

Jones Lang LaSalle

Employment Land and Viability Assessment

On behalf of Aldi Stores UK Ltd

Land off A525, Ruthin

April 2019



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1. Introduction

JLL have been instructed by Aldi Stores UK Ltd to prepare an employment land and viability statement to support proposals for a development on Land off A525, Ruthin (the Site). The total application site area extends to approximately 8.968 acres fronting on to the A525, adjacent to Ruthin Cattle Market to the south and the Brickfield Lane Industrial Estate to the north.

The site is currently allocated for employment use under the adopted Development Plan. However, despite being extensively marketed for employment uses (B1, B2 and B8) since 2014, significant infrastructure investment is required to unlock the site for development. This includes bringing utilities, including a sub-station in to the site and constructing a highways improved access to the site together with a spine road, in light of the significant level difference between the site itself and the adopted highway. The costs of which are significantly in excess of the land value achieved in selling individual plots.

Aldi Stores UK Ltd is in a position to fund the infrastructure required in order to allow employment development to come forward on the remainder of the Site. The full application area extends to 3.798 acres. This comprises an Aldi Food Store with a Gross External Area of 1,864 sq m (20,064 sq m) and Gross Internal Area of 1,786 sq m (19,224 sq m) with 135 car parking spaces and a development of 3 speculative terraced industrial units extending in total to 653 sq m (7,029 sq ft) with a 25m turning circle and 10 car parking spaces.

The remainder of the site will form the Outline Application Area extending to 5.170 acres where serviced plots from 0.65 acres would be marketed for owner/occupiers to acquire. The aim will be to react to enquiries in the market on land/design and build and construct speculative buildings for immediate occupation.

The purpose of this report is to address the likelihood of the application site coming forward for Class B1, B2 and B8 Use types in the absence of these current proposals and the concerns about the perceived loss of employment land as a result of the proposed development. In light of the above, this report should be read in the context of the planning history of the site.

In producing this report, we have considered the local market for Class B1, B2 and B8 uses. We have provided an assessment of the current and future supply of sites and premises and reviewed the level of local market demand. Based on this market review and wider analysis of the suitability of this site, we have completed the assessment by considering the viability and deliverability of the site coming forward for employment use only.

Site visits to the site and surrounding employment sites and premises were made on 8 March by Georgina Rose and John Whitehurst.

2. Site Context

2.1. Location

Ruthin is a town within the area of Denbighshire in North Wales. It lies 18 miles to the north west of Wrexham, 16 miles to the north west of Llangollen and 8 miles to the south east of Denbigh.



2.2. Situation

The site is bound by A525 Denbigh to the west, Brickfield Lane and Brickfield Lane Industrial Estate to the north; further greenfield land to the east beyond which are industrial units; and Ruthin Cattle Market to the south. To the west of the site beyond the A525 comprises Golf Links Farm.

The subject site benefits from good access to sub-regional infrastructure due to its location of the A525 Denbigh Road, a major road leading to Denbigh to the north west and Wrexham to the south east.



2.3. Site

Characteristics

The total application site area extends to approximately 8.968 acres. The site itself is currently green field, without any services, nor access into the site. There is a visible level difference between the site itself and the A525. Brickfield Lane which bounds the site to the north and serves Brickfield Industrial Estate among others is a narrow road which we understand to be unadopted. As part of the application, a 4m strip on the northern boundary of the site will be given to the Council to allow the widening of Brickfield Lane.

The property is shown for identification purposes on the Ordnance Survey extract below, the extent of the site being outlined in red in accordance with our understanding of the site boundaries.



2.4. Planning Allocations

The property lies within the jurisdiction of Denbighshire Council. The Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out the proposals and policies for future development and use of land in Denbighshire and was adopted in June 2013.

Historically, the site was allocated as early as 2002 within the Denbighshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP). It is possible the site was also allocated even earlier.

The subject site is allocated as Employment Land within the Local Development Plan and forms part of a wider allocation known as Glasdir in which Policy PSE 2 and PSE 3 are applicable. These state the following:

- **Policy PSE 2 - Land for employment uses** - Existing employment sites and new allocations for employment purposes are shown on the Proposals Maps. Within these areas employment development for the following use classes will be supported:
 - B1 Business Use
 - B2 General Industrial & waste management facilities
 - B8 Warehousing and Distribution
- **Policy PSE 3 - Protection of employment land and buildings** - Proposals which would result in the loss of employment land or buildings will only be supported provided that:

- i) there are no other suitable sites available for this development; and
- ii) a continuous marketing process of 1 year, alongside all practical attempts possible to retain the employment use, has demonstrated that the site or premises is no longer capable of providing an acceptable standard of accommodation for employment purposes; and
- iii) the loss of the site or premises would not prejudice the ability of an area to meet a range of local employment needs or the proposal involves the satisfactory relocation of a non-conforming use from an unsuitable site.

Within the Local Development Plan, Ruthin is described as a lower growth town in the context of the below statement:

- **Lower Growth Towns** – The towns of Rhyl, Prestatyn, St Asaph, Denbigh, Ruthin and Corwen have been identified as lower growth towns. These towns function as regional and/ or local service centres with wide rural hinterlands. These centres collectively make an important contribution to the overall housing and employment requirements of the County. Development boundaries have been drawn for each town and the proposals maps show housing, employment and retail allocations.

We have had sight of the Employment Land Review dated 2015 where the subject site forms part of a wider site area within Site 22 known as Glasdir. The wider site allocation extends to 48.86 gross hectares (120.7 acres) in which 38.94 hectares (96.22 acres) is available.

2.5. Proposals for the Site

The Full application will comprise an area of 3.798 acres to the west of the subject site fronting A525. The south west corner of the site will comprise an Aldi Food store with a Gross External Area of 1.864 sq m (20,064 sq ft), Gross Internal Area of 1,786 sq m (19,224 sq ft). A service yard and 135 car parking spaces will also form part of the site.

In light of the significant level difference between the site itself and the adopted highway (A525), Aldi will be funding highways improvements to provide access in to the site, together with constructing an element of spine road to allow access to their site.

The landowner will, following the completion of the estate road and the opening of the Aldi store, commence the development of speculative industrial units which lie directly to the north of the proposed Aldi fronting the A525. The industrial units will comprise a terrace of 3 units extending in total to 653 sq m (7,028 sq ft) together with 10 car parking spaces and a 25m turning circle.

The aim will be to react to enquiries in the market on land/design and build and construct speculative buildings for immediate occupation.

The Outline Planning Application area extends to 5.170 acres and the intention is to provide serviced plots from 0.65 acres available for owner/occupiers to acquire. The strategy would be to market the site, once the Aldi development commenced and interested parties could see the construction of the estate road and have an understanding as to the timeline as to when the sites and/or buildings will be available.

We understand a marketing board will be erected on the site, with “All Enquiries” for employment development and this will be advertised in the local press and on the website. The Land Owner and Developer will work with Denbighshire County Council’s Economic Development Officer, to target occupiers within the current industrial estate in Ruthin, seeking to expand their business and retain their operation in Ruthin.

3. Marketing

Celt Rowlands and Co. have been marketing the application site for the Vendor since November 2014. Over this period the marketing activity has included the following measures:

- Marketing board erected on the site (taken down in the last 12 months on instruction of the landowner)
- Marketing particulars were prepared and uploaded to the agent's website
- Registered within Denbighshire County Council Employment Land Registry

These measures follow the usual approach towards openly marketing the site.

Please find attached the latest Marketing Particulars dated June 2015 at Appendix 4.

We have been provided with a copy of the serious enquiries which were received by the agent from November 2014 until the time a deal was agreed with the land owner. A breakdown of the enquires are as follows:

| DATE | REQUIREMENT |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| November 14 | 2-3 acres |
| November 14 | General Enquiry |
| November 14 | 1-4 acres |
| November 14 | 1 acre |
| November 15 | 1 acre |
| November 14 | Complete Site |
| November 14 | |
| November 14 | Up to 4 acres |
| November 14 | |
| June 15 | 1 Acre |
| | Complete site |
| August 15 | |
| December 14 | 5,000 50,000 2 Acres |
| June 15 | 1-1.5 acres |
| First quarter 15 | Complete site |
| | 2 Acres |
| | 1 Acre |
| November 15 | |
| | |
| | |
| November 14 | 50,000 sq ft |
| November 14 | 3 Acres |

It is clear from the schedule provided that there has been various interest. The size requirements can be categorised as follows:

| Size Category | No. of Requirements |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 0-1 acre | 5 |
| 1-3 acres | 3 |
| 3-5 acres | 3 |
| Entire Site | 3 |
| Not specified / unclear | 8 |
| Total | 22 |

Since this time, we understand the land has continued to be marketed via the agent's website. Whilst we have not been provided with a further enquiry schedule, having spoken to the agent directly, we understand there were limited new enquiries for employment uses. Whilst there have been various enquires of different size requirements, during the marketing period, the interest in the site has not progressed past the enquiry stage.

At present, the site comprises a greenfield site with no infrastructure or services. It is apparent that the timescales and significant investment required to provide services and access to the site compared with the return on either an investment (rent/ yield) or direct sale (£per plot) basis are insufficient to achieve a viable development proposition for the application site without some form of enabling or cross-subsidising development. This issue is further explored in the following sections of this report.

4. Local Market Review

This section of the report provides a local market review within Ruthin focusing on sites and premises currently available in the area local to the subject site and an assessment of their suitability for employment development.

4.1. Ruthin Industrial Market Review

JLL have used VOA data to ascertain the level of existing industrial premises currently within Ruthin. In total, there is 729,846 sq ft of industrial premises within 149 units in Ruthin. The map below created on BatchMap sets out the location of the subject property circled in red together with all the existing industrial stock in the area. Whilst fairly sporadic, there is a cluster to the east of the subject site which comprises the Lon Parcwr Industrial Estate and a cluster to the north known as Brickfield Road Industrial Estate.



In terms of size of units, these can be categorised into the following sizes:

| Size Category (sq ft) | No. of Units | Total Sq. ft |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 0-1,000 | 32 | 17,305 |
| 1,001-5,000 | 82 | 184,050 |
| 5,001-10,000 | 20 | 139,045 |
| 10,001-30,000 | 11 | 188,131 |
| 30,001-50,000 | 3 | 124,172 |
| 50,001 + | 1 | 77,143 |
| Total | 149 | 729,846 |

76.5% of the total number of units are within the 0-5,000 sq ft category. Less than 3% of the units are over 30,000 sq ft.

The largest industrial occupier in the area is Clifford Jones Timber Merchants situated just to the north of the subject property off Brickfield Lane. Clifford Jones occupy 3 units extending to 170,000 sq ft. This makes up 23% of the total sq ft and comprises 3 of the largest units in Ruthin. Clifford Jones are a family run business and a major employer in the area with over 100 staff. Other notable occupiers in Ruthin include Blazers Fuel, Ruthin Precast Concrete Ltd and Wool Producers of Wales.

Taking account of the remaining occupier, these are made up of predominantly smaller companies mainly in agricultural and local services. A number of units on Lon Parcwr industrial estate are used for quasi-retail uses.






Demand and Supply of Existing Units



JLL have used Costar to ascertain levels of take-up, demand and supply within Ruthin. We have also undertaken an inspection and verified information with local agents.

Costar does not have sufficient data to obtain historic vacancy levels however we understand the current industrial vacancy is at 5,787 sq.ft. which represents a rate of less than 1% of the total supply. According to Costar there was no industrial space leased in 2018.

Below is a full list of comparable industrial units that are currently listed as available in the wider area and would be seen as competition to the site.

| Photo | Address | Size (ft ²) | Rent (per ft ²) |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------|
|  | Birch House Business Centre, Hen Lon Parcwr | 3,916 | £8.85 |
|  | Unit 8, Lon Parcwr Industrial Estate, Ruthin, LL15 1NJ | 1,871 | £5.08 |
|  | Unit 10a, Colomendy Industrial Estate, Denbigh, LL16 5TA | 7,295 | £4.80 |
|  | Unit 4, Rhyl Rd, Vale Park, Denbigh Enterprise Centre | 922 | £4.88 LET |
|  | Industrial Complex, Colomendy Industrial Estate, Denbigh, Denbighshire, LL16 5TA | Factory 1 - 17,020 Factory 2 - 3,529 Factory 3 - 7,295 Factory 4 - 4,912 Offices - 3,795 | £TBC |

| Photo | Address | Size (ft ²) | Rent (per ft ²) |
|--|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | Unit 2a, Queens Lane, Bromfield Industrial Estate, Mold, CH7 1XB | 3,111 | £8.87 |
|  | Unit 3 Queens Lane, Bromfield Industrial Estate, Mold, CH7 1XB | 5,101 | £3.76 |
|  | Unit 12 Bromfield Industrial Estate, Queens Road, Mold, CH7 1XB | 2,207 | £4.53 |
|  | Media Point, Mold Business Park, Mold, CH7 1XY | 33,073 | £4.35 |
|  | Unit 2, Bromfield Commercial Park, Stephen Gray Road, Mold, CH7 1HE | 10,205 | £TBC |

| Photo | Address | Size (ft ²) | Rent (per ft ²) |
|--|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | Unit A, Gwernaffield Business Park, Gwernaffield, Mold, CH7 5ER | 10,988 | £2.59 |
|  | Unit 4A, Antelope Industrial Estate, Rhydymwyn, Mold, CH7 5JH | 5,900 | £3.31 |

Quoting Rents are between £2.59 and £8.87 per sq ft depending on location, size and condition/ age of unit whilst lettings in Denbigh have achieved rents of £4.45 and £5.20 per sq ft.

Taking into account the above comparables and having consulted with local agents, we are of the opinion the proposed industrial units on the subject site (being 2,000-3,000 sq ft) could achieve rents in the order of £6.00 per sq ft.

In terms of capital values, we are not aware of any sales within Ruthin itself.

Taking into account the size of units proposed at the subject site and the location within Ruthin, we consider capital value for new industrial premises to be in the order of £75 per sq ft.





4.2. Ruthin Office Market Review

JLL have used VOA data to ascertain the level of existing office premises currently within Ruthin. In total, there is 146,614 sq ft of office premises within 98 individual VOA entries. The size categories are as follows:

| Size Category | No. of Individual Entries |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| 0-500 | 55 |
| 501-1,000 | 21 |
| 1,001-5,000 | 18 |
| 5,001-10,000 | 2 |
| 10,001 + | 2 |
| Total | 98 |

As demonstrated in the table above, 76 out of the 98 entries on the VOA are less than 1,000 sq ft. The largest office is the Council offices on Station Street extending to 57,000 sq ft.

JLL have used Costar and local agents to ascertain levels of take up and availability within a 5 mile and 10-mile radius of the site. Below is a schedule of the available office properties within a 5 mile radius of the subject site:

| | Address | Size (ft ²) | Rent (per ft ²) |
|---|---|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
|  | Birch House, Ion Parcwr - Ffordd Celyn | 678 | £12.30 |
|  | Crown House, Well Street, Ruthin, LL15 1AE | Suite 1 – 830 | £6.87 – UNDER OFFER |
| | | Suite 3 - 844 | £7.11 |
|  | Llys Clwyd, Office 1, Ion Parcwr Industrial Estate, Ruthin, LL15 1NJ | 1,390 | £6.47 |
|  | Lon Gwerydd, Ruthin | 1,346 | £12.00 inclusive of all bills |

We note that an office property at St Peters Square, Ruthin was removed from the market without letting and has since been converted to apartments. We understand the property was marketed for a while demonstrating the lack of demand for offices within Ruthin and the ability to convert to higher value uses. According to Costar the availability rate for office premises in a 10 mile radius of Ruthin is 56.6% which equates to 29,500 sqft. The average market rent for office premises is £9.32 per sq. ft. representing growth over the last year of 3%.

As demonstrated from the available properties above, and the size of the VOA entries, the majority of the demand for office space is from local occupiers for small office suites. There is less demand for larger requirements.

4.3. Employment Land

The subject site forms part of a wider site area within Site 22 known as Glasdir. The wider site allocation extends to 48.86 gross hectares (120.7 acres) in which 38.94 hectares (96.22 acres) is available. We understand the site has been allocated for at least 17 years.

The 2018 Annual Monitoring Report states that Employment land take up for the Denbighshire Council area has been below the 3 hectares per year for 3 years as detailed below:

- 2015/2016 – nil hectares
- 2016/2017 – 2.21 hectares
- 2017/2018 – nil hectares

The report states that demand for new employment land is primarily sourced from existing premises.

Apart from the subject site, we are not aware of any further sites available for sale in Ruthin itself. Having spoken with the marketing agent and our knowledge of industrial land in the wider area, we are of the opinion a price of £125,000 per acre could be achieved.

4.4. Market Review Conclusion

Based upon the review of employment sites and premises, we are able to draw the following conclusions:

- Ruthin comprises a local employment market with steady demand for existing stock
- More than 76% of the total number of industrial units are under 5,000 sq ft
- Whilst there is limited availability of existing industrial stock, the take up of employment land was nil over the 2017/2018 period and less than 2.5 hectares the previous year demonstrating the limited demand and/ or viability issues.
- The available office accommodation all comprise units of less than 1,500 sq ft. This is consistent with the stock of offices taken from the VOA demonstrating demand is for small suites as opposed to entire floors/ buildings.
- An office building has recently been converted for residential use following a marketing period indicating the lack of demand from office occupiers.
- Employment land take up levels across the whole region has been very extremely low over the last 3 years. Clearly there is a good supply of employment land across the area with a significant supply of undeveloped land within Ruthin. Levels of demand and viability issues are clearly main issues affecting take up levels

5. Viability Analysis

5.1. Introduction

This section of the report will seek to investigate the capability of the site as a whole to be brought forward for employment use only.

We consider there to be 3 main options for the site if it were to be developed for employment use only:

- Purchase of the whole site by an owner occupier
- Piece meal purchase of the site by a number of owner occupiers
- Purchase of the entire site by a developer for industrial/ employment use

5.2. Viability Analysis

We have considered the viability of the options below:

1) Purchase of the whole site by an owner occupier

It is apparent from the Enquiry schedule that there has been limited interest for the site as a whole and the majority of enquiries that have specified sizes have been for plots of between 0 and 5 acres. The pool of potential purchasers on this basis is limited, particularly in this location. The serious enquiries for the whole of the site has not progressed past the enquiry stage and this is likely to be the result of the following considerations which have not aligned with the purchaser's expectations:

- Availability of capital funds
- Risk profile
- Timing

The infrastructure costs associated with accessing the site is significant and may impact of viability and timing.

2) Piece meal purchase of the site by a number of owner occupiers

Whilst there have been a number of serious enquiries for smaller parcels of land, as demonstrated in the marketing schedule, without access to each of the individual plots by way of an estates road, this option is unachievable. Similar to the above, availability of capital funds, risk profile and timing will be key considerations for purchasers. In addition, timings of owner occupiers looking to purchase individual plots of land within the site will need to coincide to make it worthwhile for the landowner to undertake the infrastructure required and reduce the risk. It is likely that because none of these enquiries progressed further, this hasn't been an option.

The landowner has been marketing the site for the past 5 years. Given that the infrastructure has not been carried out by the landowner, it demonstrates lack of confidence to deliver a viable employment led scheme.

3) Purchase of the entire site by a developer for industrial/ employment use

The third option is for the site to be purchased in its entirety by a developer where infrastructure and services are provided, and the site is either sold off as serviced plots or a mixture of serviced plot sales and speculative build.

We are not aware of any interest from developers to develop the site for employment use. This would indicate the profit that could be achieved by doing this option is too low or unviable.

The intention is for a speculative scheme of 3 industrial units which totals 7,000 sq ft to be completed together with the Aldi Store and access road as part of the application for the site. The remainder of the site will then be accessible and marketed for sale on a plot by plot basis.

If Aldi were not taking occupation and therefore not providing the main access road into the site, the developer would need to fund the main access road and services.

From our analysis, it demonstrates that simply calculating the gross value of the site - by either selling off individual serviced plots on a £ per acre basis, or speculatively building some units – and deducting the significant infrastructure costs provided to us, the scheme is unviable. This is without taking into account a number of costs that would need to be factored in to the developer's appraisal such as initial land purchase and developers profit.

We have also considered the viability of the site for office use. However, the market evidence suggests that the majority of office stock (VOA data) in Ruthin is small office suites which reflects the nature and demand of this type of location. The risk associated with building and letting small office suites together with the limited occupier/ owner demand and higher build costs of offices, we consider this option to be unviable at this location.

We acknowledge that there is potential alternative access to the north of the site. However at this point, there are no set proposals. Further investigation needs to be undertaken to understand the capabilities of this road onto the site given the obvious constraints with the road being unadopted, its current width and condition, and the costs associated with this.

Given the site has been allocated for at least 17 years, there has been no appetite or commitment from other parties including the local highway authority to deliver an adopted road that would open up the site.

5.3. Grant Funding

We have undertaken a thorough search of grant funding available in Wales using the Finance Locator on the Welsh Government and there are limited grants / funds available which the Site would qualify for.

We have identified the following which could be taken into consideration. It is noted that the landowner and other developers have not applied for these funds.

The Development Bank of Wales provides property development loans for short-term residential, mixed-use and commercial property loans from £150,000 to £5 million. There is currently £80 million of funds to support residential, mixed use and commercial developments.

Through the Wales Commercial Property Fund, the Development Bank of Wales can provide funding for new office and industrial developments in Wales:

- Loan sizes from £250,000 to £5 million
- Loan terms of up to 5 years
- Speculative and non-speculative schemes (i.e. with or without pre-lets/pre-sales) are eligible

This is only able to support office and industrial projects based in Wales. The Development Bank of Wales does not offer grants. They make commercial loans and investments only. Whilst this provides an option to fund the infrastructure, given that the scheme is unviable, it is clear this has not been enough to attract developers to the site.

The Welsh Government historically managed two property development funds which were launched with £14 million of EU funds to support business growth and job creation in the North, West Wales and South Wales Valleys. The £7 million

Property for Business Development Grant Fund (PBDG) and the £7 million Property Infrastructure Fund (PIF) supported new build and refurbishments/extensions/adaptions. However, applications closed in 2017.

6. Conclusion

JLL have reviewed the marketing strategy undertaken by the landowner and by marketing agent Celt Rowland for the subject site. Marketing of the site commenced in November 2014 and we consider the measures that have been taken follow the usual approach towards openly marketing a site. Whilst there have been a number of serious enquiries for employment uses, the majority of these have been for part only of the site. Interest in the site has not progressed any further than enquiries stage.

JLL have then undertaken a review of the local office and industrial market. Data has been sought from the Valuation Office Agency; Co Star (a marketing tool used by agents); discussions with our in-house industrial team, local agents and a site visit. This has indicated the following:

- Ruthin comprises a local employment market with steady demand for existing stock;
- More than 75% of the total number of industrial units (as taken from the VOA) are under 5,000 sq ft.
- Similarly, industrial take up is most active for sub 5,000 sq ft units with more limited demand for larger premises.
- 78% of the total number of office suites (as taken from the VOA) are under 1,000 sq ft and all available office accommodation in the wider area comprise office suites of less than 1,500 sq ft.
- An office building has recently been converted for residential use following a marketing period demonstrating the lack of demand from office occupiers.

JLL have reviewed the Employment Land allocations in Ruthin had regard to the latest Annual Monitoring Report from 2018. This indicates the following:

- The site has been allocated for at least 17 years and there has been no appetite or commitment from other parties including the local highway authority to deliver an adopted road that would open up the site.
- Employment land take up levels across the whole region has been extremely low over the last 3 years. Clearly there is a good supply of employment land across the area with a significant supply of undeveloped land within Ruthin reflecting limited demand and/ or viability issues are main issues affecting take up levels.

Following the conclusion of the evidence base, JLL sought to investigate the capability of the site in its entirety, being brought forward for employment use only. We considered there for be 3 main options:

Option 1 – Purchase of the whole site by an owner occupier – Given that the site has been openly marketed since 2014 and this has not been achieved, we have discounted this as a viable option. Issues preventing this option from being realised are likely to be as a result of: limited pool of potential purchasers for a site of this size in this location; significant infrastructure costs; timing and; uncertainty and risk.

Option 2 – Piece meal purchase of the site by a number of owner occupiers – Again, the site has been openly marketed for the entire or part only of the site since 2014 and this option has not been achieved. This indicates that there is a lack of confidence from the landowner that a number of plot sales can be achieved to support the upfront construction of the infrastructure required to access each of the plots. We therefore consider this option as unviable.

Option 3 – Purchase of the entire site by a developer for industrial/ employment use – On this basis, we have assumed that a developer will provide serviced plots and therefore will fund the infrastructure costs associated with this. From our analysis, it demonstrates that simply calculating the gross value of the site - by either selling off individual serviced plots on a £ per acre basis, or speculatively building some units – and deducting the significant infrastructure costs

provided to us, the scheme is unviable. This is without taking into account a number of costs that would need to be factored in to the developer's appraisal such as initial land purchase and developers profit.

We also considered the viability of the site for office use. However, the market evidence suggests that the majority of office stock (VOA data) in Ruthin is small office suites which reflects the nature and demand of this type of location. The risk associated with building and letting small office suites together with the limited occupier/ owner demand and higher build costs of offices, we consider this option to be unviable at this location.

In terms of Grant Funding, The Development Bank of Wales does not offer grants but is able to support office and industrial projects based in Wales by way of commercial loans and investments only. Whilst this provides an option to fund the infrastructure, given that the scheme is unviable, it is clear this has not been enough to attract developers to the site.

The site has been extensively marketed for employment uses (B1, B2 and B8) since 2014. The site comprises a greenfield site with no infrastructure or services. It is apparent from our findings and analysis that the timescales and significant investment required to provide services and access to the site compared with the return on either an investment (rent/ yield) or direct sale (£per plot) basis are insufficient to achieve a viable development proposition for the site for employment use without some form of enabling or cross-subsidising development.

Aldi Stores UK Ltd is in a position to fund the infrastructure required and unlock the site in order to allow employment development to come forward on the remainder of the site. The full application area extends to 3.798 acres which includes the estates road and the speculative development of the industrial units. This will therefore result in the loss of less than 3 acres of employment land (taking account of the industrial scheme and estates road) to enable the remainder of the site to come forward for this use.

This report should be used for the purposes as agreed with Aldi Stores UK Ltd to determine the viability of the site for employment use. No responsibility whatsoever is accepted to any third party and neither the whole of the report, nor any part, nor references thereto, may be published in any document, statement or circular, nor in any communication with third parties without our prior written approval of the form and context in which it will appear.

Appendix 1
Proposed Plan

Appendix 2

Marketing Particulars



One Piccadilly Gardens
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About JLL

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