Alton Towers Resort

Alton Towers Hotel Extension

Transport Assessment

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Document history

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Rev 1.1	Initial Draft	JWT				20/6/15
Rev 1.2	Final for submission	JWT	LG	HW		22/7/15

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1. Introduction

1.1. This Transport Assessment has been prepared on behalf of the Merlin Entertainment Group in support of a planning application for a Hotel extension development within the Alton Towers Resort in Staffordshire.

Background

1.2. In 2006 planning permission was granted for a 74 bedroom hotel extension to the south of the existing hotel and spa and 74 parking spaces (Ref. 06/01004FUL). The planning permission was renewed in 2011 and following this an application was submitted to amend the scheme, through the removal of balconies to be replaced by Juliet balconies and a reduction in the height of the roof. The planning permission has been implemented through the laying out of foundations.

1.3. In 2004 planning permission was also granted for an extension to the existing spa (Ref. SMD/2014/0144). This permission remains extant but has not been implemented.

The Proposed Development

1.4. It is proposed to construct an extension to the existing Alton Towers Resort Hotel to provide a further 74 rooms. The hotel extension will be located adjacent to the existing Alton Towers Hotel on the north side and the Enchanted Village lodges on the east side.

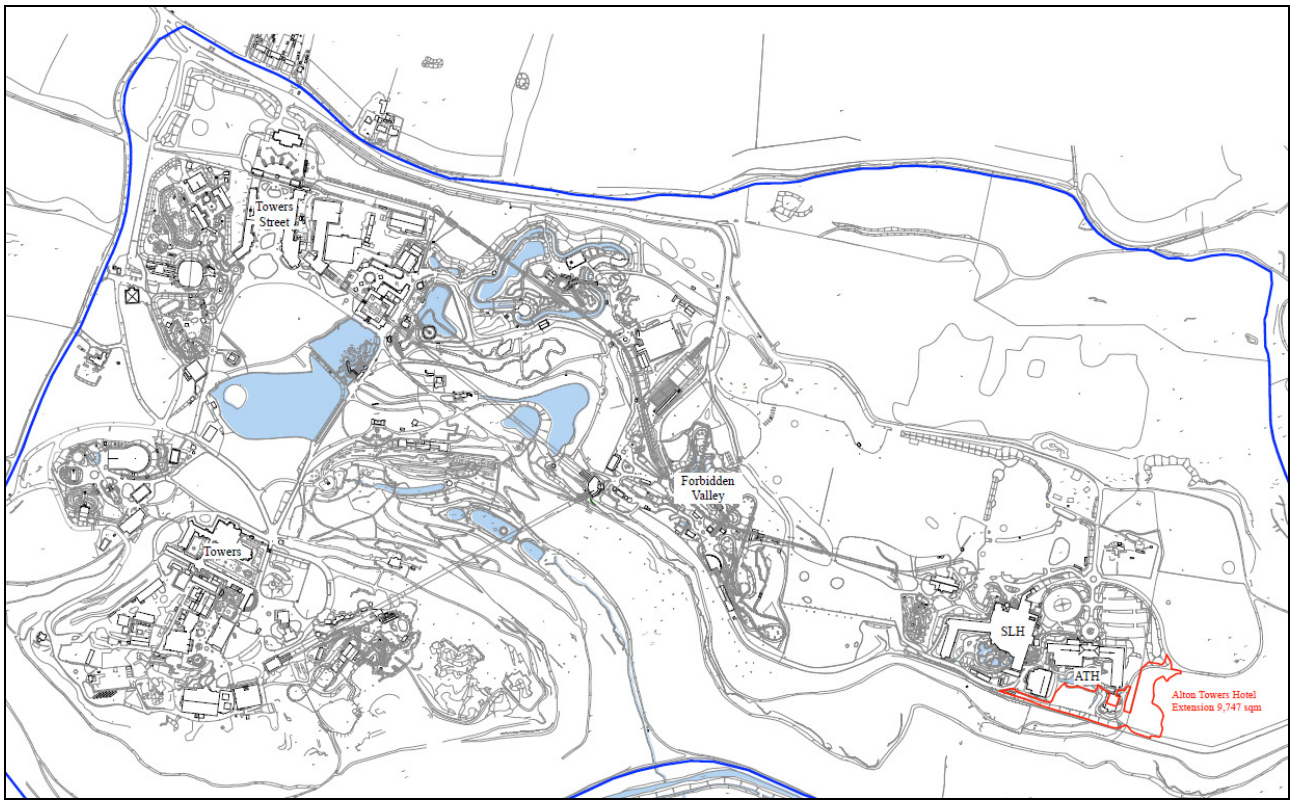
1.5. The proposed hotel extension will link to the existing hotel but include a dedicated reception, supporting facilities and a 200 seat restaurant. Parking will be provided in a new area of car parking adjacent to the front of the hotel reception with 88 parking spaces. 14 of these spaces were approved as part of the Lodges / Tree Houses development therefore the net gain in parking resulting from the hotel extension is 74.

1.6. The Resort has a Long Term Plan that includes a strategy to provide family accommodation to encourage longer stays which assists in reducing the peak time traffic movements on the local highway network. The provision of further family accommodation is intended to further enhance its position in the family short break market and will reduce the peak period traffic movements. Furthermore highways contributions have been made by Alton Towers Resort to the County Council to allow local measures to be implemented to improve traffic flows in the surrounding area.

1.7. This hotel extension of 74 rooms will be managed as part of the existing hotel complex and is an increase in the available Resort accommodation from the existing 518 rooms (391 hotel rooms, 61 double lodges and 5 tree houses) 14% increase which is in line with the Resort's Long Term Plan.

1.8. The development will be accessed using the existing Resort access road from the Farley Lane entrance. The location of the development and layout are shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1-1 Location Plan and Proposal Layout



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1.9. The Alton Towers Resort is a major tourist destination in Staffordshire and attracts visitors to the theme park and hotel complex. The transport assessment needs to examine both these attractions as they are closely linked and many hotel or lodge guests are also theme park visitors.

1.10. Section 2 describes the Resort location and Section 3 provides the available visitor and traffic data based on surveys in 2010, 2011 and 2012 which supports the assessment of potential key transport parameters that enable an assessment of traffic generation and impact in Section 4. The conclusion is provided in Section 5 with a brief summary below.

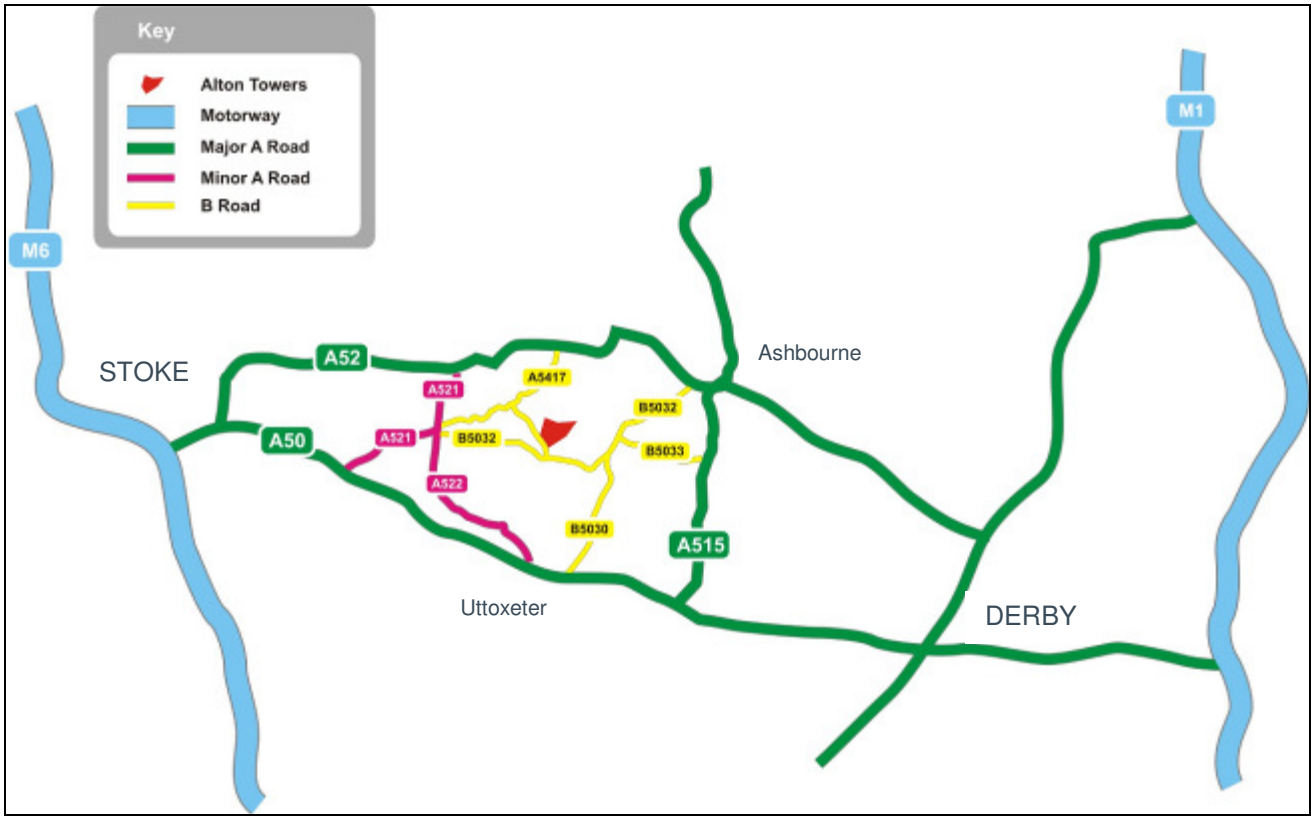
Summary of Conclusions

1.11. In summary, the main users of the proposed hotel accommodation will be resort guests and their arrival and departure will be spread across the day therefore having little or no conflict with day visitors to the theme park. Indeed the additional accommodation, in line with the statements provided for the Long Term Plan, will potentially reduce the number of vehicles to and from Alton Towers Resort during existing peak hours of the site.

2. The Resort Location

2.1. Alton Towers Resort is located in the County of Staffordshire in the Staffordshire Moorlands District. The location of the site in its wider geographical context and major highway network is illustrated below.

Figure 2-1 Location of the Alton Towers Resort



Existing Local Highway Network

2.2. Vehicular access to Alton Towers Resort is by Farley Lane and the B5032 in the south and Wootton Lane and the B5417 in the north. The B5417 connects to the A52 in the north to the west of Ashbourne, and the B5032 connects to the A50 at Uttoxeter via the B5030 in the south. The A52 and A50 are primary routes and link to the motorway and trunk road network.

Farley Lane

2.3. Farley Lane is the main southern access road to Alton Towers Resort and the development site. It is a rural road with a width of approximately six metres. Through the village of Alton the road is undulating with tight corners and has a speed limit of 30 mph. At the southern end of Farley Lane is Alton village and the B5032, which links the site to the B5030 at Denstone and the A50 Trunk Road in the south.

Wootton Lane

2.4. Wootton Lane is also a rural road of approximately six metres width with limited pedestrian facilities and numerous farm entrances. At the northern end of

Wootton Lane is the B5417, which in turns connects to the A52 and provides access to the north of Derby and Stoke.

B5417

2.5. The B5417 connects Wootton Lane to the A52 to the north of Alton Towers. It has a width of around six metres and has a speed limit of 40 mph.

B5032

2.6. The B5032 connects with Farley Lane in the south, the carriageway is approximately six metres in width. The national speed limit is in force and there is an average travel speed of 35 to 40 mph.

B5030

2.7. The B5030 connects the B5032 to the A50 at Uttoxeter in the south. The carriageway is approximately nine metres wide and is relatively flat with few curves. The national speed limit is in force, with a small section around some new roundabouts with a 40mph restriction, so the average speed is around 55 to 60 mph.

Existing Public Transport

2.8. The use of public transport for visitors to the Resort is limited as trips tend to be long distance, for family parties and at off peak periods when services are limited. However Alton Towers Resort does encourage public transport and provides information on available services on its website.

Train

2.9. There are several train stations within reasonable proximity to Alton Towers, shown below, some of which are linked to Alton Towers via public bus.

Table 2-1 Railway Stations serving Alton Towers Resort

Station	Distance
Uttoxeter	6.44 miles
Blythe Bridge	7.49 miles
Longton	10.42 miles
Barlaston	12.02 miles
Wedgwood	12.04 miles
Tutbury & Hatton	12.11 miles
Stoke-on-Trent	12.26 miles

2.10. As Stoke-on-Trent is a main-line station, in many cases it is cheaper and faster to reach than Uttoxeter. A series of buses connect these two stations with the resort as demonstrated below. These shorter multi-modal journeys that combine bus and rail, from destinations which are within say a 20 mile radius, are a realistic travel option.

Buses

2.11. The Alton Towers website provides a list of bus services and their corresponding fares. There are two bus services running to and from Alton Towers Resort from conurbations in the area (as shown in Table 2.2). These services do have a limited frequency. Alton Towers also operates buses for employees.

Table 2-2 Bus Services to Alton Towers Resort

Service Number	Route	Frequency	First and Last Service Outward Journey	First and Last Service Return Journey
32A	Hanley - Cheadle -- Uttoxeter Railway Station – Rocester – Denstone – Alton – Alton Towers	7 - 9 Journeys per day – every 2 hours	09.00am and 19.45pm	08.00am and 19.15pm
X32	Stoke-on Trent – Alton Towers	4 per weekday		
X52	Nottingham – Derby – Alton Towers	1 per day (main season)	0915	1730

2.12. First PMT (Potteries Motor Traction) operates the X32/32A from Stoke on Trent to Alton Towers Resort and and Notts Derby Buses runs the X52 from Nottingham via Derby and Ashbourne. The First PMT service is operational throughout the period Alton Towers Resort is open to visitors / staff at the Resort or hotel complex.

Employee Travel Plan

2.13. The Alton Towers Resort currently operates an Employee Travel Plan for all employees. The plan encourages all team members to reduce their dependence on the private vehicle by promoting the following policies:

- Car sharing
- Utilising public transport
- Cycling
- Varying travel times to the site
- Working from home if practical
- Using IT to virtually attend meetings rather than travel to them

2.14. The existing Travel Plan was approved by the District and Borough Councils in 2014 (ref. DOC/2014/0066) and is currently being promoted to encourage these principles. Any new employees are advised of the Travel Plan and its initiatives.

3. Available Data

3.1. This section provides a summary of relevant data on visitors and traffic to both the hotels and resort over recent years.

Resort Visitor Data

3.2. The Alton Towers Resort is open during February half term and then from mid-March to early November. Daily visitor numbers to the Resort vary considerably affected as they are by a number of influences including the economic climate, the increase in 'staycation' holidays, day of the week, school holidays, weather, other sporting events and the influence of new attractions.

3.3. Generally the peak periods, approximately 30 days per annum, immediately precede or are during school holidays, when up to 20,000 visitors are attracted to the Theme Park. There are occasions when special events (eg, concerts, Scarefest, Fireworks) are held when this number is exceeded and up to 25,000 attend. However special traffic measures are implemented at these times to reduce the traffic impact on the road network. On other days the volume is considerably less and the majority of days average at less than 15,000 visitors. The proposed hotel extension development will have limited impact on the number of theme park visitors and provides an additional facility for longer stays by visitors with long journeys.

3.4. Theme Park visitors purchase entry in a number of ways including at the ticket booths, group bookings, as special advance online purchase offers, through promotional vouchers or annual Merlin or Resort passes.

Hotel and Lodge Guests

3.5. Data is available from the existing Alton Towers Resort hotels on the hotel guest volumes. The hotels provide accommodation for Park visitors, conference guests and tourists requiring a local base for the regional attractions. The existing hotels have a total of 391 rooms together with 61 double lodges and 5 tree houses in the Enchanted Village, a total of 518 rooms, which can be used for double or family occupancy. The average number of sleepers per room during 2011 was 2.97. Occupancy of 90% is experienced during the peak Park opening period.

3.6. Hotel / lodge guests are permitted to purchase 2 day tickets for the Theme Park alongside their accommodation booking and approximately 52% of hotel guests purchased Theme Park tickets.

3.7. In addition there are hotel / lodge guests that have annual Merlin passes or tickets purchased in other ways that are not recorded but it is estimated that approximately 80 - 90% of accommodation guests visit the Theme Park during the open season. This indicates that up to 1,400 peak day Theme Park visitors could be guests at the available accommodation.

3.8. Hotel / lodge visitors can check in from 3.00pm and check out before 11.00am but are permitted to leave their cars in the car park before or after their stay. They are permitted to enter the Theme Park at 9.00am in advance of other visitors who are not staying at the site. Generally one night accommodation

guests will arrive during the afternoon and use the water park and hotel facilities. This assists in reducing the number of vehicle trips arriving at the Resort in the morning peak hours.

Summary of Key Transport Parameters

3.9. The availability of visitor and transport data enables a number of key transport parameters to be identified. Clearly these parameters will vary based on time of the year, day of the week, weather and events but they enable estimates to be made of the expected impact of the proposed development.

3.10. There are a number of key parameters that determine the volume of vehicles generated by the Alton Towers Resort. These include:

- Annual Volume of Guests
- Seasonal Variation – identification of volume of guests per day
- Modal Split
- Vehicle Occupancy
- Arrival / Departure Profile
- Trip Distribution
- Hotel Stays

3.11. This section sets out the values of each of these parameters that are used in this assessment.

Volume of Resort Visitors

3.12. As described in Section 3 the annual number of visitors to the Resort is dependent on a number of influences including the economic climate, the increase in 'staycation' holidays, the weather and the influence of new attractions.

3.13. Generally, peak days attract approximately 20,000 visitors to the resort. However, on peak days or on occasions when special events (eg, concerts, Scarefest, Fireworks) are held this number can exceed this and at peaks up to 25,000 attend.

Seasonal Variation

3.14. The Peak and Peak+ days at the Resort are when the traffic generation has some effect on the highway network. This was approximately 22 days during 2011 and 34 days during 2010. It is the Resort strategy to encourage guests to use the Resort during the quieter days and not significantly increase the number of Peak days.

Modal Split

3.15. Surveys during 2012 identified the modal split at the Resort as being:

Private car	88.1%
Private hire coach or bus	8.4%
Train and bus	2.1%
Train and taxi	0.7%
Other	0.7%
	100%

3.16. For this analysis these figures are being used to estimate the number of vehicles to be generated by the proposed hotel extension development.

Vehicle Occupancy

3.17. 2008 surveys estimated the vehicle occupancy to be 3.6 persons per car and 40 persons per coach.

Arrival / Departure Profile

3.18. The surveys undertaken in recent years provide accurate figures on the arrival and departure of vehicles at the Resort. Based on those surveys the peak movements of Park visitors occur in the morning and when the Resort closes in the evening. On Peak days the Resort can implement later evening opening to reduce the peaks.

3.19. For this analysis the following proportions are to be applied:

9.00 – 10.00 am - 25% arrivals
6.00 – 7.00 pm - 28% departures

Trip Distribution

3.20. The traffic data collection in 2010 indicates that 54% of trips to the Resort arrive from the south (through Alton) and 46% for the north (through Farley)

3.21. These parameters have been applied in the identification of the traffic impact in Section 4.

Hotel / Lodge Guests

3.22. The hotels and lodges at the Resort are unique and the travel characteristics are quite different than normal business or holiday hotels. Generally guests are visitors to the Park and follow the transport characteristics of seasonal variation, modal split, vehicle occupancy and trip distribution. The main difference is the arrival / departure profile.

3.23. Guests generally arrive during the afternoon or evening on the day before their visit to the Park. This period is the opposite of the Park visitor peaks and in fact reduces the peak traffic movements on the local highway network. A similar pattern of travel is expected for the proposed hotel extension.

4. Traffic Generation and Impact

Existing Resort Traffic Generation

4.1. The number of vehicles generated by the Alton Towers Resort is dependent on the key parameters defined in this report and is affected by a number of factors including the economic climate, the increase in 'staycation' holidays, school holidays, weather, other sporting events and the influence of new attractions

4.2. Based on the key parameters determined above the vehicles generated on a Peak+ day can be estimated as follows:

Number of Resort visitors on Peak+ days = 25,000

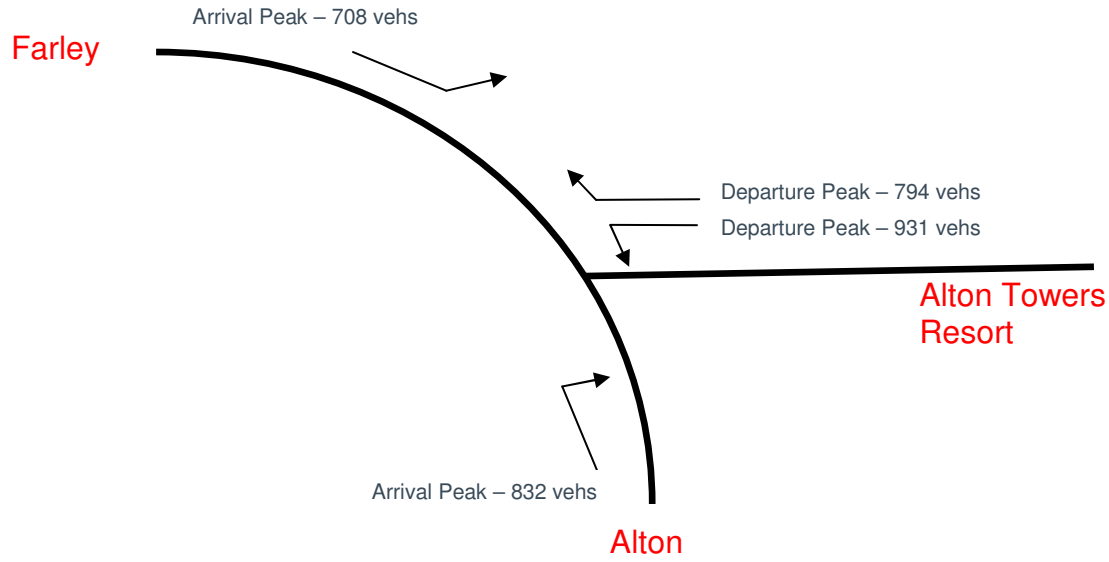
Vehicles generated
25,000 x 88% by car / 3.6 per car = 6,111 cars
25,000 x 8% by bus/coach / 40 = 50 buses / coaches
TOTAL = 6,161 vehicles per Peak+ day

Vehicles per peak hour
6,161 x 25% = 1,540 arrival peak hour
6,161 x 28% = 1,725 departure peak hour

Arrivals (9.00 - 10.00am)
832(54%) vehicles per hour from the south
708(46%) vehicles per hour from the north

Departures (6.00 – 7.00pm)
931(54%) vehicles per hour to the south
794(46%) vehicles per hour to the north

Figure 4-1 Resort Generated Traffic Movements



Hotel Extension Traffic Generation

4.3. The TRICS database that is normally used to estimate traffic generated by hotel developments is not appropriate for this proposal. The development is tourist accommodation and generated trips are considerably different to a normal tourist resort or business hotel. The availability of accommodation has a direct impact on the Resort traffic movements. An estimate has been made below of the estimated generation of traffic movements for the hotel extension based on the parameters established above and the proportion that is additional to existing movements.

Visitors

Total number of additional hotel rooms = 74.
Estimated occupancy on Resort Peak days = 90%
Estimate of maximum number of guests = 74 x 5 = 370
Based on occupancy number of guests = 250 x 90% = 333
Estimated number of guests that visit the theme park = 85% = 283

Vehicles generated

Estimated 1car per occupied accommodation unit
74 x 90% occupancy = 66 vehicles per day

Peak Arrivals – 3.00pm to 6.00pm = 25% per hour = 16 vph

Peak Departures – 4.00pm to 5.00pm = 30% per hour = 20 vph

Number of vehicles that are already Resort visitors = 85% = 56 vehs per day

Number of vehicles that are additional

= 66 vehs generated – 56 vehs already Resort visitors
= approximately 10 vehs per day

Additional Resort Trips

4.4. The estimated number of additional trips related to the hotel extension development is only 10 per day. Due to the nature of the proposed development these will be predominately outside the existing Resort peak period.

Proposal Impact

4.5. The highway network adjacent to the Resort currently carries approximately 800 vehicles in the peak hour on a peak day at the Resort.

4.6. This forecast volume of additional traffic is a very small percentage of the current volume of traffic on the network and the total is less than that experienced in 2010 when no significant congestion was experienced. In 2011 only 22 Peak and Peak+ days were recorded. On the remaining days during the Resort's season the volume of traffic generated will be significantly lower.

4.7. This additional volume of traffic can be accommodated on the peak days and is within the capacity of the highway network.

Parking

4.8. The proposed parking for the hotel extension will be at the eastern side of the development with 88 parking spaces. This will provide for hotel guests and staff together 14 spaces for the proposed Lodges and Tree houses. A small area of drop off parking and 5 disabled parking spaces will be located at the reception area.

4.9. The analysis above estimates that the proposed development will generate a minimal number of additional vehicles at the Resort as the majority are existing visitors. However, providing dedicated parking adjacent to the hotel will ensure that the proposal will not impact on the operation of the Resort and other accommodation.

Construction Traffic

4.10. The hotel extension will be constructed over a period of 16 months, this will include two periods during the winter months when the Theme Park is closed, during which time there will be construction traffic associated with the development. Areas on site will be allocated for storage of equipment and hardware and there will be no need for any off site provision.

4.11. Alton Towers Resort has vast experience of managing these types of projects with minimal impact on local highways or traffic movements.

5. Conclusion

5.1. This Transportation Assessment has been carried out in relation to the proposed additional 74 room hotel extension at the Alton Towers Resort site in Staffordshire. The proposed development will be accessible via the existing Alton Towers access.

5.2. The main users of the accommodation during peak periods will be visitors to the Resort who arrive during the day or in the evening when day visitors are leaving after spending a day at the Resort. The additional accommodation could potentially reduce the numbers of vehicles to Alton Towers Resort during the existing peak hours of the site.

Transport Benefits

In addition to there being no significant additional traffic impact there are a number of other transport benefits to the proposed development of additional accommodation.

Reduced peak period traffic movements

5.3. The main users of the accommodation will be Resort visitors whose arrival and departure will be spread across the day therefore having little or no conflict with day visitors. Visitors may arrive later in the day and leave earlier on the following day and include the opportunity explore other attractions in the area.

5.4. The additional accommodation will potentially reduce the number of vehicles to and from the Resort during existing peak hours of the site.

Provide accommodation for long distance visitors

5.5. Visitor surveys have indicated that the Resort attracts visitors from a wide area with many living more than 2 hours away. The availability of accommodation will enable visitors to share their travel over more than one day thereby reducing fatigue, unnecessary rushing and avoiding peak hours or routes.

5.6. This improves road safety and reduces the likelihood of related accidents on the highway network.

Visitors can experience other local attractions

5.7. Visitors that are able to use the proposed accommodation will have adequate time in the area to experience other local attractions including the Staffordshire Moors.

5.8. This will further increase the tourism in the area and provides benefit to the local economy.

Enable more visitors to use public transport

5.9. The ability to travel outside the commuter peaks enables more visitors to consider using public transport as rail fares often reduce by mid morning and trains become less crowded.

5.10. These additional transport benefits further enhance the feasibility of the development of accommodation at Alton Towers.

5.11. The existing Staff Travel Plan for the Resort will be extended to include the proposed development and any new staff will be encouraged to use alternative forms for transport to the private car, therefore minimising the number of employee vehicle trips to the site.

5.12. There are therefore no valid reasons for refusing the proposed development at this site, on highway or transportation grounds.