Alton Towers Resort

Revised Phase 2
Pod Development

Transport Assessment

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February 2018

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Document history

Job number: AT011 – H010071			**Document ref:** **Revised Phase 2 Lodge Development** **Transport Assessment**			
Revision	Purpose description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
1	Draft	JWT		HW/MMC		12/02/18
2	Includes initial comments	JWT				17/02/18

Table of contents

Chapter

Pages

Tables

Figures

1. Introduction

1.1. This Transport Assessment has been prepared on behalf of the Merlin Entertainment Group in support of a planning application for phase 2 of the Enchanted Village Lodge development within the Alton Towers Resort in Staffordshire.

1.2. The first phase of the lodge accommodation was approved on 22nd May 2014, comprised of 61 double lodges and 10 tree houses. That phase has been constructed and is now being occupied (with the exception of 5 of the tree houses which will be constructed at a later date). The restaurant was to be built in two phases; the second phase is to be built with this phase of the Enchanted Village.

1.3. The second phase of the Lodge development was approved (Application Number SMD/2016/0040) on 27th April 2016, comprised of 35 double lodges, with a maximum 5 person occupancy, with associated reception building, tipis, service buildings, hard and soft landscaping, parking and drainage works. Condition 12 of that approval was the revision of the existing Employee Travel Plan to be extended and updated to include the proposed development. The revised Travel Plan was submitted and discharged on 12th June 2017.

1.4. This application is to amend that approved Lodge development with different accommodation units (smaller Pods) but providing a similar number of a guest capacity

The Proposed Development

1.5. It is proposed to construct 102 pods, with a maximum 4 person occupancy, to the north of the existing Enchanted Village Lodges which lie to the east of the existing hotel complex.

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.

1.7. Phase 2 of the Lodge development will provide an increase in the available Resort accommodation by 102 pods (102 keys) from the existing total of 592 keys made up of:

Alton Towers Hotel	175 keys
Splash Landings	216 keys
CBeebies Land Hotel	76 keys
Enchanted Village	120 keys
Tree Houses	5 keys
Total	**592**

This is an increase of 17% and in line with the Resort's Long Term Plan.

1.8. 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.

1.9. This Transport Assessment examines the total development.

1.10. As part of the development it is proposed to provide a pedestrian link into the Pods from the existing car park to the north of the site.

1.11. Guests will park in Car park J, check in at the reception building and then walk to their pod with their luggage, this will be a vehicle less site. With the exception of the emergency services and golf cart service vehicles.

1.12. 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 Development Location

Contents of the Document

1.13. 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.

1.14. 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

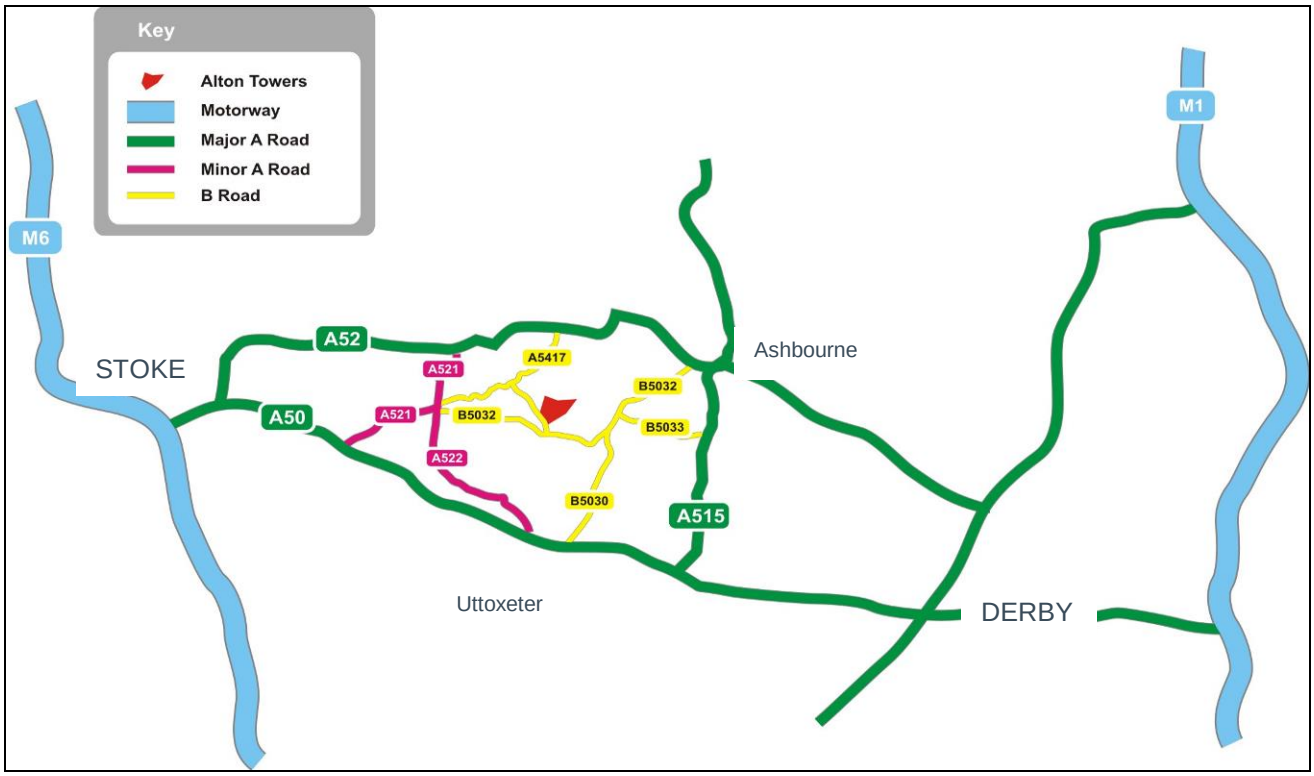
1.15. In summary, the main users of the proposed pods will be resort guests who's arrival and departure will be spread across the day therefore having little or no conflict with day visitors to the theme park. Indeed, the additional accommodation, in line with the statements provided for the Long Term Plan, will potentially reduce the number of vehicles to and from Alton Towers Resort during existing peak hours of the site. There are also additional transport benefits related to the increased on-site accommodation.

2. The Resort Location

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 is illustrated below.

Figure 2-1 Location of 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. 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 restriction of 30 mph. At the southern end of Farley Lane is 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 and has 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 that result in an average speed of 55 to 60 mph.

Existing Public Transport

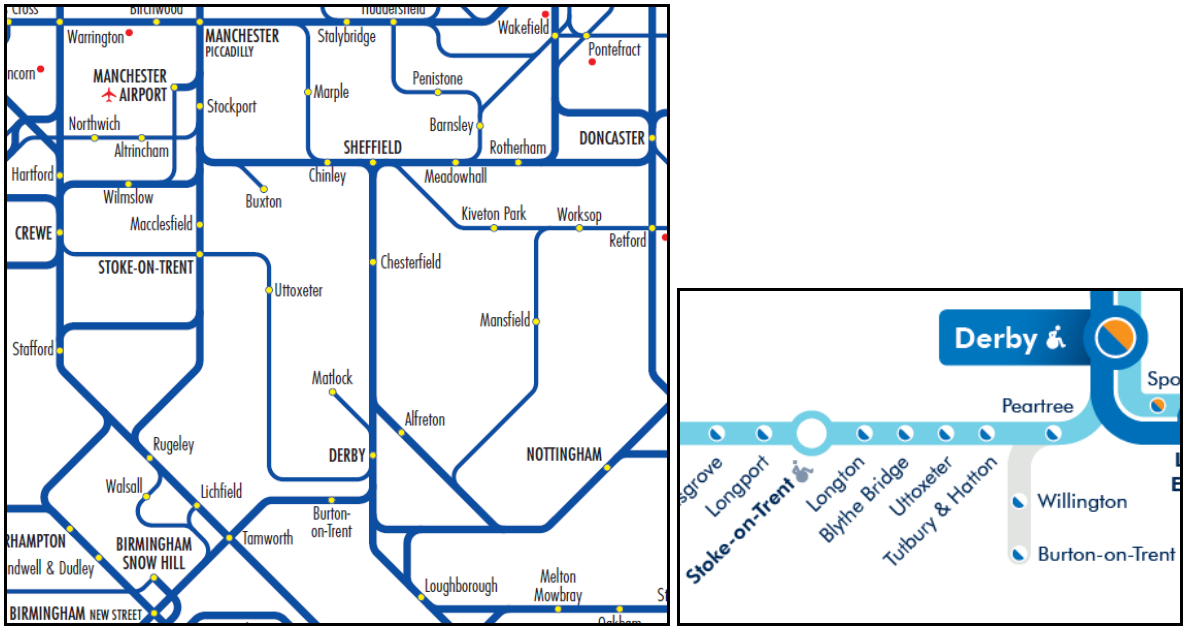
Train

2.8. There are several train stations within reasonable proximity to Alton Towers Resort on the line between Stoke-on-Trent and Derby, shown below with road distances, some of which are linked to Alton Towers via bus.

Station	Distance
Uttoxeter	9.2 miles
Blythe Bridge	9.6 miles
Longton	14.7 miles
Stoke-on-Trent	16.8 miles
Tutbury and Hatton	18.6 miles
Derby	24.3 miles

2.9. As Stoke-on-Trent is a main-line station, in many cases it is cheaper and faster to reach than Uttoxeter. The national rail network and local line are shown below.

Figure 2-2 Railway Stations



Buses

2.10. Over recent years local bus services serving Alton Towers have reduced due to financial constraints and poor patronage.

2.11. There are two bus services during Alton Towers' peak periods that provide direct access to the Resort from conurbations in the area. These services do have a very limited frequency as shown below.

Service Number Operator	Route	Frequency	First and Last Service
Notts - Derby	Nottingham Broadmarsh – Derby railway station – Ashbourne bus station – Alton Towers	1 journey per day in each direction	Arriving - 10 50 Departing – 17.30
X32 FIRST	Stoke railway station – Alton Towers coach park - Uttoxeter	1 journey per day in each direction	Arriving - 10 39 Departing – 17.20

Walking and Cycling

2.12. Given that the approach roads to the Resort are rural in character and have no safe pedestrian or cycling facilities, this is not considered to be a viable form of transport. The Alton Towers Resort is also located on top of a steep hill making cycling in particular even more impractical for all but the most dedicated cyclists. Alton Towers Resort does however provide cycle racks and showers for employees if they are inclined to walk, run or cycle. There is also an on-site physiotherapist.

2.13. A review of the potential cycle paths and road network in the area has been carried out and in view of the topography and unsafe narrow access roads there is very little opportunity to increase employee cycling and it would not be appropriate for hotel guests.

Travel Plan

2.14. The Alton Towers Resort currently operates an Employee and Hotel Guest Travel Plan, updated June 2017. The plan encourages all team members and hotel guests 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

2.15. The existing Travel Plan was approved by the District and Borough Councils in 2017 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 Pod 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 accommodation consists of total of 592 keys as explained in para 1.7. The average number of sleepers per room is 3.2. Occupancy of 90% is experienced during the peak periods. The proposed Pod development will increase the availability by 102 keys (17%) which is in line with the Long Term Plan for the Resort.

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 2,000 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 9.30am 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 Pod 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 pod development.

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

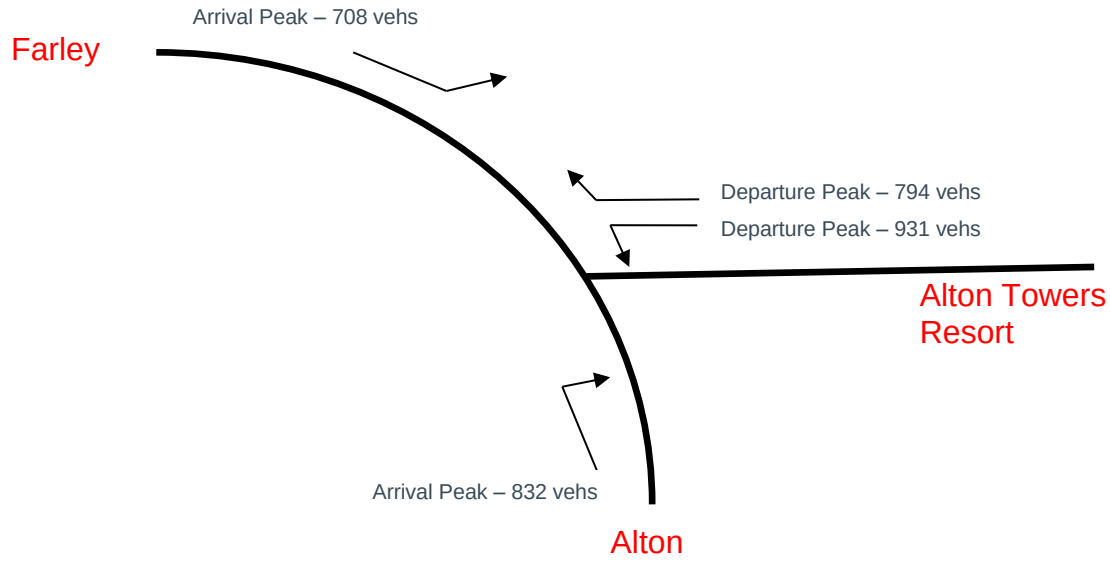
Vehicles generated
25,000 x 88% by car / 3.6 per car = 6,111 cars
25,000 x 8% by bus/coach / 40 = 50 buses / coaches
TOTAL = 6,161 vehicles per Peak+ day

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



Lodge Development 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 hotel or lodge 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 lodges based on the parameters establish above and the proportion that is additional to existing movements.

Visitors

Total number of additional pod units = 102
Estimated occupancy on Resort Peak days = 90%
Estimate of maximum number of guests = 102 x 4 = 408
Based on occupancy number of guests = 408 x 90% = 367
Estimated number of guests that visit the theme park = 85% = 312

Vehicles generated

Estimated 1 car per occupied pod unit
102 x 90% occupancy = 92 vehicles per day

Peak Arrivals – 3.00pm to 6.00pm = 25% per hour = 23 vph

Peak Departures – 4.00pm to 5.00pm = 30% per hour = 28 vph

Number of vehicles that are already Resort visitors = 85% = 78 vehs per day

Number of additional vehicles per day = approximately 14 vehs per day

Additional Resort Trips

4.4. The estimated number of additional trips related to the proposed Pod development is only 14 per day. Only an increase of 5 vehicles per day, compared to that already approved by the Council and acceptable to the Highways Authority. Lodge phase 2 = 9 vehicles 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 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.

Potential 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 on site accommodation.

Reduced peak period traffic movements

4.8. The main users of the accommodation will be Alton Towers 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 facilities within the Resort during their stay.

4.9. 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

4.10. Visitor surveys have indicated that the Alton Towers Resort attracts visitors from a wide area with many living more than 2 hours away which takes in the main conurbations of Oxford and north London to the south and much of Manchester and Sheffield to the north. 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.

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

Visitors can experience other local attractions

4.12. 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 and local countryside.

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

Enable more visitors to use public transport

4.14. 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.

4.15. This will increase the attractiveness of the use of public transport.

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

Parking

4.17. The proposed parking for the Phase 2 Pod development will be at the northern end of the development (Car Park J) as was approved previously for the extant consent for the lodge phase 2 development. It is proposed that bays will be allocated for use by guests in Car Park J which will have a dedicated pedestrian access to the Lodges. 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.

4.18. Clearly, predominantly using the existing tarmac car park provides the flexibility to use the available parking for varying levels of occupation without impacting on the total theme park and hotel parking required for the resort.

Construction Traffic

4.19. Each sub-phase of the Pods will be constructed, where possible, during the winter months when the Theme Park is closed, during which time there will be construction traffic associated with the site. Areas on site will be allocated for storage of equipment and hardware and there will be no need for any off site provision. 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 102 pods development on the Alton Towers Resort site in Staffordshire. The proposed lodges will be accessible via the existing Alton Towers access.

5.2. This development will provide accommodation for existing guests at the Resort and is not expected to generate any new guests. The main users of the pods 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.

5.3. There are a number of additional transport benefits, described in Section 4, that further enhance the feasibility of the development of additional accommodation at Alton Towers Resort. This proposal increases the available accommodation at the Resort by 17% and is consistent with the Long Term Plan for the Resort.

5.4. The existing Travel Plan, updated 2017, 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.

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