



**Maidstone Local Plan Examination  
Response to Inspectors Session  
Session 8 – Employment Policies and Allocations**

**Statement  
on behalf of Roxhill Developments Limited**

**HPPC Ref: 30531**  
**Date: 20 October 2016**



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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Statement is submitted to the Examination on behalf of Roxhill Developments Limited, who hold an Option over land at Woodcut Farm, subject to policy EMP1(5) of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
- 1.2 This Statement sets out a short update on the proposals of Roxhill Developments Limited for the development of land at Woodcut Farm, with regard to the timetable for resubmission of an outline planning application; and a response to the specific questions of the Inspector with regard to the proposed employment allocation at Woodcut Farm (Policy EMP1(5) ).
- 1.3 This statement also addresses the representations made on the Maidstone Borough Local Plan on behalf of Roxhill Developments Limited, in the light of the proposed modification put forward to the policy EMP1(5) by Maidstone Borough Council in their schedule of proposed changes; and in the light of changes agreed to the outline planning application prior to its determination.

## **2 CURRENT POSITION OF ROXHILL DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED WITH REGARD TO PROGRESSION OF PROPOSALS FOR NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT, WOODCUT FARM**

- 2.1 Proposals for new employment development at Woodcut Farm have been the subject of extensive consultation with both Maidstone Borough Council and the local community and other interested parties over the last four years. Roxhill Developments Limited secured an Option over the land in February 2013, and following pre-application discussions with the Council, and two local exhibitions of the proposals, an outline planning application was submitted in April 2015. This application was registered under reference 15/503288/OUT.
- 2.2 The planning application was accompanied by an Environmental Statement, prepared under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, which provided a comprehensive appraisal of the predicted environmental effects of the proposed development, and proposals for mitigation where appropriate. The Non Technical summary of the Environmental Statement is attached at Appendix 1 to this statement.
- 2.3 During the course of determination of the outline planning application Maidstone Borough Council confirmed the proposed allocation of land at Woodcut Farm under Policy EMP1(5); the outline planning application was amended, to take specific account of the detailed criteria now contained within Policy EMP1(5), and also the responses of consultees to the original application proposals. A brief schedule summarising the changes made to the outline planning application is attached at Appendix 2 to this Statement. The changes to the outline planning application were fully appraised in an amended version of the Environmental Statement. This included in particular an appraisal of landscape impact for employment buildings of a height of 10m above ground level, to the west of the stream; and a comprehensive review of archaeological implications, including extensive trial trenching. The revised and updated Environmental Statement concluded that all environmental impacts are acceptable, taking account of the proposals for mitigation; the revised Non Technical summary is attached at Appendix 3.
- 2.4 The outline application was reported to the Planning Committee meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, with a recommendation of approval; however, as noted in other documents before the examination, this application was refused by a margin of 7 votes to 6, for the reasons specified in the Inspectors note for this session.
- 2.5 The position of Roxhill Developments Limited, following refusal of planning permission, is that it is proposed to resubmit the outline planning application, in the form considered by the Planning Committee, this application will accord in full with the current policy wording of Policy EMP1(5). It is considered prudent to await the discussions before the Inspector at the Session 8 on employment to held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016; accordingly, it is anticipated that the outline planning application will be

re-submitted in early December 2016.

- 2.6 Roxhill Developments Limited are currently reserving their position with regard to the possible submission of an appeal against the refusal of planning permission; such an appeal must be submitted by the start of January 2017 (refusal of planning permission dated 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016).
- 2.7 Provided that outline planning permission is granted for the re-submitted application, it would be the intention of Roxhill Developments Limited to proceed immediately with a reserved matters application for the first phase of employment development, such application to be submitted in mid 2017 (subject to the outline planning application determination date).
- 2.8 The market remains good for industrial and warehousing/distribution, see attached extract (Appendix 4) from The Kent Property Market March 2016, which notes a shortage of well-located distribution stock, and the recent letting of 8297m<sup>2</sup> at Roxhill's recently completed Invicta Riverside at Aylesford; a further unit of 3810m<sup>2</sup> has now been let, accordingly a total of 2 of the 3 units are now let, the remaining unit has an area of 5513m<sup>2</sup>.

### **3 OBJECTION TO THE MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN POLICY EMP1(5) ON BEHALF OF ROXHILL DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED**

- 3.1 The objection submitted by Roxhill Developments Limited sought two changes to policy EMP1(5).
- 3.2 The first of these objections related to the exclusion of the existing farm buildings at Woodcut Farm from the proposed employment allocation; these buildings lying outside the Option area, and being required by the current owners of Woodcut Farm, to continue agricultural operations on retained land in the local area. Roxhill Developments Limited can confirm that they are content with the proposed change put forward by Maidstone Borough Council in the published proposed modifications.
- 3.3 The second objection sought a change to one of the specified criteria for development of land west of the stream, within Policy EMP1(5). The policy limitation put forward by Maidstone Borough Council required a height limit of 8m; the submitted application proposals, in their original form, sought a height instead of up to 10m, within the scope of the outline planning application. It was agreed prior to determination of the outline planning application that the height of buildings west of the stream should be reduced to 8m.
- 3.4 The purpose of seeking an increase in height to 10m was to allow for flexibility in meeting the requirements of prospective occupiers. However, in the light of the specific wording of the policy, it is considered that the subsequent process of submission of applications for reserved matters approval would allow sufficient flexibility, in the light of the more specific requirements of occupiers which would be available at that stage. The outline planning application proposals indicated the indicative finished floor levels, for new buildings in each of the main development areas; accordingly, planning conditions attached to a planning approval could specify the maximum height AOD of proposed new buildings in each of these areas. It would then be open at the reserved matters stage, subject to agreement with the Local Planning Authority, that reductions in finished floor levels could be achieved, which would enable an increase in height of buildings, without an increased landscape impact, through a greater height AOD.
- 3.5 On this basis, Roxhill Developments Limited do not wish to pursue further their objection to the specific wording of the policy, with regard to the height of buildings west of the stream.

## 4 RESPONSE TO INSPECTORS QUESTIONS

- 4.1 Our response to the inspectors questions with regards to Woodcut Farm (8.11 to 8.20 inclusive) as set out below.

### **Question 8.11 - Does MBC remain of the view that the development is necessary to meet an objectively assessed need for employment and, if not why not?**

*MBC to respond.*

### **Question 8.12 – What mix of floor space in each use is anticipated by MBC and the landowner and how much site area would each use be likely to occupy?**

*The total site area breakdown shown on the outline planning application is as shown below; it should be noted that the status of this breakdown is illustrative, however it reflects the aspirations of the applicant, Roxhill Developments Limited, for development of the site, in terms of both overall site coverage, and the detailed breakdown between land uses (see further comments below).*

#### **Total Site Area Breakdown**

Total building area for plots	4.78ha	(26.26%)
Total service areas for plots	3.37ha	(18.52%)
Internal roads and landscaping within developable site area	6.02ha	(33.10%)
Buffer landscaping (within application red line boundary/allocation boundary)	4.03ha	(22.12%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.2ha</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

With regard to the breakdown between land uses, the illustrative layout forming part of the outline planning application gives alternative uses for different plots, to provide some flexibility for the subsequent submission and determination of reserved matters applications. The indicative land use mix, with this flexibility, is as follows:

<b>Use Class</b>	<b>Plots</b>	<b>Plot Area</b>	
B8 or B1c	A1-A9	3.96 ha	(48.6%)
B8	B1 + B2	3.01ha	(36.90%)
B1b or B1c	C1 + C2	0.78ha	(9.60%)
B1a or B1b	D1 + D2	0.4ha	(4.90%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>8.15ha</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

**Question 8.13 – Should the policy further define the type of development proposed in order to better assess its likely landscape and visual impact and the scope for mitigation?**

*Roxhill Developments Limited would be content for the policy to further define the type of development proposed, provided that there is sufficient flexibility in terms of the future land use mix, within the general context of the employment land uses outlined in the answer to Question 8.12 above, and that the policy wording allows for the reasonable requirements of future occupiers of new buildings for each of the land uses proposed (B1a, B1b, B1c, B2 and B8). The Local Plan Policy is for a Strategic Employment site, which may be developed over a number of years, accordingly it is considered that it is important that the policy retains a degree of flexibility, with regard to the type of development proposed.*

**Question 8.14 – How viable would each class of development be at this location?**

*At the time of submission of the outline planning application each of the classes of development proposed was determined by Roxhill Developments Limited to be viable. During the course of determination of the outline planning application Maidstone Borough Council expressed the view that an increased amount of office floor space should be provided for within the outline planning application; the Officer Recommendation on the outline planning application was that a minimum of 5360m<sup>2</sup> office floor space should be provided; this figure accorded with the maximum amount of office floor space allowed for in the Environmental Impact Assessment, with regard to the issue of traffic generation (office development generating greater amounts of traffic than other forms of business use). The actual amount of office floor space to be provided in this location would, as with the other employment land uses, depend on the nature and level of demand, as the development proceeds; Roxhill Developments Limited position is that the amount of office floor space shown on the original illustrative scheme 3310m<sup>2</sup> corresponded with the estimated level of current market demand, however it is appreciated that this level of demand will change over the life of the Local Plan.*

**Question 8.? – Has the (Town Centre First) sequential test in National Policy need to be satisfied in respect of the office component of the development?**

*MBC to respond*

**Question 8.15 – Why is B1(b) research and development proposed to be limited to “an element”?**

*We do not consider that it is necessary for B1b Research & Development to be limited to “an*



element”; this is a part of market demand which has been identified by Roxhill Developments Limited, however in many practical respects, and in particular its land use implications, this use is similar to Use Class B1a Offices (it is shown on the illustrative layout plan as being within a block of development suitable for either B1a or B1b uses).

There is also scope for research & development to be combined with light industry; the development plots on the illustrative layout C1 and C2 are for this reason shown as being for use classes B1b or B1c.

- How much development would that represent?

*We do not see a necessity for the identification of a specific limit on the amount of B1b floor space, for the reasons outlined above.*

- Does the wording require modification for clarity and certainty as to what may be permitted?

*We would suggest that the first line of the policy EMP1(5) be modified to include B1b within the list of land uses, which could be re-ordered to read (B1a; B1b; B1c; B2; B8). The following sentence commencing “In the event of a demand arising,…” would be deleted.*

**Question 8.16- What use class would “Hi Tech” development fall within and why does it also require separate treatment?**

*We do not consider that this wording is necessary, it could be deleted as suggested above.*

**Question 8.17 – Having regard to the conclusions of the Secretary of State in relation to the heritage impact of the larger KIG proposal and to the planning committees conclusion of a less than substantial adverse impact on the setting of one Grade II Listed building, would heritage impact alone be capable of being outweighed by the public benefits of the development?**

*Yes, Roxhill Developments Limited consider that heritage impact alone would be capable of being outweighed by the public benefits of the development; the impact is accepted by both the Secretary of State and the Planning Committee as being less than substantial adverse impact, and this judgement was also reached by Maidstone Borough Council in putting forward the allocation of Woodcut Farm as a Strategic Employment Allocation, in the submission version of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. It should be noted that the KIG proposal was very much larger, extending far to the west of Woodcut Farm and hence having a greater impact on its setting; the proposed employment allocation at Woodcut Farm comprises only 13% of the floorspace for the KIG proposal.*

*It should also be noted that the outline planning application proposals took specific account of the setting of Woodcut Farmhouse, as a Grade II Listed Building; in accordance with the requirements of the policy. These measures included establishing a significant distance from the new employment buildings, to Woodcut Farmhouse; creating a landscaped visual corridor through the scheme; and providing significant landscaping/mitigation planting.*

**Question 8.18 – Would there be scope for mitigation in scale, design or mix of the development to reduce its landscape and/or heritage impacts to an acceptable degree when weighed with the economic or other public benefits of the scheme?**

*Roxhill Developments Limited considers that landscape and/or heritage impacts have already been mitigated to an acceptable degree, when weighed with the economic and other public benefits of the scheme. However, to ensure that the balance presently achieved, through the outline planning application, is maintained Roxhill consider that additional wording could be introduced to the policy, to set specific limits to the heights of buildings, AOD in accordance with the provisions of the outline planning application.*

*The developed site area is taken to include the buffer landscaping within the application/allocation red line boundary.*

**Question 8.19 – What reasonable alternatives for a development of similar strategic scale may have a less adverse landscape or visual impact, including in their effect on the AONB and its setting?**

*Roxhill Developments Limited do not consider that there are reasonable alternatives for a development of a similar strategic scale with a less adverse landscape or visual impact, including their effect on the AONB and its setting. In particular, it is considered that the proposal placed before the Examination in the Strategic Alternatives Session (Session 3B) at the former Detling Aerodrome would have a significantly greater adverse impact, for the following reasons:*

- *Located within the AONB itself – clearly a major development*
- *Transport mitigation works discussed at the Examination, including a new roundabout to the A249, and 1 (or possibly 2?) bus lanes on the A249 between Detling and “Jade’s Crossing” would have a further significant adverse landscape impact, within the AONB, due to the large scale engineering operations involved, and, with regard to a bus lane or bus lanes, removal of existing mature trees/woodland and landscaped verges.*
- *No confirmation of viability of the proposals as expanded upon at the Examination Session,*

*significant infrastructure costs, both transport, and social infrastructure to deal with the isolation of the site, and acknowledged deficiencies in existing community provision highlighted in the sustainability appraisal.*

*Roxhill Developments Limited consider that the other strategic alternative put forward by objectors, at Waterside Park, would increase the impact of new development, by extending into an area south of the A20; the disadvantages of development in this location were outlined comprehensively in the Inspector's Decision letter, rejecting the two appeals against the refusal of planning permission.*

**Question 8.20 – In the alternative could equivalent floor space be achieved by dividing provision between two or more smaller sites and would that have less impact?**

*We do not consider that equivalent floor space could be achieved by dividing provision between Woodcut Farm, and either Waterside Park (the other omission site), or Detling; in either case, the cumulative impact would be greater than the impact of the present Strategic Employment Allocation at Woodcut Farm.*

*It should also be noted that each new Strategic Employment Allocation, if more than one were to be allocated, of a reduced size, would require transport and other services infrastructure; the cost of which would be borne by a significantly smaller development. This would inevitably have an impact on viability; it would also mean that less efficient use was made of the land released for development, as a greater proportion would, of necessity, be taken up by the site access and transport infrastructure required.*

*Despite the most extensive search by Maidstone Borough Council, no other suitable Strategic Employment sites have been identified within the Maidstone Borough Council administrative area.*

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX 1

## Appendix 2.

Schedule of Changes to Planning Application as set out in the Revised Planning Statement to accompany the amendments to the Planning Application submitted in January 2016

In January 2016 a revisions to the planning application were submitted to Maidstone Borough Council in respect of the revised illustrative layout reference 9325FE229.

### Indicative Floor Space breakdown

The application was amended by these revisions to propose the following;

- 9 commercial units (units A1 to A9) for use either within use class B8 Storage and Distribution/Warehousing or light industrial (use class B1 (c)) with floor space totalling 246,700 square feet (22,920m<sup>2</sup>), and unit sizes varying from 18,200 square feet (2130m<sup>2</sup>) to 45,000 square feet (4180m<sup>2</sup>).
- Two commercial units for storage and distribution/warehouse accommodation (use Class B8), totalling 170,500 square feet (15,840m<sup>2</sup>), individual units sizes 67,000 square feet (6225m<sup>2</sup>) and 103,500 square feet (9615m<sup>2</sup>).
- Two units (units C1 and C2) for use in either use class B1 (b) (research and development) or use Class B1 (c) light industry totalling 49,000 square feet (4,550m<sup>2</sup>), individual units sized 23,000 square feet (2140m<sup>2</sup>) and 26,000 square feet (2415m<sup>2</sup>).
- Two units (units D1 and D2) for uses in either use class B1 (a) offices or use class B1 (b) research and development, totalling 35,600 square feet (3310m<sup>2</sup>), individual unit sizes 15,500 square feet (1440m<sup>2</sup>) and 20,150 square feet (1870m<sup>2</sup>).
- New site access on north side of A20, west of M20 junction 8;
- Internal drainage, new internal road network and structural landscaping

The total floor space of 46,623 m<sup>2</sup> (501,850 ft<sup>2</sup>), represents a reduction in floorspace from the earlier illustrative layout plan which showed floorspace of 47,750 m<sup>2</sup> (514,000 ft<sup>2</sup>).

### Ground Levels and Development Platform

The revised figures for the finished floor levels were amended to between 51.3 to 56.2 compared to finished floor levels on the earlier illustrative scheme of between 52.2 AOD and 57.0 AOD.

## Proposed Maximum Building Heights

Maximum building heights were reduced to accord with the emerging Local Plan Policy as far as is possible. The larger units B1 and B2 were re-located to the east of the stream, in accordance with the policy, and had maximum heights of 12 metres to ridge (10 metres clear internal height); these buildings were previously shown to have a maximum eaves level of between 10/12 metres (equivalent to 12/13.8 metres to ridge), in their original location west of the stream.

Units A1 – A9, inclusive were shown to be sited west of the stream and to have lower heights, in accordance with the emerging Local Plan Policy; the height of 10 metres to ridge / 8 metres internal exceeds that in the supporting text to the emerging policy (8 metres to ridge, 6 metres internal) however this is required to meet modern operators requirements for industrial buildings.

The heights of units C1 and C2 and D1 and D2, remained unaltered from the earlier scheme, however in each instance the relevant part of the site had a reduction in the number of units from three to two.

## Landscape

The wording of emerging policy EMP 1 (5) proposes that larger buildings should be located to the east of the stream, and lower buildings to the west. Accordingly, the illustrative layout plan, and parameter plans were amended to show this revised configuration. The table below shows a comparison of the finished floor levels for the units within plots A, B, C and D, comparing the original planning application submission, and those submitted as the amendment and which were considered when the application was determined.

<b>NOW</b>			<b>WAS</b>	
PLOT A	51.3 – 52.6		PLOT A	52.2
PLOT B	53.75 – 56.2		PLOT B	52 – 56.75
PLOT C	55.5 - 56		PLOT C	55.5 – 57.0
PLOT D	52.5 – 53.24		PLOT D	52.5 – 54.5

Additional landscaping was provided to the boundary at the eastern end of the site, to Musket Lane, with a width of 15 metres.

In addition to the requirements of the emerging policy, additional landscaping was also introduced within the site, as shown on the illustrative layout plan, including an open corridor, providing views through to Woodcut Farm, to the west, via a tree lined corridor.

## **Design and Layout**

The proposals sought to create a spacious parkland setting for development through the addition of substantial internal landscaping which will help to break up the visual appearance of the development, in particular views from the AONB; building will cover not more than 40% of the developed site area.

*Parkland setting created as required by the policy, including substantial internal landscaping along access of stream (north to south) and east to west along the boundary to the M20, and through the centre of the site; building coverage less than 40% of developed site area.*

The development sought to respect the topography of the site by minimising the need for site excavation.

*The development proposals were amended in accordance with the further criteria of the revised draft policy (in particular criterion 6, see below) to further minimise the need for site excavation, and respect the existing topography of the site.*

Landscape buffers of at least 15 metres in width were to be established along the sites to the M20 and to Musket Lane in order to help to secure the setting to Woodcut Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) and the amenity of residential properties at Chestnuts and White Heath. Development was to intended to have a landscape frontage to A20;

*Landscape buffers of required width shown to boundaries to M20 and Musket Lane, landscape frontage provided to A20.*

An area of 9 hectares to the north and north west of Woodcut Farm was secured as an undeveloped landscape area including the addition of a landscape buffer of at least 30 metres along the eastern boundary. Future management of this area was to be secured by means of a legal agreement and maintained in perpetuity,

*Landscape area shown as required: landscape buffer on eastern boundary exceeds 30 metres in depth. Legal agreement to secure future management in perpetuity.*



Larger footprint buildings were to be accommodated in the field to the east of the stream up to a maximum unit size of 10,000 square metres with building ridge heights not to exceed 12 metres. Units were shown to be orientated end-on to predominant views to and from the AONB;

*Larger buildings accommodated to east of stream; maximum size below 10,000 square metres: building ridge heights below 12 metres. Units orientated end-on as required.*

Development on the field to the west of the stream was shown to comprise smaller units with graded building heights to take account of the sites topography with building ridge heights not to exceed 8 metres. The siting, scale and detailed design of development must be designed with regard to Woodcut Farmhouse (Grade II) and its setting;

*Smaller units provided in accordance with this requirement; building ridge heights of 10 metres are required to accommodate modern day users requirements. Siting, scale and detailed design have regard to Woodcut Farmhouse and its setting.*

## **Landscape and Ecology**

The development proposals were designed to take into account the results of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) undertaken in accordance with the principles of current guidance. The assessment sought to specifically address the impact of development on views to and from the North Downs AONB Escarpment. This included environmental enhancements of the wider landscape beyond the allocation boundaries through financial contributions using the mechanism of a Section 106 Agreement.

*Proposals developed taking into account results of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; additional viewpoints appraised, in accordance with comments from statutory organisations. Section 106 Agreement to include financial contributions to environmental enhancements of the wider landscape beyond the allocation boundaries.*

The development proposals were designed to take into account the results of a Phase I Habitat Survey and any species specific surveys that may as a result be necessary, together with any necessary mitigation and significant enhancement measures.

*Phase 1 Habitat Survey and species specific surveys carried out; no adverse impact on protected species, proposals include appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures.*

## **Archaeology**

The proposals were designed to take account of the archaeological interest on the site as revealed

through appropriate survey.

*Desktop study carried out; further evaluation carried out including trial trenching; illustrative layout plan revised to remove surface water balancing pond, in location where potential archaeological interest identified; detailed scheme of pre-development evaluation to be agreed through appropriately worded planning condition.*

## **Access**

Vehicular access to the site was indicated as being from A20 Ashford Road.

*Access from the A20 Ashford Road.*

## **Highways and Transportation**

Improvements to capacity at the A20/Willington Street Junction

*Proposals included improvements to left turn slip road for traffic travelling in westerly direction, to increase Junction capacity.*

Package of measures to provide bus stops, pedestrian refuges and improvements to the footway on the northern side of the A20 Ashford Road.

*Application proposals include new bus stops, pedestrian refuges, and improvements to the footway on the northern side of the A20 Ashford Road.*

Development to contribute, as proven necessary through a Transport Assessment, to improvements at the following junctions:

- i) The M20 junction 8 (including the west bound on slip and merge)  
*Not required*
- ii) The A20 Ashford Road/M20 link road roundabout  
*Not required*
- iii) The A20 Ashford Road/Penford Hill junction  
*Not required*

iv) The A20 Ashford Road/Eyhorne Street/Great Danes Hotel access; and

*Not required*

v) The Willington Street/A20 Ashford Road junction

*Proposals include improvements to left turn slip road for traffic travelling in westerly direction*

Development was to secure a significant package of sustainable transport measures to secure access to the site by a range of sustainable modes and must be supported by the implementation of a Travel Plan.

*Proposals include enhancements to public footpath on A20; provision of new bus stops; travel plan; and subsidy to assist in establishing increased service frequency for bus routes during establishment of development (up to two years).*

## **KEY PLANNING ISSUES**

The key planning issues for the consideration of the scheme were originally identified as:

- Employment benefits
- Landscape impact
- Transport impact
- The prevention of “development creep”
- Ecology and biodiversity
- Indicative design and materials
- Drainage; and
- Noise

Each of these issues was been re-appraised at the time of the submission of the amended plans, in the light of the resubmitted parameters and illustrative layout plan, which superseded the earlier submissions.

### **Employment Benefits**

The total scheme floor space was reduced by approximately 2.5%; on a pro-rata basis, this means that the number of new jobs estimated for the completed development fell slightly, to between 921 and 1259 (previous figures 1039 and 1364). There was a similar reduction in the gross value added associated with the new employment, which subsequently lies in the range of £14,625,000 and £19,500,000 (previously £15,000,000 and £20,000,000 respectively per annum).

It is considered that these remain substantial benefits to the local economy.

## **Landscape Impact**

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment carried out for the original outline planning application was supplemented by the addition of 3 extra vantage points; these are shown in the supplementary LVIA Appendices. The new view points were prepared on the basis of the revised scheme, which is considered to have a lesser landscape impact, by virtue of siting the larger buildings to the east of the stream, with smaller buildings being sited west of the stream with a gap through, allowing views through the site, via the landscape corridor.

The LVIA concluded that there would be a reduced impact on landscape, on the basis of the changes to the scheme, and in the light of the additional view points which were assessed. These conclusions are based on the height of units west of the stream being set at a maximum of 10 metres to ridge; thus satisfying the commentary set out in the report to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015, which indicated that a height of units greater than 8 metres, (as specified in the explanatory text to the Draft Policy) could be justified, where demonstrated to be acceptable in a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment.

The revised illustrative landscape plan showed the amended landscape proposals, in relation to the revised illustrative layout plan, which includes additional landscaping on the frontage to the A20, on the site boundary.

The original outline planning application proposals were found to be acceptable, with regard to impact on the highway network (consultation comments of Kent County Council and Highways England). The small reduction in the amount of floor space reduced the transport impact further.

It was been agreed that funding would be provided through the Section 106 Agreement to accompany the grant of Planning Permission, for financial assistance with the provision of enhanced bus services for an early period, as the development is carried out. The impact of the bus subsidy would be to further reduce traffic impact. The bus subsidy would have also enhanced the sustainability credentials of the location.

The utilities statement which accompanied the outline planning application confirmed that the high pressure gas pipeline is accommodated within the site master plan; this relationship is maintained in the revised illustrative layout plan.

## **Heads of Terms/Section 106 Agreement**

The Section 106 Agreement made provisions as set out in the planning statement accompanying the planning application; in addition, it was agreed that contributions would be made for the cost of improving bus services serving the application site, in the short term following commencement of the

development. The applicants confirmed that they were also agreeable to the principle of a financial contribution to the future cost of off site environmental enhancements of the wider landscape, beyond the allocation boundaries.

# APPENDIX 3

# APPENDIX 4

# THE KENT PROPERTY MARKET

MARCH 2016





# INDUSTRIAL AND DISTRIBUTION PERFORMANCE

Following a relatively strong return to performance in 2014, the UK manufacturing sector slowed during 2015. During the fourth quarter of 2015, industrial output fell by 0.5%, while the manufacturing sector failed to contribute to the UK economy in 2015 as a whole. The global economic slowdown, led by the Far East and the loss of competitiveness due to the strong pound underpins this weakness. The subdued trend will persist in 2016, with improved fortunes and exports dependent on a recovery in global demand.

Activity and average rental growth in the industrial property sector reflects this backdrop, both nationally and in Kent. Despite a quiet manufacturing sector, the warehousing market remains robust, albeit slowing recently. Take-up across London and the South East of 4,645m<sup>2</sup> (50,000ft<sup>2</sup>) plus units during Q2 2014 was 12% down on the first half of the year. The challenges facing the retail sector have taken its toll on demand, with retailers and distributors focusing on strategic location and relocation decisions rather than expansion.

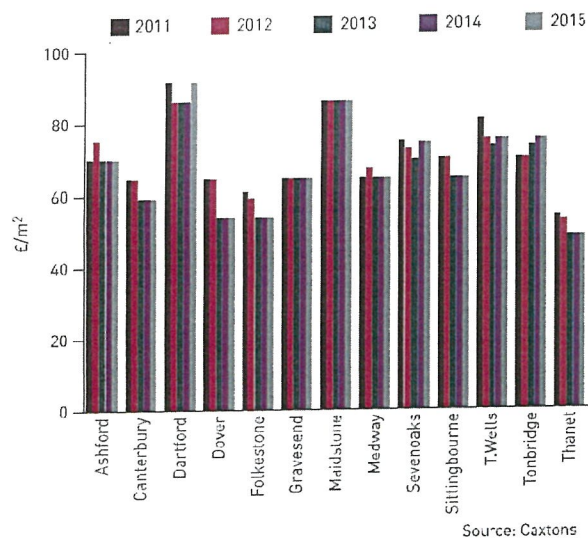
Kent saw lettings by Asda, Lidl and Aldi over the last 12 months. One of the largest deals in the South East saw Ocado take the remaining 32 acres of the Crossdox site in Erith for a 50,000m<sup>2</sup> (538,196ft<sup>2</sup>) for a £98.8m automated distribution centre to open in 2017. Although located outside the County, the centre will serve Kent and south London. Underlining the demand for well located units, there were two large lettings in the first quarter of the year at Invicta Riverside in Aylesford-3810 m<sup>2</sup> (41,020 ft<sup>2</sup>) and at Communications House in Rochester. Lakesview Business Park at Canterbury saw the County's largest letting with DS Shipping taking 11,124m<sup>2</sup> (119,742ft<sup>2</sup>).

The shortage of well located distribution stock has continued to drive forward funding transactions across the County as well as selective speculative development; Goodman & Anglesea Capital have reached practical completion on Angle 265, a speculative 24,764 m<sup>2</sup>

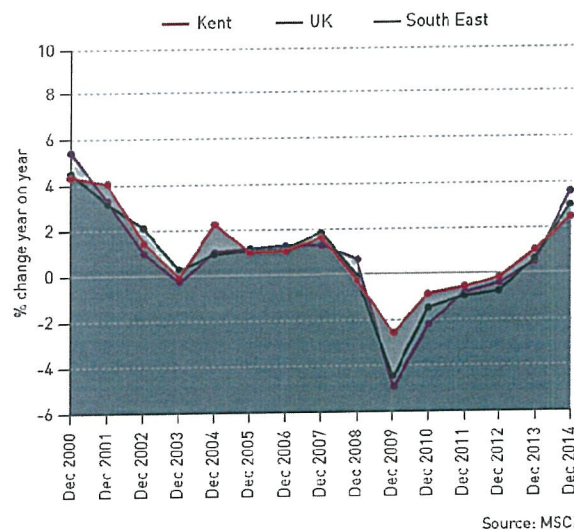
(266,570ft<sup>2</sup>) warehouse at Kingsnorth, Rochester, one of the largest spec-built warehouses in the south east. Goodman's Aylesford Commercial Park (recently sold to Merseyside Pension Fund) and Roxhill's Invicta Riverside, both in Aylesford, reached completion, with 8,297m<sup>2</sup> (89,307ft<sup>2</sup>) recently let at the latter. While in Ashford at Orbital Park, Salmon Developments commenced construction in November 2015 of a new scheme of seven units totalling 4,645m<sup>2</sup> (50,000ft<sup>2</sup>). One unit is let to Howdens Ltd. At Napcar Park, Wrotham, construction of 3,902m<sup>2</sup> (42,000ft<sup>2</sup>) across 15 industrial units is underway, with 6 units in solicitors hand, and a good level of enquiries for the remaining units.

At Capacity, Dartford – the old GSK site, occupation is expected of the 12,286m<sup>2</sup> (132,000ft<sup>2</sup>) TNT distribution hub prelet, in Q2 2017 (see deals).

## Industrial rents



## Industrial rental growth



## Industrial average yields

