

16 July 2025

Dear

Request for Information - ATISN 24873

Thank you for your request for information which I received on 26 June 2025. You asked for the following information:

1. Copies of any formal proposals, business cases, or investment plans submitted to the Welsh Government by or on behalf of Richens Leisure Projects (also known as RLP) relating to the revival, redevelopment, or acquisition of Oakwood Theme Park in Pembrokeshire.
2. Any correspondence (emails, letters, meeting notes, or internal briefings) between the Welsh Government (including Business Wales and the office of Minister for Finance and Local Government, Rebecca Evans MS) and Richens Leisure Projects, or anyone acting on their behalf, relating to Oakwood Theme Park since 4th March 2024.
3. Any internal Welsh Government documentation, meeting minutes, or evaluations regarding potential support, funding, or investment discussions connected to Oakwood Theme Park and Richens Leisure Projects.

Our Response:

Please see **Annex A** below and **Annex B** attached for release of information captured under this request. I have decided that some of the information is exempt from disclosure under section 40 (Personal Information) of the Freedom of Information Act and is therefore withheld. Consequently, personal details have been redacted. The reasons for applying these exemptions are set out in full below.

If you have any queries about this request, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future correspondence.

The request you sent me contains personal information about you - for example, your name and address. The Welsh Government will be the data processor for this information and, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, it will be processed in order to fulfil our public task and meet our legal obligations under the Act to provide you with a response. We will only use this personal information to deal with your request and any matters which arise as a result of it. We will keep your personal information and all other information relating to your request for three years from the date on which your request is finally closed. Your personal information will then be disposed of securely.

Under data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data we hold about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection

For further information about the information which the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you wish to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ
Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Website: www.ico.org.uk

Any information released under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or Environmental Information Regulations 2004 will be listed in the Welsh Government's Disclosure Log (at <https://gov.wales/about/open-government/freedom-of-information/responses/?lang=en>).

Yours sincerely

Application of exemptions/exceptions

The Freedom of information Act/Environmental Information Regulations provide a right for anyone to ask a public authority to make requested information available to the wider public. As the release of requested information is to the world, not just the requester, public authorities need to consider the effects of making the information freely available to everybody. Any personal interest the requester has for accessing the information cannot override those wider considerations.

I have decided to withhold the following information:

- *Personal details including any names/email addresses/telephone numbers or any information which could possibly identify a person(s)*

This Annex sets out the reasons for the engagement of section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act and our subsequent consideration of the Public Interest Test.

Section 40(2) – Personal Data

Section 40(2) provides an absolute exemption if disclosure of the personal data would breach any of the data protection principles.

‘Personal data’ is defined in sections 3(2) and (3) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (‘the DPA 2018’) and means any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual. An identifiable living individual is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of the individual.

We have concluded that, in this instance, the information requested contains third party personal data.

Under Section 40(2) of the FOIA, personal data is exempt from release if disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the GDPR. We consider the principle being most relevant in this instance as being the first. This states that personal data must be:

“processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject”

The lawful basis that is most relevant in relation to a request for information under the FOIA is Article 6(1)(f). This states:

“processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller or by a third party except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child”.

In considering the application of Article 6(1)(f) in the context of a request for information under FOIA it is necessary to consider the following three-part test:-

- The Legitimate interest test: Whether a legitimate interest is being pursued in the request for information;
- The Necessity test: Whether disclosure of the information/confirmation or denial that it is held is necessary to meet the legitimate interest in question;
- The Balancing test: Whether the above interests override the interests, fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject.

Our consideration of these tests is set out below:

1. Legitimate interests

The personal data includes the names/email addresses/telephone numbers or any information which could possibly identify a person(s) captured by this request. The legitimate interest lies in the information held, and in understanding the context of that information, and where any decisions are made.

2. Is disclosure necessary?

Disclosure of the personal data is not necessary for the legitimate interest where those included are not senior or public facing and were acting in an administrative capacity and would not expect their personal data to be made public.

3. The balance between legitimate interests and the data subject's interests or fundamental rights and freedoms

Because the disclosure meets the legitimate interest with the personal information redacted, disclosure of the personal data is not necessary. There is no need to further consider the balance of interests, and the information is withheld.

Annex A

From: RLP

Sent: Sat 24/05/2025 17:50

To: Cabinet Secretary for Economy Energy & Planning; Minister for Further and Higher Education; Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales; Minister for Children and Social Care; Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Cc:

Subject: Proposal for a Welsh National Theme Park – Expression of Interest in Parc Felindre

Dear all,

I hope this message finds you well.

My name is ****, and I'm writing on behalf of RLP to express interest in Parc Felindre Swansea as a potential location for a nationally significant theme park — a long-term cultural and tourism project designed to bring sustained economic and social value to South West Wales.

We are currently behind the proposal to acquire and redevelop Oakwood Theme Park. While that remains a priority, we have not received a response from the current owners, and we are now exploring alternative public land opportunities that could fulfil our broader ambition: to deliver Wales its first truly national theme park.

Parc Felindre stands out as a highly suitable option. With 104 acres of publicly owned development land, direct access via M4 Junction 46, and the proposed West Wales Parkway station nearby, the site offers strategic positioning that could underpin a new visitor destination of national impact.

Our vision is to create a family-first theme park experience that reflects Welsh identity — through bilingual storytelling, myth-inspired zones, and inclusive public partnerships. The proposal includes:

- Flagship attractions inspired by Welsh folklore and landscape
- Education-focused areas, play zones, and dark ride experiences
- Charitable and community inclusion (e.g. free access days via Tŷ Hafan)
- 500+ forecasted jobs in entertainment, tourism, catering, and operations
- Year-round footfall to benefit local supply chains and wider regeneration

This project aligns closely with goals set out in Wales' Tourism Strategy, the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and regional regeneration objectives supported by the Shared Prosperity Fund and Transforming Towns programme.

We are committed to sourcing creative, operational, and construction partners locally — with a strong focus on working with Welsh design studios, set builders, and SMEs to ensure the park is built by Wales, for Wales.

We are seeking initial dialogue around the release or long-term lease of Parc Felindre, and the possibility of Welsh Government support in land access, planning alignment, or early-stage site feasibility to unlock the next phase of this vision.

We appreciate the scale and responsibility attached to such a proposal, and we're fully committed to working closely with Welsh Government teams to ensure it delivers measurable public value. We'd be grateful for the chance to begin that conversation.

Warm regards,

From: WELSH GOVERNMENT

Sent: Mon 02/06/2025 13:23

To: RLP

Cc:

Subject: RE: Proposal for a Welsh National Theme Park – Expression of Interest in Parc Felindre - response to your recent correspondence ref: TO/RE/00601/25

Good Afternoon ****,

Thank you for your email to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning and other Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers, regarding your proposal for a Welsh National Theme Park at Parc Felindre. I have been asked to reply.

I understand that you are already in touch with Tourism Officials in respect of the Oakwood Theme Park and will be meeting to discuss your plans in respect of that site, so this will also be an opportunity to discuss any further investment opportunities.

Yours sincerely,

**Twristiaeth, Marchnata, Digwyddiadau a'r Sector Creadigol / Tourism,
Marketing, Events & Creative Sector
Grŵp yr Yr Economi, Ynni a Thrafnidiaeth / Economy, Energy and Transport
Group
Llywodraeth Cymru / Welsh Government**

From: RLP

Sent: Wed 14/05/2025 10:44

To: WELSH GOVERNMENT

Cc:

Subject: Tourism Regeneration Project – South West Wales

Hi ****,

Thanks very much for reaching out — I really appreciate the response and being pointed in your direction. Please forgive me as I have recently acquired this domain and email.

The site I'm working on is Oakwood Theme Park. I've submitted a formal offer, which was escalated to the UK director, but I haven't had a reply. I've kept everything professional and confidential — I just believe strongly that if the park is going to have a future, it should be led by someone local who understands its potential and long-term value to the region.

My aim is to restore Oakwood as a nationally significant attraction with proper investment, year-round employment, and a sustainable plan — not a short-term fix.

I'd be looking to explore strategic support through WAG and Visit Wales if the deal progresses, particularly around regeneration, infrastructure, and funding alignment.

I'd really appreciate the chance to have a short conversation if that's possible — even if it's just to get advice on how best to structure things if the opportunity becomes real.

Thanks again for the contact,

Best regards,

From: WELSH GOVERNMENT

Sent: Tue 20/05/2025 14:15

To: RLP

Cc:

Subject: Tourism Regeneration Project – South West Wales

Hi ****

I apologise for the delay in coming back to you.

My colleague ***** who leads on the Wales Tourism Investment Fund and I would be more than willing to meet with you to tell you a little more about the fund.

Would Thursday 22nd May or pm Monday 2nd June be convenient with you for a Teams call?

Many Thanks

Diolch

From: RLP

Sent: Tue 20/05/2025 14:41

To: WELSH GOVERNMENT

Cc:

Subject: Tourism Regeneration Project – South West Wales

Hi ****,

Thank you for reaching back out. A call sounds great, the only issue we have at the moment is Aspro have not yet signed anything and the decision is still with the UK director, we are currently in limbo.

Best Regards.

From: WELSH GOVERNMENT

Sent: 02/06/2025 10:21

To: RLP

Cc:

Subject: Tourism Regeneration Project – South West Wales

Hi ****

Hope all is well. Just wondering if you have heard anything further and if you would like to arrange a meeting to discuss, or if you are still waiting for a response from Aspro?

Kind Regards

From: RLP

Sent: 02/06/2025 12:18

To: WELSH GOVERNMENT

Cc:

Subject: Tourism Regeneration Project – South West Wales

Hi ****,

Thanks again for checking in — I really appreciate it.

We're still waiting on a response from ASPRO's UK Director, as advised last month. That aside, we've continued developing our wider vision, which now forms the basis of a £150 million redevelopment strategy to establish a nationally significant theme park and resort in Wales.

This project isn't just about bringing back a park — it's about building a national destination. Something rooted in Welsh identity, accessible to everyone, and delivering long-term value both culturally and economically. Oakwood remains our preferred location, and we believe it has the legacy and potential to become a flagship resort Wales can genuinely call its own.

Key parts of the plan include:

- Over 25 rides and attractions, including a major new coaster and fully themed lands
- A lead family IP integrated into key areas of the park (subject to formal licensing as part of the delivery phase)
- A fully accessible layout, including step-free routes, bilingual signage, sensory spaces and inclusive design throughout
- Over 700 seasonal roles and hundreds of permanent jobs, backed by a clear apprenticeship and training strategy
- Environmental sustainability is central to the project — from how the park is powered and constructed to how it operates day-to-day. We're committed to being greener by design, aligning with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and aiming to set a new standard for low-impact, family-led attractions in the UK

- A strategic food, drink and merchandise model, combining locally sourced products and immersive retail
- Integrated public transport access to reduce reliance on cars
- A full calendar of seasonal events to support longer visitor stays and repeat visits

We're also exploring partnerships with Welsh colleges and universities to support real skills development in areas like hospitality, engineering, and themed design — helping to ensure young people in Wales are part of building and running this from day one.

Alongside this, we're committed to engaging local communities throughout the process. We don't want this to just be a park in Wales — we want it to feel like something built *for* Wales, with local voices and identity shaping how it grows.

We've already had interest from a range of individuals who want to be part of this. That includes past Oakwood staff reaching out to offer support, and industry professionals — from ride designers to consultants involved in major UK projects like the revamp of Blackpool Pleasure Park — who are keen to contribute. It's clear there's an appetite to build something special here, and we're ready to move when the time is right.

In terms of projected impact should we build the resort on the M4 corridor:

- We expect 1.6 to 2.2 million annual visitors by Year 3–5, with Year 1 forecasts around 850,000 to 1.1 million
- Estimated in-park revenue ranges from £72M to £132M annually
- Local and regional spend is expected to increase by a further £30M to £50M per year, particularly through accommodation, food, and transport.
- We see this as a chance to place Wales firmly on the UK and Irish tourism map, with a family destination that celebrates who we are

While Oakwood remains the clear focus, we've opened early discussions with councils along the M4 corridor as a contingency, should ASPRO not proceed. Our strong preference, if an alternative site is needed, would be to locate the park somewhere between Narberth and Neath — maintaining close ties to Pembrokeshire while improving strategic access via the motorway. In those conversations, we are exploring land options in the region of 150 to 200 acres — appropriate for the scale, connectivity, and long-term viability required.

Given the scale and national relevance of the plan, we would welcome the opportunity to explore how this could be delivered collaboratively — including what a public-private partnership model might look like, where appropriate.

Very happy to meet and discuss further — just let me know what works best for you.

Best regards,

From: WELSH GOVERNMENT
Sent: 02/06/2025 14.56
To: RLP
Cc:
Subject: Tourism Regeneration Project – South West Wales

Thank you for the update ****. Would a TEAMS call next Monday (9th) at 11am be convenient with you?

From: RLP
Sent: 02/06/2025 15.05
To: WELSH GOVERNMENT
Cc:
Subject: Tourism Regeneration Project – South West Wales

Hi ****

That's a great time. Perfect being a Monday also.

Is this regarding the data I sent through earlier?

Kind regards.

From: WELSH GOVERNMENT
Sent: Tue 03/06/2025 12:45
To: RLP
Cc:
Subject: Tourism Regeneration Project – South West Wales

Thanks ****. I will send over the diary marker now. My colleague ***** will join us. We can share some information on the Wales Tourism Investment Fund in case this is something you wish to explore in taking the project forward. We look forward to meeting you Monday
Diolch

From: RLP
Sent: 09 June 2025 13:34
To: WELSH GOVERNMENT
Cc:
Subject: Oakwood Plans

Hi ****,

Thank you again for the conversation earlier — I truly appreciate your time. I'll admit I was a little nervous going into it, but it meant a great deal to speak with you both directly.

Apologies also if I spoke a bit too much — it's simply a reflection of how passionate I am about the project.

As a quick follow-up, I've attached the full planned model we've developed for Oakwood for your review. I have noted the amount that we could afford with structured plan working with the Welsh Government.

I'm genuinely excited about what lies ahead and would be honoured to collaborate with you, ****, and the wider Visit Wales and Welsh Government teams to bring this vision to life.

This is a rare opportunity to deliver something meaningful and long-lasting for the region and for Wales — and we're fully committed to making it a success.

Warm regards,

From: WELSH GOVERNMENT
Sent: Tue 10/06/2025 12:54
To: RLP
Cc:
Subject: Oakwood Plans

Thank you very much for your time yesterday **** and for sharing your plans with us. Please keep us updated on progress.
In the meantime, if you have any queries please don't hesitate to get in touch.
Kind Regards

From: RLP
Sent: 12 June 2025 11:32
To: WELSH GOVERNMENT
Cc:
Subject: Oakwood Plans

Hi ****,

Thanks again for your time recently — we really appreciated the opportunity to talk everything through. I wanted to follow up with a more detailed update on where things stand with the Oakwood proposal, and why this moment feels critical. We're more committed than ever to delivering something lasting for Wales — and we hope this can become a shared success story.

We've been advised - Informally from locals in the area - that the land of Oakwood Theme Park may soon be listed with estate agents (unconfirmed if true). Understandably, there's growing concern locally that, if it's sold without a clear plan in place, the site could be lost entirely — potentially to housing. That would mean closing the door on decades of family memories and cutting off the chance to build

something new. Oakwood still means a great deal to people, and we strongly believe it can thrive again.

This is the first time we've asked formally for funding support after sending through our plans to bring something back to Pembroke, and we do so with a carefully modelled, fully deliverable proposal. We recognise that acquisition is a key part of the wider redevelopment, and one that must be handled carefully and responsibly. With that in mind, we are proposing that the cost of the land is absorbed into the overall £250 million redevelopment envelope we are asking Welsh Government to support over multiple phases. This approach keeps the full project contained within a capped capital framework, maintaining clear accountability and enabling a 25% repayable structure.

Most importantly — we'd really welcome a conversation about earmarking the necessary funding so that, if the land is listed, we can move immediately. A guarantee that acquisition funds are accessible through a government-backed mechanism would make all the difference. We are ready to move fast with a structured and responsible offer — we just need the route to be in place.

This isn't an open-ended ask. We're not seeking operational subsidies or long-term public support. This is a one-time capital investment to unlock a fully reimaged Oakwood — something rooted in Welsh identity, culture, and long-term value.

Alongside the rides, education centre, and major new attractions, we are developing a national school programme — currently code-named "Nelly" — that would offer every child in Wales aged 4 to 11 a free ticket to Oakwood each year. Our enhanced DBS-cleared team will visit schools directly to deliver creative, bilingual learning sessions, and then invite schools to the park for a full-day visit — half learning, half play. There is no cost to schools or to Welsh Government (excluding travel costs).

This programme is designed to be truly national — accessible to every school, every year. It's about delivering joy, aspiration, and educational impact in one unforgettable experience.

We are also working on a dedicated outreach initiative for children in hospital. Our team will partner with NHS Wales and relevant charities to bring our mascots into children's wards, hold themed activity days, and — most importantly — offer free park visits to any child undergoing cancer treatment, along with their family.

We are committed to making it a central part of Oakwood's purpose.

We would be proud to launch this in partnership with Welsh Government — not just as a funded project, but as a shared cultural achievement. One that reflects the best of what Wales stands for: creativity, community, care, and ambition. A project that speaks to the heart as well as the economy — preserving a beloved destination while creating something new and hopeful in its place. Together, we can show how investment in joy, learning, and cultural identity can drive real-world impact: jobs, tourism, national pride, and brighter futures for families across the country.

We'd be more than happy to continue the conversation with you or anyone else across regeneration, Visit Wales, or finance. We're ready to go — and we'd love to make this real, together.

Warmest wishes

From: WELSH GOVERNMENT

Sent: Mon 23/06/2025 08:19

To: RLP

Cc:

Subject: Oakwood Plans

Hi ****

Thank you very much for your emails.

Visit Wales would be unable to assist with the purchase of the Oakwood site. You would need to look to commercial funding for that.

Please keep us updated on progress.

Many Thanks again,

From: RLP

Sent: Mon 23/06/2025 09:11

To: WELSH GOVERNMENT

Cc:

Subject: Oakwood Plans

Hi ****

Thank you for the update, we will be looking at financing the purchase from commercial lenders.

The proposed offer to ASPRO gives us viable time to acquire funding for the site.

Kind Regards.

From: RLP

Sent: 24 June 2025 18:30

To: WELSH GOVERNMENT

Cc:

Subject: Oakwood Proposal – Current Status and Final Contact Plan

Hi ****,

I wanted to give you a full and final update on the current position regarding the Oakwood Theme Park proposal submitted by Richens Leisure Parks (RLP).

We submitted the formal proposal to Aspro Parks six weeks ago. From the outset, we've approached this seriously, professionally, and in full alignment with Welsh Government priorities around tourism development, rural regeneration, economic growth, accessibility, and sustainability. The proposal laid out a structured acquisition and redevelopment plan, with scalable milestones and long-term community value built in from day one.

At the time of submission, we were told the UK Director would be in touch. That was six weeks ago. Since then, we've made multiple follow-up attempts by email and by phone, and we have received no written reply of any kind. No clarification, no contact. Nothing. The complete absence of response has left us with no other conclusion than that we are being disregarded.

Today, I made another direct call to their UK office. I asked to speak with the UK Director or anyone responsible for operations across their theme park portfolio. I was told they were all unavailable and offered no timeline for a response. I asked the person to pass on a message with my name and company and made it clear this was an important contact. No name was given. No escalation. No further information. Just another wall of silence.

We've remained patient. We've followed up without aggression. But six weeks of silence, after being told someone would respond, is not just unprofessional. It's unacceptable. We cannot continue to hold this project in suspension waiting for people who can't even offer a one-line acknowledgement.

Friday's call will be the final contact attempt. There will be no further calls, no additional outreach, and no delay. At that point, we will issue a final deadline. If Aspro does not provide a written response, even a basic confirmation of receipt and intent, by 5PM on Wednesday 2 July, we will consider the Oakwood proposal formally closed and withdrawn.

There will be no extensions, no further chasing, and no reopening of the conversation at a later date. This has gone on long enough. We have other partners and timelines to manage. If they do not wish to engage, that is their choice, but it will no longer hold up ours.

To be absolutely clear, this is not the end of the wider project. We are still committed to delivering this development in Wales. If Oakwood is taken off the table, we can explore alternative sites — including underused land, regional regeneration zones, or any location where stakeholders are willing to engage seriously and act in good faith. We would welcome Welsh Government and Visit Wales's support in identifying and supporting alternative delivery pathways, should it come to that.

We're not walking away from the vision. We're walking away from the silence.

We've done everything possible to open this conversation and give it space to happen on fair terms. If that opportunity closes next week, it won't be because we didn't try. It will be because we were met with a blank wall and left no choice.

We remain open to working with Welsh Government on other tourism, infrastructure, and regeneration projects in the future, should the opportunity arise. Our commitment to creating long-term, place-based development in Wales doesn't end here.

I'll follow up again after Friday's final contact attempt to confirm where things stand. If you or your department need anything further from our side in the meantime, I'm happy to provide it.

Regards,

From: RLP
Sent: Fri 27/06/2025 10:31
To: WELSH GOVERNMENT
Cc:
Subject: Oakwood Theme Park - Major Update

Hi ****.

Me again, sorry to bother you.

I personally have spoken to **** in Liverpool this morning.

There is no update and Oakwood is staying as is for the foreseeable as they are not looking to sell.

They are not looking to sell Oakwood Theme Park (maybe just to us).

We have to announce that we will not be perusing Oakwood Theme Park. This is a huge blow for the welsh economy and the theme park community.

As mentioned before, we are more than happy to work with the Welsh government on anything in the future based on tourism and scaling up.

Thank you for all the support.

Kind Regards

From: WELSH GOVERNMENT
Sent: Fri 27/06/2025 12:46
To: RLP
Cc:
Subject: Oakwood Theme Park - Major Update

Hi ****

Thank you very much for the update and sorry to hear that you are unable to progress with your plans at the Oakwood site. Please don't hesitate to get in touch should the situation change, or if there are future projects you wish to discuss.
Kind Regards



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Wales**

Croeso '25
Gwlad, Gwlad.
Only in Wales.