

Facts and figures about Project Mercia

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT IM PROPERTIES?

- In 2016, IM Properties acquired 238 acres in North West Leicestershire, at J11 of the M42.
- Established in 1987, IMP is a privately-owned investor/developer with a property portfolio worth £900m across Europe and the USA and headquarters in Solihull.
- IMP owns other sites along the M42 corridor, at Birch Coppice (J10), Blythe Valley (J4), Fore Business Park (J4) and Peddimore, Sutton Coldfield.
- There is currently said to be an insufficient supply of land to meet the growing requirement for manufacturing and logistics sites, and the A42/M42 corridor has been identified as an area of opportunity.

WHY JUNCTION 11?

- IMP chose this as their preferred location because the visibility of the site is contained, it is not classed as green belt and they claim it has limited ecological value. There is no housing in the immediate vicinity that would be impacted by the development. The land is very flat and therefore suitable for large warehouses. It is close to the motorway network and has good access to the region's main markets in the East and West Midlands, Birmingham and Solihull. They also believe there is good access to a local labour force and ample housing development within a 30 minute drive. The site is well located for the UK's airports and the rail freight terminals used to import products from overseas.

WHAT HAS BEEN AGREED?

- The public consultation started in 2018, and plans (Application ref. 18/01443/FULM) were reviewed and approved by North West Leicestershire District Council in September 2019 for the demolition of all existing buildings on the site, ground levelling and the construction of a distribution campus with offices, a gatehouse, an electricity sub-station and a pumping station, a new access from the B5493, internal roads, cycle paths, footpaths, yard space, car parks, lighting and security, surface water attenuation and 82 acres landscaping, including new wetland features for public enjoyment.
- Demolition of the farm buildings on site is already underway.

WHAT IS THE TIMESCALE FOR DEVELOPMENT?

- Construction work will start in 2020. Transport operations will commence in early 2022 and the development should be complete by 2023.

- The planning permission requires that the development of Phase 1 must commence and reserved matters for Phase 2 must be approved before 11th October 2022, and for Phase 3 before 11th October 2024.

WERE THERE MANY OBJECTIONS TO THE PLANS?

- 431 objections were received from residents in the surrounding villages of Chilcote, No Man's Heath, Acresford, Appleby Magna, Twycross and Overseal, and 16 objections from nearby Parish Councils. An action group has been formed: Residents Against Project Mercia. There were no objections from Highways.

WHAT ARE THE TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS?

- The average salary for a warehouse worker is £14-23k p.a. Average property prices in this area are £158-320k, and average rent is in excess of £500/month. This means that the vast majority of those working on the new site will need to travel by car. As there is already a high number of job vacancies in this sector, it seems unlikely that people will want to travel far for these jobs, so finding staff could be problematic for this location.
- Local residents believe that the existing transport infrastructure will be unable to cope with the additional 6,000 cars and 1,200 HGVs that the development is expected to bring each day. The rolling shift patterns planned mean that there will be no break in the noise of the traffic or the inevitable tailbacks. Around 1,000 additional cars are expected to use the B5493 through No Man's Heath on a daily basis, creating a "rat run".
- IMP has included in its plans a number of road improvements to accommodate the additional traffic. These include new traffic controls and the widening of the carriageway on the roundabout at J11 to help reduce queuing at peak times. There is to be a new roundabout on the B5493. Cars and buses will be able to access the southern end of the site from the B5493 but all HGVs will be required to access via the roundabout at J11. Leicestershire County Council and Highways England have approved these plans.
- The plans also provide for improved pedestrian access with new footpaths and cycle ways, as IMP anticipates that around 330 people will walk to work on the site, and as many as 70 will cycle. There will be a car sharing scheme in place for those on the site, and it is possible that the local bus service will be expanded to accommodate the shift patterns.

HOW WILL THE DEVELOPMENT IMPACT THE LANDSCAPE?

- Other objections relate to the loss of the countryside, as the development will irreversibly change the character of the farmland (primarily grade 2 agricultural land) surrounding these villages, having a negative visual impact as well as bringing light and air pollution, particularly during construction. The

planned development will involve the removal of 1,780m of hedgerow and 25 trees. The site is said to be home to bats, badgers and bird species of principle importance, such as skylark, song thrush, yellow hammer and owls.

- IMP assures residents that lighting will be kept to a minimum to reduce intrusion, glare and sky glow whilst keeping the site safe and secure.
- The site will operate 24 hours per day, so has been designed to minimise noise. Acoustic fencing will be installed where required.
- The area is at low risk of flooding and all surface water will be managed on site with controlled release into the water course.

WHY DID NWLDC SUPPORT THIS DEVELOPMENT?

- NWLDC argue that the development will support the local economy, bringing around 170 jobs during the construction phase and as many as 4,000 in the longer term. The site is expected to generate over £7m p.a. in business rates for the local council.

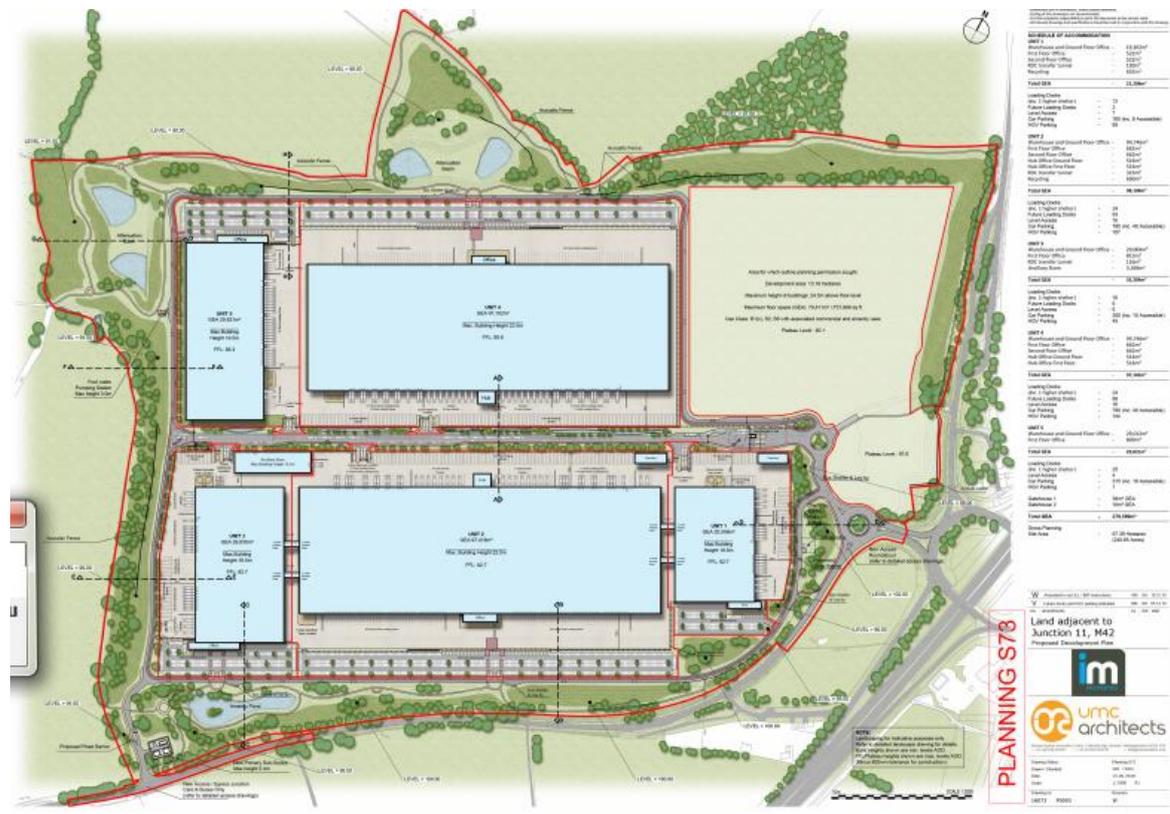
WILL THE DEVELOPERS SUPPORT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?

- IMP has announced plans to set up a Community Liaison Group and to create a new Community Fund this year. They have invited local Parish Councils to discuss projects in which this fund can be invested.

WHICH BUSINESSES WILL OCCUPY THIS SITE?

- The site will remain the property of IMP and they will rent warehouses to companies requiring storage and distribution facilities. Two tenants have been identified already: Jaguar Land Rover and DSV Logistics.
- Jaguar Land Rover has signed a 20 year lease on an area covering around 200 acres. Planning permission has been granted for almost 3 million sq. ft. of warehousing space across 5 units. They plan to use the new site to consolidate their global aftermarket parts business which is currently spread across 10 smaller sites in the Midlands. The company claims that this will reduce their vehicle movements and improve the efficiency of their operations. From day one, JLR expect to create 1,200 jobs, although some employees will transfer from existing sites. By 2030, they expect to have as many as 3,000 employees on this site, serving 80 markets across the world.
- DSV Logistics is a Danish company and a world leader in storage and distribution. They employ around 60,000 people and recently acquired the Swiss logistics company, Panalpina. They plan to lease around 27 acres from IMP and outline planning permission has been granted for 450,000 sq. ft. of development which will serve as a hub for their UK logistics operations, replacing their current site in Kingsbury. DSV expect to create 400 jobs on the new site, but around 200 are expected to relocate from Kingsbury

For more information see www.nwleics.gov.uk , www.shuttington-alvecote.org.uk and www.junction11consultation.co.uk



MERCIA PARK: electric and water infrastructure works

