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20th December 2019

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

Dear Ms Whitehead

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

I have been a resident of Chesterton for approaching 25 years. Having attended the Great Wolf Resort public meetings and studied their detailed planning application for the development of Chesterton Golf Club, I consider these proposals to be totally ill-judged. The resort is in the wrong location, its size, scale and scope is not good for local development, is not targeted for local users, provides no localised benefit and meets no criteria for leisure and recreational demands for the residents of Chesterton, Bicester and the surrounding area. It meets no local plan criteria or district strategy that I am aware of.

From the presentations, this ill-judged scheme is intended to provide a 49 room hotel, with 902 car parking spaces on a 46 acre site, to service Great Wolf visitor numbers of 500,000 per annum, staying an average booking of 1.6 nights, with an average 4.16 persons per room.

This is clearly a family orientated resort. Families will travel by car to the rural location of Chesterton, attracted by the numerous on-site facilities, water rides, meals and entertainment; plus, its easy access to the national motorway links from the South, Midlands and North. This vehicular accessibility to the location is clearly the main reason chosen by Great Wolf. It is for this same reason that the scheme is flawed.

Their proposed routes for access from junctions J9 or J10 of the M40 and then onto the A4095 cannot be guaranteed, this is by their own admission. The surrounding road infrastructure is inadequate for the increased traffic flow. Visitors could find themselves on minor unclassified and B roads. The consultancy reports of estimated increase in vehicular movements do not take into account if they stray away from the A4095. This could have a severe impact on Chesterton. The crossroads junction of the B340/Ackerman Street is dangerous and at its other end the Little Chesterton crossroads has had several unreported accidents of cars pulling out from Howes Lane. Similarly at the Fortescue Drive junction there is not enough space for two cars to pass. Traffic on this same route to and from the A41 new and proposed Bicester Gateway developments have to pass along a country lane which up to recently was overgrown.

Since the completion of two new recent residential developments in the village, what was the 25A/21 bus service no longer exists. In fact only one bus serves the village, this operates only on a Monday and I believe departs around 11.30am and returns at 1.30pm.

It is interesting to note that Great Wolf resort strategy for transportation like our bus service is also non-existent. It centres on car parking for 902 spaces.

No coach parties are expected, but analysis has been undertaken to demonstrate that a coach could access the site if required and drop off under the Port Cochere, they will have provision for a turning space.

80 cycle park spaces (40 guests/40 staff) are to be provided. That is for up to 460 full time and 600 total staff and for up to 2,000 visitors per day.

Great play is made of creating a totally new cycleway/ footpath proposed from the A4095 site entrance, to The Hale junction, at the top of the village. None existed before, because there was no need! To the South, a cycleway/footpath from the main development will use the existing Golf Course entrance, but here it will end; there is no further link onto Ackerman Street/ Green Lane; nor will it link up towards the Hale. There will be no circular route, merely two separate routes. In addition, it should be noted that the village has no walkable footpaths or cycle routes existing, or proposed, in or out of the village, either towards Bicester, or in any other directions.

Clearly, pedestrian access, or cyclist usage and access to the site does not figure highly, in reality.

Mention is made that "a staff mini-bus could be provided", and is likely to call at both railway stations, town centre and local centre. A mini-bus bay is allocated. The additional Transport Assessment Swept Path analysis details a 6.33m vehicle. Such a fifteen-seater would have to make 40 trips x 2, each day to ferry up to 600 employees there and back. "It is envisaged a staff shuttle bus will be available to Chesterton residents for".

Similarly, it is proposed that a guest shuttle bus service will operate, linking the resort to each of the two Bicester rail stations, between the hours of 9am to 5pm, on a once every 2-hourly basis, timed to meet arriving/departing trains. "The shuttle bus service will be advertised to guests at the time they book their stay and include details of times". No details of operator, or operational feasibility is provided in their Transport Assessment. For comparison, the Bicester Village shuttle link to both these stations runs every 15 minutes from 8.30 to 21.30.

Clearly, there is no real sustainable transport policy, their latest consultancy amendments I would suggest, are merely an add-on afterthought and a paper exercise intended to rebuff initial criticism, but having no material substance.

For the two and a quarter year construction phase, site workforce will be encouraged to use public transport (there is none in Cheston) and car share. "Companies which employ a significant number of workers will consider the use of crew buses. A shuttle bus may be employed to connect site to Bicester North". Great Wolf's own estimates anticipate employing 945-1,350 workers. That is a lot of movements for one shuttle bus.....

Large construction projects employ numerous specialist trades and subcontractors. They will not all come from Banbury or London Marylebone! They will travel from throughout the surrounding regions and by the very nature of site construction and the provision of their own tools and equipment, will be van or car based. No mention either is made of anticipated site vehicular movements for muck-away and earthwork phase, which will be considerable for such a 46 acre landscaped site and the building and infrastructure footprint.

The development then is clearly and totally geared towards the car. They state: "expected visitors will be drawn from a catchment area encompassing a 125 mile drive of the site". The consultancy reports and trip generation analysis modelling of three Great Wolf resorts in USA and mode modelling from Woburn Center Parcs confirms that visitor numbers, including staff, arriving by any other mode of transport other than car is minimal, the latter in fact is only 2%...

How does their published 500,000 visitors per annum equate to actual car movements per stay?

Quoted figures for their own room occupancy vary at rate of between 4.16 and 4.5 and 2.25 if fully occupied. If we take the figures from the latest November 19th Transport Assessment, by Motion Consultancy, their forecasts are based on 500 bedrooms, with a typical room residency of 4.5 guests per room, which equates to 2,250 guests per day if hotel fully occupied and 1,668 at other times, (providing a residency of level of 3.336).

This is confirmed in Table 2.2 occupancy and guest arrivals/departures from modelling based on Woburn, Center Parcs and three of their own US sites, totalling **12,940** guests per week. (This by the way could equate to 672,880 visitors per annum).

Table 2.4 equates these guest arrivals/departures to guest vehicle arrival and departure trips shows a total of 4,140 cars for the week. This equates to an average car occupancy rate of 3.125. (This could by the way equate to 215,280 cars per annum).

These figures show only arrival and departure by guests and their associated car journey in and out of the modelled site(s). "Existing resort guests have an average duration of stay of 1.6 days, although the business plan seeks to increase this".

It is therefore safe to assume that Great Wolf resort visitors are likely to make trips out, and take more the longer the duration of stay; especially bearing in mind the pull and the nearby vicinity of the surrounding areas. Three local attractions could be Bicester Village, Blenheim Palace, Oxford University.

Using the same analysis from their Table 2.2,

If, each of those 4,140 visitor cars:

- Made one extra trip + 4,140 = 8,280 car journeys for the week = 430,560 per annum
- Plus second extra trip + 4,140 = 12,420 car journeys for the week = 645,840 per annum
- Plus third extra trip + 4,140 = 16,560 car journeys for the week = 861,120 per annum

These assumptions are more than borne out by their own Table 2.1 showing vehicle trip generation, based on surveys for existing Great Wolf resorts. It is not possible to ascertain total day/week figures from the time slots used. However a reasonable comparison can be obtained from:

Weekday Daily 07.00 – 19.00 in and out = 1,977

Saturday Daily 07.00 – 19.00 in and out = 2,761

These figures are again borne out by Appendix E, for estimated Great Wolf Resort vehicle movements in and out over a 24 hour period:

Weekday in and out 1991 total x5 = 9,955

Weekend in and out 2,766 total x2 = 5,532

15,487 vehicle trips for week

805,324 vehicle trips per annum

It is unlikely these visitor figures will be any less, in reality the likelihood will be an increase, as day visitor passes are now suggested to be made available on days when 80% occupancy levels are not reached, those local day trippers, will inevitably travel in by car.

I understand Chesterton forms part of a Green Buffer Policy for Bicester and surrounding area. The village categorisation for growth is deemed as minor housing development, infilling and conversion.

It is intended to be kept free from build development which would be harmful to the rural character of the landscape and to provide a rural approach to maintain the character and identity of Chesterton as a historic village. The Cherwell Local Plan presumption is in favour of sustainable development and that development should only be resisted or refused on transport grounds where residual impacts of development are severe.

I would suggest that such a large development over its 46 acre site with an extra 15-16,000 car trips a week around the village of Chesterton's 390 houses should easily be considered severe.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Roger Herbert.

Roger Herbert