

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – SPECIAL MEETING

11 OCTOBER 2010

AN APPLICATION FOR IMPROVED PUBLIC ACCESS INCLUDING NEW VEHICULAR ENTRANCE AND 20 SPACE PUBLIC CAR PARK, 98 WOODEN HOLIDAY CABINS(25% LESS THAN THE PREVIOUSLY REFUSED SCHEME) A FACILITIES BUILDING (COMPRISING RECEPTION, SHOP, CAFE, WC'S, FOREST EXPERIENCE ROOM, MANAGERS ACCOMMODATION, CYCLE HIRE, BACK OFFICE AND STORAGE) MAINTENANCE YARD, BIOMASS BOILER ROOM, SEWERAGE PLANT AND ELECTRICITY SUB-STATION, ACCESS TRACKS, WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES, CYCLE STANDS AND CAR PARKING AND ENHANCED WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN (RESUBMISSION) - BLACK WOOD, BRADLEY, MICHELDEVER.

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING MANAGEMENT

Contact Officer: Nick Parker Tel No: 01962 840222 nparker@winchester.gov.uk

**Item No:**  
**Case No:** 10/01077/FUL / W21368/03  
**Proposal Description:** An application for improved public access including new vehicular entrance and 20 space public car park, 98 wooden holiday cabins(25% less than the previously refused scheme) a facilities building (comprising reception, shop, cafe, WC's, forest experience room, managers accommodation, cycle hire, back office and storage) maintenance yard, biomass boiler room, sewerage plant and electricity sub-station, access tracks, walking and cycling routes, cycle stands and car parking and enhanced woodland management plan (RESUBMISSION)  
**Address:** Black Wood Bradley Micheldever Hampshire  
**Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City:** Micheldever  
**Applicants Name:** Forest Holidays  
**Case Officer:** Nick Parker  
**Date Valid:** 4 May 2010  
**Recommendation:** Application Permitted

**General Comments**

This application is reported to Committee because of the number of objections received. In addition Micheldever Parish Council has requested that the application be considered by Committee. Their comments are attached at Appendix A.

The application represents a resubmission of an earlier planning application ref. 09/00186/FUL which was refused planning permission under delegated powers on 18<sup>th</sup>

May 2009. The current proposal reduces the number of holiday cabins from 130 to 98. The decision notice of 09/00186/FUL is attached at Appendix B.

### **Site Description**

Black Wood is located 8km south west of the town of Basingstoke and 12km north of the City of Winchester. The site is bounded to the north by the A303 and to the south east by the M3 and A33. The Larkwhistle Farm road runs to the west of the site where existing access is taken from. The closest settlement to the site is Micheldever Station, which is located approximately 2km to the north west of the site.

Black Wood is owned and managed by the Forestry Commission and is currently used for commercial forestry and local informal recreation. The wood is open to the public for informal recreation use and measures approximately 266ha (650 acres) in area. However there is no public right of way or formal parking facility associated with the site. The existing primary access track passes north/south through the wood terminating to the west of the central meadow. To the east of the meadow is Black Wood cottage, currently fenced off due to its derelict state. The wood also has a number of existing desire line tracks/cycle paths meandering through the wood that are accessible to the public all year round.

The wood consists of predominantly 20<sup>th</sup> century beech plantation with other native broadleaves. Part of the site is designated ancient woodland, however much of this is replanted; a few ancient woodland blocks and a number of veteran trees remain. There is a grassy open meadow towards the centre of the site. Key landscape features within the woodland include occasional veteran oak and yew trees, large swathes of bluebells, forest rides, and a shallow valley running north-east to south-west on the west side of the wood.

The wood is designated by Hampshire County Council (HCC) as a "Site of Importance for Nature Conservation" (SINC) due to a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland. The designation was based upon the HCC survey of October 1987 and the criteria used was: 1B Other woodland where there is a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving. The presence of AWVP flora, veteran Yew and Beech, areas of ancient semi natural woodland and the survival of wood banks are listed as factors contributing to the designation of the wood as a SINC.

The Forestry Commission have a "Forest Design Plan" setting out their vision for Black Wood (and other nearby woods) which contains detailed proposals for felling and restocking of trees over the next 10 years in addition to maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity of the site.

### **Proposal**

The proposed development relates to the development of the site for:

- 98 timber holiday cabins arranged in 8 linked clusters of 6 to 23 cabins centred around a sinuous central access track. The cabins would be positioned on average 25m apart, 50m from any replanted or semi-natural ancient woodland and 25m from existing woodland paths. In total it is proposed to provide 8 one bed cabins, 35 two bed cabins, 44 three bed cabins and 11 four bed cabins.
- A 323 sq. m facilities building incorporating a reception, shop, café, forest experience room, teaching room, managers accommodation and cycle hire. This

- building would be located adjacent to the central meadow area
- A wood chip boiler building – Located north of the central facilities building in the centre of the site
- A maintenance yard – Containing the main recycling centre, house keeping building, parking, and the clean-down area for the on-site maintenance vehicles. Located south of cluster 1.
- An underground sewerage plant located adjacent to the maintenance yard
- An electricity sub-station located adjacent to the maintenance yard
- 174 car parking spaces, comprising 133 spaces distributed at each cluster, 20 public parking spaces close to the wood entrance, and 21 spaces close to the central building for staff and visitors
- 548 cycle parking spaces distributed at each cabin and including 40 spaces at the central building for staff and visitors
- The proposals involve improved public access including access tracks, walking and cycling routes, cycle stands and public car parking.

The cabins would be suspended on pre-constructed steel piles to minimise disturbance to the ground area and will be constructed of Forest Stewardship Council certified timber. The central building would consist of a mono-pitched timber framed structure over the central reception/forest experience space.

The cabins and central area are to be designed to meet BREEAM excellent standards, with a woodchip heating system, pile foundations, sustainably sourced timber and clay roof tiles, high levels of insulation and thermal efficient glazing.

It is intended to accommodate vehicular circulation on existing tracks wherever possible. Existing tracks would be upgraded where necessary using similar material used previously by the Forestry Commission elsewhere on the site using compacted small stone particles with a wood chip finish. It is proposed to move the site entrance 25m to the south to improve highway safety at the junction with Larkwhistle Farm Road. An additional 20 spaces dedicated to visitor parking would be provided at the site entrance. Beyond the junction within the site, the main access road would use the existing forest track and would be altered to provide passing places and a regular mowing regime of the grass verges on either side. The entrance track would have a bituminous surface finish. New gravel tracks are proposed to provide access into the individual chalet clusters. It is proposed to provide a shuttle bus from Micheldever railway station to provide transport to the site. Emergency access is proposed to the north of the site onto the A303.

It is proposed to promote recreation to the eastern side of the woodland for visitors staying in the cabins and the general public. It is also proposed to retain a hierarchy of forest tracks for use by pedestrians and cyclists. Signage marking circular routes of varying lengths with options for connections to footpaths and bridleway routes to the wider countryside would be provided. Some of the existing tracks within the woodland to the east of the development area would be upgraded to conservation rides. Visitors will be discouraged from using quieter routes to the north and south, by promotion of way marked routes within the east of Black Wood.

The application is supported with the following documents:

- Environmental Statement covering the following topics:
  - Population
  - Land Use
  - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Ancient Woodland
- Archaeological Assessment
- Hydrology and Geology and Hydrogeology
- Noise and Vibration
- Climate and Air Quality
- Traffic and Transportation
- Tourism Need and Impact Statement
- Tree Survey, Arboricultural Implications and Method Statement Principles
- Black Wood Management Plan – Landscape, ecological, visitor and woodland management (see below for detailed description)
- Construction Management Plan
- Transport Assessment
- Sustainability Design Plan and Sustainability, Design and Access Statement
- Planning Obligation covering the Black Wood Management Plan and Transportation matters.

The Black Wood Management Plan (BWMP) forms an essential document to be considered alongside the planning application. The document is intended to be secured through a S106 legal agreement to ensure its implementation. Its purpose is to set out management objectives and proposals for the wood which will ensure the long term protection and enhancement of the woodland's amenity, ecology, landscape and other features. The following objectives are contained within the BWMP:

- Restore semi-natural woodland vegetation from plantation forestry
- Enhance and increase the area of dormouse habitat
- Enhance and increase the grassland habitat to benefit species of sunny habitats such as reptiles, invertebrates and flora
- Create attractive linear routes for walking and cycling whilst maintaining parts of the wood with little human disturbance
- Maintenance of existing semi-natural ancient woodland and other areas of younger native broadleaf trees through coppicing rotation to benefit ground flora, invertebrates, breeding birds and possibly dormice
- Expansion of the deadwood resource to the benefit of wildlife
- Protection of existing features which contribute to the landscape and amenity value of the woodland i.e. bluebell swards, veteran oak and veteran yew trees and meadow areas.
- Visitor management

The implementation of the management measures would be phased for the pre-construction, construction and long term management stages of the development and would relate to specific types of management of the wood. The BWMP also sets out a monitoring regime for all aspects of the plan.

### **Relevant Planning History**

The application ref. 09/00186/FUL related to a similar development for the erection of 130 holiday cabins. This was refused planning permission on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009 under delegated powers. The reasons for refusal are reproduced below:

*01 By virtue of the scale of the proposed development, the existing landscape*

*setting of the woodland would be significantly harmed by the proposed development. Due to the numbers of cabins, their size, height, roof materials and concentration within the wood their visual impact from within the forest would be substantial and detract from the special qualities of the woodland as a whole. In addition the significant increase in recreation use of the woodland by occupants of the cabins and general visitors would significantly reduce the existing tranquillity and seclusion experienced from within the woodland. The proposed development is therefore contrary to policies RT.18 and CE.5 of the WDLPR and contrary to the objectives of PPS1 and PPS7.*

- 02 The extent and scale of proposed scheme is of a level and significance that would cause significant direct and indirect harm to the ecology and biodiversity of the site through the loss of habitat within the SINC designation and deterioration of the ancient semi-natural woodland and replanted ancient woodland. The proposals are considered to demonstrate inadequate mitigation to compensate for the loss of ecological interests and are not considered to go above and beyond the woodland management and enhancement measures secured through the adopted Forest Design Plan. The development is therefore contrary to policy CE.9 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review and contrary to the objectives of PPS9.*
- 03 In the absence of a legal agreement or other appropriate legal mechanism to secure a travel plan, a shuttle bus link to the railway station, on-site cycle hire facility, on-site leisure, shopping and café facilities, the development would result in an unacceptable increase in the number and length of car journeys where alternative means of travel would otherwise have had less environmental impact, which would be to the detriment of the environment and the locality and is contrary to policies T.1 and T.5 of the adopted WDLPR and contrary to the aims of PPG13.*
- 04 The proposed cycleway works as show on submitted drawing fig. 4.1 would encourage cyclists to cross the A33 at a dangerous point and would pose a danger to pedestrians and cyclists that would be likely to cause undue interference with the safety and convenience of existing users of the highway and is therefore contrary to policy T.2 of the adopted WDLPR.*

## **Consultations**

WCC Strategic Planning – The previous Structure Plan policy on holiday villages was superseded by the South East Plan, which did not direct tourism development to this particular part of the region. (Since the submission of this planning application the South East Plan has been formally revoked on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010 and therefore no longer forms part of the Development Plan of the District. As a result, its policies are not material to the consideration of planning applications).

Therefore, the key issue is whether the proposal satisfies the requirements of Local Plan Policies RT.17 and RT.18, particularly in relation to the degree of visual screening and the ecological impact, which other specialist consultees can advise on. If so, the proposal would satisfy the policy requirements, which do not limit the scale of the site or number of units. If permission is granted there is a need for planning conditions or obligations to ensure that a permanent residential use is not established. NB: Issues regarding visual screening, ecological impact etc. are considered later in this report.

WCC landscape – No objection subject to landscape conditions. (Conditions 06, 07 and 08).

With reference to the previous landscape consultation response dated 20.04.2009 which considered previous proposals unacceptable based on policies CE5; CE9; CE11; DP5.

The revised scheme (April 2010) has implemented significant positive changes to the master plan which now fulfils landscape design objectives (ref. Design and Access Statement 3.6) and addresses main issues and concerns on landscape character and visual impact, in particular:

- Reduction of cabins from 130no to 98no.
- Reduction of 4 bed cabins from 20 to 15
- Average distance of 25.00m between cabins
- Reduction of cluster sizes which are now 7-21 no per cluster
- Reduction of parking spaces from 278 to 174.
- Improved locations and treatment of cabins, central building and surrounds; wood chip boiler
- Reduced area for new tracks within wider woodland
- Coordination of management objectives and proposals into one 'stand alone' long term management plan that will be implemented as part of a Section 106 agreement, commencing at pre-construction stage.

WCC trees – No objection subject to tree protection conditions. (Condition 18)

WCC Archaeology – No objection - As detailed in the Environment Statement (para. 3.6.37) the archaeological evaluation has identified that significant erosion, due to ploughing, has occurred across that part of Black Wood replanted in the 1930's, within which the proposed holiday park facilities are located. Furthermore few buried archaeological features were identified during the evaluation.

Given the findings of the archaeological evaluation it is not considered that archaeology is a significant constraint at this site. Further archaeological monitoring and recording in mitigation of the impacts of the proposed development on archaeological remains can be secured via a planning condition. (Condition 15)

As such there is no archaeological objection to this proposal, subject to a condition securing a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with Policy HE12 of PPS5 (Planning for the Historic Environment, 2010) and Policy HE.1 of the Winchester Revised Deposit Local Plan

WCC Environmental Protection – No objection subject to land contamination condition. (Condition 12)

WCC Sustainable Transport – No objection subject to securing Green Travel Plan, cycle hire service, on site facilities and shuttle bus facility. Whilst the development is likely to be heavily reliant on car based travel for access, the developer has taken steps to try and ensure that other opportunities exist and that on site visitors have the opportunity to limit their car use. These opportunities are delivered through the provision of a shuttle service, a cycle hire service, and on site leisure, shopping and cafe facilities.

WCC Drainage – No objection on drainage grounds provided drainage layout does not interfere with trees.

WCC Economic and Cultural Services – Extremely supportive of scheme on the basis of its contribution to the economic life; to local leisure opportunities and to the environmental credentials of the Winchester District.

We have been closely involved with discussions about the scheme since Forest Holidays first approached the Council, and have visited the site. We believe that the developers have taken significant care to address concerns as they have arisen, and have throughout the two submission processes done their utmost to identify solutions to the practical and policy issues raised whilst retaining the character, quality and vision of the scheme as a whole.

We are conscious that local residents may be concerned about the negative impacts of the scheme (eg noise, traffic, harm to wildlife), but the site visit, our knowledge of the operation of such sites elsewhere in the UK and our understanding of the mitigation measures proposed by the developers all lead us to conclude that these should not be major concerns. Moreover, there are new community benefits proposed including the 'Forest Experience' facility and improved access for leisure users of the wood.

By contrast – and at a difficult time for the economy which is likely to last for some years to come - this scheme brings the advantage of 57 new jobs during construction and 54 new jobs during operation, based on the economic assessment of the developers which appears to be in accordance with standard tourism models. The scheme would also bring £4.5 million to the economy during the construction phase, and £3.7 million pa during operation.

The development at Blackwood would play a major role in increasing high-value trips to the District, and – given the length of stay in holiday chalets of this kind – helping to boost overnight stays. Overnight visitors are of far higher value, economically speaking, to the District than day visitors – and generate fewer vehicle movements. The provision of a shuttle bus to Micheldever Station; promotion of on-site activities such as cycling and ranger walks, and signposting of local businesses (eg pubs, shops) to provide for day to day purchases should all contribute to ensuring that this development enhances its sustainable design credentials with sensitive operational practices.

HCC Ecology – Previous concerns have been overcome by the current proposals subject to a S106 to secure the Black Wood Management Plan and appropriate conditions

Hampshire Wildlife Trust – Objection in principle to the development as it would cause direct and indirect harm to the integrity of the SINC.

Contrary to policy CE.9 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review as it has not been demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the harm to the SINC and do not consider that sufficient mitigation/avoidance measures are in place to avoid this harm. Proposals prejudice public access to the site by directly reducing the publicly accessible land. Unsatisfied with the proposals to manage the central meadow.

Should permission be granted then recommend series of conditions aimed at limiting the number of units; restricting use of units for holiday let only; removal of units if at a future date no longer required; ensure community use of wood and provision of educational

element; no lights policy after 10pm; accreditation required for quality of design, ecological management, sustainability and education; regular monitoring of management practices.

Natural England – Proposals will not have an adverse impact on the nearby Micheldever Spoil Heaps SSSI.

WCC is reminded that proposals should accord with the key principles set out in PPS9 including paragraph 9 in relation to the SINC and that HCC Ecology and the Hampshire Wildlife Trust should be consulted in this respect.

If ancient woodland is to be destroyed then WCC needs to demonstrate that the need for the development outweighs any harm and that a substantial compensation package is in place to mitigate the harm.

Satisfied that the development would not have an adverse impact on protected species and in particular the dormouse population provided conditions are imposed in relation to mitigation measures; control of lighting; restrictions on pets for cluster 8; external connectivity for species populations maintained. (NB. Aside from a lighting condition (condition 19) the additional requirements can be secured through the Black Wood Management Plan).

The developer should be reminded that a European Protected Species Licence in relation to the dormouse population will be required in order to undertake works lawfully at this site.

Environment Agency – No objection subject to a condition securing surface water drainage details (Condition 16)

HCC Highways – No objection subject to conditions (Conditions 13 and 14) and S106

The Highway Authority raises no objection to this application subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 Agreement with the County Council in order to secure the financial contribution of £16,950, the Travel Plan bond of £60,100 and associated assessment and monitoring fees, inclusive of provision for a further contribution to the County Council should the Travel Plan measures not be fully implemented.

Highways Agency – No objection

HCC Rights of Way – We welcome the provision of waymarked circular walking and cycling routes within the site and the improved facilities for public access to the site.

The Holiday Park would be ideally situated to provide access to the rights of way network in general, and to several County Council maintained routes that are present in the immediate vicinity, in particular, namely :-

*Micheldever Restricted Byway No 25b* which runs along the western boundary of the site; The Wayfarers Walk, a County Council long distance path (70 miles), which lies to the south-east; Two County Council promoted off-road cycle routes which lie to the south east and to the west of the site.

The Park would bring additional pressure onto the network through increased use and we would therefore wish to secure funding from the applicant towards future maintenance of



these paths. We would also be happy to be involved in any discussions that may be required as part of any recreational promotion of the site and its surrounding area to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the provision and marketing of these facilities.

Ramblers – No objection.

Please ensure that during development Micheldever Restricted Byway No.25b is not obstructed for public use and remains viable at the end of the development.

HCC Tourism Manager – Support

- This development meets an identified need for additional self-catering accommodation in Hampshire
- There is significant growth potential in the domestic holiday market and the Forest Holidays product is in a strong position to capitalise from this market expansion. This means that the development has a strong chance of being successful and in-turn make a significant contribution to tourist spend in the Hampshire economy
- Additional visitor spend in the area has the opportunity to sustain local services (eg pubs, village shops, restaurants)
- It offers an opportunity for additional supply in a part of the county that is not subject to significant pressures from tourist visits eg The New Forest
- The development is located adjacent to major road and rail transport networks, ensuring that access is straightforward
- There is a strong emphasis on making the development sustainable and minimising environmental impact

And finally, the developers appear to have been thorough in the approach they have taken to develop their proposals. Their methodology looks to be sound.

Tourism South East – Support proposals for the following reasons:

- Proposals represent a quality tourism product, in an area of tourism demand
- Recognised potential for rural self-catering units in the region
- Stock of self-catering accommodation in the South East is considerably less than elsewhere in the country despite increase in popularity
- Tourism South East has therefore identified the further development of rural self-catering accommodation as a priority for investment
- Self-catering is emerging as an increasingly popular form of holiday accommodation and appeals to a range of markets
- Visitors using self-catering accommodation represent a high spending market mainly due to average length of stay in an area being longer than hotel and B&B accommodation
- Demand for self-catering accommodation remains buoyant

South Downs National Park (SDNP) – Given the distance between the site and the SDNP (9km) and the lack of any tourism development policy for the SDNP then content for this application to be determined in accordance with your Council's own adopted policies and any material considerations without any further comment from the Authority.

Test Valley Borough Council – No objection

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council – No objection

**Representations:**

Micheldever Parish Council – Strong objection for the following reasons:

- Totally unsuitable location for a significant “Forest Holiday Park” in a small woodland unable to cope with its intended use resulting in unacceptable numbers of people (in the region of 400 people and staff) and vehicle movements. The sheer weight of people within a small area of woodland will result in real environmental, safety and security issues.
- The Parish Council has concerns over the danger of ‘Larkwhistle Farm Road’ (L.W.F.). This is the only access to the holiday site. The junction with the A33 at one end is notoriously dangerous and Forest Holidays have agreed to discourage access from the A303 at the other end of L.W.F. road as it will bring traffic down the Overton Road as F.H. has agreed that the use of junction 8 off the M3 is inadvisable. Recognising the danger of the holiday camp access road, the developer has moved the entrance to the site off a blind bend in the road. This does not negate the danger to cyclist using ‘Larkwhistle Farm Road’. Forest Holidays (F.H.) are actively encouraging cyclists, which is commendable, however L.W.F. road is narrow with bends and dips and used continually by H.G. vehicles, with a significant additional volume of traffic from tractors and trailers (gross weight up to 40 tons) and grain lorries throughout the year. It is important to stress that Larkwhistle Farm Road has no verges and is lined by trees close to the edge of the road surface and therefore is highly dangerous for both cyclists and pedestrians. Undoubtedly this will lead to injury and possibly fatalities.
- The junction of Larkwhistle Farm Road is also a major concern, based on the serious accidents that have occurred there. To access the A33 in the direction of Winchester involves turning right crossing a dual carriageway, as does entering L.W.F. road from the North. Vehicles move at great speed along this stretch of the A33, appearing over the brow of a hill. It has been known in the past for drivers with no local knowledge to end up in the wrong lane facing the oncoming traffic. One last point on this junction; many visitors will be directed by their own sat nav system so will arrive at this most dangerous junction by default no matter what booking advice is given to them by F.H.
- By providing 190 car parking spaces for the cabins within the wood, plus additional public parking, the application recognises the number of vehicles that will have to be accommodated. This is at odds with the assertion that the proximity of the station and the use of a shuttle bus will significantly reduce the use of cars by visitors.
- The A303 is a cause of real concern, given the ease of access for pedestrians. Popham Service Station has an ‘M&S Simply Food’ and confectionary and ice cream sales. Visitors could walk out and along the A303 verge to access the services risking serious injury (vehicles at this point are exiting the motorway at great speed). The Parish Council feel that this is a totally unacceptable risk given the speed and volume of traffic using the A303.
- With our local knowledge of the roads surrounding ‘Black Wood’, Micheldever Parish Council would like it noted that we have repeatedly warned ‘Forest Holidays’ of the unsuitability of these roads for recreational cycling. Despite these warnings ‘Forest Holidays’ have produced a map suggesting several routes into

the surrounding areas, all of which involve either crossing or using these dangerous roads.

- Despite the assertions of the developer, there will be an adverse impact on members of the local community losing the peace and tranquillity of this small area of accessible woodland. This contravenes policies RT.1 and RT.2 of the L.P.R. As stated in the Village Design Statement, 'Open Areas' are defined as tracts of woodland and farmland that provide peace and tranquillity. 'They are a vital feature of the rural environment that serves to create this special identity.' (Village Design Statement ). Black Wood is one of the few types of ancient woodland in Hampshire (a county of downland) and should be protected and not exploited for monetary gain. The impression given in the application that the wood is at present used heavily for logging purposes is factually incorrect and the 'Forestry Commission' have already committed to a plan of mixed woodland improvement regardless of the application.
- The P.C. feels that the size and nature of the wood conflicts with the declared 'Woodland Experience' Forest Holidays say they are seeking to achieve. The restricted site is wedged between the A303 trunk and the nearby motorway. This contrasts sharply with their other existing holiday venues – Scottish Lochs, Yorkshire Moors, remote Cornwall that adjoin National Parks and remote countryside and these have far fewer cabins 35, 59, and 43 with access to vast areas of land. 'Forest Holidays' are creating what amounts to a large 'hotel' in a small confined wood – people using it merely as a base.
- This is an unsuitable choice of site merely reflects the lack of an alternative in the south of England – 'Forest Holidays' list 11 other possible sites all of which are deemed to be unsuitable. Black Wood, which will be unable to accommodate the proposed numbers of visitors, should not be chosen because there are no other suitable alternatives.
- F.H. assert that there will be a programme of visitor management keeping large areas of the wood with very few visitors so that there is little disturbance to, particularly, vertebrates. With the minimal presence of supervision - one site manager - and the predicted number of visitors (400+), on a limited area of woodland, how will this be achieved? There has already been a history of anti-social activity adding to security concerns. Effective visitor management would simply not be achievable with just one site manager attempting to control the movements of the occupants of 98 cabins.
- Given the problems of policing the site the P.C. are concerned that measures to secure the area would impact on local walkers, riders and other woodland users. The security measures that would be needed to safeguard vehicles and property on this site would not be consistent with the rural character of the area.
- The impact on farmland and privately owned property bordering the site is likely to be both considerable and unacceptable. 'Forest Holidays' tries to dismiss the limited rights of way network in the vicinity as 'minor'. It is hardly minor to a rural community already plagued with criminal damage to farmland and buildings, poaching, damage and theft of farming machinery. This is evidenced by the monthly report to the P.C by our local police liaison officers, who are already fully stretched. The limited nature of the site is bound to lead further problems for the police in the wider area. As one local resident observed the SCATS lorry park typically has 60 unattended vehicles at the weekend – an adventure park, directly accessible from the wood.
- The declared aim of Forest Holidays is to provide an opportunity for families to relax and appreciate our beautiful countryside and is commendable. However this will not be achieved at Black Wood which is a totally inappropriate location for this

type of activity. It is for this reason that the P.C. are at one with the local community in opposing the application.

Further comments were received by the Parish Council disputing comments made by the planning agents, Humberts, in their letter of 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010. In summary the Parish Council is concerned that the letter misrepresents the level of opposition within the village. The Parish Council re-iterate their concerns with the potential safety hazard posed by encouraging cyclists use of the dangerous Larkwhistle Farm Road. The Parish Council also confirm that they looked at the re-submission of the application with an open and objective mind and it was readily apparent that nothing of real significance had resulted from the refusal of the previous application to change their passionately held view that this is a totally unsuitable location for holiday cabins.

Steventon Parish Council – Object on the following grounds:

- Proposals would lead to the desecration of wildlife and quiet tranquillity of the wood

The Dever Society – Object to development for the following reasons:

- Adverse impact on Black Wood due to loss of peaceful and secluded area and loss of wildlife habitat
- Inappropriate location and scale of development too large – Black Wood is not similar to the other Forest Enterprise sites as cited in the planning documents. Far smaller site and far more cabins proposed
- Disagree that the site is located adjacent to a network of footpaths
- Development is car focused and day trips likely
- Local road network unsuitable for proposed cyclists

Campaign for the Protection of Rural England – Objection for the following reasons:

- Proposals represent unsuitable and inappropriate development
- The design and scale of development will be intrusive and detrimental to the character of the wood
- Adverse impact on the wood and its biodiversity resulting from light and noise pollution
- Increase in traffic using inadequate local roads
- Lack of Public Rights of Way in the vicinity of the site leading to more people seeking to trespass over privately owned land

The Woodland Trust - We support the concept of a sustainable forest holiday development with the level of interpretation that would allow the users of the site to fully appreciate their surroundings and the wider environment. However, we maintain our objections to this development at this site as, even with the amended format, we do not believe that this development fully delivers on those aims.

56 letters received objecting to the application for the following reasons:

- Proposals would have a detrimental impact on the existing wildlife and ecology of the wood due to a significant increase in the number of visitors proposed
- Proposals would significantly change the peaceful and tranquil character of the wood by introducing a significant level of development
- Proposals would increase the level of traffic using the site and adjacent roads to the detriment of highway safety
- The use of the Larkwhistle Farm Road for cyclists staying at the wood would be

- dangerous given the level of HGV and other traffic using the narrow road
- Proposals should include a cycle path from the site to the railway station
  - No facilities in local area and therefore lead to day trips further afield in car
  - Proposals deny locals opportunity to enjoy wood
  - Too much car parking proposed proving that the development is car dependant
  - Concerns over security as greater number of people could trespass adjoining farm land
  - Concerns that if development unsuccessful then cabins may be sold off separately and possible used as permanent dwellings
  - Increase in rubbish within park
  - Micheldever train station inadequate to meet aspirations of development. Lacks regular service and poor facilities to cater for wheelchairs, buggies and bicycles
  - Limits existing recreation use of site for orienteering and 14 km mountain biking trail
  - Concerns that the “forest experience” cannot be achieved due to the level of development proposed
  - Development amounts to a “well-appointed 500 bed hotel in the middle of the countryside with plentiful car parking”
  - Concern that the wood would become off limits to the general public in the future
  - Challenge advice provided by the Winchester City Head of Strategic Planning and the Hampshire County Council Highways Department

Letter from Steve Brine MP – Recognises his constituents have reservations about the development, including:

- The suitability of the site – they believe that the site is too small and too close to busy roads rendering the development dangerous
- Local road infrastructure inadequate
- Lack of experience of the company – they believe that the company have never managed a facility of this size/scale
- Destruction of popular environmental beauty spot
- High demand for local resources such as policing and car parking
- Existing residents will be disturbed by the influx of new visitors, almost doubling the population of Micheldever Station

11 letters of support received highlighting the following issues:

- Provides excellent opportunity for “eco-tourism” in the South East of England
- Siting has limited environmental impact
- Provides employment opportunities
- Improves facilities of wood
- Aids local facilities including pub
- Confident that the Forestry Commission would not support the proposal if it damaged the wood
- Support use of wood fuel for heating for environmental benefits and provides boost to wood fuel industry in Hampshire
- Support use of local timber in building
- Proposals provide high quality and sustainable development
- Local area benefits from good road and rail network
- Social benefits include educational facility to encourage greater awareness of the wood and habitat
- Presence of more people within site would help deter criminals especially in

evenings and at weekends

Forestry Commission – Clarifying the position of the Forestry Commission in relation to the proposal at Black Wood.

Forest Holidays were selected as a partner by the Forestry Commission following a public tender exercise. Every Forest Holidays scheme is presented to and approved by the England National Committee to make sure that it supports the objectives of the Commission. Only when the ENC are satisfied when this has been achieved, it is approved for submission as a planning application and this was the case for the Black Wood scheme.

Forest Holidays have now established an excellent track record in developing environmentally friendly holiday cabin sites in other sensitive areas within the Forestry Commission estate including the ancient woodland of the Forest of Dean and three National Parks. These are now becoming established, and demonstrate the objectives of minimum disturbance and high integration into the woodland.

The Sylva Foundation – General support.

- Proposal would foster greater environmental awareness
- Educational benefits of the forest trail, interpretation panels, multi-purpose classroom and ranger service
- Wood fuel heating system has both environmental and educational benefits
- Black Wood is of a scale and robustness to support the development, particularly with the amendments and mitigation package proposed

### **Relevant Planning Policy:**

#### South East Plan 2009:

The South East Plan was formally revoked on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010 and therefore no longer forms part of the Development Plan of the District. As a result, its policies are not material to the consideration of planning applications

#### Winchester District Local Plan Review

Policies relating to countryside recreation RT.17 and RT.18, countryside protection policies CE.5, CE.9, CE.11 and CE.28, archaeological policy HE.1, design policies DP.3, DP.4, DP.5, DP.9 and DP.10 and transportation policies T.1, T.2, T.3, T.4 and T5

#### National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements/Practice Guides:

The following PPS's and PPG's are relevant to the development proposal:

- PPS1 – Sustainable Development
- PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Development
- PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment
- PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPG13 – Transport
- PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- PPS22 – Renewable Energy
- PPS24 – Planning and Noise
- PPS25 – Development and Floodrisk

- Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism

Supplementary Planning Guidance  
Micheldever Village Design Statement

Other Planning guidance  
Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan  
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCS): Winchester District  
Winchester District Landscape Assessment

### **Planning Considerations**

The main planning considerations relate to whether the proposed development is appropriate for this site taking into consideration its impact on ecology, landscape, traffic and other material planning considerations.

### Principle of development

The site lies in a countryside location as defined in the adopted Winchester District Local Plan Review (WDLPR), therefore the general principles of development restraint apply to this area. The adopted WDLPR does cater for tourist and leisure facilities in the countryside but highlights in the supporting text that such proposals should generally be small-scale and re-use existing buildings, to ensure that activities are maintained at a level that can be accommodated without harm to the local environment (para 9.57). The WDLPR does not define what level of development is considered “small-scale” either in terms of number of units or size of site. The Head of Strategic Planning has advised that a refusal of permission based solely upon the scale of the proposed development would be difficult to justify. Consequently it is considered that the principle of development is not unacceptable. Although permission should only be granted if the proposal meets the requirements of other planning policies and is acceptable in all other respects.

Para. 9.59 relates to policy RT.18 and clarifies that the development of sites for more permanent holiday accommodation, such as chalets or mobile homes, is less acceptable in the countryside than when compared to touring sites. This is because the accommodation tends to be present all year round and the intrusion into the countryside is, therefore, greater. However the text does then go on to state that:

*“Such development (permanent holiday accommodation) will only be permitted where a site is so well screened from public viewpoints that it is not visible at any time of the year. Only woodland sites are likely to be suitable, subject to the conservation of their forestry, historical and ecological importance”.*

It is therefore clear from policy RT.18 that permanent holiday accommodation located in the countryside is only acceptable if it is totally screened from public viewpoints throughout the year and that the woodland interests of a site including conservation of its forestry, history and ecology are protected. These issues are explored in detail in subsequent paragraphs. Policies CE.5 (Landscape Character), CE.9 (Protection of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation), and CE.11 (Enhanced Sites of Nature Conservation Value) of the WDLPR are relevant in these considerations.

### Emerging Core Strategy

The LDF Core Strategy has reached the ‘Preferred Option’ stage (May 2009). The

Preferred Option seeks to resist development outside built-up areas unless it has an operational need for a countryside location or uses existing buildings (Policy MTRA.3). However, tourism is one of five key economic sectors identified and encouraged in Policy CP.3. The Core Strategy is a strategic document and does not contain any site-specific policies relating to this area.

### Current situation

Existing wood - The wood is currently used for commercial timber harvesting and general woodland management and is owned and managed by the Forestry Commission. The estimated yield is around 2,000 cubic metres of timber per year. The wood is also open to the general public and used mainly for informal leisure activities including walking, dog walking, jogging, horse riding and occasional biking. In addition formal recreational activities take place with the permission of the Forestry Commission including one off events and regular or periodic repeated events such as orienteering, nature conservation and husky training. The applicant has estimated that approximately 10,000 visitors visit the wood on an annual basis. Blackwood, in combination with other woods in the area, is subject to The Micheldever Forest Design Plan (MFDP) 2007-2037 which represents a 30 year vision for the woodlands. The objectives of the plan include:

- Sustainable use and management of the woodlands
- Support and enhance biological diversity
- Protect and enhance special sites for conservation
- Encourage people to appreciate and enjoy in a sustainable way
- Protect and preserve archaeological interest
- Ensure forestry operation take place at a scale and frequency in keeping with the surrounding landscape
- Provide income from the marketing of timber products and provision of recreation facilities
- Provide further opportunity for partnership working

In particular the management strategy for the conservation of the woodland habitat aims to prevent any further loss of the surviving wildlife and historic features that exist within Ancient Woodland sites and for the gradual restoration of native broadleaf woodland to dramatically enhance biodiversity (ref: MFDP 6.0). The restructuring of the woodland edge, with is described in the forest design plan, has already begun as demonstrated by the recent felling of a large area of woodland to the north of the site, bordering the A303. The Forest Design Plan also recognises that Black Wood is highly valued for informal public access.

The Micheldever Parish Village Design Statement (VDS) acknowledges the landscape character of Black Wood in association with the series of woods within the local area known as Stratton Woodlands. The VDS sets out a landscape management strategy to maintain and enhance the distinctive sense of place.

### Current scheme compared to the refused application

The impact of the proposed development on the environmental interests of the site and surrounding area has been comprehensively addressed through the submitted Environmental Statement and other supporting documents. The changes to the current scheme are an attempt to overcome the objections to the earlier refused scheme which



was considered to be unacceptable in terms of landscape, ecological and traffic impact.

The applicant estimates in the Tourism Need and Impact Assessment that approximately 70% of the 98 cabins will be occupied over the course of the year and have estimated that on average there may be 274.4 people sleeping on the site any given night. The applicant accepts that the number of people sleeping on site would change on a seasonal basis. The Need Assessment indicates an additional 29,632 visitors resulting from the development.

The current proposal reduces the number of holiday cabins within the site from 130 cabins, as previously proposed, to 98 cabins (a 25% reduction). Other measures to reduce the impact of the development on the surrounding area have resulted in a redesigned master plan including the relocation and reconfiguration of the cluster groups of cabins into a more compact area of the site (2% of the total area of the site). The submitted plans indicate that there would be no cabins within 50m of the replanted ancient or semi-natural ancient woodland, no cabins sited within areas of potential dormouse habitat, cabins spaced on average 25m apart and the number of two storey cabins reduced from 55 to 15. In addition the central facilities and biomass boiler buildings have been moved away from areas of reptile habitat.

The current proposal also offers a landscape and ecological enhancement package including the creation of conservation rides and clearings, regeneration of the forest floor around cabins, a mowing regime for the central meadow and strategic areas of planting aimed at aiding the woodland diversity and important forest habitat. It is proposed to provide a programme for the implementation and maintenance of these measures through the Black Wood Management Plan (BWMP) to be secured through a S106 agreement.

### Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy CE9 of the WDLPR makes it clear that development likely to harm a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the harm to the nature conservation value of the site. Policy CE9 clarifies that, where development is permitted that may harm a SINC, the Council will need to be satisfied that there is sufficient provision to minimise the damage, and to provide appropriate compensatory measures. The impact of the proposed development on ecology and biodiversity has been assessed and the results are contained within the Ecology and Biodiversity chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES). In addition the ES assesses the impact of the development on the Ancient Woodland (both semi-natural and replanted) within the site.

Natural England, Hampshire County Council Ecology and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HWWT) have assessed the scheme. In addition nature conservation groups including the Woodland Trust and the Slyva Foundation have commented on the proposed scheme. The current scheme is generally supported by the statutory consultees and the other conservation groups with the exception of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, who continue to object to the principle of developing the site for holiday accommodation. HWWT consider that the development would cause direct and indirect harm to the integrity of the SINC and the mitigation proposed is not sufficient to outweigh the harm caused. Although they do recommend a series of conditions to be applied if permission were to be granted. The Woodland Trust is supportive of the concept of a sustainable forest development but have concerns that

the development will not be able to deliver on these aims.

As part of the ES detailed protected species surveys were carried out which has informed the siting, design and extent of the proposed scheme within Black Wood and a package of mitigation measures are proposed and contained within the Black Wood Management Plan. The surveys found that there are some legally protected species within the wood including:

- Common breeding birds occur throughout the wood.
- Dormice have been found to live alongside the A303 in the north end of the wood, and evidence has also been found in the south of the wood.
- A large badger sett in the north of the wood, with smaller setts scattered throughout.
- A large population of slow-worms centred on the central fields, and smaller populations found elsewhere in open sunny areas.
- Bats are present in the wood
- The wood is used by at least one polecat as part of its range.
- A range of woodland invertebrates are present within the wood.

The ES confirms that the development would have both direct (construction and buildings) and indirect effects (recreation activity) on the ecology of the site in relation to the ancient woodland and protected species.

In terms of the direct impact of the development on the ancient woodland the development footprint avoids the area of the wood that contains ancient woodland with a proposed buffer zone of 50m between all buildings and these areas. With the exception of a short stretch of the new access road no new development will take place within 50m of the replanted ancient woodland. This compares to the guidance issued by Natural England which advises that development should be at least 15m from the edge of ancient woodland. As such it is considered that the proposals allow sufficient space between the development and the sensitive woodland and this separation distance exceeds Natural England guidance.

The reduction in number of cabins, the separation space between buildings and their containment within the central area of the site has also helped to reduce the direct impact of the development on the ecology of the wood. Furthermore measures secured in the proposed Black Wood Management Plan are aimed to improve the biodiversity of the woodland as a whole including the ancient, replanted, and non-ancient parts. In terms of the protected species contained within the site the central building and boiler house have been moved away from potential reptile habitat to an area much closer to the central point of the cabin clusters. Natural England is satisfied that the development should not have a negative impact on any protected species and in particular the dormouse population of Black Wood, subject to the proposed mitigation measures being secured. On the above basis it is therefore considered that the development would not have a direct harmful impact on the ecological interests of the site.

The ES also assesses the indirect damage and disturbance to the ancient woodland caused by the increase in visitors associated with the development. The ES finds that the reduction in numbers of visitors to the wood, when compared to the previous scheme, will further reduce the likelihood of trampling damage to the woodland. The ES concludes that there is still likely to be a minor adverse impact from visitor pressures which will need to be mitigated with improved woodland management, which should restore the structural diversity of the woodland. The purpose of the Black Wood

Management Plan (BWMP) is to set out management objectives and proposals for the wood which will ensure the long term protection and enhancement of the woodland's amenity, ecology, landscape and other features. The BWMP will also allow for improved public access and enjoyment of the wood, the management of the new holiday development, the continuation of normal forestry operations over the remainder of the wood and additional management measures to enhance the woodland.

Detailed comments have been received from Hampshire County Council's Ecologist in relation to the impact of the development on the Ancient Woodland and Protected Species. The County Ecologist acknowledges that the proposal has evolved, with a reduction in scale and a more robust package of mitigation, compensation and enhancement is now proposed. The County Ecologist confirms that the mitigation package incorporates habitat and visitor management and provides confidence in the extent of works proposed and that the measures seek to minimise the impacts and provide an overall enhancement to the site mainly by securing appropriate management of all of the land.

The County Ecologist clarifies the relationship between the existing Micheldever Forest Design Plan (MFDP) and the set of mitigation measures proposed through the BWMP. The County Ecologist confirms that strategic management of the woodland is already set out in the existing MFDP. The County Ecologist acknowledges that this explains the aspirations for ongoing works to be carried out by the Forestry Commission and that the implementation is dependent upon funding being available. The County Ecologist confirms that through the revised application and what is described in the BWMP, it is apparent that the development would secure:

- works specifically relating to the development within the footprint of the physical development;
- targeted habitat works and measures for particular species in defined wider areas of the site (beyond what is proposed by the MFDP); and also
- the aspirational works throughout the woodland as set out in the MFDP (in what is termed the 'general woodland' in the ES and Management Plan).

Therefore the County Ecologist agrees that the proposed development should enable the management of the whole woodland (as set out in the BWMP that accompanies the S106). Subject to negotiations between the parties in relation to the detail of the proposed BWMP, including resolution on issues such as flexibility and time scale, then the County Ecologist raises no objection the proposed development.

It has been confirmed by the County Ecologist and Natural England that a European Protected Species licence will be required in relation to the development impacts on the dormouse population contained within the wood as the proposed entrance track will affect the dormouse population. Under the Habitats Regulations the Council needs to be satisfied that the three derogation tests of those regulations (shown below) will be met.

1. *the consented operation must be for 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment';*
2. *there must be 'no satisfactory alternative'; and*

3. *the action authorised 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'.*

The ES addresses these tests and concludes:

1. Overriding public need - There is an overriding public need for the development primarily for social and economic reasons as demonstrated in the submitted needs assessment which looks at the social demand for holiday cabins in South-East England and the economic benefit of providing the cabins.
2. Alternatives - The ES considers all the woodlands owned or managed by the Forestry Commission in Hampshire (excluding the New Forest National Park and sensitive coastal areas) as possibilities for the development. The ES concludes that Black Wood best meets the essential and desirable criteria for the proposed development and the alternative woods are not satisfactory for a variety of reasons, such as soil type, high nature conservation constraint or poor vehicular access.
3. Favourable conservation status - The ES confirms that the area of dormouse habitat to be lost is approximately 0.05ha, with a further 0.25ha isolated from adjacent woodland, but re-linked to adjacent woodland with a rope bridge. The ES confirms that the Black Wood Management Plan would secure 11.6ha of semi-natural woodland restoration from plantation forestry with enrichment planting of shrubs to suit dormice and 5.7ha of shrub enrichment planting to naturally regenerate woodland which was felled in 2007. The ES states that this management is in the northern part of the site close to the existing population centre of dormice in the wood. The ES confirms that this makes a total of 17.3ha of new habitat for dormice as a result of the development, over fifty times the habitat to be lost or isolated.

It is considered that sufficient justification has been given to meet the first two tests in relation to demonstrating an overriding need for the development and looking at alternatives to using Black Wood for the development. The County Ecologist is satisfied that the mitigation measures proposed are sufficient to meet test 3 of the Habitat Regulations. Furthermore Natural England is satisfied that the development should not have a negative impact on any protected species and in particular the dormouse population of Black Wood, subject to the proposed mitigation measures being secured.

It is clear from the above analysis that the current planning application is accompanied with a comprehensive assessment of the potential impact of the development on the ecological interests of this sensitive site. The scale, extent and siting of the development, and the mitigation measures, have been adjusted from the previous refused scheme to take into account the special ecological interests of the site and the scheme is now considered acceptable and in accordance with policy CE9 of the WDLPR.

#### Landscape Impact

The application is supported with a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment examining the character, condition, sensitivity, magnitude of impact and potential mitigation measures appropriate for the development. The assessment examines the impact of the

development from within a 3.5km radius from within and outside of the site. It is accepted that the local landscape has a strong rural character with a robust framework of mature woodlands. The proposed development does not significantly affect the woodland edge surrounding the site as it is proposed to retain a minimum 70-100m buffer of undeveloped woodland around the perimeter of the site. It is also proposed to provide additional shrub planting on the western side of the site and off-site (within applicant's ownership) planting to the northern edge of the site to further reinforce the woodland edge and reduce potential visibility of the scheme from outside of the site.

The position of the group of clusters of cabins and associated infrastructure is considered sufficiently contained within the site so as not to be visually intrusive from viewpoints outside of the site and in this respect the development is considered not to have a wider adverse visual impact on the surrounding area subject to the enhanced planting and recognition of a need for the woodland buffer zone.

Notwithstanding the limited visual impact of the development from outside of the confines of the wood, the visual impact of the development from within the existing wood and its effect on the existing seclusion and tranquillity experienced from within the wood is also considered an important factor. The ES for the current proposal recognises that the proposed development:

*“could have an impact on the character and the quality of the woodland itself and it is important to consider the impact of the scheme on the woodland as experienced by informal recreational users using the private network of footpaths and commercial logging tracks”* (para. 3.3.33).

It was concluded on the previous planning application that the visual impact of 130 cabins would have been substantial and detract from the special qualities of the woodland as a whole due to the numbers of cabins, their size, height, roof materials and concentration within the wood.

The impact of the proposed development on the internal landscape of the wood is influenced by a number of factors including the siting and layout of the development and the number, concentration, size and height of the proposed cabins and also the loss of existing trees. The landscape impact of the proposed development has also been assessed in relation to the construction and implementation phase.

The Environmental Statement finds that there would be a significant impact on the character of the wood during the implementation phase, but that this would reduce as regeneration becomes effective and that in time the impact would reduce to an acceptable level. The assessment took into consideration:

- the impact of built forms within the previously undeveloped wood;
- the extent of felling required to widen and create new rides and to accommodate the cabins;
- the loss of tranquillity within the wood;
- the raw appearance of cleared vegetation and new materials;
- the sensitive design of the cabins and other infrastructure;
- the retention and lack of disturbance in significant areas of the woodland;
- the extent of new mitigation planting proposed, including strengthening of existing planting to improve screening properties;
- the creation of new conservation rides, with associated regenerating vegetation;
- the woodland enhancement arising from the proposed management regimes.

The Council's Landscape Officer has assessed the planning application and supporting ES and considers that the revised scheme has implemented significant positive changes to the master plan which now fulfils landscape design objectives (ref. Design and Access Statement 3.6) and addresses the main issues and concerns on landscape character and visual impact, in particular:

- Reduction of cabins from 130no to 98no.
- Reduction of 4 bed cabins from 20 to 15
- Average distance of 25m between cabins
- Reduction of cluster sizes which are now 7-21 no per cluster
- Reduction of parking spaces from 278 to 174.
- Improved locations and treatment of cabins, central building and surrounds; wood chip boiler
- Reduced area for new tracks within wider woodland
- Co-ordination of management objectives and proposals into one 'stand alone' long term management plan that will be implemented as part of a Section 106 agreement, commencing at pre-construction stage.

It is considered that the visual impact of the proposed development from within the wood itself has been carefully addressed through the current application and measures have been put in place to reduce the impact of the development on the special qualities of the wood to an acceptable level. It is acknowledged that the development would alter users experience from within the wood but that the proposals now represent a sensitive approach to the development of the site and in this respect is considered acceptable. The submitted Black Wood Management Plan is to be secured through a S106 Legal Agreement and should ensure that the measures proposed to protect and enhance the landscape setting of Black Wood can be delivered by this development. On this basis it is now considered that the overall visual impact of the development on the surrounding environment, both from within and outside of the wood, is acceptable and accords with policies RT.18 and CE.5 of the WDLPR.

#### Transportation and highway safety

The application is supported with a Transport Assessment compiled by ARUP dated March 2010 which has been assessed by Hampshire County Council Highways (HCC Highways) and the Highways Agency who do not raise an objection to the proposed development. The site is located approximately 2km to the east of Micheldever Station, approximately 12km north of Winchester and 8km to the southwest of Basingstoke close to junction 8 of the M3. The site is located within 2km of a railway station and the closest village of Micheldever Station contains a village pub and recreation area. A new access is proposed which would be located approximately 25m to the south of the existing access onto the Larkwhistle Farm Road.

As part of the sustainability package the proposals include measures to enhance the accessibility of the site by more sustainable methods of transportation, including a shuttle bus from the railway station, and the encouragement of cycling/walking within the site through the provision of dedicated cycle ways/pathways and facilities for cycle hire and parking. HCC Highways consider that the on-site facilities, including the on-site shop and cafe to serve the large element of "self-catering" customers, should reduce the need for off-site shopping travel. The nature of the development does also limit the number of sites that are suitable and in sustainability terms this site is considered better

than others assessed by Forest Holidays, due to its location close to the train station. The provision of the shuttle service, cycle hire service and on site leisure, shopping and cafe facilities and travel plan are proposed as part of the S106 legal agreement which has been agreed in principle with HCC Highways.

It is proposed that the site access is relocated 25 metres to the south in order to achieve maximum visibility. HCC Highways confirm that the proposed access will improve the safety of the junction and is therefore supported. The works will be subject to the County Council's design check process and it will be necessary for the developer to enter into a Section 278 Agreement with the County Council. Appropriately worded conditions are recommended to ensure the highway works are implemented (Conditions 13 and 14 relate).

The Transport Assessment submitted with the application considers the likely impact of the proposed development on the local highway network and has been assessed by HCC Highways and the Highways Agency who do not object to the proposals. In terms of likely traffic generation the Transport Assessment uses survey data collected from Forest Holiday's Keldy Forest Holidays site for comparison purposes. The Keldy site consists of 59 cabins and a 'trip-per-cabin' approach has been provided to establish the likely traffic generation of the Micheldever site. This method of assessment is considered robust by the HCC Highways given the similarities of the two sites. The data suggests that during the morning development peak the development site would generate 55 two-way movements, in the evening development peak 45 movements will be generated, whilst 50 movements are expected to occur during the Saturday peak. Forest Holidays intend to promote the A33 route to visitors attending the site in order to minimise traffic impact on Micheldever Station village and therefore it has been assumed that 75% of visitors will arrive via the A33. HCC Highways confirm that it is expected that the A33 may see an increase of 6.1% during the morning peak and 3.6% during the evening peak hour, and accept that whilst this indicates a notable increase, the existing flows on the A33 are relatively low due to its parallel course with the M3. HCC Highways confirm that modelling of the A33/Larkwhistle Farm Road junction has revealed that there are no existing capacity issues at this location and this junction is able to operate within capacity inclusive of the traffic generated by the development. HCC Highways consider that the A33 can accommodate the development traffic satisfactorily and do not object to the proposed development on traffic impact grounds.

Concern has been expressed by the Parish Council and others that the proposed development would encourage inexperienced cyclists, including small children, to use the Larkwhistle Farm Road which is considered unsuitable for such use. It is intended that the shuttle bus facility will have a cycle rack and will transport visitors with their bikes to off-site locations where required. HCC Highways have confirmed that they will be responsible for the approval and monitoring of the Travel Plan, and will not support the promotion of Larkwhistle Farm Road or the A33 for inexperienced cyclists. Mindful of this, and the fact that accident data obtained to cover the last 3 years reveals no recorded injury accidents at the junction of Larkwhistle Farm Road and the A33, it is difficult to demonstrate that sufficient harm will occur in highway safety terms. As a result it would be hard to sustain a highway reason for refusal.

### Archaeology

The historic value of the ancient woodland is recognised through its designation as a SINC and the issues surrounding the impact of the development on the SINC has been

considered above. Archaeology is among a number of issues which have been assessed as part of an ES and detailed in Section 3.6 of the ES submitted by the applicant in connection with this application, as are historic woodland features (Section 3.5). A detailed baseline study (archaeological desk-based assessment) and a report on the results of an archaeological evaluation have also been submitted as part of the ES (Appendix 8).

- Gifford, 2008, 'Blackwood Forest, Micheldever, Hampshire: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment'. Report No. 14783/R01Arch
- John Moore Heritage Services, December 2008, 'Interim Report on an Archaeological Test Evaluation in Black Wood, Micheldever Parish, Hampshire'

The desk-based assessment highlights the archaeological potential of the application site. It was known that the area of the proposed development did not contain elements of well-preserved earthworks which are present within other areas of Black Wood; however no detailed information on the impacts of the proposed development on any buried archaeological remains was known. Consequently, an archaeological evaluation was commissioned by the applicant in order to enable a fuller assessment of the impacts of the proposed development to be made. As detailed in the ES the archaeological evaluation has identified that significant erosion, due to ploughing, has occurred across that part of Black Wood replanted in the 1930s, within which the proposed holiday park facilities are located. Furthermore few buried archaeological features were identified during the evaluation.

Given the findings of the archaeological evaluation it is not considered that archaeology is a significant constraint at this site. Further archaeological monitoring and recording in mitigation of the impacts of the proposed development on archaeological remains could be secured via a planning condition (condition 15).

#### Crime, security and safety issues

Concerns from local residents have been raised over security and safety issues resulting from the increased use of the site by members of the public and that inadequate measures would be put in place to prevent trespass on adjoining land and anti-social behaviour. Clarification has been provided by the applicant in relation to the management of the site. A 24 hour ranger would live on site and additional staff would help to manage the facilities. The existing use of the wood is accessible to the general public and there is currently no on-site residential presence offers no on-site management occupation to provide a security. Whilst the levels of visitors and holiday makers would be significantly higher than the existing low key use it is considered that sufficient measures could be put in place to manage security and safety to an acceptable level.

#### Sustainability measures

The proposals incorporate a number of sustainable development measures aimed at reducing the impact of the development on the environment. These measures include:

- Provision of a wood chip boiler system to heat the cabins and central facilities building.
- Sourcing wood fuel locally
- Provision of a shuttle bus between the site and Micheldever Railway Station
- Segregated on-site waste management policy to ensure high level of recycling
- Highly insulated cabins and central buildings



- Use of Forest Stewardship Council sourced timber
- Thermally controlled underfloor heating system to ensure efficient use of energy
- Natural ventilation using the high volume to promote passive stack effect through high level openings
- Use of energy efficient lighting and appliances, installed as standard
- Prefabrication construction methods to limit waste and disruption to woodland

Through these measures it is proposed to achieve BREEAM excellent standards for the proposed development. These measures are considered to reduce the level of impact of the development on the environment and it is recommended that the package of measures will be secured through condition 17.

### Residential amenity

The wood is located in a fairly isolated location and the closest residential properties are located adjacent to the A33 which border the south east boundary of the wood. The closest building to the neighbouring properties relates to the cabins located within cluster 3 of the development which would be located approximately 700m from the south east boundary of the wood. Given the high level of intervening tree screening it is considered that the impact of the presence of the buildings within the site on residential neighbours would be negligible.

The proposals will increase the number of visitors using the site. Typical activities within the site would include walking and cycling and this would take place within the existing track network within the wood. Some of the tracks to be used are located adjacent to the residential properties to the south east but it is not considered that the types of activities associated with the development and the numbers of visitors within any one area would cause significant disturbance to be harmful to residential amenity. Furthermore the Black Wood Management Plan would help ensure careful and appropriate visitor management for the site.

### Benefits of the proposed scheme

It is acknowledged that the proposed development would bring about benefits to the local economy through increased tourism and spending in the local area and that the proposed scheme is considered to satisfy a particular market in the region for high quality self-catering accommodation. It is noted that the proposed scheme has the support of Tourism South East, the Hampshire County Council Tourism office, the City Council's Head of Cultural Services and many local businesses in relation to the tourism and economic benefits associated with the scheme. The associated benefits include:

- Responds to a growing visitor trend towards high end and environmentally-friendly accommodation;
- Reinforces the District's commitment to 'green' tourism;
- Reinforces the District's positioning for rural holidays and activities in a market for 'outdoor' holidays that continues to grow;
- Increases options for affordable family holidays in the district, which are at present poorly provided for by the existing range of visitor accommodation;
- Provides a modern and well thought-out visitor product which will support the economy and provide local jobs at a time when the economic downturn may lead to job losses in our rural areas;
- Encourages outdoor activities and countryside access for local residents in support of local health and well-being objectives.

- Educational benefits through the creation of wider public access to the forest and the provision of the “forest experience” room.

These benefits alone would not justify granting planning permission. However, for the reasons explained in this report, it is considered the impact of the development would be acceptable in environmental terms.

### Conclusion

It is considered that the revised scheme addresses the reasons for refusal raised on the previous application in relation to its ecological, landscape and traffic implications. The revised scheme reduces the number of holiday cabins proposed from 130 to 98 and the supporting information has demonstrated a thorough understanding of the ecological and landscape constraints of the site that has informed the master plan.

In addition to the reduction in the number of cabins, careful consideration has been given to the sensitive siting and spacing of the cabins and associated infrastructure in relation to the landscape and ecological interests of the site. Overall it is considered that the proposed development can be satisfactorily accommodated within this woodland site without detriment to the special landscape, ecological and historic importance of the wood. The proposal therefore accords with policies RT17, RT18 and CE9 of the WDLPR and is in line with the objectives set out in PPS4, PPS7 and PPS9.

It has also been adequately demonstrated that the proposed development will not adversely effect highway safety in relation to the increased traffic generation associated with the site and that adequate measures are in place to encourage more sustainable modes of transport wherever possible. In this regard the proposals accord with policies T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5 of the WDLPR and is in line with the objectives of PPG13.

Furthermore the scheme offers wider social and economic benefits to the local area in relation to providing a high quality, ecologically driven development and educational experience that meets an identified gap in the tourism market in this area.

It is recognised that the acceptability of the development is closely associated with the package of mitigation measures proposed through the Black Wood Management Plan and the Travel Plan. In this respect a S106 Legal Agreement will be entered into between the developer and the Council to ensure these measures are delivered.

### Planning Obligations/Agreements

In seeking the planning obligation to secure the implementation of the mitigation measures contained within the Black Wood Management Plan and Travel Plan and the financial contributions for sustainable transport, the Local Planning Authority has had regard to the tests laid down in Circular 05/2005 which requires the obligations to be necessary; relevant to planning; directly related to the proposed development; fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and reasonable in all other respects.

### **Recommendation**

**That subject to the applicant agreeing to enter into an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act to secure the following matters to the satisfaction of the Head of Legal Services:**

1. The agreement, implementation and monitoring of landscape and ecological management measures as contained within the Black Wood Management Plan.
2. Provision of a Travel Plan with shuttle bus between the site and the railway station at Micheldever Station
3. A Travel Plan bond of £60,100 and associated assessment and monitoring fees, inclusive of provision for a further contribution to Hampshire County Council should the Travel Plan measures not be fully implemented.
4. A financial contribution of £16,950 for sustainable transport measures as agreed with Hampshire County Council.
5. Provision of a facilities building to include cycle hire, leisure, shop and café facilities

**(Note: If the Legal Agreement is not completed within 6 months then the application may be refused without further reference to Committee)**

**application PERMITTED subject to the following condition(s):**

### **Conditions**

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2 The proposed accommodation shall not be used other than for holiday purposes and shall not be used for any individual's main or sole residential dwelling. The holiday accommodation shall not be occupied for a period exceeding 4 weeks for any single letting, shall not be occupied for more than 3 times per year by the same occupier, and there shall be no return within 4 weeks by the same occupier. A register of all occupiers, detailing dates, names and usual addresses shall be maintained by the owner and shall be kept up to date and available for inspection at all reasonable hours by officers of the Council.

Reason: The site is located within an area where permission for permanent residential accommodation would not normally be granted and therefore the Local Planning Authority wishes to retain control over the use of the site.

3 No more than 98 holiday units shall be on site at any one time. The site shall not be used for camping or caravanning whatsoever.

Reason: In order to prevent the establishing of additional tourist accommodation which may have an additional impact on the environmental interests of the site.

4 The occupation of the manager's apartment hereby permitted shall be limited to a person solely or mainly working in connection with the holiday park and any resident partner or dependant.

Reason: The site is located within an area where permission for independent residential accommodation would not normally be granted and therefore the Local Planning Authority wishes to retain control over the use of the approved residential accommodation

5 No development shall take place until details and samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the cabins, central facilities building, wood chip boiler building, maintenance yard buildings, electricity sub-station hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development presents a satisfactory appearance in the interests of the amenities of the area.

6 No development shall take place until details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. These details shall include the following, as relevant:

- existing and proposed finished levels or contours;
- means of enclosure;
- car parking layout;
- other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;
- hardsurfacing materials;
- minor artefacts and structures (eg. street furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting etc);
- proposed and existing functional services above and below ground (e.g. drainage, power, communications cables, pipelines etc, including lines, manholes, supports etc.)
- retained historic landscape features and proposals for restoration.

Soft landscape details shall include the following as relevant:

- planting plans:
- written specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment:
- schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate:
- retained areas of grassland cover, scrub, hedgerow and woodland:
- manner and treatment of watercourses, ditches and banks:
- implementation programme:

Reason: To improve the appearance of the site in the interests of visual amenity.

7 All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out before the use hereby permitted is commenced and prior to the completion of the development or in accordance with the programme agreed with the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of five years after planting any tree or plant is removed, dies or becomes, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged, defective or diseased another tree or plant of the same species and

size as that originally approved shall be planted at the same place, within the next planting season, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a reasonable standard of landscape in accordance with the approved designs.

8 A landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for Black Wood shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development or any phase of the development, whichever is the sooner, for its permitted use. The landscape management plan shall be carried out in accordance with the details hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure that due regard is paid to the continuing enhancement and maintenance of amenity afforded by landscape features of communal, public, nature conservation and historic significance.

9 Prior to the commencement of development details of all signage and interpretation, site furniture and features, and play area shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These works shall be implemented in full before the site is brought into formal public use by either the occupation of the first holiday unit or the opening of the public car park (whichever the sooner)

Reason: To achieve an acceptable balance between the provision of necessary apparatus to serve the site whilst limiting the proliferation of unnecessary clutter within this sensitive woodland.

10 All construction and pre-construction preparation works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Construction Management Plan produced by Holder Mathias Architects dated April 2010 and the approved Black Wood Management Plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the protection of the ecological and landscape interests of the site.

11. No noisy activities associated with construction shall take place outside the following hours, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

Monday – Friday 08:00 -18:00

Saturday 08:00 – 13:00

No work shall take place on Sundays or public holidays

Reason: To protect the amenity of the area.

12 Development shall cease on site if, during any stage of the works, unexpected ground conditions or materials which suggest potential contamination are encountered, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Works shall not recommence before a site assessment has been undertaken and details of the findings along with details of any remedial action required (including timing provision for implementation), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be completed other than in accordance with the

approved details. NB - potentially contaminated ground conditions include infilled ground, visual evidence of contamination or materials with an unusual odour or appearance.

Reason: In order to secure satisfactory development and in the interests of the safety and amenity of future occupants.

13 No development shall commence until a plan of the improved access to the site with Larkwhistle Farm Road has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety

14 No development shall commence until the improved access to the site with Larkwhistle Farm Road has been constructed to the satisfaction of the local planning authority and in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety

15. No development, or site preparation prior to development which has any effect on disturbing or altering the level or composition of the land, shall take place within the site until the applicant (or their agents or successors in title) has secured and implemented a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation to be submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological interest of the site is properly safeguarded and recorded.

16. Development shall not begin until a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall also include details of how the scheme shall be maintained and managed after completion. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, to improve and protect water quality, improve habitat and amenity, and ensure future maintenance of the surface water drainage system.

17. The development hereby permitted shall be built, implemented and operated in accordance with the approved Sustainability Design Document compiled by Arup and dated 21st April 2010 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to provide a development that minimises energy and water consumption in the interests of the environment.

18. Prior to the commencement of development (including any site preparation works) details of the nature, location and phasing of tree protection barriers shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved tree protection barriers shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed phasing. The Arboricultural Officer shall be informed once protective measures have been installed so that the

Construction Exclusion Zone (CEZ) can be inspected and deemed appropriate.  
Telephone 01962 848317.

Reason: To ensure protection and long term viability of retained trees and to minimise impact of construction activity

19. Prior to the commencement of development a lighting management strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved lighting management strategy unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the landscape and ecological interests of the site.

**Informatives:**

1 This permission is granted for the following reasons:

The development is in accordance with the Policies and Proposals of the Development Plan set out below, and other material considerations do not have sufficient weight to justify a refusal of the application. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should therefore be granted.

2 The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-

Winchester District Local Plan Review

Policies relating to countryside recreation RT.17 and RT.18, countryside protection policies CE.5, CE.9, CE.11 and CE.28, archaeological policy HE.1, design policies DP.3, DP.4, DP.5, DP.9 and DP.10 and transportation policies T.1, T.2, T.3, T.4 and T5

**Appendix A** – extract of minutes of the meeting of the Planning Development Control Committee held 16 September 2010

**Appendix B** – extract of Update sheet presented to the meeting of the Planning Development Control Committee held 16 September 2010

**EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF  
PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

**16 September 2010**

Attendance:

Councillors:

Johnston (Chairman) (P)

Evans (P)  
Fall  
Pearce (P)

Huxstep (P)  
Jeffs (P)  
Lipscomb (P)  
Tait (P)

Deputy Members

Councillor Mitchell (Standing Deputy for Councillor Fall)  
Councillor Bell

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1. **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SCHEDULE**  
[\(Report PDC866 refers\)](#)

Councillor Lipscomb declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests in respect of Item 1 as he was a member of the Dever Society, which had commented on the application. However, he had taken no part in the Society's consideration of the item and he spoke and voted thereon. He was also a member of the Camping and Caravanning Club, which was a trading partner of the applicant, Forest Holidays, but he had had no dealings with either of the parties in respect of the application and he therefore spoke and voted thereon.

Also in respect of Item 1, Councillor Bell declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as she was a member of, and was the Council's appointed representative to, the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) who had commented on the application. However, she had taken no part in the CPRE's consideration of the item and she spoke and voted thereon.

In the public participation part of the meeting, the following items were discussed:

**Item 1: Black Wood, Bradley, Micheldever – Case Number 10/01077/FUL**

The Committee agreed that determination of the application should be deferred to a Special Meeting of the Planning Development Control, to be held on 11 October 2010. The Committee made this decision before any public participation or the officer's presentation. Therefore, the Special Meeting would receive a full presentation from the officer and public participation. The



Committee decided to refer this item to a Special Meeting as Members did not consider it possible to determine the application without first visiting the site to assess the scale and impact of the proposals in the local area, including road junctions, notably that with the A33. It was noted that this meeting would commence with a site visit for members of the Committee only, followed by a public meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That, in respect of Item 1 (Black Wood, Bradley, Micheldever) the application be deferred for determination at a Special Meeting of the Planning Development Control Committee to be held on 11 October 2010.

Chairman

**WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL -Development Control Committee 16<sup>th</sup> September 2010**

**UPDATE**

The information set out below includes details relating to public speaking and any change in circumstances and/or additional information received between the Committee reports being written and 5pm on the Tuesday prior to the Committee meeting.

Item No	Ref No	Address	Recommendation
1	10/01077/FUL	Blackwood, Bradley Micheldever	PERMISSION
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Agenda Page: 3</b></p> <p><b>Officer Presenting: Nick Parker</b></p> <p><b>Update – Black Wood</b></p> <p><u>Correction:</u></p> <p>A copy of the decision notice for the refused application 09/00186/FUL, and referred to as Appendix B in the Committee Report, is reproduced below as it was not appended to the Committee Report:</p> <p><u>Amendment to recommendation:</u></p> <p>Remove clause 5 of the S106 which requires the provision of a facilities building to include cycle hire, leisure, shop and café facilities.</p> <p>Replace clause 5 of the S106 with condition 20 that reads:</p> <p>20 - The cabins hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the facilities building (comprising reception, shop, café, WC’s, forest experience room, managers accommodation, cycle hire, back office and storage) is constructed.</p> <p>Reason: In order to ensure the provision of an essential element of the scheme that would aid in providing a self-contained, sustainable and secure development.</p> <p><u>Representations:</u></p> <p>Letter of objection raising the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The slight reduction in numbers of chalets makes no difference to original objections. This is a monstrous proposal which should be rejected.</li> <li>• I intend to write to the MP questioning the appropriateness of this sort of entrepreneurial digression from the remit of the Forestry Commission to grow trees and generate/preserve woodland. I believe that the Government should be directing that this is not the purpose for which the Forestry Commission was set up and funded.</li> </ul>			

Letter from The Dever Society to Councillors highlighting key questions that are relevant to making a decision on the application:

1 - Is the latest application significantly different from the previous proposal refused in May 2009? No

- The reduction in number and type of cabins and slight repositioning does not overcome reason for refusal 01 of the earlier permission
- Increase in visitors would be substantial and harmful
- Concerns over future increases
- The proposals would have an adverse and irreversible impact on the character of Black Wood and its wildlife and the latest proposals do not overcome the reason for refusal 02 of the earlier permission

2 – Would the development be anything other than a car-borne destination in the countryside? No

- No doubt that vast majority of visitors to the resort would arrive by car and use their cars to visit other places in the area during their stay
- Likely to be utilised as a hotel in the countryside and not a self-contained destination as the applicant claims

3 – Could those staying at Black Wood safely access the surrounding countryside for recreational walking and cycling? No

- Access to Rights of Way in the area all involve either crossing the A33 and A303 dual carriageways or travelling along Larkwhistle Farm Road
- Inadequate measures proposed to overcome access problems
- Larkwhistle Farm Road is totally unsuitable for walking and for families cycling, and we are extremely concerned that if this development goes ahead, the result will be fatal road accidents (photos included showing the frequency and dangerous nature of the traffic on the road)

We urge you to reject this planning application when it comes before you.

## **Appendix B**

Mr Martin Taylor  
Pavilion View

19 New Road  
Brighton  
BN1 1UF

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)

REFUSAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION

Case No: 09/00186/FUL  
Ref No: W21368  
Grid Ref: 453642 143105

**Forest holiday park comprising 130 wooden holiday cabins, facilities building with reception, shop, cafe, forest experience room, managers accommodation, cycle hire, WC, back office and storage, maintenance yard, biomass boiler room, sewerage plant and electricity sub-station, access tracks, walking and cycling routes, cycle stands and car parking, and enhanced woodland management plan**

**Black Wood, Bradley, Basingstoke Road, Micheldever, Hampshire**

In pursuance of its powers under the above mentioned Act, the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, hereby REFUSES permission for the above development in accordance with the plans and particulars submitted with your application received on 2 February 2009.

The reason(s) for the decision of the Local Planning Authority to refuse permission is/are specified hereunder:-

- 1 By virtue of the scale of the proposed development, the existing landscape setting of the woodland would be significantly harmed by the proposed development. Due to the numbers of cabins, their size, height, roof materials and concentration within the wood their visual impact from within the forest would be substantial and detract from the special qualities of the woodland as a whole. In addition the significant increase in recreation use of the woodland by occupants of the cabins and general visitors would significantly reduce the existing tranquillity and seclusion experienced from within the woodland. The proposed development is therefore contrary to policies RT.18 and CE.5 of the WDLPR and contrary to the objectives of PPS1 and PPS7.
- 2 The extent and scale of proposed scheme is of a level and significance that would cause significant direct and indirect harm to the ecology and biodiversity of the site through the loss of habitat within the SINC designation and deterioration of the ancient semi-natural woodland and replanted ancient woodland. The proposals are considered to demonstrate inadequate mitigation to compensate for the loss of ecological interests and are not considered to go above and beyond the woodland management and enhancement measures secured through the adopted Forest Design Plan. The development is therefore contrary to policy CE.9 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review and contrary to the objectives of PPS9.
- 3 In the absence of a legal agreement or other appropriate legal mechanism to secure a travel plan, a shuttle bus link to the railway station, on-site cycle hire facility, on-site leisure, shopping and cafe facilities, the development would result in an unacceptable increase in the number and length of car journeys where alternative means of travel would otherwise have

had less environmental impact, which would be to the detriment of the environment and the locality and is contrary to policies T.1 and T.5 of the adopted WDLPR and contrary to the aims of PPG13.

4 The proposed cycleway works as show on submitted drawing fig. 4.1 would encourage cyclists to cross the A33 at a dangerous point and would pose a danger to pedestrians and cyclists that would be likely to cause undue interference with the safety and convenience of existing users of the highway and is therefore contrary to policy T.2 of the adopted WDLPR.

**Informatives:**

1. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-

Winchester District Local Plan Review

Policies relating to countryside recreation RT.17 and RT.18, countryside protection policies CE.5, CE.9, CE.11 and CE.28, archaeological policy HE.11, design policies DP.3, DP.4, DP.5, DP.6 and DP.10 and transportation policies T.1, T.2, T.3 and T.4

South East Plan (adopted May 2009)

CC1 (sustainable development), CC4 (sustainable design and construction), CC6 (sustainable communities and character of the environment), CC8 (green infrastructure), NRM1 (sustainable water resources and ground water quality), NRM2 (water quality), NRM5 (conservation and improvement of biodiversity), NMR7 (woodlands), C4 (landscape and countryside management), C6 (countryside access and Rights of Way management), TR2 (rural tourism), TSR5 (tourist accommodation), S1 (supporting healthy communities), T7 (rural transport)

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:

The following PPS's and PPG's are relevant to the development proposal:

- PPS1 – Sustainable development
- PPS7 – Sustainable development in rural areas
- PPS9 – Biodiversity and geological conservation
- PPG13 – Transport
- PPG4 – Industrial, commercial development and small firms
- PPG15 – Planning and the historic environment
- PPG16 – Archaeology and planning
- PPG17 – Planning for open space, sport and recreation
- PPS22 – Renewable energy
- PPS24 – Planning and noise
- PPS25 – Development and floodrisk

*Simon Finch* BSc (Hons) Lond, DipTP, MSc, MRTPI

Head of Planning Management

18 May 2009