



Comments & Representations with respect of: St Ives and Huntingdon Prospectuses for Growth

Introduction

ENGIE consider that the Combined Authority proposal in 2018 to develop plans for investment and growth for eleven market towns including St Ives and Huntingdon was a positive commitment. St Ives and Huntingdon are vibrant towns with beautiful historic centres. It is therefore particularly important that growth and investment have positive outcomes whilst protecting the heritage.

We believe that a sustainable, low carbon and connected community delivering new homes, employment space and community facilities underpinned by infrastructure investment and sustainable transport measures on the former airfields at RAF Wyton will best complement and support growth in St Ives and Huntingdon to meet these as well as wider regional objectives.

RAF Wyton is close to Huntingdon as well as St Ives, and we believe that our new community will have a positive impact on both towns. We have addressed our comments primarily to the St Ives Prospectus as it specifically references ENGIE's development site on the former airfields at RAF Wyton, however much of our statement has relevance to both towns so the comments can be taken as applicable to both.

Wyton Airfield as a strategic site

Although neither ENGIE or Crest Nicholson have been consulted on these documents, we consider that we are relevant stakeholders given the references made in the St Ives document to the former airfields at RAF Wyton and our contracted positions with the MOD as landowner. The documents are not clear as to the extent of public or stakeholder consultation that has been undertaken to date or its status with Huntingdonshire District Council or St Ives Town and Huntingdon Councils. Our comments should therefore be considered to be addressed to Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and St Ives and Huntingdon Town Councils. The following comments are referenced in the order of the document:

St Ives: Prospectus for Growth

About this document

- i) St Ives sits at the heart of the three broad economies listed, with good connections by road to all three areas and with the Guided Busway providing access to Cambridge.
- ii) The prospectus refers to the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway and its role in out-commuting but does not quantify the levels of commuting into St Ives. The document should acknowledge that buses and cycleway to St Ives often appear to be busy during the day with people visiting the town for shopping and leisure purposes.
- iii) The methodology for establishing and measuring the capacity and rate of growth is unclear. The proposal to double to economy of St Ives in twenty years is ambitious and it is unclear as what level of pace of growth would be appropriate and what the geographical boundaries are defined by this ambition.

A vision for St Ives

- i) We welcome the reference to Wyton Airfield as a base for larger employers in the digital, tech and associated sectors and building on the network of companies that already exist.

ENGIE's proposal for Wyton Hill Gardens includes TechPark Zero, a proposed business & technology park, as the first stage of accelerating the delivery of employment capacity locally. ENGIE are a founding member of Cambridge Cleantech and operate an investment fund to support the regional SME growth in the sector. Future phases of development include additional employment hubs to benefit from growing capacity provided by high quality housing with relevant educational provision and an attractive environment.

- ii) ENGIE's recent application to the Combined Authority for growth funding investment into a joint venture to accelerate delivery of the business and technology park at Wyton Hill Gardens summarised our vision and rationale as below;

'Tech Park Zero will create a unique sustainable Net Zero Carbon business & technology park that will be an ICT Centre of Excellence in an attractive, mixed-use garden setting that promotes health & wellbeing for over 400 new direct jobs as soon as 2024 by providing:

1. *An Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Centre of Excellence, with high speed digital bandwidth to all buildings*
2. *Desirable space for companies that rely upon technology to trade, including an Incubator Hub for start-up businesses and specialised follow on accommodation.*
3. *An ideal and fully serviced location for suppliers, partners and their staff to RAF Wyton who see co-location as essential.*
4. *An attractive, garden campus setting that promotes health and wellbeing in the workplace, with on-site facilities including running tracks, café, convenience store and public house.*

- iii) We support the vision to strengthen the Busway links west to Huntingdon and suggest that these should include RAF Wyton given the recognition of the former airfields site to contribute to the St Ives growth ambitions. RAF Wyton is also a major employer in the area with over 2,500 employees, expanding to 3,300 the majority of whom are civilians who commute to and from the Base by car. ENGIE are proposing enhanced cycling routes from RAF Wyton to St Ives and Huntingdon, a Busway stop, new bus stops and increased bus frequencies and to provide e-bike docking stations and EV charging points at Wyton Hill Gardens, Wyton on the Hill, St Ives and Huntingdon. We would be pleased to explore sustainable and 'active' transport projects with you and have agreed to meet Wyton on the Hill Parish Council to discuss their Climate Change Action Plan.
- iv) ENGIE's global ambition is to be a leader in the Zero Carbon Transition and we share the Combined Authority's vision to reach Zero Carbon. ENGIE are actively turning this vision into reality working with our public sector partners across the UK. Our proposed development at Wyton Hill Gardens, including the TechPark, is intended to be net zero carbon.

The Plan on a Page

- i) ENGIE's supports the strategic outcomes identified by this graphic. Wyton Hill Gardens offers the opportunity to deliver a core component of the St Ives Prospects for Growth and establish a foundation for ongoing and responsible development. The connected approach defined by the "Plan on a Page" will create a modern and quality environment with sustainable transport that ensures St Ives can grow as a hub for innovative business. RAF Wyton is expanding, and companies that work with the Joint Services seek convenient and attractive locations for their staff, supply chain and associated families.
- ii) RAF Wyton currently employs about 2,500, the majority of whom commute by car from nearby conurbations. The Base is due to further expand to 3,300 from September 2021. The development of a significant number of residential homes next to the base will provide an ideal choice to locate within close reach of their workplace and to minimise travel times and vehicular movements. Many businesses that provide services to RAF Wyton will also benefit from the co-location with the base, including staff movements.

- iii) We support the ‘seamless guided bus connection’, as well as the creation of more and better cycle-paths, and provision of e-bikes for general use.
- iv) We have expertise in 5G networks and would be happy to discuss how we can support St Ives and Huntingdon Town Councils and other local and regional authorities in developing the use cases and necessary infrastructure.

An Overview of St Ives

- i) The development of TechPark Zero is intended to improve local sustainability through improvement in cycle ways and bus services. The scheme promotes local movements that are intended to reduce congestion on roads in and around St Ives on major routes through to Cambridge by providing additional employment centres locally.
- ii) We recognise the need to create better strategic transport links and ‘last mile’ connections to RAF Wyton for the wider development to come forward. We support a focus on upgrading existing infrastructure, cycle and pedestrian links and committing to sustainable public transport options, such as support for the proposed CAM route or Guided Bus extension. Whilst our proposals currently include significant investment in the road network, we believe development that reduces road traffic by providing acceptable public transport alternatives should be prioritised and that interventions should focus on ways to alleviate existing problems such as Harrison Way.

A hub for innovative business

- i) We agree that Wyton Airfield offers the opportunity as a location for advanced manufacturing and hi-tech companies, but we consider that a single employer would not offer enough economic resilience or enough diversified benefit locally. We believe a sustainable employment strategy should be developed that is consistent with the emerging digital and tech sector and that focuses on supporting local businesses and supply chain partners in this immediate period of transition.

Residential accommodation to suit young professional workers

- i) ENGIE offer an innovative and varied housing offer with apartments, ‘homesteads’ and custom build as well as a range of ‘later living options’ which include private and shared outdoor spaces. ENGIE are exploring the feasibility of including the “100k homes” that are piloted by the CPCA. ENGIE would welcome the opportunity to discuss with St Ives and Huntingdon Town Councils the types of accommodation and housing that is in demand locally.

Huntingdon: Prospectus for the Future

A Vision for Huntingdon

- i) We welcome the reference to active travel and encouraging walking and cycling. ENGIE are proposing enhanced cycling routes from RAF Wyton to Huntingdon and St Ives and to provide e-bike docking stations and EV charging points at Wyton Hill Gardens, Wyton on the Hill, St Ives and Huntingdon. We would be pleased to explore sustainable and ‘active’ transport projects with you and believe there is an opportunity to develop a shared sustainable transport approach that would include benefits for North Huntingdon.
- ii) We have met with Huntingdon Town Council to talk about their work on the Oxmoor Estate. We explored potential employment and skills programmes at Wyton Hill Gardens that could benefit residents of North Huntingdon including opportunities in construction, care and digital sectors. We assess that our development has potential to create 1,500 jobs and apprenticeships.

Summary

ENGIE are the developer of Wyton Hill Gardens, the first phase proposed as part of a larger mixed-use community for the whole Airfield, being masterplanned by Crest Nicholson as lead developer, on behalf of the MoD as landowner. Both ENGIE and Crest Nicholson believe that the development of both Wyton Hill Gardens and the Airfield as a whole, is the fastest route to the provision of enhanced sustainable transport and social infrastructure, including new schools and health facilities, which will significantly benefit the wider St Ives community. This will demonstrate that St Ives and Huntingdon offer a strong, attractive and prosperous locations for growth and economic, environmental and social sustainability.

In conclusion ENGIE and Crest Nicholson support the overall vision and plans for St Ives and Huntingdon are keen to work with stakeholders to deliver the strategic outcomes identified as swiftly as possible.

About ENGIE:

ENGIE is a leading energy and services company focused on three key activities: production and supply of energy, facilities management and regeneration. Our 17,000 employees combine these capabilities for the benefit of individuals, businesses and communities throughout the UK & Ireland.

We enable customers to embrace a lower carbon, more efficient and increasingly digital world. Our customers benefit from our energy efficient and smart building solutions, the provision of effective and innovative services, the transformation of neighbourhoods through regeneration projects, and the supply of reliable, flexible and renewable energy.

ENGIE improves lives through better living and working environments. We help to balance performance with responsibility, enabling progress in a harmonious way.

Globally, the ENGIE Group employs 170,000 people worldwide and achieved revenues of €60.1 billion in 2019.