



# Great Wolf Lodge, Chesterton, Bicester

Environmental Statement – Statement of Conformity

Prepared for:

Great Lakes UK Ltd

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## Introduction

- 1 In November 2019, Great Lakes UK Limited (the 'Applicant') submitted a full planning application (reference: 19/02550/F) to Cherwell District Council ('CDC') for the redevelopment of part of the Bicester golf course, to the east of the M40 and south of the A4095 (herein referred to as the 'Site') to provide a new leisure resort (sui generis) including a waterpark, family entertainment centre, hotel, conferencing facilities and restaurants (with associated access, parking and landscaping). The planning application was accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) (the 'November 2019 ES').
- 2 The Site is approximately 18.6 hectares (ha) in area and is located in the northern area of the Bicester Hotel Golf and Spa, within the Chesterton Parish of Cherwell District, South Oxfordshire. The Site is located approximately 500m west of the centre of Chesterton village and 3.2km west of Bicester town centre.
- 3 Following CDC's refusal to grant planning permission, the Applicant appealed the decision and the application was subsequently allowed in May 2021, following a Public Inquiry.
- 4 Further to the Appeal Decision to grant planning permission, in November 2021 a section 73 application for minor material amendments was made (reference: 21/04158/F) for the following minor amendments to the development:
  - Reduction in the overall size of the family entertainment centre (FEC) resulting in a shift of the guestroom u-shaped tower southwards by approximately 3.6m.
  - Alterations to the number and type of leisure attractions in the FEC.
  - Reconfiguration of the Conference Centre orientation and floor plan to consolidate the guest experience and improve internal circulation.
  - General internal spatial co-ordination in line with operational requirements. Generally, this was local to internal layouts but did affect a small number of external door and window positions.
  - Updates to the landscape design proposal as a result of the building footprint changes and reconfiguration of the Conference Centre and fire tender access to the site.
  - Extension of the Porte cochere as a result of shifting the building southwards 3.6m to allow for a larger drop off / set down point for arriving guest vehicles/buses.
  - Waterpark updates including slide and external terrace paving area modifications. The overall height of the waterslide is maintained below the height of the turret which remains as per the consented scheme.
  - Relocation of the Great Wolf entrance statue.
  - Roof updates in line with revised roof access strategy.
  - Minor MEP and utility updates across the site.
  - Waste yard ramp dimensions updated with wider radius ramp and integrated vehicular protection zones.
- 5 The November 2021 section 73 application was supported by a concise suite of technical documents, including a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Addendum, which confirmed that the proposed amendments would not alter the impacts and effects reported in the November 2019 ES. In addition, a Biodiversity Net Gain Statement was submitted which concluded that there would be a negligible change to the net gain position of the scheme that was subject to the original November 2019 planning application. A Statement on Flood Risk and Drainage was also submitted that confirmed the proposed amendments would not impact the surface water drainage strategy or flood risk (on or off site). This application was approved in March 2022.

- 6 The scheme as consented for the full planning application in November 2019 and the s73 application in November 2021 is herein collectively referred to as the 'Consented Scheme'.
- 7 As the design of the Consented Scheme has moved through the further detailed design stages, some minor alterations are now required and a subsequent s96 application is being made to make these revisions. This ES Statement of Conformity considers these non-material minor alterations in relation to the scheme and basis of assessment of the November 2019 ES. These proposed amendments are described below.

## Approach to the ES Statement of Conformity

- 8 A proportionate approach has been taken to the consideration of the proposed amendments in relation to the November 2019 ES. The approach considers whether the limited scope of the proposed amendments change the basis of the assessments undertaken and reported in the November 2019 ES and whether or not that assessment (and associated mitigation and residual effects) remains applicable to the scheme as amended.
- 9 Accordingly the scope and purpose of this review is to establish if the scheme assessed within the November 2019 ES remains materially the same as what is now proposed under this s96a application. On this basis the assessments (including baseline position and methodologies) have not been revisited in their entirety. Rather, where elements of the scheme as assessed in the November 2019 ES change as a result of the proposed amendments, further consideration to those relevant technical topics upon which those elements informed the assessments is provided below.

## Summary of the Proposed Amendments

- 10 The proposed amendments to the Consented Scheme relate to both internal arrangements and external features. The internal arrangements/layouts (other than where they relate to quantum and type of development) do not inform the technical assessments of the EIA and so only those changes relating to the external features/appearance of the building and quantum/type of development are summarised here:
- Reduction in height to the two flanks of the main hotel building by 654mm.
  - Reduction in height of the central lobby part of the hotel building by 990mm.
  - End facades pushed out on end/corner guestrooms by 52mm.
  - Six additional guestrooms (from 498 to 504) within the consented envelope of the building.
  - Extension of the flat roof of the waterpark support building (the "bunker") over the pitched section to form a dormer-like structure.
  - Updates to external window and door positions.
  - Removal of the Substation West (at the northern perimeter of the carpark) and minor alterations to the substations at the southern end of the car park within the landscape.
  - Additional doors on the flat roofs to facilitate safer means of emergency egress.
  - Rationalisation of window heights.
  - Addition of windows to the ballroom to improve natural daylight.
  - Relocation of access / maintenance entrances to provide more discreet, efficient and safer means of access.
  - Minor alterations to rain water goods location setting out on the building to provide more efficient surface water collection.
  - Removal of the chimney at the ridge of the pitched roof over the lobby (no longer required).

- Revised ventilation strategy and removal of flue on green roof.

- 11 All proposed changes have been updated in line with the design and massing principles set within the original November 2019 planning application (and the Consented Scheme).
- 12 Further details, including plans, upon which this review has been undertaken, are provided in the Proposed Changes Design Document (EPR) document submitted with the section 96a application.

## **Review of the Proposed Amendments against the Scheme Assessed in the November 2019 ES**

- 13 Consideration is given below to each of the technical topic of the November 2019 ES.

### ***Socio-economics***

- 14 The assessment on socio-economic effects is principally based on the quantum and type of development to ascertain the potential impacts on spending and employment. The addition of six hotel guestrooms would marginally increase the potential for employment provision and spending, however as the increase represents a 1.2% uplift from the basis of the socio-economic assessment in the November 2019 ES (noting these effects are considered beneficial), this is not considered to change the level of the impacts and associated effects previously reported. Therefore the findings of the November 2019 ES remain unchanged and no further consideration of effects on socio-economic matters is required to inform the section 96a application.

### ***Transportation and Access***

- 15 The assessment of effects in relation to transportation and access matters are principally based on changes to traffic flows and use in other (non-car) modes of transport. These are driven by the quantum and type of development proposed, and the provision of parking being made. The quantum of car and cycle parking remains as per the Consented Scheme and the increase of six additional guestrooms in the hotel will not materially alter the operational traffic generated as reported in the November 2019 ES. The effects and conclusions of the assessment on Transportation and Access reported in the November 2019 ES remain unchanged and no further consideration of effects on transportation and access matters is required to inform the section 96a application.

### ***Air Quality***

- 16 The assessment of effects on air quality from the operational Consented Scheme, as reported in the November 2019 ES, was based on changes to road traffic. As set out above, the proposed changes will not alter the associated road traffic and therefore the basis of the air quality assessment (in relation to the development tested and assessed) in the November 2019 ES remains unchanged and no further consideration of effects on air quality is required to inform the section 96a application.

### ***Noise and Vibration***

- 17 The assessment of effects on noise and vibration from the operational Consented Scheme, as reported in the November 2019 ES, was based on noise from servicing areas and plant, and changes to road traffic. The proposed changes will not alter the plant or servicing strategy and as set out above, the traffic flows will also not be impacted.
- 18 Therefore, the basis of the noise and vibration assessment (in relation to the development tested and assessed) in the November 2019 ES remains unchanged and no further consideration of effects on noise and vibration is required to inform the section 96a application.

## ***Biodiversity***

- 19 The assessment of effects on biodiversity from the Consented Scheme, as reported in the November 2019 ES, was based on the removal and/or disturbance to habitats and protected species, and the creation and management of new habitats.
- 20 The large scale area of habitat creation/enhancement in the northern portion of the site which provides the majority of the Consented Scheme's opportunity for biodiversity net gain remains unchanged from the Consented Scheme. The alterations to the landscape arrangements are only very localised to the main development areas (around buildings and associated infrastructure) and do not alter the amount of newly created habitat that provides the previously assessed mitigation and enhancements.
- 21 Condition 12 of the section 73 decision (March 2022) sets out the requirement for the submission and approval of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) setting out how the landscape and ecological features will be managed and monitored in the long term, ensuring delivery of a net gain in biodiversity. Condition 23 of the Appeal Decision sets out the requirement for submission and approval of a mitigation strategy for great crested newts and Condition 28 requires the submission of the certificate confirming the great crested newt compensation have been dealt with. All three of these conditions were discharged in 2022 and are unchanged by the proposed changes that are the subject of the section 96a application.
- 22 It is therefore concluded that the findings and conclusions relating to the assessment on biodiversity as reported in the November 2019 ES remain unchanged and that no further consideration of effects on biodiversity is required to inform the section 96a application.

## ***Archaeology and Cultural Heritage***

- 23 The assessment of effects on archaeology from the Consented Scheme, as reported in the November 2019 ES, was based on the below ground works and the potential for disturbance to unknown buried archaeological remains. The proposed changes that are the subject of the section 96a application will not alter the below ground works of the Consented Scheme and the assessment on archaeology (and associated impacts and effects reported in the November 2019 ES) therefore remains unchanged.
- 24 The proposed changes to the appearance of the Consented Scheme are non material, and would not increase the height or massing of the buildings, therefore the changes will not increase the visibility of the new buildings to any of the designated heritage assets (which are visually separated/screened from the Site) assessed in the November 2019 ES.
- 25 No further consideration of effects on archaeology and cultural heritage is required to inform the section 96a application.

## ***Ground Conditions***

- 26 The assessment of effects on ground conditions from the Consented Scheme, as reported in the November 2019 ES, was based on the below ground works and the potential for a source, pathway and receptor link in relation to contamination risks. The proposed changes that are the subject of the section 96a application will not alter the below ground works of the Consented Scheme and the assessment on ground conditions (and associated impacts and effects reported in the November 2019 ES) therefore remains unchanged. No further consideration of effects on ground conditions is required to inform the section 96a application.

## ***Water Resources, Flood Risk and Drainage***

- 27 The proposed changes will not increase the amount of impermeable area or materially increase the demand for potable water supplies or increase the pressure on waste water drainage infrastructure,

from that assessed in the November 2019 ES and associated Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy. The surface water drainage strategy and flood risk (on and off site) remain unchanged.

- 28 Therefore, the basis of the water resources, flood risk and drainage assessment (in relation to the development tested and assessed) in the November 2019 ES remains unchanged and no further consideration of effects on water resources, flood risk and drainage is required to inform the section 96a application.

### ***Landscape and Visual Impacts***

- 29 The proposed changes would result in a decrease in the height of the two flanks of the main hotel building by 654mm and very marginal changes to the end/corner guestrooms, pushing these facades out by 52mm. The proposals remain within the approved massing of the Consented Scheme.
- 30 It is considered that in the context of the development as a whole, the proposed changes are very limited and will not impact on overall landscape character or key views into/across the Site. It is therefore concluded that the findings of the November 2019 ES remain valid and no further consideration of effects on landscape and views is required to inform the section 96a application.

### ***Cumulative Changes***

- 31 The proposed changes to the Consented Scheme that are subject to the section 73 application have been considered alongside the changes that were made through the section 73 application consented in March 2022. The nature of these previously consented changes are set out in paragraph 4.
- 32 These amendments consented in March 2022 did not alter the overall form and massing of the buildings, the proposed quantum or type of development or the quantum of vehicle parking, of the proposals as assessed in the November 2019 ES.
- 33 It is therefore considered that there are no cumulative changes to the effects assessed and reported in the November 2019 ES as a result of the section 73 approved in March 2022 and the current section 96a application as set out within this document.

### **Conclusions**

- 34 It is considered that the amendments proposed, both alone and in conjunction with the amendments that were subject to the section 73 application granted in March 2022, are non-material in relation to the scheme that was assessed in the November 2019 ES and that the November 2019 ES remains valid for the development when taking into consideration the amendments proposed.
- 35 It is therefore considered that the assessment and findings of the November 2019 remain valid for the scheme for which consent is now sought.