

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014-2015**

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL  
COMMITTEE  
3 JULY 2014**

**REPORT OF:  
SERVICE DIRECTOR  
PLANNING**

	Agenda Item No.8
<p><b>APPLICATION NO: 14/0301 OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED EXCEPT FOR ACCESS, FOR DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING CLASS B1, B2, AND B8 USES; A HOTEL/RESIDENTIAL TRAINING CENTRE (CLASS C1/C2); AND ANCILLARY USES WITHIN CLASS A1, A2, A3; ASSOCIATED ENGINEERING AND GROUND MODELLING WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, CAR PARKING, DRAINAGE AND ACCESS FOR ALL USES; PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE (INCLUDING ENERGY CENTRE(S)); LANDSCAPING AND ALL ANCILLARY ENABLING WORKS. LAND SOUTH OF JUNCTION 34, M4, HENSOL, VALE OF GLAMORGAN. OBSERVATIONS REQUESTED BY ADJACENT PLANNING AUTHORITY: THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL.</b></p>	

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To give this Authority's observations on the planning application, which is to be determined by The Vale of Glamorgan Council.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

To forward the observations of this Authority to The Vale of Glamorgan Council

### 3. APPLICATION DETAILS

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has requested the observations of this Council, as neighbouring Local Planning Authority on an outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access, for development comprising B1, B2, and B8 uses; a hotel/residential training centre (class C1/C2); and ancillary uses within Class A1, A2, A3; associated engineering and ground modelling works and infrastructure, car parking, drainage and access for all uses; provision of infrastructure (including energy centre(s)); landscaping and all ancillary enabling works.

The proposed development will be accommodated on 67.7 hectares of land located to the south of Junction 34 of the M4 and to the north and west of the land currently occupied by Renishaw (formerly occupied by Bosch). The development will be accessed via the existing highway which runs south from the Junction 34 roundabout and lies immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The existing Renishaw manufacturing facility adjacent to the application site was formerly occupied by Bosch, which relocated its operations to Hungary in 2011. The premises and surrounding land is now owned and operated by Renishaw PLC, a British engineering company based in Gloucestershire, which has recently undertaken extensive renovations of the former Bosch buildings to meet their own operating requirements and which now employs approximately 91 people. It is the applicant's intention to expand their current facilities to part of the application site and for the remainder to be used to provide other employment related development. It is suggested that this is required as enabling development to meet the costs associated with the further refurbishment of the former Bosch buildings.

The proposed development will include the following uses:

<b><u>Use</u></b>	<b><u>Area (ha)</u></b>	<b><u>Floorspace (sq.m)</u></b>
Renishaw Expansion (Area A) Comprising B1, B2 and B8 uses	9.57	33,909.61
Area B Comprising B1, B2 and B8 uses	18.57	92,903.04
Area C Comprising B1, B2 and B8 uses, of which:	6.64	25,548.34
Ancillary A1, A2, A3 uses	-	1,300
Area D (Hotel/ Residential Training uses)	1.45	9,290.30
Energy Centre	0.08	-

Access Infrastructure	0.98	-
Green Infrastructure	30.57	-
<b>Total Application Site Area</b>	<b>67.77</b>	<b>162,951.29</b>

The application documentation advises that the current proposal is in line with The Vale of Glamorgan adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (1996-2011) and the emerging Draft Local Plan. As a national and international company, the applicant is a significant employer and the proposed expansion will have an immediate beneficial effect on direct and indirect employment and new market opportunities, which would include current residents and businesses located within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The proposed development will be accessed using the existing highway south of Junction 34 of the M4, which is currently used to access the Renishaw manufacturing facility. As part of the application, both the M4 Junction 34 and the existing junction on the site access road that leads to Pendoylan will be upgraded to provide a traffic signal controlled arrangement.

As indicated above, the application includes 30.51 ha of green infrastructure, which will include areas of open space, strategic drainage provision, ecological protection and mitigation areas, retained tree preservation areas and landscaping.

The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which examines a number of issues including socio-economics, landscape and visual amenity, ecology and nature conservation, archaeology and cultural heritage, transport and access, air quality, noise and vibration, flood risk and drainage, ground conditions and agricultural and soil resources.

In view of the close proximity of the site to the administrative boundary of Rhondda Cynon Taf, there has and continues to be close liaison with officers of this Council, in order to monitor the economic impact on the County Borough.

## **SITE APPRAISAL**

The application site is located to the south of the M4 motorway, to the south-east of Junction 34 and the administrative boundary of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The South Wales mainline railway line and the existing Renishaw manufacturing facility forms the southern boundary and the Felin Isaf Castle Mound Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) lies close to the western boundary. Miskin Manor, which is Grade II Listed Building, is located approximately 500m to the north-west. A waste water treatment plant and agricultural land lie to the east of the site.

The site extends to 67.7 ha and comprises agricultural fields and existing areas of woodland, which are surrounded by low-lying marshy ground. There are a number of watercourses within and running in close proximity to the application site, which is located within a flood zone. Land to the north-west contains wetland

habitats and to the south-west is the River Ely and associated floodplain, which is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The vehicular access to the site is from the west, which links to Junction 34 of the M4 motorway. Although the railway line lies directly to the south of the application site, the nearest railway station is approximately 2km away at Pontyclun. There are no Public Rights of Way (PROW) within the application site, but a number are located in close proximity, to the east, south-west and north.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

Planning history records are held by The Vale of Glamorgan Council however, the Planning Statement accompanying the current application confirms that the site has been the subject of a number of previous applications including in 1989, an outline consent for B1 (light industry), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) uses for the majority of the current application site.

## **PUBLICITY**

Publicity of the planning application, including site and press notices, will have been undertaken by The Vale of Glamorgan Council.

## **CONSULTATION**

Consultation with statutory consultees on the planning application will have been undertaken by The Vale of Glamorgan Council.

In response to the application, consultation has also been carried out with relevant internal departments within the Council, in order to inform the recommendation to Members and a summary of the comments is provided below.

**Regeneration** – has raised the following observations:

- The proposal represents a significant private sector led development.
- The site enjoys easy access from Rhondda Cynon Taf and the County has the potential to benefit from employment opportunities and enterprise.
- The proposal would unlock the employment potential of the site and encourage enterprise.
- The proposal offers the potential to realise significant job opportunities.
- The development of hotel accommodation could impact on existing local accommodation. Provision should only be considered where it is demonstrated that there is sufficient market capacity to support such a development.
- The extent of A1, A2, A3 uses on the site could impact on Retail / Office provision and jobs at Talbot Green.

**Transportation Section** – following the initial consideration of the Transport Assessment, objections were raised in relation to the impact on highway safety and the free flow of traffic, principally along the A4119 and A473, but also along the segregated left-turn lane on the M4 west arm slip onto the A4119 at Junction 34. Following discussions with officers and further consideration of the submitted information, the following conclusions have been reached:

- The TA submitted recognises that congestion already exists along the A4119 and the A473 and that the proposal would exacerbate the situation to the detriment of highway safety and free flow of traffic.
- The proposed development would have substantial impact on these strategic highway networks and the developer has not proposed any mitigation measures to mitigate their impact nor has offered any financial contribution in compliance with the Council's adopted SPG to mitigate the impact of the proposed development. It is on this basis that highway objections were previously been raised.
- It also should be noted that the site does not benefit from good public transport links and therefore the proposed development would be predominantly car borne which gives cause for concern.
- The proposal has not addressed RCT concerns regarding its impact on the A4119 and the A473 which is at and above capacity at peak times. However, further to discussions with the planning case officer, the previous highway objections can be removed subject to the implementation of a transport tariff in accordance with RCT's SPG.
- In light of the above assessment, no highway objections are raised subject to the developer making a transport tariff contribution of £169,725 towards improving the strategic highway network.

**Land Reclamation & Engineering** – the application lies outside the boundary of Rhondda Cynon Taf and no specific flood risk observations are raised. The application lies within a flood zone and 20m of a watercourse and the proposals for surface water drainage include discharge into sustainable systems, main sewers and ponds. It is noted the applicant has provided an FCA and is correspondence with Welsh Water.

**Public Health and Protection** - raises no objections.

**Countryside, Landscape and Ecology** - the ecology chapter of the ES includes the expected required habitat and species surveys. It is obvious that habitat of high ecological value is being affected within the context of an associated larger area of habitat (the wet grasslands and woodlands to the east of the ex-Bosch Factory) which presents habitat of extremely high nature conservation value. It is clearly important that The Vale of Glamorgan and NRW review all of the protected species issues and habitat impacts and ensure that appropriate and adequate mitigation is provided, if planning permission is granted.

The ecology chapter of the ES also makes reference to an 'Ecological Mitigation Strategy' that has been developed that would be in place at the outset of the development. This plan would be further developed into a more detailed 'Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan' as the development is brought

forward in consultation with Natural Resources Wales and the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Ecologist.

The Council's Ecologist has noted that the strategy includes measures to protect, maintain and enhance retained habitats within the application site and to create new habitats and features of value to wildlife which would ensure their value to wildlife is maintained in the long term. It is suggested however that the Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan is used to explore how habitat mitigation, compensation and enhancement on this site can contribute to habitat connectivity within the Ely Valley and across the M4 in conjunction with regard to other projects and objectives for other species for which the M4 has a significant recognised impact. This is important in contributing to the wider habitat connectivity opportunities and to establish an RCT perspective for the Plan.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

The relevant Development Plan is The Vale of Glamorgan Adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (1996-2011) and The Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan Deposit Plan Written Statement (November 2013).

### **National Guidance**

The relevant national policy and guidance is Planning Policy Wales.

Chapter 3 (Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions), Chapter 4 (Planning for Sustainability), Chapter 5 (Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast), Chapter 6 (Conserving the Historic Environment), Chapter 7 (Economic Development), Chapter 8 (Transport), Chapter 11 (Tourism, Sport and Recreation), Chapter 12 (Infrastructure and Services) and Chapter 13 (Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution), set out the Welsh Government's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of the application.

Other relevant policy guidance consulted:

PPW Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning;  
PPW Technical Advice Note 11: Noise;  
PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design;  
PPW Technical Advice Note 13: Tourism;  
PPW Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk;  
PPW Technical Advice Note 18: Transport;  
PPW Technical Advice Note 22: Sustainable Buildings;  
Manual for Streets

## **REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION**

The principle of the development and other material planning considerations fall to The Vale of Glamorgan Council to assess in its determination of the application. However, from a Rhondda Cynon Taf perspective, the main considerations are the potential visual impact of the development, its impact on

traffic impact and highway safety, ecology and the potential economic benefits for the County Borough.

### **Visual Impact**

The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which provides a comprehensive assessment of the various impacts of the proposed development in this location. In terms of visual impact, as the current application is at outline stage, the detailed design of the development will be subject to further consent however, the cumulative impact resulting from the total floorspace of the buildings proposed (162,951 sq.m), will be visible from parts of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Information forming part of the EIA indicates that the development would be theoretically visible from various parts of Rhondda Cynon Taf, including areas around Groesfaen, Cefn-yr-Hendy and the upper areas of Llantrisant however in some locations, the development would be at least 3 kilometres away. Whilst it is evident from the closest viewpoints 3, 5 and 6 of the Environmental Statement (ES), which are taken from rural locations along Pendoylan Road immediately to the north of the M4 that the proposed development, being on higher ground will be visible looking south, the landform and intervening vegetation will mean that its visual impact is unlikely to be significantly harmful.

The section of the ES that deals with Landscape and Visual Amenity also suggests that the landscape character of the immediate context of the application site is influenced by a number of detracting features, including the M4 and Junction 34, the existing Renishaw industrial buildings, railway line and Hensol golf academy, which introduce urbanising influences into the rural landscape, including traffic noise, built form and lighting. The assessment of the proposal from surrounding public and private viewpoints has been carried out which has shown that the site is generally well contained in terms of views.

Furthermore, a Landscape Strategy Plan has been prepared which sets out the proposed landscape and visual mitigation, prepared in conjunction with the Ecological Mitigation Strategy in order to integrate the proposed development into the surrounding landscape and this anticipates no major adverse residual effects after 15 years. As a consequence, it is considered that it is unlikely that the proposed development will have any significant visual impacts upon the County Borough.

### **Traffic Impact and Highway Safety**

The proposed development will be accessed via the existing highway located to the south-east of Junction 34 of the M4, which would be subject to improvements detailed as part of the Transport Assessment (TA). This has assessed the impact of additional traffic associated with the proposal and the effect on the roads leading up to Junction 34 and has informed the proposed mitigation / improvements including, the provision of traffic signals on the approach to the access road and the junction approaching from Pendoylan to the south.

The internal access roads will be agreed at the detailed stage together with the provision for pedestrians and cyclists within the site. The accompanying application and Travel Plan acknowledges that the existing bus network does not serve the application site and it is therefore proposed that a bespoke bus service will be operated initially by Renishaw.

In relation to the mitigation and improvements put forward, the Council's Transportation Section have highlighted a number of concerns regarding the current scheme which officers consider will add to the congestion already experienced along the A4119 and A473, with which Members will be familiar. Furthermore, application 03/1674 which would have delivered improvements in the form of a segregated left-turning lane from the eastbound off slip of Junction 34 of the M4 has now lapsed. For these reasons, it is considered appropriate that the developer makes a contribution of £169,725 which has been calculated according to the Council's SPG and this will be put forward in the Council's response.

### **Ecology**

Whilst the Council's Ecologist has highlighted the high conservation value of the application, it will be for Vale of Glamorgan and NRW officers to review all of the protected species issues and habitat impacts to ensure that appropriate mitigation is provided.

What is of relevance to Rhondda Cynon Taf however is the potential impact that the proposed development could have on habitat connectivity in a wider context. Although this was an issue that was identified and raised by the Council during the scoping exercise, it is apparent from the comments raised by the Council's Ecologist in respect of the current application, that the ecology assessment has not fully recognised or explored the importance of the site within the context of wider ecological connectivity. It is suggested that the presence of the M4, which is major barrier to species movements between Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale and the loss of habitat area indicated by the development proposals may well damage the habitat connectivity value of the site and have implications and impacts on habitat viability in the wider site network. In order to overcome any potential issues for existing habitats, it is therefore recommended that The Vale of Glamorgan Council is requested to undertake formal consultation with and input from the Council's Ecologist in relation to the development and approval of the Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan, which is proposed to be taken forward as part of the application.

### **Economic Benefits**

As Members will be aware, the existing site has accommodated a significant workforce, with employment by the former occupier (Bosch) previously exceeding 1,200 employees. Information submitted as part of the current application suggests that during the construction phase, the average number of jobs could range between 1,132 and 1,419, depending on the duration of construction. The proposed development once completed would provide a range of employment uses and is anticipated to generate between 2,555 and 3,069 jobs, which is considered to have a moderately beneficial effect on employment. It is also



confirmed that at the present time, 31% of the current labour force at Renishaw reside in Rhondda Cynon Taf and therefore, up to a third of the expected 3,000 employees could come from the County Borough. The development is also considered to have a beneficial effect on population as it will have a positive effect on the proportion of economically active residents in the area.

In terms of the specific impact on Rhondda Cynon Taf, Regeneration officers have identified a number of benefits that would result from what is considered to be a significant private sector led development. The site enjoys easy access from Rhondda Cynon Taf and the County has the potential to benefit from employment opportunities and enterprise. The proposal would also unlock the employment potential of the site, encourage enterprise and offers the potential to realise significant job opportunities including, having a positive impact on retail and office provision and jobs in Talbot Green. It is advised that hotel accommodation should only be considered where sufficient market capacity to support this can be demonstrated however, information supporting the application confirms that the proposal has been included as the applicant need onsite floorspace to support their training needs. These include seminars and conferences and will also enable an improvement to the apprenticeship schemes which they offer, which are intended to be developed in conjunction with local Universities in South Wales including Newport, Treforest, Cardiff, Swansea and Bridgend College.

In conclusion, subject to the appropriate accommodation of the issues identified below relating to a transport contribution and ecology input, it is considered that the development is unlikely to have an adverse impact on Rhondda Cynon Taf and is likely, through the employment opportunities offered to have a number of economic benefits. It is therefore recommended that that subject to the 2 conditions below, observations of no objection are returned to The Vale of Glamorgan Council.

**RECOMMENDATION: Raise no objection, subject to:**

1. The securing of a transport tariff contribution of £169,725 through a Section 106 Legal Agreement towards improving the strategic highway network.
2. The formal consultation with and input from the Council on the Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan to be implemented as a result of the proposed development.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**as amended by**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

**3 JULY 2014**

**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR PLANNING**

**REPORT**

**APPLICATION NO: 14/0301  
OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION WITH  
ALL MATTERS RESERVED EXCEPT FOR  
ACCESS, FOR DEVELOPMENT  
COMPRISING CLASS B1, B2, AND B8  
USES; A HOTEL/RESIDENTIAL TRAINING  
CENTRE (CLASS C1/C2); AND  
ANCILLARY USES WITHIN CLASS A1, A2,  
A3; ASSOCIATED ENGINEERING AND  
GROUND MODELLING WORKS AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE, CAR PARKING,  
DRAINAGE AND ACCESS FOR ALL  
USES; PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE  
(INCLUDING ENERGY CENTRE(S));  
LANDSCAPING AND ALL ANCILLARY  
ENABLING WORKS. LAND SOUTH OF  
JUNCTION 34, M4, HENSOL, VALE OF  
GLAMORGAN. OBSERVATIONS  
REQUESTED BY ADJACENT PLANNING  
AUTHORITY: THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN  
COUNCIL**

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**See Relevant Application File**