

**Mrs Janet Wardell
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28 December 2019

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

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

Dear Ms Whitehead

I write to protest in the strongest possible terms against the planning application to build a Great Wolf resort on Bicester Golf course in Chesterton. It is totally contrary to the Local Development Plan, and the Cherwell Strategy of reducing car usage, and there will be absolutely no economic benefit to the local area. The proposed development is on a greenfield site, and with buildings that comprise 500,000 sq. ft. of total floor area, plus a car park of 900 spaces, it will completely destroy the ecology and landscape of the area.

It will have a major impact on what is already a congested and over-used road network, which has already worsened with the other significant, ongoing, building projects in the Bicester area, e.g. Kingsmere, Bicester Gateway, Bicester Heritage, and the warehousing on the junction of Middleton Stoney road and Howes Lane. There is no public transport in Chesterton, therefore the resort will totally rely on car travel both for guests and the workforce. The village of Chesterton is already a rat-run for vehicles trying to avoid the busy A41 and A34, and the proposed routing will increase congestion along the B430 and the A4095. Additionally, when incidents occur on the M40 between junctions 9 and 10, which may necessitate closure of the motorway, the B430 is one of the alternative routes. This goes through the villages of Middleton Stoney and Weston-on-the-Green, which are again used as rat-runs already. Therefore, the whole road network in this area will be unable to cope with any additional traffic generated by the resort which will only add to the current congestion.

Chesterton is still a village, despite the creeping encroachment from Kingsmere, but a development of this size will destroy the rural nature of this particular area. The current golf course fits well into the landscape, and despite the low-rise design of the Great Wolf resort, this will spread further across the site, and make it appear and feel a more urban space. It is of concern that we will lose an 18-hole golf course, meaning that members who wish to play 18 holes will need to travel elsewhere. Indeed, should the development go ahead, how long would it be before the remaining 9 holes be taken over by Great Wolf, losing a local amenity? As it is a 'resort', it is presumed that guests will be encouraged to stay on site for the duration of their stay, and not use any other amenities in the local area. This also means that, despite any 'sweeteners', those who live locally will not benefit – any day passes are likely to be limited, as guests staying at the resort are the priority, and will also be expensive judging by those advertised on the company website in resorts in North America.

As local businesses, such as hotels and retailers, are already finding it difficult to recruit staff in the local area, it is unlikely that Great Wolf will find it any easier. They will either take staff away from existing local businesses, or need to employ people from other areas, thus increasing traffic movements. This type of employment will not support Cherwell's strategic aim of prioritising a 'Knowledge based economy' in the area, and will not offer anything to the economy of the area as a whole.

The costs will far outweigh any 'benefits' such a development may bring – in fact it is hard to see any benefits at all from this proposal. It will destroy a rural location, increase congestion, and mean the loss of a sports facility for local people. It is not in accordance with the local plan, and there is no demonstrable need for a resort either in this area or indeed the whole of the UK. It is based on an American model, which is fine where there is plenty of space, and perhaps where there is high unemployment. As there is neither in Cherwell, I strongly urge the Planning Committee to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,

J E Wardell