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POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

12 December 2005 – 6.30 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Hodds (in the Chair); Councillors Ames, Barker, Blyth, Howard, Linden, Taylor, D Thompson, C Walker and Watts.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peck and Mrs M Hartley (Community Services Section Head)

Mr P Warner (Head of Planning and Development) and Miss S Davis (Senior Member Services Officer).

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 7 November 2005 were confirmed.

Councillors Ames and C Walker declared personal, non-prejudicial interests in the following item, on the grounds that Councillor Ames managed holiday accommodation in the Borough and Councillor C Walker was a County Councillor and on the Norfolk Police Authority, but in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct they were allowed to speak and vote:-

2. SECONDARY HOLIDAY AREA POLICY

The Committee received the Head of Planning and Development's report summarising progress towards implementation of the recommendations made by this Committee in relation to the above.

It was reported that cluster analysis and re-survey work had been completed and was subject to validation by the Head of Tourism. The Head of Planning and Development indicated that, after looking at several options for defining a cluster, it had become apparent that clusters of 300/400 bed spaces could be established, although this would leave some existing hotels currently within the Secondary Holiday Area outside the cluster. Reference was made to Trafalgar Road and North Denes Road and Members were asked to clarify whether they still wished to include these Roads within a cluster as this option would leave them out as being too small. The proposed criteria would also leave Sandown Road out of a cluster but it was pointed out that there would be sufficient supporting evidence to suggest that the eastern part of this Road should be included in the Primary Holiday Area. The Head of Planning and Development reported that the proposed clusters needed further refinement and discussion with the industry.

Clarification was sought as to how it would be possible to justify including areas such as Trafalgar Road if they did not meet the criteria. It was reported that a case could be made in respect of Trafalgar Road and North Denes Road as they were largely in holiday accommodation, although physically separated from areas in the north and south, and they were unique. Members were reminded that, during the review, consideration had been given to the possibility of including Trafalgar Road in the Prime Holiday Area but the point was made that this was a review of the Secondary Holiday Area and if this suggestion was pursued it would need to be argued out at a Planning Inquiry. It was suggested that, if the previously identified grouping of holiday accommodation on North Denes Road was added to the large number of units north of The Golfers pub, the road could probably qualify as a cluster under the suggested 300 bed spaces criteria. Whilst the Head of Planning and Development acknowledged this point, he stated that he had only been able to include those premises who had responded and not the other premises such as holiday flats in the area. He also reminded Members that North Denes Road had not been included in the Secondary Holiday Area.

A suggestion was made that any lone guest house/hotel which met RAC standards should be included in the clusters. The Head of Planning and Development reported that, if Members were so minded, there was sufficient flexibility available to accord with this suggestion as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) process. A query was raised as to how much knowledge residents had about the proposed clusters and he indicated that, at this stage, they would have very little if any and, unless Members wished for more consultation, the issue would be dealt with under the normal LDF process, although the Tourist Authority would be consulted shortly. Whilst the principle of defining a cluster based on the number of bed spaces was endorsed, concern was expressed that, in future, some hotels could fall out of a cluster ie if they were renovated to include en-suites etc as this would reduce the number of bedrooms. The Head of Planning and Development responded that this would be a snapshot of the time and, although changes were inevitable, any reductions in bed spaces were likely to be across the Areas. He stated that as long as the Authority could provide reasonable information to justify the decisions taken this would be sufficient to defend the clusters. He also added that the Council was now able to prove that the policy, which had come into effect in 1994 and been tested at a Local Planning Inquiry in 1998, had been reviewed in 2004/05 and was up to date.

The Head of Planning and Development reported that consultants were currently being sought to draw up a list of compatible uses that would fit into and regenerate Secondary Holiday Areas. Members' attention was drawn to the draft brief and it was noted that this would be finalised following further consultation with the industry, the Head of Housing Needs and Welfare Services and Head of Tourism etc. The Head of Planning and Development indicated that the consultants would be asked to take a current view ie 2006, a medium term view ie 2010/11 and beyond 2011 (desirable but not essential). It was reported that Planning Delivery Grant funding would be used to pay for the study which would hopefully be completed by April 2006. Members were also informed that a Panel had now met to consider a planning application and its views would be submitted to the Development Control Committee as part of its deliberations. The County Council had produced a revised on-street parking scheme for Wellesley Road but it was noted that the scheme had now been dropped as the majority of residents had not been in favour. The Head of Planning and Development added that a report on CCTV and parking would shortly be considered by the County Council's Area Committee and this could have an impact on Secondary Holiday Areas.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Head of Planning and Development's report be received and endorsed.
- (ii) That the definition of a Secondary Holiday Area Cluster be endorsed but it be recommended that any lone guest houses/hotels which meet RAC standards be included, together with Trafalgar Road and North Denes Road and that the Local Development Framework Working Party and Development Control Committee be informed accordingly.
- (iii) That the draft consultants' brief be endorsed in principle.

3. FUTURE REVIEWS

Councillor Ames declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in the following item on the grounds that he was the Council's appointed nominee on the SeaChange Board, but in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct he was allowed to speak and vote:-

(a) Review of Cultural Activities/Delivery in the Borough

The Committee received the draft Terms of Reference and Work Programme for the above and the Chairman clarified that this review would now focus on the quality and delivery of the Council's Arts Development provision.

Following recent comments made by the Audit Commission in relation to the Council's policy making procedures, the Vice-Chairman suggested that the Executive should be asked to provide formal Terms of Reference for the Committee detailing its overall remit.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Executive be requested to approve the draft Terms of Reference and Work Programme for the Review of the Quality and Delivery of the Council's Arts Development Provision.
- (ii) That the Executive be asked to endorse a request that the Head of Member and Legal Services be asked to provide formal Terms of Reference for this Committee.

(b) Review of Parks/Open Spaces in the Borough

Members noted that it was envisaged that this review would commence in June 2006, dependent on the proposed timescale for any other review topics.

4. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 7.25 pm.