

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Document

1.1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning – Environmental Impact Assessment (England and Wales) Regulations 1999, in support of an outline planning application for a major tourist facility in the Cotswold Water Park at Lakes 103, 103A, 104 and land at Milestone House, 750m east of Fairford, Gloucestershire.

1.1.2 It forms a resubmission of a refused outline planning application Ref:05/02098/OUT for a similar, but much larger tourism proposal submitted in August 2005 around Lakes 103, 103A and 104 and which later failed at a Section 78 Planning Appeal held in December 2007. The ES has therefore been prepared in context of the reasons for refusal of the original proposal and those matters arising in the Secretary of State's Decision Notice. In combination, the ES also includes the assessment of the environmental effects of development at land known as Milestone House situated immediately north of Lake 103 that is submitted as a separate planning application.

Site and Proposed Development

1.1.3 The scheme is to comprise 53 pavilions around the shores of lake 103; 6 pavilions around the south and west shore of lake 103A; 16 pavilions and 63 apartments at Milestone House and a leisure facility to the northeast of lake 104. Pavilions will range in size from 2 to 6 bedrooms and apartments will be predominantly 2 bedroom arranged in small blocks of 6 and 9 apartments. The leisure building will contain a gym restaurant/cafe and swimming pool.

1.2 Site Description and Location

(Fig 1.1 Location Plan)

1.2.1 The sites are located immediately to the south of the A417 lying between lake 105 to the east; lakes 102, 102A River Coln and Courts Brook to the south; arable fields and the southeast fringes of Fairford to the west. Agricultural land to the north of the A417 remains undisturbed by gravel extraction comprising small fields bounded by hedges and occasional copses.

1.2.2 The Lakes application area extends to approximately 40 hectares, and Milestone Land approximately 1.5 hectares. The applicant, Cygnet Investments, owns the land contained within the application save for land contained within the adopted highway corridor of the A417.

Lakes 104, 103 & 103A (Fig 1.2 lakes 103, 103a and 104 Application Boundary)

- 1.2.3 The proposals have been reconsidered and amended to address officers concerns and issues outlined within the appeal scheme decision notice. These primarily related to the intensity of development around the north and east shore of Lake 104 in relation to the advice contained within the Supplementary Planning Guidance and its detrimental impact upon the landscape character.
- 1.2.4 The proposals retain the same redline boundary and maintain habitat creation and leisure facilities and amenity proposals outlined within the previous application.

Milestone (Fig 1.3 Milestone Application Boundary)

- 1.2.5 The proposals will be located within an area, which currently consists of a detached residential property, two fishing lakes and an open area of hard standing. Access is via a direct entrance onto the A417. The house and hard standing area are to be demolished and the two lakes re-profiled into one water body that will be managed for nature conservation and setting for the waterside development. It is proposed that the existing A417 access is closed and access to the development will be via the proposed road in Lake 104. A description and breakdown of the proposals are described further in Chapter 2.

1.3 Legislative and Planning Policy Background

- 1.3.1 The application areas are located within the administrative boundaries of Cotswold District Council (CDC).

Legislative Context

- 1.3.2 The Town and Country Planning (England & Wales) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999, known as the 'EIA Regulations', implements EC Directive 85/337/EEC, as amended by Directive 97/11/EC, into domestic legislation. The EIA Regulations require that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is undertaken for certain projects to identify environmental impacts, to assess the significance of effects, and provide mitigation measures for adverse effects

Screening

- 1.3.3 Charles Planning Associates Limited submitted a formal request for a 'Screening Opinion' from Cotswold District Council on the 27th January 2009.
- 1.3.4 The Local Planning Authority (LPA) Cotswold District Council has determined that the scheme falls within Schedule 2 paragraph 12 (f) (Golf courses and associated development exceeding 1 hectare) of the EIA regulations, and the advice in Circular 02/99 Environmental Impact

Assessment, particularly, Paragraph A33 of Annex A. therefore an Environmental Statement is required as part of the application

Scoping

- 1.3.5 Following discussions with CDC a formal scoping request was submitted by Davies Landscape Architects on 17th February 2009. The scope described the proposed development and outlined the proposed scope of the EIA as summarised in table 1.1. It was agreed that the assessment of potential impacts on Archaeology, Noise and Air Quality and Aviation undertaken for the previous application would not be significantly altered and therefore not needed to be reassessed as part of the ES. These reports were submitted as part of the scoping.

Table 1.1 Summary of the scope of assessment

Assessment Topic	Undertaken within original ES	Undertaken in this ES
Air Quality	Yes	No
Planning Policy	Yes	Yes
Landscape and Visual	Yes	Yes
Ecology	Yes	Yes
Utilities & Infrastructure	Yes	No
Flood Risk & Drainage	Yes	Yes
Transport Assessment	Yes	Yes
Noise	Yes	No
Archaeology	Yes	No
Aviation	Yes	No

- 1.3.6 The ES will review the planning history of the site insofar as it is relevant to the application proposals. It is not considered necessary for the ES to review the history of other relevant leisure/tourism accommodation developments elsewhere in the Water Park as this issue was thoroughly explored in the context of the previous S.78 Appeal. A summary assessment of other relevant leisure/tourism accommodation developments will however be included within the supporting Planning, Design and Access Statement that accompanies each planning application.

- 1.3.7 In relation to planning policy, the ES will review the following key elements:

National Policy:

- National Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)
- National Circulars
The Development Plan:

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- Adopted Regional Planning Guidance for the South West
- The Saved policies of the Gloucestershire Structure Plan
- The Saved policies of the Cotswold District Local Plan
- Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Emerging Policy:

- The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West (The South West Plan)(Proposed Changes)
- The emerging Local Development Framework

Other Documents:

- The Cotswold Water Park Master Plan

1.4 Structure of the Environmental Statement

1.4.1 The ES is divided into the following volumes:

- Environmental Statement
- Figures and Photographs
- Technical Appendix 1, Ecology, Landscape and Visual ,Hydrology and Flood Risk and Socio-Economic
- Technical Appendix 2, Transport Assessment

1.4.2 All documentation is available on line at www.fairfordlakes.info

1.4.3 This report forms the main section of the ES and continues with a description of the application site and the proposed development, the planning and policy context, sustainable design principles, construction programme and the EIA assessment methodology. The cumulative effects of the proposed development, impact interactions and residual effects are discussed at the end of the document.

1.5 Assessment and Design Team

1.5.1 The Environmental Statement has been prepared by a team of consultants appointed with all the necessary expertise and experience that the Environmental Statement with its broad

based topics, demands. The majority of the client's team comprises local consultants with previous experience of working in the Water Park, and were involved in the original application and subsequent appeal. The contact details for the team have been included at the rear of this document

Table 1.2 EIA and design team

Consultant	Discipline
Planning and Policy, Socio Economic	Charles Planning Associates Limited (CPA)
Landscape and Visual, Masterplanning & EIA co-ordination	Davies Landscape Architects
Transport and Access,	PFA Consulting
Hydrology and Flood Risk	Dr Paul Garrad and Dr Chris Whitlow
Ecology and Nature Conservation	Waterman Energy, Environment & Design (formally CPM)

1.6 Consultations

- 1.6.1 The revised proposal that this Environmental Statement relates to has been the subject of extensive pre-application discussion with Officers at the District Council dating back to May 2008. The Environmental Statement process itself has been informed by discussion with Officers in addition to the formal Scoping Opinion received from the District Council on 09 April 2009.
- 1.6.2 Further detail on the pre-application discussions undertaken is set out in the Planning, Design and Access Statement.

1.7 Other Planning Documents Submitted with the Application

- 1.7.1 Please note the following reports have been submitted with the planning application in addition to the ES and should be referred to for a full understanding of the proposed development.
- Planning, Design and Access Statement, Lakes 103, 103a and 104
 - Planning, Design and Access Statement, land at Milestone