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Ms Clare Whitehead
Case Officer
Development Management
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
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OX15 4AA

14th December 2019

Dear Madam

Ref: Great Lakes UK Ltd – Planning Application No: 19/02550/F

As a resident of Chesterton, I am writing to you to express my deep concerns about the proposal to develop a resort and theme park in my village. The proposal is not in accordance with the local development plan and there are no material considerations that would warrant planning permission being granted. Further objections focus predominantly around the subject of its sustainability and suitability in a small Oxfordshire village.

A development of this scale, with the sole aim of attracting large numbers of people, poses an over-bearing presence in terms of the resort's 500,000 sq. ft. of buildings. The vast 900 space car park and 500 hotel rooms planned would mean that, at capacity, the number of hotel guests and staff would equal the whole village population, with the potential to inflict more than double the traffic movements on small local lanes.

The proposed site is beside the M40, one of busiest motorways in the UK which already deposits an unsustainable amount of traffic onto the A34, the A41, Bicester town and its surrounding villages. Any amendments to the local road infrastructure to cater for traffic bound for the resort would only add to local air, noise and light pollution and cause further damage to the environment through loss of greenbelt land, the tarmac over swathes of countryside and loss of valuable hedgerows. In turn this would lead to a higher water table and risk of local flooding, not to mention the constant threat to our precious but dwindling local wildlife.

Sadly, in Chesterton we already hear the constant noise from the M40 and A41. As a result of the Kingsmere development and Vendee Drive, the village now sits like an island, surrounded by noise from these busy roads. The resort would generate a substantial increase in vehicle movements through Chesterton, especially by those travelling to and from the M40 and Bicester Village, adding to the noise, disruption and driving hazards on our country lanes. There are other significant proposals that are either awaiting decision (expansion of Bicester Sports Association site in Chesterton) or have been approved (Kingsmere housing and retail park, Bicester Gateway and Bicester Heritage) and the Great Wolf proposal would simply swamp an area already struggling to cope with current accelerated development.

Approached by B-roads and pretty green lanes, Chesterton is a typical English village situated on a Roman road, with its own conservation area, two greens, ancient lanes and pathways, numerous historical and/or listed buildings of note and a 12th century parish church. Although subject in recent years to two new modern developments, there remains a feeling of neighbourly cohesion among its residents, who have chosen to live in a rural area rather than a town in order to enjoy the quiet and privacy this offers. We accept the trade-off of not having a bus service or local shop in return for a slower, more peaceful way of life. A large influx of holiday-makers, thrill-seekers or tourists in the area would completely destroy the very nature of the quiet lifestyle we seek. Furthermore, a four-

storey, 500 room hotel, in whatever style it is built, its accompanying 84 foot high waterpark hangar and huge carpark are all completely at odds with the local architectural style. Great Wolf Lodges all appear to be built in a very specific all-American style of architecture which would neither integrate nor blend in remotely with the existing Bicester Hotel & Spa and most importantly, Chesterton, other surrounding villages and the English countryside.

My overriding concerns about these proposals are the lack of sustainability and considerable ecological impact. The plans encompass a vast area which is currently green space and golf fairways within an area of green belt land. The combination of the car park, the hotel and the waterpark hangar together demands an enormous footprint, all of which would be under concrete. The design makes no attempt at eco-efficiency and construction alone would demand colossal resources in terms of unsustainable raw materials, water, energy, etc. The damage to green space, flora and fauna would be irreversible with these vital elements of the rural landscape disappearing forever. This is tragic, especially in this day and age when we are striving to reverse these threats to the natural world.

Aside from ecologically unsustainability, the resort would be unsustainable in its supply chain and staffing. Most of the 600 jobs on offer would be low-paid and unskilled bar and domestic shift work, which would not support local people with a wage that meets the high cost of living in this area. Local businesses already struggle to get the staff they require, with local unemployment being at record lows. There are already two large hotels planned for Bicester – Holiday Inn Express (149 rooms) and Bicester Heritage Hotel (344 rooms). Add these to the 500 rooms planned by Great Wolf and it begs the question of who is going to staff these establishments. It is highly unlikely that all the staff requirements would be met locally meaning even more 24-hour, 7-day-a-week vehicle movements by commuters and potential overcrowding on public transport. The claim that the resort would be good for employment is an empty promise, as we don't need additional employment in the area, especially if it is low paid work. Furthermore, the proposal is contrary to CDC's strategic aim of prioritising Knowledge Based business investment, thereby offering employment that supports the 'Knowledge Economy'.

A claim was made that the resort would source all its food from local farms however I am very sceptical about this and regard it as merely a sweetener to pacify the local people during the proposal stages. Considering the likely ingredients required for menus at an American-owned, family-oriented visitor attraction (pizzas, hot dogs, burgers, etc.) it would not make commercial sense for Great Wolf to purchase supplies from local farmers as their produce and raw ingredients clearly would not meet these needs; it's much more likely that frozen and chilled food would be bought in bulk from contract food processors, manufacturers and catering suppliers to the hotel trade. Therefore, the demands of Great Wolf's supply chain, for its food at least, would do nothing whatsoever to enhance the local economy or help our farming community.

Although the development may garner some support from Bicester town's residents who have been tempted with the questionable idea of day passes, they do not live in Chesterton. I urge you to take *my* objections and those of my fellow villagers very seriously. Our objections are not simply a case of "Not in my back yard" but "Not in *anyone's* back yard" because the proposals for this resort are totally out of scale, completely unsuitable for a rural location and would have a hugely negative impact on the people who live here.

Yours faithfully

