Flood Risk Assessment

on behalf of Messrs Rupert and Tom Ransom

Change of Use From Agricultural Land to Dog Walking and Exercising Facility, including the provision of a Field Shelter, associated Hardstanding, Access and Parking

Land at Old Ramsey Road, St Ives, PE27 3LL

Prepared by: Heidi Surfleet, Graduate Planner,

Reviewed by: Tom Kilvert, Associate Planner

For and on behalf of Brown&Co.

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared by Brown&Co to support a planning application on behalf of Messrs Ransom for the change use of part of an agricultural field to a dog walking/exercising facility with the provision of at Land at Ramsey Road, St Ives, PE27 3LL.

1.2 National planning policy seeks to ensure that development is directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding, whilst recognising that certain forms of development may be appropriate in flood risk areas where they are compatible with flooding and can be undertaken safely without increasing flood risk elsewhere. The purpose of this Flood Risk Assessment is to consider the flood risk constraints affecting the site and demonstrate that the proposed development can operate safely and appropriately within its setting.

1.3 NPPF Policy F6 explains that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere and to only consider development appropriate in areas at risk of flooding informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment. NPPF Policy F7 states that development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided unless it satisfies the criteria set out in limb 2 of the policy.

1.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance states site-specific flood risk assessments should always be proportionate to the degree of flood risk and make optimum use of information already available, including information in a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the area, and the interactive flood risk maps available on the Environment Agency's web site.

2. Site and surroundings

2.1 The application site lies within the southwestern section of an agricultural field located within St Ives Parish and open countryside.

2.2 The site is enclosed by trees and hedgerow along its western and southern boundaries, with the wider agricultural field enclosed on its northern, eastern and southern boundaries by hedgerow. A residential dwelling is located to the south.

2.3 The site is located within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3, according to the Environment Agency Map contained in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Extract from the Government's Flood Map for Planning, showing Flood Zones, with the site outlined in red

2.4 The Huntingdonshire District Strategic Flood Risk Assessment extract map contained at Figure 2 further shows that the site (indicated by a yellow star) is partially located within Flood Zone 3a, with it likely to fall under Flood Zone 3b in the future due to climate change impacts.



Figure 2: Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Extract Map (Source Huntingdonshire District Council)

2.5 The site is located within a low surface water flood risk area.

3. Proposal

3.1 It is proposed that the field be utilised for the exercise of dogs. As part of this it is proposed to erect a 1.8 metre tall deer fencing with wire mesh fence around the dog walking field, with rabbit fencing incorporated at ground level to provide the necessary enclosure for all sizes of dogs. The field shelter will facilitate use throughout the year, including during periods of adverse weather.

3.2 The existing track from Old Ramsey Road would be used as the site access. A small car park area will be located in an existing area of hard standing in the westernmost section of the site, adjacent to the site access, with space available for five vehicles.

4. Flood Risk Assessment

4.1 The NPPG outlines that developments located in Flood Zones 2 and 3 will need to be typically supported by a sequential test. The exceptions for not requiring a sequential test include developments involving a change of use. The proposed development is for an agricultural to dog walking facility change of use with the scheme utilising the existing hard surfacing for car parking, with the only operational development being the installation of 1.8m deer fencing, which would be permitted development.

4.2 The NPPG identifies the use of amenity open space and recreation as being water-compatible. The proposed fencing would allow flood water to pass through it, and it will utilise the existing hardstanding for car parking. As such, the proposed use would have no effect on existing flood activity on and off-site. Therefore, no mitigation solutions are proposed as part of this development.

Flood Zones	**Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification**				
	Essential infrastructure	Highly vulnerable	More vulnerable	Less vulnerable	Water compatible
Zone 1	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Zone 2	✔	Exception Test required	✔	✔	✔
Zone 3a †	Exception Test required †	X	Exception Test required	✔	✔
Zone 3b *	Exception Test required *	X	X	X	✔ *

Key:

✔ Exception test is not required

X Development should not be permitted

Table 1: Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification (Source: National Planning Practice Guidance)

4.3 Policy F5 of the National Planning Policy Framework refer to the application of a sequential test intended to steer development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. However, limb 2b(i) of Policy F5 clarifies applications that would not involve built development within the site boundary should not be subject to the Sequential or Exception Tests. While the proposed hardstanding falls within the definition of operational development, it does not constitute built development. The only element of built development proposed is the timber hut, which would be sited within Flood Zone 1. As a result, there is no need to apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development or an Exception Test.

4.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance refers to the Environment Agency Standing Advice on flood risk and clarifies the Environment Agency should be consulted on developments involving a change of use to more vulnerable or highly vulnerable uses. As the proposal falls under less vulnerable and water-compatible development, no consultation with the Environment Agency is necessary.

4.5 Policy F6 of the National Planning Policy Framework clarifies that when determining applications local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere. In this instance, the proposal relates to the establishing of only a limited extent of hardstanding to the west of the site adjacent to the site entrance. Given the limited scale of this change in surfacing, with the remainder of the site remaining grassland, it is not anticipated that there will be any material adverse impacts in terms of flood storage capacity of surface water run-off. Consequently, there will be no implications in terms of increasing the flood risk elsewhere.

4.6 In the event of a flooding event, it is envisioned that the flooding level would have been built up over a period of time (hours, days or weeks) from a prolonged storm episode, and a sudden flooding event at this site would be highly unlikely where immediate evacuation of the site would be required. Moreover, the nearest watercourse to the site lies within the Applicant's ownership (circa 5m to the south) and is regularly managed to decrease the risk of flooding into their surrounding fields, including the application site.

4.7 The Applicants are already registered on the Environment Agency Flood Warning system, which alerts them (text and phone call) to any such flood risk periods. Therefore, in the event of a period of higher water levels in the surrounding watercourses, the Applicants will be able to notify customers and immediately close the site. The booking system will also temporarily close during these periods. The Applicants live in close proximity to the site, and so will also be able to regularly check on the water levels in the surrounding watercourses, and potentially close the site, as and when required.

4.8 Given that the area of highest fluvial flood risk is generally confined to the south of the site, it is reasonable that customers using this proposed dog walking facility will be no greater risk of walking their dogs here.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 It is considered that due to the nature of the proposal for a change of use and associated hardstanding, the proposed development will not increase the risk of flooding on the site. Suitable steps are in place to ensure that the site can be safely closed in the event of a flooding event.

5.2 The proposal is appropriate development with the Zone 3 flood area and has regard to the Environment Agency's advice.

5.3 The proposed development does not have consequences in terms of loss of flood area or increase the risk of flooding to other areas.

5.4 There are no flood risk related grounds under the National Planning Policy Framework on which to object to the proposal.