

Project: Great Wolf Lodge, Chesterton
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Motion has been instructed by Great Wolf Resorts (the parent company of Great Wolf Lodge) to advise on highways and transport matters associated with development proposals for a new family resort at a site in Chesterton near Bicester.
- 1.2 A planning application was submitted to Cherwell District Council (CDC) in November 2019 (Planning Ref: 19/02550/F) for:
- "Redevelopment of part of golf course to provide new leisure resort (sui generis) incorporating waterpark, family entertainment centre, hotel, conferencing facilities and restaurants with associated access, parking and landscaping"*
- 1.3 Following submission of the planning application comments have been provided by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in a letter dated 10th January 2020 in respect of the submitted planning application. A subsequent meeting was held between Motion and Officers of OCC on 4th February 2020 to discuss the matters raised within their consultation response and confirm the matters which have been agreed.
- 1.4 This Technical Note has been prepared in response to the comments from the OCC and provides further details in relation to the sustainability of the site, shuttle bus provision, walking and cycling improvements, signage strategy and the effect of the development proposals on the wider highway network. In addition, this Technical Note provides a brief summary of the matters which have been agreed.

2.0 Accessibility and Site Location

- 2.1 OCC have confirmed that they have no 'in principle' objection regarding the sustainability of the site location, subject to agreement on appropriate obligations or contributions to enhance the accessibility of the site, as outlined in this Technical Note, and as follows:
- ▶ A contribution for a public bus service or obligation for a shuttle bus service, to be agreed;
 - ▶ Enhancements to the pedestrian routes adjacent to the and connections to an existing PRoW, to be agreed; and,
 - ▶ A contribution to wider cycle improvements between the site and Bicester, to be agreed.
- 2.2 The OCC response letter requests a contribution towards the provision of a public bus service between the site and Bicester. OCC have subsequently confirmed that their request for a contribution towards a public bus service would be in place of the shuttle bus service proposed by the applicant and OCC are not seeking for both the public bus service and the shuttle bus to be provided.
- 2.3 It is evident that there is no 'in principle' objection relating to the sustainable location of the site and that discussions relate solely to whether a contribution towards a public bus service or an obligation to provide a dedicated shuttle bus service is the most appropriate method of provide a bus connection to the site.

Shuttle Bus Service

- 2.4 The Transport Assessment submitted alongside the planning applications provides details of shuttle bus services that would be provided for both staff and guests to connect the site with both Bicester train stations and Bicester town centre. It is envisaged that the guest shuttle bus service would provide a direct service between the Bicester stations and the resort, in order to provide the most convenient connection for guests. The staff shuttle bus service will likely call at the local train and bus stations, the town centre and local centres around Bicester in order to provide a range of pick-up and drop-off points for staff. Motion consider that the provision of dedicated shuttle bus services is the most appropriate and beneficial method of delivering bus connectivity to the site.

2.5 Further to submission of the planning application, it is now proposed that the guest shuttle bus services would operate an hourly frequency between the site and Bicester, consistent with the frequency of the public bus service requested by OCC. The proposed staff shuttle bus service would be timed to meet the start/finish of main shift times at Great Wolf to ensure its convenience for staff and would operate at up to an hourly frequency during shift changeover times. In addition, it is proposed the shuttle bus services associated with the site will be secured in perpetuity, through a S106 obligation.

2.6 In order to provide a comparison of the benefits associated with the shuttle bus service proposed by the applicant and public bus service contribution requested by OCC, Table 2.1 considers the benefits of the two options based on the following criteria:

- ▶ Timescale;
- ▶ Frequency;
- ▶ Flexibility; and
- ▶ Inter-connectivity.

	Shuttle Bus Service Obligation	Public Bus Service Contribution
Timescale	Secured in perpetuity by S106 obligation	The requested contribution would fund the service for 10 years. Continued operation would be subject to viability
Frequency	Hourly Frequency for Guests & Up to Hourly Frequency for Staff (during shift changeovers)	Hourly Frequency
Flexibility	The shuttle bus service would be operated by Great Wolf and will operate flexibly to meet the needs of guests and staff	The public bus service would operate to run a fixed timetable and therefore would not provide flexibility
Inter-connectivity	The S106 would include an obligation for Great Wolf to liaise with OCC via a forum to agree the routing of shuttle bus service and potential connections with other developments in Bicester	The final route of the service would be determined by OCC and could potentially connect with other developments in Bicester

Table 2.1 Shuttle Bus and Public Bus Comparison

2.7 Table 2.1 demonstrates that the proposed shuttle bus service either provides a comparable service to the public bus requested by OCC or provides has significant benefits as detailed below;

- ▶ The shuttle bus services can be secured in perpetuity under a S106 obligation whilst the S106 contribution requested by OCC would cover the cost of the public bus service for a 10-year period only. At the end of the 10-year funded period there is no guarantee the public bus service would continue to operate;
- ▶ The public service requested by OCC would operate at an hourly frequency. In comparison, the proposed shuttle bus services would operate an hourly shuttle service for guests and with an additional up to hourly service for staff during shift changeover times and therefore the proposed shuttle bus service would provide a more frequent of service than the requested public bus service between the development and Bicester;
- ▶ The proposed shuttle bus services would be operated by Great Wolf and, as such, the service can be flexible to accommodate the needs of guests and staff. The shuttle bus service can be timed to meet arriving and departing trains at Bicester Village or Bicester North stations. In addition, should a train be delayed on arrival to the station the shuttle bus service has the flexibility to wait for arriving guests. In comparison, the public bus service would operate to a fixed timetable and therefore does not provide flexibility to meet guest/ staff needs. There is the potential for guests to need to wait at the stations for significant periods of time, should the timetable not link to the train timetable or should a train be delayed;

- ▶ Both of the proposed shuttle bus services would be available to local residents of Chesterton; and,
 - ▶ OCC have advised that the public bus service could also route via other developments coming forward within the Bicester area and could provide greater inter-connectivity between sites. Motion have confirmed that the S106 obligation associated with the shuttle bus service can include provision for OCC to be included within a forum relating to the routing of the shuttle bus service.
- 2.8 OCC have advised that one of their primary reasons for requesting a S106 contribution to deliver a public bus service, is to seek to achieve wider public benefit from the bus service rather than a service focused on the Great Wolf development. Motion would highlight that the delivery of wider public benefits is not a planning matter and securing a planning obligation on that basis would not meet the necessary planning tests.
- 2.9 On the basis of the above analysis and comparison, it is concluded that the proposed shuttle bus service provides the most appropriate and beneficial approach to promoting sustainable travel and bus connectivity between the site and Bicester train station and the town centre.
- 2.10 It is therefore proposed that an obligation securing the proposed shuttle bus services, in perpetuity, is included within the Heads of Terms of the S106 agreement and that details of the obligation can be agreed following determination of the planning application and this would include a requirement for ongoing collaboration with OCC in regard to the shuttle bus service.

Public Rights of Way and Pedestrian/ Cycle Improvements

- 2.11 The Transport Assessment submitted alongside the planning application include details of proposals to divert the existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) 161/06 and the provision of a new shared foot/cycleway from the site access to Chesterton.
- 2.12 Following discussions with OCC it is now proposed that an additional stretch of footway of circa 370 metres in length is provided along the A4095 west of the site access junction, either side of the motorway overbridge, to connect with PRoW 161/11 to the west. This provides a betterment to the existing connection between PRoW 161/06 and PRoW 161/11, providing pedestrians with a footway where they are currently required to walk within the grass verge to connect between PRoW 161/06 and PRoW 161/11. The proposed extended footway is shown on Drawing 1803047-03, attached at [Appendix A](#).
- 2.13 In addition, it is proposed to provide a new section of footway of circa 400 metres in length on Green Lane, either side of its junction with The Hale, from the southern end of PRoW 161/06 east to connect with the existing footway within Chesterton. The proposal provides a betterment over existing facilities for pedestrians providing a footway connection from the southern end of PRoW 161/06 to Chesterton, where pedestrians are currently required to walk within the grass verge. The proposed footway is shown on Drawing 1803047-15, attached at [Appendix B](#).
- 2.14 It is noted that the response from OCC to the planning application requests that consideration be given to the provision of a circular 'trim trail' PRoW route within the western part site. Motion consider that the 'trim trail' route suggested by OCC does not provide any betterment with regard access to the site or the connectivity of the site to the wider footway network. The route suggested by OCC would run close to the proposed service yard and the carriageway of the M40 and would therefore not provide an attractive route to pedestrians. Furthermore, there are significant level differences between the site and the carriageway of the A4095 at the western boundary of the site which would prevent any connection between the trim trail route and the footway on the A4095 in this area. OCC have subsequently advised that they are no longer wish to pursue the circular route within the western part of the site.
- 2.15 It is concluded that the proposed shared foot/cycleway and the proposed footway, as detailed at paragraphs 2.11 to 2.13 above, provide appropriate linkage between the application site and the existing footway and PRoW network and enhance connectivity between PRoW 161/06, 161/11 and Chesterton to the betterment of local residents and future users of the proposed development.

- 2.16 The proposals include the diversion of part of existing PRoW 161/06 through a landscaped section of the proposed development. The applicant is satisfied to take responsibility of the maintenance of the diverted stretch of PRoW within the application site and OCC have agreed with this approach. On the basis that the applicant will take responsibility for the future maintenance of the PRoW, no S106 contribution to the future maintenance is required.
- 2.17 Great Wolf is committed to cycle improvements in the local area and are liaising OCC about the potential for providing a reasonable contribution towards local cycle improvement, subject to meeting the appropriate planning tests as set out in paragraph 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3.0 Effect on Local Highway Network

- 3.1 Motion are liaising with OCC regarding the effect of the development proposals on the local highway network, in particular, at the B430/ B4030 crossroads in Middleton Stoney. Motion maintain the position that the development proposals will not result in a significant change in vehicle movements at this junction. Notwithstanding this, further work is being undertaken in relation to the effect of the development at this junction and this could include further consideration of the signage strategy for the development.

4.0 Signage Strategy

- 4.1 OCC have advised that in order for the signage strategy for Great Wolf to be integrated into the wider signage within Bicester it is considered that this is addressed via S106 contribution to be paid by the developer towards OCCs plans for integrated signage across Bicester.
- 4.2 The applicant is satisfied to accept the requirement for a S106 contribution towards the signage strategy. It is proposed that an obligation for a contribution to the signage strategy is included within the Heads of Terms of the S106 agreement which can be agreed following determine of the planning application. Motion will continue to liaise with OCC regarding the design and cost of the works and details of the obligation

5.0 Other Matters

- 5.1 At a meeting with OCC dated 4 February 2020, Officers confirmed that there are no other matters associated with the current planning application for which they have any objections or concerns. On that basis, it is concluded that is assumed that all other matters relating to the planning application are agreed between the applicant and OCC.
- 5.2 A Framework Travel Plan was submitted alongside the planning application. OCC have requested that a final Travel Plan be secured by Planning Condition and that no updates to the submitted document are required at this time. The applicant is satisfied to accept a Planning Condition in relation to a final Travel Plan.
- 5.3 A Framework Delivery and Servicing Management Plan (DSMP) was submitted alongside the planning application. OCC have requested that a final DSMP be secured by Planning Condition and that no updates to the submitted document are required at this time. The applicant is satisfied to accept a Planning Condition in relation to a final DSMP.
- 5.4 OCC have raised no comments or objection to the Framework Construction Management Plan submitted alongside the planning application. The applicant is satisfied to accept a Planning Condition in relation to the submission of a final CTMP.

6.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 Motion has been instructed by Great Wolf Resorts (the parent company of Great Wolf Lodge) to advise on highways and transport matters associated with development proposals for a new family resort at a site in Chesterton near Bicester.
- 6.2 A planning application was submitted to Cherwell District Council (CDC) in November 2019 (Planning Ref: 19/02550/F) for:
- “Redevelopment of part of golf course to provide new leisure resort (sui generis) incorporating waterpark, family entertainment centre, hotel, conferencing facilities and restaurants with associated access, parking and landscaping”*
- 6.3 The Technical Note has demonstrated that:
- ▶ OCC have confirmed that they have no ‘in principle’ objection regarding the sustainability of the site location, subject to agreement on appropriate obligations or contributions to enhance the accessibility of the site, as outlined in this Technical Note;
 - ▶ It is considered that the proposed shuttle bus service provides the most appropriate and beneficial approach to promoting sustainable travel and bus connectivity between the site and Bicester train station and the town centre. It is therefore proposed that an obligation securing the proposed shuttle bus services, in perpetuity, is included within the Heads of Terms of the S106 agreement;
 - ▶ Additional improvements are now proposed to the pedestrian infrastructure in the vicinity of the site. It is concluded that the development provides a betterment over existing conditions for pedestrians and cyclists with improved connectivity between PRoW 161/06, 161/11 and Chesterton to the betterment of access to the site for future users of the proposed development;
 - ▶ The applicant is satisfied to accept the requirement for a S106 contribution towards a signage strategy for the development. It is proposed that an obligation for a contribution to the signage strategy is included within the Heads Of Terms of the S106 agreement and Motion will continue to liaise with OCC regarding the design and cost of the works; and,
 - ▶ Officers confirmed that there are no other matters associated with the current planning application for which they have any objections or concerns. On that basis, it is concluded that is assumed that all other matters relating to the planning application are agreed between the applicant and OCC.
- 6.4 This Technical Note has demonstrated that the development proposals accord with the principles of sustainable development set out within the NPPF and would not result in a severe impact on the highway network. It is concluded that the matters raised by OCC, in their consultation response to the planning application, can be dealt with through appropriate planning conditions and S106 obligations and there are no reasons why the current planning application should be resisted or refused on sustainability, transport or highways grounds.

Appendix A

Drawing 1803047-03



Legend:

Highway Boundary



84 North Street
Guildford
Surrey
GU1 4AU

Cargo Works
1-2 Hatfields
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SE1 9PG

T: 01483 531 300

T: 020 8065 5208

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Project:
Great Wolf Resort, Bicester

Title:
Proposed Access Arrangement

Scale: 1:1250 (@ A3)

Notes:

Drawing:
1803047-03

Revision:
F

Appendix B

Drawing 1803047-15



Legend:

Highway Boundary



84 North Street
Guildford
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T: 01483 531 300

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Project:
Great Wolf Resort, Bicester

Title:
Proposed Footway

Scale: 1:1000 (@ A3)

Notes:

Drawing:
1803047-15

Revision:
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