

REPRESENTATIONS

Maidstone Borough Council Tourism Manager:

With reference to the above planning application, I fully support the application to develop high quality holiday let accommodation. The proposed wooden lodges are of a high quality and a small development of 10 lodges will allow the flexibility for groups of people to holiday together. The local supply currently has a lot of single unit holiday accommodation, and very little multiple unit accommodation. This development would satisfy the many requests we receive for suitable accommodation groups of friends and their families to holiday together, college and university groups looking for self-catering accommodation whilst on short study tours, and most of all the families looking for value for money holiday accommodation.

In support of this, the UK domestic Tourism figures for 2009 produced by Visit England show that in 2009 holidays taken domestically were up 17%. An analysis of the statistics show:

- Self-catering is doing very well showing a massive increase in both the number of trips taken, number of nights stayed, and the resulting expenditure. This was across all sectors including rented holiday let accommodation and caravan and camping.
- There was an above average increase in the number of trips taken by people with children. This is reflected in the increase in self-catering holidays.
- London and the North East struggled while the South West, South East and Yorkshire did well.
- Domestic holidays of 4+ days grew at much the same pace as short breaks

These figures are an accurate reflection of what is happening locally. The move to value for money holidays is evident through local occupancy figures for self-catering being much higher than serviced accommodation. Self-catering holidays attracts longer stays in the area and thus impacts on the local economy through secondary spend at the local shops, pubs and restaurants, as well as the visitor attractions and leisure facilities.

Appendices attached:

Letter dated 17/6/09 Laura Dickson MBC Tourism Manager

Letter dated 19/10/09 Tourism South East

Adjoining land owner comment:

A telephone call has been received from Mr F Wilson the land owner of the site to the north subject of planning application MA/02/0255. As discussed in the officer's report this site was granted planning permission for open storage of 50 caravans subject to a legal agreement which prevents the use of Cherry Tree Caravan Park for the open storage of 20 caravans. Mr Wilson has advised that planning permission MA/02/0255 was implemented and that the officer's report is incorrect. After further investigation, it appears that the conditions relating to MA/02/0255 were discharged in May 2007 and that some laying of hardcore at the site entrance was approved and undertaken. Mr Wilson has advised that on placing an undisclosed number of caravans on the land a theft then took place and he ceased the authorised use of the site. It is unclear whether the permission was fully implemented, to what intensity and throughout what period. However, this matter is not of relevance to the consideration of the current planning application. Should the applicant wish to proceed with the open storage of the caravans at Cherry Tree Caravan Park he would need to apply to modify or discharge the legal agreement that forms part of application MA/02/0255.

Officer Comment

My recommendation remains unchanged