



Final Report  
December 2012

UNITED  
KINGDOM  
& IRELAND



# Sevenoaks District Council Employment Land Review in relation to:

United House, Swanley

Manor House, New Ash Green

Trading Estate to the rear of Premier Inn, Swanley

West Kingsdown Industrial Estate, West Kingsdown





**Project Title:** Employment Land Review in Relation to : United House, Swanley;  
Trading Estate nr Premier Inn, Swanley; Manor House, New Ash Green;  
and West Kingsdown Industrial Estate

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**Employment Land Review in Relation to: United House, Swanley;  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Explanation
DPD	Development Plan Document
ELR	Employment Land Review
GEA	Gross External Area
GIA	Gross Internal Area
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
LDF	Local Development Framework
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
SME	Small-medium sized Enterprise

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Context to the Study**

The key objective of this assignment is to provide clarity about the future use of the following four sites:

- United House, Swanley;
- Trading Estate to the rear of Premier Inn, Swanley;
- Manor House, New Ash Green; and
- West Kingsdown Industrial Estate, West Kingsdown.

The sites are subject to either representations or enquiries from landowners seeking one hundred percent residential development as part of the District Council's forthcoming Allocations and Development Management Plan.

The main purpose of this assignment is to provide specific evidence to help assess the future use of these sites for allocation in the District Council's forthcoming Allocations and Development Management Plan. A plan of each site is included in Section 2 of the study.

The study examines the characteristics of the sites; the size and condition of the principal buildings and any constraints to new development. The revised balance of employment land demand and supply included in the Long Term Employment Space Projections for Sevenoaks District Final Report (September 2011) is also used as a basis for appraising the sites.

### **1.2. Study Objectives**

The study carries out a review of the sites to address the following issues:

- The suitability of the sites for continued business use having regard to their size and location, accessibility, their form and quality of buildings and related facilities on site, parking and servicing arrangements and relationship to adjoining uses.
- The prospects for achieving viable re-uses of the sites in whole or in part for business purposes in accordance with Core Strategy policy. This includes longer term prospects as required by Core Strategy Policy SP8 and not be limited to current market demand.
- Any wider implications for the District if the sites were to be lost in part or whole to other uses. This includes the impact on the overall supply of employment land.

### **1.3. Approach**

The study has been based on site surveys, telephone consultations with three local property market agents and a review of secondary information including analysis of the 2007 Sevenoaks ELR and the 2010 Update Addendum. Options for each site were then formulated based on the findings of the above and appraised.

The research team has also considered other vacant space on the market to give an idea of present availability and frictional vacancy rates, and liaised with the landowners at the United House and Manor House sites.

To meet the study objectives this review is arranged around the following structure:

- Section 2 introduces the characteristics of the sites; including the size and condition of the principal buildings and constraints to new development. This section also includes the results of our consultations with property market agents and an overall SWOT summary on each. The consultations with property market agents mainly present a short term view on the prospects for the sites.
- The long-term projections of demand for employment space in Sevenoaks are visited in Section 3 along with a consideration of the overall supply of employment land in the District.
- Section 4 explores a range of options for the future of the sites. These options are appraised and a preferred option recommended for each site.
- Section 5 assesses the implications of the preferred options on the balance of supply and demand in the district and wider conclusions.



**2. THE SITES**

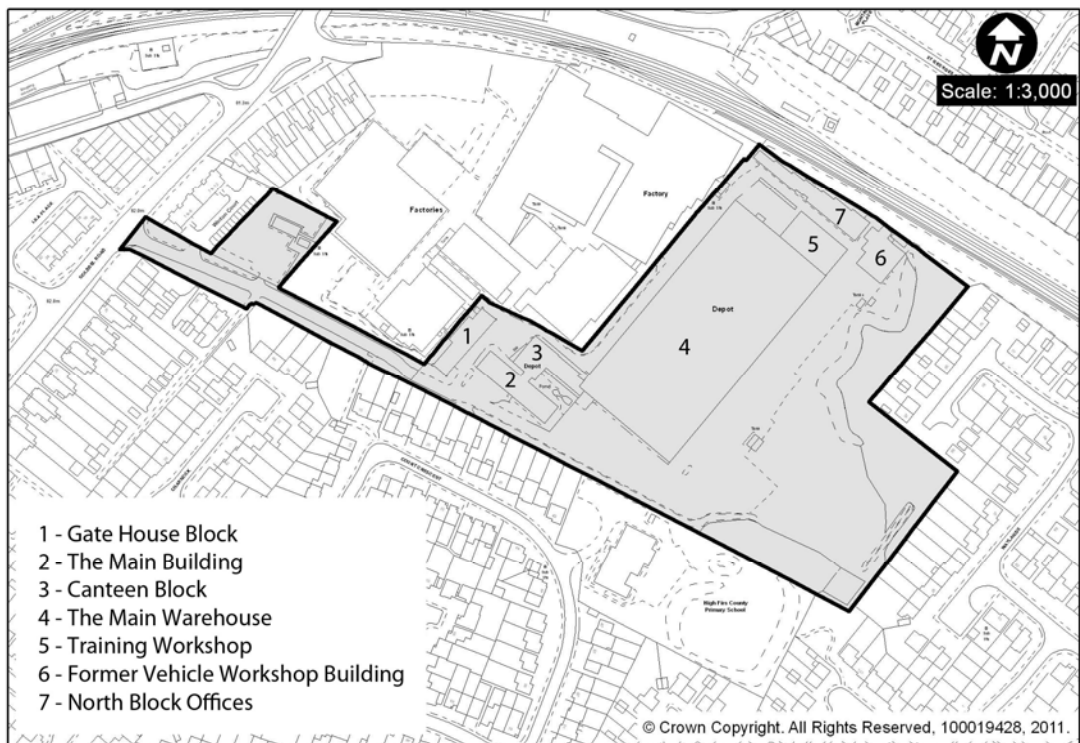
**2.1. Introduction**

This section introduces the sites, considers their characteristics as employment sites and the condition of the buildings. The features of the sites are presented to help inform the future development options. The analysis explores each site’s location, environment, remediation, archaeology, land use contexts and planning policy.

**2.2. The United House, Swanley**

The United House site in Swanley occupies a gross area of 3.80 hectares. The site is set within the settlement of Swanley, immediately south of the designated town centre, and is bounded to the north by railway lines, residential areas and a primary school to the east and south, and industrial development to the west of the main part of the site. Figure 2.1 below illustrates the location and immediate geographical context of the site.

**Figure 2.1 The United House Site**



Source: Ordnance Survey via Sevenoaks District Council (adapted by URS)

The sole occupier of the site is United House, a building contractor specialising in the new build and refurbishment of social housing, urban regeneration and private residential development.

## **Owner Plans for the Site**

The site owner, United House, has already relocated 100 of their staff to Media House, Azalea Drive, Swanley and intend to relocate the remainder there in due course. With changes in the building industry and their operations, they no longer require the site with its warehousing and have indicated their wish to promote the site for redevelopment. They had originally intended to promote the site for mixed use development but since the 2010 Allocations and Management DPD, have submitted details to the Council suggesting that employment/commercial use would be unviable and that a purely residential scheme would be envisaged.

## **Condition of the Site and Buildings**

The consultant team surveyed the site with a representative from United House and their planning agent, Planning Potential, on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012.

The site is an irregularly shaped site with sole access via a private service road leading off Goldsel Road. A well-used car park (with no marked bays) is provided off the service road at the western end of the site, with an access point with a security checkpoint into the main part of the site. The net area of the site is 3.30 hectares, taking into consideration land which is not suitable for development – i.e. the access road (0.2 hectares) and the balancing pond (0.3 hectares).

There are a number of office buildings, workshops and a large warehouse on the site. United House state that in total, there is 11,394m<sup>2</sup> Gross Internal Area (GIA) of accommodation<sup>1</sup>. A second area for hardstanding is used for parking (with marked bays) east of the main warehouse building – this is currently under-utilised and partly used for recycling/storage of materials.

Table 2.1 below summarises the type, quantum and condition of the buildings. In total, there are seven principal building areas providing office and warehousing floorspace. The majority is warehouse space (7,727m<sup>2</sup>) with the two main office buildings by the access point and the North Block offices accounting for 2,573m<sup>2</sup>.

The Gate House and Main Office blocks are the two blocks closest to the access point and are both two storey buildings with bold architectural detailing on the facades. Both buildings were refurbished in the 1970s and contain a combination of open plan and cellular offices. There are no lifts in either building. A further ancillary office block, North Block, is located at the northern edge of the site, which was built approximately 50 years ago. These three buildings are primarily for office use.

The Main Warehouse is also approximately 50 years old and has seven interconnecting bays. It has relatively low eaves which are considered unsuitable for modern users and uses. It is used to assemble and store parts of refurbishment kits (e.g. boilers, kitchen units, etc) but at the time of the site survey, only a small proportion of the available floor space was in use. Generally, the site owners claim that the warehouse is largely under-

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Rogers LLP Market Review, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012

utilised due to a shift towards ‘just-in-time’ production and wider changes in the construction industry.

Appendix A contains photographs during the survey of the principal buildings.

**Table 2.1 Type, Quantum and Condition of the Buildings at United House**

Building No.	Building Name	Type of Space	Quantum (m <sup>2</sup> ) GIA	Condition
1	Gate House Block	Office	674	Average
2	Main Office	Office	950	Average
3	Canteen Block	Ancillary	433	Average
4	Main Warehouse	Warehouse	7,727	Average
5	Training Workshop	Workshop	542	Average
6	Vehicle Workshop & Offices	Workshop	119	Average
7	North Block Offices	Office	949	Average
1, 2 & 7	Total B1 office space	-	2,573	-
4	Total B8 warehouse space	-	7,727	-
3, 5 & 6	Other uses	-	1,094	-
Total Building Areas: All Floorspace		-	11,394	-

*Source: URS; floorspace figures from United House/Michael Rogers LLP*

The site as a whole is in reasonable condition. There is an internal road system, security fences and on-site parking in the car park at the western end of the site and within the main part of the site, east of the main warehouse building.

### **Historic Employment**

The site owner estimates that there were previously 300 staff on site; there are approximately 200 left on site at present, with 100 staff having been relocated to Media House by Swanley rail station. United House staff currently occupy approximately 550m<sup>2</sup> of office space at Media House. They believe that the staff remaining on site could be relocated and accommodated within Media House if the United House site is vacated.

### **Site Characteristics**

The key characteristics of the site are set out below. The planning policy context is considered separately.

**Access - Employees**

The site is well served by public transport with Swanley rail station located about 0.25 miles away. Swanley is on the railway line between London, Ashford International, Dover and Ramsgate with frequent services. There are 167 car parking spaces at Swanley rail station.

There are bus stops outside the station on Azalea Drive for routes 477 and 478, serving a range of destinations including West Kingsdown, Swanley town centre, Orpington and Dartford. There are one to two buses every hour between 09:00 and 18:00 Monday to Saturday.

For pedestrians, the private service road to the site is both well paved and lit, as is Goldsel Road itself. Swanley town centre with its amenities is within ten minutes' walk of the site.

The car park at the western edge of the site off the service road was almost full at the time of the site survey on a weekday afternoon, suggesting many employees choose to drive to work.

Swanley is close to Junction 3 of the M25 motorway and Junction 1 of the A20/M20. Access for heavy goods vehicles to the site is through a residential area from the High Street/B2173 or Goldsel Road/B258.

**Archaeology**

The site is not located within an Area of Archaeological Potential.

**Remediation**

Sevenoaks District Council has confirmed that part of the United House site may potentially be contaminated (in the period 1990 to 2004); this part of the site lies under the main warehouse building. Additional work would need to be carried out to determine the level of contamination and remedial works.

**Topography**

The site level drops by approximately 10 metres (based on a visual inspection during the site survey) from the access point to the site down towards the eastern boundary where the balancing pond is located at low level.

**Flood Risk**

The site itself is not within the functional floodplain but is within close proximity to a strip of Flood Zone 3b that runs through the adjacent housing estate to the southeast of the site (parts of Waylands and Pink Hill).

**Public Right of Way**

There is a public right of way from Goldsel Road.

### Sensitive Land Uses

The site is bordered by residential buildings to the east and south of the site and High Firs County primary school is located immediately to the south. The service road is shared with three residential properties on its southern side (numbers 31-35 Goldsel Road) and also provides vehicular access to the rear of the flats at Winston Court, also on Goldsel Road.

Immediately to the west of the main part of the site is Swan Mills, a paper tableware manufacturer, and to the north lies the railway line – both of these uses have the potential to generate noise which could affect redevelopment/other uses on the United House site.

### Planning Policy Context

#### Sevenoaks Core Strategy (2011)

The site was excluded from employment land to be protected purely for B Use class development in the ELR Update 2010 and assumed as a site suitable for mixed use in the Core Strategy, which has since been amended to purely residential development in the Allocations and Management DPD – Supplementary Site Allocation Consultation March 2012. This amendment has arisen as the site owner has submitted details suggesting that employment/commercial use on the site would be unviable. It is unknown whether a site valuation appraisal has been developed to demonstrate this point and URS has not seen or been made aware of any.

Development is framed by Policy SP8 of the Core Strategy which aims to encourage the sustainable development of the district's economy by measures such as:

- The retention, intensification and regeneration of existing business areas;
- New office development in Sevenoaks and Swanley town centres.

Policy SP8 of the Core Strategy also states that:

*'Sites used for business purposes will be retained in business use unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of their take up or continued use for business purposes during the Core Strategy period. Redevelopment for mixed use of business sites in urban areas may exceptionally be permitted where such development would facilitate the regeneration of the site to more effectively meet the needs of modern business, where the employment capacity of the site, represented by the commercial floorspace, is maintained and where a mixed use development would represent a sustainable approach consistent with the general distribution of development.'*

This policy forms part of the rationale for this study – to establish whether there is a reasonable prospect of the continued use of the site for business purposes over the Core Strategy period.



**National Planning Policy Framework (2011)**

The NPPF states that:

*'Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocations should be regularly reviewed. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.'* (paragraph 22)

**Property Market Perspective**

The property market perspective is that whilst other warehouse/industrial locations within Swanley might benefit from being closer to Junction 3 of the M25 – such as the Gateway Trading Estate or The Interchange – the advantage that the United House site has is proximity to the town centre and public transport provision. In terms of offices, White Oak Square in Swanley on the northern side of Swanley town centre is considered to be a stronger office location, with Dartford and Crossways Business Park more favoured within the wider area. In the longer term, the view was that when the existing buildings reach the end of their life, it may be unviable to redevelop them for similar uses and therefore preferable to redevelop the site for other uses, such as residential.

**Summary**

Table 2.2 shows the SWOT of the United House site for employment uses drawing upon the findings of the preceding sections. In summary, the research finds that:

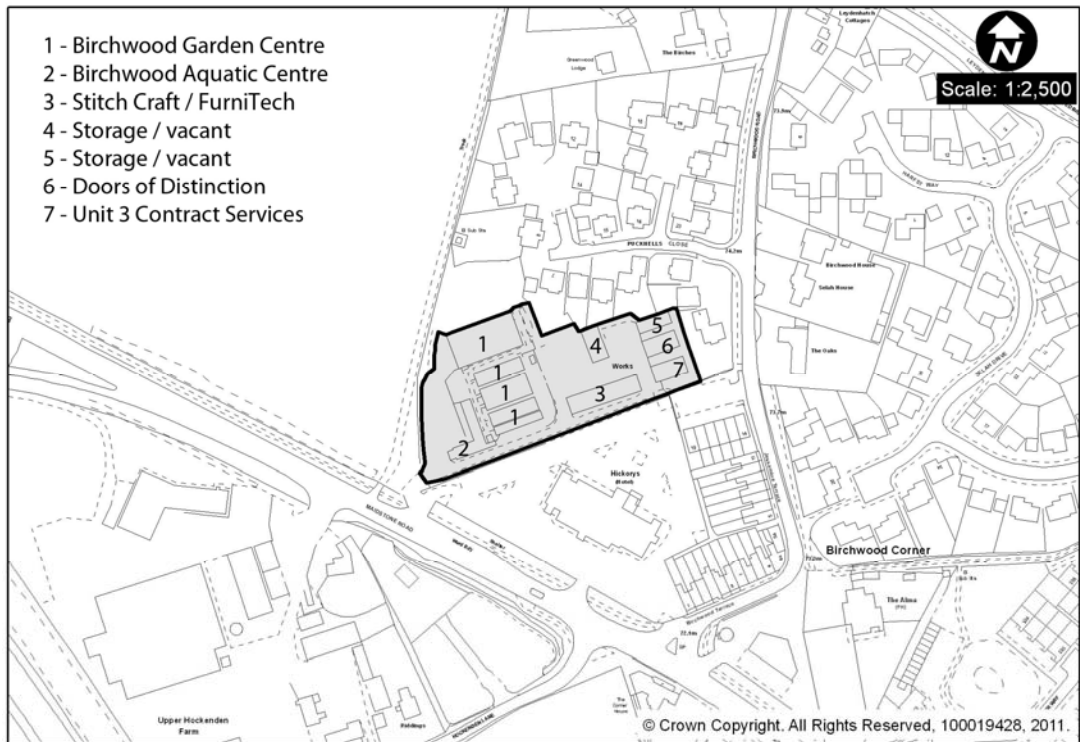
Office	Warehouse
<b>Strengths</b>	
Physical assets – 2,573m <sup>2</sup>	Physical assets – 7,727m <sup>2</sup>
Located close to Swanley rail station and bus services	Dedicated private service road with large area of hard standing by the warehouse for ease of access
<b>Weaknesses</b>	
Current offices lack visibility from Goldsel Road	HGV access is via residential areas
Requires significant refurbishment to meet current office standards / requirements	Requires refurbishment
	Low eaves are not suitable for today's occupiers/users
	Sensitive neighbouring uses (residential and primary school)
<b>Opportunities</b>	
Possibility to develop the site more intensively	Possibility to develop the site more intensively
Opportunities to have office space on higher visibility part of the site	There is a demand for additional B8 space in the District over the longer term
<b>Threats</b>	
Competing locations for office space	Competing locations for industrial space with better HGV access to the strategic road network
Flat long-term demand (net) for new office space	

This section has shown that the principal buildings at United House require significant investment and refurbishment in order to attract new office/industrial users when the site becomes vacant. Whilst the site is largely free of significant constraints to development, competing industrial locations are considered to have better access to the strategic road network. The proximity of the site to the town centre and train station presents an opportunity for some continued offices uses at appropriate locations on the site.

**2.3. Trading Estate to the rear of Premier Inn, Swanley**

The trading estate to the rear of Premier Inn, London Road, Swanley occupies a gross area of 0.58 hectares. The site is on the northwestern edge of the settlement of Swanley and is bounded to the north and east by residential properties, a new Premier Inn hotel and Beefeater Restaurant to the south, and agricultural land to the west. Figure 2.2 illustrates the location and immediate geographical context of the site.

**Figure 2.2: Trading estate to the rear of Premier Inn, Swanley**



Source: Ordnance Survey via Sevenoaks District Council (adapted by URS)

The site is currently occupied by four small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) including the Birchwood Cane & Garden Furniture/Aquatic Centre, Doors of Distinction, FurniTech/Stitch Crafts and Unit 3 Contract Services. It was unclear upon inspection whether two of the units were currently being used for storage or were vacant – both units were locked with no exterior signage.

**Owner Plans for the Site**

The site is in single ownership and the owner has previously indicated that they would be interested in promoting the site for a housing/residential led mixed use development in the next five years.

**Condition of the Site and Buildings**

The consultant team surveyed the site on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012.

The site is broadly rectangular in shape with sole access via a private service road leading off Maidstone Road/B2173. A first car park with no marked bays is provided for customers/employees on the westernmost part of the site, fronted by the Birchwood Cane and Garden Furniture Centre and Birchwood Aquatic Centre. Access to the remaining units is via an internal road along the southern edge of the site where a second area of hard standing provides space for additional parking, servicing and storage (with no markings or allocated spaces).

There are 11 units in total used for retail/workshops and associated storage with a container unit also appearing to provide temporary storage space on the eastern portion of the site. Table 2.3 below summarises the type, quantum (approximate) and condition of the buildings.

Appendix B contains photographs during the survey of the principal buildings.

**Table 2.3 Type, Quantum and Condition of the Buildings at the Trading Estate to the Rear of Premier Inn, Swanley**

Building Name	Type of Space	Quantum (m <sup>2</sup> ) GIA <sup>2</sup>	Condition
Birchwood Garden Centre	Retail	890	Average
Birchwood Aquatic Centre	Retail	170	Average
Stitch Craft / FurniTech	Retail / workshop	220	Average
Storage 1	Storage (Ancillary to retail)	110	Average
Storage 2	Storage (Ancillary to retail)	70	Average
Doors of Distinction	Retail / workshop	100	Average
Unit 3 Contract Services	Workshop	90	Average
Total Building Areas: All Floorspace	-	1,650	-

Source: URS

The site as a whole is in reasonable condition, although it could benefit from some investment in its public realm. There is an internal road system, security fences, some lighting and the areas of hardstanding provide (unmarked) space for parking and access.

### Historic Employment

Details of historic employment at this site are unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Approximate Gross External Areas (GEA) were estimated using aerial photography and converted to GIA by subtracting 10% from the GEA

## **Site Characteristics**

The key characteristics of the site are set out below. The planning policy context is considered separately.

### **Access - Employees**

The site is reasonably well provided for in terms of public transport. Less than five minutes' walk from the site entrance is a bus stop for route 233 which serves Swanley and Eltham. There are three buses every hour between 08:00 and 19:00 Monday to Saturday.

Swanley rail station is approximately 1.2 miles away by road and Bexley rail station 4.0 miles away. Swanley is on the railway line between London, Ashford International, Dover and Ramsgate with frequent services; Bexley is on the line between London and Dartford/Gravesend. There are 167 car parking spaces at Swanley rail station and 259 at Bexley rail station.

For pedestrians, the private service road to the site is both paved and lit, as is Maidstone Road. The nearest amenities are the Beefeater Restaurant on the adjacent site on Maidstone Road and the convenience store at the petrol station on the corner of Birchwood Road, both less than five minutes' walk eastwards along Maidstone Road.

Both car parking areas were less than half full at the time of survey (a weekday afternoon). There were no marked parking spaces or loading/unloading areas.

The site is located on the Maidstone Road/B2173 with access nearby to the A20, providing connections to Junction 3 of the M25 motorway and Junction 1 of the A20/M20 towards the east, and Sidcup and London to the west and northwest. Heavy goods vehicle access is via Maidstone Road/B2173 although the site layout is likely to restrict deliveries to smaller vehicles.

### **Archaeology**

The site is not located with an Area of Archaeological Potential.

### **Remediation**

There are no known areas of contamination on this site.

### **Topography**

The site level drops by approximately three metres (based on a visual inspection during the site survey) from the eastern part of the site towards the west.

### **Flood Risk**

The site is not within the functional floodplain.



### **Public Right of Way**

There are no known public rights of way across the site.

### **Sensitive Land Uses**

The site is backed onto by residential buildings (relatively new, detached houses) to the north and east of the site; the western boundary is shared with a private service road for the agricultural land to the west. The recently developed Premier Inn hotel and Beefeater Restaurant back almost directly on to the southern boundary of the site.

### **Planning Policy Context**

#### **Sevenoaks Core Strategy (2011)**

The site was not included within the schedule of surveyed employment land in the 2007 ELR and 2010 Update but was proposed for residential development in the 2010 Allocations and Development Management DPD, along with the adjacent Premier Inn and Beefeater site (formerly the Déjà Vu nightclub site).

Since during the recent URS surveys the site was identified to be in established retail/trade and ancillary uses, Policy SP8 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy (2011), which is concerned with retention and protection of sites for B use class business space, is not applicable.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (2011)**

The NPPF states that:

*'Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocations should be regularly reviewed. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.'* (paragraph 22)

### **Property Market Perspective**

The property market view on this site is that there are better small/medium sized business units available at other Swanley sites such as at the Park Road or The Grove Industrial Estates (although these are primarily for warehouse/light industrial). Given the neighbouring uses, it was thought that in the long term, this site could lend itself to residential or other uses.

### **Summary**

Table 2.4 shows the SWOT of this site for employment uses drawing upon the findings of the preceding sections. In summary, the research finds that:

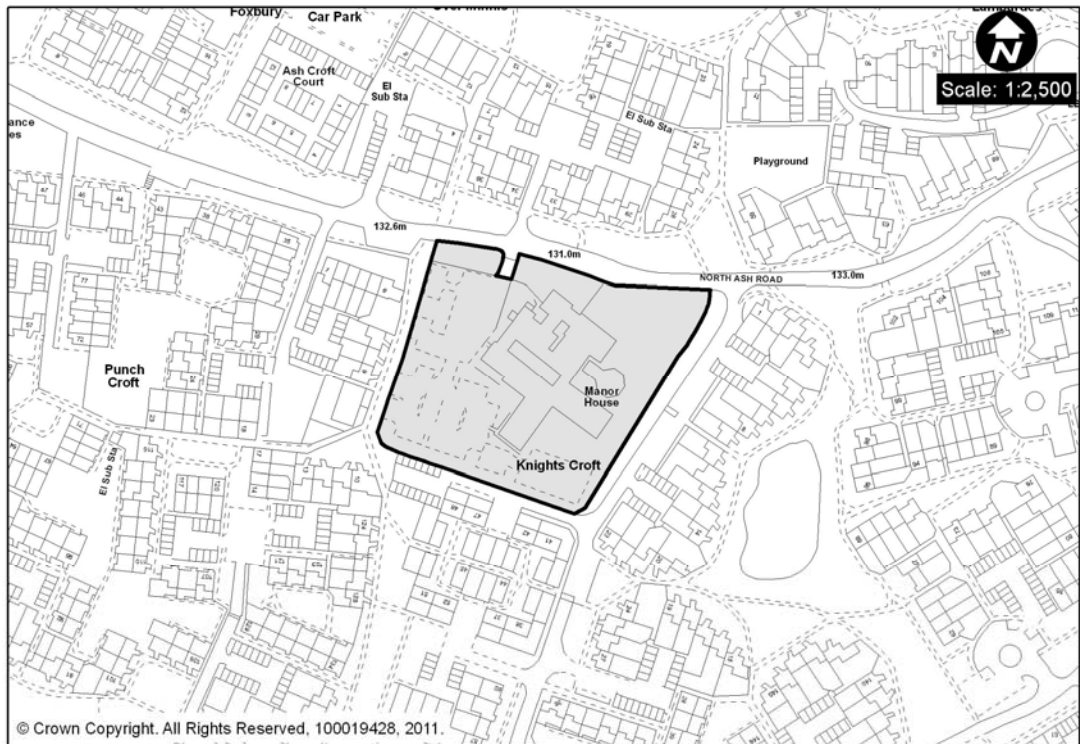
Retail	Storage / Industry
<b>Strengths</b>	
Reasonable public transport access	Good access to the strategic road network.
Assumed to be providing affordable accommodation for businesses with lower turnover.	Units appear from site survey to be able to accommodate small scale storage and workshop operations.
<b>Weaknesses</b>	
Lack of clearly allocated customer or staff parking	Restricted HGV access / servicing due to site layout
<b>Opportunities</b>	
Possibility to enhance the customer image of the site through investment in the public realm	Possibility to enhance the customer image of the site through investment in the public realm
<b>Threats</b>	
Competing retail locations	Competing locations for storage/distribution

This section has shown that the site is mostly in retail use rather than office or industrial use. It is beyond the scope of the study to assess or consider the suitability of the site for ongoing retail use.

**2.4. Manor House, New Ash Green**

The Manor House on North Ash Road in New Ash Green occupies a gross area of 1.00 hectare. The site is bounded by North Ash Road to the north and residential properties on the remaining three sides (a mixture of mostly two storey terraced houses and three storey terraced townhouses, all built in the 1960s-1970s). Figure 2.3 below illustrates the location and geographical context of the site.

**Figure 2.3. Manor House, New Ash Green**



Source: Ordnance Survey via Sevenoaks District Council

**Owner Plans for the Site**

The site owner has indicated their intention to relocate their operations elsewhere within the District and to promote the site for alternative uses – mixed use or residential development - within the next five years.

**Condition of the Site and Buildings**

The consultant team surveyed the site on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012 with a representative of Bovis Homes.

The site is broadly regular in shape with sole access via a private entrance leading off North Ash Road. The site contains an area of landscaped open space in its northeastern corner and a large area of hard standing surrounding a Grade II listed building – The Manor House – and 1980s/1990s office extension. The hard standing provides allocated

parking space for employees, approximately 100 spaces. The site is surrounded by mature trees and fencing.

The Manor House fronts North Ash Road and contains the main office reception on the ground floor and storage rooms on the first floor as it is not considered suitable for modern office use by its occupants. The bulk of the offices and ancillary space are within the extension constructed in the one to two storey 1980s/1990s building which covers a large part of the site, arranged around a small landscaped courtyard. This extension is of a low architectural quality and comprises mostly cellular offices, although the most recent octagonal extension has open plan offices (though the consultants were unable to access this part of the building at the time of the surveys). The building does not have a lift or step-free access throughout and has retro-fitted air conditioning in parts of the building. Table 2.5 below summarises the type, quantum and condition of the buildings.

Bovis Homes estimate that 50 – 60% of the floor space is currently occupied.

Appendix C contains photographs during the survey.

**Table 2.5 Type, Quantum and Condition of the Buildings at the Manor House, New Ash Green**

Building Name	Type of Space	Quantum (m <sup>2</sup> ) GIA	Condition
Manor House & office extension	Office	3,500	Average
Total Principal Building Areas: All Floorspace	-	3,500	-

*Source: URS; floorspace provided by Bovis Homes*

The site as a whole is in good condition with a well maintained area of hard standing, security fences, lighting and CCTV.

### **Historic Employment**

According to Bovis Homes, prior to 2007/08, 250 employees worked on the site. Following the economic recession and subsequent downsizing, approximately 130 members of staff now work on site with only five travelling from the immediate locality. The remainder of the employees live in Kent, Surrey, London and Essex with approximately 60% of staff living within 30 miles of New Ash Green.

### **Site Characteristics**

The key characteristics of the site are set out below. The planning policy context is considered separately.

#### **Access - Employees**

The site is served by local bus services with routes 423, 433 and 489 operate along North Ash Road with stops within five minutes' walk of the site. Destinations include Dartford,

Longfield, Bluewater and Gravesend. There are two buses an hour from 09:00 to 19:00 for route 423/433 and only one bus every one to two hours for route 489.

The buses provide a connection to Longfield rail station which is approximately 2.5 miles by road. Longfield is on the railway line between London Victoria and Dover Priory, Ramsgate and has 92 parking spaces. Overall, public transport provision for this site is considered relatively poor.

For pedestrians, access to the site from North Ash Road and within the site is paved and lit. The village centre of New Ash Green is less than five minutes' walk north of the site and has a range of facilities and amenities including a bank, pharmacy, supermarket, cafés and restaurants. It is understood that improvements to the village centre are proposed which could incorporate some element of new office floor space.

The car park was mostly occupied at the time of the site survey on a weekday morning indicating that many employees choose to drive to work.

The offices are set within a residential area in New Ash Green and the nature of the operations is such that HGVs are not required for deliveries. However, it is useful to note that Junction 2 of the M20 is approximately 4 miles south by road, mostly along a secondary road (Ash Lane) and part of the London Road/A20.

### **Archaeology & Listed Buildings**

The site is not located with an Area of Archaeological Potential; however, the Manor House itself (fronting North Ash Road) is a Grade II listed building.

### **Remediation**

There are no known areas of contamination on this site.

### **Topography**

The site level drops by approximately three metres (based on a visual inspection during the site survey) from the southern part of the site towards the north. The newer, easternmost part of the office extension is therefore at a lower level than the car park at the rear of the site.

### **Flood Risk**

The site is not within the functional floodplain.

### **Public Right of Way**

There are two public rights of way located close to the eastern boundary running the length of the site.

### **Sensitive Land Uses**

The site is surrounded by residential properties on three sides and North Ash Road forming the northern boundary. Residential properties also front the road, facing the site.



There are also several Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) around the boundary of the site.

## **Planning Policy Context**

### **Sevenoaks Core Strategy (2011)**

The site was not included within the schedule of surveyed employment land in the 2007 ELR and 2010 Update, or in the 2010 Allocations and Management DPD.

Development is framed by Policy SP8 of the Core Strategy which aims to encourage the sustainable development of the district's economy by measures such as:

- The retention, intensification and regeneration of existing business areas;
- New office development in Sevenoaks and Swanley town centres.

Policy SP8 of the Core Strategy also states that:

*'Sites used for business purposes will be retained in business use unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of their take up or continued use for business purposes during the Core Strategy period. Redevelopment for mixed use of business sites in urban areas may exceptionally be permitted where such development would facilitate the regeneration of the site to more effectively meet the needs of modern business, where the employment capacity of the site, represented by the commercial floorspace, is maintained and where a mixed use development would represent a sustainable approach consistent with the general distribution of development.'*

This policy forms part of the rationale for this study – to establish whether there is a reasonable prospect of the continued use of the site for business purposes over the Core Strategy period.

The listed building at the front of the site facing North Ash Road falls under Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy where *'the District's heritage assets and their settings, including listed buildings...will be protected and enhanced.'*

### **National Planning Policy Framework (2011)**

The NPPF states that:

*'Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocations should be regularly reviewed. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.'* (paragraph 22)

## **Property Market Perspective**

The market view on this site focused on the following key issues:

- Historically, the site accommodated approximately double the number of employees than are on the site today (according to Bovis Homes, prior to 2007/08, 250 employees worked on the site). The site has been well maintained by Bovis Homes;
- As a commercial site within New Ash Green, this site is isolated and secondary in comparison to the other main office development, Ash House, in the village centre. Ash House is located on the main thoroughfare, Ash Road, and is more visible compared to the Manor House site. Any future employment space at the Manor House site should be highly visible from the road;
- Letting office space in New Ash Green generally not historically been easy given the isolated location (no railway station);
- Gravesend and Dartford and considered to be stronger commercial locations for offices than New Ash Green;
- Agents considered residential led scheme to be the most likely use of the site in the medium to long term.

## **Summary**

Table 2.6 shows the SWOT of the site for employment uses drawing upon the findings of the preceding sections. In summary, the research finds that:

---

Office

Strengths

- Physical assets – approximately 3,500m<sup>2</sup>
- Attractive mature trees and landscaping
- Sufficient parking for employees
- Proximity to New Ash Green village centre and facilities

Weaknesses

- Poor access by car and public transport, particularly by rail
- Need to significantly refurbish/reconfigure buildings to meet current office standards and demands of today's occupiers
- Topography of the site means the building is split level with no step-free access currently provided
- Limitations of the listed Manor House building for modern day office use
- Lack of prominence within New Ash Green as a key office location

Opportunities

- Possibility to develop the site more intensively

Threats

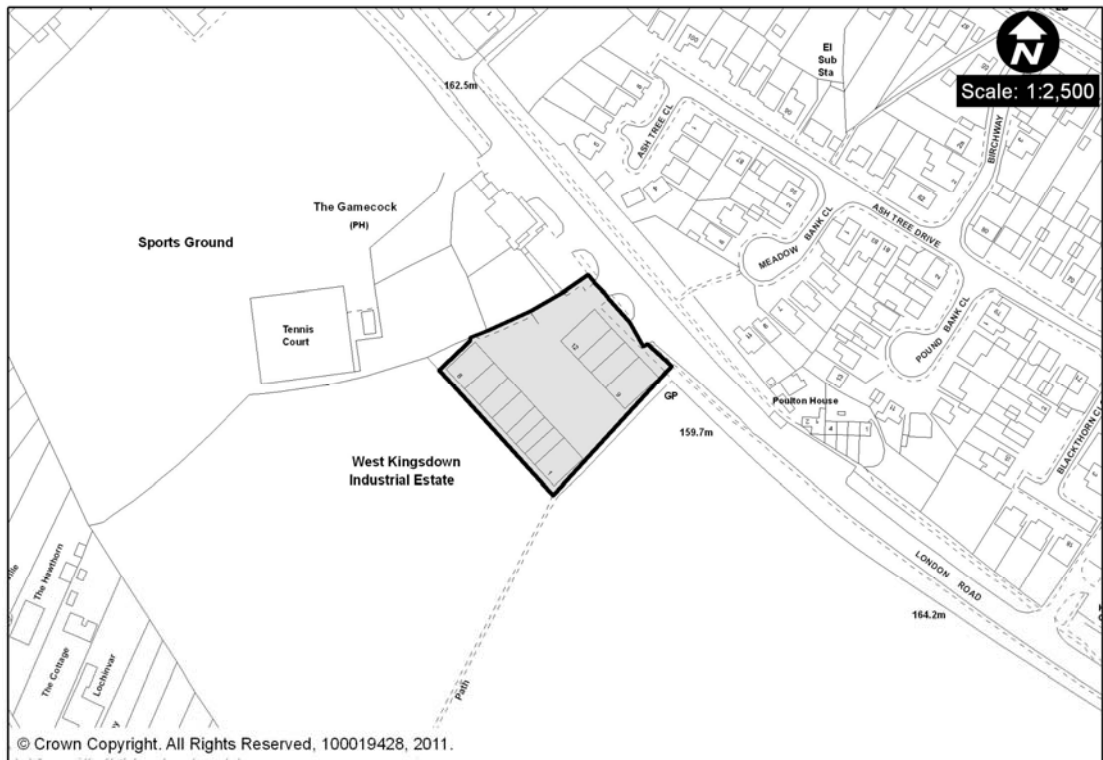
- Competing office locations such as Gravesend and Dartford

This section has shown that the office buildings on site are of an average condition and require significant investment to refurbish them to meet the needs of today's office occupiers. The Grade II listed Manor House is a consideration in terms of future uses on the site, as are the TPOs on site but otherwise, it is largely free of significant constraints to development.

**2.5. West Kingsdown Industrial Estate, West Kingsdown**

The West Kingsdown Industrial Estate site occupies a gross area of approximately 0.47 hectares within the settlement of West Kingsdown. The site is bounded to the north by The Gamecock pub, the A20 London Road to the east, and green field to the west and south. Figure 2.4 below illustrates the location and immediate geographical context of the site.

**Figure 2.4 West Kingsdown Industrial Estate**



Source: Ordnance Survey via Sevenoaks District Council

The site is in single ownership, owned by Glen House Estates Ltd. Seven of the 12 light industrial units appeared to be occupied at the time of the site survey by a range of light industrial and logistical type businesses including Collins Bespoke Windows & Doors, Business Print Services, HES, Kent Wholesale Appliances, Pyramid Textiles and Kent County Council Technicians, although the agent for the site (Michael Rogers) states that 11 of the 12 units are now let.

### Owner Plans for the Site

The site owner has previously indicated that they are interested in promoting the site for a housing/residential-led mixed use development in the next 11-15 years.

### Condition of the Site and Buildings

The consultant team surveyed the site on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012.

The site is broadly regular in shape with sole access via a private service road leading off the London Road/A20. The site contains a central area of hard standing with four light industrial units along the northern edge of the site and eight on the southern edge. The buildings appear to be in good condition and approximately 10-20 years old. Table 2.7 below summarises the type, quantum (estimated) and condition of the buildings.

Appendix D contains photographs during the survey.

**Table 2.7 Type, Quantum and Condition of the Buildings at West Kingsdown Industrial Estate**

Building Name	Type of Space	Quantum (m <sup>2</sup> ) GIA <sup>3</sup>	Condition
Units 1-8	Warehouse / Light industry	1,130	Good
Units 9-12	Warehouse / Light industry	720	Good
Total Principal Building Areas: All Floorspace	-	1,850	-

Source: URS

The site as a whole is in good condition with a well maintained area of hard standing (used for parking and servicing), security fences and lighting mounted on the buildings.

### Historic Employment

Michael Rogers, the letting agents, state that the units were all let when the site was originally constructed in 1982. The current owners bought the site in 2006 and most units were vacated with new tenants taking up the space. Applying the Homes and Communities Agency's Employment Densities Guide 2010, this equates to approximately 31 full time employees (FTEs) based on the estimated GIA.

### Site Characteristics

The key characteristics of the site are set out below. The planning policy context is considered separately.

### Access - Employees

<sup>3</sup> Approximate Gross External Areas (GEA) were estimated using aerial photography and converted to GIA by subtracting 10% from the GEA



The site is not particularly well served by public transport though it is noted based on the DCLG Employment Land Review Guidance Note (2004) that this is not necessarily a requirement for industrial (B2/B8) type business areas. It is served by the 478 bus route which serves Eynsford, Swanley and Dartford. The nearest stops are approximately five minutes' walk in either direction on London Road/A20. There is approximately one bus an hour from 09:30 to 17:00.

The nearest train stations are at Eynsford (4.2 miles by road), Longfield (5.3 miles) and Swanley (6.0 miles). The nearest station, Eynsford, is on the London to Ashford International route with approximately two trains an hour. There are 15 parking spaces at the station.

For pedestrians, access to the site is along the paved and well lit London Road/A20. The nearest amenities within 10-15 minutes' walk include The Gamecock pub, Portobello Inn and the West Kingsdown library.

Cars were parked in unmarked bays along each side of the site, suggesting that most employees travelled to work by car.

The site is located on the London Road/A20 with Junction 1 of the M20 and Junction 3 of the M25 approximately 5 miles (by road) to the north and Junction 2 of the M20 less than 4 miles to the south. Heavy goods vehicle access is via London Road/A20.

### **Archaeology**

The site is not located within an Area of Archaeological Potential.

### **Remediation**

There are no known areas of contamination on this site.

### **Topography**

No significant changes in level were identified during the site survey.

### **Flood Risk**

The site is not within the functional floodplain.

### **Public Right of Way**

There is a public right of way running the length of the eastern boundary.

### **Sensitive Land Uses**

The site is bordered by green fields to the west and south, The Gamecock pub to the north and London Road/A20 to the east.

## Planning Policy Context

### Sevenoaks Core Strategy (2011)

The site was not included within the schedule of surveyed employment land in the 2007 ELR and 2010 Update. It was allocated for residential development in the 2010 Allocations and Management DPD after the site owner indicated their intention to promote the site for redevelopment, but revised to protect the site for employment in the Allocations DPD – Supplementary Site Allocation Consultation March 2012 in line with the approach taken for a similar nearby site in West Kingsdown, the Blue Chalet Industrial Park.

Development is framed by Policy SP8 of the Core Strategy which aims to encourage the sustainable development of the district's economy by measures such as:

- The retention, intensification and regeneration of existing business areas;
- New office development in Sevenoaks and Swanley town centres.

Policy SP8 of the Core Strategy also states that:

*'Sites used for business purposes will be retained in business use unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of their take up or continued use for business purposes during the Core Strategy period. Redevelopment for mixed use of business sites in urban areas may exceptionally be permitted where such development would facilitate the regeneration of the site to more effectively meet the needs of modern business, where the employment capacity of the site, represented by the commercial floorspace, is maintained and where a mixed use development would represent a sustainable approach consistent with the general distribution of development.'*

This policy forms part of the rationale for this study – to establish whether there is a reasonable prospect of the continued use of the site for business purposes over the Core Strategy period.

### National Planning Policy Framework (2011)

The NPPF states that:

*'Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocations should be regularly reviewed. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.'* (paragraph 22)

## Property Market Perspective

In terms of a market view on this site, key points to note are:

- Of other similar estates in West Kingsdown, the site has the best location and access arrangements; and
- Though there are other slightly better industrial locations to West Kingsdown such as within Swanley or at the Invicta Business Park at Wrotham Heath which offer better quality accommodation, the units at West Kingsdown are mostly occupied suggesting a demand at this location.

**Summary**

Table 2.8 shows the SWOT of the site for employment uses drawing upon the findings of the preceding sections. In summary, the research finds that:

Warehouse
<b>Strengths</b>
Physical assets – approximately 1,850m <sup>2</sup>
Well maintained site
Sufficient space for parking / servicing
Clearly visible from the A20
High occupancy rates
<b>Weaknesses</b>
Lack of amenities/facilities near by
<b>Opportunities</b>
No real opportunity to intensify for industry as the site is already developed to optimum capacity for current use.
<b>Threats</b>
Competing warehouse locations such as Swanley though this is not necessarily affecting take up at the West Kingsdown Estate to date.

This section has shown that the buildings on site appear to be in good condition and the site to be well maintained and almost fully let. The site is largely free of physical constraints to development.

### **3. OVERVIEW OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

Building upon the site specific analysis within Section 2, this section provides an overview of the district wide employment land supply and demand analysis from the 'Sevenoaks ELR' (2007), the 'ELR Addendum Report' (2010) and the 'Long Term Office and Industrial Projections for Sevenoaks District' (2011).

#### **3.2. Supply of Employment Land**

Table 3.1 overleaf sets out a summary of the most up to date information on the surveyed employment land supply in Sevenoaks District. This is taken from Table 3 of the 'Employment Land Review: Update Addendum 2010' as undertaken by Council Officers. This identifies 86.1 hectares of identified employment land which is recommended for protection over the Local Development Framework (LDF) plan period. This table updates the supply of employment land following a review of information contained within the 2007 ELR.

##### **Table 3.1 Employment Land Supply**

Settlement	Site	ELR Site Area 2007	SDC Review Area 2009	SDC Difference
Sevenoaks	Vestry Road, Sevenoaks	9.2 ha	11.9 ha	+2.7 ha
	Bat & Ball Enterprise Centre, Sevenoaks	1.0 ha	1.8 ha	+ 0.8 ha
	British Telecom, London Road Sevenoaks	2.5 ha	2.5 ha	/
	Erskine House, Oakhill Road, Sevenoaks	0.7 ha	0.5 ha	- 0.2 ha
	Hardy's Yard, Riverhead	1.2 ha	1.2 ha	/
	High Street Sevenoaks	1.4 ha	1.4 ha	/
	London Road Sevenoaks	4.1 ha	4.1 ha	/
	Morewood Close (Outside Housing Area)	2.8 ha	3.2 ha	+0.4 ha
	South Park, Sevenoaks	0.2 ha	0.2 ha	/
	Tubs Hill House, Tubs Hill	0.6 ha	0.4 ha	- 0.2ha
	West Kent Cold Store	7.7 ha	N/A	-7.7 ha
	Buildmart House	0.1 ha	N/A	- 0.1 ha
	London Road (Railway/Bicycle)	0.1 ha	N/A	- 0.1 ha
	South Park/Lime Tree	0.9 ha	N/A	- 0.9 ha
	Coffee House Yard	0.1 ha	N/A	- 0.1 ha
	Sackville House	0.1ha	N/A	- 0.1ha
	Epicurus House	0.05 ha	N/A	- 0.05
<b>Total</b>		<b>32.75 ha</b>	<b>27.2 ha</b>	<b>-5.55 ha</b>
Swanley	Wested Lane Industrial Estate, Swanley	N/A	8.0 ha	+8.0 ha
	Swanley Town Council Offices, Swanley	0.4 ha	0.4 ha	/
	Goldsel Road, Swanley	5.8 ha	2.6 ha	-3.2 ha
	Horizon House, Swanley	0.3 ha	0.3 ha	/
	Land at Broom Hill, Swanley*	N/A	8.1 ha	+ 8.1 ha
	Media House, Swanley	0.3 ha	0.3 ha	/
	Moreton Industrial Estate, Swanley	N/A	1.9 ha	+1.9 ha
	Park Road Industrial Estate, Swanley	2.3 ha	1.3 ha	-1.0
	Southern Cross Ind. Estate, Swanley	12.0 ha	1.9 ha	-10.1 ha
	Swanley Library and Information Centre, Swanley	0.7 ha	0.7 ha	/
	Teardrop Industrial Estate, Swanley	N/A	3.4 ha	+ 3.4 ha
	The Technology Centre, Swanley	1.9 ha	1.9 ha	/
	St Barts Laundry	0.7 ha	Deleted	- 0.7 ha
	Royal Mail	0.4 ha	Deleted	- 0.4 ha
<b>Total</b>		<b>24.8 ha</b>	<b>30.8 ha*</b>	<b>+6 ha</b>

Edenbridge	Station Road, Edenbridge	16.2 ha	18.8 ha	+ 2.6 ha
	Edenbridge Trading Centre/ Warsop Trading Centre and Leigh Builders Yard, Edenbridge	1.2 ha	2.2 ha	+1.0 ha
	Station Approach, Edenbridge	1.3 ha	1.1 ha	-0.2 ha
	Albion Business Park	1.2 ha	deleted	-1.2 ha
	Coop Store	0.77 ha	deleted	-0.77 ha
<b>Total</b>		<b>20.67 ha</b>	<b>22.1 ha</b>	<b>+1.43 ha</b>
Other Settlements	Westerham Trading Centre, Westerham	3.1 ha	3.7 ha	+0.6 ha
	Blue Chalet Industrial Park, West Kingsdown	0.7 ha	0.9 ha	+ 0.2ha
	Horton Kirby Trading Estate	3.5 ha	0.8 ha	-2.7 ha
	Warren Court	0.6 ha	0.6 ha	/
<b>Total</b>		<b>7.9 ha</b>	<b>6 ha</b>	<b>-1.9 ha</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>86.12 ha</b>	<b>86.1ha</b>	<b>-0.02 ha</b>

Source: SDC

Although the site areas have changed slightly between the 2007 Employment Land Review (Column 3 of Table 3.1) and the Employment Land Review: Update Addendum 2010, the overall amount of surveyed land allocations recommended for protection remains consistent at 86.1 ha.

The 2007 ELR combined the United House study site with the adjacent Goldsel Road industrial site. Since the United House had at the time of writing been put forward for a major residential led mixed use development this area is excluded within the 2010 ELR update (as set out in column 4 of Table 3.1 above) as employment land that is to be protected as a pure B Use Class designation.

The most up to date information on commercial stock from the Valuation Office Agency shows that there is approximately 622,700 square metres of B use class floorspace in Sevenoaks District. This includes both the B use floorspace contained within the identified 86.1 ha of surveyed employment land shown in Table 3.1 above (which based on estimated capacity is believed to account for the vast majority of the total B use class floorspace in Sevenoaks District), plus some other B use class floorspace that was not surveyed in the ELRs because it was either not accessible or because it fell below the agreed size threshold of sites for surveying. So this other minority stock of B use class floorspace would have included for example VAT registered but inaccessible office space located above shops and some smaller sites or single units with a relatively low quantum of B use class space - such as the Manor House and West Kingsdown Industrial Estate,

Therefore although these two aforementioned sites do not feature in the existing employment land allocations summarised in Table 3.1, they do exist as part of the wider stock of employment floorspace within the District, which is set out within Table 1.3 of the 'Long Term Office and Industrial Projections for Sevenoaks District 2011' report, from which future net additional employment floor space and associated land requirements are



forecast for the LDF plan period (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3 below). So with this in mind, all existing B use class space within Sevenoaks District, including the space surveyed as part of this report, should therefore be considered for retention under Policy SP8 of the Sevenoaks District Core Strategy.

**Table 3.2 Office and Industrial Floorspace Demand Forecast in Sevenoaks District to 2026**

(Taken from Table 1.3 of the ‘Long Term Office and Industrial Projections for Sevenoaks District 2011’)

Use	Estimated Floorspace 2011	Future Floorspace Requirement 2026 (m <sup>2</sup> )		
		Low Scenario	Medium Scenario	High Scenario
Office (B1a/b)	144,900	143,200	149,500	156,600
Warehouse (B8)	261,000	270,700	281,700	296,800
Industry / Factories (B1c/B2)	216,900	196,700	206,500	214,100
<b>Total (Gross)</b>	<b>622,700</b>	<b>610,700</b>	<b>637,700</b>	<b>667,500</b>
<b>Total (Net)</b>	<b>622,700</b>	<b>-12,000</b>	<b>+15,000</b>	<b>+44,800</b>

*Note: columns may not sum due to rounding. Source: Valuation Office Agency*

Table 3.2 above shows that the net requirement for new employment floorspace is approximately 15,000m<sup>2</sup> by 2026 under the most likely medium scenario. Given the stage of the current economic cycle it is likely that short-term growth will be at a lower rate than the long-term average.

Information supplied by Sevenoaks District Council in Dec 2012 on existing vacancy rates for B1, B2 and B8 floor space shows that there is currently 51,525 sq m of vacant space within the District, which equates to around 8% of existing estimated stock as shown in Table 3.2. This demonstrates that the market is currently working broadly in equilibrium with neither too much or too little available stock.

### 3.3. Demand Projections

Table 3.3 shows the net additional employment land requirements forecast for the LDF period. This is extracted from Table 1.4 of the ‘Long Term Office and Industrial Projections for Sevenoaks District 2011’ report.

This applies the plot ratios to new employment space developments to derive a land requirement from the employment floorspace forecasts. The plot ratios are the same as those used in the 2007 ELR and based on the ‘DCLG’s Employment land Review Guidance Note’:

- 1.50 for new office space (assuming new development will have a 50% plot ratio and be comprised of three storeys)
- 0.45 for new factory space<sup>4</sup>
- 0.40 for new warehouse space

**Table 3.3 Net Employment Land Demand Forecast in Sevenoaks District to 2026**

Use	Future Land Requirement 2026 (hectares)		
	Low Scenario	Medium Scenario	High Scenario
Office (B1a/b)	-0.1	0.0	0.8
Warehouse (B8)	2.4	5.2	9.0
Industry/ Factories (B1c/B2)	-4.5	-2.3	-0.6

*Note: the columns are not summed intentionally as different land uses have different locational requirements and demand is not necessarily interchangeable between sites*

The long-term demand trends for Sevenoaks District show a change since the 2008-09 recession, with a flat forecast of demand for additional office floorspace. The space required for storage and distribution purposes is expected to grow in line with the economy but space required for manufacturing activities is expected to continue to decline.

### 3.4. Balancing Demand and Supply

The analysis shows that the supply and demand of employment land allocations in Sevenoaks District are broadly in balance over the long-term. Under the medium scenario there is limited scope for B1c/B2 land and floor space release though a requirement for additional space for B8 land. Within this context there should be a cautious approach to B1a/b use class land release with any future loss minimised and wherever possible offset with the provision of replacement space.

<sup>4</sup> The long-term trend is for a decline in factory premises rather than the construction of new sites. However, the 2007 ELR notes that existing factory premises had a plot ratio of 0.47 so the difference between new build and existing premises is negligible.

## 4. OPTIONS FOR SITES

### 4.1. Introduction

This section introduces and appraises a number of development options for the sites. In development of these options we have considered the conclusions of the preceding sections.

Our long term LDF plan length view on the prospects for sites is informed by the District wide balance of supply and demand of employment land including the economic factors and projections that fed into that exercise. The shorter term view is influenced by the feedback from property market agents (where this has been possible) and the existing site conditions as assessed from the surveys.

Depending on the size and status of the sites, between two and five development options are proposed. These options range from the 'status quo' scenario to a complete redevelopment of the site for residential use. Between these options are hybrid options. The section includes an option appraisal against key criteria from which a preferred option is proposed.

### 4.2. Options

#### United House, Swanley

##### **Option 1 – Retain the entire site for office and warehousing**

The site would continue to be occupied or marketed until a new tenant(s) moves in and uses the space and associated buildings across the site for manufacturing/ logistics and administrative functions.

##### **Option 2 - Retain some buildings Main Office and Gate House (B1 use) and allow redevelopment of the warehouse for more modern industrial/ warehousing use**

This option would involve redevelopment of the assembly plant / warehouse with a more modern warehouse with higher eaves and the three existing purpose built office units being retained for office use with the current user or marketed until a new tenant(s) move into the spaces.

##### **Option 3 – Retain some buildings Main Office and Gate House (B1 use) and allow redevelopment of the rest of the site for residential use**

This option would involve seeing most of the site being redeveloped for residential with two of the three existing purpose built office units being retained for office use with the current user or marketed until a new tenant(s) move into the space.

**Option 4 – Allow redevelopment of most of site for residential use with new office space to be provided on the existing car park closest to Goldsel Road which is the highest visibility part of the site.**

This option would see the entire site redeveloped for residential led development with a modest re-provision of some new office space. The re-provided office space could consist of a unit/s providing circa 1,830m<sup>2</sup> (GEA) of office space. This is based on a measured car park site area of around 1,489 square metres, with an applied plot ratio of 0.41 (as per the ODPM ELR Guidance Note for offices) and based on a three storey development to tie in with height of the adjacent block of flats and rear of warehouse to the south. The office use would be marketed until a new tenant(s) move into the space. The plot ratio of 0.41 assumed that there would be some room for on site parking. If the office building was designed to permit use of the roof space for office use (which would constitute another floor), the new building could provide just under 2,500 square metres of office space (GEA) – which would broadly equate to a complete re-provision/ no net loss of the existing on site office space.

At the time of the site survey, United House indicated that there was a pumping station for the balancing pond within this car park site – we have assumed that this will be relocated as part of any site’s comprehensive redevelopment, subject to further technical investigations.

**Option 5 – Allow complete redevelopment of the site for residential**

This option would see the entire site redeveloped for residential use with complete loss of existing employment generating floorspace.

**Trading Estate to the rear of Premier Inn, Swanley**

**Option 1 – Retain the use of the site as industrial and warehousing**

The site would be designated for industrial (B2/B8 use).

**Option 2 – Permit mixed use development of the site with replacement employment floorspace and new residential uses introduced**

This option would retain a significant level of employment on site and would see residential uses introduced. This would result in a significant intensification of the site.

**Option 2 – Allow complete redevelopment for residential**

This option would see the entire site redeveloped for residential use with complete loss of existing employment generating floorspace.

**Manor House, New Ash Green**

**Option 1 – Retain the entire site for office use**

The site would continue to be marketed for office use until a new tenant(s) moves in.

**Option 2 – Allow redevelopment of most of site for residential use with a consolidated amount of new office space with parking to be provided on the North Ash Road frontage.**

This option would see new offices to be built on part of the site (in the northwestern corner) with the remainder of the site (including the listed building) redeveloped for residential use. This consolidated quantum of space could yield circa 500 sq m of office space (GEA) which is the equivalent to potentially re-accommodating 20% of existing 130 on-site Bovis employees (26). This is based on a measured site area of approximately 785 sq m in the northwestern part of the site (currently used for car parking) with an applied plot ratio of 0.41 based on a two storey development.

**Option 3 – Allow complete redevelopment of the site for residential**

This option would see the entire site redeveloped for residential use with complete loss of existing employment generating floorspace.

**West Kingsdown Industrial Estate, West Kingsdown**

**Option 1 – Retain the use of the site as industrial and warehousing**

The site would be designated for industrial (B2/B8 use) in line with current uses.

**Option 2 – Allow complete redevelopment for residential**

This option would see the entire site redeveloped for residential use with complete loss of existing employment generating floorspace.

### 4.3. Options Criteria

The appraisal of options is based on information gathered from the preceding sections. The criteria which have been chosen are as follows:

- Development capacity: A high level estimate of the commercial floorspace and number of houses that could be delivered.

There are a number of caveats which we recognise in our high level assessment of development capacity, which could require further examination:

- There may be geographical limitations to where development comes forward due to flood risk (and there is likely to be a need for flood risk mitigation measures such as SUDS<sup>5</sup>)
- There will be costs incurred associated with demolition, site clearance and site remediation which could impact on options involving residential, which are not known at this stage

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<sup>5</sup> Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

- Demand and Supply: Whether the option helps achieve a balance of demand and supply over the long term.
- Impact on the local economy: The employment-generating potential of the option and the type and quality of employment provided.
- Sustainable development: Potential travel patterns and car trip generation.
- Marketability: Analysis is included on how marketability the option could be. Factors which typically impact on this are: location; site constraints; type of development allowed; property market feedback.

Options take account of existing planning policies.



4.4. Options Appraisal for United House, Swanley

Table 4.1 Options Appraisal United House, Swanley

Option Number	Development Capacity	Balance of Demand and Supply	Impact on Local Economy	Sustainable Development	Marketability (for Employment Use)
Option 1: Status Quo (retain and allocate the entire site for office and warehousing uses)	No change in current capacity.	Demand and supply of employment land allocations in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the long-term. Retention of the site would not impact upon the total quantum of employment space	Were a new tenant to be found and the site's building floorspace capacities to remain the same there would be negligible impact on the local economy.	Negligible change to when United House Group operated the site.  The site has good access in terms of public transport (Swanley Station under 5 minute walk). Trip patterns and frequency expect to be of similar levels as when United House operated the site.	United House Group confirms they are winding down their operations and planning to vacate the site entirely and consolidate their operations into vacant space in Media House in Swanley. The site would have to be marketed for B1 and B2/B8 use.  Since the site B2/B8 premises in particular are dated and specific to United House's old operational requirements they are unlikely to be attractive to new businesses. The warehouse may also have asbestos (according to the Michael Rogers report) which would be costly to remove for any tenant.
Option 2: Retain some buildings Main Office + Gate House (B1 use) and allow redevelopment of the warehouse for more modern industrial/warehousing use	Slight reduction in office floorspace as the North Block offices may be demolished.  Slight increase in warehousing/manufacturing floorspace as the more modern facility design may result in an increased operational area.	Demand and supply of employment land allocations in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the long-term.  Loss of office space to the north of the site would have a minor adverse impact on the quantum of office employment space. Increase in warehouse space would have a minor beneficial impact on future combined stock of B2/B8 land which is forecast to increase by circa 2.9 ha during the LDF period.	Were a new tenant to be found and the site's building floorspace capacities to remain broadly the same there would be negligible impact on the local economy.	Negligible change to when United House Group operated the site.  The site has good access in terms of public transport (Swanley Station under 5 minute walk). Trip patterns and frequency expect to be of similar levels as when United House operated the site.	United House Group confirms they are winding down their operations and planning to vacate the site entirely and consolidate their operations into vacant space in Media House in Swanley. The site would have to be marketed for B1 and B2/B8 use.  Although new more modern B2/B8 premises would be more attractive to businesses than the current outdated facility, the site location in general is not particularly suited to such uses given its close proximity on two sides to residential uses and its constrained vehicular access through residential streets.  Further, retaining the Main Office and Gate House for office use may impact negatively on marketability of site as these offices would require significant investment to bring up to modern standards by way of fitting lifts to ensure they are DDA compliant and introducing air conditioning throughout.
Option 3: Retain some buildings Main Office + Gate House (B1 use) and allow redevelopment of the rest of the site for residential use	Slight reduction in office floorspace as the North Block offices may be demolished.  Reduction in warehousing/manufacturing floorspace as the existing facility would be lost.  Introduction of residential units.	Demand and supply of employment land allocations in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the long-term.  Loss of office space to the north of the site would have a minor adverse impact on the quantum of office employment space.  Decrease in warehouse/manufacturing space would have a minor adverse impact on future combined stock of B2/B8 land though given the warehouse has in more recent operational years predominantly been used for furniture assembly it can be considered as industrial space, which is forecast to decrease slightly by circa 2.3 ha during the LDF period. If the B2/B8 floorspace is lost to non employment use this should be considered in the context of the Council continuing to monitor the overall supply of employment land in the District over the plan period to ensure the appropriate recommended balance between loss, gain and retention is struck.	Were a new tenant to be found for the main office uses at the Main Office and Gate House, a loss of office floorspace at the north of the site and a reduction in the warehouse/manufacturing space (but a gain in local spend as a result of the significant number of new residents on site) would have a minor beneficial impact on the local economy.	Assuming sustainable design practices are followed as part of any new masterplan there is an opportunity to protect and enhance the environment through introduction of renewable energy, sustainable urban drainage systems, new open space and biodiversity.  The site has good access in terms of public transport (Swanley Station under 5 minute walk). Trip patterns and frequency expect to be slightly higher car levels but lower HGV levels than when United House operated the site.  There are residential uses on two adjacent sides of the site so this would be in keeping with residential uses on the main part of the site.	United House Group confirms they are winding down their operations and planning to vacate the site entirely and consolidate their operations into vacant space in Media House in Swanley.  Gate House and Main Office would be marketed for B1 use though given their low visibility from the street and requirement for significant investment to bring up to modern standards by way of fitting lifts to ensure they are DDA compliant and introducing air conditioning, they would probably be difficult to let to a new tenant.

<p>Option 4: Allow redevelopment of most of site for residential use with new office space to be provided on the existing car park closest to Goldsel Road which is the highest visibility part of the site.</p>	<p>Slight reduction in office floorspace, as the replacement office space maybe circa 1,830-2,450 square metres as opposed to 2,500 sq m currently on site. This is based on a three storey office block (with additional possibility of roof space) with a plot ratio of 0.41 on the circa 1,490 sq m car park site.</p> <p>Reduction in warehousing/manufacturing floorspace as the existing facility would be lost.</p> <p>Introduction of residential units on site area not occupied by new office space.</p>	<p>Demand and supply of B1a/b uses in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the long-term and existing provision should be retained on suitable sites.</p> <p>Any small loss of office space would have a minor adverse impact on the quantum of office employment space though this is considered marginal and with careful site specific masterplanning it may be possible to increase the amount of replacement office floorspace to minimise or remove entirely any net loss.</p> <p>Decrease in warehouse/manufacturing space would have a minor adverse impact on future combined stock of B2/B8 land though given the warehouse has in more recent operational years predominantly been used for furniture assembly it can be considered as industrial space, which is forecast to decrease slightly by circa 2.3 ha during the LDF period.</p>	<p>With a near replacement/ replacements amount of office floorspace and a reduction in the warehouse/manufacturing space (but a gain in local spend as a result of the significant number of new residents on site), there is judged to be a minor beneficial impact on the local economy.</p>	<p>Assuming sustainable design practices are followed as part of any new masterplan there is an opportunity to protect and enhance the environment through introduction of renewable energy, sustainable urban drainage, new open and biodiversity.</p> <p>The site has good access in terms of public transport (Swanley Station under 5 minute walk). Trip patterns and frequency expect to be slightly higher car levels but lower HGV levels than when United House operated the site.</p> <p>There are residential uses on two adjacent sides of the site so this use would be in keeping with residential uses on the main part of the site.</p>	<p>United House Group confirm they are winding down their operations and planning to vacate the site entirely and consolidate their operations into vacant space in Media House in Swanley.</p> <p>The new office space which is at the most visible part of the site and which would be developed to modern specification / user requirements would be marketed for B1 use. The new office would also be on the part of the site closest to Swanley Station.</p> <p>Given that HGVs currently access the site via residential areas and that there are better industrial locations closer to the strategic road network, it may be difficult to market this site for new B2/B8 development.</p>
<p>Option 5: Allow complete redevelopment of the site for residential</p>	<p>Reduction in office floorspace as the existing 2,500 sq m of space currently on site would be lost.</p> <p>Reduction in warehousing/manufacturing floorspace as the existing facility would be lost.</p> <p>Introduction of residential units.</p>	<p>Demand and supply of employment land allocations in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the long-term.</p> <p>Any small loss of office space would have a minor adverse impact on the quantum of office employment space in the District.</p> <p>Although it is understood that the majority of staff at United House's premises will be located to vacant space in Media House, there would be a net loss in the total stock of office floorspace in the District. The future demand projections are based on the existing stock of floorspace.</p> <p>Decrease in warehouse/manufacturing space would have a minor adverse impact on future combined stock of B2/B8 land though given the warehouse has in more recent operational years predominantly been used for furniture assembly it can be considered as industrial space, which is forecast to decrease slightly by circa 2.3 ha during the LDF period.</p>	<p>With a loss of office floorspace, a reduction in the warehouse/manufacturing space but a gain in local spend as a result of the significant number of new residents on site there is judged to be a negligible impact on the local economy.</p>	<p>Assuming sustainable design practices are followed as part of any new masterplan there is an opportunity to protect and enhance the environment through introduction of renewable energy, sustainable urban drainage, new open and biodiversity.</p> <p>The site has good access in terms of public transport (Swanley Station under 5 minute walk). Trip patterns and frequency expect to be slightly higher car levels but lower HGV levels than when United House operated the site.</p> <p>There are residential uses on two adjacent sides of the site so this use would be in keeping with residential uses on the main part of the site.</p>	<p>United House Group confirms they are winding down their operations and planning to vacate the site entirely and consolidate their operations into vacant space in Media House in Swanley.</p>

#### **4.5. Preferred Option for United House, Swanley**

*'Option 4: Allow redevelopment of most of site for residential use with new office space to be provided on the existing car park closest to Goldsel Road which is the highest visibility part of the site'* is the preferred option.

With United House planning to depart the site and the existing dated premises within the next couple of years, a comprehensive redevelopment option would for the sake of marketability be the most appropriate option. To ensure an ongoing District wide balance between overall supply and demand of employment floorspace the loss of occupiable premises should be minimised.

The site's constrained location and access does not lend itself to logistical or manufacturing uses. Subject to a more detailed masterplanning and a site capacity study, replacement office space on the most visible part of the site, which is the car park closest to Goldsel Road, should be provided with the remainder of the site being permitted for developed for residential uses.

Although a viability appraisal has not been produced, in our view this option would be a financially viable one. The office development may be slightly more expensive to develop than residential space (if the site was developed just for residential use); however the site is and has historically been in the ownership of United House so there is not a site purchase price to factor into the equation.

#### **4.6. Options Appraisal for Trading Estate to the rear of Premier Inn, Swanley**

URS surveyed the site in November 2012 and it was found from the information we could gather that it was more or less entirely in retail/ trade and ancillary uses. As such, policy SP8 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy (2011), which is concerned with retention and protection of sites for B use class business space, is not applicable. As part of this study it has not therefore been possible to make a legitimate recommendation on the future allocation of the site.

4.7. Options Appraisal for Manor House, New Ash Green

Table 4.1 Options Appraisal for Manor House, New Ash Green

Option Number	Development Capacity	Balance of Demand and Supply	Impact on Local Economy	Sustainable Development	Marketability (for Employment Use)
Option 1: Status quo / retain and allocate use of the site for offices	No change in current capacity.	Demand and supply of employment land allocations in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the long-term. Retention of the site would not impact upon the total quantum of employment space	Were Bovis Homes to remain in the premises or if a new tenant were to be found and the site's building floorspace capacities to remain the same, there would be negligible impact on the local economy.	Negligible change to current situation. The site is 2.5 miles from Longfield train station and there are three bus services within a five minute walk of the site going to Dartford, Gravesend and Longfield. Going forward trip patterns and frequency expected to be of similar levels to when Bovis Homes operate the site today.	Bovis Homes have suggested they may vacate the site and move both their group and/or regional functions to a more accessible location in though there are currently no detailed proposals that have been progressed. Under this option if they were to vacate the site it would have to be marketed for B1 use.  Since the existing premises are fragmented, physically constrained internally with a poor and inefficient cellular arrangement of space, they are unlikely to be attractive to new businesses.
Option 2: Allow redevelopment of most of site for residential use with a consolidated amount of new office space with parking to be provided on the North Ash Road frontage.	A reduction in office floorspace from the existing circa 3,500 sq m currently on site. A consolidated quantum of new modern office space could be feasibly located on the New Ash Road frontage, subject to careful consideration of and design around any protected trees, providing space on the highest visibility part of the site closest to the village centre amenities.  This consolidated quantum of space could yield circa 500-550 sq m (GEA) of offices, which is based on a measured building site area of approx 650sq m with an applied plot ratio of 0.41 and based on a two storey block (given the scale of adjacent neighbouring houses).  . Introduction of residential units – numbers subject to more detailed masterplanning.	Demand and supply of employment land allocations in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the long-term. Loss of floorspace should therefore be kept to a minimum over the LDF plan period.  A loss of office space would have a minor adverse impact on the quantum of office employment space throughout the district.	Although under this option there would be a net loss of 3,000 sq m of office space it is understood based on information supplied by Bovis Homes that their on site employees spend little in the local economy as the existing office premises have an on site canteen that the majority of workers choose to use. This option would see increased resident expenditure through the new dwellings being provided. Overall this option is therefore judged to have a minor beneficial impact on the local economy.	Assuming sustainable design practices are followed as part of any new masterplan there is an opportunity to protect and enhance the environment through introduction of renewable energy, sustainable urban drainage, new open and biodiversity. The site has existing medium density residential uses on three sides.  The site is 2.5 miles from Longfield train station and there are three bus services within a five minute walk of the site going to Dartford, Gravesend and Longfield.  With new residents but less on site workers, going forward trip patterns and frequency are expected to be of similar levels to when Bovis Homes fully operate the site today.	Under this option there would be an on site replacement of a relatively small proportion of the office space that would be lost. Though consulted agents felt that Ash House in New Ash Green centre was a more prominent business location than Manor House, with a more visible presence on the New Ash Road frontage and higher quality accommodation on offer, the new space could be more attractive to potential occupiers.
Option 3: Allow complete redevelopment of the site for residential	Reduction in office floorspace as the existing 3,500 sq m of space currently on site would be lost.  Introduction of residential units – numbers subject to more detailed masterplanning.	Demand and supply of employment land allocations in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the long-term.  Complete loss of office space would have a minor adverse impact on the quantum of office employment space in the District.	Although under this option there would be a net loss of 3,500 sq m of office space it is understood based on information supplied by Bovis Homes that their on site employees spend little in the local economy as the existing office premises have an on site canteen that the majority of workers choose to use. This option would see increased resident expenditure through the new dwellings being provided. Overall this option is therefore judged to have a minor beneficial impact on the local economy.	Assuming sustainable design practices are followed as part of any new masterplan there is an opportunity to protect and enhance the environment through introduction of renewable energy, sustainable urban drainage, new open and biodiversity.  The site is 2.5 miles from Longfield train station and there are three bus services within a five minute walk of the site going to Dartford, Gravesend and Longfield. With new residents but less on site workers, going forward trip patterns and frequency are expected to be of similar levels to when Bovis Homes fully operate the site today.	There are currently no firm plans for Bovis Homes to actually vacate the site so it is not clear if or when any potential redevelopment scheme would be brought forward.  There are residential uses on three adjacent sides of the site so this use would be in keeping with residential uses on the main part of the site.

#### 4.8. Preferred Option for Manor House, New Ash Green

*'Option 2: 'Allow redevelopment of most of site for residential use with a consolidated amount of new office space with parking to be provided on the North Ash Road frontage'* is the preferred option.

The existing Manor House office premises are fragmented, physically constrained internally with a poor and inefficient cellular arrangement of space. They are therefore unlikely to be attractive to new businesses if they were put onto the market. Since this site is not considered to be a prime office location and the stated position of Bovis Homes is that they would ideally seek premises in a more accessible location for the bulk of their workforce currently located on site, redevelopment of the site for offices only was not considered to be a feasible option.

Demand and supply of employment land allocations in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the LDF plan period. The context for B1 land and floorspace is that loss should be minimised. Therefore reprovision of a consolidated quantum of new modern office space is the preferred and recommended option on this site. We believe a unit providing circa 500-550 sq m of office space could feasibly be located on the New Ash Road frontage, providing space on the highest visibility part of the site closest to the village centre amenities. This would allow circa the remaining site area of around of 9,350 sq m (or 0.94 ha) to be redeveloped for residential uses.

Given the existing surrounding residential uses, a residential led scheme on the site would be appropriate in our view subject to more detailed masterplanning. Although a viability appraisal has not been produced, in our view this option would be a financially viable one. The office development may be slightly more expensive to develop than residential space (if the site was developed just for residential use); however the site is and has historically been in the ownership of Bovis Home so there is not a site purchase price to factor into the equation.

4.9. Options Appraisal for West Kingsdown Industrial Estate

Table 4.1 Options Appraisal for West Kingsdown Industrial Estate

Option Number	Development Capacity	Balance of Demand and Supply	Impact on Local Economy	Sustainable Development	Marketability (for Employment Use)
Option 1: Retain and allocate use of the site for industry and warehousing)	No change in current capacity.	Demand and supply of employment land allocations in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the long-term. Retention of the site would not impact upon the total quantum of employment space	With continued occupation and the site's building floorspace capacities to remain the same there would be negligible impact on the local economy.	The site has excellent access from the A20 and reasonable bus service provision with direct services to Swanley and Dartford. The nearest train station is more than four miles away.  Units, believed to be around twenty years old, are providing employment floorspace for small and medium enterprises.	At the time of the site visit high levels of occupation were observed within the industrial units. The industrial estate is well maintained with adequate and clearly marked parking provision and servicing areas.
Option 5: Allow complete redevelopment of the site for residential	Reduction in workshops and storage units floorspace as the existing circa 2,000 sq m of space currently on site would be lost.  Introduction of residential units.	Demand and supply of employment land allocations in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the long-term.  Decrease in workshops and storage units space would have a minor adverse impact on future combined stock of B2/B8 land.	With a loss of workshops and storage units space but a gain in local spend as a result of new residents on site there is judged to be a negligible impact on the local economy.	Assuming sustainable design practices are followed as part of any new masterplan there is an opportunity to protect and enhance the environment through introduction of renewable energy, sustainable urban drainage, new open and biodiversity.  The site has reasonable public transport provision – bus services. Trip patterns and frequency expect to be slightly lower car levels and during operational phase reduced HGV levels than when the existing industrial estate operated on the site.  This would be a brownfield site with fields on two to three sides and the A20 on the other side.	The site owner has indicated that they would like to see the site allocated for residential uses through the length of the leases on site are unknown.  Local property market agents have confirmed that all but one unit is let to businesses suggesting high demand for space at this location.



#### **4.10. Preferred Option for West Kingsdown Industrial Estate**

*'Option 1: Retain and allocate use of the site for industry and warehousing is the preferred option.*

The site is located away from sensitive residential uses and has excellent access directly from the A20 making it an ideal location for small industrial units. The units are in relatively good condition and are almost entirely occupied suggesting there is a demand for space in this area. They are well serviced and maintained, with adequate parking provision. They are providing valued space for local SMEs so should be retained for industrial employment use certainly during the LDF period.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This section summarises the conclusions and preferred options for each site including the implications of these on the balance of supply and demand of employment land and space in the District as a whole.

### 5.1. Conclusions and Preferred Options

The analysis shows that the supply and demand of employment land and floorspace in Sevenoaks District is broadly in balance over the long-term. Under the medium forecast land demand scenario presented in Section 3 there is no scope to release B1a/b uses, limited scope for B1c/B2 floorspace release and a requirement for some additional space to accommodate B8 uses. Within this context there should be a cautious approach to B1a/b land and floorspace, release with any future loss minimised and wherever possible offset with the provision of replacement space at appropriate locations.

Where B use class floor space is lost to non employment uses this should be in the context of the Council continuing to monitor the overall supply of employment land in the District over the plan period to ensure the appropriate recommended balance between loss, gain and retention is struck.

The research conducted as part of this report has also considered and factored in site specific factors and conditions, owner intentions and shorter term property agents feedback. The preferred site options summarised below (which have been fully justified in Section 4) have taken account of all these factors, and are as follows:

#### United House, Swanley

- **Preferred option** - *Allow redevelopment of most of site for residential use with new office space to be provided on the existing car park closest to Goldsel Road which is the highest visibility part of the site (Option 4).*
- **Impact on office space** - Small loss of office space would have a minor adverse impact on the quantum of office space in the District. However with careful configuration of new office space on the car park site it is believed that this loss can be minimised or removed entirely in which case the impact would be negligible for offices.
- **Impact on warehouse/manufacturing space** - Loss of warehouse/manufacturing space would have a minor adverse impact on future combined stock of B2/B8 land. Longer term supply and demand balance should be carefully monitored by the Council over the LDF period.

#### Manor House, New Ash Green

- **Preferred option** - *Allow redevelopment of most of site for residential use with a consolidated amount of new office space with parking to be provided on the North Ash Road frontage (Option 2)*

- **Impact on office space** - Loss of some office space would have a minor adverse impact on the quantum of office space in the District.

**West Kingsdown Industrial Estate, West Kingsdown**

- **Preferred option** - *Status Quo (retain and allocate use of the site for industry and warehousing)* (Option 1)
- No impact on the total quantum of employment floorspace in the District.

It has not been possible to make a legitimate recommendation on the future allocation of the Trading Estate to the rear of Premier Inn in Swanley given that it is primarily in retail/trade retail and ancillary uses.

**APPENDIX A - Photographs of United House, Swanley**

A.1 Private service road looking east towards security check point



A.2 Westernmost car park for employees



A.3 Main office building



A.4 Typical communal/open plan office area in Main Office/Gate House buildings



A.5 Eastern side of the main warehouse



A.6 Inside the main warehouse





A.7 North Block offices (rear left) & vehicle workshop (righthand side)



A.8 Balancing pond on the eastern edge of the site



A.9 Parking and storage area east of the main warehouse



A.10 Main office building as seen from the eastern parking/servicing area



**APPENDIX B - Photographs of Trading Estate nr Premier Inn, Swanley**

B.1 Birchwood Aquatic Centre



B.2 Birchwood Garden Centre and car park



B.3 Internal road leading to the eastern units



B.4 Stitch Craft / FurniTech unit



B.5 Main parking / servicing area with adjacent residential properties in the background



B.6 Doors of Distinction unit on the eastern edge of the site





**APPENDIX C - Photographs of Manor House, New Ash Green**

C.1 Car park, looking south from the entrance



C.2 Car park, looking west from the southeastern corner of the site



C.3 The listed element of the Manor House



C.4 Office extension, looking north from the southeastern corner of the site



C.5 Office extension seen from the North Ash Road side







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