



**REPORT of
INTERIM HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES**

**to
NORTH WESTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE
06 MARCH 2017**

MEMBERS' UPDATE

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

Application Number	FUL/MAL/16/01373
Location	The Warren Lodge Park Herbage Park Herbage Park Road Woodham Walter Essex
Proposal	28 new holiday lodges with associated infrastructure and access
Applicant	The Warren Estate
Agent	Mr D Wallis - Smart Planning Ltd
Target Decision Date	9 March 2017
Case Officer	Yee Cheung, TEL: 01621 876220
Parish	WOODHAM WALTER
Reason for Referral to the Committee / Council	Major Application

Additional Information

The Applicant has submitted additional information in support of the application in relation to the need for the additional tourist accommodation on site in accordance with policy REC20 (a) of the adopted local plan.

Tourism Need

The need for the additional tourist accommodation on site includes:-

- *“There is low supply of existing self-catering accommodation within a 10 mile radius of the proposed development, with a total of 23 properties identified, of which 13 are known to participate in a quality assurance scheme. The Scheme consists of an assessment to recognise quality and to differentiate levels of facilities available at the premises, using 1 – 5 stars, and services which guests can expect from the accommodation providers. 8 of the 13 participating businesses achieve 4 stars quality rating (our analysis shows that 13 of the 23 properties mentioned above are within 5 miles of Herbage Park)”*
- *“In terms of wooden lodge type accommodation available in the South and East areas, the proposed business would represent a valuable addition to the offer whilst*

posing very little or no competition for the existing self-catering providers in the area”

- *“Need is usually interpreted as the inability of current supply to meet demand and is measured using occupancy level statistics. The East of England Self-Catering Accommodation Survey (2010) shows that Essex achieves average annual occupancy of 60%. This is 3% above the regional average of 57%. It is commonly accepted that high occupancy levels suggest high levels of demand for accommodation”*
- *“Additional accommodation provision would ensure the demand is met at all times throughout the year as well as encouraging further economic growth in the area as indirect business is generated. For example, the development will work with local suppliers and their income will increase as well as creating or safeguarding employment. Equally visitors staying at Herbage Park will spend some of their money at local retail and food and drink outlets as well as visiting local attractions”*
- *“The views from the tourism official at Maldon District make reference to the need for additional accommodation: The need for more accommodation in the north of the District has been highlighted. It’s also noted that the number of enquiries for self-catering accommodation is disproportionate to the level of accommodation provision, highlighting a need for additional accommodation to meet demand”*
- *“Current trends show that a significant and growing number of tourists are looking for richer holiday experiences and higher quality products closer to home. As a result of the economic uncertainty consumers’ attitudes and expectations have changed”*
- *“The proposed holiday units are well located to benefit from the growing walking and cycling enthusiasts’ market (as mentioned in the introduction, the site offers direct access to a range of footpaths and bridleways). This, in turn creates a much closer contact with local communities, meaning richer visitor experiences”*
- *“Additionally, promoting the distinctiveness of the countryside experience encourages direct expenditure in the local area (e.g. pubs, community shops, local shops, etc.) thus helping local employment growth”*

In support of the development proposal, the Applicant has also confirmed the following:-

- *The proposed lodges are not on ‘woodland’ areas of the site*
- *An ecology report was submitted with the application – if further ecology work is required then a condition can be attached securing such works prior to commencement.*
- *The development does not encroach into the Nature Conservation Area.*
- *The management at the Warren is well aware of their environmental duties and the environmental law. They are responsible persons and the holiday park is governed by a suite of rules agreed with the LPA through condition.*
- *The lodges do not require the removal of any semi-mature or mature trees. Works are wholly confined within the pit ‘basin’ and not on woodland fringes.*

7 **Consultation Response**

7.3 Internal Consultees

Coast and Countryside Officer – Objects to the proposal as an updated Ecological Appraisal and Mitigation Plan is required in order to determine whether impacts on protected species or important BAP habitats would be affected as a result of this further expansion and the most appropriate mitigation.

Should the application be approved a planning condition should be imposed to ensure that an updated Ecological Appraisal and Mitigation Plan to be submitted to and approved by the Council.