



BUSINESS PAPER

ORDINARY MEETING LATE REPORT

Thursday 21 March 2024
1.30PM
Council Chambers

COUNCIL'S VISION

To build and maintain sustainable communities while retaining the region's natural beauty.

COUNCIL'S MISSION

To provide services and facilities to enhance the quality of life and economic viability within the Council area.

COUNCIL'S AIMS

To perform services in a cost efficient, effective and friendly manner in order to achieve Council's Mission in meeting the annual objectives and performance targets of the principal activities Council undertakes on behalf of the community

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

“I would like to Acknowledge and pay our respects to the Aboriginal Elders both past and present, as well as emerging leaders, and Acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Land on which we meet today.”

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15 LATE REPORTS

The following item is submitted for consideration -

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Environment and Planning - 21 March 2024

ITEM 15.1 **Proposal for the declaration of new off leash area - Lot 1 DP 1054839 Woodward Lane, Crookwell**

FILE REFERENCE **I24/73**

AUTHOR **Director of Environment and Planning**

ISSUE

This report seeks Councils consideration and determination regarding the review of the location of ULSC's current designated leash free area at Willis Park and to identify if an alternate area within Crookwell is suitable for a similar designation to meet the needs of the community.

It is proposed to investigate the site located adjacent to the Crookwell Cemetery on Woodward Lane.

RECOMMENDATION That -

1. Council receive the report on the proposal to Declare new Off-Leash Area.
2. Council determine to give notice of Intention to Declare new Off-Leash area in the Council reserve located on Woodward Lane, Crookwell (Lot 1 DP1054839).
3. That the notice of Intention to Declare new Off-Leash areas seeks submissions from the public for a minimum period of 28 days.
4. A further report be presented to Council after the completion of the public exhibition period to enable Council to consider any feedback and make a determination with respect to relocating the current Off-Leash Area.

BACKGROUND

Exercising dogs off-leash has benefits for both the owner of the dog and the animal itself. Council has operated the property located at Lot 174 DP 753042, known as Willis Reserve, Hay Street, Crookwell as one of Council's off-leash areas.

Council supported a community group in applying for grant funding to assist in improving the facility and experience for potential users of the reserve. The community group was successful in obtaining funding to erect a 1.8m fence and shelters and the installation of solar lighting.

Neighbouring property owners within the immediate vicinity of the reserve raised concerns with the project and the potential impact that it may have on their livelihood and amenity. To progress the project or outcome a public meeting was held that enabled both supporters and objectors of the project to speak.

Council considered a report at its meeting of 14 December 2023 recommending that the off-leash area be retained at the Willis Reserve, however Council resolved to investigate alternate sites. The only alternate site located within Crookwell that was deemed suitable is located at Lot 1 DP1054839, Woodward Lane.

Environment and Planning

PROPOSAL FOR THE DECLARATION OF NEW OFF LEASH AREA - LOT 1 DP 1054839 WOODWARD LANE, CROOKWELL cont'd

REPORT

The property located at Lot 174 DP 753042, known as Willis Reserve and located at Hay Street, Crookwell was gazetted in 1945 for public recreation. Council subsequently resolved to utilise the reserve as an off-leash area. The reserve has basic facilities and is currently utilised as the off-leash area for Crookwell.

In around 2021 some discussions took place between Council and a local community group to ascertain whether this group would be interested in assisting with the upgrade of the reserve to improve the general facilities and make same user friendly.

Council provided three letters of support to this group, which enabled grants to be applied for and obtained with respect to the erection of shelters, 1.8m high fencing and solar lighting.

The erection of the fencing and lighting and the manner in which the off-leash area is proposed to be managed has raised significant concerns from the neighbours in the immediate vicinity of the reserve, with a number of submission being received by Council.

A public meeting was held at the Crookwell RSL Club on Tuesday 19 September 2023, where both the community group and objectors discussed the proposal to improve the facilities at the reserve.

As a result of the objections from the neighbouring property owners Council considered a report at its meeting of 14 December 2023, which recommended that the off-leash area be retained at the Willis Reserve, however Council resolved as follows:

'That the decision be deferred and Council seek alternative sites to come back to Council by March 2024.'

A number of sites that are either owned or under the care, control or management of Council were investigated, however the only site located within Crookwell that was deemed suitable is located at Lot 1 DP1054839, Woodward Lane.

Environment and Planning

PROPOSAL FOR THE DECLARATION OF NEW OFF LEASH AREA - LOT 1 DP 1054839 WOODWARD LANE, CROOKWELL cont'd

POLICY IMPACT

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* states: section 13 (6).

(6) A local authority can by order declare a public place to be an off-leash area. Such a declaration can be limited so as to apply during a particular period or periods of the day or to different periods of different days. However, there must at all times be at least one public place in the area of a local authority that is an off-leash area.

Retaining the existing off-leash area or relocating the off-leash area would meet the legislative requirements.

Council also has an off-leash area located in Gunning.

OPTIONS

Option 1: Retain the off-leash area at Willis Reserve.

Option 2: Remove the Off-Leash Area from Willis Reserve and not replace same as ULSC has an alternate Off-Leash Area located in Gunning and as such this would meet the legislative requirements. This option is not preferred as it would disadvantage the Crookwell community and have an impact upon the current grant funding

Option 3: Commence the public exhibition period to seek community feedback with respect to relocating the current off-leash area at Willis Reserve to Woodward Lane.

FINANCIAL IMPACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Additional Funds will be required to enable the establishment of a new off-leash area and to relocate existing infrastructure, including the shelters, dog bins, extension of the water main, signage, access or similar. There is currently no budget in the 2023/24 financial year or in the 2023/24 forward budget.

Ongoing annual maintenance costs will need to be found in forward budgets.

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3. That the notice of Intention to Declare new Off-Leash areas seeks submissions from the public for a minimum period of 28 days.
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ATTACHMENTS

Nil