

Rachel Tibbetts

From: Planning
Sent: 12 March 2020 09:36
To: DC Support
Subject: FW: Great Wolf Proposal

From: Judith Keeling [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 March 2020 15:17
To: Councillor Barry Wood <Barry.Wood@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk>
Subject: Great Wolf Proposal

FOXTOWNSEND FARMHOUSE
HEYFORD ROAD
KIRTLINGTON
OX5 3HS

9th March 2020.

Dear Barry,

I am writing to express my strong objections to the water park proposal by Great Wolf Resorts (application 19/02550F).

My main objection is the sheer scale of these plans (half a million visitors a year and an ugly four-storey, 500-bedroom hotel) and the volume of unnecessary and unwelcome traffic.

I cannot begin to think how our already struggling local road network – particularly the A34, M40 J8-10, A40, A41 and A4095 - could possibly cope with so many extra cars. (And how it's also deemed appropriate to direct this quantity of vehicles down smaller, pothole-ridden country lanes is, frankly, a mystery.)

This is completely counter to national and local objectives to reduce the volume of traffic as well as the pollution it brings – numerous recent scientific studies link road pollution to a number of serious chronic conditions including asthma, particularly in children.

Whatever their consultants might say, the Great Wolf water park is entirely dependent on the private motor car – why else do they need a 900-space carpark?

Based on a business model that might work in the US where space is abundant and the car is 'king,' it is staggeringly inappropriate to crudely transplant this plan onto our country lanes, green spaces and tiny, historic villages. This is a scheme that is not only wrong in the village of Chesterton, but wrong in any village, anywhere.

I note with interest that the planned expansion of Heathrow Airport has been ruled illegal by the Court of Appeal because it fails to comply with the Government's pollution reduction pledges in the Paris climate agreement; surely this must be a consideration, too, for a scheme that depends on attracting an estimated extra 1800 vehicles a day (not counting the two year construction period).

My other principal objection is that there is no benefit to the local community. We currently have high levels of employment in the kinds of low-paid jobs Great Wolf would offer (bar staff, cleaners, waiters) and local firms actually struggle to fill these vacancies themselves. Given the government's plans for an Australian-style points system this is a situation that can only deteriorate – to the detriment of existing local businesses. And, as Great Wolf customers will be encouraged to remain on site during their visit, there would be no 'trickle down' trade for local shops, restaurants or pubs either.

The reality will be that local communities will bear all the brunt of the half a million Great Wolf clients who'll drive to the theme park every year in their private cars, stay overnight, eat and drink there – and then drive away the following day.

In addition, according to Great Wolf's own admissions, it's highly unlikely that many local families would be able to use the resort at all (unless they are prepared to pay for an expensive overnight stay)

Great Wolf have not said how much this would cost but in the U.S. it averages around £160 a night for a family of four (without food) and probably much more in school holidays and peak weekends – hardly a local amenity.

This is an arrogant and careless proposal. Careless about the immense traffic and environmental impact and careless about whether or not it brings any real benefit to the local community.

Very belatedly and under pressure, token offers have been made about 30 'sustainable' day passes for local families, for instance. But, apart from practical issues (such as where would you park to catch the shuttle bus from Bicester) this is an insult to the intelligence of local people, in the context of a total hotel capacity of 2250 guests.

Again, if Great Wolf were serious about sustainability, they would not be planning a carpark with roughly the same capacity as the Westgate Centre and twice that of Blenheim Palace.

I have every faith that our local councillors will study these proposals with the scrutiny and scepticism they deserve.

I urge you to reject this proposal on the grounds there is no need at all for any element of this scheme while it could cause harm that will last for generations.

Yours sincerely

Judith Keeling

This e-mail (including any attachments) may be confidential and may contain legally privileged information. You should not disclose its contents to any other person. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately.

Whilst the Council has taken every reasonable precaution to minimise the risk of computer software viruses, it cannot accept liability for any damage which you may sustain as a result of such viruses. You should carry out your own virus checks before opening the e-mail(and/or any attachments).

Unless expressly stated otherwise, the contents of this e-mail represent only the views of the sender and does not impose any legal obligation upon the Council or commit the Council to any course of action..

This e-mail (including any attachments) may be confidential and may contain legally privileged information. You should not disclose its contents to any other person. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately.

Whilst the Council has taken every reasonable precaution to minimise the risk of computer software viruses, it cannot accept liability for any damage which you may sustain as a result of such viruses. You should carry out your own virus checks before opening the e-mail(and/or any attachments).

Unless expressly stated otherwise, the contents of this e-mail represent only the views of the sender and does not impose any legal obligation upon the Council or commit the Council to any course of action..