

# **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S PRE APPLICATION ADVICE ON THE RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

**District:** Cherwell

**Application No:** 20/CH0003/Preapp

**Proposal:** Advise on highways and transport matters associated with development proposals for a new family resort at a site in Chesterton near Bicester.

**Location:** B430/ B4030 Middleton Stoney junction, Bicester.

**Response date:** 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020

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## **Purpose of document**

This report sets out Oxfordshire County Council's view on the proposal.

This report contains officer advice in the form of a strategic response (if appropriate) and technical team response(s).

## **Where possible these comments contain:**

- Advice on the feasibility of the location.
- Advice on what to include in a full application.
- Advice on the need for any pre-application surveying to be undertaken.

## **Disclaimer**

Please note this advice represents the opinion of an Officer(s) of the Council only, which is given entirely without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application which may be submitted.

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**Application No: 20/CH0003/Preapp**

**Location:** B430/ B4030 Middleton Stoney junction, Bicester.

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## **Transport Development Control**

As you may be aware, Oxfordshire County Council is a consultee of the local planning authority and provides advice on the likely transport and highways impact of development where necessary.

It should be noted that the advice below represents the informal opinion of an Officer of the Council only, which is given entirely without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application, which may be submitted. Nevertheless, the comments are given in good faith and fairly reflect an opinion at the time of drafting given the information submitted.

### **Background:**

The request for advice follows the refusal of planning permission (application no. 19/02550/F) for a leisure resort incorporating a hotel, waterpark, family entertainment centre and other facilities on part of the existing golf course at Chesterton. The proposed development is commonly referred to as the Great Wolf Resort. Planning permission was refused for six reasons in total; Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) had objected on transport and drainage grounds.

Motion (the Transport Consultants acting on behalf of the applicant) have instigated this advice procedure to seek resolution of the transport objection prior to an impending appeal against the refusal decision. As the objection was based on the operation of the signalised junction at Middleton Stoney, proposals relating to a modified layout have been put forward for review by OCC.

### **Detailed comments:**

Technical Note N09, titled "Highways Matters", was submitted with the application for advice and concludes with four matters on which confirmation is sought from OCC. These are covered individually in the sections below.

- I. Confirmation that OCC have no objection to the Great Wolf development on the basis of accessibility or sustainability, subject to the package of sustainable transport improvements and measures detailed*

This matter is extensively covered in the two OCC Single Responses (19/02550/F, dated 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and 19/02550/F-2 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March). The following section was included in the latter response:

#### **Accessibility and Site Location**

While the county council has not specifically identified an objection to the application on the basis of the site's location and accessibility, the response did highlight significant concerns regarding the accessibility of the site and its location.

The county council has identified requests for obligations and contributions to improve the accessibility of the site by sustainable transport modes should the development be granted planning permission. However, concern remains over the site's location which dictates that car travel to the site will remain the primary mode of travel to the site, even with the improvements identified.

OCC's position on this matter remains unchanged.

- II. Confirmation that the only junction for which OCC had an outstanding objection, at the time of determination of the planning application, is the B430/ B4030 Middleton Stoney junction and that OCC are satisfied that the development will not have a material traffic impact on any other junction on the local highway network*

The reason for an OCC transport objection is given in the Single Responses as:

- Severe congestion at the Middleton Stoney signalised junction will be exacerbated by the additional trips generated by the proposed development. This is contrary to paragraphs 103, 108 and 109 of the NPPF, Cherwell Local Plan Policy SLE4 and Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 4 Policy 17

It is confirmed that the B430 / B4030 junction at Middleton Stoney remains the only junction that is the subject of an OCC objection.

- III. Confirmation that, based on the proposed mitigation works at the B430/B4030 and the additional analysis presented in this Note, OCC are satisfied that the development will not have a material traffic impact on the operation of the junction and their previous objection on the grounds of traffic impact at this junction has been resolved*

For the purpose of clarity, it is noted that OCC have considered not only this Technical Note (and the accompanying LinSig analysis), but also the follow-up exchange of emails and the virtual meeting. An updated Technical Note (N09 – Technical Note on Highways – 2020-09-04 (Final)) was submitted on 4<sup>th</sup> September.

The Technical Note presents a proposed junction layout drawing titled “Indicative Mitigation Works”, drg. no. 1803047-17 Rev. B, along with a LinSig analysis of the junction under two scenarios – with and without the Great Wolf Resort development. There is also a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA).

OCC conducted an initial review and reverted (19 August) with comments on the LinSig modelling and a request for Designer's comments on the RSA. Following a resubmission of the analysis it was noticed that an incorrect matrix of intergreen timings had been incorporated, so the correct matrix (as currently used at the junction) was supplied and used. It is accepted by OCC that the final LinSig analysis accurately models the two layouts. Output

from this analysis is included in the email from David Lewis (3 September) and formed the basis for discussion at the virtual meeting on 4 September.

The Middleton Stoney junction is, and will be further, impacted by large-scale development of the Local Plan allocation site at Heyford Park. There are two principal planning applications with potential mitigation schemes affecting the junction, as follows:

- 1) 10/01642/OUT (referred to as “Phase 1”). This application was approved with an indicative mitigation scheme as shown on the Woods Hardwick drawing no. HEYF/5/582 C. This scheme has not been implemented and OCC currently has some safety concerns, particularly in regard to the ghosted right-turn filter lane from the southbound B430 to the westbound B4030. It is recognised that if a bus gate were to be installed (see below) then the number of vehicles making this manoeuvre would be substantially reduced.
- 2) 18/00825/HYBRID (referred to as “Phase 2”). This application has not yet been considered by the Local Planning Authority Planning Committee. There has been significant discussion regarding traffic impacts and potential mitigation schemes for local villages, including Middleton Stoney. The scheme accepted in principle by OCC as mitigation for the impact of the development on Middleton Stoney includes a two-way bus gate on the road between Heyford Park and Middleton Stoney which would substantially reduce vehicle flows on the western arm but will increase flows on the northern arm. There would also be an HGV restriction on the eastern arm. LinSig analysis of the various potential mitigation measures has been undertaken by Peter Brett Associates (now Stantec) and reported in their Technical Note 024 Rev. D, which is included in the Transport Assessment Addendum.

The Motion analysis used in this request for advice takes the flows from the PBA document and applies them to the Phase 1 mitigation scheme, as a baseline position for comparison. This is considered to be reasonable. However, the AM and PM flows are taken from different mitigation scenarios so are not equivalent. AM flows (the accepted worst case) are taken from a run with the bus gate in place, whereas the PM flows are from a different scenario. This is apparent from the Baseline Flows for Heyford Road illustrated in Figures 3.2 and 3.3 of the Technical Note.

Output for the baseline case is different from the PBA analysis due to the revised intergreen matrix being used, as described above.

The second Motion analysis is modelled on the layout proposal as shown in drg. no. 1803047-17 Rev. B, with the Great Wolf Resort peak hour generated traffic being added to the flows.

Output from the two AM analyses are extracted from the Technical Note and shown below for convenience:

Approach	AM Peak	
	DoS	MMQ
B430 (south)	107.3%	107
B4030 (east)	106.7%	52
B430 (north)	75.0%	11
B4030 (west)	86.7%	5

Table 5.1 B430/B4030 Signalised Crossroad – 2026 Baseline with Heyford Park Phase 1 & 2

Approach	AM Peak	
	DoS	MMQ
B430 (south)	108.7%	117
B4030 (east)	107.8%	56
B430 (north) (ahead, left)	37.5%	9
B430 (north) (right)	75.0%	2
B4030 (west)	86.7%	5

Table 5.2 B430/B4030 Signalised Crossroads with Heyford Park Phase 1 & 2, Great Wolf and Mitigation

The comparative outputs show that, despite the expansion of the junction to include a left turn only lane from the northbound B430, the performance of the junction remains over the theoretical capacity and is marginally worse with the Great Wolf generated traffic and mitigation. The Degree of Saturation (DoS) increases by just over 1% on the B430 southbound and B4030 westbound (titled B4030 (east) in the Tables), whilst the Mean Maximum Queue (MMQ) increases by 9% and 8% respectively.

Given the results of the analysis, it is not considered that the proposed Great Wolf mitigation scheme will reliably provide a signalised junction that will alleviate the current severe congestion or will improve upon the consented Heyford Park mitigation scheme.

The proposed layout will necessitate a significant change to the facilities for pedestrians wishing to cross the B430. With the current arrangement, which is largely unaltered in the Heyford Park mitigation scheme, the informal crossing point is behind the stop line for northbound B430 traffic, which means that pedestrians may have to cross between vehicles in a queue (two lanes in the case of Heyford Park mitigation) of stationary vehicles. The proposed Great Wolf mitigation incorporates a pedestrian refuge at the centre of the junction, allowing pedestrians to cross in two stages. However, the waiting area on the east side footway is very narrow, meaning that any waiting pedestrians would be uncomfortably close to passing or turning vehicles, particularly HGVs. Furthermore, the footway to the north is even narrower as the kerblines are particularly close to the highway boundary.

It is appreciated that there is no identifiable pedestrian (or cyclist) crossing point that would accord with current standards. At this stage, OCC are neutral about replacing the existing crossing point with one that allows improved crossing opportunities but has constrained access on one side.

Motion have separately supplied a version of the Indicative Mitigation Works drawing (Rev. C) that is marked up to illustrate the areas of proposed widening over and above the Heyford Park scheme (see Appendix A). This shows further encroachment into the south-east verge

and the footway being positioned up against the boundary wall on the west side, with nearly all the grassed verge being removed on this side.

Whilst it is agreed that the proposed scheme falls entirely within the highway boundary, because of the widening which brings the carriageway closer to properties and reduces verges, the environmental impacts would need to be considered before such a scheme could be agreed or implemented. The scheme has potential impacts on air quality, noise and vibration, and heritage. Consequently, the scheme may not be considered to be deliverable if the environmental impacts are not acceptable.

Overall, OCC are unable to confirm that their previous objection to the full application has been resolved.

*IV. Confirmation from OCC as to which approach they would prefer to adopt with regarding implementation or contribution towards works at the B430/ B4030 Middleton Stoney junction.*

OCC are unable to confirm at present which approach would be preferable should the Great Wolf mitigation scheme go ahead.

**Officer's Name: Roger Plater**  
**Officer's Title: Transport Planner**  
**Date: 08 September 2020**

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## **Appendix A**

Drawing no. 1803047-17 Rev. C

Indicative Mitigation Works showing Proposed Areas of Widening



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