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Kildare Village development to target rich Chinese

Outlet centre to spend €50m building development with 36 additional shops

Overseas visitor numbers up 53% and 'Chinese led the growth, at number one'

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Kildare Village, the fashion outlets complex just off the M7 motorway near Kildare town, says it intends to target larger numbers of wealthy travellers from China, Russia and other emerging economies following planning approval for a major expansion.

The village, where 550 staff are employed in 60 shops, has secured planning permission for a €50 million development adjacent to its existing site. It will create 500 additional jobs, including 120 in construction.

The development will add 36 retail outlets to the centre, including a number of new

brands not operating there, and will increase its footprint by about 60 per cent.

Luxury brands

The village has luxury names such as Calvin Klein, Coach, DKNY and Juicy Couture, which sell out-of-season fashions at reduced prices.

The intended development, which received final clearance this week from An Bord Pleanála, also includes restaurants, a tourist centre and about 400 car parking spaces.

Maria McGovern, the centre's director, said the expansion was essential to marketing the centre overseas. She said it would step up its marketing efforts to "cosmopolitan,

wealthy travellers" from outside Europe, especially China and Russia. Chinese shoppers are the number one users of Kildare Village's tax-refund service for non-European shoppers.

Chinese visitors

She said the number of overseas visitors had increased 53 per cent so far this year. "Chinese led the growth, at number one. Second were Malaysian visitors and Russians were third," she said.

The centre has a long-standing relationship with the Chinese embassy, and its executives have visited the country several times to attend trade fairs in conjunction with Tourism Ireland, the State tourism marketing body. It has also sponsored the Chinese new year festival in Dublin for the past four years.

The centre is one of nine owned by Value Retail, a multinational company. It effectively acts as landlord to the shops, charging a fee estimated at about 12.5 per cent of sales.

VALUE RETAIL.