
Planning Statement

East Malling Estate: Land at Ditton Edge



Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Site and Surrounding Area	5
3.	Planning History and Pre-Application Background	7
4.	The Proposed Development	8
5.	Planning Policy Framework	16
6.	Planning Assessment	20
7.	Conclusion	35

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the East Malling Trust (EMT, 'the Applicant') in support of an outline planning application for the development of up to 300 residential dwellings on land to the south of Ditton, within the East Malling Estate.

Description of Development

- 1.2 The application seeks outline planning permission as follows:

"Development of the site to provide up to 300 dwellings (Use Class C3) and provision of new access off Kiln Barn Road. All other matters reserved for future consideration".

The Applicant

- 1.3 EMT is a registered charity. Their primary objective is *'the advancement of science for public benefit, primarily through the support of research and development, particularly in the fields of horticultural and other plant-based disciplines'*.
- 1.4 EMT own and manage the East Malling Estate and the East Malling Research Campus. The East Malling Estate is located between the villages of East Malling and Ditton and has a gross area of over 210 hectares, which comprises a large expanse of land used as the East Malling Research Campus. The majority of the Research Campus is leased to the National Institute of Agricultural Botany East Malling Research (NIAB EMR), a subsidiary of NIAB.
- 1.5 EMT is seeking to make substantial and much needed improvements to its existing Research Campus, in particular by providing new glasshouses, energy centre and office and laboratory facilities. These are required to ensure the long term success of the research and development undertaken by NIAB EMR at the site. In addition, EMT support accommodation for 69 businesses based at the Estate as well as maintain the Grade I listed Bradbourne House and parkland.
- 1.6 Due to advancements in technology, NIAB EMR no longer require the extent of land currently used across its Research Campus, including circa 50 hectares of EMT's existing land. The site is therefore surplus to operational requirements and is available for residential development.
- 1.7 Financial receipts generated through the sale of the land benefitting from a residential planning permission will provide essential funding to enable the delivery of the new infrastructure and facilities.

Background to the Proposals

- 1.8 Working with EMT and NIAB EMR, Savills prepared a masterplan for the whole Estate. This was submitted to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's (TMBC) Development Options Consultation in November 2016. The masterplan was developed having regard to the need to ensure the ongoing operation of the Research Campus and the upgrade of existing facilities.
- 1.9 EMT and Savills have had extensive discussions with senior officers at TMBC since the masterplan was prepared. This has informed EMT's proposed strategy and the design and indicative layout has evolved in response to the discussions held.
- 1.10 Site A is the largest site and includes land outside of EMT's control. Given its strategic nature, it has been agreed with officers that this site should continue to be promoted through the emerging Local Plan rather than being brought forward for development through a planning application.
- 1.11 The masterplan identified two sites: one at Ditton Edge and one at Parkside as potential standalone development opportunities, given their relationship with the existing settlement boundaries. This outline application relates to the Ditton Edge site. A separate application has been submitted for the Parkside site. There is a link between the sites in that they are both required to be released for development in order to provide the investment into the upgrade of infrastructure and facilities at the Research Campus and provide funds to sustain the Trust's ongoing charitable works.
- 1.12 The majority of this planning application site is proposed to be a housing allocation under emerging Policy LP25: Housing Allocations – Overview "*Site O: East Malling Research Station (Ditton Edge)*". EMT's other site, Parkside, is proposed to be a housing allocation in Policy LP25: Housing Allocations – Overview "*Site P: East Malling Research Station (Parkside)*".

Overview of Development

- 1.13 An Illustrative Masterplan is submitted with this application which demonstrates that a high quality residential development can be delivered. The Illustrative Masterplan shows a scheme of 300 units, comprising a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses. 1 and 2 bedroom apartments are also proposed within the scheme to support and mixed and balanced community. 25% affordable housing will be provided, based on a tenure split of 70% rented and 30% intermediate units.
- 1.14 The illustrative mix has been prepared having regard to the need to ensure there is a range of units (as per the policy requirements) and on local market demand within this location. The mix is weighted in favour of 3-bed semi detached and terraced houses which is considered to be appropriate for the location; however, this will be subject to change at Reserved Matters stage.

- 1.15 A new access off Kiln Barn Road is shown extending into the site providing a network of streets, private lanes / drives and courtyards. The car parking arrangement has not been fixed as part of these proposals, but the Illustrative Masterplan has been designed to accommodate 1.5 spaces per 1 and 2 bed houses and 2 spaces for larger dwellings. For any future Reserved Matters application, the scheme will be designed and prepared using the requisite minimum parking standards. The car parking layout design principles are illustrated in the Design and Access Statement.
- 1.16 Based on 300 dwellings at a site of 11.58 hectares, the density will be 26 dwellings per hectare which is considered to be appropriate for this location and makes optimum use of the site whilst being compatible with the existing properties in Ditton and the sensitive landscape and historical features within the vicinity. The Illustrative Masterplan has been designed to respond to the urban form of Ditton to the north and the wider landscape setting to the south. It accommodates three distinct character areas: 'Suburban Edge', 'Semi-Urban' and 'Landscape Edge', each with a varying density and building form.
- 1.17 It is proposed to provide a range of open space typologies on the site. The scheme will deliver play spaces for young children, including a Local Area of Play (LAP) and other Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) located across the site within larger areas of public open space.
- 1.18 A more detailed description of the development proposals, the Parameters Plans and Illustrative Masterplan are provided in Section 4 of this Planning Statement.

Purpose of this Planning Statement

- 1.19 This Planning Statement has been prepared to support an outline planning application for up to 300 dwellings at land to the south of Ditton (referred to as 'Ditton Edge').
- 1.20 It should be read in conjunction with the following documents which have been prepared to address the full range of planning considerations:
- **Design and Access Statement** prepared by Savills Urban Design Studio;
 - **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** prepared by Lloyd Bore;
 - **Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy** prepared by Ardent Consulting Engineers;
 - **Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan** prepared by Ardent Consulting Engineers;
 - **Arboricultural Impact Assessment** prepared by Down to Earth Trees;
 - **Ecology Appraisal and Ecological Mitigation Strategy** prepared by Ecology Solutions;

- **Noise Impact Assessment** prepared by Ardent Consulting Engineers;
- **Air Quality Assessment** prepared by Ardent Consulting Engineers;
- **Heritage Statement** prepared by Savills Heritage Consultancy;
- **Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment** prepared by CgMs;
- **Utilities and Services Strategy** prepared by Ardent Consulting Engineers; and
- **Statement of Community Involvement** prepared by Maxim.

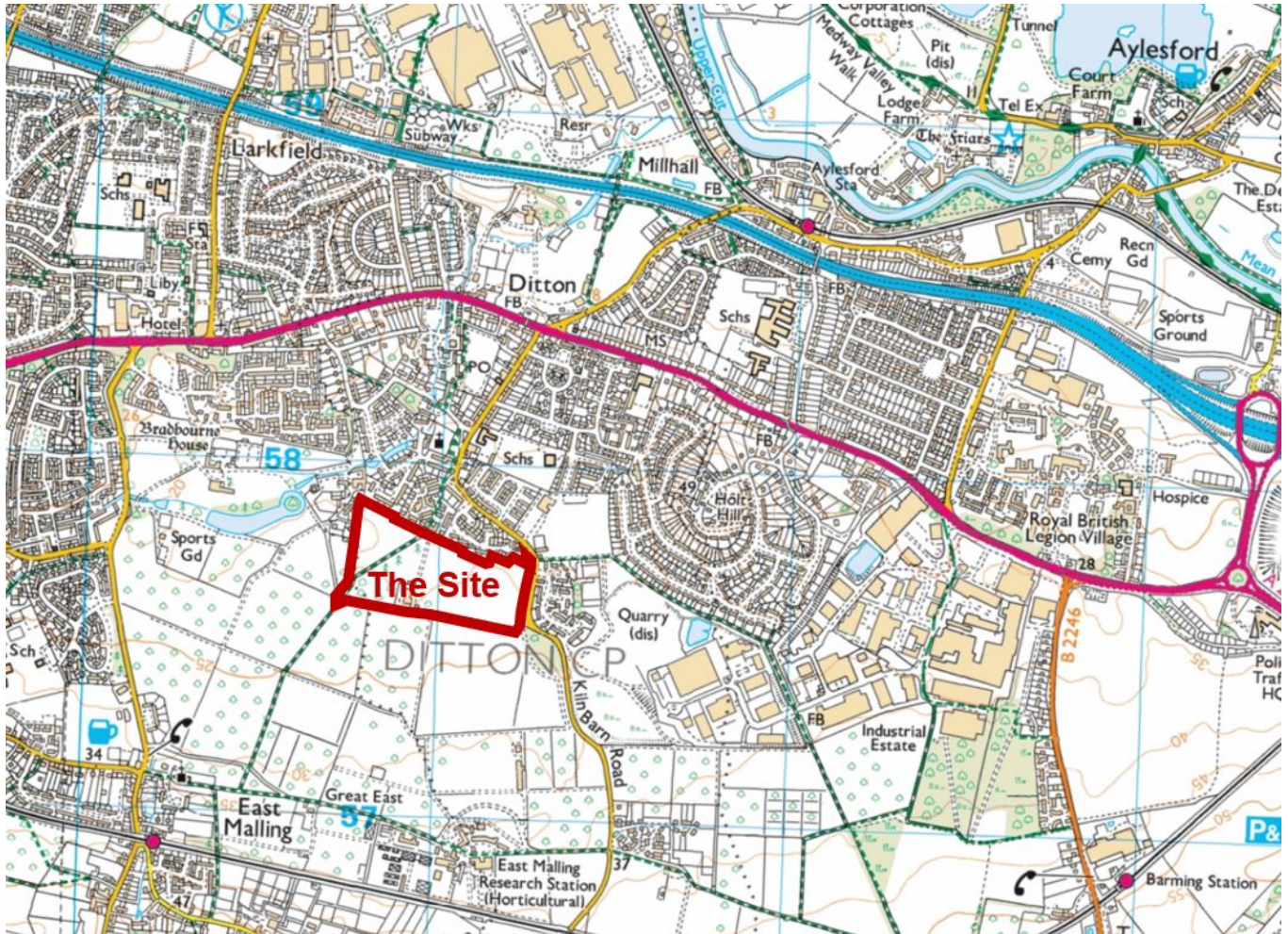
Structure of the Statement

1.21 The structure of this Planning Statement is as follows:

- **Section 2** describes the site and its context within the surrounding area;
- **Section 3** sets out an overview of the planning history of the site, and the pre-application engagement process;
- **Section 4** provides a summary of the development proposals;
- **Section 5** sets out the relevant planning policy framework for the site;
- **Section 6** provides an assessment of the proposed development against the relevant planning policy framework; and
- **Section 7** presents our conclusions in respect of the proposals.

2. Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site is located directly to the south of the urban edge of the village of Ditton. It measures approximately 11.5 hectares. There is existing access into the site is from Kiln Barn Road via a field gate. It is bound to the north and east by existing residential properties, and research fields to the south. There is an existing public right of way running north to south linking the village of Ditton with the wider countryside. It is currently used as agricultural research fields.
- 2.2 The site is relatively flat and is partially screened from the existing development to the north at Cherry Orchard, Brampton Fields and Wilton Drive by existing hedgerows and trees. An existing windbreak marks the southern boundary, which follows a historic field structure.
- 2.3 The main Research Centre is located circa 600m south of the site and comprises a number of large detached buildings including a conference centre and restaurant for the Research Campus. There are also a number of glass houses and ancillary structures which are in varying states of repair. To the north and east of the Research Centre are the research fields. These comprise commercial planting beds, orchards and arable land.
- 2.4 The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located approximately 1.5km to the north west of the site, but it is separated by the built up areas within the Medway Gap Urban Area.
- 2.5 The site is bound to the west by a historic stone and brick wall which formed part of the boundary wall of Bradbourne Park, centred around the Grade I Listed Bradbourne House. To the north-east of the site, the non-designated heritage asset of Park Farm, the remains of an 18th Century farm associated with Bradbourne House, is located. This lies within the Bradbourne East Malling Conservation Area, which itself adjoins the site at the north-west corner. The Ditton Church Conservation Area is also located circa 100m north of the site.
- 2.6 There are bus stops on London Road to the north of the site serving 15 bus routes, including into Maidstone. The site is equidistant between East Malling and Aylesford rail stations which are both on the southeastern line. Journey times into London are 1 hour, via Strood in Kent.
- 2.7 There are various local amenities within the vicinity of the site on London Road including a Morrison's supermarket, medical centre, library, post office, petrol station, church, bank, coffee shops and restaurants. Ditton Infant School and Aylesford Secondary School are within 500m of the site. Maidstone has a wider range of amenities and is less than 10 minutes on the train from Aylesford.
- 2.8 The site is located in a Flood Zone 1, so has a low probability of flooding (less than 0.1% annual probability of flooding).
- 2.9 The site's location is shown in Figure 2.1 below.



Crown copyright, license number 100024244 Savills (UK) Limited

Figure 2.1: Site Location

3. Planning History and Pre-Application Background

- 3.1 There have not been any planning applications for development on the site to date.
- 3.2 EMT has sought to engage positively with TMBC through a formal pre-application process. This has include a number of meetings and presentations to senior officers at TMBC and KCC between November 2016 and August 2018. The discussions and feedback provided has improved the design and layout of the proposed scheme. This process also assisted in establishing the principle of residential development on the site in line with the emerging Local Plan.
- 3.3 EMT has also sought to engage with local stakeholders. This has included a presentation to Ditton Parish Council in October 2018. This provided EMT and some of the design team with the opportunity to discuss draft emerging proposals with Parish Council members and to take feedback.
- 3.4 In addition, EMT held a 2-day public exhibition in late October and early November 2018 in order to engage with local residents and obtain their feedback on the proposals. Ward Councillors were invited to bespoke briefing sessions on both of these days before the event was open to the public.
- 3.5 Further details, including the feedback obtained, and how the scheme has evolved in response to this, is explained within the Statement of Community Involvement supporting this planning application.

4. The Proposed Development

- 4.1 This application proposes the development of up to 300 residential units. The application is submitted in outline form, with matters of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping reserved for future consideration. Approval is sought for the proposed access arrangement for the site.
- 4.2 Full details of the proposed scheme are set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement. However, this section of the Planning Statement provides a brief summary of the application proposals.

Design Approach

Parameter Plans

- 4.3 This application is supported by a series of Parameter Plans. Planning approval is sought for these drawings in order to establish the overarching design thresholds in respect of a future Reserved Matters application. The key details from each of the submitted Parameters Plans are set out below.

Parameter Plan – Masterplan Principles

- 4.4 This Parameter Plan sets out the basic development structure for the scheme and is informed by the site's geometry and shape. The result is a coherent structure of development parcels, streets and spaces.
- 4.5 Access is shown from Kiln Barn Road and a vehicular circuit extends around the site from which a number of secondary and tertiary streets and lanes provide access to the residential development.
- 4.6 The structure of the development parcels maintains a clear order of fronts (public) and backs (private) throughout the scheme. The larger development parcels at the centre of the site accommodate residential courtyards.

Parameter Plan – Developable Area

- 4.7 This Parameter Plan distinguishes between the residential developable area, and other land uses, including the green network, formal public open space, trees and hedgerows to be retained and the proposed SuDs feature.
- 4.8 The residential area accounts for the majority of the site and is positioned centrally within it. There is potential for an area of formal open space to the north of the site, including a SuDs feature, and for an area of open space to the south around the existing pumping station. Landscape buffers to the north, east and west are accommodated on this Parameter Plan.

Parameter Plan – Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Drainage

- 4.9 This Parameter Plan indicates the position of the different open space typologies at the site. Key sensitivities relate to protecting the amenity of local residents, accommodating the Public Right of Way that crosses the site, and presenting an appropriate developed frontage to the agricultural landscape to the south and west.
- 4.10 This can be achieved by retaining the existing windbreaks, and reinforcing this with new planting; and designing a soft landscape corridor along the southern and western boundaries.
- 4.11 It is also envisaged that the layout will open up views of the wider landscape and ensure that new planting for biodiversity enhancement is located outside of the private curtilages so that it can be maintained in perpetuity by means of an agreed management plan.

4.12 *Parameter Plan – Movement and Circulation*

- 4.13 This Parameter Plan identifies the location of the primary site access and the street hierarchy for the development, which comprises the widened access carriageway, together with the primary, secondary and tertiary streets (private lanes / drives) and courtyards. It also identifies the existing Public Right of Way to be retained and the proposed footpaths through the development.
- 4.14 The movement network delivers a clear hierarchy of streets, that will serve vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. At the junction with Kiln Barn Road, the primary access road with is 6m, reducing to 5.5m in the remainder of the site. The looped nature of this street will allow for an efficient movement of vehicles.
- 4.15 Secondary streets serve the primary street. These provide access to the dwellings and will promote a lower vehicle speed in the residential areas. The tertiary streets (private lanes / drives) serve the secondary streets and take the form of shared surfaces. This street typology will be shared by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.
- 4.16 The courtyards are situated internally within the development block. This street typology is provided to create movement equality between all users i.e. vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

Parameter Plan – Building Heights and Frontages

- 4.17 This Parameter Plan demonstrates that all of the residential parcels will accommodate dwellings which are two storeys in height. It also outlines where the building frontages will be positioned.
- 4.18 Along the northern edge, development responds to the existing context and backs on to the edge of the site. Development parcels along the southern and western edges always front on to streets and edges with residential development parcels backing onto each other.

- 4.19 Building frontages will focus activity on the edge of the development plots, reinforcing and supporting the perimeter block structure, and approach to facades and access. Active frontages will provide good enclosure to the streets and informal surveillance to both the public and private areas, such as the parking and areas of open space.
- 4.20 The building frontages will help to define and frame the spaces through the site.

Parameter Plan – Character Areas, Block Structure and Density

- 4.21 The site accommodates three distinct character areas: ‘Suburban Edge’, ‘Semi-Urban’ and ‘Landscape Edge’. Each of these has a distinct block structure and density.
- 4.22 The Suburban Edge character area responds to the existing edge condition of fronts and backs and replicates the character of existing development to the north. This character area contains predominantly 2 and 3 bed terrace and semi-detached dwellings and parking that formally addresses the street. It is characterised by a higher density than the other character areas.
- 4.23 Development at the centre of the site, in the Semi-Urban character area, consists of larger development parcels centred around residential courtyards. These mainly consist of 2 and 3 bed dwellings with a mixture of terrace and detached housing, including some larger 4-bedroom houses which frame the central courtyard spaces. Views into the courtyards are always terminated by building elevations, windows and front doors.
- 4.24 The Landscape Edge character area responds to the more rural landscape setting to the south of the site. It consists primarily 4 bedroom houses with off-street parking and garages. The informal street arrangement does not accommodate through routes to other streets, resulting in a quieter and more sensitive response to the landscape setting.

Illustrative Masterplan

- 4.25 An Illustrative Masterplan is submitted with this application which demonstrates that a high quality residential development can be delivered which respects and integrates with the sensitive landscape and historic features in the surrounding context and accords with the submitted Parameters Plans.
- 4.26 The Illustrative Masterplan shows a scheme of 300 units, comprising a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses. 1 and 2 bedroom apartments are also proposed within the scheme to support a mixed and balanced community. 25% affordable housing will be provided, based on a tenure split of 70% rented and 30% intermediate units.
- 4.27 The illustrative mix is set out below:

House Type	Percentage
1-bed flat	8%
2-bed flat	2%
2-bed semi detached house	16%
3-bed semi detached house	19%
3-bed terraced house	31%
3-bed detached house	4%
4-bed semi detached house	3%
4-bed detached house	17%
Total	100%

4.28 The illustrative mix has been prepared having regard to the need to ensure there is a range of units (as per the policy requirements) and on local market demand within this location. The mix is weighted in favour of 3-bed semi detached and terraced houses which is considered to be appropriate for the location. This is provided for indicative purposes and will be subject to change at Reserved Matters stage.

4.29 A new access off Kiln Barn Road is shown extending into the site providing a network of streets, private lanes / drives and courtyards. The car parking arrangement has not been fixed as part of these proposals, but the Illustrative Masterplan has been designed to accommodate 1.5 spaces per 1 and 2 bed houses and 2 spaces for larger dwellings. For any future Reserved Matters application, the scheme will be designed and prepared using the requisite minimum parking standards. The car parking layout design principles are illustrated in the Design and Access Statement.

- 4.30 Based on 300 dwellings at a site of 11.58 hectares, the density will be 26 dwellings per hectare which is considered to be appropriate for this location and makes optimum use of the site whilst being compatible with the existing properties in Ditton and the sensitive landscape and historical features within the vicinity.
- 4.31 The scheme will deliver play spaces for young children. A Local Area of Play (LAP) will be located along the pedestrian and cycle routes and will cater for children up to 6 years of age. There will also be Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) located across the site within larger areas of public open space, within a 5 minute walk from each home. These will encourage various forms of active play and imaginative play and will be designed for children between 4 and 8 years old.

Access Arrangement

- 4.32 Vehicular access is proposed to be served via Kiln Barn Road in the form of a priority-controlled T-junction. The proposed access arrangement has been designed in accordance with the Kent County Council (KCC) Local Design Guide and takes into account the guidance provided within the Manual for Streets and Design Manual for Roads and Bridges documents.
- 4.33 The development will be served by a 5.5m carriageway with 2m of footpath on either side. The exception to this is that a 6m wide carriageway will be provided for the initial section of road off Kiln Barn Road, before the internal loop road, to accommodate emergency access. The junction with Kiln Barn Road also includes 6m of kerb radii in line with the KCC Local Design Guide.
- 4.34 There is an existing public right of way running north to south linking the village of Ditton with the wider countryside which will be retained as part of the proposals.
- 4.35 A new footway will extend along the extent of the site frontage at Kiln Barn road and a crossing point with tactile paving will be provided that connects to Ragstone Court. Should planning permission be granted, a Traffic Regulation Order will be sought to move the existing speed 30mph speed limit further south along Kiln Barn Road. A gateway feature would also be sought to act as traffic calming with the extended section of 30mph zone. Implementation of the Order will be obtained to 'best endeavours', but it is important to recognise that failure to obtain this would still result in compliant and safe access arrangement.
- 4.36 Visibility splays of 52m to the north and 50m to the south can be achieved at the proposed access junction, measured from a 2.4m setback distance to the carriageway edge.
- 4.37 The proposed access arrangement is illustrated on drawing number 182600-003 Rev B and further details are set out within the Transport Assessment which accompanies the planning application.

Supporting Drawings

1.22 As described above, a number of drawings are submitted with the planning application. Approval is sought on some of these whilst others are submitted for illustrative purposes. This is clearly identified in the table below for ease of reference:

Drawing Title	Drawing Number	Revision	For Approval / Illustrative
Site Location Plan	EMT-B-01	Rev A	For Approval
Illustrative Masterplan	EMT-B-02	Rev A	Illustrative
Parameter Plan – Masterplan Principles	EMT-B-03	Rev A	For Approval
Parameter Plan – Developable Area	EMT-B-04	Rev A	For Approval
Parameter Plan – Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Drainage	EMT-B-05	Rev A	For Approval
Parameter Plan – Movement and Circulation	EMT-B-06	Rev A	For Approval
Parameter Plan – Building Heights and Frontages	EMT-B-07	Rev A	For Approval
Parameter Plan – Character Areas, Block Structure and Density	EMT-B-08	Rev A	For Approval
Proposed Access Arrangement via Kiln Barn Road	182600-003	Rev B	For Approval

Summary of Key Planning Benefits

4.38 The planning benefits of the proposed development of the site are twofold. There will be invaluable benefits to the operations of the Research Campus through securing a financial receipt from the sale of the site. Secondly, the delivery of the site will help to increase the housing supply within the Borough.

Research Campus Operations

4.39 As explained previously, due to advancements in technology, NIAB EMR no longer requires the extent of land currently used across its Research Campus, including circa 50 hectares of EMT's existing land. This site is therefore surplus to operational requirements and is available for residential development.

4.40 Financial receipts generated through the sale of the land benefitting from outline planning permission will provide essential funding to enable the delivery of the new glasshouses, energy centre and office and laboratory facilities at the Research Campus. These are critical pieces of infrastructure to secure the ongoing research operations of the NIAB EMR and ensure that the Research Campus is equipped with modern, fit-for-purpose facilities.

4.41 As well as this immediate investment, the financial receipts will allow the Trust to secure a long term investment strategy and to ensure the ongoing success of the NIAB EMR.

4.42 Therefore there is a clear need for the development in order to support NIAB EMR's operations and for EMT to further their charitable objectives. The Trust remains committed to its core objective of the advancement of science for public benefit through the support of research and development within the fields of horticultural and other plant-based disciplines.

The Borough's Housing Supply

4.43 To help boost housing supply, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and keep up-to-date a deliverable five year housing land supply. In the absence of this, planning policies for the supply of housing will be considered out-of-date.

4.44 This is particularly significant given that the NPPF states that where relevant policies are out-of-date, development proposals should be approved without delay, unless in doing so, any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or other policies in the NPPF indicate otherwise.

4.45 TMBC does not currently have a five year housing land supply, as confirmed in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (October 2017) and a recent appeal decision. The tilted balance is therefore engaged (further discussion in this is provided in Section 6). The early delivery of this application site for up to 300 homes will

make a significant contribution to addressing the housing supply shortage and help the Council to achieve the ambitious housing targets for the Borough set out within the emerging Local Plan.

- 4.46 The new homes will be designed to a high quality and there will be a range of unit types and sizes. It is proposed that 25% of the new homes will be affordable, with 70% of these for rent and 30% as intermediate units. This will assist in creating a mixed and balanced community and respond to local market demand evidence.

5. Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 The redevelopment proposals for the site have taken account of relevant national and local planning policy and guidance. This section of the Planning Statement sets out a brief summary of the relevant planning policy framework, and the following section demonstrates compliance with these policies.
- 5.2 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant parts of the Development Plan for TMBC are:
- The Core Strategy (adopted September 2007);
 - The Development and Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) (adopted April 2008);
 - The Managing Development and the Environment DPD (adopted April 2010); and
 - Saved policies from the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan (April 2010).
- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2018) is also a material consideration when determining planning applications.

National Planning Policy

- 5.4 At the national level, the July 2018 NPPF provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
- 5.5 The NPPF is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development which is achieved through securing various interdependent economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 5.6 So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan without delay.
- 5.7 To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, the NPPF places an emphasis on the delivery of a sufficient amount and variety of land, and for land with planning permission to be developed.

Local Planning Policy

- 5.8 At the local level, the relevant parts of the Development Plan for TMBC comprises the series of documents listed above, all of which are out-of-date because they pre-date the March 2012 NPPF. The Development Plan is supported by a Proposals Map which illustrates the policies contained within the DPDs. At present, the site is not subject to any planning designations or allocated for development.
- 5.9 Policy CP1 relates to sustainable development and outlines that all proposals for new development must result in a high quality, sustainable environment. It adds that the need for development will be balanced against the need to protect and enhance the natural and built environment.
- 5.10 The Proposals Map confirms that the site is outside of the Urban Area of the Medway Gap (which comprises the major developed parts of Kings Hill, Leybourne, East Malling, Larkfield, Lunsford Park, Ditton and Aylesford south of the River Medway). The site adjoins the southern edge of Ditton.
- 5.11 Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy states that development will be concentrated within the confines of the Urban Areas and that development adjoining these will only be proposed in the Local Development Framework, or otherwise permitted, where there is an identified need and there are no other sites within the Urban Areas. Priority is also afforded to the use of previously developed land.
- 5.12 Policy CP14 relates to development in the countryside. For the purposes of interpreting Policy CP14, “the countryside” is defined as parts of the Borough lying outside of the confines of the Urban Areas identifies in Policy CP11. The introductory text to Policy CP14 states that the concept of sustainability argues in favour of concentrating most development in or adjoining existing built-up areas, therefore recognising that new development adjoining the Urban Areas would accord with the definition of sustainability. Importantly, Policy CP14 permits some forms of development in the countryside, including extensions to existing settlements in accordance with Policy CP11.
- 5.13 Despite the site being outside of the Urban Area, it is EMT’s view that development of the site would accord with Policy CP11 because there is an identified need for housing in the Borough. As previously outlined, TMBC is not currently able to demonstrate a five year land supply, meaning there is a need to identify and bring forward new sites for development.
- 5.14 Notwithstanding the above, the Council is preparing a new Local Plan. Once adopted, this will form part of the Development Plan and will replace all of the existing DPDs. The new Local Plan will set the policies and proposals for the Borough to the year 2031.

- 5.15 The Council's emerging Local Plan is at a relatively advanced stage of preparation. It has recently been the subject of a Pre-Submission Consultation (Regulation 19). TMBC intends to submit the draft Local Plan for examination before 24 January 2019 (i.e. within 6 months after the publication of the revised NPPF), so it can proceed to examination based on the Council's lower, locally derived housing figures. This is an ambitious timetable which results in TMBC having an accelerated Local Plan preparation period.
- 5.16 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF outlines that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging Local Plans according to the stage of preparation of the emerging Local Plan. The more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that it may be given. As such, it is considered that weight should be afforded to the policies and proposals in the emerging Local Plan when determining this planning application.
- 5.17 The emerging Local Plan makes clear the Council's ambition to support sustainable development and to approve planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan (Policy LP1), which is consistent with the NPPF. The principal strategic objective of the emerging Local Plan is to support the delivery of new homes to provide a stock of housing that meets the needs of the community, including the need for affordable housing (Policy LP2).
- 5.18 Policy LP3 explains that provision is made in the emerging Local Plan for at least 6,834 dwellings to meet the objectively assessed housing need during the plan period up to 2031. The emerging Local Plan allocates five strategic sites for development which have the potential to deliver 5,000 dwellings over the plan period. In addition to the strategic sites, new housing will be delivered on other sites across the Borough which have been allocated for development within the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.19 Policy LP5 outlines the settlement hierarchy for the Borough which maintains the spatial strategy for development contained within the existing Policy CP11. The preference is for development to be concentrated within the confines of the Urban Areas, such as the Medway Gap. There are instances where development outside of the confines of the Urban Areas will be permitted; however these are restricted to limited infilling and proposals for predominantly open space together with essential built infrastructure, amongst other irrelevant provisions.
- 5.20 Policy LP25 sets out the housing allocations that have been identified to address the housing requirement for the Borough over the emerging Local Plan period. The majority of the application site is allocated for residential development. The draft allocation is for 216 dwellings and is referred to in Policy LP25 as 'Site O: East Malling Research Station (Ditton Edge)'.
- 5.21 For TMBC to achieve a five year housing supply during the emerging Local Plan period, the Council is reliant on the delivery of the draft allocations. The Regulation 19 Local Plan sets out an indicative trajectory for the site of 40 units in the year 2020 / 2021.

- 5.22 EMT's representations to the emerging Local Plan Pre-Submission Consultation have demonstrated the potential to deliver 75 units in this year, and 75 units each of the three following years, meaning that 300 units can be delivered early on in the emerging Local Plan period. However, this is dependent on the scheme obtaining outline planning permission as soon as possible (further details on the delivery of the site are provided in Section 6).
- 5.23 It is understood that, once adopted, TMBC will need to review their Local Plan in order to meet the uplift in housing numbers through the application of the standardised methodology for calculating housing need.
- 5.24 The draft allocation of this site in the emerging Local Plan is a significant material consideration in favour of the development of this site and for the positive determination of this planning application. The weight afforded to the draft allocation will also increase as the Local Plan progresses towards submission through the remainder of this year.

6. Planning Assessment

6.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides justification for the proposals with reference to the planning policy framework set out in the previous section and other material considerations. It considers the key planning issues in respect of the residential development of the site.

Principle of Development

6.2 As explained previously, within the extant Development Plan, the site is not allocated for development and is located outside of the confines of the Medway Gap Urban Area. It is however adjacent to the settlement boundary of Ditton.

6.3 Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy states that development will be concentrated within the confines of the Urban Areas, but makes provision for development adjoining these where there is an identified need and there are no other sites within the Urban Areas. The absence of a five year housing land supply and the draft allocations outside of the Urban Areas within the emerging Local Plan would suggest that there is an identified need for housing and that there are no preferable sites within the Urban Areas.

6.4 Additionally, there is allowance within Policy CP14 for forms of development in the countryside, including extensions to existing settlements in accordance with Policy CP11. The supporting text to this policy also outlines that the concept of sustainability argues for most development within, or adjoining, existing built-up areas, recognising that development adjacent to Urban Areas is also a sustainable location for new development.

6.5 Despite the site being outside of the Urban Area, it is EMT's view that development of the site would accord with Policy CP11 because there is an identified need for housing in the Borough. As previously outlined, TMBC is not currently able to demonstrate a five year land supply, meaning there is a need to identify and bring forward new sites for development.

6.6 Extant Policy CP15 makes provision for at least 6,375 dwellings over the plan period to 2021. There are also provisions within this policy for the delivery of other housing sites where they accord with the sustainability principles established in Policy CP1, CP11 and other Core Strategy policies, as appropriate.

6.7 Provision is made in the emerging Local Plan for at least 6,834 dwellings to address the objectively assessed need for housing (using locally-derived figures) during the plan period up to 2031. Major new housing development will be delivered at five strategic sites over this time. In addition to these, new housing development will be delivered on other sites across the Borough as defined on the emerging Proposals Map, and in accordance within the policies in the Local Plan.

- 6.8 Significantly, in the emerging Local Plan, the majority of the site has a draft allocation for 216 dwellings as set out in Policy LP25. The site is called “*Site O: East Malling Research Station (Ditton Edge)*”. EMT has made representations to the Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation, supporting the site’s allocation for housing, and requesting a modification to Policy LP25 for an allocation of 300 dwellings.
- 6.9 This is because the EMT is also bringing forward the Parkside site for 110 dwellings which is allocated as “*Site P: East Malling Research Station (Parkside)*” in the emerging Local 205 dwellings. Both EMT’s sites aim to deliver the overall number of dwellings proposed by the Local Plan. However, following a detailed spatial analysis of these sites and their ability to sensitively accommodate development, it is considered more sustainable for the number of dwellings to be rebalanced between the sites, with more at Ditton Edge and fewer at Parkside. This approach has responded to the heritage and landscape constraints unique to each site, which we have discussed later in this Planning Statement.
- 6.10 EMT is of the view that the proposals are compliant with Policies CP11 and CP14 of the extant Development Plan because of the identified need for housing and the location of the site adjoining the settlement of Ditton. Notwithstanding, the extant Development Plan policies cannot be considered up-to-date in the absence of a five year housing land supply. The site’s draft allocation in the emerging Local Plan indicates the direction of travel of TMBC, which considers that the site is a suitable, sustainable site for delivering new homes.
- 6.11 It is considered that weight should be attributed to the draft allocation and that this, in combination with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, especially where a five year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, establishes the principle of residential development at this site.
- 6.12 As indicated on the Illustrative Masterplan accompanying this planning application, the site can deliver a high quality scheme of up to 300 units within the parameters set by the submitted Parameters Plans.

Residential Density

- 6.13 The NPPF requires planning decisions to optimise the potential of every site to accommodate development.
- 6.14 The residential density of the site will be determined through a future Reserved Matters application. The density of the scheme will accord with the parameters established by the Density Parameter Plan submitted with this application.
- 6.15 Based on 300 dwellings at a site of 11.58 hectares, the density will be 26 dwellings per hectare which is considered to be appropriate for this location and makes optimum use of the site whilst being compatible with the existing properties in Ditton and the sensitive landscape and historical features within the vicinity.

- 6.16 This will ensure that the scheme complies with Policy LP14 in the emerging Local Plan which requires new development to be well-designed, of a high quality and to respect the site and its surroundings in terms of density and character.

Mix of Dwellings

- 6.17 Emerging Policy LP40 requires major residential developments of 10 or more units to provide a mix of dwelling types having regard to the evidence in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- 6.18 The mix of dwellings will also be determined through consideration of the Reserved Matters and based on the prevailing local demand for house types. At this stage, it is envisaged that the scheme will provide a mix of dwelling types including 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes, and some blocks of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments for first time buyers and downsizers, having regard to the evidence in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This will ensure that the scheme is compliant with Policy LP40 in the emerging Local Plan.

Affordable Housing

- 6.19 Extant Policy CP17 requires the provision of 40% affordable housing on sites of 10 or more dwellings. It seeks a tenure split of 70% affordable units to be provided as social rented accommodation and 30% as intermediate housing. This policy, and the evidence underpinning it, is considered to be out-of-date.
- 6.20 To support the preparation of the emerging Local Plan, TMBC has undertaken an up-to-date viability study. This has identified different areas within the Borough as capable of delivering different levels of affordable housing. Emerging Policy LP39 identifies the north-east of the Borough, including Ditton, as a 'lower value' area within the emerging Local Plan. Non-strategic sites in this location will be required to provide 25% affordable housing. A tenure split of 70% rent (capped at the Local Housing Allowance) and 30% intermediate products will be sought.
- 6.21 The quantum and tenure split of affordable housing will be established through the Reserved Matters submission. The emerging Local Plan is predicated on the site delivering 25% affordable housing at this site, as per the latest evidence base. The site will therefore provide 25% affordable housing on-site in accordance with the emerging requirements.

Residential Accessibility

- 6.22 Policy LP45 of the emerging Local Plan sets out that major residential development will be required to build 25% of the dwellings to the requirements of Part M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) of the Building Regulations.

- 6.23 The applicant will endeavour to deliver this requirement and details of compliance with the Building Regulations with regard to residential accessibility. This will be addressed through a Reserved Matters submission.

Open Space

- 6.24 Policy LP41 of the emerging Local Plan requires major residential development to deliver an element of publically available open space, including opportunities for habitat creation to help strengthen the Green Infrastructure and Ecological Network.
- 6.25 The scheme will deliver publically accessible open space in accordance with the standards contained within Policy LP41 of the emerging Local Plan.
- 6.26 Open space has been incorporated throughout this scheme, with areas of formal open space at the northern boundary in linear form, and with smaller areas of open space across the site which can incorporate Local LAPs for young children.
- 6.27 The inclusion of green spaces across the site will help to create a sense of openness and support the countryside feel to the development.
- 6.28 The details of the open space provision will be confirmed during the Reserved Matters submission and EMT will seek to ensure that this provides opportunities for habitat creation to help strengthen the wider Green Infrastructure Network.
- 6.29 It is also envisaged that the open space provision will be supported by a clear long term management plan in accordance with Policy LP41.

Transport and Highways

- 6.30 Emerging Policy LP23 relates to sustainable transport and seeks to ensure that developments is designed to maximise sustainable transport modes. Emerging Policy LP42 sets out the parking standards for new developments, recognising that a number of factors will determine what will represent an acceptable and proportionate level of parking.
- 6.31 As detailed within Section 4 of this Planning Statement, the access to the site is proposed to be taken from Kiln Barn Road in the form of a priority-controlled T-junction and has been designed in accordance with the KCC Local Design Guide.
- 6.32 The initial section of road, before the internal loop road, will be served by a 6m wide carriageway in order to accommodate emergency access. The remainder of the development will be served by a 5.5m carriageway with a 2m footpath either side.

- 6.33 Visibility splays of 50m to the south and 52m to the north of the new access junction, measured from a 2.4m setback distance to the carriageway edge, will be achieved. The proposed access arrangement can be seen on drawing number 182600-003 Rev B. A new footway will extend along the extent of the site frontage at Kiln Barn road and a crossing point with tactile paving will be provided that connects to Ragstone Court.
- 6.34 The car parking arrangement has not been fixed as part of these proposals. The Transport Statement accompanying this planning application confirms that parking should be provided in accordance with the KCC 'enhanced' parking standards which are determined based on the location of the development.
- 6.35 The site is considered to be in a 'Suburban Edge/Village/Rural' location which requires 1.5 spaces per 1 and 2 bed houses and 2 spaces for larger dwellings. The Illustrative Masterplan has been designed to accommodate this level of parking. For any future Reserved Matters application, the scheme will be designed and prepared using these minimum standards and have regard to the standards set out within emerging Policy LP42.
- 6.36 The opportunity for the development to maximise sustainable travel modes will be explored through the detailed design of the scheme. On-site cycle parking will be included to encourage residents to travel to and from their homes using non-car modes as per emerging Policy LP23.

Arboricultural Impact

- 6.37 Within the site, 36 individual trees and 8 groups of trees were assessed as part of the development proposals. The Arboricultural Report submitted with this planning application confirms that 1 tree is Category A, 7 trees are Category B, 33 trees are Category C and 3 trees are Category U.
- 6.38 The best quality trees were identified at the outset and used to inform the proposed illustrative design. The Illustrative Masterplan is based on a harmonious relationship between the trees and the new development.
- 6.39 Down to Earth Trees has undertaken an arboricultural assessment of the proposals. This assessment confirms that development of this site is not likely to pose adverse effects. Access into the site is proposed to pass through a hedgerow of low arboricultural value. No significant trees are proposed to be lost to the development.
- 6.40 The overall design approach is to retain all existing trees along the northern boundary. Trees along the southern boundary which currently form a windbreak will be retained, with some selected gaps made in the trees to provide views out to the south across the research fields and beyond.
- 6.41 Where higher value trees and hedgerows exist on site, these can normally be retained, and new native species planting will also be undertaken.

Ecological Impact

- 6.42 Policy LP19 of the emerging Local Plan sets out the major development should accommodate nature by including opportunities for habitat creation and wildlife.
- 6.43 The site is not within or adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation. The closest such site is Ditton Quarry Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site, to the east of the site.
- 6.44 In general, the majority of the habitats to be lost as part of the development comprise agricultural fields of low ecological interest. Whilst surveys have confirmed some use of the site by bats and birds, suitable measures can be adopted to avoid any significant adverse effects upon these groups, and to provide enhancement opportunities. During construction, best practice and reasonable avoidance measures will be adopted to avoid significant adverse effects on protected and other species.
- 6.45 The Ecological Assessment submitted with the planning application confirms that there are no overriding ecological constraints to the development of the site. Therefore, no significant impacts are considered likely to occur.
- 6.46 Open space will be provided on site and the specific details of biodiversity enhancements to be provided within the open spaces will be included as part of a future Reserved Matters application. It is envisaged that the site will make space for preserving and enhancing nature by including opportunities for habitat creation and wildlife as an integral part of the external building fabric. Therefore the proposals will accord with Policy LP19 of the emerging Local Plan.

Noise Impact

- 6.47 Policy LP21 of the emerging Local Plan states that noise sensitive development, such as residential, will only be permitted where it is designed to reduce the impact of noise from the local environment to an acceptable level.
- 6.48 A Noise Assessment has been prepared by Ardent and submitted with the planning application. The site is considered to be 'low risk' when considered against the relevant industry guidance.
- 6.49 The worst-case change in traffic flow along Kiln Barn Road as a result of the development will lead to a subjective change that is just notable to road traffic noise levels on Kiln Barn Road. In all other locations the change in noise levels at the site will be insignificant. The Noise Assessment highlights that suitable internal noise levels will be maintained for the occupants of the dwellings, even with open windows.
- 6.50 The Noise Assessment concludes that the site is suitable for residential development provided the principles of good acoustic design are followed. It is expected that the relevant design details of the dwellings are submitted with any future Reserved Matters application. This will ensure the proposals comply with Policy LP21 of the emerging Local Plan.

Air Quality Impact

- 6.51 Emerging Policy LP20 states that development, either individually or cumulatively with other proposals or existing uses in the vicinity, that could result in additional air pollutants and worsen air quality, will not be permitted.
- 6.52 In terms of air pollution, the site is located close to a number of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) including: '*London Road/New Hythe Lane junction and London Road towards Ditton*'; '*Station Road / London Road, Ditton*'; and '*London Road / Hall Road junction and London Road*'.
- 6.53 An Air Quality Assessment has been submitted with the planning application, which assesses the impact of the proposed development at construction and operational stages. The Air Quality Assessment considers the potential long and short term exposure of air pollution (NO₂ and PM₁₀) to the proposed development once completed, including an assessment of baseline conditions.
- 6.54 The Assessment confirms that, based on the traffic levels and distribution pattern from the development, no significant impact is likely to occur. In any event, mitigation is possible through reducing the number of vehicle movements, through a suitable Travel Plan, and encouraging non-car modes of travel in the design of the scheme. The scheme will therefore be designed in accordance with Policy LP20 of the emerging Local Plan.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 6.55 Policy CP5 resists development that would impact the separation and separate identities of the built-up areas of the Medway Gap settlements, which includes Ditton.
- 6.56 A Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) has been undertaken by Lloyd Bore Ltd. This confirms that the proposed development is not uncharacteristic of its setting, and is not in a location or of a scale that would result in notable impacts upon the landscape character at a local, regional or national scale. The LVIA has also considered this proposal in conjunction with EMT's proposals for the Parkside site, to consider the cumulative effects of both site.
- 6.57 In terms of impact upon views, the site is highly visually contained by existing built form within the Medway Gap Urban Area to the north and west, and by linear shelterbelts within the EMT's Estate to the south and east. The proposed development would not be prominent in views from elevated viewpoints on the AONB, due to the effects of distance and the presence of intervening structures and vegetation.

- 6.58 The scheme would cause some changes in or loss of views towards the AONB from some viewpoints, but not sufficient to have a measurable impact on its overall appearance or setting. Therefore the proposals are consistent with Policy CP7 and emerging Policy LP12.
- 6.59 The proposed development has been located and designed to protect significant cultural and historically important views. The scheme would not result in the loss of, or damage to, key visual resources or features. Residential development at this location would not introduce uncharacteristic or detracting features into the landscape.
- 6.60 Visual amenity of residents overlooking the site from neighbouring roads at Cherry Orchard and Brampton Fields have the potential to be effected by the development. Part of this frontage is separated from the development by a shelterbelt, but additional mitigation planting is recommended for this boundary.
- 6.61 Ultimately the site has a medium to high capacity to accommodate the proposed residential development and the scheme would not cause an adverse change in the prevailing landscape and visual character of the area.
- 6.62 Consideration has been given to how the development will sit within the wider landscape and integrate with the existing built up edge of the settlement. The detailed design of the scheme brought forward through a future Reserved Matters submission will ensure that the development does not unduly erode the separate identity of the existing settlements or harm the setting or character Ditton when viewed from the countryside or from adjoining settlements. The proposals will accord with Policy CP6.

Heritage and Archaeology

- 6.63 Policy LP11 of the emerging Local Plan sets out that for designated areas, including Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas, the Council will apply the relevant NPPF policies at the time that planning applications are determined.
- 6.64 The site does not contain any designated or known non-designated heritage assets, as confirmed in the Heritage Appraisal prepared by Savills to support the planning application. The site is located circa 350m east of the Grade I listed Bradbourne House, Bradbourne Conservation Area and Registered Park and Garden. The proposed development acknowledges the historic environment in which the site is located, and the scheme has been designed with the aim to preserve and enhance the significance of the heritage assets in the vicinity. It has been confirmed in the Heritage Appraisal that the proposed development will not cause harm to the nearby heritage assets or their settings.
- 6.65 The majority of the site lies within an Area of Archaeological Potential and the site can be considered likely to have a low to moderate archaeological potential for the prehistoric and Roman periods. The site has remained open farmland and horticultural land throughout its documented history.

- 6.66 CgMs have prepared an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment which considers the site for its below ground archaeological potential. No designated archaeological assets are identified within the study site or its immediate vicinity. The Scheduled Monument of part of an Iron Age enclosure and minor Roman villa lies adjacent to East Malling Station, south of the church of St James, c.700m southwest of the site. The proposed development is not considered likely to have an impact upon the setting of the Scheduled Monument.
- 6.67 Provided that the recommendations for archaeological mitigation works recommended within the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, initially comprising trial trench evaluation, are secured by appropriately worded planning conditions, significant adverse environmental effects are not considered likely to arise in relation to below ground archaeology.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.68 Policy CP10 sets out that development should first seek to make use of areas at no or low flood risk before areas of higher risk.
- 6.69 The entire site is situated in a Flood Zone 1 which means it has a low probability of flooding (less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding).
- 6.70 A detailed Flood Risk Assessment accompanies the planning application, which demonstrates that the proposed development will not increase the risk of flooding to the site or the surrounding area.
- 6.71 The preferred SuDS option for this site will be a combination of swales, permeable paving, detention basin and deep borehole soakaways which will accord with the requirements of emerging Policy LP18 which encourages the use of SuDS techniques for the management of run-off in major developments. As the planning application is submitted in outline form, a foul and surface water drainage strategy will be submitted in due course.
- 6.72 The proposals accord with Policy CP10 because the proposed development is within an area of low flood risk as opposed to an area of higher risk. This scheme will be designed to meet all relevant national policies in respect of flood risk and will thereby accord with the requirement of Policy LP17 of the emerging Local Plan.

Sustainability

- 6.73 Policy LP44 of the emerging Local Plan requires new dwellings to meet the Building Regulations optional requirement for tighter water efficiency of 110 litres per person per day. Emerging Policy LP14 sets out that development should, where practicable and proportionate, be designed to maximise opportunities to reduce energy demands through the orientation of habitable rooms to harness natural light and through landscaping to prevent overheating.

6.74 The applicant is committed to addressing these requirements and it is envisaged that the specific details of the measures to conserve energy and water, and to maximise the overall sustainability of the scheme, will be submitted in association with a future Reserved Matters application.

Section 106 Heads of Terms

6.75 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 at Regulation 122 provide limitations on the use of planning obligations. Planning obligations may only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

6.76 These tests are further reinforced in the NPPF which recognises that any planning obligations must be fully justified and evidenced, and should not preclude the delivery of development.

6.77 In addition to the key planning and regeneration benefits that will be generated by the proposed scheme (discussed in Section 4), it is anticipated that an appropriate package of Section 106 contributions will be negotiated and agreed with the Council in accordance with the statutory tests contained in Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010, and the overall viability of the proposals.

6.78 TMBC has prepared an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (August 2018) to specifically identify the infrastructure which is necessary to support the development proposed with the emerging Local Plan and how this will be delivered. This sets out that the Council will continue to seek funding for infrastructure for individual developments through Section 106 agreements or by delivery on site.

6.79 An assessment of the capacity for introducing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been undertaken as part of the emerging Local Plan viability work, but the Council is not minded to progress work on CIL until the Local Plan has progressed and been examined.

6.80 EMT understands that the Council seeks Section 106 contributions on a case by case basis having regard to the infrastructure requirements set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. These could therefore relate to the following forms of infrastructure:

- Affordable Housing;
- Transport;
- Education;

- Healthcare;
- Social Infrastructure;
- Public Services;
- Biodiversity and Flood Infrastructure; and
- Utility Services.

6.81 The specific matters and costs will be subject to negotiation and agreement with the Council during the determination of the planning application.

6.82 In terms of highways obligations, it is with some certainty that there will need to be some highways mitigating improvements at junctions along the A20 corridor near to the site. Any such improvements should be tailored to offset the impact of the development in itself, rather than resolving capacity issues in the local network.

6.83 The highways mitigations could be secured by a planning condition attached to the outline planning permission to be delivered through offsite Section 278 works. Alternatively the highways mitigation could be costed financially and agreed as part of the Section 106 which KCC could then pool to wider strategic highway improvements.

Planning Balance

6.84 In making a judgment on the planning application, a balancing exercise is required of the weight to be attached to other material considerations against the requirements of the statutory Development Plan.

6.85 There is a preference within extant Policies CP11 and CP14 of the Development Plan for new development to be located within the confines of the existing Urban Areas. The site is unallocated and located outside of the confines of the settlement of Ditton, so the proposals do not completely conform with the preferred spatial strategy within these policies. However, there is recognition within the policies that development adjoining the existing Urban Areas would be also appropriate in sustainability terms, where there is an identified need. EMT considers there is an identified need for new housing within the Borough.

6.86 Based on the policies within the Development Plan, TMBC must weigh up all of the benefits and harm resulting from the proposed development, and then come to a balanced view on whether planning permission should be granted or refused.

6.87 The July 2018 NPPF sets out a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development which comprises economic, social and environmental considerations. It identifies that where development proposals accord with an up-to-date Development Plan, they should be approved without delay.

6.88 Where Development Plan policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date (which includes situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites including the appropriate buffer), planning permission should be granted unless:

“i. the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.” (paragraph 11).

6.89 For the avoidance of doubt, the policies referred to in point i. are those within the NPPF relating to, amongst AONB's and designated heritage assets. As set out within the earlier parts of our Planning Assessment, the proposed development will not be prominent in views from elevated viewpoints on the AONB, due to the effects of distance and the presence of intervening structures and vegetation. The scheme has the potential to cause some changes in or loss of views towards the AONB from some viewpoints, but this will not be sufficient to have a measurable impact on its overall appearance or setting, as confirmed in the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal.

6.90 The site does not contain any designated or known non-designated heritage assets. It is located circa 350m east of the Grade I listed Bradbourne House, Bradbourne Conservation Area and Registered Park and Garden. The proposed development acknowledges the historic environment in which the site is located, and the scheme has been designed with the aim to preserve and enhance the significance of the heritage assets in the vicinity. It has been confirmed in the submitted Heritage Appraisal that the proposed development will not cause harm to the nearby heritage assets or their settings. On the above basis, it is EMT's view that point i. is not triggered.

6.91 With regards to point ii., EMT considers that the Development Plan is out-of-date as TMBC cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing supply. This is set out in TMBC's Annual Monitoring Report (October 2017) which states that as at 31 March 2017 the Council could only provide 95% of its objectively assessed requirement (including 5% buffer) for the five year period to 2021 / 2022, equating to a shortfall of 199 dwellings. The absence of a five year housing supply has more recently been confirmed by the Planning Inspectorate in a March 2018 appeal decision (Appeal Ref. APP/H2265/W/1/318947) which refers to the *“lack of a 5 year housing supply that is not disputed by the Council”*. On this basis, the tilted balance as set out at Paragraph 11 of the NPPF is engaged.

6.92 The application of the tilted balance means that significant weight should be attached (individually and cumulatively) to the benefits of the scheme. It also requires the Council to show any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal. This sets a very high hurdle and requires possible impacts to be afforded significant weight such that the planning balance is tipped to such an extent that the benefits of the proposed development are outweighed.

6.93 It is unusual for a development proposal not to have an adverse impact of some form. Therefore, all of the competing considerations have to be assessed together, and an overall balanced conclusion reached. The benefits of the proposed development represent important material considerations which weigh heavily in favour of the application. These include:

Economic

- The creation of full time equivalent and indirect jobs during the construction phase of the development. This workforce will boost the local economy through local spending;
- The introduction of new residents into the local area who will also boost the local economy through local spending;
- The provision of a financial receipt to the EMT from the sale of the application site once it gains outline planning permission. This will enable the new facilities and infrastructure at the Research Campus to be provided, and has the potential to generate new jobs at the Campus; and
- The financial contributions to the Council that will be obtained through the Section 106 Agreement.

Social

- The delivery of a significant quantum of new homes which will help to address TMBC's housing target and lack of a 5 year housing land supply;
- The provision of 25% affordable housing in the form of rented and intermediate dwellings which will be fully integrated into the scheme;
- The provision of a range of unit sizes to address different housing needs;
- The introduction of new residents into the local area which will expand the local community;
- High quality design comprising including landscaped open spaces and play areas for the well-being and enjoyment of local residents; and
- Financial contributions towards education, healthcare, social infrastructure and public services.

Environmental

- The provision of ecological enhancements which will result in a net gain in biodiversity across the site, adding to the level of biodiversity within the wider area. Ecological enhancements will include new trees, shrubs and hedges, to be confirmed at the detailed design stage;

- Measures to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport around the City, including green routes through the site, ample cycle spaces; and the delivery of a Travel Plan at the detailed design stage; and
- A financial contribution towards biodiversity infrastructure.

6.94 These benefits are significant, and comprise material considerations which should be afforded substantial weight in the balancing exercise.

6.95 The Planning Assessment has demonstrated that the scheme is planning policy compliant and it is not considered that there will be any adverse impacts of the proposed development that weigh strongly against the scheme benefits. Landscape and Visual impacts on the AONB will not be significant, and the scheme has been designed to respect the nearby heritage assets and their settings.

6.96 Whilst there is a preference within Policies CP11 and CP14 for development to be located within the existing Urban Areas, the site immediately adjoins the built-up area of Ditton and so is a suitable location for development. Additionally, the site has a draft allocation for residential development in the emerging Local Plan which offsets any perceived dis-benefits arising from the divergence from the preferred spatial strategy with the extant Development Plan.

6.97 Overall, EMT is of the view that there are no adverse impacts of the proposed development. In the absence of any adverse impacts to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, and many material benefits of the scheme, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies. The proposed development represents a sustainable development which is viable and deliverable. The planning balance is therefore strongly in favour of the proposal being granted planning permission.

Delivery Trajectory

6.98 A significant benefit of EMT securing outline planning permission at this stage is that it will reduce the planning risk associated with bringing the sites forward when each site is taken to the market.

6.99 If planning permission is granted in Q1 2019, the Trust envisages that there is potential to select a development partner and address the Reserved Matters by Q4 2020.

6.100 As previously explained, the emerging Local Plan sets out an indicative trajectory for the site of delivering 40 units in the year 2020 / 2021. EMT's representations to the emerging Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation has demonstrated the potential to deliver 75 units in this year, and 75 units each of the three following years, meaning that 300 units can be delivered early on in the emerging Local Plan period.



6.101 However, given the lead in times associated with the delivery of the scheme, it is important that EMT secures outline planning permission as soon as possible. This will benefit TMBC by ensuring its five year housing supply is maintained during the emerging Local Plan period, which is reliant on the delivery of the draft housing allocations.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an outline planning application for the residential development of land at south of Ditton within the East Malling Estate for up to 300 dwellings.
- 7.2 The proposals have been informed by a series of pre-application discussions with TMBC and have in principle support from officers.
- 7.3 The existing Development Plan cannot be considered up-to-date in the absence of a five year housing land supply. The new Local Plan is at an advanced stage of preparation, and will have an accelerated preparation period over the remainder of this year. As such, it is considered that weight should be afforded to the policies and proposals in the emerging document when determining this planning application.
- 7.4 The majority of the site has a draft allocation for 216 dwellings in association with Policy LP25 of the Emerging Local Plan. The site's draft allocation in the emerging Local Plan indicates the direction of travel of TMBC, which considers that the site is a suitable, sustainable site for delivering new homes.
- 7.5 Weight should be attributed to the draft allocation and this, in combination with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, establishes the principle of residential development at this site.
- 7.6 The planning benefits of the proposed development of the site are twofold. There will be invaluable benefits to the operations at the Research Campus operations through the receipt of funds. Additionally, the proposals will increase the housing supply within the Borough, to the benefit of TMBC.
- 7.7 This Planning Statement has assessed the level of compliance with the prevailing planning policy framework, and demonstrates that the scheme is planning policy compliant.
- 7.8 The application is submitted in outline form and consideration has been given to the main planning policy requirements in the formulation of the proposals. Detailed technical and design matters can be dealt with by way of planning condition and will be addressed in full at the Reserved Matters stage when a detailed design is submitted. It is therefore respectfully requested that the proposals are recommended for approval at the earliest opportunity.

