

BRITISH HOLIDAY & HOME PARKS ASSOCIATION LTD

*The representative body
of the parks industry including
caravans, chalets, lodges,
park homes, tents and all types
of self catering accommodation.*

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Mr Glyn Davies
Bidwells
16 Upper King Street
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2 January 2008

Dear Mr Davies

You have asked us to comment on matters that you are to address, along with BH&HPA Member Mr Michael Timewell of Blue Sky Leisure, at North Norfolk District Council's (NNDC) LDF Inquiry 15th/16th January.

In particular, we explored NNDC's proposed time limit on unserviced holiday occupancy: *'It shall be let for commercial holiday lets for at least 140 days a year and no let must exceed 31 days.'* This is drawn from Valuation Office (VO) guidance relating to the rating of 'Self Catering Units'.

The VO defines a Self Catering Unit as *'A building or self-contained part of a building which is available for letting commercially as self catering accommodation'*. NNDC should be advised that caravans are not buildings but have a statutory definition in law. (Caravan Sites Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968.)

Further, we have consulted the Association's professional advisers on rating matters, HLL Humberts Leisure; they commented as follows:

'The VO guidance relating to the rating of Self Catering Holiday Accommodation informs ratepayers regarding the domestic/non-domestic border-line and is aimed at those people who let out holiday accommodation for part of the year only. It does not apply to static leisure caravans which are the subject of separate legislation and are treated as non-domestic property unless occupied as a sole or main residence. To that extent it would seem wrong for an LDF to use this guidance note as a basis for a Policy that would also apply to static caravans as well as other forms of holiday accommodation.'

We believe that the use of this VO guidance in the context of land-use planning policies in connection with tourism accommodation is spurious. It may be appropriate to remind NNDC of the guidance in the Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism (Department for Communities and Local Government May 2006) (GPG) that was designed by government to guide tourism land use planning policies (an entirely separate matter from rating). Specifically, Annexes A and B deal with tourism accommodation and seasonal occupancy.

For the avoidance of doubt you may also wish to refer NNDC to an early paragraph in the GPG:

'The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires regional planning bodies to have regard to "national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State" when preparing Regional Spatial Strategies. A similar provision exists for local authorities when preparing local development documents. Regional and local planning authorities should therefore have regard to the guidance in this document when preparing development plans. The guidance may also be material to individual planning decisions.'

I hope that this letter is useful to you in your endeavours to obtain constructive land-use planning policies for tourism in North Norfolk. To quote again from the GPG:

'The planning system, by taking a pro-active role in facilitating and promoting the implementation of good quality development, is crucial to ensuring that the tourism industry can develop and thrive, thereby maximising these valuable economic, social and environmental benefits.'

Yours sincerely,



Joan Clark
Deputy Director General