

4.1 – SE/15/00628/OUT Date expired 30 June 2015

PROPOSAL: Outline planning permission for the demolition of buildings and development of a mixed-use development comprising a business area (Use Classes B1 and B2 with ancillary energetic material testing) of up to 27,000 sq m GEA, 450 residential units, a hotel of up to 80 beds, a village centre (Use Classes A1-A3, B1a, D1 and D2), use of the Fort Area and bunkers as an historic interpretation centre (Use Class D1) with ancillary workshop space, and works associated with the development including roads, landscaping, security fencing, formal and informal open space, pedestrian, cyclist and public transport infrastructure, utilities infrastructure, sustainable urban drainage system, cycle and car parking (with all matters reserved); and detailed approval for two access points at Otford Lane/Crow Drive (primary) and Star Hill (secondary).

LOCATION: Fort Halstead, Crow Drive, Halstead Sevenoaks TN14 7BU

WARD(S): Brasted, Chevening and Sundridge; Dunton Green & Riverhead; Halstead, Knockholt & Badgers Mount

ITEM FOR DECISION

This application is referred to Development Control Committee at the discretion of the Chief Planning Officer, as the development is of a significant and sensitive nature.

RECOMMENDATION A: That planning permission be GRANTED subject to:

- a) The conditions set out below, subject to officers being authorised to make any appropriate amendments arising following negotiations and/ or in the light of legal advice.
- b) A satisfactory legal agreement made under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and any other appropriate legislation being completed no later than 30 September 2015 (PROVIDED THAT if officers are satisfied that the applicant has agreed in writing to the extension of the statutory period for determination, officers are authorised to agree to the extension of the time for completion of the legal agreement and the issue of the decision notice).
- c) The S106 legal agreement shall include the following requirements:
 - i. 20% affordable housing provision.
 - ii Ecological mitigation works and management of habitats.
 - iii Provision, protection and management of all open space and the green infrastructure that would be protected from public access.
 - iv Safeguards for heritage assets including provision and management of a Heritage Information Centre, Feasibility study for works to open up a part of the Moat, provision of a Heritage Trail.
 - v Management and maintenance plan for the whole site.
 - vi Highway and transportation improvements including:

- Construction of a roundabout
- Provision of speed limits
- Provision and upgrading of pedestrian and cycle routes
- Upgrading of Polhill to Twitton bridleway.
- Star Hill road junction improvements.
- Provision of community bus
- Payment for the re-routing of a bus service for a period of 5 years.
- Travel plan

1 For each phase of the development scheme referred to in condition 4 below, approval of details of the scale, layout and appearance of the proposed building(s) and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called the "reserved matters") shall be obtained from the LPA in writing before any development in that phase is commenced.

In pursuance of section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

2 Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the District Planning Authority before the expiration of 10 years from the date of this permission.

No such details have been submitted and in pursuance of section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

3 The development to which this permission relates must be begun before:

- a. The expiration of three years from the date of this permission; or
- b. The expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters whichever is the later.

No such details have been submitted and in pursuance of section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

4 No development shall take place until details of a scheme of phasing of the development providing an employment led scheme, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed scheme of phasing.

In accordance with policy EMP3 of the Allocations and Development Plan

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

5 For each phase of the submission of reserved matters applications pursuant to this outline application a 'Compliance Report' shall be submitted that states how the reserved matters comply with the approved parameter plans and Design principles at Appx 5.1 of the Environmental Statement submitted for the outline permission SE/15/00628 and the Design Brief and Design Code to be approved pursuant to condition 6 below.

To comply with the requirements of Policy EMP3 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) and to conserve and enhance the AONB, heritage assets and protect the character and openness of the Green Belt, in accordance with policies LO8, SP1, SP2, SP3, SP5, SP7, SP8, SP9 and SP11 of the Core Strategy and policies EMP3, EN1, EN4, EN5, EN6, GB10 of the ADMP and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

Whole site before commencement

6 No development shall take place until a Design Brief and Design Coding for the site, including the Residential Character Areas, Village Centre and Commercial Area, as set out in the Design and Access Statement and Parameter plans and Environmental Statement, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The detailed design principles within the Design Brief shall include details of:

- a. Constraints
- b. Topography
- c. Land use
- d. Massing and building heights
- e. Access and circulation
- f. Parking
- g. Public realm and amenity space
- h. Layout
- i. Appearance
- j. Architectural, landscape and sustainable construction guidelines.
- k. Existing and proposed levels
- l. Renewable energy provision and a low carbon development scheme
- m. A strategy for the layout of the affordable housing provision.
- n. A strategy for the layout of public open space including LEAPS and LAPS
- o. A lighting strategy
- p. Security and safety
- q. A materials strategy
- r. Power supply
- s. Broadband internet provision
- t. A strategy for the replacement, removal and retention of the existing security fencing
- u. A strategy to minimise noise from the proposed new buildings for Qinetiq
- v. Those parts of the site that are proposed to be adopted as public highway.

No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To comply with the requirements of Policy EMP3 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) and to conserve and enhance the AONB, heritage assets and protect the character and openness of the Green Belt, in accordance with policies LO8, SP1, SP2, SP3, SP5, SP7, SP8, SP9 and SP11 of the Core Strategy and policies EMP3, EN1, EN4, EN5, EN6, GB10 of the ADMP and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

7 The details submitted for reserved matters and pursuant to condition 6 above shall demonstrate compliance with the following criteria:

- a. Shall provide not less than 27 000 sqm for Class B floorspace.
- b. A maximum height of 16 metres for the Qinetiq replacement headquarters and all other commercial floorspace.

c. A maximum height of 11.5 metres for the residential units.

To comply with the requirements of Policy EMP3 of the Allocation and Development Management DPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8 No development shall take place until a foul water drainage strategy detailing any on and/or off site drainage works, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation. No discharge of foul water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until the drainage works referred to in the strategy have been completed.

The development may lead to sewage flooding; to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to cope with the new development; and in order to avoid adverse environmental impact upon the community. This is supported by policy EN1 of the Allocations and Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

9 No development shall take place until details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority of:

- a. the detailed design of the sustainable drainage system for the site
- b. a management and maintenance plan for the sustainable drainage system
- c. details of the implementation timetable

No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To minimise the risk of flooding and ensure the satisfactory means of surface water disposal using sustainable drainage methods for the lifetime of the development in accordance with paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

10 No development shall take place until an impact study of the existing water supply infrastructure has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The study should determine the magnitude of any new additional capacity required in the system and a suitable connection point a programme of implementation for any works. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved scheme.

To ensure that the water supply infrastructure has sufficient capacity to cope with the/this additional demand. This is supported by policy EN1 of the Allocations and Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

11 No development shall take place until a remediation strategy that includes the following components to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site

have each been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority:

a. A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:-

- all previous uses
- potential contaminants associated with those uses
- a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors
- potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.

b. A site investigation scheme, based on (a) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.

c. The results of the site investigation and the detailed risk assessment referred to in (b) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.

d. A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (c) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action. Any changes to these components require the express written consent of the local planning authority.

No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To protect public health and comply with policy SC1 of the Core Strategy and paragraphs 120 and 121 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

12 No development shall take place until a scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority of:

- a. The road junction(s) splitting the residential associated traffic from the commercial associated traffic within the site.
- b. Details of proposed speed limits, visibility splays, surfacing and signage around the commercial part of the site.
- c. A programme of implementation.

No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved plans and details.

In the interests of Highway Safety as supported by T1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

13 No development shall take place until details of the following has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- a. a public recycling facility,

- b. a layby and hardstanding for the facilities,
- c. a timetable for the implementation of the works

No development shall be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details and timetable.

To contribute to the sustainability of the development as supported by policy SP2 of the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

14 No development shall take place until a method statement for the salvage, secure storage and re-use of items of historic interest including;

- a. original street lamps,
- b. other street furniture, building numbers,
- c. street name signs,
- d. the red information board outside the M series/Bunkers,

has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall be carried out other than in accordance with the approved method statement.

To preserve the heritage and historical importance of the site in accordance with policy EN4 and EMP3 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan and paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

15 No development shall take place until methodology for recording the architecture and / or archaeology buildings prior to and during demolition has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No demolition shall be carried out other than in accordance with the approved methodology and the records or reports shall be stored in accordance with the approved methodology.

To preserve the heritage and historical importance of the site in accordance with policies EMP3 and EN4 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan and paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

16 No development shall take place within 15m of the Ancient Woodland until a methodology has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to:

- a. Details of how the ancient woodland will be protected during the construction including the provision of a 15 metre buffer.

These details shall include a timescale for implementation. The works shall be carried

out in accordance with the approved details.

To protect existing planting on site and to preserve the visual appearance of the area as supported by SP11 of the Core Strategy and EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

17 No development shall take place within 15m of the Ancient Woodland until a methodology has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to:

- a. Detail how the ancient woodland would be managed
- b. Detail how the public access to the ancient woodland would be managed

These details shall include a timescale for implementation. No development shall be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

To protect existing planting on site and to preserve the visual appearance of the area as supported by SP11 of the Core Strategy and EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

18 No development shall take place until a demolition and construction environmental management plan (CEMP) for that Phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter implemented and maintained throughout the construction period in accordance with the approved CEMP. The CEMP shall include:

- a. Details of the proposed working hours
- b. Details of the design and location of the construction access:
- c. Details of proposed wheel washing facilities located adjacent the construction site access
- d. Details of an area for the storage of materials, parking for construction traffic and an appropriate turning area to be provided within the site clear of the public highway
- e. A site waste management plan
- f. Details of temporary utilities
- g. How the construction will comply with the sustainable use of soils on construction sites
- h. Details of a communication strategy to include the provision of a dedicated phone line for residents to contact the site manager directly with complaints which should be manned whenever site works are in progress.
- i. Details of a routing agreement for the site construction traffic and HGV traffic associated with the movement of bulk material to and from the site
- j. Details of means of suppressing dust during the construction process to include the regime for dust deposition measurement at the site boundaries;
- k. Details of the measures to mitigate the noise and vibration from construction
- l. Details of a surface water drainage scheme for the temporary drainage of the Site.

In the interests of highway safety and the amenities of neighbouring dwellings as

supported by polices T1 and EN1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

19 No development shall take place until a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, in accordance with the principles contained in the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan submitted in July 2015 of application SE/15/00628 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) shall provide the overarching approach to landscape and ecological management, shall include details of the ecological mitigation measures to be delivered during the development, including the wider survey area outside of the application site but within the applicant's control, and shall include the following details:

- a. Description and evaluation of features to be managed;
- b. Aims and measurable objectives of management;
- c. Appropriate management prescriptions for achieving aims and objectives;
- d. Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over the duration of the Plan);
- e. Ongoing habitat and species monitoring provision against measurable objectives;
- f. Procedure for the identification, agreement and implementation of contingencies and/or remedial actions where the monitoring results show that the objectives are not being met;
- g. Details of the body/ies or organisation/s responsible for implementation of the plan.

No development shall take place otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To ensure that the proposed development will not have a harmful impact on landscape and ecology, and will enhance the wider biodiversity, in accordance with polices EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, SP11 of the Core Strategy and guidance in National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

20 No development shall take place until a building retention and demolition management plan has been submitted for and approved in writing by the local planning authority in accordance with the building retention and demolition management plan. This shall include:

- a. identify all buildings to be retained on site and
- b. the means for their protection and
- c. the details of a demolition management strategy.

All buildings to be retained shall be so retained in accordance with the approved details and no demolition shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To preserve the historic site and its designated and non designated heritage assets as

supported by Policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan and paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

21 No development shall take place until the details submitted pursuant to reserved matters shall include, for each phase of the development above slab level a noise report, indicating how noise levels for outdoor amenity areas not exceeding 55dBa can be achieved across the site. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Kent Downs AONB, and to protect the amenity of future users and occupiers of the site, including residents. This is in accordance with policies EN5 and EN2 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

22 No development shall take place until details have been submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority of a strategy to implement the recommendations of the Slope Stability Assessment submitted for application SE/15/00628. The strategy shall include:

- a. Details of a watching brief for solution cavities and voids.
- b. Details of those parts of the site where ground levels should not be increased.
- c. Details of those parts of the site where new foundations should not be placed.
- d. Details of those parts of the site where the existing natural drainage needs to be protected.
- e. Details of the temporary support or battering works required during any excavation or filling works.
- f. Details of a programme for monitoring and assessment of slope stability across the site during the construction process.
- g. Details of an implementation timetable.

No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To protect the stability of the site as supported by Policy SP2 of the Core Strategy and Policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan and paragraphs 120 and 121 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

23 Prior to commencement of any works to the Scheduled Ancient Monument details shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority of any proposed landscaping works, including the removal of trees within the curtilage of the Scheduled Ancient Monument. No development will be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To preserve the historic significance of the Scheduled Ancient Monument as supported by Policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

For each phase conditions

24 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan: Biodiversity (CEMP: Biodiversity) for that phase shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The content of the CEMP: Biodiversity shall adhere to and support the principles of the approved overarching Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, shall be in accordance with the Outline CEMP and shall include the following:

- a. Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities;
- b. Identification of “biodiversity protection zones”, including the use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs;
- c. Practical measures informed by further ecological surveys (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce ecological impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements);
- d. The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works;
- e. Responsible persons and lines of communication;
- f. The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.

No development shall be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details..

To ensure that the proposed development will not have a harmful impact on landscape and ecology, and will enhance the wider biodiversity, in accordance with policies EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, SP11 of the Core Strategy and guidance in National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

25 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced details of all trees / bushes / hedges to be retained within (and immediately adjacent to) each phase shall be protected by a fence erected in accordance with the guidance contained in BS 5837:2005 and maintained during the course of development within that phase.

Within the protection areas erected in accordance with the guidance contained in BS 5837:2005, the existing ground level shall neither be raised nor lowered and no materials, temporary buildings, plant, machinery or surplus soil shall be placed or stored within such areas without the prior written approval of the local planning authority. If any trenches for services are required in the fenced off areas they shall be excavated and backfilled by hand and any tree root encountered with a diameter of 25mm or more shall be left unsevered.

To protect existing planting on site and to preserve the visual appearance of the area and the existing trees on site as supported by EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

26 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced the details submitted pursuant to reserved matters shall include the following details:

- a. any proposed access road(s) including details of horizontal and vertical alignment
- b. the layout, specification and construction programme for:
 - any internal roads not covered by (a) above
 - footpaths
 - parking and turning areas (including visibility splays)
 - cycle parking areas and
 - cycle storage facilities;
- c. For the landscaping scheme:
 - Location of existing trees, hedges, shrubs and other vegetation.
 - The layout, character, structure and types of the proposed planting, together with an indicative schedule of planting species.
 - The layout and character of the proposed hard surfacing areas together with an indicative schedule of materials.
 - Details of any earthworks proposed, contours to be formed and representative cross/long-sections and
 - Location of lighting for roads, footpaths and other areas. The reserved matters for landscaping details shall show integration with the other reserved matters.

In the interests of highway safety and the amenities of neighbouring dwellings as supported by polices T1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

27 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced the details submitted in connection with the reserved matters shall include measures to minimise the risk of crime. No development shall take place until details of such measures, corresponding to that phase, according to the principles and physical security requirements of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied before the approved measures have been implemented and thereafter retained.

To create a safe and secure environment for residents as supported by policy EN1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

28 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced the details submitted in connection with the reserved matters shall include the following details: a plan for the installation of electric vehicle charging points showing their proposed locations, type and specifications, and how they would relate to the access and layout of the scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved plans.

To ensure the sustainability of the site in accordance with policy T3 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan.

29 Before each relevant phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced a scheme for the provision of secure cycle storage facilities shall be submitted to and improved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To ensure the sustainability of the site in accordance with policy SP2 of the Core Strategy and EMP3 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan.

30 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced the details submitted pursuant to reserved matters shall include details for internal and/or external spaces for the storage of recyclable materials for all buildings. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To ensure the sustainability of the site in accordance with policy SP2 of the Core Strategy and EMP3 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan.

31 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced no development shall take place until a written scheme of archaeological investigation has been submitted to and improved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall take place other than in accordance with the programme of archaeological work provided for in the written scheme of investigation. No development may take place in any area which is identified in the scheme of investigation (or by the work provided for by that scheme) as requiring a programme of archaeological investigation work until that programme has been completed in accordance with the scheme of investigation.

To investigate and record archaeological features as supported by Policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan and paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

32 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced the details submitted pursuant to reserved matters shall include a strategy and design for street furniture which shall include, street lighting, waste bins, seating and any non-highway signage. This shall include a programme of implementation. The strategy and programme of implementation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To ensure good design and contribute to the character of the development as supported by policies EN1 and EMP3 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan.

33 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced details of the boundary treatment for each phase shall be submitted to and

approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include a plan indicating the positions, design, height, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected in accordance with the design brief and design coding approved pursuant to condition 6 and details of a timetable for their implementation. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

In the interests of visual amenity and the amenity of residents in accordance with policies EN1 and EN2 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan.

34 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced the details submitted pursuant to reserved matters shall include details of hard and soft landscaping in accordance with the design brief and design coding approved pursuant to condition 6 shall be submitted for approval in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include:

- a. Planting plans, including plants to be retained and new plants
- b. Written specifications including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment.
- c. Schedules of new plans including species, size, stock at time of planting, and proposed densities
- d. A programme of implementation.

No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details. If within a period of 10 years from the completion of the relevant phase any trees or plants that form part of the approved details are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, they shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

To ensure that the proposed development will conserve and enhance the landscape and ecology, and biodiversity, in accordance with policies EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, SP11 of the Core Strategy and guidance in National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

35 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced the details submitted in connection with the reserved matters shall include a scheme for the construction of play equipment for Learning, Evaluation and Planning (LEAPS) and Local Area of Play (LAP). This scheme shall include a programme of implementation. The scheme and programme of implementation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

In the interests of the amenities of future residents as supported by policy EN2 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan and paragraph 73 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

36 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced a scheme and programme of implementation shall be submitted of all proposed vehicular accesses, driveways and turning areas that serve residential units shall be submitted to and improved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Local Highway Authority. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in

accordance with the approved scheme and programme of implementation.

In the interests of highway safety and convenience in accordance with policies T2 and EMP3 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan.

37 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is first occupied details of a scheme for external lighting and a programme of implementation shall be prepared in accordance with the details contained in the approved LEMP shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To control light pollution, protect the amenities of the local area and ecology in accordance with policies EN1 and EN6 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan, SP11 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

38 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is commenced a detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for that phase shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Each detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan shall be written in accordance with the approved overarching Landscape and Ecological Management Plan and shall include details of the ecological mitigation measures to be delivered during the specified phase of the development. Where different from and/or additional to the overarching Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, the detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plans shall include the following:

- a. Description and evaluation of features to be managed;
- b. Aims and measurable objectives of management;
- c. Appropriate management prescriptions for achieving aims and objectives;
- d. Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over the duration of the Plan);
- e. Ongoing habitat and species monitoring provision against measurable objectives;
- f. Procedure for the identification, agreement and implementation of contingencies and/or remedial actions where the monitoring results show that the objectives are not being met;
- g. Details of the body/ies or organisation/s responsible for implementation of the plan.

No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To ensure that the proposed development will not have a harmful impact on landscape and ecology, and will enhance the wider biodiversity, in accordance with policies EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, SP11 of the Core Strategy and guidance in National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

Before each phase is occupied

39 Before each phase of development identified pursuant to condition 4 is first occupied a verification report demonstrating completion of works set out in the approved remediation strategy approved pursuant to condition 10 and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning

Authority. The report shall include;

- a. results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met.
- b. any plan (a "long-term monitoring and maintenance plan") for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action, as identified in the verification plan.

No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To protect human health and to comply with paragraphs 120 and 121 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

No x unless y

40 No impact piling shall take place until a piling method statement which includes;

- a. detailing the depth and type of piling to be undertaken,
- b. the methodology by which such piling will be carried out,
- c. measures to prevent and minimise the potential for damage to subsurface water infrastructure,

shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall take place otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

The proposed works will be in close proximity to underground water utility infrastructure. Piling has the potential to impact on local underground water utility infrastructure. This is in accordance with paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

41 No road or footway that is to be a public highway shall be constructed as part of the development without having first entered into an agreement with the Local Highway Authority pursuant to a Section 38 and/or Section 278 Agreement of the Highways Act 1980 in respect of that road or footway.

In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy T1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan.

Other conditions requiring timing

42 All non-residential buildings shall be constructed in accordance with a specification to be submitted for approval to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The specification shall include a commitment to build to a BREEAM 'very good' certification, or such equivalent scheme and standard that shall operate at the time of construction of that building. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To ensure a high standard of sustainable development in accordance with Policies SP2 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Ongoing conditions

43 If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then the Local Planning Authority must immediately be notified in writing and (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) no

further development within the relevant phase shall be carried out until a supplementary remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination will be dealt with has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

To ensure that any possible land contamination related to historic site activities is addressed in line with current planning guidance. The site is located on a principal aquifer and has a history of use as a laboratory for weapons testing.

44 No infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground at the site is permitted other than with the express written consent of the local planning authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to controlled waters. No development shall be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approval details.

To protect groundwater, ecosystems and human health in compliance with paragraphs 120 and 121 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

45 No noise generating machinery (other than any plant forming part of the building services comprised in the development and approved in accordance with this permission) shall be operated on the premises outside the following hours:-0800 - 1900 Mondays – Fridays 0900 - 1700 Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or Public Holidays'.

To conserve and enhance natural beauty (relative tranquillity) of the Kent Downs AONB, the biodiversity and landscape setting of the site, and to protect the amenity of future users and residents of the site'. This is in accordance with policies EN5 and EN2 of the Sevenoaks Allocation and Development Management Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

46 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 no external storage shall be carried out (excluding all residential units and their curtilages) without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control over future development given the location of the site in an AONB. In accordance with policies EN1, EN4 and EMP3 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development management Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

47 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, (or any order revoking, re-enacting or modifying that Order), the premises first built and occupied for uses falling within Classes A1-A3, D1, D2 and those falling within Classes B of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 shall only be used for those purposes and no other purpose (including any other purpose falling within the same Use Class of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control over future development given the location of the site in an AONB and the policy requirement for an employment led scheme. In accordance with policies EN1, EN4 and EMP3 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development management Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

48 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- Figure 5.1 00556A_PP_01 Land Use revision P5
- Figure 5.2 00556A_PP_02 Residential Density revision P5
- Figure 5.3 00556A_PP_03 Proposed Building Heights revision P5
- Figure 5.4 00556A_PP_04 Access and Movement revision P6
- Figure 5.5 00556A_PP_05 Green Infrastructure revision P6
- Figure 5.6 00556A_PP_06 Demolition Plan revision P2
- Letter dated 27.7.15 from Waterman
- Environmental Statement and appendices and figures and non-technical summary
- Site location plan 00556A SV 01 Rev P1
- 26582/001/001 Star Hill access
- 26582 / 001 / 001B Star Hill Road access visibility splays.
- 26582 / 001 / 008D A224 Polhill / Otford Lane Junction Improvements
- 26582 / 001 / 030 Fort Halstead Roundabout option and pedestrian and cycle provision
- 5.1 Design Principles of Appendix 5.1 of the Environmental Statement
- Illustrative Masterplan 00556A S 01 revision P1
- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Employment report
- AONB report
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Sustainability Statement
- Energy Statement
- Utilities statement / Strategy
- Land Stability Report
- Lighting Assessment

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives

- 1) With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of groundwater. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. They can be contacted on 0800 009 3921. This is required in order to ensure that the surface water discharge from the site shall not be detrimental to the existing sewerage system.
- 2) The application form indicates that soakaways, ponds and sustainable urban drainage techniques will be used. The following points should be noted wherever soakaways or infiltration devices are proposed at a site:

Appropriate pollution prevention methods (such as trapped gullies or interceptors) should be used to prevent hydrocarbons draining to ground from roads,

hardstandings and car parks. Clean uncontaminated roof water should drain directly to soakaways entering after any pollution prevention methods.

- No soakaway or infiltration device should be sited in or allowed to discharge into land impacted by contamination or land previously identified as being contaminated.

- There must be no direct discharge to groundwater, a controlled water. An unsaturated zone must be maintained throughout the year between the base of soakaways and the water table.

- Normally we advise that a series of shallow soakaways are preferable to deep bored soakaways, as deep bored soakaways can act as conduits for rapid transport of contaminants to groundwater. However, there is a significant unsaturated zone at this site and therefore this may not be as relevant.

Any potential surface water drainage should refer to the contamination reports to ensure that the drainage isn't located in land which could have been impacted by contamination.

3) Fuel, Oil and Chemical Storage

Any facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals shall be provided with secondary containment that is impermeable to both the oil, fuel or chemical and water, for example a bund, details of which shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. The minimum volume of the secondary containment should be at least equivalent to the capacity of the tank plus 10%. If there is more than one tank in the secondary containment the capacity of the containment should be at least the capacity of the largest tank plus 10% or 25% of the total tank capacity, whichever is greatest. All fill points, vents, gauges and sight gauge must be located within the secondary containment.

The secondary containment shall have no opening used to drain the system. Associated above ground pipework should be protected from accidental damage. Below ground pipework should have no mechanical joints, except at inspection hatches and either leak detection equipment installed or regular leak checks. All fill points and tank vent pipe outlets should be detailed to discharge downwards into the bund.

4) The CLAIRE Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice (version 2) provides operators with a framework for determining whether or not excavated material arising from site during remediation and/or land development works are waste or have ceased to be waste. Under the Code of Practice:

- excavated materials that are recovered via a treatment operation can be re-used on-site providing they are treated to a standard such that they fit for purpose and unlikely to cause pollution

- treated materials can be transferred between sites as part of a hub and cluster project

- some naturally occurring clean material can be transferred directly between sites.

Developers should ensure that all contaminated materials are adequately characterised both chemically and physically, and that the permitting status of any

proposed on site operations are clear. If in doubt, we should be contacted for advice at an early stage to avoid any delays.

We recommend that developers should refer to :

- The position statement on the Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice and;

- Our website at www.gov.uk/environment-agency for further guidance

5) Contaminated soil that is, or must be disposed of, is waste. Therefore, its handling, transport, treatment and disposal is subject to waste management legislation, which includes:

- Duty of Care Regulations 1991

- Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005

- Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010

- The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011

Developers should ensure that all contaminated materials are adequately characterised both chemically and physically in line with British Standard BS EN 14899:2005 'Characterization of Waste - Sampling of Waste Materials - Framework for the Preparation and Application of a Sampling Plan' and that the permitting status of any proposed treatment or disposal activity is clear. If in doubt, we should be contacted for advice at an early stage to avoid any delays.

If the total quantity of waste material to be produced at or taken off site is hazardous waste and is 500kg or greater in any 12 month period the developer will need to register with us as a hazardous waste producer. Refer to our website at www.gov.uk/environment-agency for more information.

6) It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure , before the development hereby approved is commenced, that all necessary highway approvals and consents where required are obtained and that the limits of highway boundary are clearly established in order to avoid any enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority. The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under such legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.

Note to Applicant

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals. SDC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner, by;

- Offering a duty officer service to provide initial planning advice,
- Providing a pre-application advice service,
- When appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any small scale issues that may

arise in the processing of their application,

- Where possible and appropriate suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome,
- Allowing applicants to keep up to date with their application and viewing all consultees comments on line (www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/environment/planning/planning_services_online/654.asp),
- By providing a regular forum for planning agents,
- Working in line with the NPPF to encourage developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area,
- Providing easy on line access to planning policies and guidance, and
- Encouraging them to seek professional advice whenever appropriate.

In this instance the applicant/agent:

- 1) Was updated with the progress of the planning application.

OR

RECOMMENDATION B: If the S106 legal agreement is not signed in accordance with the above recommendation, then planning permission be REFUSED on the following grounds:

1 The proposal fails to make provision for affordable housing and it is therefore contrary to Policy SP3 of the Sevenoaks District Council Strategy and the Sevenoaks Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2 The proposal fails to provide safeguards to protect the ecology, bio-diversity, protected habitats on the site and to conserve and enhance the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contrary to Policies SP1, SP11, LO8 of the Core Strategy and Policies EMP3, EN5 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan DPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3 The proposal fails to make provision for open space and the management of it and to conserve and enhance the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contrary to Policies SP1, SP9, LO8 of the Core Strategy and Policies EMP3, EN5 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan DPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4 The proposal fails to provide safeguards to protect the designated and non-designated heritage assets on site and is therefore contrary to Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy and Policies EMP3, EN4 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan DPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5 The proposal fails to make provision for the appropriate and necessary highway and transportation improvements required to mitigate impact arising as a result of the development contrary to Policy SP9 of the Core Strategy and Policies EMP3, T1 of the

Allocations and Development Management Plan DPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

In this instance the applicant/agent:

- 1) Working in line with the NPPF, the application was refused as the proposal failed to improve the economic, social or environmental conditions of the area.

Description of Proposal

- 1 The scheme comprises: an outline application seeking permission for the demolition of buildings and development of a mixed-use development comprising:
 - a business area (Use Classes B1 and B2 with ancillary energetic material testing) of up to 27,000 sq m GEA
 - 450 residential units
 - a hotel of up to 80 beds
 - a village centre (Use Classes A1-A3, B1a, D1 and D2)
 - use of the Fort Area and bunkers as an historic interpretation centre (Use Class D1) with ancillary workshop space, and
 - works associated with the development including roads, landscaping, security fencing, formal and informal open space, pedestrian, cyclist and public transport infrastructure, utilities infrastructure, sustainable urban drainage system, cycle and car parking (with all matters reserved)
 - and detailed approval for two access points at Otford Lane/Crow Drive (primary) and Star Hill (secondary).
- 2 The Council is being asked to consider 5 parameter plans as part of this application and these demonstrate development principles that any reserved matters application will have to comply with.
- 3 The submission refers to an energy centre that could potentially be accommodated within the site, in the employment zone.
- 4 An Environmental Statement was submitted with the application and a draft S106 agreement.
- 5 The plans deal with:

Demolition Demolition of buildings across most parts of the site are proposed:

Qinetiq Within that part of the site which is to be retained by Qinetiq a number of buildings shown on the schedule have already been demolished and several more are proposed for removal: both within the heart of the Qinetiq enclave and at the edges of the site. These include some of the bunkers currently used for storage of explosives close to the Star Hill entrance to the site.

DST: Most of the buildings within this part of the site are to be removed. As they have become vacant some have already been removed as part of an ongoing demolition plan, subject to the appropriate approvals. A number of buildings will be retained within this part of the site, serving as part of the village centre or within the commercial area serving as either temporary or permanent commercial

buildings as part of the re-development of the commercial area. These are set out on a plan submitted with the application and relate to 25 buildings. One of these buildings is listed – the Penney building, listed for its historical connections rather than its architectural merit. Within the commercial area and adjacent to the Fort four buildings are proposed for retention – being associated with the fort and 20th century armaments research providing a visual and contextual setting for the designated heritage assets.

Proposed land use

- 6 The application identifies a number of land uses:
- Commercial – broadly to the south and east of the site comprising the existing commercial area occupied by Qinetiq and the area aligned with the eastern part of the site for a new proposed commercial area.
 - Residential – areas to the north and west of the commercial areas.
 - Residential/Commercial – an area shown as potentially either commercial or residential use lying adjacent to the Polhill Road entrance to the site.
 - Village centre – The Fort, a mixed use area encompassing some buildings within the village centre, the public square and community use buildings adjacent to the square.
 - Hotel – Land to the NW of the proposed village centre of the site and north of the area occupied by Qinetiq.
 - Greenspace – The village green, including a pavilion, further green space in and around the site and the existing ancient woodland that surrounds the site.

Building Heights

- 7 A mixture of proposed heights are proposed:
- Within the residential areas up to 2 and 2.5 storeys, generally with the greater height being adjacent to the proposed highways network;
 - Most commercial buildings would be at a maximum of 3 storeys in height although that part west of the main access road would be a maximum of two storeys in height;
 - The village centre and hotel would be a maximum of 2.5 storeys (newbuild) with some existing buildings at 3 storeys;
 - The pavilion on the village green at a maximum of 1.5 storeys.
- 8 It should be noted that whilst the plan specifies maximum storey height, particular maximum heights have been used to assess the impact upon the surrounding landscape.

Residential Density

- 9 A range of densities from the lowest at up to 25dph to the highest density at 36-45dph. In general terms the lowest density is to the west and north west of the residential area adjacent to the grassland and woodland whilst the higher density is adjacent to existing housing in the north of the site and around the village centre. The density of the existing housing around Fort Road and Armstrong Close is

approximately 15dph. The illustrative masterplans indicates how such densities could be interpreted to provide more spacious layout around the woodland edge and denser levels around the centre of the village and adjacent to the existing housing to the north.

Green Infrastructure

- 10 This plan identifies a number of different categories of green space for retention and for creation:

Retention

- Existing and ancient woodland surrounding the site
- Existing grassland to the south west of the site which forms part of an area where the value of the grassland is to be improved and protected.
- An area of existing chalk grassland to the south of the site adjacent to the North Downs Business Park.

Creation

- Additional planting belts where required.
- Newly created green fingers that would run through/around the site between the housing and commercial areas, including the village green and a new space forming the main entrance to the site on the site of the existing helipad.
- A green informal recreation area to the north west of the site.

Access & Movement

- 11 This plan clarifies the vehicular and pedestrian routes through and around the site. The main vehicular accesses to the site are via existing accesses on Star Hill and Polhill. The main entrance to the site will be via Polhill where a roundabout is proposed to accommodate the new development. The Star Hill entrance will be retained and remain open on a permanent basis as a secondary access to the site. Polhill is expected to provide the main access to the site for commercial traffic with road layouts being proposed that would seek to discourage traffic for the commercial sites travelling through the site to reach Star Hill – by means of feature such as a right turn for any access roads which link from the commercial estate onto the main Crow Drive access leading to Polhill. Likewise a prohibition on left hand turns for traffic leaving the Qinetiq site will discourage traffic from leaving Qinetiq and then trying to exit the site via Star Hill. Such access will be possible for those determined to use Star Hill but the layout and junction/priority arrangement will be such, in conjunction with other features such as speed humps, width narrowing etc. as to strongly discourage such use.

- 12 The site being opened up with footpaths and cycle paths currently running around the site to connect through the site. A new bridleway will connect the site to the edge of Knockholt connecting with a PROW in the process. This will also run through the centre of the site, through the commercial area connecting with another PROW on the eastern side of the site. By utilising the path adjacent to the Polhill access this will also open up connections from Knockholt through the site to connect with public rights of way leading to Otford.

- 13 A range of minor residential roads and footpaths will run around the residential areas and village green enabling pedestrian access from all parts of the village to all other parts.
- 14 The precise design of cycle paths, footpaths and roads around the village will be dealt with as part of the reserved matters applications.

Illustrative masterplan

- 15 Although this plan is not being considered for determination as a part of this application, it demonstrates how the parameter plans could be applied.
- 16 The site would provide for a balance of commercial, community and residential with the two main uses separated by the main road running through the site.

Residential:

- 17 The residential area would comprise a number of different character areas whose characteristics have been broadly described in the Design & Access Statement. The different characteristics of each area should allow the design of each area to respond to its location on the site so that, for instance, the mews style development to the northern boundary of the site would have a very different characteristic to the less densely developed housing that faces onto the surrounding woodland which in turn would have a different character to the houses facing onto the green fingers of landscaping which run through the site.
- 18 As this is an outline application the precise details of the scheme are not to be considered at this point. The Council needs to be clear from the submitted details however that the resulting design of these areas could be accommodated within the site and wider landscape in an acceptable manner.

Commercial

- 19 The commercial area comprises an existing company Qinetiq who will remain within an enclave on the southern most boundary of the site. The plan makes provision for the siting of a new office building close to the Star Hill Road entrance and for a security fence around the compound including the retention of the existing security fence that cuts across the grassland slope to the south of the site.
- 20 The second main commercial area stretches northwards from the Fort towards the main Polhill entrance. Lying to the west of the main entrance road would be a land that could also be used for commercial floorspace. The use of this land is flexible insofar as it is intended to provide commercial floorspace, but could be used for residential uses if the demand for commercial floorspace were to change due to future market conditions for this type of use.

Village Uses

- 21 Located between the commercial and residential areas would lie the village green and village centre. The green could accommodate a pavilion and potentially an 80 bed hotel. Demand for an additional hotel has been identified in this part of the district and such a facility could offer bar/restaurant facilities for local residents as well as providing accommodation for visitors to the commercial site. The village centre will incorporate existing buildings, one of which is listed, for use for a mix of commercial and community uses. A new building could be accommodated on the

northern edge of the village providing a mix of retail, community (it is thought that in this location a nursery would be appropriate) and residential accommodation. These buildings would sit around a pedestrian square. In terms of facilities, the centre could therefore provide sufficient space for a shop, and other uses such as a community room and potentially space for a visiting GP. A good link with this layout would exist between the village centre and village green.

Heritage

- 22 The village centre would lie opposite the entrance to the Fort, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Fort comprises a late C19 mobilisation centre which was modified from the late 1930s for rocketry research, and post-war for the top-secret development of Britain's atomic bomb. It is one of 13 purpose-built mobilisation centres nationally erected in the late C19; was the largest (and most expensive) built and is one of only four designed for artillery deployment. It was also a highly significant site in terms of mid-late C20 rocketry and atomic bomb research and development.
- 23 The fort is polygonal in plan and is surrounded by an earth rampart and a deep external ditch which is present or much of the circuit, although having been infilled at the north east edge. The fort incorporates a number of buildings including three listed buildings and a number of unlisted buildings/structures.
- 24 Works are proposed to be carried out to the Fort to make it ready for use as an interpretation centre dealing with the historical use of the fort and wider site, with public access. Further information on this aspect is set out later in this report.
- 25 Precise proposals to the fort are not yet finalised but are likely to include the clearing of some self seeded trees within the Fort and potentially some on the embankment to open up views to the surrounding countryside as would have originally existed. There is also a commitment in the draft legal agreement to explore the feasibility of opening up a short length of the moat adjacent to the entrance.

Description of Site

Uses

- 26 Fort Halstead comprises an existing employment site, currently occupied by DSTL and QinetiQ. This operation sits principally within a secure fence, with a canteen, visitor reception area and visitor car park outside of the fence. The function of the Site is a Research and Development (R&D) facility, and includes the storing and use of high grade explosive material amongst other military research activities. In 2011, DSTL announced its intention to relocate all of its operations from Fort Halstead to Porton Down and Portsdown West, expected to take place by early 2018. The development of the site in its current form has taken place over a significant period of time from the Fort circa 1895 through expansion during the Cold War and then as a government defence establishment being split into two organisations in 2001 – DSTL and QinetiQ who both still occupy the site.
- 27 At its busiest the site accommodated approximately 350 buildings but that number has declined and it is still subject to an ongoing programme of demolition as DSTL move their operations away from the site.

- 28 A Certificate of Lawful Development for the existing use was issued in 2004 and confirmed the lawful use of the site for business purposes, including storage and distribution, energetic material testing, a canteen and a social club. It identified 82,168 sq m (GEA) of built footprint. A number of buildings on site have since been demolished.
- 29 In the south east part of the site, close to the North Downs Business Park is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (which includes 3 listed buildings) and close to the entrance to the Fort lies the Grade II listed 'Penney' Building. The 'Penney' building is located in the area that would become the village centre as part of these proposals.

Location

- 30 The site lies at the top of the North Downs Scarp approximately 8 kms to the north of Sevenoaks. It lies to the east of the village of Knockholt and south-east of Halstead. Polhill runs to the east of the site with the M25 beyond that and Star Hill to the west and south.
- 31 It is located within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt, and includes large areas of woodland (including c.45 ha of designated Ancient Woodland) and open space.
- 32 Adjacent to the north eastern boundary of the site lie 72 residential dwellings. These lie outside the site and do not form part of this proposal. None of these are in the same ownership as the application site.
- 33 Outside the application site, the Officers Mess, Canteen and visitor car park lie adjacent to the northern boundary and lie outside the security fence which runs around the perimeter of a large part of the site. The officers' mess is subject to a change of use permission, granted in August 2014, for residential conversion albeit this permission has not yet been implemented.

Designations

- Green Belt
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Area of Special Control of Advertisements
- Ancient Woodland around the perimeter of the site
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- 4 listed buildings
- Public Rights of Way run around the site
- Airfield Safeguarding Zone
- Partly within an Air Quality Management Area
- Area of Archaeological Potential
- North eastern boundary lies very close to a Local Wildlife site – Woods West of Shoreham (the boundary is on the opposite side of the A224).

Relevant Development Plan Policies

Sevenoaks Core Strategy (CS):

34 Policies - L01, L08, SP1, SP2, SP3, SP5, SP7, SP8, SP9, SP10, SP11

Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP):

35 Policies - SC1, EMP2, EMP3, EN1, EN2, EN4, EN5, EN6, EN7, GI1, GB10, LT1, T1, T2, T3

Other material considerations:

- 36 National Planning Policy Framework
- 37 National Planning Practice Guidance
- 38 SPD: Development In the Green Belt
- 39 SPD: Countryside Assessment
- 40 SPD: Affordable Housing
- 41 Kent Downs AONB Management Plan
- 42 Kent Design Guide

Planning History

43 A large number of planning applications have been submitted for works already on site but the most relevant to this scheme is the following:

03/02897/LDCEX - Certificate of existing lawful use in respect of B1 purposes (research and development, offices, light industry) with ancillary uses including B8 (storage/distribution) canteen, energetic material testing and social club – GRANTED – Delegated 22/3/04

Consultations

Parish / Town Councils

- 44 The site currently falls in four parishes: Halstead, Dunton Green, Chevening, Badgers Mount.
- 45 From 1st April 2015 a small area of site (at access point by Polhill Arms) is in the new parish of Badgers Mount. This Parish were not consulted in the first round of consultation as the application was submitted before this date. They have been consulted on the amended round of consultations. This area was previously part of Shoreham Parish Council who were also consulted in the second consultation for continuity.
- 46 The adjoining parishes of Knockholt and Otford were consulted.

Chevening PC

- 47 The Council recommends refusal as Star Hill is not suitable for a secondary access due to the steepness and width of the road. Considerable additional traffic will be generated and the road is simply not able to support this. The traffic through Chipstead is already heavy at peak times and this development will exacerbate the problem. In addition, it is considered that the infrastructure to support 450 dwellings is inadequate and the issue of provision of primary and secondary education has not been adequately addressed.

Dunton Green PC

- 48 Dunton Green Parish Council may not have strong objections with regard to the proposed size of the residential and commercial development proposed but is concerned about the lack of detail contained within the application in relation to a number of key elements.
- 49 The Parish Council is of the opinion that there needs to be significant clarification about these issues before any planning permission is granted and that should there be a grant of permission that there should be some very stringent conditions to alleviate concerns that have been raised.

Access / Transportation

- 50 Star Hill: there is no detail within the application regarding the type of junction proposed at Star Hill. (*Officer note – further detail provided and subject to second consultation*).
- 51 It has been noted that previous developers interested in this site did not expect there to be an access on Star Hill and they accepted the general consensus that Star Hill is not suitable. The potential for increased traffic volume on this road is cause for concern.
- 52 There is also concern about the impact of the development on the Morants roundabout at the bottom of Star Hill. This is already a major junction but the proposal for Fort Halstead means that there are effectively two major developments on either side of that junction (Ryewood Meadows in Dunton Green and Fort Halstead). Satellite navigation routes large lorries heading towards Biggin Hill up Star Hill and visibility from the Dunton Green exit is already very poor. Will the impact of additional traffic emanating from the Fort Halstead development (as well as the Dunton Green development) be taken in to consideration by both Highways and SDC's planning department?
- 53 Polhill: It is understood that the proposal may be for traffic lights but it is the opinion of DGPC that this would be inherently dangerous on this road and that a roundabout allowing traffic to flow more freely would be a much safer option.
- 54 Presumably there have already been discussions between the developer and KCC Highways in relation to a Section 278 Highways Agreement? Details of the schemes that are being proposed for this site and the transport routes around the site should be made available for consultation.

Car Parking

- 55 Whilst guidelines may indicate that 1.5 spaces per dwelling is an adequate provision for car parking this is clearly nonsense and a recipe for issues once a development is inhabited. The developer should not be satisfied to have provided only the minimum, which is undoubtedly insufficient for modern living standards and should be providing car parking provision that meets the real day to day requirements of residents. The provision within this outline planning application particularly for the 2 bedroom dwellings appears to be entirely inadequate. Given the size of the site there simply must be the space to create realistic parking provision.

Historical Interpretation Centre (HIC)

- 56 Consideration should be given to storage of historical artefacts currently at the Fort. This has not been addressed by the developers and there is a significant degree of urgency with regard to identifying where such artefacts will be stored and classifying who will be responsible for their storage in the interim period between grant of any planning permission and the opening of the proposed Historical Interpretation Centre.
- 57 The funding position in relation to the historical elements of the proposal both in the short term and more particularly in the longer term need to be specified in more detail. It is unclear as to where this funding is expected to come from. There has been 'talk' that English Heritage will be the custodian going forward but will they (and can they) fund the running of the heritage site? Is there a clear financial commitment to keeping the HIC and the Old Fort open to the public?
- 58 The Old Fort lies within the boundary of Dunton Green Parish. It is therefore only right & proper that any and all proposals for the Old Fort area be directed to Dunton Green Parish Council in the first instance for consideration.

Community Trust

- 59 In the appendices it is proposed that a Community Trust will be set up. It indicates that representatives of Parish Councils will be involved. Dunton Green Parish Council has not been approached with regard to the establishment of a Community Trust nor with regard to the involvement of the Parish Council. There needs to be clarification in relation to the level of funding that a Community Trust should expect to receive (this is patently not clear from the spiel in the documentation) and there is no explanation as to why the maintenance charges to be levied on the development would not also be apportioned to the maintenance of the surrounding areas, including the fort (and for which a Community Trust would have overall responsibility).
- 60 Another issue with the heritage centre and the setting up of a trust is that there will be competing factions for funds from those operating the trust. There is arguably a good case for the heritage centre funding to be ring-fenced and to be funded separately from other grounds maintenance so that funding is maintained.

Halstead PC

- 61 Halstead parish council strongly objects to this planning application.

- 62 *Green Belt:* because the proposed development will be on previously developed land, Council believes that the following policies apply to the majority of the open space at Fort Halstead: GB1; EN23, conserving and enhancing the historical environment'; EN17B conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Council therefore believes that the square footage and building volume proposed for the new development should not be greater than the figures which apply to the current site.
- 63 *The Core Strategy:* document adopted in 2011, included the requirement of provision for 3,300 homes which would be delivered at the rate of 163 homes per year up to 2026. Fort Halstead was not included in these calculations until an Appeal Inspector approved that these proposed 450 homes should be included. Council believes that the time and expense of preparing the document (Core Strategy) was totally wasted if the decisions and findings can be ignored and over ruled so easily.
- 64 *Contamination:* Council is very concerned that the surveys carried out were not thorough enough and that there should be some information available as to what substances were identified and how the clearance will be achieved; An independent body should be used to carry out the work and who will be 'signing off' and taking responsibility for the site being 'contamination free?' A report was prepared on the history of Fort Halstead by English Heritage in 2009, revised in 2010. Page 6, para 2 'Fort Halstead and High Explosives Research' relates: 'In January 1947, the British Cabinet took the decision to proceed with the development of an atomic bomb and in May the task was given to William Penney, Chief Superintendent Armaments Research (CSAR) who was based at Fort Halstead (Gowing1974, 4420). Penney was a physicist and had been a leading member of the wartime British Mission to the United States Manhattan Project that was responsible for creating the first atomic bombs.' Page 6, para 3 states: to accommodate Penney's team at Fort Halstead a fenced enclave was created centred on the Mobilisation Centre and a group of buildings to its immediate north. Within these structures were housed electronics, engineering, mathematics and theoretical physics departments, by the end of 1950 the atomic bomb project dominated work at Fort Halstead with 600 working on the project, this was a closely guarded secret with all government orders routed through AERE. Council received a letter in March 2007 from Simon O'Donnell who worked for Hines, at that time would-be developers of Fort Halstead. The letter was to Mr Fallon MP. Quote: ' I notice that the story on page three of your latest newsletter headlined Toxic Check for Fort Halstead concluded with the statement that the site is highly toxic and unsuitable for new housing'.

Council believes that outline planning permission should not be granted until a full programme of remedial works is proposed and agreed, with the proviso that the remedial work should be assessed and agreed (and perhaps undertaken) by a totally independent organisation. It is extremely important that remedial work should not be undertaken in phases or stages, but the entire site should be completely cleared of any contamination before any development is started.

- 65 *Employment:* It has been stressed that this development is employment led, with a substantial percentage of employment provided for local people. Council is pleased to hear that QinetiQ will be remaining on site but expresses concern as to how the employment sector will be marketed and would like to know what plans the Developer has in place for this. There is very little information on this topic and it seems that the only new plans relating to employment are for the hotel and the

museum. The commercial aspects should be dealt with first before the building of any housing is considered.

It seems that QinetiQ is to be behind a fence topped by razor-wire which will be immediately adjacent to some of the domestic properties. This is entirely inappropriate. Council is concerned that if there is not enough interest in commerce, then there will be an attempt to build more houses. This should not be allowed at any-time, now or in the future.

66 *Housing:* There should be no reduction in the nationally agreed percentage for the number of affordable homes. Surveys have shown that Sevenoaks District is in dire need of affordable housing so it is important that the 40% national percentage should be adhered to. The applicant knew that there was a statutory number and should have agreed to this rather than negotiating for a lesser number with SDC.

67 *Education:* There are some places at Halstead Primary School. Dunton Green School is having to cope with an influx of children with the erection of 450 homes at West Kent Cold Store. Where will the children be sent to school?

There is already a severe shortage of places in secondary schools in the Sevenoaks area, and a high percentage of local children are already bussed out of area to secondary schools. Planning permission should not be granted for further housing development until this matter is satisfactorily resolved, and local secondary education provision is substantially increased.

68 *Utilities:* It seems that there is to be no gas on the site. The electricity supply will therefore be under strain with the extra homes and businesses having no alternative source of power. The water supply provided by Thames Water will need considerable improvement and Thames Water has already stated that it has identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of the application.

No agreement should be given to the application until a detailed scheme is provided by the developer to show how these problems will be overcome.

69 *Traffic:* Concern is expressed about the increased usage of Polhill, Otford Lane and Star Hill. A survey was carried out on Polhill in 2006 and a full report was prepared noting that the hill was subsiding and though some remedial work was undertaken there was not sufficient funding available to carry out major work.

The introduction of traffic lights or a roundabout has been considered for the top of Polhill (A224) but the Parish Council suggests that no work be carried out until the impact of increased traffic is monitored at that junction. There will of course be a further increase in traffic on the A224 when the crematorium is built.

Otford Lane is a winding, narrow lane with many 'blind bends' and few passing places also no footways, and it is likely that this would be the main route to Halstead Primary School.

Star Hill is a narrow de-restricted, steep, winding road used by commercial vehicles, cyclists and residents in Knockholt as it is the main route out of the village when travelling to Sevenoaks. There have been many accidents on this hill that are not logged as statistics as few are fatal.

70 *Travel:* Council believes that the developer should investigate and initiate a bus service to the Fort which would encourage people not to use their cars. Discussion should be held with Network rail to ascertain if the time-table could be improved.

Air Quality: Sevenoaks District, particularly the parishes located near the Fort, have had considerable problems with the quality of the air due to the close proximity of M25, M26, A21 and A224. Several consultations were undertaken and regulations introduced to try and improve the situation. With the introduction of more vehicles the situation can only worsen.

71 *Flooding:* the A224 at the top of Polhill has been flooded on several occasions over the last few years causing the road to be closed to traffic for days at a time. A survey and corrective works will need to be carried out as a matter of urgency.

72 *Traffic movements:* Statistically with vehicles movements for each home at eight per day, 450 homes would equate to 3,600 vehicle movements. The vehicle movements of the 1,500 employees would equate to 3,000 movements. There will also be casual daily traffic movements to both businesses (including the hotel) and residential properties, making an approximate 7,000 movements per day. Plans should include details of how the developer will ensure that local villages will not suffer because of the increased traffic levels. A simple measure would be the introduction of a no left turn sign for traffic leaving the Fort via Crow Road, and wishing to enter Otford Lane.

73 *Management Plan:* The Parish Council notes the developers plan to set up a Charitable Community Trust to manage all the Green Belt areas within the development, the plan being to include the neighbouring Parish Councils in this trust. This development is a commercial enterprise and as such should be managed by the owners of the land. Halstead Parish Council would not wish to be involved with any such arrangement and would not commit to providing any funding, now or at any time in the future, from the Parish Council's Precept raised from the residents of Halstead.

Knockholt PC

74 Knockholt Parish Council objects to the application for detailed approval to two access points at Otford Lane/Crow Drive (primary) and Star Hill (secondary).

Traffic Estimates.

75 There is a vast underestimation of the predicted traffic movements per day. Based on the number of households and business traffic, a far more realistic estimation would be 4,000 – a quadrupling of the existing of 1,000 movements per day.

Primary/secondary

76 The terminology of primary and secondary is wrong as the layout of the development means the majority of households are nearer Star Hill, and there is nothing proposed to stop residents using this as their 'primary' exit.

2 exits

77 The need for 2 exits from the site is recognised, however, in previous applications Star Hill has been identified for emergency/public transport only. There have been no changes or proposed changes to Star Hill to justify this exit being open to all

traffic. Rising bollards are successfully used in towns to restrict entrance to only emergency vehicles and public transport.

Star Hill exit

- 78 Proposals to improve sight lines by removing vegetation are inadequate as the undulation of Star Hill means hill brows restrict visibility of oncoming traffic. This stretch of the road is derestricted and traffic can be travelling up to 70mph. Traffic would have to be slowed down by traffic lights or a roundabout.
- 79 Traffic turning right out of Star Hill exit will head to Knockholt, a small village where the already narrow roads, are further restricted by parking down one side. During peak hours there is severe congestion around the school. Cars regularly speed using the Old London Road and Rushmore Hill, where the lack of pavements leaves pedestrians vulnerable.

Dangerous road

- 80 There have been no major improvements to Star Hill in living memory. At its narrowest part, Star Hill is a blind bend, too narrow to accommodate passing large vehicles. There have been several fatal and life changing accidents on Star Hill. Any increase of traffic will increase these events. In severe weather the steep gradient in parts makes it treacherous. Glacial slippage means that there is little scope to widen either Star Hill or Polhill.

Otford Lane/Crow Drive

- 81 Traffic lights would lead to static traffic held on the steep gradient of Polhill, as experienced during recent temporary road works at the top of the hill. A roundabout would reflect the others along this stretch of road heading towards the motorway junction. Due to ongoing drainage issues this road has been impassable for vehicles smaller than 4 by 4s several times this winter due to flooding.

Other developments

- 82 To consider the effects of the increase of traffic from the Fort Halstead development in isolation would vastly underestimate the future pressures placed on the roads in surrounding villages. In the past weeks Biggin Hill have been granted extended operational hours and potential to increase employment by 2300 jobs. Dunton Green's development of 450 houses with some employment is only a third through construction, and planning has just been granted for a new crematorium at the top of Polhill. All these developments are within 6.5 miles of each other. A great deal of this new traffic and the Fort Halsted traffic will use the roundabout at the bottom of Star Hill and Polhill which has poor sight lines especially from the Dunton Green approach.

Community bus

- 83 Previous attempts to run a community bus to the train station failed as although it was busy in the morning, commuters return home at various times making it unviable in the evenings. The expectation that a charge could be levied on householders except those in affordable houses is untested. The current bus route 402 if extended to cover the Fort Halstead, would have to be increased from hourly if it was to have a considerable effect in the use of cars for commuting and getting to the station. Parking at the stations is currently inadequate for existing users. The

lack of a medical centre and local primary and secondary schools locally further increases journeys to be made.

- 84 Knockholt Parish Council objects to the application for Outline planning permission for the demolition of buildings and development of a mixed-use development comprising a business area (Use Classes B1 and B2 with ancillary energetic material testing) of up to 27,000 sq. m GEA, 450 residential units, a hotel of up to 80 beds, a village centre (Use Classes A1-A3, B1a, D1 and D2), use of the Fort Area and bunkers as an historic interpretation centre (Use Class D1) with ancillary workshop space, and works associated with the development including roads, landscaping, security fencing, formal and informal open space, pedestrian, cyclist and public transport infrastructure, utilities infrastructure, sustainable urban drainage system, cycle and car parking (with all matters reserved);

Ongoing management of the site

- 85 The expectation that land not built on will be the responsibility of surrounding parishes to maintain would be a burden on the precept, where any increase is subject to restrictions and scrutiny of its use. An annual levy on residents is untested.

Open spaces

- 86 The removal of existing boundary fencing would leave the large stretches of open land vulnerable to illegal traveller encampments, a use that SDC has already ruled out for the Fort Halstead site.

Utilities

- 87 Thames Water would need to replace the currently inadequate mains water and sewage infrastructure. The stability of the land has not been tested and the piling needed for construction may affect the aquifer beneath.
- 88 Estimates for the provision of electricity will need to be revised as they were completed prior to the gas providers stating they would not be supplying the development.

Inadequate medical provision

- 89 Although a building is designated as a medical centre, there is no commitment from the NHS to provide funds to run it. Surrounding surgeries are oversubscribed with long delays to get appointments. Sevenoaks hospital does not have A&E department so emergencies would have to travel to Pembury or Farnborough.

Schools

- 90 There is already a shortage of schooling in the area, as indicated by the campaign for a new grammar school in Sevenoaks. The transportation of the majority of children out of the town for secondary education means that school bus services would need to be provided.

Employment lead

- 91 According to the applicant's consultants Regenesys there is a declining market for the types of commercial development proposed. KPC would urge that every phase

includes both housing and employment to ensure that at some future date the commercial development does not become unfeasible and further housing is put on site.

Contamination

- 92 With the site's history KPC are concerned that the contamination survey seems to be restricted to reports done in 2008 and 2012 which did not include the restricted areas. Several buildings would need to be demolished prior to a full survey being completed.

Stability of the land

- 93 Over several decades this site has been subjected to explosive blasts on a weekly basis. This coupled with glacial slippage makes the land less stable and possibly unsuitable for further development at the top of the hill.

Area of outstanding natural beauty

- 94 Although current plans show that building heights will not exceed current ones, there is concern that some of the larger houses have vast loft spaces which could be used for future additional bedrooms. More bedrooms generally means more cars per household.
- 95 The buffer zone between the ancient woodland and the back gardens is narrow in some places. As identified there is a vast diversity of wild plant and animal life on site and there is no indication how this will be protected during construction.

Otford PC

- 96 The prime concerns of OPC relate to the impact of increased vehicular activity through the village and in particular the High Street which lies in a conservation area.
- 97 The Travel assessment in section 13 has not fully considered the causes for vehicular activity in the village, nor the impact arising from the proposed Fort Halsted development.
- 98 The report classes the sensitivity of Otford High Street as "High" but rates the resulting development traffic impact as "insignificant". In 2010 Kent highways carried out a traffic census which stated that there were 66,000 vehicle movements through the High Street in a week. The Fort Halstead traffic analysis indicates that they only surmise an increase of 5% as a result of the development. However, it is recognised that during the intervening years (since 2010) there has already been an increase in excess of 5%.
- 99 OPC is clear in that the transport study has not understood or adequately studied the vehicular activity in the Village. The traffic data has only considered the number of vehicles and not why they use the High Street as a route.
- 100 Firstly, Otford railway station has not been included in the study, although it is located approximately 6km from the development. The station is used extensively by commuters as in one direction it gives access to Victoria Station London and a direct line to (East London) and Bedford and in the other direction, eastward travel

to Maidstone and beyond. OPC also has concerns over the capacity of the station car park to be able to absorb any further major increase in cars.

- 101 Secondly, current employees at Fort Halsted traveling from the Maidstone direction use the A25, Seal, Kemsing, Otford High Street as a daily route to avoid the Bat & Ball and Riverhead junctions. This not only impacts on Otford High Street but the narrow Otford to Kemsing Pilgrims Way East.
- 102 Thirdly the report has assumed supermarket shopping will take place at Tesco, Riverhead, or north to Orpington and Bromley and has ignored the proximity of Sainsburys on the outskirts of Otford. The obvious route from the proposed development will be through Otford High Street and is a route commonly used by residents of Knockholt, Halstead and Badgers Mount.
- 103 Fourthly the road crossing over the M25 to Pilgrims Way West and leading on to Otford High Street has a width limit of 6' 6". With only one significant business in Otford High Street requiring deliveries via HGVs, the HGV activity is way in excess of this business' needs. The report has overlooked that goods and domestic traffic use the route through Otford as a preferred route to travel east on the A25.
- 104 It is requested that the report takes full consideration of the actual traffic movements through Otford and amends the report to reflect this.
- 105 Additionally a condition should be applied to any planning consent restricting development site HGVs from using Otford High Street and additionally making the planned businesses for the development fully aware of the road width restriction through Otford.

Shoreham PC

- 106 While accepting that the Fort Halstead site is to be redeveloped, we object to certain sections within this application.

Commercial Viability

- 107 Even by the CBRE's own submission, difficulties could be encountered in enticing businesses to the site, which casts a shadow over the commercial viability of the project. We are concerned that the ambition of the project, (1483 jobs), could be over optimistic and the very real threat of failure to attract sufficient commercial enterprises to Fort Halstead could ultimately lead to an increase in housing. The Sevenoaks A&DMP states that the Fort Halstead site is primarily for employment, but this application seems to be focused on housing with employment as an afterthought.

Housing

- 108 We have concerns regarding the height of some of the houses proposed. All of the housing currently within Fort Halstead is of two storeys; proposed housing in excess of two storeys could be contrary to the requirement to "Protect and Enhance" the ANOB. With this in mind the development should be seen as an opportunity.
- 109 20% affordable housing is too low a figure, the area is in great need of more affordable housing to service businesses in the Sevenoaks area. It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit staff for low pay jobs.

Parking

- 110 Parking is a concern with what appears to be no or insufficient parking provision for visiting family, friends, tradesmen, etc, particularly in the 'mews'/'terraced' properties. The reality will be that visitors will be forced to park on verges, pavements, or in narrow roads, blocking other residents. Were this development well served with public transport parking would not be an issue but this will effectively be an isolated community with poor access to buses and trains

Access Points

POLHILL, OTFORD LANE and CROW DRIVE junction

- 111 We strongly support Option 3, the roundabout, for this junction. It would produce better traffic flow and largely prevent traffic from backing-up down Polhill, (particularly vital in winter conditions), something which is almost certain to occur with option 2, traffic lights.
(Officer note – this is the proposed option under consultation).
- 112 It should be borne in mind that, despite research on safety carried out for this project, a major cause of death and severe injury to cyclists at traffic lights is caused by large vehicles turning left; a particularly pertinent consideration during the construction phase when there will be a considerable amount of HGV traffic entering and exiting the site. It should also be borne in mind that, according to the submission, no accidents have occurred at, or been caused by, this junction in the past 7 years. In terms of safety traffic lights cannot improve on this. The Polhill roundabout at Badgers Mount accommodates a lot of cycle and pedestrian traffic without, to our knowledge, any death or injury to either of those groups.

STAR HILL junction

- 113 It is disappointing that no clear, viable plan is in place for access on Star Hill, one that prevents large commercial vehicles from using the entrance while at the same time allowing for a bus service. Whatever solution is eventually found it must also deter vehicles of any description from using Crow Drive as a rat-run to avoid the major traffic flows on Polhill.

Transport

- 114 We have considerable concerns regarding the viability of a 'Community Bus' service, and therefore the sustainability of the residential part of the development. These services can work well in the mornings as most people tend to arrive at work over a short period of time but fail in the evening as peoples return from work is spread out over a much longer time period.
- 115 The reality will be that the majority of travel to and from the development will be by car, most likely to Knockholt Station as that is the first station within Zone 6. This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of roadside parking that takes place at Knockholt Station is by commuters, many from Sevenoaks and beyond. (It is known that some come from as far afield as Wadhurst a distance of some 26 miles). Some people will make the longer car journey to Orpington which has services operating much later into the evening. On that basis the station of choice for residents of the development will almost certainly be Knockholt; perhaps some consideration should be given to creating a station car park.

Education

- 116 Although there can be little argument regarding primary school provision the Secondary school situation is highly concerning as no account has been taken within the application of the already large, and continuing, development of 500 homes at Dunton Green.
- 117 The application states that there are 277 free state secondary school places, and describes the impact as “insignificant”, (arguable). However, when the two major developments in adjacent areas are combined it seems inconceivable that the impact from 950 new homes could be described as such.
- 118 Other places are available in private fee paying schools but nationally only around 6.5% attend these.

Healthcare Provision

- 119 *GP Availability:* The proposal highlights the insufficiency of GP provision to accommodate the demand from the development - it is described in the application as of “of minor significance”.
- 120 *Acute Hospital Services:* The increased pressure on acute hospital services which CBRE has already identified as “at capacity” is described as “of minor significance”.
- 121 *Dental Services:* All of the Dental surgeries within a 3 mile radius of the development are closed to new patients. This too is classified as “of minor significance”.
- 122 We do not consider the shortage of any of these services as of “Minor Significance” to a new community and again feel that this threatens the sustainability of the development, particularly when the impact on these services is combined with that caused by the larger development at Dunton Green. This cannot be ignored.
- 123 *Contamination:* The application points out that there are various contaminants on site but there is considerable concern about the quantities and the possibility of contaminants not listed in the application being present.

Other Consultees

MOD

- 124 The MOD has no safeguarding objections to this proposal.

Kent Police

- 125 I would be grateful if you could draw the applicant’s attention to the Kent Design Initiative (KDI), which will also assist them with Crime Prevention and Community Safety. I would welcome a meeting with the applicant/agent to discuss Crime Prevention in more detail and any notes from a meeting/consultation will be passed back to the Planning Officer dealing with the application as part of my full response to this planning application.
- 126 If this planning application is given approval and no contact has been made to the Crime prevention Design Advisors (CPDAs) by the applicant/agent, then we would suggest that a relevant condition be included as part of the planning approval.

127 *Officer Comment: Following discussion it was resolved that since this is at the outline stage the discussions the police wish to engage in would be more appropriate for the next stage of the planning process with the submission of reserved matters.*

SDC Policy

128 Planning policy supports this development provided it is established that the requirements of ADMP Policy EMP3 are met and provided it is shown that provision for affordable housing will be in accordance with Core Strategy Policy SP3. Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) Policy EMP3 deals specifically with redevelopment of Fort Halstead and is the key development plan policy to be considered

Redevelopment proposals will be expected to achieve a range of employment uses in assessing the current application.

129 To comply with this requirement it must be shown that the proposals for the employment land are sufficiently flexible to accommodate different types of business, including businesses supporting highly skilled jobs. Objective 1 gives specific support to the retention of Qinetiq in premises to meet its needs.

Redevelopment may also include a hotel.

130 The inclusion of a hotel is consistent with the policy, although it is not an absolute requirement.

Residential development of up to 450 units may also be permitted

131 To be consistent with the policy, the development must do more than just include 450 dwellings and sufficient commercial floorspace to replace the 1,200 jobs. The policy creates a requirement to “deliver” employment-led development which means providing the development, not just the space for it, and also means that the employment floorspace should be “leading” the development which means it must be provided at the start or early in the development programme.

The inclusion of appropriate community facilities and infrastructure

132 The provision of community facilities and infrastructure is consistent with the policy and contributes to objective 3 regarding achieving a sustainable development. Following the introduction of CIL there are limitations on the use of planning obligations to fund off-site infrastructure as such infrastructure is now funded through CIL, for which the development is liable

Provide accessibility to jobs, shops and services by public transport, cycling or walking

133 Given the location of the site away from existing settlements, sustainable transport initiatives are important. In deciding whether provision is proportionate account should be taken of the potential impact on viability and of achieving an outcome that is at least equivalent to other settlements of a similar size.

Make a positive contribution to the achievement of aims and objectives of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan

- 134 This may be achieved through reduced impacts compared with the existing development and/or new initiatives for example in managing the woodland and grassland and improved access. The tranquillity component requires consideration of the noise impact of the development proposals compared with the operation of the existing development.

Integrate existing dwellings located in close proximity to the boundary of the Major Employment Site into the new development

- 135 The relationship of the new development to existing housing should be considered. This involves considering whether there will be any adverse impact on existing housing and also whether the development makes a sufficient contribution to integration.

Incorporate principles of sustainable design and construction to minimise energy consumption in its construction and operation

- 136 Core Strategy Policy SP2 is relevant but care is required in anticipating requirements for sustainable construction that may exist at the time the development is likely to be carried out (post 2018). We can anticipate that the development will need to comply with the requirement for zero carbon homes as set out in the draft 2016 Building Regulations and additionally point three of the policy requires at least a 10% reduction in the total carbon emissions to be achieved through the use of decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy sources. *(Officer note – commitment now removed by Minister).*

Improve the provision and connectivity of green infrastructure

- 137 It is noted that there is substantial provision for green infrastructure within the development though we need to be satisfied that there are arrangements in place for its long term maintenance

Provide for a comprehensive development and include a phasing plan

- 138 The application provides for a comprehensive development but we also need to be satisfied that this is delivered through the phasing plan. The specific issue of delivering the employment is covered above but the phasing plan also needs to ensure the provision of residential development is related to the provision of the community facilities and necessary infrastructure, including transport infrastructure, in an acceptable way.

Delivery Mechanism – A planning brief will be prepared

- 139 The planning application was submitted less than two weeks after the adoption of the ADMP which meant there was no time to prepare and consult on a planning brief for the site. As a result the opportunity for engagement with the local community and other stakeholders in the preparation of a brief to guide the details of the development was lost. This is unfortunate but it is not considered that refusal on grounds of prematurity could be justified solely in relation to the planning brief.

SDC Housing

- 140 Firstly, if viability suggests a lower percentage of affordable housing, then provided our consultant concurs, we will be guided by that and work up a mix based on relevant percentage.
- 141 Based on the 20% currently on offer, our current SHMA suggests 2/3 should be for rent (that now being affordable rent) and this would be our default position. We do not therefore support zero provision of rent.
- 142 And as discussed, such a high level of shared-ownership would not work for anybody – particularly as this will be in the future when intermediate affordability is likely to be that much worse and also the whole perpetuity issue with shared-ownership is currently out to consultation. *(Officer note – the right to acquire means that the affordable housing could not be secured in perpetuity on this site).*
- 143 As and when the new SHMA evidence is in, of course we'll review our recommendations on exact tenure and size split – so the clauses in the S106 should be broad enough to allow for this.
- (Officer note – the application will be determined based on the evidence available at that time.)*
- 144 The existing draft S106 draft put forward does not comply with the SDC template and we would look to see those standard clauses used here from S106 drawn up with legal guidance.
- 145 As far as any specialist/supported provision, again we might recommend as and when evidence comes our way – so some kind allowance for this would be good (note – older persons' housing needs survey likely to be commissioned after SHMA data in, if data outstanding).

Thames Water

Waste Comments

- 146 Following initial investigation, Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this application. Should the Local Planning Authority look to approve the application, Thames Water would like a 'Grampian Style' condition imposed.
- 147 Surface Water Drainage - With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer.

Officer note: See Conditions 8, 9 and 10.

KCC Flood Team

- 148 Kent County Council Flood team, as Lead Local Flood Authority have no objection to the proposed development with respect to means of surface water disposal and are pleased to offer the following comments. Particular reference is made to the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) prepared by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd, dated February 2015.

149 Para 3.7 recommends the primary means of surface water disposal will be via infiltration methods. In particular, the ground investigation has established that using borehole soakaways will be feasible.

150 If the authority is minded to consider the application favourably, we recommend an appropriate condition.

Officer note: See Conditions 9 and 45.

Environment Agency

151 Have no objections subject to the imposition of conditions regarding Contamination prevention.

Officer note: See Conditions 11, 39 and 44.

KCC Highways

152 As you are aware there has been considerable correspondence between ourselves, the applicant's planning agents (CBRE) and their transport consultants (Peter Brett Associates (PBA)) since the application was first submitted in March 2015. As a result of these negotiations many of the concerns on highway matters have been resolved to a satisfactory conclusion provided appropriate Conditions and / or Section 106 Clauses are applied to any consent granted.

153 The application was supported by a Transport Assessment prepared by PBA dated February 2015 accompanied by Appendices A – S and an illustrative Masterplan layout (latest revision July 2015) and an Access and Movement Parameter Plan. These documents, including revisions submitted during the consultation period, have been used to assess the impact of this development proposal in highway terms.

154 Dealing with those specific issues in turn:

Sustainability

155 The site's location is likely to result in residents and employees to be primarily dependant on the use of the private car for access to key locations such as stations, schools, retail outlets etc. However, some mitigating measures including bus facilities, and pedestrian / cycle routes both on and off site are proposed which will help to reduce that reliance on the private car. A Framework Travel Plan has been submitted which needs to be developed separately for the commercial, residential and hotel uses to increase the use of sustainable travel and Conditions / Section 106 Clauses should be applied to ensure that these Travel Plans are developed and monitored in a robust manner prior to first occupation.

(Officer note – Travel Plans could not be developed until occupier details are known).

Traffic Generation

156 The Transport Assessment (TA) submitted, and particularly Appendix H, has demonstrated that, provided the sustainable transport measures referred to above are implemented, there is unlikely to be any adverse impact on the local

highway network and not to the extent where development is refused due to the traffic impact being considered “severe” in terms of NPPF

Para. 32

- 157 The latest revision of the Masterplan layout (July 2015) has been designed so that all traffic from the commercial area and the majority of the residential / hotel area enters and leaves the site via the proposed new roundabout at the Crow Lane / A224 junction. The number of vehicles likely to use the secondary access off Star Hill Road is considered to be low (20 – 30 vehicles in the peak hour) and which will represent a modest 7 – 10% increase on existing traffic flows. A combination of non-direct routes and suitable traffic calming should help maintain the Star Hill Road access to this level of traffic generation and should be conditioned to ensure this is maintained when detailed layout proposals are developed.

Bus Provision

- 158 Current bus services in the area of the site are poor and the provision of effective bus transport is key to increasing the sustainability of the site. In this respect two proposals have been submitted as described in Appendix N of the TA and found to be acceptable. Firstly two community buses are proposed, funded and managed by the developer for a period of 10 years, which will provide services between the site, the local primary schools and Knockholt Station on a fixed timetable in the mornings and evenings and “on demand” at other times. The timetable for these buses should be flexible and usage monitored such that adjustments may be made according to needs. Secondly, the existing 402 bus service operated by Arriva currently passes the site along Star Hill Road junction. Discussions with Arriva have indicated that provided a contribution is made by the developer, the service could be extended to run to the centre of the development (with the addition of an extra vehicle) once there is a sufficient number of residents established – probably 100 houses. The cost of this enhanced 402 service would be £110,000 per year and should be paid for by the developer for a period of 5 years after the completion of the 100th residential dwelling. Prior to this the 402 service should turn at the Star Hill Road access as described in the TA. The provision of both the two community buses and the enhanced 402 service should be covered by appropriate clauses in a Section 106 Agreement.

Link Road over M25

- 159 Local concern has been expressed about queues developing at the junction of Pilgrims Way West and the A224 Pollhill. The TA indicates that in future years (2027) there could be additional queueing as a result of the development. However the number of additional vehicles is low and the junction was subject to a safety improvement scheme recently which may result in a small amount of additional queueing. KCC will continue to monitor the junction and take any remedial action in the future should it be necessary. It is not considered to be a major concern and there are limited options for improvement at this time.

Knockholt Station Parking

- 160 A parking survey has been undertaken at Knockholt Station, and, together with ticketing evidence from SDC Parking Team, there appears to be sufficient parking available along Old London Road close to the station to accommodate the additional demand generated by the development.

Masterplan Layout

- 161 Whilst this is an outline application, it is necessary to ensure that sufficient land is allocated for the commercial area to accommodate the necessary parking and manoeuvring movements. It is considered that sufficient land is available although any detailed application will need to clearly demonstrate the parking and servicing arrangements.
- 162 As discussed, the commercial and residential / hotel areas should have separate access roads apart from the stretch of Crow Lane between Pollhill junction and the start of the development. It is considered that a distinctive “gateway” feature should be incorporated in the layout where the commercial / residential split occurs and the access to the commercial area (including Qinetiq) should be in the form of a cul-de-sac with all access from Pollhill rather than from Star Hill Lane. These layout requirements should, if possible, be controlled by either condition or Section 106 clause.
- 163 The residential element of the development will be the subject of a Section 38 Agreement between the developer and KCC and a Condition is required to ensure that all elements of this are to the current KCC adoption standards. It is unlikely that the roads in the commercial area will be subject to adoption but remain the responsibility of the developer, possibly under a management contract. Current KCC Parking Standards should apply across the development with details to be submitted and approved under a suitable Condition.

Pollhill Junction

- 164 The revised drawing of the proposed roundabout submitted 23th July 2015 is considered acceptable subject to details being submitted for approval prior to construction and for the access works to be completed before any demolition / construction commences on the site.
- 165 The TA in Appendix P considers various access junction options and it is agreed that a roundabout junction is the most appropriate. The alternative traffic signal solution is also acceptable although the traffic modelling would suggest that queue lengths would be greater with this option. Special consideration must be given to providing safe facilities for cyclists and pedestrians using the roundabout junction but it is agreed that there is scope for these details to be addressed at the detailed design stage. The design and construction of the roundabout will need to be the subject of a Section 278 Agreement with KCC as it is to be constructed on existing highway.

Star Hill Road Junction

- 166 The 40mph speed limit should be implemented between Knockholt Village and south of Keepers Cottages with gateway features and interactive signs in line with the proposals given in Appendix F of the TA. Also, improved visibility splays and high friction surfacing around the junction are required as proposed. Further investigation is required into the width of the footway outside Keepers Cottages with a view to widening and should be covered by Condition. All these works are subject to submission and approval by the highway authority and S278 Agreements.
- 167 Based on the accepted trip rates and distribution in Table 3 of Appendix F, proposed trip rates are only 7-10% higher than existing in the am and pm peaks,

which amounts to 20-26 additional vehicles. It must be remembered that when the site was running at full capacity, considerably more traffic would have been exiting at the Star Hill junction. The proposed mitigation measures have the effect of slowing traffic along this route and improving visibility when exiting the site. We are happy with the proposed measures

Pedestrian and Cycle Routes

- 168 The pedestrian and cycle routes around the Pollhill access roundabout should be submitted for approval at the same time as the design of the roundabout itself. The Pollhill to Twitton bridleway should be upgraded in line to the proposals outlined in the TA and also the access to Knockholt village should be improved to make it suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and horses in the form of a Bridleway for which details should be submitted and approved prior to occupation of 50 houses on the development.

A224 between site and Shacklands Roundabout.

- 169 In order to increase the sustainability of the development it is important that residents and employees have the opportunity to travel by sustainable means e.g. cycle. The nearest railway station to the site is at Knockholt at a distance of approximately 3 km – an ideal cycling distance and it is expected that a relatively high proportion of residents will commute to London by train.
- 170 In addition we should be encouraging employees in the commercial area to travel by non-car means. To encourage cyclists their route should be convenient and safe and it is considered that an off-road route between the proposed junction at Crow Drive to Shanklands Roundabout would be the preferred way of encouraging more cyclists to use this method of travel. Because of the location of the development which has limited non-car travel facilities, it is considered that any mitigating measures that can be provided to increase that sustainability should be sought and in this instance KCC would be looking towards the developer to thoroughly investigate the provision this cycle route and to submit their proposals to the highway authority for their approval. I would recommend the use of a suitable Condition, or possibly a Section 106 Clause, to ensure that this process is fully committed by the developer.
- 171 In conclusion, it is confirmed that KCC Highways have no highway objection to this development proposal provided the issues referred to in the forgoing dialog are either Conditioned or included in a Section 106 Agreement. We will provide you with our suggested Conditions and S106 Clauses under separate cover in the near future.

INFORMATIVE: It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure , before the development hereby approved is commenced, that all necessary highway approvals and consents where required are obtained and that the limits of highway boundary are clearly established in order to avoid any enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority. The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under such legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.

Highways England

- 172 The Strategic Road Network is a critical national asset and as such Highways England works to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.
- 173 Having considered the proposals Highways England have concluded that they have no objections and a formal recommendation is attached.

KCC Public rights of Way

- 174 The County Council's PROW and Access Service would like to bring to the attention of the applicant the existence of numerous Public Rights of Way which run immediately through and adjacent to the proposed development: SR728, SR722, SR172 and SR97.
- 175 The local area has a varied Public Rights of Way network available to residents. These routes are well used and valuable assets for the surrounding community as demonstrated by comments made in the submitted Community Stakeholder Workshops. The North Downs Way, National Trail also passes adjacent to the site and would be easily accessible to new residents or hotel visitors.
- 176 The site is not well placed to access local services or amenities by sustainable means. Improved bus provision is therefore essential, however will do little to deter vehicular use. Facilities at Otford could be made more accessible by the provision of a continuous Footway/Cycleway along Crow Drive to the A224, continuing along bridleway SR714 will then allow access to Otford.
- 177 If there is to be no education provision on site the likely impact on the local road network and around the surrounding village schools would be severe.
(Officer note – These comments contradict the views of KCC as Highways Authority.)
- 178 The lack of sustainable access to school sites makes this application unsustainable and we therefore object pending the resolution of an agreeable solution to access schools and facilities. The solution to provide a bus to primary schools is highly unlikely to be taken up by parents of infant or even junior school age.
- 179 Other suggestions include:
- The proposed cycleway to Knockholt is upgraded to a public bridleway status
 - East west route across the site is sought to improve access for equestrians in the area
 - In respect of PROW SR97 improved access which would result from tree clearance where they fall over the footpath and improved alignment to this footpath.
 - Creation of a linear footpath along the northern perimeter of the chalk grassland
 - Sustainable means of access to schools and facilities must be found
 - Financial contribution 150k to improve walking/cycling routes

Officer Note: See Officer's report and recommendations for S106 legal agreement.

Network Rail No objection

KCC Ecology

180 The following habitats and species of ecological value have been identified on and around the site:

- Ancient woodland;
- Neutral grassland;
- Calcareous grassland;
- Trees and scrub;
- Bats;
- Breeding birds;
- Reptiles;
- Invertebrates;
- Badgers;
- Dormice.

181 We advise that there is sufficient current ecological survey data available but that additional information is necessary to inform the determination with regards to the conclusions reached and the approaches to mitigation. Sevenoaks DC needs to be satisfied that there are appropriate mitigation measures available for all potential ecological impacts.

182 The format of the submission, with varying levels of detail provided in different documents, means that it is difficult to undertake an holistic appraisal of the ecological impact assessment, particularly in relation to the protected species impacts. We advise that there is a need for a clear summary of the identified ecological impacts, the measures that are necessary to mitigate for those impacts and the enhancement measures that are proposed. In particular, there is limited detail regarding the mitigation measures for the direct protected species impacts (e.g. loss of bat roosts, loss of dormouse habitat, loss of reptile habitat) and the timeliness of the mitigation measures as compared to the phasing of the development. IT would also be useful for an indicative timetable of survey updates to be provided.

183 Given the stated need for European protected species mitigation licences in relation to the potential impacts to bats and dormice, Sevenoaks DC must have sufficient information to adequately engage with the EC Habitats Directive. While the habitat management proposals have the potential to provide favourable habitat opportunities in the long-term, we advise that further details are sought regarding the mitigation measures necessary to avoid direct impacts during construction. We previously advised this in our pre-application comments so it is disappointing to note that no additional details have been submitted.

184 There will be no loss of ancient woodland as a result of the proposed development, but there is potential for indirect impacts. Measures to minimise the potential for impacts during construction (e.g. dust, noise, light-pollution, surface water run-off) can be secured within the Construction Environmental Management Plan.

185 We are pleased to note that a 15m buffer to the ancient woodland will be provided, though we consider the proposal to create the buffer "as each 'development plot' is

brought forward” to be insufficient; we would expect the whole buffer to be created early on in the phasing of the proposed development. This would allow it to mature, increasing its effectiveness as occupants move into the proposed development site. (*Officer note – See phasing conditions 4, 16 and 17*).

- 186 As stated in the Environmental Statement Volume 1: Chapter 12 - Ecology and Nature Conservation, the proposed development is likely to result in “an increase in recreational use of the ancient woodland...which is not currently accessible to the public”. Measures are proposed to mitigate for the potential impacts of recreational activity and domestic pet predation, such that the assessment concludes that there would be an insignificant impact on the ancient woodland.
- 187 While we consider the proposed measures likely to provide some mitigation for the potential impacts of recreational activity and domestic pet predation, we are unable to agree that it can be concluded that there will be no significant impact on the ancient woodland. It has not been demonstrated that recreation can be discouraged from the “most valuable parts of the ancient woodland” (we also query whether these have been identified) and the presence of existing public rights of way does not appear to have been taken into account. (*Officer note – See comments on the objectives of the S106 legal agreement and conditions 6, 16, 17, 19, 24, 25, 37 and 38*).
- 188 We advise that the proposed ancient woodland management will also help to mitigate the potential for deterioration of the resource as a result of recreational impacts, but justification for the proposed implementation during phase 6/7 has not been provided; earlier implementation may help the woodland to respond more robustly to the increasing use.
- 189 We advise that further details are sought to support the conclusion within the application that the proposed mitigation for ancient woodland is sufficient to prevent deterioration and avoid significant impacts. If this is not provided to Sevenoaks DC’s satisfaction, the ‘needs test’ detailed in paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework must be applied.
- 190 As a minor point, we note some opportunity for confusion in the use of the term ‘wild areas’ to refer to the mitigation and enhancement area in the south-west of the wider site and also to refer to areas of alternative semi-natural resource for domestic pets within the developed area.

Kent Wildlife Trust

191 No objection subject to a number of issues being conditioned:

- Long term ecological and woodland management plan
- Access management plan
- Lighting strategy
- Woodland buffer protection
- Reptile mitigation
- Calcerous grassland enhancement
- Assessment/mitigation of impact upon Local Wildlife Site of additional residential use of the site.

See comments on the objectives of the S106 agreement and conditions 16, 17, 19, 24, 25, 37 and 38.

SDC Tree Officer

- 192 There are two main areas of current vegetation that need to be taken account of in assessing this application.
- 193 There are wooded areas which tend to dominate most of the perimeters of the site. Of these woodlands, most are designated as Ancient and as such these areas of woodlands would have been in existence in one form or another for at least the last 400 years.
- 194 The interior of the site has what I would call estate planting, which has to a certain degree been formally planted and matured over the previous few decades.
- 195 The aforementioned woodland has later planting mostly along the Star Hill Road frontage. This and the much older Ancient Woodland are important features for the site and based upon the "Illustrated Masterplan", Drawing number 00556A_S_01. All appears to have been given a margin of space between the woodland edges and the nearest proposed structure. There is one pinchpoint adjacent to the proposed northern most 2 bedroom dwellings close to the wooded area adjacent to Armstrong Close. The aforementioned drawing shows these new dwellings close to existing trees shown for retention. On the whole I see the existing important wooded areas to be shown to be retained with sufficient space awarded them from the proposed development.
- 196 It was difficult to fully assess what is proposed for the internal estate trees without the benefit of a detailed tree survey. From what I could ascertain, the bulk of these trees are to be retained within the proposals. It has to be expected with a development of this size that tree removals will need to be carried out to accommodate this development. It would appear from the information to hand at this stage that the losses are acceptable.
- 197 At this outline stage I find the proposals to be acceptable with minor concerns that could be dealt with by minor adjustments. (*Officer note – landscape condition/tree protection*)

KCC Landscape

- 198 This is an outline application for a site where development in the AONB already exists. Therefore detail will determine what the landscape impacts might be and how significant they are. The proposed scale and design of the development will be critical to enable KCC to carry out a full assessment of potential impacts. (*Officer note – further consultation at Reserved Matters stage*)
- 199 KCC would suggest the applicant considers what building heights are appropriate in the Kent Downs AONB, this is landscape-led design, where decisions are informed by landscape evidence. An understanding of settlement character, perhaps within this character area would be a useful starting point. Existing building heights are only representative if the applicant has already come to the conclusion that this site is currently characteristic of the AONB.
- 200 The full quota is not justified by the fact that they are hidden by trees; this is not a visual issue but one about landscape impacts.

- 201 Part of the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) method in our view is not appropriate for this development, and so at this stage KCC are unable to support the outcome of the assessment.
- 202 The Management Plan or AONB in general has not formed an integral part of the LVIA. The LVIA is the only means by which a transparent assessment of both landscape and visual impacts can be presented. Therefore it is considered that impacts upon the features of natural beauty in the AONB have not been assessed.
- 203 The AONB is being considered purely as a designation rather than a landscape whose character and natural beauty is defined by the features and their patterns within it. The features of the AONB have not been identified within the DAS or LVIA. The outcome is that the design of the scheme is not landscape-led ultimately this proposal could generate impacts which have not yet been assessed or understood.
- 204 To summarise design principles should be based on evidence from the landscape; it should be landscape-led. The scale, massing and layout (spaces) of buildings can generate negative impacts upon landscape character. Using the AONB settlement character as a guide to inform new development, does not mean creating a pastiche Kentish design, there are opportunities here to develop a site based on high level sustainability criteria, and exemplary design. See SD2 of AONB Management Plan. With the information available it is unlikely that this proposal will achieve paragraph 64, nor 116 of the NPPF.
- 205 Some images and illustrations are unavailable, and therefore our comments in regard to landscape should not be considered complete, as they are not informed by the full suite of information.

(Officer note – this is an Outline planning application – most concerns would be addressed at a later stage with consideration of the Reserved Matters).

Historic England

- 206 Fort Halstead contains a scheduled monument and several listed buildings. These buildings and the site in general is of national heritage significance because of a role in the defence of London in the nineteenth-century and strategic armaments research during the twentieth-century.
- 207 The development will cause some harm to heritage significance, but we think that the proposal has evolved recognising heritage significance and could create a settlement that sustains the most important elements of the place's heritage while creating a new locally distinctive settlement.
- 208 We are pleased to see provision for refurbishment of the scheduled monument and conversion and opening of a heritage interpretation centre although we would wish to see more details prior to determination of planning permission. *(Officer note – legal guidance and heads of terms).*
- 209 We also think that there are omissions from the draft section 106 agreement that we think should be addressed prior to determination of planning permission.
- 210 We think that a more realistic and firmer commitment to assessment of the feasibility of re-opening the fort ditch is needed; with adequate contingency for car parking should this be found to be feasible and desirable.

- 211 Where harm to historic buildings will occur provision should be made for recording and analysis to an agreed specification and the curation of documentary archives in an appropriate and approved archive. We concur with Kent County Council's recommendation to you in relation to the treatment of undesignated archaeological remains.
- 212 Where work is proposed within the scheduled monument a prior application for scheduled monument consent will be needed. We will be pleased to offer further guidance and to advise about scheduled monument consent applications in due course.

Georgian Group

- 213 No comments received

KCC Heritage

- 214 The Historic Building Assessment by Heritage Collective is an excellent report. However, there are some issues to discuss further as the application scheme progresses and KCC are not in complete agreement over the assessment of significance. This needs to be addressed as soon as possible in view of the proposed approach to demolition. The decision on which buildings should be retained and which can be demolished following a programme of building recording work needs to be fully informed. At present further assessment of the built heritage assets is needed and the proposed mitigation needs to be reviewed;
- 215 The "Buried Heritage" DBA is not a reasonable assessment of archaeological issues, partly because it is not sufficiently detailed and focuses on below ground remains. There needs to be more assessment of the potential for prehistoric, Roman and medieval remains and there needs to be consideration of 19th and 20th century archaeology, some of which will be below ground but a considerable amount is above ground and is not a building;
- 216 There needs to be a historic landscape assessment, considering the heritage elements which have fallen in between "buried heritage" and "buildings", such as the ancient routeways crossing the site, military structures, open spaces, significant roads, specimen tree planting, utilitarian/military/research fixtures and fittings, views of historic aspects, including the Scheduled Fort.
- 217 There needs to be a more integrated historic environment assessment; one which draws together a comprehensive description of the heritage resource. At present the historic environment assessment is being too compartmentalised and key elements are not being fully addressed. In accordance with NPPF, paragraph 126, this development should seek to "draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place" and conserve and enhance the key heritage assets and their settings.
- 218 There needs to be a more detailed Archaeological Impact Assessment which should include a topographic survey of the site and more information on original ground levels, possibly through test pitting. Archaeological mitigation measures need to be fully informed.
- 219 KCC currently do not agree with the mitigation measures for heritage. More detail is required setting out a fully informed strategy which should include: preliminary fieldwork; retention of key heritage assets; long term conservation measures; and

proposals for interpretation. Mitigation measures need to consider the entire site, not just the Scheduled Fort and a few historic buildings. KCC welcome the proposals for the Fort to be a Heritage Centre and hope that further opportunities for a wider interpretation strategy can be brought forward as the development scheme progresses.

220 Archaeological remains from earlier periods are recorded in the surrounding countryside and there is potential for remains from the prehistoric period onwards to survive within the development site. However, “archaeological remains” extend to being above ground and I object to the division of the heritage assessment in to “above ground” and “below ground”. This oversimplifies the heritage significance of this site. Buildings can have archaeological significance and there is little consideration of the historic landscape – the historic development, design and layout of the site (ie road and footpath network, specimen planted trees, pipes, historic open spaces, spaces between key buildings, historically significant views etc). The consideration of the historic landscape by the developer is poor and needs to be urgently reviewed.

221 It is recommended that the above issues are fully addressed prior to determination of this outline application, KCC are happy to discuss this further.

Officer comment: Since this comment was written further site visits and discussions have taken place with KCC with further non listed buildings being added to the list of buildings to be retained in areas outside the Fort as well as agreeing the provision of a heritage trail across the site which will focus on both existing and removed buildings/ structures. Other issues referred to are suggested to be dealt with by condition.

222 KCC Archaeology comments are incorporated into the Heritage comments above.

Officer comment: see conditions 14, 15, 20, 23 and 31.

SDC Conservation

223 The applicant has submitted an appropriate level of information to make an assessment of significance on the site. They have also sensibly assessed the harm to the designated heritage assets on this site by the proposals. I am happy with the demolition schedule and there has been extensive consideration on the buildings identified as being retained. I do not consider that the small level of harm to the setting of the designated heritage assets out-weighs the public benefits of the proposals.

224 The application has been the subject of extensive and constructive pre-application discussions with Officers the outcome of which can be seen within this application. Of primary concern is securing the long term future of the Fort (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) and associated listed structures. Following direction from Officers the applicant identified the level of heritage attraction/offer that they considered would be successful and sustainable on the site. A level of detail was required in order to demonstrate that the S106 was appropriately costed so that the identified offer was supported financially. The proposed Trust managed by volunteers will be supported by the funding of a full-time Curator which will be crucial to getting the project off to a successful start. There is also a sensible commitment of 30 days public opening which provides a flexibility to the opening hours.

- 225 I welcome the repair and refurbishment proposals to the Fort and the Listed Buildings within the S106 as this will support the continuing viability of the site by preserving the fabric and the special interest. Management of the trees and shrubs will create long views across Kent and will support an understanding of why the Fort was located at this point. Opening up a stretch of the original moat to the right of the entrance bridge is key to enhancing the special interest of the Fort. This view was supported by Historic England and I welcome the allocation of funds via the S106 for the exploratory work to secure this. To enhance understanding of the site the applicant, as part of the Heritage Interpretation Centre, there will be a Heritage Trail around the development with information boards. This will provide a wider context to the Fort and retain the link between the Fort and the wider site.
- 226 The setting of the Fort and Listed Buildings has been considered and the primary spine roads are being retained and the long-views along Crow Road unaltered. The character of the current site is organic, sporadic, low-level development with a light industry use and keeping a mixed use offer is sympathetic to the established character of the area. However, there will need to be approved Design Guidelines attached to the permission that identify and reflect the characteristics of the current site, including the organic layout, to ensure that qualities and special interest is reflected in the design and vision of the new development. I am confident that the character of the site can be reflected in a new locally distinctive development.
- 227 Further conditions need to be attached to the outline application, including a Conservation Management Plan for the Fort and associated listed buildings to include detailing the works necessary to create the Heritage Centre and the trail. Listed Building consent and Scheduled Ancient Monument consent will also need to be sort for the specifics of works to the designated heritage assets. We should also require the site to be recorded prior to clearance, where this is occurring.

KCC Education

- 228 An assessment spreadsheet for the proposed development at Fort has been submitted. The assessment relates to Education's needs in the vicinity as a result of this and other concurrent and planned housing developments.
- 229 Whilst Sevenoaks DC operates a CIL process, the purpose behind this assessment is to demonstrate a significant primary school place need arising from new housing developments. KCC will fund school expansions resulting from growth in the indigenous population. However, the spreadsheet seeks to indicate the pressures on education facilities in Sevenoaks due to housing alone. Although a service capacity issue at secondary school level is not envisaged this is dependent on whether the Sevenoaks Selective (Grammar) provision materialises. The KCP, and all future planning assumptions are being made on there being an increase of 6FE in the Sevenoaks south area. If the Grammar provision is not forthcoming, then it is expected there are likely to be significant pressures on the number of Year 7 places for Sept 2016 and a deficiency by Sept 2017. This deficiency would worsen annually as houses are occupied on Fort Halstead.
- 230 In terms of Primary School requirements, future projections do show numbers falling for Halstead and there appearing to be sufficient places in the locality. However, KCC know that there is huge pressure on Sevenoaks town and as that increases, schools around the area will need to fill. Firstly Dunton Green with the added pressure from the Rydall development and then we would expect Seal

followed by the likes of Halstead to take more pupils in the coming years, meaning that the project product of 104 pupils from the development would require additional provision to be put in place.

- 231 Some contributions will need to be secured to allow Halstead to be fit for purpose in the future. Funding will need to be sought from CIL receipts towards the provision of additional primary places in lieu of a s106 planning obligation. This funding would be allocated to a capital expansion project at Halstead Primary School.
- 232 There are also concerns about the developer's proposal to use minibuses to ferry commuting residents (and in particular children to and from school). Early Years and Infant children will need to be accompanied by a parent/carer and so the number of children that can be transported this way is limited.

Officer Comment: Education is on the Councils CIL Reg 123 list so money can be sought to contribute towards additional educational infrastructure required in the future if KCC wish.

KCC Community Services:

- 233 The 450 houses within the proposed development will place additional pressures on KCC community services. The number of additional service users by need are set out below:

Assistive Technology	5	Users
Learning Disability	1	
Physical Disability	1	
Older Persons	8	
Adult Learning	31	
Libraries	213	
Youth Service	24	

- 234 The isolated nature of the site means that these additional users are unlikely to be able to easily travel to existing centres. KCC requests that to accommodate the needs of these users and for the County Council to fulfil its statutory obligations, provision within the proposed community building is to be made for onsite service delivery.
- 235 Such facility is to incorporate a 50sqm classroom, kitchen, storage space for class equipment, sufficient toilet facilities for classes of 30, a changing place facility, automatic doors and full DDA compliance for access by service users in wheelchairs. To meet demand and deliver the range of services required KCC will require 25 hours use of the facility per week with no rent charged.
- 236 It is requested that this be secured either through a legal agreement related to the potential planning consent or through condition. Additionally as no financial contributions can be secured through a s106 agreement from this site as the area is subject to CIL with no exclusion proposed by SDC, the above does not fully represent the additional cost this development will place on KCC services. It is therefore likely that to fund the additional cost over and above that set out above KCC will apply to SDC for a proportion of the CIL secured.

Officer Comment: Sufficient space would exist in the community development within the site to accommodate the facilities required if KCC wished to make

arrangements to use it in the future, but since Education infrastructure lies on the Councils CIL Reg 123 funding would need to be sought in that manner rather than via a S106 contribution.

SDC Direct Services

- 237 There are so many unknowns at this early stage that it is not possible to make a complete consultee comment at this time. A development of this size requires the design of a recycling and waste collection strategy for both the residential and commercial elements of the development.
- 238 We need to discuss the day to day refuse and recycling vehicle access requirements, recycling and general waste storage provision if needed, and the location of one or more recycling bring-sites for glass and other materials not collected at kerbside from homes.
- 239 Some capacity is needed for the recycling of glass needs from the business premises? This is thinking ahead, so that the businesses have the ability to recycle the glass that employees produce from meals, coffee breaks, etc.
- 240 Third, a provision for glass recycling should be made for the hotel and any food or drink establishments planned.
- 241 Fourth, we need to think strategically about the best location for a community recycling site.

Officer Comment: See conditions 13 and 30.

SDC Environmental Health Officer

Noise:

- 242 The acoustic report is ok, however as we know from the meeting with QinetiQ, a dull thud may be noticeable from time to time from the testing of energetic materials. I do not believe they currently undertake projectile testing in the area that will be occupied by QinetiQ so it is likely any testing will be in an existing or new building so will hopefully be suitable or constructed so as to be suitable to contain noise.
- 243 I think we have sufficient information and separation distances should be adequate, the unknown is future activity at Qinetiq, but as the redevelopment on their site will require permission, any range or ballistic/explosive test facility noise issue will be addressed at that time.
- 244 The current noise has been addressed with future noise being addressed by Qinetiq would seem the best way forward. I therefore have no significant concerns regarding noise

Contamination

- 245 I am in general satisfied with the submitted information, but have the following comments to make:
- 246 The submitted report consist mainly of a review of previous site investigations carried out. Most of these investigations were carried out to target known potential sources of contamination. There are limitations to these investigations due to the sites continued use.

- 247 The submitted information also includes an outline remedial strategy, which highlights the requirement for further investigations to be carried out following demolition, and the preparation of detailed remediation method statements for each individual plot. These further investigations should also include some non-targeted sampling.
- 248 Chapter 4.8 of the outline remedial strategy relates to unforeseen ground contamination – further information should be submitted to detail how this watching brief is to be carried out.
- 249 Air Quality: I am satisfied with the submitted air quality assessment and accept the conclusions detailed in section 4 of the report.

Officer note – clarification was sought on contamination issues and the following additional comments were received:

- 250 Significant works to remediate contamination of the site has already taken place in order for the transfer of land from the MoD/DSTL to the developer. The land quality would be suitable for commercial use, however further investigation is necessary to ascertain if any contamination in the proposed residential areas meet requirements for use for residential purposes. If investigation shows the land is unsuitable then it can be remediated to national guidance and British Standards to ensure that any development does not have an unacceptable risk associated with it from either naturally occurring substances in the ground or material from the former uses of the site.
- 251 As the development progresses further intrusive investigation is likely as building and infrastructure are removed to delineate where soils require removal or onsite remediation, this can be covered by standard condition and I believe James Fox has already commented on the need for further information on the watching brief for unforeseen ground contamination. This covers the possibility that an undocumented activity or un-regulated waste disposal has taken place on site.
- 253 At this stage the exact extent and nature of contamination is not known at this site, what is important is that the developer has a robust method for identifying areas of contamination and the material can be either removed or treated to render it suitable for the intended use. The planning process has dealt with a number of heavily contaminated sites in the past and there is nothing to suggest this site poses any more risk than some of the other sites developed in the district. Guidance and British standards are required to be met when undertaking investigation and remediation of contaminated sites; it is normal practice to have key stages of the process overseen by specialist environmental consultants to aid the compliance process.
- 254 Removal or treatment of contaminated materials are again subject to specific guidance and legislation to protect both those working on the site and the public. Any material removed from the site for disposal requires specific testing prior to removal to ascertain that the intended site of disposal is suitably licensed to take the material with much of the process being licensed or regulated by the Environment Agency.
- 255 Whilst many people will have concerns due to what they have heard has happened on the site, the reality is that the planning process and other regulatory legislation ensure that dwellings, residential gardens and open space associated with any development are adequately protected.

(Officer note: See conditions 11, 39, 44, 18, 21, 45).

Kent Downs AONB Unit

- 256 The following comments are from the Kent Downs AONB Unit and as such are at an officer level and do not necessarily represent the comments of the whole AONB partnership.
- 257 The AONB Unit has accepted the principle of redevelopment. The redevelopment of Fort Halstead represents a unique opportunity to create a truly exemplary sustainable development in an internationally protected landscape, in our view the proposals submitted to Sevenoaks Borough Council fall far short of this.
- 258 The starting point for the proposal should be the purpose of the Kent Downs AONB and it should be landscape led, we are concerned that the quantum of residential units has been a more significant driving force in the proposals submitted. The vision for the site falls short of meeting the purposes of the AONB. Despite proposing to enhance the high-quality environment the outcome sought is merely to 'not have an adverse impact on the landscape'. It should rather seek to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Kent Downs (in line with policy); the vision sets the scene for the outline application which therefore falls short of meeting both national and local planning policy and the opportunity identified by the applicants in section 4.1 of the Design and Access Statement. *(Officer note – ADMP Policy EMP3 is business led)*
- 259 Despite a significant amount of information having been provided, most of this is intent and is not tied down – the key 'fixes', the parameter plans would allow a development which in our view would not meet even the stated intent.
- 260 The proposed character area design does little to respond to the landscape setting and character of the AONB and appears somewhat generic.
- 261 Maintaining the design quality over the lifetime of the project is vital to this major and long term development. At the moment there is very limited assurance that this will be achieved. We recommend both strengthening the design principles and strategies (to reflect the site's position in the AONB) and protecting them at this stage. *(Officer note – the purpose of Reserved Matters applications and subsequent determination is to clarify these details).*
- 262 The AONB Unit broadly agrees with the importance placed in the design principles and landscape strategy to retaining and managing the natural landscape features of the site such a mature tees, chalk grassland and woodland. Doing so does not add up to conserving and enhancing the AONB or making a net contribution to the purposes of the AONB Management Plan. Little assurance is provided that the important trees identified during extensive site survey would be protected when the site to be built out. *(Officer note – conditions would secure this it reasonable to presume compliance with those conditions).*
- 263 Policy EMP3 sets out detailed policy requirements that any development proposals will be expected to meet. The AONB Unit considers that the application does not meet several of these requirements, in particular:
- Building heights should be derived through consideration of what heights are appropriate to the site, informed by landscape character (including settlement character). The heights of the buildings appear to have been set

to meet the aim of ensuring that the development cannot be seen from outside of the site. The fact the development is hidden by trees is not sufficient; the impact on landscape itself needs to be considered as the site itself is part of the AONB landscape and therefore the design and height of the development must take account of the need to conserve and enhance the character and qualities of the landscape.

- The proposals are not considered to adequately consider how future residents and visitors will move around the site to ensure pedestrian and cycling is chosen above car usage. The employment hub and QinetiQ character areas in particular are car dominated and a more comprehensive network of walking/cycling routes should be incorporated.
- The Planning Statement advises that the development delivers a range of environmental improvements and benefits the natural beauty criteria of the AONB. Reference is made to enhancement of natural heritage features and ensuring the sensitive management of the woodland, mature trees and areas of chalk, semi-improved and neutral grassland and it is claimed that the development will also benefit the understanding and enjoyment of the AONB, and the social and economic wellbeing of communities within the AONB. We do not consider that these factors represent conservation and enhancement of the AONB for reasons elaborated on below, neither do these elements, when balanced against the negative impacts of the proposal, result in a net contribution to achieving the aims and objectives of the AONB Management Plan, as required by this policy.
- A development of the scale proposed could have a detrimental impact on the character of the surrounding rural roads. We are particularly concerned about the potential effects of the proposal on Star Hill. It is noted that KCC Highways have requested additional information and the AONB Unit reserves its position on this issue until the requested information has been received so that the full impact of the changes can be properly assessed.
- The Design and Access Statement recognises that due to the scale of the site and proposals, future development would need to be undertaken in phases. While a phasing plan is produced, the D & A advises that this is indicative only and that the delivery of the phases is not likely to be sequential. As such, no certainty can be attached to the content and delivery of the phases as set out.

264 The Allocations and Development Management Plan advises that the delivery mechanism for policy EMP3 will be a Planning Brief, to provide a more specific agreed planning framework than the policy and that it will be prepared in consultation with a number of bodies/organisations, including the Kent Downs AONB Unit. No such document has been prepared. It is contended that in the absence of such a Brief the proposal is premature and developer led rather than conforming to a guiding framework that has been properly considered and subject to appropriate consultation. (*Officer note – see SDC Policy comments*).

265 The proposals as submitted are not considered to meet the stringent requirement set out in both policies of ‘conserve and enhance’.

266 It is considered that the proposal is contrary to local and national policy.

London Borough of Bromley

267 No objection

Other SDC Consultees

268 In addition to comments received from the consultees reported above the Council has in this instance sought professional advice from external consultants in respect of the issues of viability, landscape impact and masterplanning and their comments are summarised below:

Viability

269 Knight Frank has been acting for Sevenoaks District Council in a capacity as expert viability consultant, regarding this scheme, for a period of 3 years over which time various permutations of land use proposals have been considered.

270 The current scheme has resulted from ongoing engagement with the applicant's agent CBRE and builds on the site's allocation as a Major Employment Site in the Green Belt. The allocation calls for redevelopment proposals being expected to achieve a range of employment uses appropriate to an employment site such as research and development, serviced offices and workshops and to generate at least the number of jobs that the site accommodated immediately prior to the announced withdrawal of DSTL from the site. Redevelopment could also include a hotel and land based employment (eg management of the woodland) in addition to the provision of up to 450 residential units.

271 The review of the applicant's appraisal and supporting evidence (which was submitted on a Commercial in Confidence basis) was carried out in line with the RICS 2012 Guidance Note- Financial Viability in Planning. In the context of achieving sustainable development the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) refers to ensuring viability and deliverability at sections 173-177. "... To ensure viability, the costs of any requirement likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking into account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable"

272 The NPPF also refers to the use of planning conditions and obligations at sections 203-206 and advises that where obligations are being sought:

"...local planning authorities should take account of changes in market conditions over time and, wherever appropriate, be sufficiently flexible to prevent planned development being stalled. " It continues with the importance of the planning authority in the decision making process "

273 The RICS guidance fully recognises the wider role of the planning authority in achieving sustainable development and that the planning authority may refuse planning permission in order to achieve its objectives". Regard has clearly been taken into account through the review process of both affordable housing requirements and for the delivery of an appropriate quantum of commercial uses that the planning authority has sought on site.

274 Viability appraisals may be used in connection with a number of planning-related issues in respect of both policy assessment and development control (as is the case here). It is usual to apply a 'reasonableness' test in development control (as Knight Frank have applied). The RICS Guidance continues "this may take the form, for example, of the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing in terms of the economic viability of a development. Reasonableness should be considered of

utmost importance in all instances where viability appraisals are undertaken. In certain instances, financial viability may also be relevant in the context of seeking to depart from planning policy. This is emphasised in paragraph 187 of the NPPF.”

275 Viability testing is most commonly used in the following (taken from the RICS Guidance):

- assessing the nature and level of planning obligation contributions/requirements
- establishing the level of affordable housing
- identifying the split between affordable housing tenures
- the quantum of planning obligations and affordable housing delivery
- applications incorporating enabling development
- assessing the bulk, scale and massing (and specification relative to cost and value) of a proposed scheme
- reviewing land uses
- assessing continuing existing uses in terms of obsolescence and depreciation
- dealing with heritage assets and conservation issues

276 The assessment has tested the underlying assumptions of revenues for commercial and residential uses in the context of the prevailing market in addition to scrutinising the majority of issues listed above. The review has analysed the applicant’s submission for areas which might be seen as unreasonable or contrary to accepted principles of viability modelling. Knight Frank have engaged on the review of the application’s viability submission in close liaison with Sevenoaks’ Planning Department. The principle of 450 residential units being required on an enabling basis is accepted and the latest review of accommodation with the council has concluded that with the inclusion of an improved commercial offering the residential area could still accommodate 450 units.

(Officer note – Knight Frank have clarified that the principle of 450 residential units is required on an enabling basis, means that these units are required to make the scheme viable as a whole.)

277 The overall quantum of affordable housing had previously been demonstrated to be unable to deliver the local authority target of 40% but 20% as modelled has been insisted on. Concerning the affordable offer particular emphasis has been paid to the applicant’s original proposals to alter the agreed tenure split between affordable rented and shared ownership homes however this has now been agreed at the council’s preferred 65% affordable rent/ 35% shared ownership position. Through the viability review there has also been a considerable improvement in the offer of commercial floor space to be delivered on site which is now reported in the planning report.

Landscape Impact

278 Chris Blandford Associates were appointed as the Council’s landscape consultants and their comments are set out below.

279 The key purpose of this review is to set out advice to the Council on whether, in our opinion, the promoter’s evidence provides sufficient information to demonstrate that the redevelopment proposals in regards to landscape and visual matters

would be able to comply with requirements stated as per Scoping Opinion (September 2014):

- Relevant criteria in Policy EMP3 – Redevelopment of Fort Halstead,
- Relevant criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in regards to Green Belt
- Relevant criteria in the AONB policies

- 280 Our methodology for assessing the landscape and visual impact of the current proposal involved a desktop review of relevant documents and a site visit. Some information was missing or in conflict in respect of the energy centre so this has not been assessed. (*Officer note – no energy centre is proposed as part of this application*).
- 281 Green Belt: the assessment of the impact of the scheme upon the green belt is undertaken in the Planning Statement and we agree with the conclusions that the scheme will not result in harm to the green belt.
- 282 Landscape: It is obvious that the mitigation of landscape and visual impacts (excluding the energy centre flue zone) have been addressed from an early stage in the design process of the development, and consideration of the potential impacts of the development has been an important part of the development of the proposals and associated landscape works.
- 283 Green Infrastructure and Woodland Protection: Overall we are satisfied with the landscape strategy and illustrative masterplan of the redevelopment showing that the character of local settlement is reflected. Nevertheless, there are no drawings identifying which woodland/tree will be removed/retained. That would help to actually identify what has been retained as part of the design. (*Officer note – condition*).
- 284 AONB Report: The AONB Report demonstrates that the development (excluding the energy centre flue zone) would deliver a range of environmental improvements and benefits for the natural beauty criteria of the AONB. Specifically the development would enhance natural heritage features, ensuring the sensitive management of the woodland, mature trees and areas of chalk, semi improved and neutral grassland. The development would also benefit the understanding and enjoyment of the AONB, and the social and economic wellbeing of communities within the AONB. A range of new housing, employment and recreational facilities would be created, including providing public access and interpretation of the site. The degree of change is overall beneficial. The AONB report states that the development would result in a beneficial effect on all these issues, and this concurs with CBA's own opinions.
- 285 Lighting Assessment: The assessment comes to the conclusion that the existing site, although well illuminated, is well screened from all directions by the boundary woodland and vegetation. Direct views of the existing site lighting are therefore limited, and only from specific viewpoints are glimpses of the site lighting possible. Moderate levels of sky glow above the site are clearly visible in the form of an 'orange' aura against the surrounding dark skies.
- 286 It is stated that it is likely that the development (excluding the energy centre flue zone) will result in reduced levels of sky glow due to the better lighting design and luminaires that would be used resulting in a reduction in direct upward light from

that provided by the present lighting installation. It is concluded that the development (excluding the energy centre flue zone) is therefore considered to be an improvement on the existing levels of sky glow, therefore providing minor beneficial impacts at most viewpoints. The impact of the development's lighting in terms of light intrusion and luminaire intensity are considered to be negligible to minor beneficial at most of the viewpoints assessed and identified within the assessment.

- 287 On the basis of our review and understanding of the information provided, it is reasonable to conclude that the promoter's evidence does provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the redevelopment proposals (excluding the energy centre/laboratory flue zone) would be able to comply with the relevant criteria stated above and would not have a significant adverse effect on the AONB, nor on the openness of the Green Belt.

Masterplanning

- 288 Tibbalds were appointed as the Council's masterplanning and urban design consultants and their comments are set out below.

Paragraphs 56, 60, 61,128,132, of the NPPF are of particular relevance in respect of this advice.

- 289 Overall masterplanning and landscape approach: The application material should demonstrate a credible approach to development, so that – in determining the application – officers are confident that the proposed land uses can be delivered; and provide sufficient guidance in the form of parameter plans and design principles in the Design and Access Statement to ensure that the vision set out in the application material will be delivered, particularly with respect to sensitive elements of the site such as the Scheduled Monument and the woodland.
- 290 In assessing the urban design quality of the application in terms of local distinctiveness, there are two questions to ask:
1. Does the application create a scheme of appropriate local distinctiveness?
 2. Do the Parameter Plans and Design and Access Statement (DAS) combine to provide adequate guidance for Reserved Matters applications.
- 291 The application responds to the sensitive woodland edge by facing development onto it, separated by a buffer zone; creates green fingers incorporating existing trees; retains existing buildings within the village centre and within the employment zone; and retains the Scheduled Monument. However, these principles are insufficient by themselves to create a development of local distinctiveness. It is the Character Area Guidance within the DAS that needs to add to these principles to provide a convincingly robust approach to creating local distinctiveness.
- 292 The Character Area Guidance adds very little to the parameter plans and provides insufficient precision and clarity to guide Reserved Matters applications, for example:
- On page 120, the guidelines seek variety through statements such as 'Vary the roof forms of adjacent homes' and 'Vary the set back of homes from the shared surface'. As discussed in pre-application, stating that variety is required rarely

leads to the desired outcome – simple ‘rules’ are required for the design intent to be carried through to the Reserved Matters stage.

- 293 For example, variation in set back can be achieved through flexible, non-prescriptive but clear guidelines such as:
- Dwellings shall be set back a minimum of 2m and a maximum of 4m from the back edge of the carriageway.
 - No more than 2 adjacent dwellings shall be set back the same distance from the back edge of the carriageway.
- 294 As discussed in pre-application meetings, the interface between the employment area and the residential development is a critical area where clear design parameters need to be set. It is likely that the two land uses will be brought forward by different developers, and the residential developer in particular will be concerned about the treatment of the employment where it fronts onto the residential. In addition, the view of the employment area from Crow Road will be a key ‘first impression’ of the development for everyone arriving at Fort Halstead. The quality of this frontage is therefore important.
- 295 The DAS includes no guidance to ensure that a quality frontage is achieved – that is, there is no guidance on the consistency of set back (a minimum of 4 metres is required, but no maximum is set), or avoiding blank elevations by requiring entrances and windows. A disorganised collection of buildings with blank frontages onto Crow Road would accord with the Design Guidelines as currently set out.
- 296 In conclusion, the proposals incorporate some elements that provide local distinctiveness. However, the Character Area Guidance is weak and does not provide the clear guidelines required to secure a development that adequately delivers local distinctiveness.
- 297 There are some positive elements to the masterplan, particularly the integration of green space and landscape with built development. However, there are some serious weaknesses regarding the credibility of quality of the employment area, design guidelines are vague and unclear, the treatment of Qinetiq’s boundary has been inadequately addressed and the approach to heritage is poorly articulated.

Officer note: Following discussions with the developer some of these concerns have been overcome, in respect particularly of heritage issues and the Qinetiq fence line. However in order to overcome concerns regarding the general character of the scheme it is recommended that a condition be imposed which will require the approval of a Design Code for the site. In effect this will ensure the provision of the detail that we consider is thus far missing to guide the appearance and character of the development. See conditions 5 and 6.

Representations

- 298 2 letters of support raising the following points:
- This will make good use of a redundant site
 - The access remains the same
 - There will be no increase in traffic compared to the historic use of the site
 - The housing is not excessive in quantity

- A percentage of the housing should be suitable for retired downsizers
- A medical centre should be provided
- Qinetiq cannot be left in a derelict site
- The historic centre is an attractive suggestion

299 137 representations raising the following objections:

300 *Green Belt*

- Harm to openness and character

301 *Transport/Highways*

- This scheme will not reduce dependency upon the car and is not in a sustainable location – challenging location for cyclists and not within walking distance to a major conurbation
- Increased use of surrounding country lanes will cause obstruction, congestion, nuisance and lead to deterioration in highways safety, exacerbated by the fact that few of the surrounding road have pavements
- Will increase congestion in Dunton Green
- Increased traffic on Star Hill leading to highways safety concerns and increased fear of highways danger
- Star Hill should be used or emergency traffic only/buses/ , if at all
- Polhill is a country road that is inadequate for access to the site
- The applicants traffic figures are incorrect – being too low and under estimating the impact of additional traffic
- Severe impact upon surrounding roads in the vicinity of nearby schools
- Knockholt would be used a rat run for workers and school runs
- The number of cars to use Knockholt Station would make it impossible to park there: parking is already in short supply.
- Flooding of the A224 makes the traffic situation worse as cars seek to find alternative routes.
- Polhill is collapsing and more traffic would exacerbate this
- All traffic should use Crow Road with no left turn into Otford Lane.
- The community bus idea is misconceived: most people will use their private car.
- Polhill should have a new roundabout not traffic lights
- A one way system should be used within the site to ensure vehicles don't use Star Hill
- Lack of street lighting on surrounding roads will exacerbate the highways safety concerns
- The level of traffic that previously operated from the site may have been possible in those days but the huge increase in traffic on these road would prevent the same number of vehicles using the site again without causing extreme congestion.
- The area is often gridlocked already with school journey parking and any M25 problems – this would make it much worse.
- There have been many RTAs on Star Hill
- Star Hill Road is frequently closed during bad weather

- Lack of clarity about what a secondary access is: Star Hill is the closest access to Bromley, Sevenoaks and the nearest supermarket and will be used more for these journeys than Polhill
- Rail services are already at standing room only – this development and that at Dunton Green will make the situation even worse.

302 *Cycling*

- Danger to cyclists and walkers from increased use of the roads
- The core objective of the Cycle Strategy is not just to mitigate impacts on conditions for existing cyclists but to enable more people to cycle more safely in the District so as to encourage a shift towards more sustainable transport choices and healthy leisure activities
- A S106 agreement should be used to fund cycling improvements over a wider area
- It is important to improve access for cyclists between the site and Knockholt Station

303 *Infrastructure*

- Insufficient to cope with this development lack of facilities expected in a normal village.
- Not the facilities one would expect in a normal village
- Cost of future maintenance of the new development
- Shortage of school places already
- Water, sewage and power provision would require a dramatic overhaul within the area
- Inadequate leisure facilities within the district
- Medical facilities are already too few including hospital provision
- The NPPF seeks to ensure that key facilities such as primary schools should be located within walking distance of most properties. This scheme would conflict with this aim creating more traffic in the process. Parents will choose the best school for their children not the nearest thereby creating more traffic congestion in the surrounding area. This scheme must include a primary school

304 *Housing*

- SDC has made sufficient housing provision already
- SDC has an over provision of housing
- This level of housing will be contrary to the councils own policies seeking to deliver housing primarily in existing urban areas.
- If the only way to make this scheme viable is to include 450 houses then this becomes a housing led scheme.
- Inadequate affordable housing provision and if this is justified by virtue of the viability appraisal this should be made public.
- A safety issue siting housing alongside a company that makes explosives

305 *AONB/Landscape*

- This will significantly adversely affect the character of the AONB: this quantum of development cannot help but have such an effect
- Light pollution will adversely affect the area

- Knockholt is losing its identity and this will be exacerbated by this oversized, out of place and unimaginative, inadequately serviced development, of this enormity.
- What is the impact of this scheme upon rare wildlife and plant life
- The blocks of flats will extend above the tree line having significant visual impact on the wider landscape.

306 *Employment*

- This will create new jobs for people moving into the area with re-locating firms rather than for existing residents
- The employment buildings must be built in conjunction with or before the residential dwellings.
- Why would anyone work here when a better wage could be earned in London
- Can the working hours of the estate be restricted to those of Qinetiq (ie Monday-Friday 8 – 6) which has supported 900 jobs in the area for years with minimal impact upon the surrounding area.
- The huge number of vacant premises in Sevenoaks must put in doubt the idea that the site can provide for the jobs required.
- There is potential development at Biggin Hill of 2,300 new jobs yet it is indicated that demand in Sevenoaks is falling.
- How will residents know what businesses are operating on this site

307 *Miscellaneous*

- The removal of boundary fences will encourage travellers, fly tipping etc
- The inclusion of 450 houses makes this a residential led scheme not an employment led scheme
- CPRE consider that an employment led site would attract sufficient use of the site without the need for housing
- The land is contaminated
- The consultation/publicity period was inadequate
- The council are more interested in receiving £6 million from this development than giving this scheme a fair assessment are we being bribed?
- Potential health and death risk to residents in surrounding villages from the contamination on this site
- Loss of wildlife
- Why not turn the site into a nature reserve
- The plans do not reflect any consideration for the WWII historic areas of the site
- Qinetiq were given the site so the applicants cannot now suggest that the scheme is unviable.
- Difficulty getting children to local schools – they will not use the bus suggested.
- The heritage centre is not scheduled to be finished until Phase 7 – this should be higher on the list of priorities.

308 A further round of consultation was undertaken at the beginning of August, relating to amendments proposing:

- A roundabout
- Provision of additional employment land
- Non vehicular access improvements to Knockholt

- Retention of building M2;
 - Recycling facilities
 - Additional Information clarifying the landscape impact of any future proposed energy centre/laboratory use of the site.
 - Amendments to the bio-diversity and ecological mitigation proposed: Building heights parameter plan amended to refer to maximum number of storeys, not height: Amendments to internal pedestrian/cycle links
 - Further information on affordable housing and viability
 - Drafts legal agreement: Revised position for Qinetiq fence
 - Additional information regarding the proposed heritage centre.
- 309 These consultations expire on 4th September 2015. Any comments that are not included in this report that have been received as a result, will be reported as late observations.
- 310 The following consultees were contacted but have not made any response to date:
- Georgian Group
 - Ancient Monument Society
 - Kent Fire and Rescue Services
 - The Council for British Archaeology
 - Society for Preservation of Ancient Buildings
 - Twentieth Century Society
 - Victorian Society
 - South East Water Ltd
 - West Kent PCT

Chief Planning Officer's Appraisal

Principal Issues

- 311 As set out in S36(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For Sevenoaks, the Development Plan is made up of the Core Strategy (CS) and Allocations and Development Management DPD (ADMP)
- 312 Policy EMP3 is a key consideration. The consideration should be whether *overall* the proposal complies with these policies or not, noting that that some policies will pull in different directions and not all elements of all policies may be complied with.
- 313 For the purposes of this report, the requirements of Policy EMP3 will be considered in detail first.
- 314 Policy EMP3 of the ADMP accepts the principle of the re-development of the site subject to compliance with a number of specified criteria (addressed in sequence below). This policy states that up to 450 dwellings may also be permitted provided it is part of a mixed use scheme that delivers employment led development and that the other aspects of the policy are met. The policy does not therefore presume that 450 dwellings on this site are acceptable.
- 315 Officers consider that the priorities for this site, taking into account Policy EMP3 and all other policies and guidance are:

- Preserving and enhancing the AONB and designated heritage assets.
- Provision of a range of employment uses to generate at least the number of jobs (1200) that were on site prior to the announcement that DSTL would withdraw.

316 The provision of housing units, including affordable housing units are a lesser priority. These priorities will be a key consideration for this application, when taking into account the harm that may occur from the different elements of this proposal.

Green Belt

317 The NPPF identifies the fundamental aim of the green belt as being to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of the green belt are its openness and permanence.

318 At paragraph 87 we are reminded that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the green belt and that such should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

319 Para.89 clarifies that the construction of new buildings would be regarded as inappropriate subject to a number of exceptions including the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land) whether redundant or in continuing use which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the green belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

320 It is against this paragraph that the development under consideration must be assessed.

321 In the Core Strategy (CS) adopted February 2011, paras 4.5.16 to 4.5.21 refer to Major Developed Sites (MDS) and Fort Halstead at 41 hectares, is listed. At the time the Core Strategy was adopted, PPG2 (Green Belts) was still in force. Major Developed Sites are linked to PPG2 and the CS states that PPG2 allows for development to take place within the designated area of the MDS provided criteria to prevent adverse impact on the Green Belt are met. PPG2 was superseded by the NPPF in 2012 but the clauses in the NPPF for the redevelopment of sites referred to above have a similar intention although they would allow for more sites to be included. The CS states that the Major Developed Sites form a significant part of the District's land supply and that the site at Fort Halstead will be reviewed in the Allocations and Development Management DPD. At this stage, the site was not allocated for any housing provision. Policy EMP2 of the ADMP reiterates this part of the CS.

322 In the ADMP adopted February 2015, Policy EMP3, sets out the broad quantum of development appropriate for this site and the criteria against which it will be considered and advises that the redevelopment of the site shall maintain or reduce the amount of development and must be fully contained within the Major Employment Site boundary, having no greater impact on the openness of the green belt. This policy does now included potential for residential as well as employment uses.

- 323 The terms openness should be interpreted to reflect an absence of built form and does not relate specifically to the wider visibility of a structure. In the context of this site, because it is largely surrounded by woodland and therefore not highly visible within the surrounding landscape this should not affect an assessment of its impact upon the openness of the green belt.
- 324 The justification to this policy reflects the fact that the number of jobs now sought reflect the level of employment onsite prior to DSTL announcing their withdrawal from the site which, as detailed above, has also resulted in very recent months in the demolition of a number of buildings. The impact upon the green belt between the existing and proposed schemes is therefore considered between the site at its previous and long term level of development, rather than after the current programme of demolitions.
- 325 In terms of floorspace comparisons the scheme seeks permission for 27,000 sqm of employment floorspace (a mix of existing and proposed) compared to the 82,168 sqm identified in the 2004 Lawful Development Certificate. In terms of residential units this is dealt with by number of units rather than floorspace figures and does not therefore allow a direct floorspace comparison between the previous position and that proposed. A direct comparison becomes more difficult because we do not have the precise details of floorspace proposed – this only being revealed at the detailed stage. We need therefore to assess a combination of floorspace and the volume of development indicated on the parameter and masterplans to make an assessment regarding impact upon the green belt.
- 326 The site at present incorporates significant levels of development – with some open areas around the site – although within the site these are more as a result of parking/turning areas than large areas of open landscaping. There are of course some green landscaped area between buildings that adds to the general character of the site. Around the edge of the site there are areas of grassland and storage bunkers that add to the openness of the green belt.
- 327 The proposed scheme would contain development within the identified employment site thereby retaining levels of grassland around the edges of the site. Internally the scheme will provide a level of open space that is perhaps more formalised than at present, in the form of the village green, landscaped and wooded ‘fingers’ of land separating areas of the residential and commercial uses as well as open gardens, road etc. It is officers view that the fact that these green areas would be significantly larger and linked to each other, as well as to the surrounding open landscape, than the landscaped areas evident in the original employment site, would result in the site feeling more open than previously it has been.
- 328 Perhaps the most significant sized building proposed as part of this scheme would be the new headquarters building for Qinetiq shown to lie in the south western part of the site adjacent to the access road to Star Hill. It proposes a maximum storey height of 3 storeys, and for the purposes of the ES a maximum height of 16 metres was assessed. When determined at the detailed stage we need to be sure that the building could be accommodated in terms of its impact upon the green belt but also in terms of the character and impact upon the residential units likely to be lying opposite. It could be of a significant size and is likely to be visible from the Star Hill entrance. However with good design, careful positioning within the area shown on the parameter plans and taking account of a number of buildings that sit on this part of the site close to the outer boundary of the developed site, it is

considered that the impact overall on the green belt of this particular part of the development will be neutral.

- 329 One of the parameter plans details building heights and storey height. For the residential units, the heights of 11 – 11.5 metres were assessed, based on storey heights of between 2 and 2 1/2 storeys. Even though views from outside the site are only part of the green belt concern, given the heights of buildings on site already and those proposed, it is officers view that the heights proposed would not generally allow the scheme to be visible outside the site (apart from views described above of the Qinetiq office building) other than when standing at the site entrances.
- 330 Overall it is considered that the proposed scheme would therefore comply with para 89 of the NPPF and policy EMP3 by having no greater impact upon the green belt than the existing development it would replace. It would thus be appropriate development in the Green Belt.

Be sustainable in respect of the location, uses and quantum of development and be accompanied by a Travel Plan incorporating binding measures to reduce dependency of future occupants on car use;

Sustainability

- 331 The NPPF refers to a presumption in favour of sustainable development as the ‘golden thread’ running through both plan making and decision taking. As part of the plan making process local authorities are advised that they should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their areas. Plans should provide clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally.
- 332 In this instance policy EMP3 has been considered as part of the process leading to the adoption of the ADMP with the policy reflecting the considerations of the Inspector following the examination in public. The parameters contained within EMP3, if complied with, are therefore to be considered as representative of sustainable development.
- 333 In terms of the decision taking process this means that development that accords with the development plan should be approved without delay unless the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date.
- 334 There are three dimensions to sustainable development set out in the NPPF, which should be sought simultaneously:
- An economic role - contributes to building a strong responsive and competitive economy by providing sufficient land of the right type in the right places at the right time to support growth.
 - A social role - support communities by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations to a high quality environment with accessible local services.
 - An environmental role - contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural built and historic environment helping to improve bio-diversity, represent the prudent use of natural resources whilst minimising waste and pollution.
- 335 Policy EMP3 seeks to ensure that this development *be sustainable in respect of the location*. Therefore we must consider if sufficient facilities are proposed as part of

the scheme to make the location more sustainable and to encourage a sustainable way of working and living and this is examined in more detail through the report.

- 336 Para 38 of the NPPF refers to larger scale residential developments seeking to ensure that policies promote a mix of uses to provide opportunities to undertake day to day activities including work, on site. This suggests the inclusion of facilities such as primary schools and local shops but this site is not in fact large enough to support a new primary school.
- 337 Retaining the jobs at Fort Halstead contributes to sustainable development. The ADMP recognises that Fort Halstead is an important employment generating site, but with DSTL set to leave the site in the near future evidence has shown that an employment only redevelopment scheme is unlikely to be viable.
- 338 The proposals include improved provision for cycle facilities, bus services, pedestrian links and a travel plan, to help improve the connectivity of the location. Conditions and clauses in a legal agreement can secure these benefits.

Quantum of Development

- 339 The quantum of development considered to be appropriate for the site is considered by policy EMP3 with up to 450 houses specified and an acceptance in the supporting text that approximately 1200 jobs should be capable of being provided on the site. This number of jobs reflects the level of employment on site prior to the announced withdrawal of DSTL, as considered in detail as part of the evidence submitted for the ADMP.
- 340 Originally the Council had identified the site as purely a commercial site, but evidence submitted as part of the ADMP process by the landowner showed that a development including approximately 450 dwellings could potentially be accommodated within the built confines of the site and without adverse impact on the AONB or an increase in development in the Green Belt. At present the employment density is relatively low and would remain so on the QinetiQ site as part of the proposed scheme. However by utilising a greater employment density it is possible to still provide the 1200 jobs on site (including Qinetiq) with sufficient land remaining for residential and other uses.
- 341 Objections have been raised regarding the need for up to 450 dwellings but as set out in the Inspectors report into the EIP he considered that even with 450 dwellings viability may still be questionable. The viability figures have been independently assessed for the Council and are considered to support the development approach taken in this scheme, that a scheme of up to 450 houses would make the delivery of the employment uses, the village centre and heritage improvements viable. Reducing the number of units would depress viability and the number of affordable housing units proposed. The quantum of development is therefore considered to be appropriate and comply with policy EMP3.
- 342 Clearly the connectivity of the site to the surrounding area and the impact of travel to/from the site is an important aspect of this scheme. The supporting text to policy EMP3 is clear that sustainable transport proposals should come forward for accessing the site. Accordingly a travel plan is required to demonstrate what binding measures can be employed to reduce dependency of future occupants upon the private car.

Travel Plan

- 343 The NPPF concludes that all commercial development that generates significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan and identifies this as a means to facilitate opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes.
- 344 In order for a travel plan to truly consider the travel patterns and needs of those on the site we need to know who will be on the site. Apart from Qinetiq employees we do not know and certainly in the case of future employees on the site have no idea of the type of industries that may operate from this site. A framework travel plan has been submitted and it is proposed that this will guide further travel plans to be submitted in due course to address residential and employment travel issues. The individual workplaces can be required to develop separate detailed travel plans which accord with the current framework travel plan. These will seek to encourage sustainable travel patterns tailored to the specific land users of each individual site.
- 345 The submitted travel plan identifies that the existing connectivity of the site via public transport and sustainable methods of transport are poor and that the site is currently fairly reliant on car trips.
- 346 The travel plan has the following general aims:
- encourage the most efficient use of cars and vehicles;
 - reduce peak travel needs,
 - reduce the need to travel,
 - influence travel behaviours of visitors;
 - ensure greater use of sustainable transport modes,
 - increase awareness of the travel plan and its measures;
 - ensure the site is accessible to all.
- 347 In more specific terms the scheme proposes:
- Prioritising the movement of pedestrians and cyclists within the site
 - Improving accessibility for cyclists and walkers to surrounding villages and public footpaths by proposing a new bridleway from the village to the west of the site exiting the site at the top of Star Hill Road close to Knockholt village
 - Providing a cycle path alongside the main road into the site to the Polhill junction
 - Agreement in principle for the 402 bus to enter into the site from the Star Hill side of the site to provide an hourly service (Mon -Sat) to Bromley Town Centre with stops along the way in the nearby villages and to the south a service to Tunbridge Wells stopping at Sevenoaks Tonbridge on the way. This provides a weekday connection to Knole Academy.
 - Providing an east/west cycle route to link Polhill and Star Hill Road
 - S106 financial contribution to investigate and provide for a cycle route north of the proposed roundabout, as far as possible bearing in mind potential land ownership
 - restrictions Charging points for electric vehicles within the site
 - Cycle parking provision within the site
 - Providing funds via a S106 agreement for the provision of a community bus. This will provide a fixed timetable service during morning and evening peak periods to link to Knockholt and Orpington stations and school journeys to

Halstead and St Katherines primary schools. During the off peak periods the bus would provide a service on demand to provide access to key shopping and leisure facilities (ie local superstores, SDC leisure centre).

- Pedestrian crossing to link the site with the east side of London Road.
- Improvements to the link between the site and Knockholt.

348 The travel plan can be secured via a legal agreement or condition.

Provide accessibility to jobs, shops and services by public transport, cycling or walking, including proposals for onsite provision proportionate to the proposed development;

349 The NPPF seeks to ensure that new development is sustainable which includes creating a high quality built environment with accessible local services that reflects the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

350 This is interpreted at the local level by policy SP9 of the Core Strategy which refers to infrastructure provision. This policy states (in part) that where new development creates a requirement for new or improved physical, social and green infrastructure beyond existing provision, developers will be expected to provide or contribute to the additional requirement.

351 At present the site would not provide access to any facilities by anything other than private car. It is proposed to provide a number of facilities on the site for use by both residents/employees and indeed to widen the range of facilities for use by local villages, particularly beneficial to Badgers Mount which has no facilities.

Education

352 The County Education Authority has confirmed that the scheme is not large enough to justify the provision of a new primary school. It is anticipated that the primary school at Halstead is likely to provide most places for primary aged children from the development. At present the school is significantly under-subscribed and officers are advised that rather than reduce numbers permanently at the school KCC will maintain potential for the current maximum to ensure provision within the local area for children of both existing and future residents.

353 The school lies too far from the site to expect children to walk although some older children may be able to cycle. Realistically it is envisaged that most children will either be taken to school by car or will use the community bus being provided as part of the S106 agreement for the initial period of the site's use. This has limitations apart from the fact that the S106 fund will not provide this bus in perpetuity. The scheme has attracted criticism regarding the practicality of using a bus to deliver the potential number of children that the site may generate:

- The very youngest will need to be delivered to the classroom door so one parent or carer will need to accompany each child thereby reducing the number of children that can be accommodated on the bus. The bus therefore needs to be available to return those parents to the site when the children are in the classroom.
- If the bus needs to make more than one trip this results in the first busload being delivered to school earlier than required.
- Parents will anyway not wish to use the bus

354 It cannot be predicted how many parents would wish to use such a facility and certainly there may be provision for several older children to be accompanied by a

single parent or carer thereby reducing the number of trips the bus needs to make. Until the site is fully occupied this cannot be clarified. Certainly it is at least likely that any working parents on the school run will wish to drop their children off at school on the way to work. Such a solution is not going to meet every requirement of every parent. However it does provide the potential at least for a few years to reduce the number of car trips that have to be made to the local schools from the site. If this site is not developed then the existing places in Halstead school will remain open to cater for the general increase in existing population and those children are very unlikely to come from Halstead. It must be assumed therefore that they would be driven to school by private car. At the very least the proposed scheme may reduce that level of traffic and is therefore an improvement over the alternative.

- 355 In respect of secondary education the site will generate a need for additional places. KCC advise that in this respect they are heavily dependent at present on the agreement to the additional grammar school currently being considered by the Government. If that does not go ahead additional provision will still need to be found, regardless of this development and this will have to be found through a variety of approaches which KCC will consider when the outcome of the grammar school issue has been determined. It is the responsibility of KCC as Education Authority to provide education facilities.

Medical Services

- 356 Very preliminary discussions have been held between the Council and Otford (Medical) Practice in respect of them holding a remote surgery on this site. Obviously there are many issues to be resolved in future discussions, but at present they indicate that they would like to consider operating a branch surgery, ideally running a Doctors clinics every day a.m. and p.m. (provided the demand merited it) possibly with additional nursing support as well. They would possibly envisage commencing use of this once 70-100 houses were completed to serve the initial residents and ensure it was an established service by the time the development was completed. The proposal is for a clause in the legal agreement to require that the relevant units in the village centre are first offered to users such as the Healthcare services, to enable providers to consider their options at that time.
- 357 Health facilities are on the Councils CIL Reg. 123 list so any application for funding would need to be made at the appropriate time. At this stage this application can make sure there is space provided on the site should future funding and demand be available.

Shops/Services

- 358 The village centre will provide a range of buildings capable of use for a variety of services and uses that would be complementary to the surrounding residential and employment area. These would be set around a public square sitting close to the entrance to the Fort. The illustrative plan shows 5 buildings around the square with potential for mixed use and employment use. These buildings could accommodate uses such as a shop, offices, space for adult education – as requested by KCC, space for a visiting Doctor as discussed above, space for a nursery.
- 359 A hotel is shown on land adjacent to the village green. Not only could this provide overnight accommodation for those visiting the wider area, but would also provide convenient accommodation for over night visitors to the businesses on site. It

could also provide bar/restaurant facilities for those living and working on the site as well as in the nearby villages and countryside.

- 360 Other facilities will be provided, as would be expected of a residential area, such as play spaces and other open space.
- 361 The closest surrounding villages and rural area offers a limited range of restaurants/pubs, garden centre, garage, shop, albeit only some of these would be within comfortable walking/cycling distance of the site.
- 362 Implicit within the scheme of course is the provision of new employment opportunities and housing within walking distance of each other.

Employment

- 363 The scheme facilitates the retention of an existing employer (QinetiQ) on the site which is estimated will provide for up to 275 jobs in due course. At present QinetiQ's buildings are spread across the site. When DSTL leave, the QinetiQ workforce will be concentrated into a single enclave along the southern edge of the site to the west of the Fort. Also proposed is a new headquarters office building in the western corner of the QinetiQ site adjacent to the access road from Star Hill.
- 364 The parameter plans identify two further areas of employment use on the eastern part of the site, adjacent to Crow Road leading to the Polhill junction. The land directly abuts the main access into the site running through to the village centre and Qinetiq. This is an outline permission and the precise make up of these uses is unknown at this point, but sufficient land has been identified to allow for a range of B1 and B2 uses to be provided. The layout has been modelled to include a higher number of B2 units which take a larger amount of land compared to the employment provided and also a higher percentage of B1a type uses which have a smaller land take but higher employment numbers.
- 365 Further employment could be provided on site as a result of facilities in the village, for instance in the shop, offices and community type uses; in the hotel shown on the edge of the village green.
- 366 The site provides the ability to provide for a range of employment types within walking distance of future residents on site and in close proximity to residents in the surrounding villages and countryside.
- 367 Public transport connections to the surrounding area from inside the site do not at the moment. However as part of the scheme the 402 bus which runs up Star Hill to Bromley, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge will be routed into the centre of the village. The applicant has agreed to fund this for a period of 5 years (proposal is from completion of the 100th house) and if sufficient demand is shown for this service the bus company will thereafter continue the service on a permanent basis. Discussions with KCC Highways and Arriva have indicated that these payments will be provide sufficient time, as the site is built out to determine if the route alteration is viable in its own right, or not. This benefit would be part of any legal agreement.
- 368 In terms of pedestrian and cycle links through and around the site the simple opening up of the site will allow existing links around the site periphery to linkup in a more direct manner. Provision is made through the site for this to happen by means of footpaths and a public bridleway from Knockholt. The site is small

enough that the range of cycle paths and footpaths through and around it will allow all parts of the site to be accessed without a car.

- 369 The Sevenoaks Cycle Forum seeks to make the District more cycle friendly through improvements to the surrounding highways network. Apart from internal routes it is considered that there could be a facility within the highways changes to the Polhill junction to build in an off road shared/segregated footway/cycleway. In order to maximise the width for this scheme, the carriageway width may be reduced. However more survey work needs to be carried out in order to confirm sufficient land is available for this possibility at the formal design stage and the precise manner in which provision could be made for cyclists is not available at this stage. KCC wish for the developer to provide this cycle route. The applicant is proposing funding towards on street cycle lanes. The site is as set out earlier in this report, to be considered sustainable for variety of reasons which are not limited to the provision of non-car based travel options. It is not considered that it would be reasonable therefore to require the full investigation and delivery of an off road cycle route. The proposal for funding to explore the cycle options available would still be a valuable contribution to the options for sustainable transport being proposed. This could be secured with a legal agreement.
- 370 A community bus for 10 years forms part of the draft legal agreement and it is hoped that the use of this by residents and employers/employees alike will encourage a more sustainable approach to transport being less car dependent. Precisely how successful and how well used this facility becomes will depend upon the residents and employees in due course when the precise timetable and use of the bus can be worked out.
- 371 At the end of the 10 year period it will be a matter for the community to determine if the bus presented a viable transport option and take such steps as necessary to find funding for such provision. There are within the district for instance a number of school buses which are privately funded so this would not be a particularly unusual arrangement.
- 372 Whilst the paucity of public transport to the heart of the site is a matter of concern it is considered overall that the range of services for which provision is made on the site and the general connectivity off the site with the surrounding area will provide as good a level of access as could reasonably be expected and anticipated given the rural location of the site. This scheme is therefore considered to be compliant with policy EMP3 in this respect.

Make a positive contribution to the achievement of aims and objectives of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and conserve and enhance the natural beauty and tranquillity of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;

- 373 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) requires decision-makers in public bodies, in performing any function affecting land in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of that area.
- 374 The NPPF sets out its approach to the enhancement of the natural environment at paragraphs 109 – 125. Para 109 advises *that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
- *Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation and interests and soils,*

- *Recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services*
- *Minimising impacts on bio diversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible*
- *Prevent both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from unacceptable levels of soil, air , water or noise pollution or land instability*
- *Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

375 It advises at para.115 that *great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.*

376 At para 116 of the NPPF we are advised that:

Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations and the impact of permitting it or refusing it upon the local economy,*
- *the cost of and scope for developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way,*
- *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

377 These sections of the NPPF and the requirements of Policy EMP3 also relate to the impact on biodiversity. As the understanding of 'natural beauty' in the CROW Act includes 'conservation of its flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features', this is also a relevant consideration for any impact on the AONB.

378 There is accordingly a strong but rebuttable presumption against granting permission where there is harm to flora, fauna, flora or physiographical features of the AONB. In this circumstance, the assessment is about the extent of that harm and whether it is outweighed by other considerations.

379 The scheme should also be assessed against the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan which has been formally adopted by all local authorities in Kent in which the AONB occurs, including Sevenoaks District Council.

380 At a local level policy SP1 of the Core Strategy advises that all new development should be designed to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated. In rural areas account should be taken of guidance in the AONB Management Plans.

381 Policy L08 of the Core Strategy states amongst other things that the distinctive character of the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their settings will be conserved and enhanced. Development that supports the maintenance and diversification of the rural economy and the vitality of local communities will be supported provided it is compatible with policies for the

protecting the Green Belt, AONB and conserves and enhances the value and character of the area.

- 382 Policy EN5 of the ADMP refers specifically to the AONB within the district and advises that proposals in the AONB will be permitted where they conserve and enhance the character of the landscape including areas of tranquillity and where feasible help secure enhancements in accordance with landscape actions in accordance with the Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment SPD.
- 383 It is clear from a range of consultee responses that there are differing views on the compliance of the scheme with the national and local policies. The AONB Unit particularly expressing very strong concerns that the starting point for the proposal should be the purpose of the Kent Downs AONB and it should be landscape led, expressing concern that the quantum of residential units has been a more significant driving force in the proposals submitted.
- 384 It would be worth considering at this point the comments of the Inspector in respect of policy EMP3 at the Examination In Public – concluding that a quantum of development of up to 450 units could be acceptable on this site: “*The presumption is in favour of sustainable development which includes the need to conserve and enhance the natural environment and in particular conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB and the openness of the Green Belt and I am satisfied that those objectives would be achieved.*”
- 385 As detailed above, he further commented on the viability issue of 450 dwellings and the potential impact upon viability of less dwellings.
- 386 In respect of the impact upon the AONB he concluded at para. 55 of his report that:

This leads me to the consideration of the impact of the site’s redevelopment on the Kent Downs AONB and the Green Belt. I attach great weight to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB and retaining the openness of the Green Belt but CS policy SP8 (and implicitly paragraph 89 of the NPPF) supports the retention, intensification and regeneration of a Major Developed Site such as this, subject to the retention of visual quality. The issue therefore becomes one of ensuring that the impact of any redevelopment would not be greater than already exists. This objective is encapsulated within policy EMP3 and can be further achieved through the development management process and more specifically through the requirements that will be set out in the proposed Development Brief for the site.*

**(officer’s emphasis)*

- 387 The AONB unit acknowledges the Councils acceptance of the principle of the redevelopment of this site and then goes on to suggest that the site must still be considered against para 116 of the NPPF, as detailed above, which advises that permission should be refused for major developments in designated areas except in exceptional circumstances. Officers believe that an incorrect interpretation has been placed upon paragraph 116 for the purposes of this site, ignoring the comments of the Inspector about how the re-development of the site is to be assessed and instead assessing the scheme as if the site were currently undeveloped. A material consideration in the determination of the proposed scheme has to include an assessment of how the existing site already affects the AONB and how it responds to the character of the surrounding AONB, rather than

ignoring the existing impacts and considering this site as if it were development free.

388 No assessment by the AONB unit is made of whether this scheme represents an improvement to the wider AONB compared to the existing development and comments made that refer to the wider issues of this site, such as viability, suggest that in fact it may not be possible to achieve the scheme the AONB unit seek to achieve given the quantum of development that Officers accept is necessary on this site to be viable. It is understandable that the comments may not be as comprehensive as the AONB unit would wish to make because certain elements of the scheme are unavailable to them, such as the viability evidence which has been withheld on the grounds of commercial sensitivity. On this basis the AONB unit conclude that *“The lack of proper justification for the quantum of residential units means that the AONB Unit reserves its position but generally it is considered that the quantum, massing and scale of development is too high for a settlement in the Kent Downs AONB. The average residential densities across the site may not allow the sort of exemplar development we seek”*.

389 If the proposed scheme is compared to the existing site in terms of the tests within the NPPF regarding impact upon the AONB, we can then realistically assess whether the scheme conserves and enhances the wider AONB. There are a number of factors to be considered:

- The site has been developed very much on an ad hoc basis with buildings put up as and when needed, being very functional and with little regard on the whole to their appearance. The internal layout of the site is in some respects quite random with no clearly planned road network for instance.
- The general character of the site is not one that is representative of the landscape and general character of development outside the site.
- In terms of open spaces and planting within the site this is also on a quite random basis – some trees for instance being almost entirely surrounded at very close proximity by a single building, rather than sitting within a larger planned landscaped area. Such landscaped areas as there are within the site do not necessarily link up with each other nor with the external woodland and grassed areas.
- Due to the nature of security on the site there are no vehicular or pedestrian links freely available through the site.
- As a result of the current use the site can make no addition to the provision of natural open space for use by residents
- The existing planting and wildlife is not managed on or around the site.

390 By contrast the scheme will provide for a planned environment both in terms of its layout and in terms of its design. Whilst it is not considered that the design details provided thus far are sufficient to ensure a quality of development that the Council wishes to see, and officers would agree that the character areas are generic rather than reflecting any particular local characteristic. This can be remedied by attaching a condition requiring the design codes for the scheme to be resolved prior to the Council having to consider a Reserved Matters application. In this way we can influence the design that comes forward for the site and ensure a wholly more attractive and better quality of design than is exhibited at present. It gives the opportunity to introduce designs that are representative of Kentish design and character and that will link this site to those areas surrounding it.

- 391 Both national and local policies consider issues of housing density. This is not specifically considered here because policy EMP3 refers to the level of development up to which it is considered appropriate on this site. Policy EMP3 states that up to 450 houses may be acceptable on the site in a manner that could be acceptable in terms of the character of the wider surrounding area.
- 392 The submitted parameter plans set out a range of design parameters but are not considered to be detailed enough to give the character of these areas. This scheme could be designed to reflect different local characteristics to encourage a less formulaic feel and one that is more attuned to the surrounding area. This matter can be dealt with by means of an overarching condition that requires the submission and agreement of such details as will guarantee the character of the scheme.
- 393 The green infrastructure plan introduces a significant level of planting and green landscaped space within the development, linking around the site and indeed to the surrounding grassland and ancient woodland. This scheme will provide for the protection and maintenance for these areas.
- 394 Additional areas of natural open space will become available for residents of the site and those surrounding the site that will be managed and enhanced with these benefits secured by condition and where applicable by clauses in a legal agreement.
- 395 Concerns have been expressed for instance by the PROW team regarding trees constantly falling over one of the footpaths – the grassland. Open space and ancient woodland will become a managed resource leading to improvements in management and therefore increases to the anticipated use of the surrounding AONB.
- 396 The Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment identifies this site as lying within the Knockholt Scarp an area where it is identified as important to conserve the wooded cover and the scale of the steep grassland and cultivated fields. Development is not appropriate for this ridgeline and scarp. The site is of course already developed but otherwise the scheme would comply with the landscape actions sought as part of this SDP.
- 397 In addition, the scheme includes the introduction of a new modern lighting scheme to replace the existing lighting on the site. This can be secured by condition and would improve and enhance the area by reducing the night time light glow both locally and in the wider landscape.
- 398 The Council's landscape consultants confirm that they agree with the conclusions of the AONB report submitted by the applicants that development would result in a beneficial effect on the AONB taking into account all of the issues referred to above.
- 399 Viewed as a comparison to the existing development and taking into account the proposals to manage the landscape in the future, install modern lighting, allow public access to the site and to protect the local economy it can be seen that this scheme would conserve and enhance the AONB and would thus be compliant with that aspect of policy EMP3, the requirements of Policies SP1 and L08 of the Core Strategy and Policies EN4 and EN5 of the ADMP.

400 The requirements of para 116 of the NPPF are more complex and biodiversity issues also need to be taken into account. Accordingly the considerations for this requirement will be considered in more detail later in this report after all of the other considerations.

Confirm, by way of a Transport Assessment, that the development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the local and strategic road networks:

401 A key element of the NPPF is the promotion of sustainable transport with para. 29 advising that sustainable transport will give people a real choice about how they travel. It recognises however that different policies and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions exist.

402 Para 30 suggests that Local Planning Authorities in preparing local plans should support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.

403 Para 32 advises that all developments which generate a significant amount of development should be supported by a transport statement or assessment. Decisions should take account of whether:

- The opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up, depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure.
- Safe and suitable access to the site can be gained for all people.
- Improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe.

404 There are other elements of the NPPF which provide relevant guidance to the development of this site such as the use of travel plans, priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, safe and secure layouts, facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra low emissions vehicles, consideration of the needs of disabled people by all modes of transport.

405 At a local level policy T1 of the ADMP seeks to mitigate any adverse travel impacts including their impact upon congestion and safety, environmental impact such as noise and tranquillity and pollution and impact upon amenity and health.

406 Policy T2 advises that vehicle parking should be made in accordance with current KCC vehicle parking standards.

407 The majority of objections arising from consultations with residents relate to concerns regarding transport issues as outlined above. Considerable negotiation has taken place on highways matters to enable the scheme that is now proposed to come forward in a manner that it is considered overcomes initial concerns about traffic flows and highway safety.

408 Historically the site has accommodated significantly more employees than at present with the consequent impact upon the surrounding highways network: in the 1970s at least 4,000 people were employed at this site.

409 The submitted Transport Assessment (TA) indicates that the peak hour highways impact of the proposed development, based upon a worst case scenario and prior

to the take up of improved public transport provision, results in an increase to traffic on surrounding roads less than a 10% increase for most links with an increase of up to 20% on the A224 link to the north of the site. The main impacts would be experienced upon Crow Drive, Star Hill Road and the A224 corridor. Impacts upon Crow Drive would be as a result of the desire to channel most traffic along this road, and on Star Hill Road a result of the low base flows. The TA emphasises that flows on all links remain within the capacity of the roads to be safely absorbed. Likewise assessments of 6 junctions around the site indicate that all will operate within their safe capacity. The TA was based on an assessment of the site as it was operating in June 2014, compared to the proposal outlined by this application.

- 410 The TA concludes that the impacts of the development are minor and that any residual unmitigated impacts due to the development would not be regarded as severe in the context of the NPPF.
- 411 The County Highways engineer originally raised a series of objections to this scheme but changes made to public transport links into the site, the provision of additional clarification regarding the Polhill junction and further information regarding potential cycle links have overcome these objections. Concern expressed regarding the proposed timetable for the community bus is considered by officers to be capable of resolution at a later stage: the important feature being that we have the bus: the timetable can be worked out and adjusted to respond to the needs of the users.
- 412 Assessing the proposed scheme against the provisions of paragraph 32 of the NPPF we should consider:

Sustainable Transport Modes

- 413 There are still from residents and Parish Councils, about the impact of additional traffic upon surrounding roads with many suggesting that the Star Hill entrance should be closed other than for emergencies. It is considered that with the correct internal road layout and features such as cattle grids road narrowing etc that the use of Star Hill can be reduced. It is not considered appropriate, nor indeed necessary to develop this site as a cul-de-sac with sole access via Polhill – either in highways terms or in terms of trying to incorporate this site into the surrounding communities. Closing the Star Hill entrance would not prevent traffic from using the rural roads to the west of the site and the evidence provided does not suggest that in fact the increases in traffic levels would be so great as to constitute a highways danger. Works to slow down traffic on Star Hill would be appropriate and would mitigate the dangers which local residents advise they already experience. These features can be secured via conditions and a legal agreement.
- 414 In terms of sustainable travel modes this is examined in detail above but it is considered that a number of improvements to sustainable modes of travel around the area will be achieved as a result of the scheme. Concern has been expressed about whether the bus service will be used. All that can be done is to make such provision and make it in a manner that encourages its use: the timetable would be adjusted to respond to the demands of residents and employees as the site is developed. In the context of existing planning policy this is considered to be policy compliant.

Safe and Suitable Access for all

- 415 The existing access to the site on Polhill will be changed to make provision for a roundabout. The use of a roundabout will reduce traffic queues compared to the initially proposed traffic lights and sufficient work has been carried out to demonstrate that this can operate in a safe manner that accords with all relevant design and safety guidance. It is anticipated that provision can be made for northward bound cyclists improving the range of access to the site.
- 416 Works will be carried out to the access onto Star Hill to improve visibility in/out of the site and speed will be reduced on this road. This would be reinforced by a new gateway treatment at the entry to the new speed limit.
- 417 Whilst it is expected that the majority of users will use the private car to access the site, with the sustainable travel modes suggested and changes to the road junctions at the access to the site it is considered that safe and suitable access for all can be provided.

Improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development

- 418 The improvements detailed above will be achieved as a result of either a S106 agreement or as part of a S278 agreement and have been agreed by the applicant. The costs of such works therefore falls within the viability assessment carried out, not rendering the scheme unviable and being considered proportionate to the scheme under consideration.
- 419 Overall it is considered that the proposed scheme would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the local and strategic road networks and in terms of the NPPF would not result in severe residual cumulative impacts such as to warrant a refusal of permission.

Protect and integrate the Scheduled Ancient Monument and listed buildings into the development with improved access and setting

- 420 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires consideration of whether the application would affect any listed building or its setting. In doing so decision makers must:
- 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'*
- 421 This statutory duty requires decision makers to give *'considerable importance and weight'* to the desirability of preserving the buildings, settings and features of architectural or historic interest. This means that if there is any conflict with the statutory objective, a *'strong presumption'* against granting permission applies, which may be outweighed by other factors depending upon the extent of harm to the objective and their assessment of the weight of the other factors.
- 422 Paragraphs 126 to 141 refer to the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 423 The NPPF at para. 126 advises LPAs of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

- 424 Paras 128 - 129 refer to the importance of understanding the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. The information provided to make this assessment should provide an understanding of the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage assets. Local authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal, including where this would affect its setting. They should avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 425 At para 131 it advises that *in determining planning applications LPAs should take account of:*
- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.*
 - *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality and*
 - *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*
- 426 At para 132 it advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of Grade II Listed Buildings or scheduled monuments should be exceptional.
- 427 Para 134 advises that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset this harm should be weighted against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 428 Paras 135 – 6 state that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account when determining the application, taking into account the scale of any harm or loss and its significance. The loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.
- 429 In para 137 the NPPF states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.
- 430 Finally at para 141 we are advised on the requirement for developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and to make this evidence publicly accessible.
- 431 Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy expects heritage assets and their settings to be protected and enhanced.
- 432 At a local level Policy EN4 of the ADMP confirms that applications that affect a heritage asset will be permitted where the development conserves or enhances the character, appearance and setting of the asset. Applications will be assessed with reference to the historic or architectural significance of the site; the prominence of its location and setting and the historic/architectural significance of any elements

to be lost or replaced. Provision should also be made for the assessment and preservation of archaeological remains.

- 433 To assess the proposal against the statutory test, policies and guidance, it is necessary to assess key features and significance of the heritage assets and their significance, identify what harm will be caused and appraise how the impacts of the proposal will affect the heritage assets and their settings and the features of historic or architectural interest. Finally, are those impacts neutral, positive or negative.
- 434 There are five designated heritage assets on the application site;
- Scheduled Ancient Monument – Fort Halstead
 - Listed Building - Experimental Filling Shed (Grade II)
 - Listed Building – Bomb Chamber (Grade II*)
 - Listed Building – Detonation Chamber (Grade II*)
 - Listed Building – Q14 (Grade II)
- 435 The outline application does not physically affect the fabric of the listed buildings or the scheduled ancient monument, although there are proposals to excavate a section of the ditch and shrub and tree clearance which would require Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent. This regime is administered by Historic England. If planning permission is required for these works, a separate application could be submitted at a later date. Proposals which affect the fabric of the listed building include repair and refurbishment Fort. This will require separate listed building consent applications.

Scheduled Ancient Monument - The Fort

Assessment of Significance

- 436 The Fort is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and this designation means it is of national importance. It was built as part of a scheme called London Defence Positions in the 1890s. It was one of 13 mobilisation centres designed to defend London from invasion. It was the largest and most expensive to build. This scheme lasted approximately a decade and then during WW1 a laboratory was built outside the Fort. The Government owned the site until 1921 when sold off and became a Territorial Army, Girl Guide and Boy Scout camping ground and accommodation for destitute refugees. The site went back into government hands in 1938 when Fort Halsted became the separate Projectile Development Establishment and construction began on the wider site outside of the Fort. This comprised of specialist explosives fillings stations, a large laboratory, workshops, administration buildings, welfare facilities as well as air raid shelters and a housing estate for the War Department police force. The site has expanded in the twentieth century but the use has remained as explosive-based. The Fort was and still is accessed via a mass concrete causeway and but the surrounding concrete lined ditch only partially remains. Within the Fort confines are three listed structures (see below)
- 437 The site was re-evaluated by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) in 2013 and in line with recent designation descriptions is clear about the nature, extent and importance of the significance of the site;

- Rarity and form: one of 13 purpose-built mobilisation centres nationally erected in the late C19. Fort Halstead was the largest (and most expensive) built and is one of only four designed for artillery deployment. Also, a highly significant site in terms of mid-late C20 rocketry and atomic bomb research and development;
- Survival and diversity: a mobilisation centre which survives in largely intact form. Although a section of late C19 ditch has been infilled, this survives intact as a buried feature. The fort also includes evidence for the site's later research and development role with limited alteration of some of the casements and magazines for this later use; this modification adds to the fort's interest;
- Documentation: the site has the potential to significantly enhance our understanding of the development and operation of the late C19 mobilisation centres constructed to defend the capital, also to aid our understanding of the nationally significant atomic bomb research and development undertaken here;
- Group value: with listed buildings within and immediately outside the Fort representative of the site's *later* role as a military research establishment.

438 This gives Fort Halstead evidential and historic value using the criteria set out in 'Conservation Principles' (English Heritage, 2008)

Setting

439 The established setting is loosely enclosed by other development that is associated with the historic evolution of the site. This is low level and intermittent. The original setting has been eroded by sporadic development (as discussed previously) but the original cottages and store still remain. However, the later development of the Q buildings and the X buildings and the relationship between these buildings reflect the significance the Fort has in the twentieth century weapons research. There are long views towards the fort from the Main Entrance but due to dense tree growth it is not visible from the south in surrounding long views. The Fort is covered in tree and shrub growth which it unlikely to have been deliberately planted.

Impact of the proposals on The Fort

440 The proposals are that part of the Fort is turned into a heritage attraction with the potential open for 30 days per year as a minimum. The listed buildings are proposed to be used to illustrate a particular part of the Fort's history with the Experimental Filling Shed being repaired and re-furbished and converted into a Heritage Interpretation Centre. There is also potential to excavate some of the infilled ditch next to the entrance causeway to better reveal the significance of the Fort. This proposal and its feasibility would be investigated further in a manner to be secured via a legal agreement. The other buildings within the Fort are to be offered as workshop space. These proposals will have a neutral impact on the significance of the Fort and the listed building which are historically for weapons research and which will no longer fulfil that use. The wider development that is proposed falls outside of the Fort and does not impact on the setting of the listed buildings. The works to the Fort and the listed buildings will have a positive impact on the character and special interest by allowing the public access and better revealing the significance.

441 The wider demolition schedule will see the loss of over 260 of the 300 buildings on the site. The Fort is protected by an almost complete buffer of existing buildings with which it has group value as identified in the Listing Description as are those

QinetiQ buildings which are not proposed for demolition. The proposal for light industrial use in the near vicinity reflects the historic use of the area and sits comfortably with the established character of the site. A security fence is proposed which will also reflect the historic and evidential values of the site and have a neutral impact on the scheduled ancient monument and its setting. The wider scheme for housing development sees greater density housing located near the Fort and the remaining Q buildings. This reflects the traditional pattern of development on the site. Lower density housing radiates away from this core also in a manner similar to the historic pattern. There will also be increase soft landscaping to ensure there is a sympathetic context. These proposals are not harmful to the significance of the Fort and the re-development will have a neutral impact effect on the significance of the Fort.

Listed Building – Experimental Filling Shed Building F11 (Grade II)

Assessment of significance

- 442 This building is located within the Fort. It is Grade II listed, of national importance and this means it is considered to be of special interest warranting every effort to preserve it (Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings, DCMS March 2010)
- 443 The Experimental Filling Shed was designed and built in 1938 and is probably the earliest surviving building in the new research establishment. This building is a two storey concrete-framed building with a fletton brick skin. It has an L-shaped plan form. There is a metal stair and covered first floor walk-way to the front elevation. It was designed to allow the filling of cordite rocket motors. It was later dubbed 'Poole's Folly' as there are questions as to whether or how much it was used for its intended function. This is considered to be the earliest surviving purpose-built rocket-related building in England.
- 444 The listing description describes its significance thus;
- Rarity and early date: this is the earliest surviving purpose-designed building associated with rocketry research and development nationally. Most buildings associated with this area of research are of post-war date rather than pre-war as here;
 - Design and form: the building's function is legible through its form, the internal vertical bays to accommodate the filling of 9 foot rocket casings survive particularly well;
 - Historic interest: F11 is significant as part of the early research programmes at Fort Halstead under the Projectile Development Establishment and, given the specialist nature of this work, is of national interest.
- 445 This gives the Experimental Filling Shed evidential and historic value using the criteria set out in 'Conservation Principles' (English Heritage, 2008)

Listed Building – Building F16 (Bomb Chamber) & F17 (Detonation Chamber) (Grade II*)

Assessment of significance

- 446 These buildings are located within the Fort. Buildings F16 and F17 share a listing description and are Grade II* listed which means they are considered by the Secretary of State to be particularly important buildings of more than special interest. (Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings, DCMS March 2010)

- 447 The Bomb Chamber was designed in July 1947 and with buildings F17 and F18 forms the key group of structures within the fort relating to atomic bomb research and development. The speed with which it was designed – only two months after the High Explosives Research Establishment was set up at Fort Halstead – is a testament to the importance of and need for this structure in the context of that body’s research and development. This is a bi-partite building of reinforced concrete and brick with an attached single store structure in reinforced concrete for the armoured laboratory
- 448 The Detonation Chamber is a bi-partite building of reinforced concrete and brick. To the south and west it is a single storey flat roofed structure housing the armoured laboratory (in reinforced concrete); to the south and east it is faced in red brick English bond, but the north elevation is in concrete (the west elevation was not inspected). The laboratory has a large and prominent T-shaped funnel to its flat roof. The main access is via folding wooden doors in the east elevation. A porch has been added to protect a south pedestrian doorway. At its north-east corner the building rises to two storeys, again in red brick English bond. All windows are metal-framed casements with concrete heads.
- 449 The listing description describes the reasons for listing both these buildings thus;
- Rarity: these are unique buildings, specifically designed for the development of Britain’s first atomic bomb;
 - Historic interest: both are vital buildings in our understanding of the nation’s atomic bomb research and development, a top-secret programme under the aegis of the High Explosives Research Establishment which through its work at Fort Halstead, and sister sites, was to prove one of Britain’s major scientific breakthroughs in the field of military armament;
 - Design and form: the original function of both buildings is legible through their specialised form and both remain little altered from their original design.
- 450 This gives Fort Halstead evidential and historic value using the criteria set out in ‘Conservation Principles’ (English Heritage, 2008)

Setting (Experimental Filling Shed, Bomb Chamber and the Detonation Chamber)

- 451 These buildings are located within the Fort and sit enclosed in the central core. The site is grassed and there is a wooded perimeter on the schedule ancient monument. There is limited visibility into and out of the site but also there are restricted views between the buildings because of the casement traverses. This is the character of the setting and positively contributes to the special interest because it reflects the unusual evolution of the site from a mobilisation centre to specialist weapons testing facility.

Impact of proposals (Experimental Filling Shed, Bomb Chamber and the Detonation Chamber)

- 452 The physical setting will remain largely unchanged, although heritage interpretation boards are proposed within the site. The listed buildings will be refurbished (under separate listed building consents) and the Experimental Filling Shed is proposed to become a display area for the Heritage Interpretation Centre. The Heritage Interpretation Centre would allow public access to the site and an opportunity to understand the history of these designated heritage assets and the wider site. The applicant has proposed a Heritage Trail around the site to better reveal the special

interest of the site. This includes the retention of some of the M magazine stores to better reveal the history and evolution of the site to visitors. There is no harm to the significance of these buildings and the proposals will have a positive impact.

Listed Building - Building Q14 (Grade II)

Assessment of significance

- 453 This building sits a short distance outside of the Fort. It is Grade II listed and this means it is of national importance and considered to be of special interest warranting every effort to preserve it (Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings, DCMS March 2010).
- 454 Q14 was a purpose-built structure designed for the assembly of the prototype warhead and its ballistic casing. It was the only place where all the component parts of the bomb were brought together and where a complete model was assembled, although inert model wooden replicas were used instead of the live explosive components. (The colloquial name for Q14 was the 'RAF Building', illustrating the close collaboration between Penney's team and the end user, the RAF.) It is not known where the electronic components of the trial devices, which were then taken to RAF Woodbridge (Suffolk), were assembled although Q14 is a possibility.
- 455 The listing description describes its significance thus;
- Historic interest (personnel): of considerable significance nationally for its association with William Penney, Chief Superintendent of Armaments Research, who led Britain's atomic bomb development programme here and which association is celebrated by a memorial plaque;
 - Historic interest (bomb development): the only building nationally where the prototype bomb was put together and thus instrumental in the detonation of Britain's first atomic bomb in 1952;
 - Form and design: purpose-built for Britain's atomic bomb development programme. Although a functional building without architectural embellishment its form expresses the secrecy surrounding the programme, being blind on the public-facing side, and which retains its original workshop space and support accommodation for the assembly of the prototype warhead and ballistic casing;
 - Group value: for its associations with Fort Halstead and the contemporary buildings within and outside of the mobilisation centre which were also part of the atomic bomb development work.
- 456 This building has evidential and historic value as defined by the criteria set out in 'Conservation Principles' (English Heritage, 2008)

Setting

- 457 Building Q14 sits outside the Fort but within close proximity. Aside from the immediate buildings the Fort and A10, A13 and A14 provide historical context. It is experienced as part of a group of buildings, some contemporary and some more recent. Adjacent buildings Q13, Q12 and Q1 are broadly contemporary and through their architecture and material composition provide an appropriate historic setting that contributes towards the significance. It is not clearly visible in long views.

Impact on Building Q14

- 458 Building Q14 and the structures that form an important part of the setting (Q1, Q12 and Q13) are to be retained as part of the proposals but their setting altered. The substantial demolition of the entire site will have a harmful impact on the significance of all the designated heritage assets on the site because of the inter-relationship and context. They have historic significance based on their role in weapons research and this role is intrinsically linked to the wider site. Q14, located outside of the Fort is part of a group of contemporary buildings and the impact of the demolition of the wider site will also have a visual impact. The development of the wider site was low level, organic and sporadic that was developed as a need arose. The proposals are considered to be of minimal harm because they still locate the building within a context of related buildings (Q1, Q12 and Q13) which are contemporary to Q14 and that also reflect the materials and design of the period and better reveal the significance of Q14. The wider development will also retain a similar use of weapons research, light industrial and housing. In terms of the NPPF it is considered to be of less than substantial harm.
- 459 The demolition of the immediate buildings of Q8, Q11 and Q3 which are not in themselves considered to be of special interest affects the immediate setting of Q14 and the Fort. It will change the relationship between the two areas by opening up the flank elevation of the Penney building (Q14). The proposals will see a new village hub created and a square formed along this elevation. This will help to better reveal the significance by the improvement of the relationship between the Fort and Q14. This is considered to be of less than substantial harm but the impact of the final proposals will have a positive impact.

Undesignated heritage assets

- 460 Heritage assets are defined by the NPPF as being:

“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions”

- 461 The following buildings are considered undesignated heritage assets on the site;

F14 & F18

- 462 These buildings are located on the Fort and are not listed or covered by the Scheduling of the Fort that specifically excluded buildings post 1900.
- 463 Building F14 was built in 1915 and it is the only surviving representative of the period. It was also used as the residence of the private owner in the interwar period. It is part of the setting of the listed buildings and the scheduled ancient monument it has historical significance.
- 464 Building F18 was built to support the work of William Penney’s atomic bomb research. It has served as a workshop and administration building. It is of historic significance and like Building F14 makes a positive contribution to the setting of the listed buildings and the Scheduled Fort. These buildings are to be retained as part of the proposals.

A10

465 This building is located near to the Fort and is a substantial three storey structure dating from 1936-1944. It is flanked by bays of single storey ranges. It was labelled the 'Tube Process' building in 1944 and thought to be involved in shell development. It is the principle building in Area A and derives historical interest from direct associations with the highly secretive and nationally important work of ARD and CSAR. It is a utilitarian building but there is some architectural detailing including recessed window bays and solid course lintels.

466 This building positively contributes towards the setting of the listed Q14 and the scheduled Fort as it represents a principle building in the work that was carried out by Penney. This building is to be retained as part of the proposals.

A11

467 This is a long rectangular building was built between 1936 and 1944 by German Prisoners of War. It was an office for CSAR so has a historic connect to the work of Penney. There is some significance from its historical connections with the Prisoners of War and it forms a neat group with A10, A13 and A14. It makes a positive impact on the setting of the scheduled Fort. This building is to be retained as part of the proposals.

A13 & A14

468 These building are contemporary to the Fort (late 1890s) and were built as caretaker's cottages and a tool store. These enhance the setting of the Fort as they demonstrate ancillary building outside of the dominant earthen works. They have historic significance and make a positive contribution to the setting of the scheduled ancient monument. They are to be retained as part of the proposals.

F14 & F18

469 These buildings are located on the Fort and are not listed or covered by the Scheduling of the Fort that specifically excluded buildings post 1900.

470 Building F14 was built in 1915 and it is the only surviving representative of the period. It was also used as the residence of the private owner in the interwar period. It is part of the setting of the listed buildings and the scheduled ancient monument it has historical significance.

471 Building F18 was built to support the work of William Penney's atomic bomb research. It has served as a workshop and administration building. It is of historic significance and like Building F14 makes a positive contribution to the setting of the listed buildings and the Scheduled Fort. These buildings are to be retained as part of the proposals.

All other building in the F Area (Fort)

472 These buildings are located in the Fort and are ancillary to the use. They represent a variety of uses and date from 1892 through to 1950s. They are make a positive contribution to the setting of both the listed buildings and scheduled ancient monument. These buildings are proposed to be retained.

Q1, Q3, Q4, Q4-1, Q13

473 These buildings are part of the CEAD buildings used by Penney and have an obvious function. They date from 1936 – 1949.

X03, X04, X06, X07, X08, X09, X11, X12, X13

474 These are structures relating directly to the weapons and firing. They are magazines and firing and testing chambers, they date from 1936 – 1944.

For clarity, condition 20 is proposed relating to the retention and demolition of buildings.

Overall assessment

475 The applicant has submitted an appropriate level of information to make an assessment of significance on the site. They have also assessed the harm to the designated heritage assets on this site by the proposals. The demolition schedule is considered an acceptable approach and there has been extensive consideration of the buildings identified as being retained.

476 Of primary concern is securing the long term future of the Fort (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) and associated listed structures. Following direction from Officers the applicant supplied more details about the potential for a Heritage Interpretation Centre and identified the level of heritage attraction/offer that they considered would be successful and sustainable on the site. A level of detail was required in order to demonstrate that requirements in a legal agreement were appropriately costed so that the identified offer was supported financially. There is also a sensible commitment of 30 days public opening which provides flexibility to the opening hours.

477 The proposed repair and refurbishment proposals to the Fort and the Listed Buildings to be secured via condition or legal agreement will support the continuing viability of the site by preserving the fabric and the special interest. Management of the trees and shrubs will create long views across Kent and will support an understanding of why the Fort was located at this point. Opening up a stretch of the original moat to the right of the entrance bridge would enhance the special interest of the Fort. This view was supported by Historic England. Clauses in a legal agreement are proposed to secure the exploratory work and if feasible to open up a small section. To enhance understanding of the site the applicant, as part of the Heritage Interpretation Centre, has proposed a Heritage Trail around the development with information boards. This would provide a wider context to the Fort and retain the link between the Fort and the wider site.

478 The setting of the Fort and Listed Buildings has been considered and the primary spine road is being retained and the long-views along Crow Road unaltered. The character of the current site is organic, sporadic, low-level development with a light industry use and keeping a mixed use offer is sympathetic to the established character of the area. However, there will need to be approved Design Guidelines attached to the permission that identify and reflect the characteristics of the current site, including the organic layout, to ensure that qualities and special interest is reflected in the design and vision of the new development to secure a new locally distinctive development. Conditions can be imposed to secure this.
Officer note: see conditions 5 and 6.

479 Conditions and / or clauses in the legal agreement will be required to require a Conservation Management Plan for the Fort and associated listed buildings to include detailing of the works necessary to create the Heritage Centre and the trail.

Listed Building Consent and Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent will need to be sort for the specifics of works to the designated heritage assets. A condition relating to the recording of the site should also be attached. *Officer note: see conditions 14 and 15.*

Archaeology

- 480 The County Archaeologist has commented about the impact of the scheme upon potential Roman and Medieval remains (which have been found within the wider area and which maybe present on this site – although none are known of at this stage). A request has also been expressed for the retention of a wider range of buildings than originally proposed within the site and for a heritage landscape assessment to be submitted.
- 481 Other existing non listed buildings will also be retained as part of the proposal for the creation of a village centre which are considered to form a group alongside the listed Penney building (Q14).
- 482 Four of the existing bunkers/structures used for the storage of explosives will be retained at the Star Hill entrance to the site and will become part of a heritage trail across the site. The remaining bunkers will be backfilled and grassed over remaining as a permanent landscape reminder of the previous history of this part of the site. These in fact will become part of an area of open recreational grassland adjacent to the Star Hill entrance. There is potential for the rear most, above ground, brick storage building to be used as a cafe or some ancillary use to the adjacent recreation space.
- 483 Other buildings were requested for retention by the County Archaeologist but after further consideration some were not considered worth preservation and others would have had minimal historical value (a set of men’s toilets for instance) as well as being difficult to blend sympathetically into the surrounding proposed residential area and have not thus been proposed for retention.
- 484 Conditions are proposed for a method statement relating to the salvage, storage and re-use of items of historic interest; for a methodology for recording the architecture and archaeology prior to demolition and for archaeological investigations of the site.

Conclusions

- 485 In conclusion, there is harm to both designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets. As there is harm, in accordance with the statutory duty to preserve the listed building or its setting and features of historic or architectural interest, there is a strong presumption against granting planning permission, those assets being irreplaceable. This harm may be outweighed by other factors depending upon the extent of harm to this objective and the weight to be given to other factors.
- 486 The harm to the heritage assets arising from this proposal is considered to be significant.
- 487 Considering para 133 of the NPPF, it is concluded that there would be substantial harm to the designated heritage assets.

- 488 There are considerable benefits that can be secured as part of any permission to allow public access to the site and some of these heritage assets, to help the public to understand the historical significance of these assets and the reasons for their designation. The proposals will also involve the refurbishment and management of these assets to secure their long term future. These benefits are only likely to be secured in conjunction with the wider development of the site for employment and other commercial uses and residential development. This proposal would allow for the most important heritage assets on the site to be retained and in some cases, as appropriate re-used. Unless the site is developed in the comprehensive manner as proposed, it is thought unlikely that the future of these assets and their historical significance would be secured.
- 489 For these reasons, it is considered that the substantial and significant harm that would occur as a result of this proposal would be outweighed by the substantial public benefits that can be delivered by this scheme, as secured by condition and legal agreement.
- 490 It is considered that the proposal would also result in compliance with this aspect of policy EMP3.

Protect and Integrate existing dwellings located in close proximity to the boundary of the Major Employment Site into the new development

- 491 The NPPF seeks to provide for balanced and well-designed communities, contributing to a strong and responsive economy; vibrant and healthy communities, a high quality built environment and the protection and enhancement of our natural, built and historic environment.
- 492 The houses that lie just outside the major developed area, but adjacent to part of its northern boundary would be physically different in design and age from any of the proposed housing. They will however lie immediately adjacent to a residential area within the site, will lie within the wider 'village' environment (ie past the village entrance) and will benefit as much as any other residents on the application site from the facilities that will be provided.
- 493 The existing dwellings lie adjacent to the main entrance and will therefore benefit from improvements to the access and entrance changes, including improvements to clearance and management of adjacent public footpaths that will provide wider access across the site.
- 494 In design terms an area of woodland lies between the two sites which will provide a green link between the application site and the existing housing similar in character to the proposed area of landscaping that will link different parts of the new development.
- 495 At the time EMP3 was adopted the residential units that are adjacent to the site lay within a single ownership and it would have, at that point, been possible to encourage greater integration by, for instance, running new footpaths between the two sides of the boundary line. However now that the adjacent housing is in separate ownership this cannot be achieved by this planning application.
- 496 Future residents of the housing outside the site will benefit from the submitted scheme in a satisfactory and inclusive manner and this element of policy EMP3 is secured.

Incorporate principles of sustainable design and construction to minimise energy consumption in its construction and operation

- 497 The NPPF refers to the presumption in favour of sustainable development as the golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking.
- 498 At para 93 it advises that planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and supporting the delivery of renewables and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. Councils are encouraged to plan for development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions and when setting any local requirement for a buildings sustainability to do so in a way that it consistent with the Governments zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards.
- 499 At a local level Policy SP2 of the Core Strategy states the minimum Code for Sustainable Home (CSH) standard a new dwelling should achieve. At present the code standard requires a code 3 standard. It also states that the achievement of the Code levels and BREEAM standards must include at least a 10% reduction in total carbon emissions through on site installations and implementation of decentralisation.
- 500 Section 1(1)(c) of the Planning and Energy Act 2008 gives local planning authorities in England and Wales the power to include, in their development plan documents, policies that require development in their areas to comply with energy efficiency standards that are more stringent than those under the Building Regulations.
- 501 Since this application is in outline we do not have any details of how the final buildings will be constructed and what energy saving features will be included. Certainly larger scale assumptions about the site, for instance that the whole site should be built out at Code 6, or that an energy centre could be provided as part of this scheme have been ruled out on the basis that this would add so much to the cost of the site that it would make the scheme unviable.
- 502 Indeed, since this application was submitted there are now changes being carried out that removes the Code for Sustainable Homes and proposals to no longer include proposals relating to zero carbon in the 2016 Building Regulations.
- 503 Section 43 of the Deregulation Act will stop section 1(1)(c) of the Planning and Energy Act 2008, applying to construction of or any other work on dwellings in England. As yet section 43 of the Deregulation Act is not in force and will be commenced by a commencement order at some future time. When the section is in force the SDC plan will no longer be able to require energy efficiency standards to application on dwellings – new or adaptations.
- 504 The commencement order is expected to be made when the “optional requirements” which are included in the Building Act by section 42 of the Deregulation Act 2015 have been made by further regulation. The “optional requirements” will cover cases where there is a need for provision to deal with local circumstances. The Government’s policy is that technical housing standards should only be included in the main Building Regulations.
- 505 For the time being SP2 is still backed by legislation, the Planning and Energy Act 2008. Until section 43 of the Deregulation Act is in force it must be considered where relevant.

- 506 However, two material considerations are the recent ministerial statement on this issue and the fact that the Code for Sustainable Homes no longer exists making it a fairly pointless exercise to impose related conditions. Therefore in this case the proposal has been considered in relation to the Development Plan however material considerations dictate that in this instance the conditions previously imposed are no longer valid.
- 507 The scheme will have to comply with the current building regulations when it is built out. The Design and Access Statement advises that when the houses are built out that Code level 4 and BREEAM standards (applicable to commercial buildings), achieving an excellent rating would be targeted and the achievement of such targets will include at least a 10% reduction on the Building Regulation Target Emission Rate through the on-site installation and implementation of decentralised renewable or low carbon energy sources. The aspiration is that non domestic users would achieve higher levels of carbon reductions.
- 508 The scheme will incorporate sustainable drainage systems and the detail of this will also be clarified at a later stage and secured by condition.
- 509 In terms of the wider site it is anticipated that the provision of facilities will reduce the need to travel thereby aiding sustainability goals. However the issue of viability will prevent this site becoming the exemplar development that had been hoped for.
- 510 Conditions are proposed to secure where applicable, BREEAM 'very good' certification, and details of provision for renewable or low-carbon energy sources across the site.
- 511 Nevertheless what is proposed is sufficient to ensure that the scheme complies with the relevant policies in respect of sustainable design.

Improve the provision and connectivity of green infrastructure, including the protection, enhancement and management of biodiversity and the provision of improvements to the Public Right of Way network

- 512 At a local level policy SP11 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that the biodiversity of the district will be conserved and opportunities sought for enhancement to ensure no net loss of bio diversity.
- 513 The NPPF states that "the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...minimising impacts on biodiversity and delivering net gains in biodiversity where possible."
- 514 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), requires "Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". In order to comply with this 'Biodiversity Duty', planning decisions must ensure that they adequately consider the potential ecological impacts of a proposed development.
- 515 Paragraph 99 of Government Circular (ODPM 06/2005) Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations & Their Impact within the Planning System states that:

"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the

planning permission is granted otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.”

- 516 Para 118 of the NPPF requires that when determining planning applications, local authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying certain principles. Those principles relevant to this site and proposal are:
- If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
 - Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be encouraged.
 - Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for , and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.
- 517 The impact of the scheme in this respect can be considered in terms of impact upon existing features and habitats and proposed management of the existing habitats and new green infrastructure that will provide new habitats and opportunities for enhancement.
- 518 A large number of habitats and species of ecological value have been identified on and around the site: Ancient woodland, neutral grassland, calcareous grassland, trees and scrub, Bats, Breeding birds, Reptiles, Invertebrates, Badgers and Dormice.
- 519 An assessment of the likely effects on ecology including any habitat deterioration, whether it can be prevented and whether there is any mitigation or enhancements proposed. Is included the submitted ES.
- 520 The ES concludes that during the demolition and construction process there are likely to be short term adverse impacts of minor significance on bats, badgers, reptiles, breeding birds (45 species found) and terrestrial invertebrates. During this period there would be an insignificant adverse impact on the protected Ancient Woodland and Calcareous Grassland. For this period it is proposed to manage the risks from demolition by protecting the existing habitats that are not part of the programme of demolition. The ecologically sensitive habitats would be retained and protective fencing erected during the demolition and construction process. Conditions are proposed by KCC Ecology to control this. *Officer note* – see *conditions* 19 and 24.
- 521 The ES has also assessed the likely impact of the completed development. The impact on Ancient Woodland is likely to be generally insignificant with a long term beneficial moderate significant impact with habitat management. For the Calcareous Grassland, the ES states that there is likely to be long term beneficial minor significant impact with habitat management. In relation to protected species, the ES states that there would be long term beneficial minor significant impact from long term management.
- 522 A Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) has been submitted to provide a long term management strategy and a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is also proposed, both of which can be linked to conditions and / or a

legal agreement to ensure implementation and further details are required for the next stages of the development. *Officer note: see conditions 19 and 24 and the objectives of the S106 legal agreement.*

- 523 The mitigation and enhancement measures proposed in the ES, to be secured via condition and / or legal agreement include:
- provide a purpose-built bat house in the south-western part of the Site adjacent to the woodland and the QinetiQ area. The bat house would be constructed early 2016 in Phase 1;
 - provide an artificial badger set in 2016 within the 'wildlife area' in advance of the construction of the new QinetiQ security fence in Phase 2;
 - provide dormice, bird and bat boxes to be installed in the woodland and new builds. In addition to the provision of terrestrial invertebrate boxes and reptile refugia (in Phase 1 onwards to Phase 7);
 - provide a 'wildlife area' created in 2016 (in Phase 1) to the south-west of the Site in the wider Survey Area. The 'wildlife area' would comprise a species-rich wildflower grassland area;
 - create and enhance habitats of ecological value to provide a net biodiversity gain (Phase 4 to Phase 7);
 - retain, protect and enhance all woodland including Ancient Woodland;
 - provide a minimum of a 15m buffer between the development plots and all Ancient Woodland;
 - maintain and enhance woodland connectivity with the wider landscape;
 - include native woodland infill and scrub planting, of regional provenance;
 - retain scattered trees, wherever possible;
 - include new tree planting, where possible, including fruiting varieties;
 - retain, protect and enhance all areas of calcareous grassland;
 - include ponds and sustainable drainage features to provide aquatic habitat;
 - create green infrastructure corridors to increase connectivity;
 - provide clearly defined pathways away from habitats of greatest value;
 - enhancement of existing pathways into areas of greatest ecological value;
 - creation of wild areas within the green infrastructure for domestic pets; and
 - provide an appropriate lighting mitigation strategy using low level / directional lighting along woodland edges and habitats of ecological value to retain and create dark corridors.
- 524 The scheme proposes a balanced response to the issue of bio-diversity protection and enhancement. For instance whilst the most valuable calcareous grassland within the site boundary – primarily that to the south of the site – will be protected from public access and its quality enhanced, some grassland to the north of the access road, adjacent to the Star Hill entrance, will become publicly available for leisure/recreational purposes. Likewise with the woodland surrounding the site, management of the surrounding ancient woodland will be enabled for the first time in many years thereby improving the quality of the woodland. At the same time access to some parts of the woodland will need to be managed to ensure that the habitats that have evolved are protected, which is unlikely to be the case with unrestricted access for future surrounding residents. It is expected however that with suitable safeguards that can be identified and developed as part of an appropriately worded condition, that this can be achieved.
- 525 Such a managed approach will for instance be able to take account of the issue of Ash dieback. Whilst it has been identified that ash trees do exist within the

woodland they do not form the majority of trees and are spread around the woodland such that it is expected that should they die this will not expose the site to wider views within the surrounding landscape. However a management condition will allow the long terms impacts of this to be monitored and dealt with such as to mitigate any wider impacts.

- 526 Details have been provided about the location of various species within the site boundary and mitigation measures are proposed to minimise the impact of the new development upon these species that are considered acceptable by the County Ecologist. The only outstanding work that needs to be clarified before the commencement of development, concerns the impact of the works and particularly the works to the Polhill access upon the nearby Shoreham Woods Local Wildlife Site. Whilst the works to provide for the roundabout will not actually involve work to the woods, the development of the site and its opening up for residential use will increase the number of people likely to access the woods site, with potential impacts upon its interest which will need to be clarified and potentially mitigated for. This work has not yet been carried out but it is considered that a mitigation strategy can be devised and be dealt with by legal agreement.
- 527 In terms of new green infrastructure a number of new green corridors will be created within the site that will provide links currently unavailable for existing wildlife through the site as well as creating new habitats.
- 528 Public Rights of Way currently skirt around the edge of the site providing access for walkers all around the site and connecting to surrounding villages. At present access through the site is prevented due to security measures.
- 529 A new bridleway would run through the site from the north west corner of the site (SR172) to the nearest adopted highway within the site providing an extension of this footpath.
- 530 An upgrade is proposed to the length of SR172 that runs alongside Lime Pit Lane at the recommendation of the County Public Rights of Way team. Discussions had been held regarding the provision of a public right of way across the southern slope of the site to the south of the security fencing. However that runs across an ecologically sensitive area which it is sought to protect and enhance and without adding further fencing across the slope, which would be highly visible within the wider landscape, this idea was felt to be counter productive in bio diversity terms. An upgrade to SR172 would assist access around the bottom of the site where the footpath joins SR172.
- 531 Concerns have also been raised by the Public Rights of Way team about trees falling across footpaths around the site that lie within existing woodland. As a result of management of the woodland should make these footpaths more accessible.
- 532 The opening up of the site will provide access and connectivity for walkers, cyclists and horse riders from one side of the site to the other along a number of roads, cycle paths and footpaths. Whilst some off these will be permissive rather than public highways or footpaths the scheme will nevertheless increase access around this are considerably and it is considered would comply with the ethos of policy EMP3 in this respect.
- 533 As this an outline application there is currently no precise details about layout, scale and design of the buildings proposed. Therefore as noted by KCC Ecology,

whilst they consider that there is sufficient ecological survey data available, there is further need for details of the measures necessary to mitigate the impacts of the development and the enhancement measures proposed. The timing of these measures in relation to the phasing of the development is also unknown at this stage and the phasing can be controlled by imposing a phasing condition.

534 The ES has identified that significant harm resulting from this development, can be avoided. Adequate mitigation and enhancement is proposed, and there are likely to be beneficial impacts as a result of this. The proposal would not involve the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland. There would be some scattered loss of trees across the site during the demolition and construction process. The mitigation and enhancement proposed would clearly outweigh this loss which the ES concludes is of minor adverse significance.

535 Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with this part of policy EMP3, and local policies and national guidance.

Provide for a comprehensive development and include a phasing plan, including phasing of infrastructure provision, showing how each phase of the development will contribute to the implementation of the policy.

536 The supporting text to policy EMP3 clarifies that a development agreement and phasing plan will be required to ensure that the development is delivered in a timely way and in a way that is truly employment led.

537 At present we have an indicative phasing plan which will be finalised by means of a relevant condition. It is thought that the site will become available late in 2018. The indicative phasing is as follows:

Phase 1

- Phased demolition of DSTL buildings – ongoing from now as they become redundant and subject to relevant consents.
- Some wildlife mitigation works ie bat boxes, bird boxes

Phase 2

- Further wildlife works ie creation of artificial badger sett/relocation of badgers from Qinetiq enclave
- Construction of new Qinetiq fence including buffer and planting
- Construction of new Qinetiq headquarters building
- Works on utilities infrastructure for Qinetiq

Phase 3

- Construction of sustainable drainage system (SUDS)
- Dstl fully vacate site.
- S278 highways works associated with Polhill and Star Hill entrances

Phase 4

- Utilities infrastructure for the wider site
- Creation of village centre
- Creation of village green
- Construction of access roads

- Refurbishment of retained buildings
- Commence refurbishment of the Fort
- Implementation of SUDS within former helipad
- Commencement of /enhancement of management of grassland
- Create buffers to ancient woodland
- Commence first phase of residential building around the village centre and commencement of provision of serviced employment plots in employment park, including one B1 A and two B1C units

Phase 5

- Occupation of village centre and first phase of residential and commencement of second phase of residential
- Creation of green infrastructure
- Further building out of serviced employment plots
- Protection of most sensitive areas of grassland and ancient woodland
- Implementation of SUDS
- Planting of green infrastructure

Phase 6

- Next phase of residential
- Commence woodland and tree planting
- Footpath and cycle improvements
- Community bus facilities
- Build out employment plots

Phase 6/7

- Commencement of further residential plots
- Completion of commercial plots
- Complete refurbishment of Fort and opening of heritage centre
- Commence management enhancement of woodland

Phase 7

- Commencement and completion of Hotel

538 This phasing plan is not a simple timeline as some of the phases are likely to overlap. The graphic at Appendix A of this report indicates the possible overlapping of the phasing below up to 2027.

539 It should be stressed that this is an indicative plan but gives an idea of how the scheme could be built out.

540 The main issue regarding phasing concerns the balance between the build out of commercial units and village centre and the build out of residential units such as to ensure that the site remains employment led. An early commitment to commence work on the heritage assets would also be expected. As the phasing proposal is currently indicative, it is difficult to secure a robust phasing plan via a legal agreement. It is proposed therefore to control phasing with planning conditions to and it would be for the applicant, in discharging those conditions, to demonstrate that the phasing plan they submit would deliver an employment led development as required by Policy EMP3 of the ADMP. *Officer note – see condition 4.*

- 541 Key to seeking the correct balance for such a phasing plan is the need to consider the viability of the scheme. Any phasing scheme that seeks to prevent the build out, for instance, of any residential units until the commercial areas have been entirely built out would make the scheme unviable. Such an approach would be clearly contrary to central Government advice and therefore ensuring that a balance is found between providing an employment led scheme and enough residential floorspace to keep the scheme viable would be key to discharging any submitted scheme. Conditions are also proposed to secure appropriate infrastructure provision for the whole site and per phase.
- 542 Overall it is considered that subject to the appropriate conditions that this scheme can be developed in a manner that provides for an employment led scheme whilst allowing sufficient residential floorspace to keep the scheme viable in accordance with the requirements of Policy EMP3.

Noise

- 543 At a local level policy EN7 of the ADMP advises that development will not be permitted when it would have an unacceptable impact when considered against the indoor and outdoor acoustic environment including existing and future occupiers of the development and the amenities of existing and future occupants of nearby properties and the development would not result in unacceptable noise levels from existing noise sources that cannot be adequately mitigated.
- 544 This policy further advises that where proposals for high noise generating development would affect AONBs or open countryside or sites designated for their bio-diversity value that development will not be permitted if it would undermine the character or harm the biodiversity of these areas.
- 545 Policy EN2 of the ADMP is a more general policy seeking to protect residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of development against a number of harmful effects including noise.
- 546 The NPPF advises at para 123 that planning policies and decisions should aim to:
- *“avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development;*
 - *mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development including through the use of conditions;*
 - *recognise that development will often create some noise and existing businesses wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established and*
 - *identify and protects area of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.”*
- 547 The scheme has potential to create noise and disturbance for existing and future residents in a manner that must be addressed. These circumstances are set out below.

Noise during the demolition / construction phases.

- 548 This is most likely to be noticeable to nearby existing residents. Such disturbance cannot be prevented but subject to a site management condition can be mitigated by, for instance, a construction traffic management plan.

The impact of the QinetiQ operations upon future residents living on the site.

- 549 At present noise from explosions carried out within the site are heard from time to time in the wider area. A lot of this work will, in due course, be moved to sites elsewhere in the country so that the work retained on site will have much less impact upon the wider area. We are advised that the principal future functions of Qinetiq relate to scientific and technical research which would also include ancillary forensic energetic trace material analysis. Energetic trace material may be detonated for reasons of safety. Such incidents will be undertaken in a dedicated part buried steel reinforced concrete bunker with acoustically treated mechanical ventilation. In addition, as noted by the Councils Environmental Health Officer works that will be carried out in the future by Qinetiq will be carried out in new buildings that can accordingly be constructed to suitable standards to contain noise emissions to an acceptable level, given the close relationship with future residential areas on the site.

The impact of future traffic movements upon those surrounding the site.

- 550 It is envisaged that, as a result of the design of the internal road system that traffic will be more likely to utilise the Polhill junction rather than Star Hill. Whilst access via Star Hill will not be prevented, due to the road layout, emphasis for commercial vehicles will be on using Polhill and there would be various techniques used to discourage the use of Star Hill ie road narrowing, cattle grids etc. It is predicted that Star Hill will become a secondary access. Therefore most impact resulting from future traffic using the site is expected to occur in the vicinity of Polhill. However the increase in traffic is not predicted to be so significant as to cause a significant rise in noise to the surrounding area as to be harmful and unacceptable in this respect.

The noise impact of the new commercial site upon nearby residential units.

- 551 The main part of the proposed commercial site is to be separated from the nearest residential units by a substantial green wedge (in excess of 40 metres) that runs almost the length of the commercial area. This space, in addition to building standards that would be employed in any B2 units would be sufficient to ensure that residents of the proposed residential units would not suffer direct noise from the commercial units on the site. The separation of the access road to the commercial area from the main vehicular access to the village will be sufficient to ensure that noise associated with commercial traffic is neither significant nor harmful to residential amenities. It is anticipated that the majority of the units would be likely to be in a B1 use, a type of activity that is by definition acceptable within a residential area. If B2 units are required however there is sufficient space on site that these can be placed behind a frontage of B1 units that would act as a buffer both in visual and noise terms and this can be controlled at the Reserved Matters stage.
- 552 One part of the commercial, to the west of the main entrance would comprise B1a units – ie office accommodation. These are in close proximity to residential

dwelling but by nature of their use and size it is not anticipated that there will be any conflict between the different uses such as to cause nuisance to the residents.

- 553 It is concluded that with the imposition of appropriate conditions, there will be no significant adverse impacts from noise as a result of this development. The proposal would comply with this part of the Policy EMP3 of the ADMP, the other local policies referred to above and the NPPF.

Air Quality

- 554 Policy SP2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that new development will take account of the need to improve air quality in accordance with the District's Air Quality Action Plan. Development in areas of poor air quality or development that may have an adverse impact on air quality will be required to incorporate mitigation measures to reduce impact to an acceptable level.

- 555 The site does not lie within an Air Quality Management Area but does lie within the Kent Downs AONB where the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan opposes development threats to the conservation of the natural resources of soil, water and air.

- 556 The Sevenoaks Air Quality Action Plan 2009 seeks to achieve a number of goals:

- minimise any increase *in air pollution*
- *continue to liaise with the Highways Agency to secure improvements to the M25 such as to result in a reduction of pollution levels within the motorway AQMAs*
- *continue to promote schemes seeking to result in a reduction in car use*
- *reduce congestion and improve air quality as a result through parking schemes*
- *promote initiatives to reduce energy consumption, improve energy efficiency, and recycling and develop the Councils carbon management role*
- *proactively enforce industrial control and nuisance legislation to minimise pollution emissions from these sources.*

- 557 The NPPF seeks to ensure that planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit value or national objectives for pollutants taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan.

- 558 This scheme has the potential to affect air quality both as a result of dust from demolitions and construction work, construction traffic exhaust emissions and as a result of the new development with all associated traffic when complete.

- 559 In terms of dust arising from demolition works it is considered that the impact outside of the site will be limited – both as a result of the distance between to most surrounding development, direction of prevailing wind and as a result of the screening impact of trees surrounding the site. A number of techniques can be employed during construction to minimise the impact of works upon those nearest dwellings, such as:

- dust suppression *techniques,*
- *wheel washing,*

- *erect and maintain solid barriers around the construction activity,*
- *use agreed haulage routes into the site.*

560 It is considered these can be achieved by means of an appropriate condition.

561 It is envisaged that the impact of construction traffic emissions upon local air quality would be short term, local and of minor significance. However in order to minimise the impact of such emissions, traffic must use the Polhill / Crow Road access into the site. Star Hill would only be used on an exceptional basis and with the minimisation of traffic approaching the site during peak hours. Such matters can be controlled by means of a construction management statement to be agreed prior to the commencement of works.

562 In the long term it is the effect of vehicle emissions upon the local air quality that will have the greatest impact. It is considered however that the final development is likely to have a low impact on local air quality. However notwithstanding this expectation, a travel plan is still required to seek to reduce private travel to and from the site, a community bus is proposed as part of a legal agreement and cycle paths and access would be improved around the site to provide as far as possible a reduction for potential vehicle emissions around the site and local area.

563 Overall it is not considered that the scheme would have impacts upon the local air quality that could not be mitigated for or in the longer term that would be significant or unacceptable.

564 It is considered that both national and local policies would be complied with as a result of the proposed development.

Contamination

565 Policy SP1 off the Core Strategy advises that new development should create safe inclusive and attractive environments.

566 The NPPF seeks to prevent unacceptable risks from pollution planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location. The effects of pollution on health, the natural environment or general amenity and the potential sensitivity of the area or proposed development to adverse effects from pollution should be taken into account. Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, the responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and / or landowner.

567 At para 121 we are advised that Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that the site is suitable for its new use taking account of ground conditions and land instability, including from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, pollution arising from previous uses and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation or impacts on the natural environment resulting from that remediation.

568 The NPPG sets out sources of data to be used for assessments and seeks early consultation to establish an appropriate level of investigation. With regard to outline applications it states that the information sought should be proportionate to the decision at the outline stage, but before granting outline planning permission a LPA will among other matters, need to be satisfied that it understands the contaminated condition of the site, the proposed development is appropriate as a means of remediating it and it has sufficient information to be confident that it will

be able to grant permission in full at a later stage bearing in mind the need for necessary remediation to be viable and practicable.

- 569 In this instance contamination is expected to arise as a result of the nature of work carried out by current occupiers of the site, namely relating to the storage and testing of weapons systems, explosives, propellants and other military research operations. The Council therefore needs to be clear from the submitted strategy that works can be carried out to the site to make it safe for the range of activities that will take place on the site as a result of this application, if approved.
- 570 The assessment of contaminants has been carried out using a number of sources of evidence and information, including both historical and more recently available data. Sources of contamination were identified from desk based research, site walkovers and site investigations. Particular concern has been expressed by local residents regarding the presence of contamination relating to depleted uranium contamination and chemicals known as 'Pink Water' contamination. The submitted report identifies the fact that previous work has been carried out to remove the principal sources of these contaminants although acknowledging that some localised 'hot spots' may still be present. It is calculated that at present the site has a risk rating of medium which would be reduced to a low risk following remediation and mitigation measures being carried out.
- 571 The submitted strategy sets out how existing known areas of contamination will be dealt with and the impacts mitigated as well as setting out a strategy for dealing with currently unknown areas of contamination which are identified during the demolition/construction phase of development. These methodologies will be carried out in accordance with the Contaminated Land Regulations 2012. This strategy will ensure protection in the shorter term of demolition and construction workers on the site as well as the long term protection of future residents and consequently any other residents from the surrounding area.
- 572 The Council's Environmental Health Officer advises that as the development progresses, further intrusive investigation is likely as building and infrastructure are removed to delineate where soils require removal or onsite remediation. This covers the possibility that un-regulated waste disposal has taken place on site.
- 573 At this stage the exact extent and nature of contamination is not known at this site. British standards are required to be met when undertaking investigation and remediation of contaminated sites, it is normal practice to have key stages of the process overseen by specialist environmental consultants to aid the compliance process.
- 574 Removal or treatment of contaminated materials are again subject to specific guidance and legislation to protect both those working on the site and the public. Any material removed from the site for disposal requires specific testing prior to removal to ascertain that the intended site of disposal is suitably licensed to take the material with much of the process being licensed or regulated by the Environment Agency.
- 575 The Council's Environmental Health Officer has discussed the site and results of testing and mitigation strategies with the applicant and is satisfied that the approach proposed, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions, would secure the safe long term development of the site.

576 Accordingly the proposal would comply with this part of Policy EMP3, the other local policies referred to above and the NPPF.

Light Pollution

577 Policy EN6 of the ADMP specifies a number of criteria that any scheme needs to achieve if to be permitted including:

- any night time impact should be minimised through time limit and user activated lighting,
- no harmful impact upon privacy or amenity for nearby residential properties
- must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of any Heritage Assets which may be affected
- potential impacts upon wildlife should be avoided or adequately mitigated
- if in an AONB or open countryside it can be demonstrated that the lighting is there for safety or security reasons

578 The NPPF states that by encouraging good design planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

579 A baseline Lighting Assessment has been submitted which aims to set out a baseline for development of a Lighting Strategy for the Development so that the impact of any new lighting will be equal to or an improvement on the existing lighting environment. A site assessment was carried out between the 22 and 25th October 2014 and concludes that the existing site, although well illuminated, is well screened from all directions by the boundary woodland and vegetation. Direct views of the existing site lighting are therefore limited, and only from specific viewpoints are glimpses of the site lighting possible. Moderate levels of sky glow above the site are clearly visible in the form of an 'orange' aura against the surrounding dark skies (a result of the existing roadway and car park light spill reflected off the ground level back into the night sky. The orange colour of sky glow is typical of the out-dated low pressure sodium lamp and lighting types utilised across the site. Due to the elevated location of the site and the surrounding dark skies, the levels of sky glow appear more obvious.

580 Sixteen representative viewpoints were selected and reviewed with eight viewpoints being considered to be most sensitive to change or where most change is likely to occur in terms of lighting and was therefore identified as being more critical. The remaining eight viewpoints were considered to be less subject to change with regards to lighting and therefore less critical. All sixteen were assessed during both day and night time.

581 One of the dis-benefits of an outline application is that we do not have the precise details of the proposed lighting scheme to consider. The submitted assessment aims to set out a baseline for development of a Lighting Strategy for the Development so that the impact of any new lighting will be equal or an improvement on the existing lighting environment.

582 The Council's landscape consultants have assessed the submitted report, alongside the AONB Report and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and have concurred with the report's conclusions, namely overall artificial lighting

impacts associated within the Development would not have any significant adverse impacts upon the surrounding environment and the identified receptors.

- 583 In terms of the impact upon wildlife the main impact will be upon bats. It is necessary to protect bat roost and foraging areas and this can be taken account of in the submitted lighting scheme. *Officer note: see conditions 6 and 37.*
- 584 It is considered that in terms of the impact upon the wider landscape/ AONB and impact upon wildlife that a suitable lighting scheme would not cause significant harm to the surrounding environment and that this aspect of the scheme is capable of being policy compliant.

Viability

- 585 The NPPF is clear that pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan making and decision taking (para 173). The sites and scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. To ensure viability the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.
- 586 Policy EMP3 of the ADMP refers to viability as the key to ensuring delivery of the commercial element of the scheme.
- 587 The Council's approach at the ADMP Examination in Public was that policy EMP3 should not include a specific number of houses in order that flexibility would be retained to identify the appropriate level nearer to the point when DSTL vacates the site (anticipated to be in 2018). The Inspector concluded that "residential development is justified in principle, but that more detail was required, particularly with regard to dwelling numbers, in order that a decision maker would have a clear indication of how to re-act to a development proposal on the site. Only through the provision of additional detail can it be demonstrated that this element of the ADMP would be justified, effective and consistent with national policy."
- 588 In terms of trying to identify how much housing would make the scheme viable he concluded that:
- "Although a figure lower than 450 dwellings was not specifically tested, it is clear that even the 450 figure poses some risks in terms of viability and therefore the risks associated with an even lower housing figure would be greater. In any event the Council has retained an appropriate level of flexibility by including the words up to 450 dwellings in the amended policy."*
- 589 The development of the site will incur considerable costs that affect the schemes viability, such as remediation, provision of infrastructure, works to protect the heritage on the site and provision of affordable housing and the employment led aspect of the scheme.
- 590 The consultants assessing the viability submission for the Council have concluded that 450 dwellings would be required to make the scheme as a whole viable and that the level of affordable housing proposed is appropriate in viability terms.

591 It is known that part of the land outside this site, but adjacent to it, where there is some housing on Crow Drive, was previously part of the same ownership as this site, but has since been sold. In accordance with guidance from the Homes and Communities Agency and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, the sale of this land is not a relevant consideration when looking at the viability of this proposal.

592 Knight Frank (who the LPA has engaged to provide specialist analysis of the applicant's Viability Appraisal) have been provided with information as to the viability of the scheme by the applicant. In preparing this report, officers have given due consideration to the information provided by the applicant and have taken into account the assessment of that information prepared on behalf of the LPA by Knight Frank. This report sets out and addresses the key points of that appraisal and considers what impact, if any, viability might have on the ability of the LPA to secure planning obligations now and in the future.

593 Knight Frank has provided a summary of the assumptions that have been made in relation to the viability assessment that are set out below:

1. What are the KF assumptions as to financing and cashflow, and is it reasonable to expect any other approach could be taken that would render more affordable housing viable?

Knight Frank has reviewed the applicant's model which is based on the assumption of 100% debt funding as is usual in financial viability modelling. The applicant's assumption on the cost of funds aligns with what we would expect as a global cost to cover headline borrowing rates for mixed use development and reflects sums for arrangement, non-utilisation and exit fees. The cashflow modelled by the applicant reflects reasonable periods for construction and linked sales. An alternative position that could be adopted would be to carry out viability reviews linked to detailed planning coming forward at each stage however this could see the reduction of the affordable if prevailing market conditions dictate or if projected costs are exceeded.

2. What is the assumed profit margin that is your (KF's) litmus-test for viability?

There is no standard assumption that is made on the requirement of acceptable margins as profit levels must reflect risk associated with undertaking development. Having said this, a profit of 20% based on the costs or 15% based on the Gross Development Value is often allocated to developer profit and it is this level of return that investor/funders typically seek to have demonstrated in order to commit to fund development.

3. What assumptions have been made by KF about prices of land, labour and construction materials? [in particular, whether current values or future values, and whence obtained]?

The viability review has been made on the basis of current day cost last reviewed against BCIS indices (Building Cost Information Service of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) and current day values (against comparable market evidence). The applicant's case for underlying existing-use land value within the red line (ie excluding the houses which have been disposed of) has been reviewed in the format of Red Book Valuation prepared by an RICS accredited valuation firm. A scheme of this nature typically requires expenditure being front-ended on elements such as demolition, infrastructure and servicing with receipts following

construction and there is inflation risk associated to this and other costs. Construction costs have risen significantly over the last 2-3 years and house prices have also increased. The current day cost and current day value approach to assessment removes uncertainty of projection and underpins the prospect of securing funding, without which development is unlikely to be brought forward.

4. What assumptions have been made by KF about remediation of the land, provision of infrastructure, and costs thereof?

The application has provided a quantity surveyor's report which in addition to providing an assessment of construction costs also details the above costs and how they should be timed. There is reference to an element of these costs being recouped through existing contractual arrangements which has been reflected in the appraisal.

5. What assumptions have been made by KF about the specification and extent of commercial units?

Commercial units have been assumed as consisting of a range of serviced plots, refurbished existing buildings (some of which are listed) and completed new constructions. The quantum of the commercial floor space as reflected in the proposals has been agreed through a negotiation process in liaison with the council's officers and the applicant.

6. What assumptions have been made by KF as to the mix of housing units and their form of tenure at sale.

The mix of housing has been assumed as being appropriate to reflect the receipt as modelled, and supported by comparable local schemes being sold. The affordable housing component as proposed has been subject to scrutiny of affordability aligning with borough need and has been modelled using the appraisal software employed by developing Registered Providers (Housing Associations) to test likely receipt against those modelled.

7. What assumptions have been made by KF about the prices of completed housing and commercial units.

Evidence of prevailing sales and lettings in the area, in addition to scrutiny of investment yields applied for the commercial elements has been reviewed and tested.

8. How much cross-subsidy is likely to be required for X in KF's view?

The development appraisal as a whole has been reviewed to test viability, the quantum of subsidy has not been tested but it follows, in line with the evidence previously collated for the EIP, that the private residential element as appraised "enables" the delivery of the affordable, community, infrastructure and commercial uses proposes.

9. Have the developers demonstrated that it would not be viable to provide the same amount of employment floorspace with less subsidy from housing or fewer housing units in KF's view?

The review undertaken as confirmed above supports the proposals with their overall quantum and mix of commercial, ecological, heritage, infrastructure and private/affordable housing development as proposed.

10. Have the developers demonstrated that it would not be viable to provide more than 20% affordable housing assuming a total of 450 housing units in KF's view?

This is confirmed.

11. How might market conditions change between now and the estimates completion date in 2028 and how far, if at all, does KF consider that this ought to be taken into account in the conditions for phasing or the affordable housing scheme?

Looking back at historic market movements the extended period above could incorporate a full market cycle including boom and recession. Construction costs are also subject to movement as are the cost of materials. Phasing/Grampian Conditions should ensure the timely delivery of the agreed affordable component and the commercial space proposed.

12. What is the construction programme/timing of works and sales that has been assumed.

The scheme has been appraised in line with reasonable assumptions on construction and take-up of units. The appraisal as scrutinised has in part been assessed on the basis of profit on GDV (receipt), a measure which does not reflect the passing of time. It is not unreasonable to point out that a scheme which returns a fixed level of profit over a shorter time is preferable to one that takes a longer period to realise the same return. The extended period modelled by the applicant ultimately exposes the developer to greater uncertainty (both positive and negative) linked to market movements.

Officers have ensured that all information as to viability that can be disclosed in the public domain has been included in this Report and officers are satisfied that Members and the public have thus been provided with sufficient information to inform the assessment, debate and determination of the application.

594 On the basis of the professional advice available to the Council it is considered that the submitted quantum of development is required in order to make the scheme viable in the long term.

Affordable housing

595 Apart from providing guidance on how an issue such as affordable housing can form part of the viability consideration for a site the NPPF also advises that a Local Planning Authority should meet the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing (para 47).

596 Paragraph 50 advises that having identified a need for affordable housing such need should be met on site unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified.

597 Policy SP3 of the Core Strategy seeks provision of 40% of the total housing as affordable housing. This policy also states that in exceptional circumstances, where

it is demonstrated through an independent assessment of viability that on-site provision in accordance with the policy would not be viable, a reduced level of provision may be accepted. As detailed above, following an independent assessment of viability for this proposal, in this instance only 20% provision can be made without adversely affecting the viability of the scheme as a whole.

- 598 Policy SP3 also seeks to ensure that at least 65% of the affordable units should be social rented unless the Council is satisfied that an alternative mix meets a proven need.
- 599 In this case it can be seen from the comments of the SDC Housing team that there is a much greater need for affordable rented accommodation than intermediate housing (ie shared ownership) and the scheme meets this need. The precise mix of units, their phasing on site and position within the site will be clarified as part of the legal agreement / conditions for the site.
- 600 In view of the conclusions reached regarding viability it is considered that this scheme would comply with the Councils aspirations in respect of the provision of affordable housing on this site.

CIL

- 601 A Community Infrastructure Levy payment will be applicable to this site. However the precise amount of monies due are unknown at this stage – the figures being calculated when the Reserved Matters application(s) are submitted in due course and responding to the fact that in certain circumstances the floorspace of existing buildings can be taken into account in calculating the chargeable amount. Where part of an existing building has been in lawful use for a continuous period of 6 months within the past three years, parts of that building that are *to be* demolished or retained can be taken into account.

S106 Agreement

- 602 The S106 was still under discussion at the time of writing this report but will include the following Heads of Terms:

Affordable Housing

Green Infrastructure and Open Space

Ecological Mitigation Works

Heritage and Historic Information Centre

Highways and Transportation Works

Community Bus

Travel Plans

Land Stability

- 603 The applicants have undertaken a Slope Stability Assessment for the proposed redevelopment of Fort Halstead including a review of available information (previous relevant reports, aerial photos, British Geological Survey maps and

memoirs) and a walkover survey was undertaken. This in response to concerns expressed locally that the Polhill highway is unstable.

604 The report concludes that:

- Aerial photos and satellite imagery do not indicate the site to be affected by any significant slope instability.
- No evidence of slope instability such as cracking of structures, soil creep, hummocky ground, slip scars, leaning of trees etc, was observed on site during the walkover.

605 A qualitative assessment of development risk based on slope gradient has been undertaken and it has been concluded that the development area falls in the lowest development risk category. As such it is unlikely that any significant mitigation measures will be required as part of the proposed development.

606 The more steeply sloping land to the south of the development area forms part of the natural chalk escarpment. Natural chalk slopes and escarpments formed at angles of less than 30° are highly likely to be stable. As the escarpment gradient is much less than 30°, it is concluded that there is no significant stability risk associated with the escarpment slope.

607 The following precautionary recommendations are made with regard to maintaining the existing margin of stability at the site during development however:

- The site has moderate potential for ground dissolution stability hazards. A 'watching brief' for solution cavities and voids should be undertaken by an appropriately qualified person during the course of the development works.
- Ground levels should not be increased close to the top of the existing chalk escarpment or other existing slopes. Additionally, new foundations should not be placed so that they increase the loads at the top of existing slopes.
- The existing pattern of land drainage must not be affected during development and the placement of fill during development must not inhibit pre-existing natural land drainage.
- With regard to temporary works, all excavation and filling activity should be planned and due consideration given to providing temporary support or suitable battering. Excavations should be regularly inspected by a competent engineer to ensure continued safety and stability.
- Visual monitoring and assessment of site-wide slope stability should be undertaken during development.

608 The Council has no evidence to suggest that this approach is incorrect and this matter is therefore dealt with by means of a relevant condition. *Officer note: see condition 22.* This condition would not relate to land that is outside of the applicant's control.

Community Trust / Management of Site

609 When the application was submitted it was suggested that a Community Trust be set up to deal with the long term control and maintenance of the site and its various components.

610 That offer has been withdrawn and it is now proposed to make a commitment by legal agreement to secure the management of the site. It is considered important

to secure this as part of the legal agreement so that there are sufficient safeguards in place to manage for example:

- the open space,
- protected habitats that will not be publicly accessible,
- the heritage assets to be retained,
- the village centre.

Flooding

- 611 Whilst the site itself does not have a history of flooding, land on the A224 to the north of the site has surface water flooding issues. This has resulted in the closure of the road during heavy and prolonged rainfall. KCC advise that this surface water flooding is a result of drainage ditches adjacent to the road becoming blocked.
- 612 Permission has been granted for the development of the site adjacent to this area of flooding for a crematorium. Part of that permission, if implemented, will involve works to improve drainage onto this section of the public highway. At the very least this will reduce the amount of water running into this area. Even if this does not prevent the flooding issue completely, or if the permission is not implemented, that matter would not be sufficient to justify a refusal of permission of this site as there are alternative routes around the flooded area if it should be repeated. Equally the County Highways Authority could investigate and resolve the matter as it falls within their remit and it would not be within the control of the applicant.

Fences around the site:

- 613 Concern has been expressed that the removal of security fencing would allow access to the site and potential for fly tipping, gypsy occupation and other activities. This would be a matter for the landowner to deal with if it occurs at a future date. It is not considered a reason to retain the existing security fencing and its removal would allow public access to the site and the recreational areas proposed.

Retention of Employment Land

- 614 Concern has been raised that if the commercial land cannot be used for such purposes that the developer may seek to 'flip' the use of the site to residential purposes. Certainly central government relaxations for landowners to make such changes to existing premises permit an increasing amount of commercial floorspace to be changed and lost in this way. A condition can be imposed to remove these permitted development rights.

Razor Wire

- 615 Qinetiq will require security fencing around the whole of their site. This will comprise a 2.4m fence topped with strands of razor wire. The scheme has been amended such that wherever possible there is potential for it to be moved back from the public domain to allow additional space for landscaping in front of the wire. The position of the fence responds to the need to maintain security around the site but also to take account of blast zones around the areas within the site where explosives are stored. There are two areas where the fence will lie in close proximity to public area with little to screen it – to the rear of a few parking spaces to the south of the hotel and on the eastern side of the site where adjacent to the Fort. Since the Fort cannot be moved and the existing buildings within the Qinetiq

enclave are to be retained there is little that can be done to mitigate the impact of this feature.

Environmental Statement

- 616 This planning application was accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. The purpose of the ES is to identify the likely environmental impacts of the development.
- 617 This process can also identify ways in which the development can be modified to avoid, reduce or off set likely adverse impacts, as well as ways in which beneficial impacts can be optimised.
- 618 For the purposes of this report, the key findings and environmental information are set out below, including the weight to be attached to those impacts.

Built Heritage

- 619 The ES identifies that three building of moderate heritage importance are to be demolished as part of this proposal. These buildings are said to form part of the setting of the existing Grade II Listed Building but are not in themselves of high architectural interest and they are stated to make little contribution to the significance of the Listed Building.
- 620 The ES refers to the proposals to provide a village centre that include the Grade II Listed Building and to the refurbishment of the Fort, a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a proposal for a Heritage Interpretation Centre to help explain the sites history and therefore the importance of these buildings. The proposal is to retain important views through the site using the historic route of the existing Crow Road.
- 621 In the future the works proposed will involve the need for separate Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument consents.
- 622 The ES concludes for this section that the setting of heritage assets would also be enhanced by the development proposed through the improved management of the landscape and green infrastructure.
- 623 These conclusions and assessments of impact are accepted. There is an opportunity to secure the refurbishment of the most important of the existing heritage assets and there is potential, to be supported via a legal agreement, to open up the wider site for public access, so that the context of these heritage assets can be understood; no public access is currently permitted.

Buried Heritage (Archaeology)

- 624 The ES concludes that the below ground elements of the original Fort are a heritage asset of national importance. The works proposed in this area concern the refurbishment of the Fort, the provision a Heritage Interpretation Centre and potentially, subject to a feasibility study, the opening up of part of the existing moat. These works will have some impact on the Fort Heritage as a heritage asset but will also enhance it.

- 625 For the wider site it is concluded in the ES that there is low to medium potential for archaeological remains that pre-date the Fort. Mitigation is proposed with a programme of archaeological work to be carried out (secured by condition) during the excavation and construction works on site. *Officer note: see condition 31.*
- 626 It is concluded that the substantial and significant harm that would occur as a result of this proposal would be outweighed by the substantial public benefits that can be delivered by this scheme, as secured by condition and legal agreement.

Socio-economics

- 627 Some of the economic benefits to the proposal referred to in the ES relate to the construction process, which it is currently anticipated would take around 11 years. It is stated that between 143 and 360 jobs per year would be created.
- 628 The proposal would provide for 20% of the residential units to be for affordable housing which would be secured by a legal agreement.
- 629 It is acknowledged in the ES that the proposal is likely to lead to an increase in demand for education and nursery places but there is sufficient capacity to absorb the extra demand.
- 630 The ES states that there will be additional demand for health care facilities. Healthcare provision is one of the types of infrastructure that can be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The proposal includes provision of floorspace for D1 uses that would allow occupation by healthcare providers.
- 631 The ES estimates that once completed there would be 1480 employment opportunities at the site, which are likely to cover a range of skills. Some of those employees would be related to Qinetiq who are already on the site, and the majority of other employment is expected to come from the B1 and B2 uses (light and general industrial uses) proposed. More limited employment would be related to the proposed hotel and the services in the village centre.
- 632 The ES anticipates that with the full development of the site, there would be increased spending in the area from the new workforce and new residents, which is a reasonable assumption.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

- 633 There is contamination on site and some affected areas of the site may have resulted in the presence of potentially explosive materials. Remediation of the site through treatment or removal is to be carried out by DSTL before they vacate in 2018. Further remediation would then be undertaken to the areas proposed for residential use as appropriate for that use.
- 634 Conditions can be proposed for any permission to secure the requirements for remediation of this site and these would be referred to the Council's Environmental Health Team and the Environment Agency, for expert comment, as appropriate. A Construction Environmental Management Plan is proposed for the site to minimise the risks from contamination during this process. This could also be secured by condition.
- 635 Upon completion of the development, once the remediation is complete, it is concluded that there would be low risk to human health and the wider

environment. There have been no objections to the proposals from the Environment Agency or SDC Environmental Health.

Water Resources and Flood Risk

- 636 The ES states that the Environment Agency's data confirms the site is at a low risk of flooding.
- 637 The proposal would include a scheme for sustainable drainage, which could be secured via planning condition, to reduce and manage surface water drainage.
- 638 Replacement foul sewer infrastructure is proposed including a new pumping station for some of the residential plots. New connections will be needed some of the existing drainage. The Qinetiq area would have separate drainage provision.
- 697 It is stated that these measures would ensure sufficient foul water infrastructure for the site and a condition can be imposed to secure this. This would address the issues raised by Thames Water.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

- 640 A number of surveys were carried out as part of the ES assessment and several 'protected' and 'notable' species were found on the site and in the wider Survey Area: bats, badgers, breeding birds, dormice, reptiles and terrestrial invertebrates.
- 641 It is proposed to retain the most valuable habitats. Mitigate will be required during the demolition and construction process and as a result of the development proposals. The ES proposes a long-term management and enhancement of the habitats on the Site and in the wider Survey Area would be secured through an Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).
- 642 Conditions can be imposed to secure the management and mitigation required. Other legislation will still apply in relation to any protected species. The proposal also includes clauses within a legal agreement to address the long term management of the site.

Transportation and Access

- 643 A construction and environmental management plan is proposed that would set out proposals for the management of traffic and access during the construction process. This can be secured by condition.
- 644 The ES concludes that there will be a marginal increase in traffic flows as a result of the completed development. KCC Highways confirm that there would be unlikely to be any adverse impact on the local highway network.
- 645 Various improvements are proposed including enhanced bus provision, cycle facilities, a travel plan, improved pedestrian routes.
- 646 Conditions, clauses in any legal agreement and highway agreements are proposed to secure the improvements proposed and required.

Air Quality

- 647 The ES states that the demolition and construction activities associated with the development would be expected to generate dust, with the potential for nuisance.

As the development would be phased the impact of this would change over time and be localised to some extent when they occurred. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is proposed to minimise the dust generated during the demolition and construction works and this can be secured by condition.

- 648 It was concluded that there would be no significant impacts on local air quality. This conclusion is accepted.

Noise

- 649 During construction and demolition, the ES states that noise levels are likely to increase temporarily for those dwellings closest to the site. The proposed Construction Environmental Management Plan would seek to minimise the noise generated during the demolition and construction works and this can be secured by condition.

- 650 Noise assessments were carried out relating to traffic noise, building services plant and for the proposed residential areas and it was concluded that the appropriate noise levels would be achieved. No adverse impacts are at this time expected from the work proposed by Qinetiq.

- 651 These conclusions are accepted and conditions proposed where appropriate.

Cumulative Assessment

- 652 The ES states that the cumulative impacts of the Development, together with any other planned (or committed) developments were assessed. The only planned development that has been considered and which was agreed with SDC as part of the Scoping process, is the former West Kent Cold Store (WKCS) scheme, located approximately 2km to the south-east of the Site.

- 653 The cumulative impacts were found to be minimal.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

- 654 The ES states that due to the location of the site on a ridge of the Kent Downs escarpment, with existing perimeter woodland and vegetation, there is an effective screen to many potential views.

- 655 It states that views of taller elements of existing buildings, such as laboratory chimneys, are possible above the perimeter vegetation, although views into the site are not possible.

- 656 This situation is unlikely to change during the construction process due to the retention of most of the existing screening. The ES confirms that most of the landscape features within the site would be retained and enhanced. It advises that the tallest elements of the Development would potentially break the vegetation line; however, these would appear as small features within the wider panorama and would not result in significant changes in the landscape.

- 657 The ES states that the proposals would be particularly beneficial to the night time visual amenity. The Star Hill Road gate house would be removed and the associated security lighting. A lighting strategy that reduces sky glow (which can be achieved via modern lighting techniques) is also proposed.

658 These conclusions are supported by the Council's own landscape consultant.

Other issues

659 Climate change was not assessed separately as part of the ES, in accordance with the Scoping Opinion for the ES. At the time that the ES was being prepared, the Code for Sustainable Homes was still in force and there were proposals for zero carbon requirements as part of the amendments proposed to the Building Regulations. The Code for Sustainable Homes is now being withdrawn and the changes to the Building Regulations are no longer proposed.

660 The proposals for this site include a travel plan, cycle provision, bus provision and modern infrastructure for services including lighting and water. Conditions can be imposed on any permission to secure BREEAM standards for the non-residential units and an investigation of renewable energy options as supported by Policy SP2 of the Core Strategy. Electric vehicle charging points are also proposed via a condition.

661 As this is a secure site and due to the nature of the use, it is difficult to obtain qualitative data about existing carbon emissions. It is also difficult, due to the nature of an outline application with so many reserved matters to make a qualitative assessment of the proposed carbon emissions.

662 Climate change is a difficult issue to assess for this complex site and due to the nature of the existing use and the type of application submitted, it is an issue that cannot be dealt with fully. It is concluded that the approach on climate change adopted is not an unreasonable one for this application, considering the constraints that apply.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Para 116 of the NPPF.

663 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) requires in performing any function affecting land in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of that area.

664 The impact on the AONB is discussed in detail earlier in this report. This section refers specifically to the tests under para 116 of the NPPF.

At para 116 of the NPPF we are advised that:

665 *Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of :*

- *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations and the impact of permitting it or refusing it upon the local economy,*
- *the cost of and scope for developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way*
- *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

- 666 These sections of the NPPF and the requirements of Policy EMP3 are also related to the impact on biodiversity. As the understanding of 'natural beauty' in the CROW Act includes 'conservation of its flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features', this is also a relevant consideration for any impact on the AONB.
- 667 There is accordingly a strong but rebuttable presumption against granting permission where there is harm to flora, fauna, flora or physiographical features of the AONB. In this circumstance, the assessment is about the extent of that harm and whether it is outweighed by other considerations.
- 668 This proposal is for a major development so permission should be refused except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated it is in the public interest. This assessment must cover key issues which are set out below:

The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations and the impact of permitting it or refusing it upon the local economy.

The cost of and scope for developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way.

- 669 The consideration of this site for the ADMP demonstrated that the site was needed to protect the local economy. The proposal was for a development that allowed replacement employment on the site, for the job that would be lost with the withdrawal of DSTL. The proposals for employment at this site were in addition to the proposals within the Core Strategy, for this reason, not in place of.
- 670 The site had already been identified as a Major Developed Site in the Core Strategy as it was considered important to protect this employment site and to allow for redevelopment if needed, consistent with Green Belt and AONB policy. The site, before the announcement that DSTL would withdraw, provided 1200 jobs and this loss would have an adverse impact on the local economy.
- 671 The development would, through conditions and a legal agreement secure:
- an employment led scheme to replace the employment to be lost
 - public access to the site that is not currently available
 - the refurbishment of existing heritage assets
 - the comprehensive management and maintenance of the open spaces, woodlands and protected landscape within the site
 - an improved lighting scheme for the site to reduce the skyglow in the local and wider landscape.
 - Improvements to the transport and pedestrian options to and through the site.
 - A village centre with a mix of retail and community uses.
- 672 These issues support the key priorities identified earlier in this report to preserve and enhance the AONB and to provide a range of employment uses on the site to generate at least 1200 jobs. The NPPF at para 19 states that significant weight should be attached to the need to support economic growth the planning system.
- 673 In addition the proposal would provide for 450 homes of which 20% would be affordable. This is a lesser priority in policy terms but is considered a key component to ensure delivery of the employment, heritage and village centre elements referred to above, ensuring that the development is viable.

674 Alternative sites have not been considered due to the status of this site as a Major Developed Site and the long term aim of allowing replacement employment on this site, and the socio-economic benefits this would bring. As this District, the land required for this amount of employment is very unlikely to be available unless it is in the Green Belt. This site is previously development land and as concluded earlier in the report, the proposal would be appropriate development in the Green Belt.

Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities and the extent to which that could be moderated.

675 The conclusions in the section earlier in this report on the impact of this proposal on the AONB state that overall the scheme would preserve and enhance the landscape. Consideration is also given to the 'natural beauty' which includes flora and fauna and is discussed in detail in the section on biodiversity.

676 There will be some adverse harm that is insignificant or of minor significance in the short term to biodiversity. This would be during the period of demolition and construction only. After completion, it is likely that the impacts would be of minor beneficial significance due to the proposed management of the habitats on site.

677 There are no existing recreational opportunities on this site as it is secure. This proposal would allow public access and open recreational areas to large part of the site, improving the opportunities to enjoy this location, its views and unusual heritage.

Conclusion on para 116 tests

678 It is unusual that there is already a developed employment site of this scale in the AONB and Green Belt. This site began with the Fort in the late 1890s and has expanded extensively since that time as part of defence plans before, during and after both World Wars. After World War II 59 buildings are associated with the role of the site for atomic research and this would have involved the erection of further buildings. Further building took place in the 1960s with major redevelopment taking place in the 1970s and early 1980s.

679 In contrast, the Kent Downs AONB was designated in July 1968 under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. It covers 339 square miles from Surrey / Greater London to the Strait of Dover, covering some 23% of the total area of Kent.

680 At the time of this designation this site was already well established as a secure defence and research facility including a significant amount of development.

681 This site is also unusual in that it is secure so there are clear benefits in allowing the site to be opened up to the public so they can enjoy the landscape, views (albeit limited), recreational opportunities and heritage assets. Whilst there would be some harm to the landscape and short term harm to the biodiversity as a result of the proposed development, there is also likely to be some harm from the current use and operations. Taking all the above into account, it is not unreasonable to conclude that there are exceptional circumstances in this case and that this proposal would be in the public interest.

Conclusion

- 682 The proposed scheme relates to the redevelopment of a major employment site in the green belt. The quantum and principle of development is accepted by policy EMP3 subject to a number of caveats. It is considered that the redevelopment in the manner proposed could be achieved without causing any greater impact upon the surrounding green belt than the existing employment site.
- 683 The application proposes improvements to existing public transport, walking and cycling facilities in and around the site. A community bus will be provided in addition to the changes to the existing bus that runs alongside the site.
- 684 A range of facilities will be provided for use by future residents and employers thereby reducing the need to travel and thereby reducing future dependency on car use. The scheme would therefore be compliant with policy EMP3 and those policies seeking to promote sustainable development.
- 685 The site lies within the Kent Downs AONB at the top of the scarp overlooking Sevenoaks. It is ringed by ancient woodland and existing calcareous grassland. Both will be protected and enhanced by the proposed scheme, and the habitat improved for protected species. The quantum of development, when compared to the existing level of development on site would not be harmful to the surrounding AONB.
- 686 Also, in terms of the impact on the AONB, the site is currently secure so there are clear benefits in allowing the site to be opened up to the public so they can enjoy the landscape, views (albeit limited), recreational opportunities and heritage assets. Whilst there would be some harm to the landscape and short term harm to the biodiversity as a result of the proposed development, there is also likely to be some harm from the current use and operations. There will be additional benefits with the introduction of modern lighting that would reduce the skyglow in the landscape. Taking all the above into account, it is not unreasonable to conclude that there are exceptional circumstances for this development in the AONB and that this proposal would be in the public interest.
- 687 The submitted Transport Assessment concludes that the scheme will have an impact upon surrounding road network but a relatively minor impact and not one that requires mitigation. Nevertheless changes and improvements are proposed to the surrounding road network that will benefit existing and future residents of the area. Overall the impact upon the surrounding road network would be within acceptable limits.
- 688 The existing Scheduled Ancient Monument and Listed buildings would be protected and their setting and use enhanced as result of the proposed scheme. A number of buildings will be retained and refurbished as part of the scheme which will add to the character and setting of the site and the proposed use of the Fort and the listed Penney Building would add interest and long term value to the site and individual buildings. The substantial and significant harm that would occur as a result of this proposal would be outweighed by the substantial public benefits that can be delivered by this scheme, as secured by condition and legal agreement.
- 689 Existing dwellings at the edge of but outside the site will be part of the new village to be developed here and will benefit in improvements to access, social facilities, green open space improved public transport etc. Compliance with Policy EMP3 will be achieved in this respect.

- 690 Whilst not the exemplar development that had been hoped for (as a result of viability issues) sufficient conformity with existing building codes and energy saving methods will be achieved to comply with policy.
- 691 Significant improvements in green infrastructure within the site will be made as well as the maintenance and improvement of the green infrastructure surrounding the site to the benefit of the site and wider environment.
- 692 The scheme will be subject to phasing conditions and a legal agreement that will ensure that this is an employment led development in accordance with policy EMP3.
- 693 Evidence has been provided and agreed in regard to the approach to minimise the impact of the development upon surrounding air quality and light pollution that will ensure compliance with the relevant national standards and policies. An appropriate strategy has been agreed to deal with ground contamination that will ensure protection for construction workers, future residents and surrounding residents such as to be policy compliant.
- 694 The submitted details have been assessed in regard to the viability of the scheme and it is concluded that the quantum of development is correct to sustain the employment space proposed and to provide for the S106 contributions towards making this a sustainable development.
- 695 The viability of the scheme is a key issue in determining the amount of affordable housing that can be provided. The policy requirement for 40% cannot be achieved without making this an unviable scheme. It is considered that the 20% provision proposed is acceptable in the viability context and supports the Councils aims for the provision of affordable housing, an employment led scheme and the protection of the heritage assets to be retained.

Background Papers

Site and Block Plan

Appendix A – Graphic of Indicative Phasing Plan

All pertinent documents are available on the planning register other than those documents that are exempt from disclosure.

Contact Officer(s): Mrs A Salter Extension: 7360

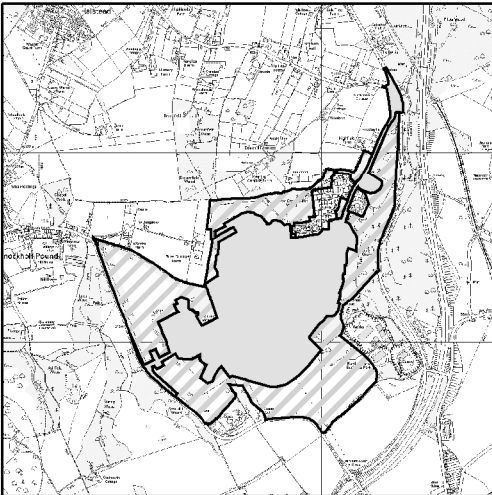
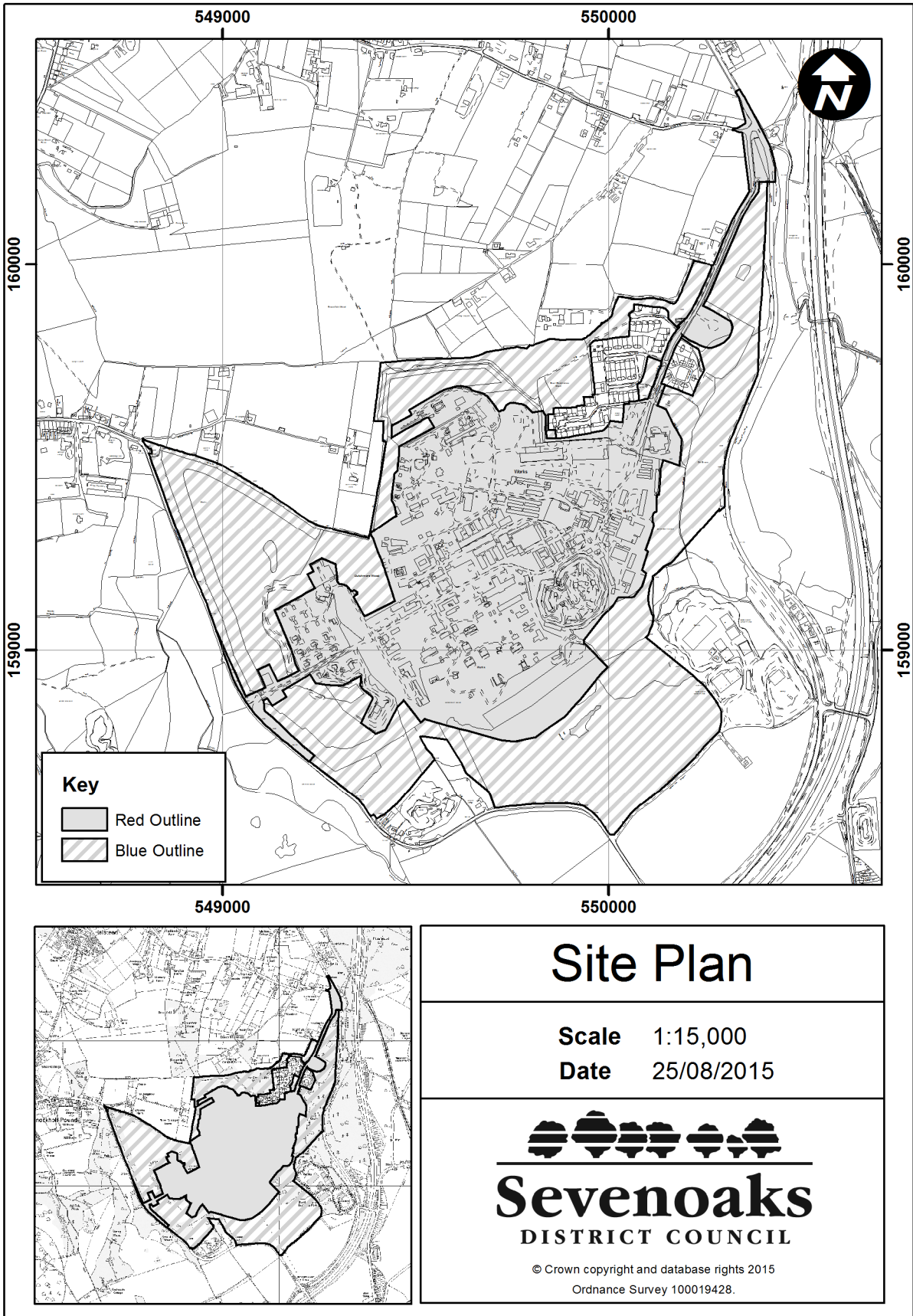
Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer

Link to application details:

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=NKKXZEBK0L000>

Link to associated documents:

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=NKKXZEBK0L000>



Site Plan

Scale 1:15,000

Date 25/08/2015



Sevenoaks
DISTRICT COUNCIL

© Crown copyright and database rights 2015
Ordnance Survey 100019428.

Block Plan



Aerial Block Plan



Key

--- Application boundary

--- Applicant's land ownership boundary

1 & 2 Bed Flats

2 Bed Houses

3 Bed Houses

4 Bed Houses

5 Bed Houses

B1a/B1b Offices

B1c Light Industrial

B2 General Industrial

A1 Shop

D1 Community Space

D1 Interpretation Centre/Listed Buildings

C1 Hotel

QInet/Q Retained Buildings

Fort Workshops

Graphic of Indicative Phasing Plan – **Appendix A**

