

Broads Local Plan – March Bite Size Piece
Report by Planning Policy Officer

Summary: This report introduces the following topic for the Publication version of the Local Plan: BeWILDerwood. There is also a general update on the Local Plan.

Recommendation: Members' views are requested.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report introduces the following topic for the Publication version of the Local Plan: BeWILDerwood.
- 1.2 Members' views are requested to inform the draft policy approach in the Publication version of the Local plan.
- 1.3 It is important to note that this is not necessarily the final text or approach, but is part of the development of the final text. There could be other considerations that come to light between now and the final version being presented to Planning Committee in April 2017.

2.0 BeWILDerwood policy

- 2.1 This is a new policy on this important tourist attraction located in the Broads, in a sensitive environment. The policy has been the subject of discussion with the operators at BeWILDerwood and is attached at Appendix 1.

3.0 General update

- 3.1 The consultation stage on the Preferred Options has now been completed. Officers are logging the comments received and will respond to these comments. A report will come to Planning Committee in due course so members can see the comments. This report will highlight some particular issues that will need discussing and agreement regarding the way forward.
- 3.2 The evidence base has been commissioned and is ongoing:
 - i) Gypsy, Traveller, Show People, Caravan and Houseboat need assessment – underway and due spring 2017
 - ii) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – brief being finalised and set to start spring 2017. Set to be reported towards end of summer. Modelling issues

means that not all of the Broads will be modelled as part of this work, but discussions with the Environment Agency are ongoing with regards to modelling the remaining area.

- iii) Strategic Housing Market Assessment update – this is the study that produces the Objectively Assessed Housing Need. It is being updated to reflect recent data releases relating to population growth projections. To be completed in spring 2017
- iv) Economy study – being produced in house. Due in the spring 2017.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Generally officer time in producing these policies and any associated guidance as well as in using the policies to determine planning applications.

Background papers: None

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – BeWILDerwood policy

Policy x: BeWILDerwood Adventure Park

The retention of the park as identified on the policies map, as an outdoor adventure and education facility will be supported.

Ancillary development to meet the operational needs of the park, alterations to existing development and modest new development that supports the outdoor adventure and education facility will only be acceptable if the following considerations are assessed and appropriately addressed:

- a) impacts on individual trees and the woodland as a whole;
- b) impacts on protected species and habitats;
- c) impacts on amenity of adjoining occupiers including from changes in activities on site and opening times;
- d) traffic, transport, access and parking;
- e) flood risk and water quality;
- f) ongoing management of the activities of the park to protect the trees, woodland, habitats and species; and,
- g) Impacts on visual amenity and landscape character of the area.

The outdoor adventure and education facilities shall remain within the existing main facility area (as identified on **X** map)

Appropriate complementary diversification necessary to support the existing park may be acceptable, subject to consideration of the above points and other policies in the Local Plan and NPPF.

The policies map identifies three main areas:

- i) The main area of the outdoor adventure and education park;
- ii) The maturing woodland area is protected as a visual and amenity buffer. Small scale park related activities which do not cause adverse impact may be supported in this area; and,
- iii) The car parking and service areas will be retained in such a use.

CONSTRAINTS & FEATURES

- Previous surveys have found BAP invertebrates, bats, breeding birds, otter, and water voles.
- There are large areas of wet woodland.
- Flood risk has changed over time. Previous FRAs have found parts of the area in Flood Zone 2 and 3. Much more is affected when considering Climate Change allowance.
- The Three Rivers Way walking and cycle route passes by the entrance to BeWILDerwood.

- The site is also home to The Norfolk Broads Cycling Centre.

Reasoned Justification

BeWILDerwood Adventure Park is one of the major attractions in the Broads. There are Treehouses, zip wires, storytelling, boat trips and marsh walks and the BeWILDerwood education programmes offer cross-curricular activities.

Being such a unique and popular attraction, in a special setting, a policy is deemed necessary to manage change in a way that seeks to protect and enhance the trees, species and amenity of nearby and adjoining occupiers. The park has continued to develop incrementally since first opening, but the trees and habitat are sensitive to the activities of the park. A policy would also help the local community understand what may/may not happen in future.

The Park is required to be within the existing woodland because of visual, landscape and amenity impact.

The Horning Road access shall remain the primary access, with internal circulation on the track permitted by 2012/0038 and 2016/0063 and limited emergency and delivery access via Long Lane in accordance with 2012/0038 and 2016/0063. Any development which would result in an increase in visitor numbers should be served by appropriate sustainable transport options. Additional demands for on-site parking, if acceptable with regards traffic and highway safety, would need to be carefully designed to integrate into the landscape and protect the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

All proposed development within the park should be assessed in line with BS5837:2012 - Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction (or any successor standard). The policy seeks to ensure the management of the existing development and any future development takes account of the following impacts on trees:

- Reduction in tree cover
- Compaction of roots and associated impact on tree vigour
- Severance of roots
- Impact damage
- Tree protection during construction
- Comprehensive and sustainable woodland management

Turning to habitats around the site:

- Wet Woodland: The wet woodland habitat is the most important and species rich of the habitats on the site. Any future development should avoid adverse impacts to wet woodland habitat and associated plant and invertebrate species.
- Grassland: used by resident breeding barn owls for hunting and should remain available and managed as such.
- Woodland: The woodland on the site supports many species including bats, birds and invertebrates, and some reptile potential such as grass snake. Any further

development should take into account protected species mitigation and enhancement.

The policy identifies three main area of the Adventure Park.

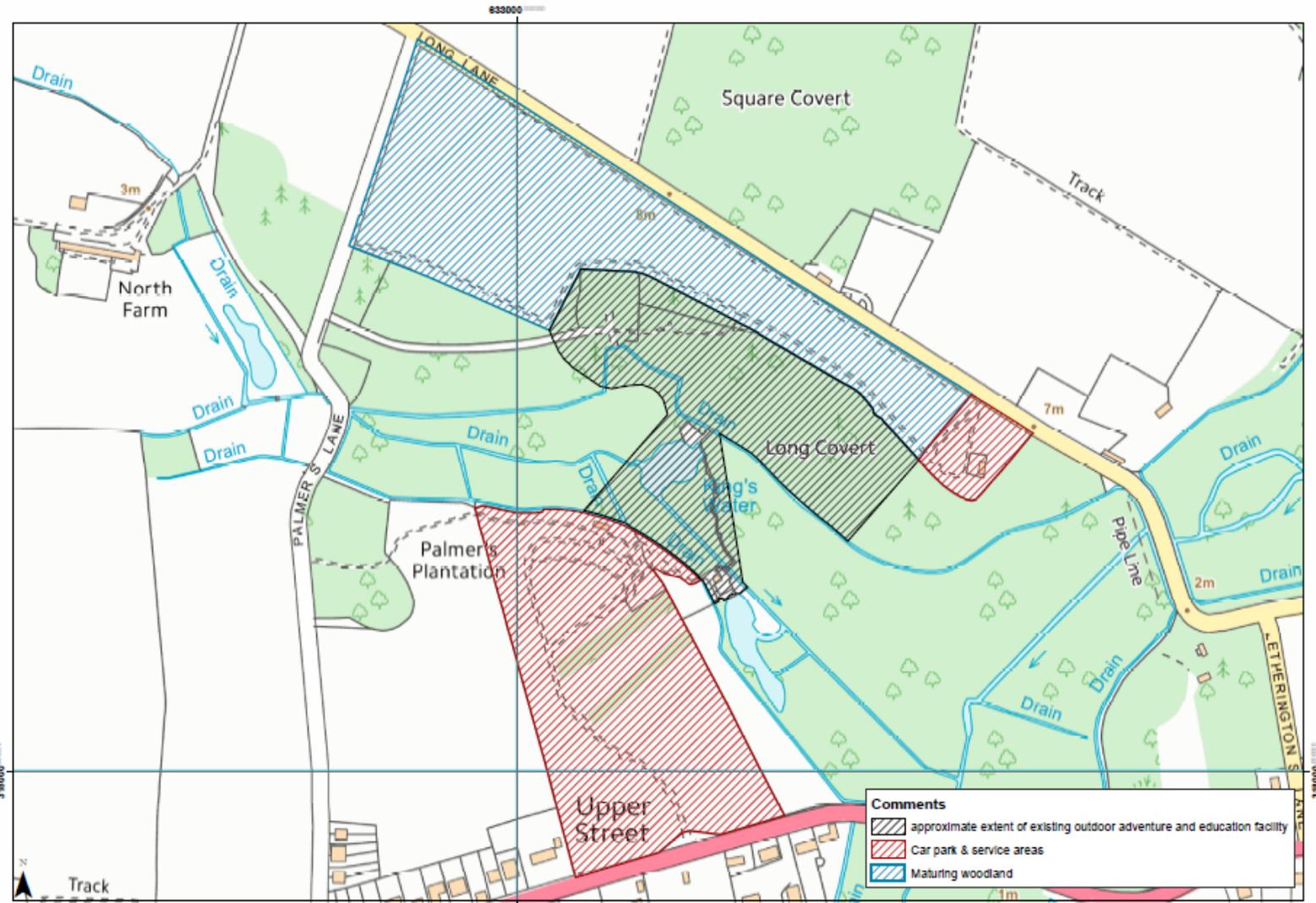
- i) The main area of the adventure park. In this area retention and alteration of the existing play structures and other features will be broadly acceptable. Some modest new development may also be appropriate. All proposals will be assessed against criterion a-g above.
- ii) The woodland area
- iii) The maturing woodland area is protected as a visual and amenity buffer. Small scale park related activities which do not cause adverse impact may be supported in this area; and
- iv) The car parking and service areas.

The car parking lies outside these areas but is an important component of the development and there are dedicated service areas. It would be appropriate to retain these uses in these areas.

The emphasis of this policy is in line with BeWILDerwood's own Environment Policy¹ which states that the Park was designed '*to have a light environmental impact and to carry a sustainable approach throughout every aspect of the business*'.

¹ <http://www.bewilderwood.co.uk/environment-policy>

BEWILDERWOOD



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The Broads Authority Boundary dataset is a representation indicating the location of the executive boundary at 1:10000. The definitive paper map is held by the Broads Authority which shows the legal boundary at 1:10000.