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With Vauxhall workers feeling "betrayed" by Stellantis following confirmation of the closure of its Luton van factory, it's then good news that Luton Council have begun discussions with Stellantis to buy the land after it has closed in April ⁽¹⁾.

This site is ideally placed to become the Green Horizons Science and Innovations Park, and avoid the destruction of the award-winning Wigmore Valley Park, from where it is currently planned. The purchase could also save the destruction of the Luton's second biggest park, Wigmore Valley Park, from the plans to expand Luton airport onto its footprint, saving the estimated £780 million build cost, currently awaiting approval from the Department of Transport. Terminal two could now be located on the existing brown field site surrounding the current airport. The planned Airport Access Road would be reduced in length, again saving hundreds of millions. The Vauxhall site could also accommodate other elements of the expansion, such as additional airport car parking, which would ease traffic congestion within the airport, as passengers could easily transfer to the airports DART.

With 1,100 jobs at risk due to the van plant closing and Green Horizons Park estimated to create 3,200 jobs, and an Airport expansion an additional 10,000 jobs, it's simply a no-brainer.

The infrastructure, such as utilities, roads and transport connections are already established at the Vauxhall site and Luton Rising have already proven that they are able to renovate and transform landmark historic Vauxhall buildings with Morton House and Hart House ⁽²⁾. This would also help government promises of tackling the climate and nature emergencies. There would no longer be the requirement to introduce additional carbon and climate footprints by excavating and building over the park, when there are ready-made brown field sites just a mile away, closer to the town centre and rail and bus connections, reducing additional travel pollution.

With Stellantis informing staff that the Luton Vauxhall factory will close in April, and in the same month the Department of Transport also making their decision on the expansion of Luton Airport, relocating Green Horizons Park could be just the good news the town needs.

References.

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