

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

5 January 2020

Dear Ms Whitehead,

Objection to Planning Application Ref: 19/02550/F – Proposed Water Park by 'Great Wolf'

I wish to object to the above planning application.

I have worked in Bicester for the past 36 years and have seen the effects of the significant changes in the area and the pressure the various new developments have placed on the local infrastructure. I was therefore very surprised when 'Great Wolf' proposed a Water Park in Chesterton which would impact massively on that village and Bicester too.

I am a keen golfer and play regularly at Bicester Golf Course and it is disappointing to see that the plan by 'Great Wolf' would reduce the course from 18 to 9 holes. Cherwell is already losing 18 holes at North Oxford so combined with this, it limits the local courses available and puts pressure on those remaining too. In addition, to use other courses would generally mean travelling outside of Cherwell, something I certainly would wish to avoid if possible.

It appears to me that there are many negatives relating to this proposal, including the impact on the highways, the loss of open space, the impact on the landscape and the loss of a good golf course! There are some negligible positives, perceived as 'economic benefit', but most of the rewards would flow to 'Great Wolf'. On this basis, I believe that the application should be refused and 'Great Wolf' should seek an alternative and more sustainable and appropriate site for this development.

Below I have detailed my objections further:-

Unsustainable form of development

This is a significant development that will attract high levels of visitors every day. Cherwell District Council's (CDC) Policy SLE3 states that such developments should be located in highly sustainable locations adjacent to a multitude of transport modes to reduce the reliance on car usage. Policy ESD1 also seeks to distribute new developments to sustainable locations to tackle Cherwell's commitment to climate change. This site is on the edge of Chesterton village in an inherently unsustainable location with low accessibility to public transport and the scheme provides for 900 car parking spaces, therefore promoting car usage and in these circumstances is contrary to Policy SLE3 and ESD1.

The site is currently Greenfield open space and policy BSC10 seeks to ensure that there is sufficient quantity and quality of open space, sport and recreation provision by protecting and enhancing existing provision. The planning system should be supporting the redevelopment of previously developed Brownfield sites, or allocated sites in sustainable locations adjacent to public transport modes, not on a Greenfield site that will irreversibly remove valuable open space. This is totally the wrong location for such a proposal and whatever gestures or promises the applicant provides for in terms of improved access, bus services or cycle routes, the site is in an inherently unsustainable location and not appropriate for such a development.

Landscape Impact and Design

The proposed scheme is not in keeping with the local area which is characterised by 2/3 storey buildings which are detached and in clusters. The Countryside Design Summary (2008) published by CDC provides guidance for developments in locations such as this and supports developments of small scale, low height and detached. Also Policy T5 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 states that new hotels in rural locations will only be approved where they would largely be accommodated in existing buildings or totally replace an existing commercial operation.

Policy ESD13 states that successful design should contribute to an area's character representing the traditional form, scale and massing of buildings. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

This development consists of a large bulk of 500,000 sq.ft of built form and mass and at a significantly greater height than any of the other buildings in the vicinity of the site and this is all to be delivered on what is currently Greenfield site with no buildings on it. The proposal is therefore contrary to the Countryside Design Summary, Policy T5, ESD13 and paragraph 170 of the NPPF.

Traffic

Policy ESD1 supports new developments that reduce the need to travel by car and Policy SLE4 states that new developments should facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport. CDC's 1996 Policy TR7 states that developments that will attract a large number of vehicles on to minor roads will not normally be permitted.

The existing road infrastructure cannot cope with the projected extra 1,000 – 1,500 daily car movements. Chesterton is already a 'rat-run' and experiences major congestion as an escape route during the many traffic issues on the M40 and A34. The applicant is seeking to re-route traffic down the A34 particularly and does not appear to appreciate the issues that we already encounter from the A34; the slip road at Weston on the Green is notorious for accidents due to the short length of the slip road. 'Great Wolf' is directing traffic to use this slip road and this will exacerbate the already significant issues. There is no reference or consideration for this aspect in the Applicant's Transport Assessment.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies SLE4 and Policy TR7.

The proposal is not in accordance with the development plan and represents an unsustainable form of development delivering 500,000 sq.ft of built form on a Greenfield site. It is totally in the wrong location for such a significant development and as such, this planning application should be refused.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Gary Brewerton.

Gary Brewerton