

## **BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

### **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – 23<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 2009**

#### **REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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#### **LYNG: ERECTION OF HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION, LAKESIDE COUNTRY CLUB, QUARRY LANE**

**Applicant: Lakeside Country Club**

**Reference: 3PL/2009/0715/F**

**Summary** – This report concerns a planning application for additional holiday accommodation at the Lakeside Country Club at Lyng. Subject to the resolution of outstanding issues relating to flooding, it is recommended that permission is granted subject to conditions and a legal agreement.

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report concerns an application for full planning permission for the erection of 10 units of holiday accommodation in two 3-storey blocks at Lakeside Country Club, Lyng. Retrospective permission is also sought for an internal access road.

The application site is located on the northern fringe of the village of Lyng and close to the River Wensum. The Lakeside Country Club comprises a development of 30 holiday lodges, together with indoor and outdoor leisure facilities, set within an area of former gravel workings. The site extends to around 27 hectares and includes 4 lakes. The site is adjoined on its south side by established residential development. The application site is located close to the River Wensum SSSI and SAC, and immediately adjacent to a Country Wildlife Site.

The application is supported by a Design & Access Statement, Needs Report and Flood Risk Assessment. A Section 106 Agreement has been drafted which would limit the occupancy of the proposed units to holiday accommodation only.

#### **2. KEY DECISION**

This is not a key decision.

#### **3. COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

The following Council priorities are relevant to this report:

- A safe and healthy environment
- A well planned place to live and work

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

Lyng Parish Council has objected to the application on the various grounds, including that there is not a need for further holiday accommodation and that the site should not continue to be developed in a piecemeal fashion. Reference is made to previous unauthorised developments.

The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the application subject to the proposed accommodation being limited to holiday use.

The Environment Agency has objected to the application on the grounds that flood risks have not been properly considered.

The Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board has raised no objection to the application.

Two letters of objection have been received raising concerns about loss of amenity due to additional noise, traffic safety and the condition/maintenance of the access road. A letter of support has also been received referring to the benefits of the development for local businesses.

## **5. SITE HISTORY**

A planning application for 10 holiday units was submitted in August 2008. The application was subsequently withdrawn.

## **6. POLICY**

Relevant national planning policy can be found in PPS 7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas', PPS 25 'Planning and Flood Risk', and the DCLG Good Practice Guide on Planning For Tourism (May 2006). At a regional level, Policy E6 of the East of England Plan deals with tourism development. Policy DC8 of the Council's Core Strategy sets out local planning policy on tourism related developments. Also of relevance are Core Strategy Policies CP10 (Natural Environment), CP11 (Landscape Protection) and DC1 (Protection of Amenity).

## **7. ASSESSMENT**

The principal issues raised by the application concern: i) planning policy matters, ii) impact on the surrounding area, iii) relationships with neighbouring development, and iv) flooding.

### **Policy**

National policy and guidance on tourism development requires a balance to be struck between the economic benefits of development and its environmental effects, with particular emphasis placed on sustainability. Core Strategy Policy DC8 permits tourism developments in rural areas provided that certain criteria are met relating to need, proximity to existing settlements, links to existing attractions and sustainability.

It is considered that the proposed development would generally be consistent both local and national planning policies relating to tourism. The development would be well related both to the adjacent existing leisure/tourism complex and associated fishing lakes, and to the village of Lyng, the centre of which is within easy walking distance of the site. It is proposed to construct the holiday units with enhanced wall/roof insulation and solar hot water panels to achieve the policy of 10% on-site renewable energy generation.

The need for the development has been carefully considered, particularly in the light of local concerns relating to the previous use of existing holiday accommodation for migrant workers. Information contained in the submitted Needs Assessment Report indicates that significant investment has been made in the Lakeside complex over the last 12 months in order to develop it as major attraction for fishing and wildlife breaks. Existing fishing lakes have been re-stocked, apartments upgraded and a new website launched with online booking. Information provided shows that booking and occupancy levels so far in 2009 are significantly higher than the previous year. Occupancy levels between June and September 2009 were between 96-98%. On this basis it is considered that a need for the proposed development has been demonstrated.

### **Impact on surrounding area**

Core Strategy Policy CP11 requires development proposals to have particular regard to the appearance and biodiversity of existing rural landscapes, with high protection being afforded to key landscape types including river valleys. Policy CP10 seeks to resist development that would adversely affect designated wildlife sites.

The proposed holiday units would be located immediately adjacent to existing holiday apartments and would be of the same design and materials. In the context of the existing holiday/leisure complex at Lakeside Country Club, it is considered that the proposals would not have a significant impact on either the appearance of the surrounding landscape or on the wildlife interests on nearby designated sites. The proposals would not therefore offend Policies CP10 and 11.

### **Relationship with neighbouring development**

The proposed blocks of holiday units would be located some distance from the nearest residential properties and would not have any direct impact on local amenity. Some increase in traffic movements to the site would result, but not a level generally that would create any noticeable impact on nearby residents.

In addition to the holiday units themselves, the application seeks permission retrospectively for the retention of an internal access road within the site. This road provides access to 15 existing holiday units (which would increase to 20 units under the current proposal) and passes close to the southern boundary of the site and several neighbouring dwellings. Use of this access road could result in disturbance to neighbouring properties. In order to mitigate such potential effects, it is proposed to reinforce existing tree planting and landscaping along this boundary and to restrict traffic flows by adopting a one-way flow traffic system along the road. Access to the main leisure complex and the remaining holiday units would continue to be via the original central access road. Given these safeguards and the scale and nature of the development, it is not considered that undue harm would be caused to the amenities of local residents.

### **Flooding**

The proposed two new holiday apartment blocks both fall within Flood Zone 2. The Environment Agency has objected to the application on the grounds that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has not been provided. However, a FRA was submitted with the application, and so further clarification of the Agency's position has been sought. The Environment Agency did not object to the previous application submitted last year, subject to a conditions relating to floor levels and a flood warning/evacuation plan, but did advise that the local planning authority should satisfy itself that the development would meet the 'sequential test'. The sequential test in PPS 25 is designed to ensure that areas at little or no risk of flooding are developed in preference to areas at higher risk, with the aim of keeping all development out of medium and high risk areas (Flood Zones 2 and 3) where possible. Further information is being sought from the applicant in order to determine whether the proposed development meets the sequential test.

### **Other matters**

Objections to the proposals have been raised by a local resident relating to maintenance of the private drive that provides access to the development. Whilst this is principally a private matter, clarification of the applicant's position on this has been sought.

Reference has been in representations received to various unauthorised development at the Lakeside Country Club in addition to the internal access road referred to above. These developments include an outdoor swimming pool and a bowling green. The applicant has indicated that further applications will be submitted as necessary to cover these matters.

#### **7. RECOMMENDATION**

Subject to outstanding issues relating to flooding being adequately addressed, it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions and a legal agreement.