

Application No: 19/01255/SCOP

Proposal: Scoping opinion - Redevelopment of existing 9 holes of the wider 18 hole course at Bicester Hotel Golf and Spa to provide a new leisure resort (sui generis) incorporating waterpark, family entertainment centre, hotel, conferencing facilities and restaurants with associated access, parking and landscaping.

Address: Bicester Hotel Golf And Country Club Akeman Street Chesterton Bicester OX26 1TE

Comment

The scoping document is helpful in beginning to create a framework upon which to fully assess the likely impact – positive and negative of this emerging proposal. Whilst such a scheme has the potential to bring considerable economic benefits, it is important to openly understand all likely impacts upon the community and environment, in order for mitigation to be made in avoidance of any negative consequences.

Within my realm, I focus upon the socio-economic impact contained within the WSP report as section 5.0. Currently a general overview is provided as to the importance of the leisure & retail sector locally; this should be expanded upon as the proposed loss of half of the golf course will be inevitably affect the economic viability of this remainder of this existing leisure facility – either positively or negatively. The principle of how this development links to other aspects of society and economy locally, regionally and nationally will also be important to fully understand. This should provide insight into the wider economic impact as well as the important considerations, for example, of the movement of vehicles and people alongside comprehensive details of the benefits to accrue to the local community.

In paragraph 5.2.6, recognition is made of 'barriers to housing' which should be expanded upon in detail as to how this proposal would seek to define and address this matter. Affordability of housing is implied so, for instance, how would the specific types of employment created enable the workforce to better afford local housing costs? It is also important to be clear as to the types of employment to be created by this development in order to understand how, for example, it will contribute towards the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy, the wider 'Arc' and Cherwell's extant and emerging economic strategies that focus upon high value employment in terms of skills and incomes, providing stable employment with defined career paths. Mention is made of links to colleges which should be expanded upon in detail with, for example, commitments to the creation of apprenticeships and employment opportunities to meet the future needs of local residents.

I look forward to seeing the emergence of an exemplar proposal and would welcome the opportunity to contribute further as required.

Steven Newman