

**Our ref: JCD0064**

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Dear Ceiri,

## **2019/00871/OUT - Land at Model Farm, Port Road, Rhoose**

This letter provides an up to date overview of planning application 2019/00871/OUT. It will explain the background, current position as well as the environmental, social and economic matters relevant to consideration of the application.

### **BACKGROUND**

Nearly 20 years ago L&G acquired land near three airports in England and here in the Vale of Glamorgan. L&G has made a considerable investment to get to this point. A key milestone was achieved when the site was included in the current LDP that was adopted in 2017, alongside the allocation at St Athan in the Enterprise Zone. The intention to bring the site forward to accommodate space for employment has been known to all parties with an interest in the site for many years. The process to bring about vacant possession of the site is guided by law. It is a procedure that is frequently used and takes into account the interests of both landowner and tenant.

The developable area of the land owned by L&G was identified as part of the LDP process to avoid landscape impact in particular. LDP Policy MG10 is the St Athan Cardiff Airport Enterprise Zone and for employment purposes the allocation comprises land adjacent to Cardiff Airport and Port Road, Rhoose and at St Athan. The development of this enterprise zone was to be guided by a masterplan that includes a 42 hectare extension to Porthkerry Country Park. This planning application is the means to deliver the extension to Porthkerry Country Park for the wider enterprise zone.

In February 2021 the 'Future Wales: the National Plan 2040' was published by the Welsh Government (WG). Future Wales (FW) is the highest tier of development plan to be taken into account when determining planning applications. FW identifies Cardiff Airport as an essential part of Wales' strategic transport infrastructure. It is an international gateway connecting Wales to the world and is an important driver within the Welsh economy. Cardiff Airport is located within the Cardiff Airport and Bro Tathan Enterprise Zone which offers opportunities for investment in the site and surrounding areas. The Enterprise Zone offers a wide range of development sites and business accommodation, providing opportunities for the development of bespoke facilities or investment in existing accommodation. The planning application submitted by L&G is delivering a key strategic site as sought by the national plan.

### **SUMMARY OF CURRENT POSITION**

In July 2021 this application was recommended for approval, a S106 agreement was completed, and a decision notice issued. Notwithstanding the current reconsideration of the application, an internationally known company is still interested in occupying a large part of the proposed business park. Their presence would provide high quality jobs, attract further investment and generate a significant boost for the local economy.

L&G remains committed to delivering the employment allocation in the LDP. The content of the application and the planning policies applicable remain the same as in July 2021. A plan-led

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approach is the most effective way to secure sustainable development. The current LDP is in place until at least 2026.

The delivery report submitted with the application explains the contribution the site can make to fulfil a supply of readily available and attractive employment land in the region. Measures have been put in place to satisfy concerns expressed by Cardiff Airport. There are no technical objections, including traffic impact, to the proposed business park from the statutory consultees.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The primary objective of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) (PPW) is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. PPW paragraph 1.18 states that the planning system secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development, to ensure that social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated. Section 5 recognises that *“A Prosperous Wales can be achieved through increased economic activity across all sectors and at all scales.”* It continues at paragraph 5.4.4, *“Wherever possible, planning authorities should encourage and support developments which generate economic prosperity and regeneration”.*

### **Environment**

The site is not located within a Flood Risk Zone and there is a very low risk of surface water flooding to the site.

The quality of land that could be used for agriculture is a planning consideration. The vast majority (98.3%) of the land is graded 3b or less. This grade is not considered to be the best and most versatile agricultural land afforded protection in planning policy.

As noted above, the enterprise zone policy requires an extension to Porthkerry Park. The 48-hectare extension to the park, which is part of the planning application is for public consumption to enjoy the environment. Initial works will include new footpaths, trails, footbridges, together with associated signage and furniture. It is not feasible to retain all the habitat within the business park site area. It is possible however to re-create the habitat on land proposed to form the Porthkerry Country Park extension. In order to facilitate these works and on-going maintenance a financial contribution is required.

Just over 10 hectares of green space will be retained within the business park. Overall, the proposals will result in:

- nearly two miles (3.01 km) of new hedgerows, plus 300m of hedgerows to be restored through additional planting;
- nearly 4 acres (1.5 hectares) of hazel dominated scrub planting;
- nearly 2.5 acres (1 hectare) of scrub planting; and
- over 6 acres (2.5 hectares) of new broadleaved woodland planting.

Natural Resources Wales has no objection to the proposed business park. The Council’s Ecologist has stated that the mitigation target set out within the Biodiversity and Development SPG has been met

### **Social**

The objective of the LDP is to create a cluster of economic activity around Cardiff Airport. Progress to date has included the location of Aston Martin at St Athan. The St Athan site was also an option for a giga factory to supply EV batteries to the automotive sector.

The proposed business park sits immediately adjacent to the airport. Across the Port Road from the business park is the site for the Cardiff and Vale College new campus investment. This includes a

dedicated centre for advanced manufacturing technology. Cardiff and Vale College has 30,000 full time equivalent students and is one of the UK's largest further education institutions and the largest provider of Apprenticeships in Wales. The College is also able to access and provide a range of Welsh Government funded training schemes to meet the needs of employers. The colocation of the business park and the college campus provides an opportunity for employers, employees and students to collaborate to the benefit of young people entering work and for ongoing training and development.

A Training and Development Scheme for future employees will be implemented before occupation of any part of the business park. This will provide opportunities for local people to learn new skills, improve upon existing qualifications or retrain, thereby helping to increase the average wage and standard of living in the immediate area.

The business park has the capacity to support significant financial benefit for the local residents in sectors that will pay in excess of the current average for the Vale of Glamorgan. Overall, the development is expected to result in net additional wages of up to £26 million in the construction phase and £94 million in the operational phase.

For travel to the business park, airport or college the proposal includes an active travel corridor to form part of a route between Cardiff Airport and Barry. It would also combine with the active travel linkages between Rhoose to Barry, as well as Five Mile Lane and Culverhouse Cross to Cardiff Airport.

The proposals also include measures for public transport. Bus services (303 Barry to Rhoose) can connect into the business park. The business park, Cardiff airport and the college could utilise the T9 bus service, which would provide good connectivity to Cardiff.

In addition, land at the business park is safeguarded for a rapid transit link between the Vale of Glamorgan railway and Cardiff Airport. The extent of land to be safeguarded was determined in collaboration with Transport for Wales. The land safeguarded is sufficient to accommodate a station as well as the rail link. When complete, this will greatly improve wider Airport accessibility via public transport.

Green space at the business park could be used for exercise, work breaks and lunch breaks. Wellbeing will be enhanced more broadly as it is anticipated that the extension to Porthkerry Country Park will result in increased visitors. The demand and interest in access to green and healthy environments has increased as people strive to achieve a balance between work, home and recreation.

## **Economy**

Sutton Consulting and RPS completed a delivery report for the business park, which sets out the contribution the development would make to the supply of employment land in the Cardiff Capital Region. There is a lack of Grade A employment floorspace in the B1, B2 & B8 markets and a lack of readily developable employment sites. This is now a structural weakness of the Welsh economy. There are few international class strategic sites of this nature that can underpin Wales' inward investment efforts to attract or retain mobile projects, particularly in value added sectors.

The total cost to construct the business park is estimated at up to £180m. The latest study from CBI and Oxford Economics suggests that for every £1 spent on construction, this creates £2.92 of value to the UK economy. This results in a total direct and indirect investment in the economy of over £525 million as a result of this development. Construction is estimated to last up to 10 years and generate up to 1,050 person years of construction sector employment. This equates to the creation of 104 full time equivalent jobs.

When built and functioning as a business park the development has the potential to generate gross wages of £127 million, and when factoring in leakages this equates to a £94 million net increase in local wages. Based on the overall floorspace of the proposed development (circa 160,000m<sup>2</sup>) and

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using Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) indicative floorspace densities, the anticipated level of employment floorspace could create the capacity to accommodate approximately 4,375 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs. Some of these jobs may, however, be taken by those living outside the Vale of Glamorgan, therefore, when considering displacement and leakage the overall net increase in jobs for local people is estimated at 3,225.

## **NEXT STEPS**

After nearly 20 years of investment by L&G if planning permission is granted the next steps, including securing vacant possession to implement the permission, will be taken to realise the economic potential and associated benefits as outlined above. This fully accords with the National Development Framework – Future Wales.

Yours sincerely,  
for RPS Consulting Services Ltd



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