



Local people invited to share their views at consultation events for a £500 million investment in Suffolk.

Valley Ridge is announcing revised plans to revise its £500m high-quality leisure-focused family-friendly-resort in Suffolk, launching a major consultation exercise after Easter, and will be submitting a new planning application in the Summer, to deliver the resort by 2024.

The new plans turn this from primarily a day-resort centre to a staycation venue, with most guests on the site at any one time staying for at least a few days.

The casino, gaming room and nightclub have gone, as has the concentration on retail. The ski slope is now aimed at the family market, with a ski slope of about 180m – and about 47 metres wide, perfect for family skiing and comparable with the largest indoor slopes in the UK.

The focus is now on all-year round leisure, from swimming, spas and a wellness centre; a water-park with a lazy river, a wave pool and a kids pool; outdoor pursuits like climbing and high ropes, zipwires, archery and adventure golf; as well as a winter park with toboggan runs, ice-caves, and of course the ski slope.

There will be plenty of restaurants and cafes to cater for all needs, but the self-catering lodges have been upgraded, with around 50% extra space in the 450 to 500 of these cabin-type lodges, as well as around 450 rooms in the new four-star hotel.

Valley Ridge will be part of the local community, no more so in the real impact in around 1800 jobs and training on the site, and around 2000 during construction.

Public consultation on the proposals begins this week, with over 7,000 homes in the area being sent information leaflets on the proposals. People can find out more about the proposals – and register for the events - by visiting the project’s website at ValleyRidge.site.

Simon Padgett from Valley Ridge said:

“The new project team are determined to deliver our new vision of a family-focused resort offering great entertainment all year round. With best-in-class winter sports and activities for families – including one of the longest indoor ski slopes in the UK – we are very excited to be bringing these proposals forward”.

Ends

For further enquiries, call Richard Patient on 07747 615918 or email Richard.patient@thorncliffe.com

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Notes to Editors

1. Research suggests this development will have a knock-on effect in the Suffolk economy, with small and large businesses in Suffolk likely to create up to an extra 900 jobs.
2. Both during construction and when we open, we will be focussing on local procurement and local employment, including training, as much as possible.
3. We expect just shy of a million visitors per year – of which around 430,000 will be staycation visitors.

4. There is a new team taking this forward that has learnt the lessons of the old SnOasis site, with a focus on delivery. The team includes board advisers – Robert B Cook and David Church - that joined last year, from the leisure and finance industry, that underline the high-calibre nature of this new plan.
5. Part of the new focus will be on biodiversity and sustainability, with for instance a desire to be a carbon neutral development, and a commitment to achieve an excellent rating towards the whole built environment lifecycle (BREEAM). This includes focus on the travel plan, with electric vehicle charging, and accessibility via a range of transport options, including shuttle buses.
6. Whilst the details of the traffic plans have not yet been worked up, we can say that one of our primary goals is ensuring local roads are not adversely affected, and access and servicing arrangements, agreed already under the old scheme, are updated to take the new plans into account. We're working on models that assume between around two-thirds and three quarters of the car spaces are being used for those staying overnight.
7. We will be updating proposals for cycle and pedestrian improvements, potential works include a cycle path between Claydon and the site and a pedestrian crossing on the B1113; we will detail things like payments towards highway improvements, twin-queuing lanes into the park, and necessary signage along the major trunk roads for tourists; we will highlight works at Stowmarket railway station and our commitment to provide a shuttle bus from that station and other locations.
8. We will also show that most day visitors to the site will come outside of the main morning peak hours, particularly given attractions for day use will not open until at least 10am.

9. The site will become a habitat of significant ecological value such as woodland and species-rich grassland. A good number of ponds will be built to benefit great-crested newts, grass snakes and insects such as dragonflies, and there will be a wildlife friendly lighting plan to ensure that bats and other nocturnal creatures will continue to use the site. Whilst some of these areas will remain secluded, we hope to encourage visitors to access other areas to enjoy butterflies, birdlife, wildflowers and many of the other wildlife that will find their way here.
10. Our architects are experienced in the leisure market – Holder Mathias. They lead a team that will bring forward proposals that will enhance the beauty and quality of the site, respect the landscape, follow the existing topography, and reduce the visual impact of the site from elsewhere.
11. People can register on the website for the six Question and Answer events planned after Easter. We are using a very accessible consultation platform called communityUK – used by many local authorities to undertake their own consultation. Any resident that needs help accessing the site can call our freephone helpline on 0800 955 1042 or send us a note using our freepost address or email valleyridge@yours shout.org.