

Appendix 1

Consultation Feedback Analysis Report

Rochester Airport Masterplan

June 2013



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1 Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction

Rochester Airport is owned by Medway Council and is a vital part of Medway's future economic prosperity. However, the airport's facilities are nearing the end of their economic lives. Investment is needed to secure the airport's medium to long-term future.

Medway has developed a strategy of making the airport 'smaller but better' with improved facilities for users and visitors. The main change will be removing one of the two grass runways, and replacing the remaining one with a hard surfaced runway, with a grass runway alongside.

These changes will free up land for development next to the airport. New development provides the opportunity to:

- meet Medway Council's aspirations for the area by creating a hub for knowledge-based employment; and
- release value from council-owned land, so helping to fund improvements to the airport.

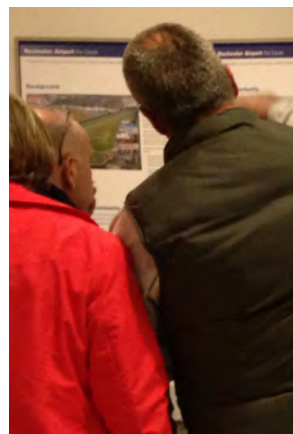
Whilst there are clear planning policies identifying the area as a hub for high quality employment, there are no specific policies that protect the airport. Medway Council has therefore commissioned Tibbalds Planning & Urban Design (supported by Campbell Reith, consulting engineers, and Aspinall Verdi, property consultants) to prepare a masterplan for the area that will provide a clear vision for the future.

1.2 Purpose of this report

Consultation with local people is important for making sure that the masterplan takes the right approach. There are two stages of consultation:

- an initial stage of informal consultation on the emerging masterplan before it is finalised; and
- a formal statutory stage that will last for a minimum period of six weeks.

This is a report of the initial consultation stage, which was centred around a two-day exhibition at the Innovation Centre, Medway. The report sets out what information was shown at the exhibition, how the event was publicised, details of the responses made by local people, and how the emerging masterplan will be changed as a result of comments made.



Photos from the initial consultation event

2 Consultation Summary

2.1 Publicity and promotion of consultation

The consultation took the form of a two-day exhibition at the Innovation Centre, Medway, with the same material provided on Medway Council's website for those unable to attend. Leading up to the exhibition, Medway Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council worked together to promote the consultation through a number of measures. A week prior to the event Medway Council distributed 7,300 flyers to homes and business around the airport (within both council areas). The flyer contained information about the exhibition and details of web based content. (see Appendix 1). This was accompanied by online presence on Medway Council's websites. A press release (see Appendix 1) was sent to the following:

- Medway Messenger/KMFM
- ITV Meridian
- Rochester People
- BBC South East
- BBC Radio Kent
- Community Voice
- Machinery magazine
- Federation of Small Business
- Kent on Sunday
- Kent Business TV
- Production Engineering Solutions
- Kent Institution of Directors
- KM Business
- Heart
- Local Government Association

The press release secured coverage in the Medway Messenger and online presence on the following websites:

http://www.kentonline.co.uk/medway_messenger/news/Airports-vision-for-future-596

<http://www.rochesterpeople.co.uk/Exhibition-plans-Rochester-Airport-takes-place/story-18971312-detail/story.html>

http://www.kentnews.co.uk/news/plans_for_rochester_airport_to_go_on_public_display_1_2186244

<http://www.medway1.com/news/4609/Exhibition-sets-out-Rochester-Airport-vision>

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=921>

http://article.wn.com/view/2013/05/10/Exhibition_sets_outs_vision_for_Rochester_Airport_Medway_Cou/#/related_news

<http://localuknews.co.uk/kent/business/localnews/public-exhibition-setting-out-vision-for-rochester-airport-taking-place-at-chatham-innovation-centre>

2.2 Public exhibition and consultation event 13-14 May 2013

The public exhibition and consultation was held at Medway Council's Innovation Centre adjacent to the airport masterplan site. Seven display boards were exhibited in the ground floor foyer area of the Innovation Centre. These were visible from the entrance and located next to a cafe area making the exhibition accessible and welcoming to attendees.

The exhibition boards (which are set out in Appendix 2) provided information on the following issues:

- Background to project and proposals
- The opportunity
- Key masterplanning issues (physical and design)
- Key masterplanning issues (economic and policy)
- Draft masterplan
- Draft masterplan details
- Next steps

The event ran from 10:30 am - 8:00 pm on both days. Staff were available to discuss issues with attendees. Feedback forms were available for people to fill in.

The main body of the feedback form posed three questions:

- What three things do you like about the draft masterplan?
- What three things could we do to improve the draft masterplan?

- Do you have any other comments on the proposals?

In addition, the forms requested some personal information including name, address and post code. Respondents were asked to describe what best described their interests in the proposals: local resident, business owner or other.

The staff actively encouraged the completion of the forms. Attendees were able to take a copy of the feedback form home to complete and return at a later date. In addition colour handouts of the exhibition boards were made available. Both days of the event received a steady flow of visitors with a number of different interests represented.

Parallel to the event an electronic version of the boards and feedback form were available on Medway Council's website: (www.medway.gov.uk/rochesterairport). This was also highlighted to all attendees who wished to re-examine the proposals and feed back at a later date. A link to Medway Council's website was provided on Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's website.

The closing date for feedback was 24 May.

2.3 Summary of feedback received

All of the written comments received are set out in Appendix 3 and 4 of this report. This section provides a summary of these comments. There was strong support for the retention of the airport, and most people were positive about new employment in the area. However, a number of concerns were also raised, particularly about how the airport would be used in the future (types of aircraft and frequency of flights) and traffic issues.

Support for the airport

A great amount of support was received from the public at the consultation event. There was a general desire to secure the future of the airport signifying its importance to local people. Specifically, there were many positive references to the Medway Aircraft Preservation Society (MAPS) and their contribution to the area. The masterplan was seen as an opportunity to enhance their activities.

Support for new employment

The development of business spaces and creation of jobs was largely supported by the public.

Road and traffic issues

Local people queried the effect the masterplan would have on the existing road network and the volume of traffic the development would generate. Key concerns included:

- potential traffic increase and queuing at junctions;
- concerns about the design of existing junctions;
- pedestrian and cycle improvements; and
- internal arrangement and parking.

Airport design issues

Many of the issues raised at the consultation event were related to the detail of how the airport itself will operate in the future. Rochester Airport Ltd is developing its plans for the future in parallel with the masterplan, and detailed proposals have not yet been finalised. It was not therefore possible to answer many of the detailed questions raised by local people. The questions raised included:

Airport operation

- How the airport will operate whilst paved runway is laid?
- What times will planes fly? Can these be limited at weekends and holidays? Will noise levels be limited?
- How many planes use the airport at present and how you anticipate this changing with the development of the airport?
- Are the majority of flights commercial or leisure? Will this change over time?
- How will improvements be funded over 25 year lease period?
- Will landing fees increase and price out hobby aircraft?
- What aircraft use the airport at present?

- Can MAPS/ Café /flying school /viewing areas be more accessible to public?
- Could you provide figures to demonstrate the number of planes using the airport at present and how you anticipate this changing with the development of the airport?
- Concern about helicopter noise. Is there potential to reduce this?

Safety

- Safety concerns due to closure of one runway. Does this make aircraft more susceptible to accidents from cross winds as they will have less options for landing?
- If there is an increase in aircraft how will safety be maintained?

Infrastructure

Although many members of the public supported the closure of runway 16/34 and creation of a paved runway, some concerns were raised including:

- How will the creation of a paved runway change number and types of aircraft using the airport?
- Will different types of aircraft attracted by the paved runway be noisier and larger than existing?
- Concern that the closure of one runway only will increase risk of accidents.
- Concern that using runway 02/20 only will result in higher concentration of aircraft and significant increase in noise and pollution over the properties directly beneath the flight path of 02/20.
- Questions over why 16/34 is to be closed rather than 02/20.

2.4 How the masterplan should respond

The feedback received from the consultation was generally supportive of the masterplan. However, there was clearly frustration at the lack of detailed information on the operation of the airport. There was also some confusion about the level of detail of the masterplan, but this was overcome by discussions that explained its main role is to set clear planning policies rather than decide precisely where buildings should go and what they should look like.

The main conclusion, therefore, is that the masterplan itself does not need to change but the supporting information needs to be much clearer in explaining the future operation of the airport and, setting the context for issues such as traffic.

Road and traffic issues

Traffic / queuing / delays at specific road junctions

- Any new development will require a planning application accompanied by a full Transport Assessment (TA). The TA will assess the impact of the development traffic at the key junctions in the local area, and, if necessary, propose improvements. The extent of the junctions to be assessed will be agreed with Medway Council in a Scoping Study.

Davis Estate / Toys-R-Us junction

- This junction currently accommodates u-turning traffic for the Asda supermarket. The masterplan will identify opportunities to reduce the impact on this roundabout by alternative access arrangements at the airport entrance.

Horsted Gyratory

- The residential development at the Horsted Gyratory apparently generates less traffic at peak times than the previous educational use and therefore no improvements to nearby junctions were proposed. However, a sum of money has been set aside for improvements at the gyratory itself which Medway Council are currently designing.

Pedestrian / cycle improvements

- Improvements to the existing provisions for pedestrians and cyclists will be considered as part of the masterplan, both on the development area and connecting to the surrounding local area.

Internal layout arrangements

- The masterplan is illustrative only and does not show detailed road designs. Future detailed design of the site access roads will consider the needs of all types of vehicles requiring access. Parking will be required to be provided in accordance with local standards.

Airport issues

Rochester Airport Limited (RAL) has been contacted regarding airport issues raised at consultation, and asked to provide clarification - set out below - to help answer as many of the questions as possible. As set out above, RAL is in the process of developing its plans for the airport and subsequently not all of the technical questions about the development of the airport can be answered at this time. Issues such as the precise location of MAPS for example will become clearer as RAL develops its proposals.

It should be noted that the detailed design of the airport itself is not part of the masterplan. Any proposals made by the airport will be part of a separate planning application. The public will have opportunity to comment on this application as part of the normal consultation process.

Operations

Understandably the main concern is the size and type of aircraft that could potentially use Rochester Airport once the runway has been paved. Photographs and a brief description of types of aircraft that are anticipated are attached. All of these aircraft either use or have used the airport.

The core business will remain the leisure flyer. The runway will not be long enough to attract larger commercial aircraft although small twin engined aircraft could land as now. There is already commercial passenger traffic landing and would expect this to increase slightly. It may be possible to charge additional handling fees for commercial aircraft with measured increases in landing fees for leisure aircraft. The

leisure market is extremely price sensitive and the operators will remain competitive in this market. It is not envisaged there will be enough commercial traffic to marginalise leisure aviation and in any case RAL would not allow this to happen.

The airport is not equipped for cargo flights. There are already a few emergency movements of very light cargo flights and this type of movement is not expected to increase substantially. Typically this involves the transport of small machinery parts or human transplant organs or blood.

The airport currently handles around 35,000 aircraft movements per year or 96 movements per day. There are currently no restrictions on the number of movements. The operators have offered to cap total annual aircraft movements at 50,000 per annum or 137 per day. A very busy summer day is predicted to be 400 to 500 movements, compared to a peak of around 360 movements now. Careful monitoring will be in place to check the number of flights.

Licensed operating hours will be 7:30am to 7:30pm although these hours may decrease by experience during the dark winter period. The license means the airport can accept commercial aircraft and also offer training during those hours. Home based aircraft will retain the right to operate up until dusk or 9pm as now.

Rochester Airport is a base for the national and transport police helicopter services and also the Kent Air Ambulance which is moving its life saving operations to a 24-hour service. Currently, these aircraft will be able to use the airport 24 hours per day as a vital refuelling and rest stop for their crews. The military also use the airport at all hours and will continue to do so.

Helicopters by design are more flexible than fixed wing aircraft. Noise mitigation is available by low level (keeping above the legal minimum) by direct departure or arrival from/to the west over the railway and M2 if safe to do so. All night time operators are encouraged to use this route but if the runways are busy, it may be unsafe to cross them and therefore standard departures and arrivals must be made.

Strict permission is required for anyone else to use the airport outside of the licensed hours and any commercial traffic is prohibited. As now there may be a flight outside of these hours wishing to use a licensed airport. This may be an aircraft late returning or perhaps an emergency medical

evacuation. These flights are considered the exception and the operators are negotiating remission of 10 movements per months (a movement being a landing or a take off,) with Medway Council officers.

Rochester Airport currently enjoys absolutely no limits to its use and these restrictions are offered voluntarily. Movement logs will be available for examination by Medway Council representatives.

The loss of runway 16/34 will inevitably lead to intensification on runway 02/20. The approximate movements split is 70/30 between runways (70 per cent being 02/20). Runway 16/34 is often used for convenience rather than necessity. Detailed figures are also available. The paved runway improves safety and lessens the noise of aircraft particularly on take off. An aircraft taking off on a paved runway will get off the ground earlier and will therefore be higher at the boundary. Typically on landing an aircraft is gliding on a low power setting.

A grass airfield is slippery when wet and can be boggy. A correctly laid paved, drained and grooved runway is neither of these.

Safety

An examination of the Air Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB) website reveals the good safety record at Rochester Airport. All aircraft accidents and incidents are reported to them and a Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) inspector.

The reports with the AAIB have been examined and number 23 since 1988, less than one per annum, with two serious and six minor injuries reported.

All aircraft are subject to a strict maintenance regime. They are examined by an engineer every 50 hours with a thorough check every 100 hours. All aircraft parts are strictly licensed. Fuel sold at Rochester is strictly controlled at source, samples are retained and checked daily for contamination and goes through separate filters before delivery.

Pilots undergo thorough training which is ongoing and tested by an examiner periodically together with a strict medical regime.

The aerodrome licence demands a Safety Management System (SMS) which is annually audited by the CAA. Two licensed rescue and firefighting crew are on duty with a

bespoke fire and rescue vehicle available to them during licensed opening hours. The crew are trained to attend any incident within two minutes of an alarm and are qualified first aiders. There is always a duty manager on site who is ultimately responsible for day to day implementation of the SMS. The crew receive ongoing training and are regularly re-examined by an officer of the Kent Fire & Rescue Service.

An air traffic radio controller (FISO) is on watch during licensed opening hours. They keep constant radio contact with all aircraft in the local area and on the ground. They cannot control aircraft in the air but for safety will instruct those on the ground. The controller has extensive views over all of the operating areas and runways. They are highly trained and also have to obtain a license which is renewed regularly on examination. All pilots are therefore responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the rules of the air. The airport operator will always try and assist should there be complaints regarding low flying. The CAA ultimately police all aircraft and pilots and take transgressions very seriously.

All infrastructure improvements described below following the closure of runway 16/34 mean that safety will be enhanced and the airport can be more welcoming to visitors as airside and landside will be defined.

Infrastructure

The runway will not be moving neither will it be possible to increase the length significantly from its current 827 metres. It is envisaged the width will be reduced to 25 metres from 31 metres. At either end will be hard areas for holding and turning. During its construction runway 02/20 will be closed for the duration. Runway 16/34 will be used when the prevailing winds allow. When the runway intersection (i.e. the crossover between 16/34 & 02/20) is built then the airport will be shut for a short period. Once the work is complete, and the new paved runway has been licensed, runway 16/34 will be closed and the land to the north west will be handed back to Medway Council. This area will be safeguarded to ensure that any buildings or works do not interfere with airport operations and to ensure that safety is not compromised.

The grass (relief) runway will be retained and refurbished although it is currently in a good state. This will not move or be adjusted in size.

Going from the current configuration to one runway will cause operational problems at certain times. It is anticipated that less than 10 per cent of the time the airport will be unusable due to high crosswinds. Each aircraft (and some operators) have individual crosswind limits. It is down to the individual pilot or operator to assess wind conditions at the time of flight. This is one of many calculations made by all pilots prior to getting into their aircraft. It has also been assessed that we will lose far less flights due to crosswinds than unsuitable field conditions. On many occasions the runways are usable but have been unable to get aircraft to the runway due to poor conditions on the taxiways.

The apron will be extended with all existing airport buildings, portakabins and temporary buildings being demolished. A short paved taxiway will be constructed from the enlarged apron to the new paved runway. Existing grass taxiways will remain and will be used when possible. At times the taxiways cannot be used the new runway will be backtracked.

Both existing hangars will remain where they are.

Hangar 3 will be completely reclad and reroofed with new doors. Consideration is currently being made as to where the airport operational buildings will be located. They can either be standalone buildings on the front line overlooking the airfield or consideration can be given to building offices into hangar 3 with a control tower being constructed in the roof.

Hangar 4 will be refurbished although this is mainly cosmetic with a renewal of guttering and new doors.

A new fenced viewing area will be constructed front line giving extensive views over the airfield its approaches and the new runway. An adjacent café will be built for refreshments and light snacks and will be open throughout the airport operating hours.

MAPS will be housed in new facilities. Until they can finance the facilities they require and for expediency a new hangar will be constructed which will be able to house all of their

existing operations under one roof. It is anticipated that this will be located in an area where it can be expanded to enable them to fulfil their wishes.

Both the MAPS facility and the public areas will be adjacent to the airport entrance which will be improved both for access and to create a welcoming environment. Signage will be improved on the Maidstone Road.

There may be an increase in leisure road traffic at weekends and bank holidays but it is not envisaged that this will increase substantially during the working week from current levels.

There is a great deal of outside interest at what is happening at Rochester and the current operators have enquiries mostly from aviation related businesses to base themselves at the airport. This is very good news in that new business brings wealth and employment to the local economy. Other enquiries have also been received for airside access from the new development on the airport. Other enquiries have also been received for airside access from the new development on the north west area which will be given up to Medway Council.

RAL has invited anyone with queries or concerns raised in this section of the report to contact them directly. The contact telephone number is 01634 869969.

2.5 Next steps

A draft masterplan document will be produced that provides a clear vision for the future of the area, along with planning policies that set out what can and cannot happen in the area.

This masterplan will be the subject of at least six weeks' public consultation over the summer. The feedback from the consultation will be assessed and, if necessary, the masterplan will be amended. It will then be taken to council committee to be formally adopted.

Appendix 1: Publicity material

Flyer page one

Rochester Airport the future

Public exhibition of development proposals to secure the airport's future, enhance heritage facilities and provide quality jobs



13 - 14 May 2013

10.30am - 8pm

Innovation Centre Medway,
next to the Holiday Inn hotel

Medway
COUNCIL
Serving You

Medway Council invites you to a public exhibition of development proposals for Rochester Airport's future.

As a resident or business local to the airport, we want to hear your views on the proposals to secure the airport's future, enhance heritage facilities and provide quality jobs through development of part of the site.

Staff will be available to discuss the proposals and answer your questions.

Details of the proposals for regenerating Rochester Airport are available at www.medway.gov.uk/rochesterairport

Parking is available in the Innovation Centre visitor car park.

We look forward to welcoming you at the public exhibition.

Contact: business.support@medway.gov.uk
01634 338177



PR 5245



08 May 2013

Communications, Performance and Partnerships
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham ME4 4TR
e-mail: communications@medway.gov.uk

For Immediate Release

Exhibition sets out vision for Rochester Airport

A public exhibition setting out a vision for the long-term future of Rochester Airport, including space for a new hi-tech business zone with the potential to create up to 1,000 jobs, takes place next week.

The two-day event, will be held next door to the 1930s built airfield at the Innovation Centre, off Maidstone Road, Chatham, from 10.30am to 8pm on Monday, 13 and Tuesday, 14 May.

Medway Council's cabinet agreed before Christmas to begin the process of drawing up a master plan for the airport that will form the basis for any future development. The exhibition will update businesses and residents on how proposals are taking shape with staff on hand to answer questions.

Cllr Alan Jarrett, Deputy Leader of Medway Council, said: "This exhibition will bring residents and businesses up to date on our proposals to secure the future of the Rochester Airport site for generations to come

"It will be the first of many opportunities for comments to be made on these exciting proposals, which ultimately will form the basis for any future planning application.

"I would encourage both residents and businesses, especially those living near the airport, to come along and help us to shape how best to protect the site and open it up for business, tourism and the wider community."

Anyone going to the exhibition will see a number of displays that give an initial vision for the future of the site. All comments made over two days will be fed into the process that will produce the final master plan, setting out the council's ambitions for the site. A further public consultation event will take place later in the summer.

First established in 1933, the Rochester Airport site is owned by Medway Council and has been leased since 2000 to an airport operator – Rochester Airport Limited.

Proposals, revealed last autumn, involve replacing many of the existing buildings and facilities on the airport now reaching the end of their useful life and a reconfiguration of the existing runways.

One of the grass runways on site will be closed and replaced with a new parallel grass and paved runway. The paved runway will allow modern small aircraft to take off and climb to a higher altitude very quickly, reducing the impact of noise on surrounding homes.

The grass runway will allow the nationally recognised Medway Aircraft Preservation Society (MAPS) to continue to use the site for heritage aircraft and open days. It would not lead to the site becoming a full-scale commercial passenger carrying airport.

The new runway layout could allow 29 acres near to Rochester Airport Industrial Estate – to be developed as a new hub as a new hub for science or technology related firms – with the potential to eventually create up to 1,000 new skilled jobs.

The changes are also geared towards increasing visitors to the area in the long run by becoming a new aviation heritage attraction to encourage more visitors to Medway.

Appendix 2: Public exhibition boards and feedback form

Rochester Airport the future

www.medway.gov.uk/rochesterairport

A masterplan to secure the airport's future, enhance heritage facilities and provide quality jobs



Background



Rochester Airport is important to many people living in Medway and is something that Medway Council has committed to securing a long-term future for.

First established in 1933, the Rochester Airport site is owned by Medway Council and has been leased since 2000 to an airport operator - Rochester Airport Limited.

Many of the buildings and facilities on the airport are reaching the end of their useful life. This means that we need to think about how we are going to safeguard the important aviation activity that happens at the airport and help improve community access to this unique facility.

Medway is doing two things to safeguard the future of the airport:

- the council has recently completed a process to invite tenders for an airport operator to work in partnership with the council to carry out improvements to the airport, and to manage it long-term;
- the council has commissioned masterplanners to produce development proposals to support the airport's future.

In December 2012 the council explained plans for the improvements to the airport. These are summarised in the photo opposite.

The purpose of today's exhibition is to look at the masterplan for the wider area.

About the airport improvements

The airport operator will need to apply for planning permission for the new facilities at the airport. The planning application would include extensive consultation with local residents and businesses about the proposals.

What is being proposed?

- Major improvements to existing airport facilities on their current location on the airfield.
- Better public access to the site for heritage, leisure and tourism.
- A new permanent home for the nationally recognised Medway Aircraft Preservation Society (MAPS).
- Creation of new parallel paved and grass runways to replace the existing 02/20 grass runway, as well as improvements to navigation aids and outdated facilities.
- Closure of the old 16/34 grass runway.

Benefits

- Safeguards Rochester Airport as a "smaller but better" sustainable airport with improved facilities for Medway residents and visitors.
- New land released for job creation - with the potential to eventually create up to 1,000 new skilled jobs.
- A new aviation heritage attraction to encourage more visitors to Medway.
- Preserves the existing green view of the airport from Maidstone Road, Chatham as well as reducing aircraft noise around the airport through the use of a paved runway.
- Opportunity to attract private sector investment into Rochester Airport by offering a 25 year lease to an operator alongside a council contribution to the overall development.



1

A masterplan to secure the airport's future, enhance heritage facilities and provide quality jobs



The opportunity



Approximate site boundaries

Creating one parallel runway opens up land surrounding the improved airport for development. The council's vision is to create a major 'hub' for high-quality technology and knowledge-based employment.

The masterplan is looking at several areas of land around the airport, and these are shown on the plan opposite.

- A Land currently occupied by part of the 16/34 runway.
- B Land on a long lease to BAE Systems, partly used by BAE Systems for car parking.
- C The Innovation Centre - there may be opportunities to extend this successful business location.
- D Vacant land to the south of the Innovation Centre owned by Medway Council.
- E Woolman's Wood Caravan Park. This is in private ownership and has some groups of trees subject to tree preservation orders. It may have potential for employment development.
- F Potential for some new development within the airport area.

The masterplan is not yet finalised. What you see today is a draft, and will be refined following consultation.

The aim is for the masterplan to clearly set out Medway Council's ambitions for the Rochester Airport area. The masterplan will be adopted by the council as a supplementary planning document (SPD). This means that there will be strong planning policies guiding what can and can't happen in the area.

There will be a further opportunity for you to give your views on the masterplan at another public consultation event in the summer.

Planning applications will be required for all new development. Local residents and business will be consulted about applications and will have the opportunity to put forward their views about the proposals.



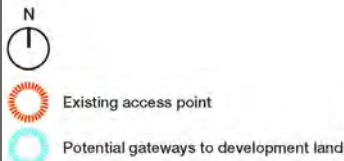
A masterplan to secure the airport's future, enhance heritage facilities and provide quality jobs



Key masterplanning issues

The employment area to the north-west will be accessed principally from Laker Road and potentially via the A229. The quality of the existing industrial estate is variable, with some unattractive buildings. The masterplan therefore needs to:

- create high-quality access points that get vehicles into the new development as efficiently and safely as possible;
- identify ways of improving Laker Road over the long-term.



The masterplanning team has looked at a range of issues that will affect how the masterplan is designed.

One of the main things to consider is how the development will be accessed. To create the type of high-quality employment 'hub' envisaged by the council, it is important that the 'gateways' to the new development are easy to navigate and give a good impression of the area. Although the study area is well-connected, there are some challenges at present.

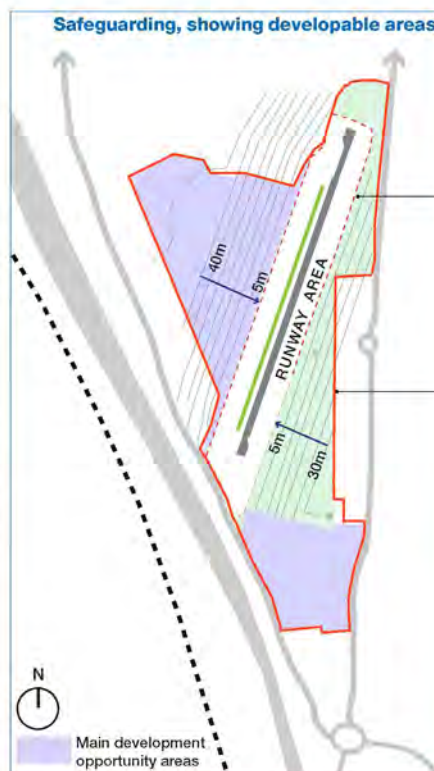
The access to the airport is difficult for visitors to understand. As vehicles can only turn left into the site, those approaching from the north along the A229 must drive past the airport, around the Bridgewood Roundabout, and drive back up to the airport. Improving this junction is likely to require the cooperation of the Holiday Inn.

Safeguarded zones on and around an airfield are defined to ensure the safe movement of aircraft on the ground and in the air. The current safeguarding zone for Rochester Airport has a number of implications, including:

- buildings cannot be developed on the area to the south of the Innovation Centre;
- tree and shrubs surrounding the airport, especially those within the caravan park, must be kept trimmed to below certain heights.

The removal of runway 16/34 means that the safeguarding zone will change. Specialist consultants TPS have looked at what the new safeguarding area will be. The diagram opposite shows the safeguarding zone, and how it increases in height with distance from the two parallel runways. That is, new buildings may increase in height the further they are from the runway. However, they must not exceed the heights indicated on the diagram.

For guidance, a typical single storey light industrial building with a flat roof would be around 4-5 metres high. The Innovation Centre maximum height is approximately 12 metres.



Position of 5 metre contour line. All development must be set back from this point

Clearance contours dictate building heights set back from runways

A masterplan to secure the airport's future, enhance heritage facilities and provide quality jobs



Masterplanning issues

As well as looking at physical issues affecting the study area, the masterplanning team has investigated what sort of employment and other uses could come forward.

There are two things that influence the type of development:

- what planning policy says should happen in the area;
- what the property market appraisal suggests is likely to be economically viable.



The draft core strategy states: "BAE Systems is by some way the area's largest private sector employer and the company is a global leader in its field. The company itself has identified opportunities for spin-off activities and land is available to develop complementary employment facilities. This could create an economic 'cluster' of considerable significance."

Planning policy

Planning policy for Rochester Airport is mainly set by the Medway Submission Draft Core Strategy (2012).

The draft core strategy states:

"Facilities at Rochester Airport need reinvestment and upgrading and the current operator is working closely with the council to see how this might be achieved, while also ensuring that adjacent land can be fully utilised for employment purposes. Investigations are ongoing and it is expected that a masterplan covering both the airport and surrounding land will be agreed in the near future."

This masterplanning work will fulfil the expectations set out in the core strategy.



Property market appraisal

The masterplanning team has looked at what is happening in the local property market now, and what could happen in the future. The key uses we have looked at are:

- **B1 Employment:** B1 is the type of employment that is appropriate in a residential area, such as offices, research and development, and light industry. The Innovation Centre is a good example of B1.
- **B2 Employment:** B2 covers a range of industrial-related employment. B2 uses include hi-tech research and manufacturing, such as that carried out at BAE Systems.
- **B8 Storage or distribution:** B8 is usually large warehouse 'sheds'.

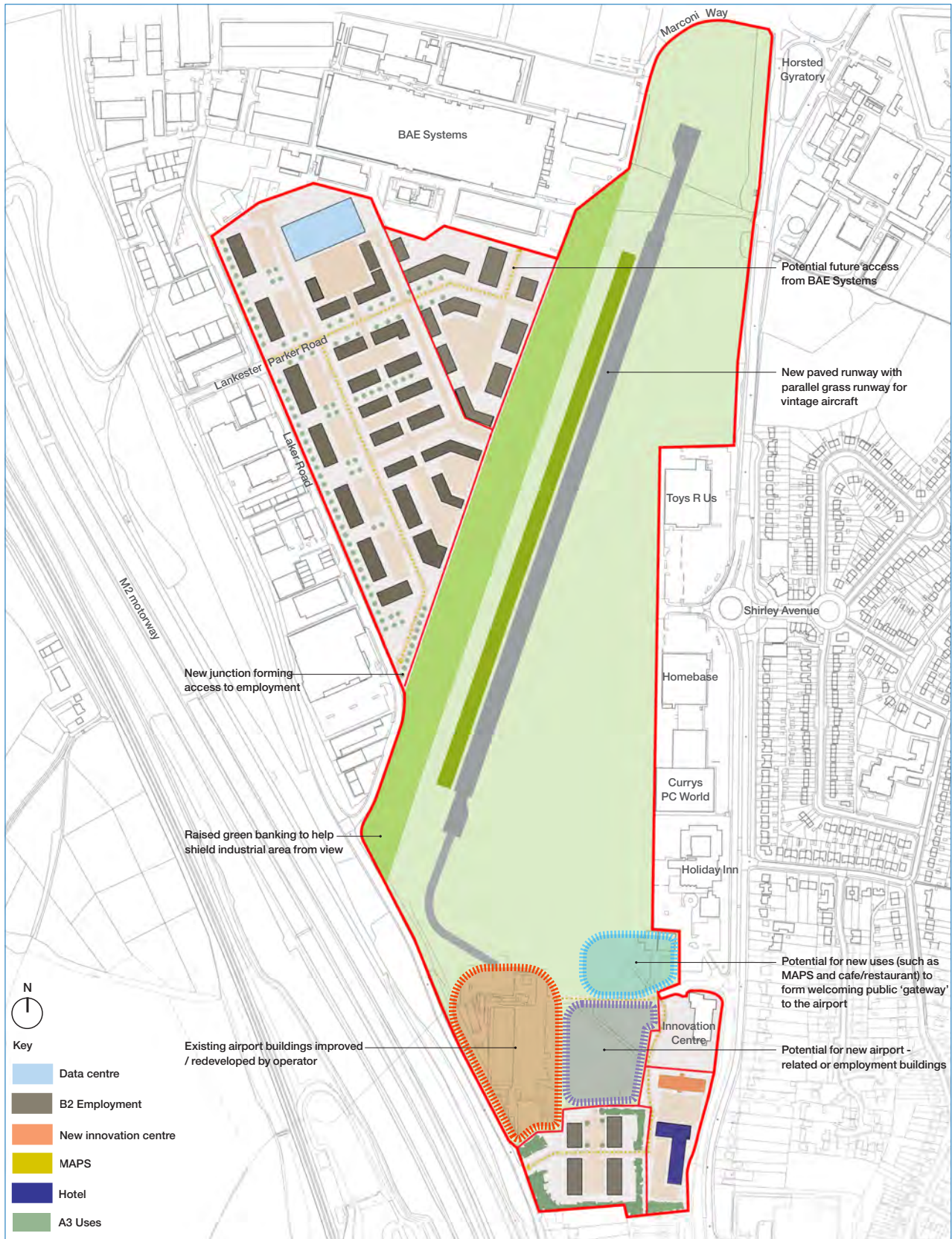
The property market appraisal shows that light industrial and industrial development are likely to be most economically viable. The demand for offices is likely to be low, as Rochester is close to better performing and more established office areas such as Maidstone. However, the Innovation Centre is doing well and there is potential to expand this. Storage or distribution use is unlikely to be acceptable in this new development. The property market appraisal therefore is in line with planning policy requirements for the area.

There is also potential demand for another hotel, as well as a gym and cafe/restaurant uses.

A masterplan to secure the airport's future, enhance heritage facilities and provide quality jobs



The draft masterplan



A masterplan to secure the airport's future, enhance heritage facilities and provide quality jobs

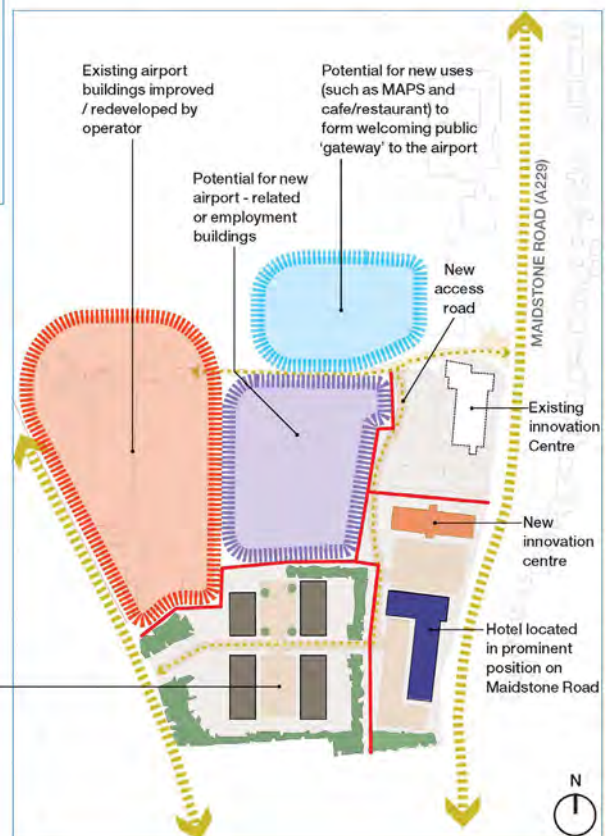


The draft masterplan - details



- Possible data centre located away from airport
- Potential future access to BAE Systems land
- BAE Systems land designated as an independent part of the masterplan
- High-quality entrance created from Lankester Parker Road
- Lower density buildings closest to airport
- Masterplan provides for a variety of building sizes and types to give a range of B2 Employment opportunities
- Green bank to screen employment area from views from the east
- High-quality entrance created on Laker Road

- Key**
- Data centre
 - B2 Employment
 - New innovation centre
 - MAPS
 - Hotel
 - A3 Uses



Woolman's Wood Caravan Park could be brought forward independently for employment

A masterplan to secure the airport's future, enhance heritage facilities and provide quality jobs



Next steps

How can I make my views known?

The masterplanning team would welcome your comments on the draft masterplan. There are two ways you can make your views known:

- 1 you can fill in the feedback form available at today's exhibition, and leave it in the box provided;
- 2 if you would like more time after today's exhibition, you can have a look again at the same information online at www.medway.gov.uk/rochesterairport

We need to have your comments by 5pm on Friday, 24 May at the latest.

When will I be able to see the final masterplan?

The aim is to complete the masterplan by the end of June, ready for at least six weeks of public consultation over the summer.

The masterplan will be accompanied by a feedback analysis report, which will provide a record of the responses from this consultation and explain how the masterplan has responded to the issues raised.



7

Rochester Airport the future

Public exhibition of development proposals to secure the airport's future, enhance heritage facilities and provide quality jobs



As a resident or business local to the airport, we want to hear your views on the proposals to secure the airport's future, enhance heritage facilities and provide quality jobs through development of part of the site.

Please fill in this feedback form and either drop it into the box at the exhibition or return it to Richard Kidd, Economic Development, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME44TR.

We need your comments by 5pm on **Friday 24 May 2013**

If you are happy to be contacted regarding your feedback, please leave your details:

Full Name

Post Code

Email

Postal Address

Which of the following best describes your interest in the proposals?

As a local resident

As a business owner

*Other
(Please state)*

What three things do you like about the draft masterplan?

1.

2.

3.

1

Please turn over to continue

What three things could we do to improve the masterplan?

1.

2.

3.

Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix 3: Consultation responses - feedback forms

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	What three things do you like about the masterplan?			What three things could we do to improve the masterplan?			Do you have any other comments on the proposals?
1							
2	Securing the future of the Airport.	Developing the existing historical/leisure aspects.	Improved employment hopes.	None at this time!			Open-Ended Response Acquiring the Woolman's site has been muted/attempted on previous occasions with a view to developing the Airport. How realistic are the chances of this being achieved this time? There will no doubt be many, supported by those with ulterior political motives, who will oppose these plans on the basis of noise and personal inconvenience. That is unfortunate as I believe that this concept is long overdue and can do nothing but good for Medway as a whole and the immediate neighbourhood of the site in particular. As a local resident and neighbour of the Airport for nearly 40 years I support this plan 100%. I wish you well in your endeavours in bringing it all to fruition.
3	Creation of jobs						Living very close to the Airport we would not want to see an increase in the number of planes taking off and landing as this will cause noise pollution to us.
4	None	none	none	More concise information concerning development of air strip usage			We are not supportive of an increase of aircraft numbers and types flying over our house. It would seem probable that this will be the case given the concrete runway and its increased length. We seek reassurance that the numbers / types of aircraft will not be increased
5	retaining the area as a working airport	proposal bringing skilled quality jobs to the area	possibility of an increase in social facilities in the area i.e. restaurants and bars	improvement in highway infrastructure	access to airport and Bae plus surrounding areas		Concerns about aircraft noise, type of aircraft using concrete strip. Hours of flying. Type and operation of landing lights and equipment. Traffic congestion.
6	none recorded	none	none	as long as there is sufficient car parking for any business (never seems to be enough)	will be interested to see planning at next stage, which will be easier to visualise		Any improvement giving scope for more employment must be good. Extra plane traffic for business purposes will make airport more known and hopefully busier.
7	the whole layout	more jobs would be fantastic	none	none recorded	none recorded	none recorded	We would like more information i.e. paperwork
8	as soon as possible	none recorded	none recorded	none recorded			
9	business prospects for the area	none recorded	none recorded	none recorded	none recorded	none recorded	Concerned about the increase in noise over my property in the past year, which looks as if it will get worse due to change in direction of runway. Traffic problems. Getting out of City Way, which obviously will get worse
10	Hard runway	increased employment	improvement of airport facilities	improvement of the B20974 increased traffic and make pedestrian/cycle facility/footpath	Traffic lights on Shirley Avenue roundabout	none recorded	Serious consideration must be given to the access for the new Fire Brigade services in Mairconi way
11							Concerned about having off surplus land. Rochester airport perhaps at the moment does not need this land, but it will probably do so in the future since leisure activities like flying are increasing. Runways will be too close to inhabited buildings. After a few planes have led to fatalities - airport authorities could say it is unsafe! Keep the so-called surplus land for future use. Winds can be very treacherous in this part of the country. Planes need to be able to veer off and still be safe. Good to look at improving the facilities at Rochester airport. About time, but once land is sold off like the school playing fields were sold off for housing then you cannot buy them back.
12							

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	What three things do you like about the masterplan?			What three things could we do to improve the masterplan?			Do you have any other comments on the proposals?
1				if you must build on the land indicated Toys R Us will have to come down. The proposed plan makes the landing window much too narrow.	none recorded	none recorded	It will make landing by inexperienced and trainee pilots even more hazardous than it is already! These machines are easily caught by a gust of cross wind. Expect more fatal accidents if this goes ahead. Aircraft have ended up on the M2 before - this is likely to become more common
13	less downtime due to waterlogged runways	smarter appearance hopefully. Present airport looking scruffy and tired	security that should come with a 25 year lease				
14	none recorded	none recorded	none recorded	address problems such as increase in aircraft using the improved facilities	shown possible areas of emission contamination on takeoff	highlight safety areas, i.e. fuel storage	As a local resident, I am most concerned about the frequency and size of aircraft using the airport. I am concerned that the runway when paved could lead to larger planes. Indeed, if planes can take off quicker on tarmac why is a longer one needed? Will small jet aircraft be allowed to land and take off? Would the noise levels fall below the Council monitoring standards? I can only presume, having secured a 25 year lease, but the intention is to develop and improve the facilities, leading to increased use. To me, this means increased noise, disturbance, emissions, not to mention possible traffic problems
15							There needs to be a balance in the needs of local residents and the airport management. Noise pollution is an issue to local residents. The plan should include proposals to lessen the noise nuisance.
16	potentially preserves a local amenity	tidies the site	improve public access				I would not like to see any increase in helicopter traffic, especially at weekends
17							

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	What three things do you like about the masterplan? the hard runway	increased hangar space plus a number of individual small hangers for specialised aircraft	opportunities for aviation related businesses	What three things could we do to improve the masterplan? 1. There is a major error in the proposed design. In the absence of a return hard taxiway, say, down the eastern side of the field, there needs to be a holding loop at the north end of the hard runway - to have room for at least four light aircraft. Otherwise usage will be severely hampered by aircraft backtracking for takeoff to the south and after landing from the South. This works very well in non-taxiway airfields I have visited, e.g. Stauning in Denmark, and many others. There needs to be more hangar space including T hangers or equivalent, for one or two aircraft so that operators can access their own aircraft without disturbing			Do you have any other comments on the proposals? It is easy to underestimate the amount of business attracted by the new runway. In the absence of a hard taxiway around the field back to the Tower etc, a holding loop is vital. However, such a return taxiway opens opportunity for a line, or to, of very small, individual, one or two a/c hangars for direct owner/operator access (possibly freehold?). This would cater for those owners/operators who will not house their aircraft in the large communal hangars where damage can/does occur to specialised performance aircraft. Given the hard taxiway access these additional individual hangars, perhaps 10 to 20 in all, could back onto the toys R us and Homebase complex. These would provide additional business and usage of the airport to that already covered in your master plan. Note regarding intelligent grass cutting: at Brest airport in France, they leave a large section of grass uncut until after the nesting of corncrakes. The result is a number of nesting pairs of this rare bird in residence during the summer (along with other species) - a tourist attraction in its own right
18				is the concrete/tarmac airstrip needed?	statement from the airport management on their intent of use		The display was too small and so did not allow more than a small amount of people to view at any one time. Maybe best to have been on a larger flat table to allow the project to be viewed at one time and so restricted my full view and understanding of the full change of use to the airport as it is at the moment. I have no objections to the airport as it is the moment. By adding an asphalt landing strip, how will this change the use and what size of aircraft will then be able to land - noise and frequency. How will the proposal to develop the Laker Road side impact on the traffic on Rochester Maidstone Road? Will the landing fees increase and push out a small light hobby type aircraft that it caters for at the moment?
19	promised less noise			no late, early or night flights	ensure aircraft respect residents - avoid low takeoffs and landings	limited training flights and solo glider flying	We have lived in the [area] for over 20 years. During this time we have repeatedly complained to airport management regarding low-flying aircraft over our property. To date no effort has been made to respect our views. We are concerned about safety issues and the effects of this proposal, in regard to enjoying our amenities if extra traffic is generated.
20							

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	What three things do you like about the masterplan?			What three things could we do to improve the masterplan?			Do you have any other comments on the proposals?
1	better potential for business development in the area	potential for new income, more jobs, more activities; business and social in the area	transforming a dormant resource into a productive one	general area for local events, exhibitions, etc			Good project, best of luck
21	structured approach in considering the future of the airport	open forum approach in airing the proposals	the innovation centre is the perfect venue for promoting the proposals	it may be early days but what are the financial implications?	some indication of the environmental impact would be helpful	what are the considerations for the involvement of local organisations?	No doubt the tendering processes for construction and services will be conducted openly
22	it is positive and innovative	it will support the continuation of the airport as a local amenity	it will help to sustain aircraft preservation in Medway	continue to make the rapid progress already being achieved	encourage investment in the new airport		MAPSL needs to retain its present constitution and scale. We are most successful being "what we are". The formation of a Medway aviation and heritage centre would need to be by a trust with members from the local community as the Council
23	retaining of airport	extension of 25 years retention	small area for officers (sell off)	loop on hard runway required for aircraft waiting to take off	retention of Medway Aircraft Preservation Society		really pleased the airport is retained. Conservation of the area to wildlife etc. Green area between towns - Medway to Maidstone
24				master plan needs to take account of improvements along full length of the Maidstone Road, not just improvements to junctions and access points			
25	the safeguarding of the airport (though reduced in size)	possible job creation	updates to the airport facilities	phased introduction of new business units to ensure that those built would be let, as Medway has a number of empty business units, e.g. Medway City Estate	road infrastructure - lights and roundabouts at Tiger Moth junction, etc	consideration to be given to leisure/recreation facilities on new development. Also need to ensure sufficient parking for each business.	1. What would happen if BAE Systems pulled out of Medway (bearing in mind the workforce has reduced from about 6000 to 1300 approximately)? Would that have a knock-on effect stalling any new high-tech business setting up in the location. 2. Is it possible to have more public events at airports? 3. Consideration for Museum inc. brief history of airport
26	concrete runway	potential job creation	redevelopment of airport - dependent on airport owner				Proposal for traffic lights right turn from airport entrance (holiday inn) is crazy many years ago it was possible right turn from 82 nine into Asda and that was soon stopped due to large jams caused. As a resident pilot, I am concerned about any closures to airport while concrete runway laid. There needs to be a contingency to allow airport operations while works are in progress.
27	The intention to retain the airport	The provision of a hard runway	Improved facilities for MAPS and job creation	Very little - I think it is very good	Possibly hard taxiways we need from h hard runway	Improved viewing facilities for the public	A working airport, like Rochester, will add to the prosperity of the area and attract more businesses. A small commuter airline will be possible within the UK using turboprop aircraft - they are very quiet. Let's hope this development becomes a great success
28	Employment prospects	Change to one runway - in/outgoing traffic will not be over our house	MAPS - brings visitors to the area	More attention to road layout, consider increased usage at peak times	no overall objections. Anything that is done to this area can only be seen as an improvement		
29							
30							I would like to know how many planes use the airport at present? What will be the increase in use? How will you compensate house owners of the increase in noise? What will the airport be used for - commercial or just leisure? Query on times of flights

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	What three things do you like about the masterplan? local development	area and support for historical preservation		What three things could we do to improve the masterplan? have the airport operator present at the forum			Do you have any other comments on the proposals? I was surprised that there was no information regarding the number of flights current and proposed for the development
31	prospects of increased employment opportunities			more information on proposed new flight paths in and out, e.g. over Bluebell Hill Village? Stacking, where, if they do not take off or land over land towards BAE Systems.	ensure the safety record of the airport is maintained		Would like facts and figures on types of larger planes and the frequency of flights and start/stop times. Information on pollution increase? In principle the development is a good idea but obvious concerns are the creation of noise pollution for the village
32	I think it is making better use of an important development site	I like the hotel/innovation centre Mark 2 going onto the derelict part to the south of the site	I like the potential for more employment	concerned about the closeness of the concreted runway to the industrial estate - potential for serious accidents			
33	shame about downsizing the site but guess it goes with a nice shiny hard runway	idea of quality public Gateway a good idea - look at Shoreham Terminal building		MAPS workshop to be incorporated into public Gateway - could also include heritage centre/museum/shop /cafe	café should have terrace for views overlooking airport	parallel taxi needed to be hardened as drainage is poor one eastern side of runway	create use of solar heating/treeplanting around perimeter
34	Rochester airport stays	better use of land for development and employment	improve facilities for MAF Sand the airport buildings	better access to the airport from the North (Maidstone Road space A229)			very relieved that the airport stays - love the advantage of this facility, which is a great asset to Rochester
35	no problems regarding airport plans			consider your many ratepayers on the Davis estate regarding road structure			yes, we are all for the suggestions for the airport, it is forward thinking, however previous requests for traffic lights at the toys R us roundabout have been ignored by yourselves. Now the suggestion that a roundabout could be installed to access the airfield. If us residents have to except Watson Avenue we to have to exit left and travelled the Bridgewood roundabout and return back past the innovation centre to travel to travel to Chatham/Rochester for as many as 20 cars are awaiting to join the A229 at Shirley Avenue. Your thoughts are with visiting motorists, will us Davis estate ratepayers be allowed to use the suggested roundabout? Will this allowed the lorries thundering down to the toys R us roundabout to turn back to Asda etc? Please consider the road infrastructure (more traffic from homes built on college also) good luck to the airport planning but think also about your Davis estate residents - think road!
36							

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	What three things do you like about the masterplan? redevelopment of airport with paved runways giving rise to increased airport usage	redevelopment of airport facilities (many over 70 years old) for all users	potential for aviation Heritage at airport	What three things could we do to improve the masterplan? lack of definite proposals on industrial development and jobs	lack of assessment of environment including aircraft and traffic noise, road traffic congestion etc	lack of funding assessments for viability of industrial development	Do you have any other comments on the proposals? I'm generally in favour of the development of an industrial site on the north-western portion of the airfield at Rochester airport, provided that all facilities at Rochester airport are significantly improved, as follows: 1. (See pages 30 and 31 for full comment)
37	nothing recorded	nothing recorded	nothing recorded	give greater consideration to the potential increase in noise to the local community	ensure that the surrounding road systems are not adversely affected		my property currently is on the flight path for aircraft landing on the O2/20 runway. My concern is that the closure of the 16/34 and the enhancements to the O2/20 will ultimately increase the traffic landing on this and as a consequence increase the noise levels over my property. The planning makes reference to faster takeoffs and reduction in noise but does not address the associated noise levels from increase in landings and potential larger traffic
38	the general improvements which I hope will be made to both access and the airport						the offer of a 25 year lease term is too short in view of attracting investors I would have thought a 50 year term a better traction to get good grade improvements
39							as a resident I cannot see any fault with the plans for Rochester airport it seems that the land in all the areas is to be put to the best possible use, which hopefully will eventually lead to more employment. Many years ago there were flights to Jersey from Rochester, so now with a new paved runway and several passenger aircraft now have short takeoff and landing facilities it would be good if some commercial flights were eventually available
40	Existing views and wildlife protection	Raised green banking to help shield industrial area from view	Improved public access via existing Maidstone Road area	No comment	No comment	No comment	At the northern end of the runway O2/20 lies an area of green land adjacent to Marconi Way. Could this be used for wildlife conservation? The beauty of the land is that it is protected from vandals. Mid Kent College employed ecologists to carry out conservation work on land to the south of the public footpath (RC18). The results were amazing and I spent many enjoyable hours studying the wildlife. Sadly the college lost all interest in the field and it became overgrown and the pond dried out. It would be marvellous if a pond could be created on the airport land
41	Safeguarding and improvement of airport	Use of development area to create employment	No B8 use as both roads unsuitable for HGVs	Alteration of access on A229 to avoid traffic from the north having to navigate the Bridgewood Roundabout. This would also benefit ASDA if a roundabout replaced the traffic lights at their entrance			
42	Still a small airport	Small bit of green to see on way to Chatham	Let's keep a bit of green space	Have a cycleway and footpath down Maidstone Road to Laker Road Development			if more traffic in the area is going to new Laker Road Development, how are roads going to cope? M2 roundabouts and A229 gets very congested at rush hour now. Will there be even more traffic lights around the area? Tarmac runway - will this lead to bigger planes and will they make more noise? Make sure new development area gets enough parking for workers / visitors
43							

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	What three things do you like about the masterplan?			What three things could we do to improve the masterplan?			Do you have any other comments on the proposals?
44	none			Close 02/20 runway, keep 16/34 open, along with new concrete, thus flights will take off and land over less populated area	Restrict type of planes	Restrict night flying (emergency only)	Fursty the exhibition was very disappointing, the display was badly positioned requiring people to crouch down to see lower display boards and staff available were not able to answer with any authority. It is obvious that local residents most affected by the problems i.e. city way/Wallace/Wilson/Grafton Avenue will, unless severe restrictions are imposed, have to contend with increased flights, larger aircraft and increased noise levels, blighting their lives. It is wrong to suggest that provision of a concrete is runway will reduce noise level that would only be the case should flights and aircraft be limited to existing levels it would have been better if there had been a key and a meeting also of course residents would have a chance to know why other options were not put to the Medway residents
45	the master plan appears a sound idea, as is laid out in the draft master plan						
46	by closing the East/West runway much of Walderslade will be spared the noise of aeroplanes taking off	Medway keeps it airport and we keep a large, green, open space	it will create the right background for the high-tech jobs we need in Medway as the innovation centre has shown	viewing facilities at the airport	encourage MAPS and other heritage information such as Short Bros	Bring your maps up-to-date - those on show still show the Horsted college complex, which has now been demolished	what happened to the lightning fighter that was on display? There does seem to be a lot of helicopter noise these days
47	restoration of aged airport buildings by new build more suitable areas	hard runway creating all year round flying	increased scope for public usage	provision is needed for public usage, e.g. Museum facilities to emphasise historical importance (Short Bros)	flying/helicopter schools must be easily approachable for public use	airport facilities are critical	in principle the master plan has much to commend it. The finer detail will be much harder to define. Helicopter facilities are increasingly important
48	keeping the airport	the open space	safeguards the airport and MAPS	grass bank to high!	extra trees		
49							I am very concerned about the proposal to construct a hard landing strip Rochester airport as I feel this will inevitably mean more aircraft traffic and bigger planes which will have a detrimental affect on my enjoyment of my home and garden. At the moment the light aircraft which use the airport fly over my property as they descend coming to land (in fact I can very often read their registration number as a flyover!) This causes a lot of noise pollution and I'm very fearful that an increase in the amount of planes using the airport and the fact that these planes will be far bigger and noisier spoil my hopes were peaceful and tranquil retirement, in hopes of which the property was purchased in the first place

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	What three things do you like about the masterplan?			What three things could we do to improve the masterplan?			Do you have any other comments on the proposals?
1							I was rather concerned to see the proposals for the development of Rochester airport. The 'improvement' to the runways will mean an increase in the number of flights, and the use of larger planes albeit for freight rather than passengers, which will result in more noise and pollution. The introduction of an area for 'small' businesses will mean more traffic and will, presumably, be the thin end of the wedge and lead to a bigger and busier site. MAPS, I appreciate, it needs more support at plans to develop the site will, again, add to the already heavy traffic experienced in this area. I recall that a few years ago the proposals to develop the site included plans for houses, retail and business parks etc these plans were 'put on hold' but seem to have been put into effect at the Horsted college site. this will also mean more traffic on roads that is already heavily trafficked. It is difficult enough to get out to get of the Davis estate at present, especially at the Tiger Moth junction. We do not need more traffic along that road. Continued in cell below...
50							By the way, that junction could do with traffic lights instead of the controlled pedestrian crossing. There is nothing in this area for the residents of the Davis to state to relax. If 'improvements' are needed at Rochester airport why cannot something be done to give the local people somewhere to go a park or gardens, a play area - maybe with a small cafe - somewhere the locals can relax, take their children, meet with friends. This seems to be nowhere around here people can go to meet and socialise. The community hall seemed limited in what it has to offer, obviously all indoor activities.
51	safeguarding the future of the airport	none other		do not close the old 16/34 runway	create new paved runway is to both 16/34 and 02/20	do not reduce the airport or its facilities	Rochester airport's future should become sort of the Gateway to the Medway towns areas. Its location close to motorway, rail, and port links is vital to ALL commercial and recreational businesses within the surrounding Medway area. Its further development would provide opportunities for short flight aircraft for both commercial and public use providing a 'much bigger picture' for growth and jobs within our area. I think the additional industrial development site proposed would create a huge burden on already busy road network. The scheme proposed shows little imagination! Could say, "lots more"
52							I do not want any expansion of flight traffic over my property. Also would these alterations cause extra traffic volumes in the area? I feel it is congested enough and the air is polluted enough with car and lorry fumes. Also larger planes are overhead all the time, there is never a quiet moment.
53							I wish to make one comment concerning these proposals in so far as the development of the area of the existing runway area is concerned. The plans do indicate that Greenbank will be provided so as to shield the industrial area from view. This is to be applauded. However, another very important aspect to be considered is the impact on any new buildings on the distant views from across the western side of the Medway Valley. Although I do not think that one needs to have a lot of concern here is the new buildings would be away from the Maidstone Road, it will be important the height of such buildings the restricted to the same as those of the existing units. The top of the escarpment of the eastern side of the Medway Valley is visible from as far away as some 5 miles and any high buildings would have a significant visual impact. The council did in fact take this point into account back in 2008 when it refused to building development on land to the west of Maidstone Road (ref. MC 2008/0968).
54							

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	What three things do you like about the masterplan? none. Even though I want to see the airport improved and stay, I didn't like this draft master plan			What three things could we do to improve the masterplan? keep the existing runway but tarmac over it	if you need to sell any land (which I am strongly against) then sell off a piece at the end of the proposed new runway near BAE Systems. This would then filter traffic from the proposed 1000 jobs out onto city way/Chatham Maidstone Road via the existing traffic lights	lease any land not required for this development	Do you have any other comments on the proposals? [We] have lived in Rochester all our lives and in [the area] over 40 years. We have always been keen supporters of the airport. However, we are not happy with the Council's proposals/plans for the airport, mainly the siting of the new runway. In the past there have been several accidents using the existing runway, but fortunately due to the direction used these were over rural areas and caused no fatalities to local residents. However, the new runway would mean that all planes would be taking off and landing, travelling over heavily built-up area; any crash therefore would be devastating. Your representative when asked at the meeting of the size of planes using airport was extremely evasive, but I've learned since the turboprops will be flying from Rochester, hence the high banking, which I was supposed to believe was to protect the public fugal factory buildings!! I understood that £4 million of Medway taxpayers money is being used for this project with a 25 year lease paying £30-£40,000 per annum - quite a shortfall! These figures do not add up. I am not at all happy to learn of the sale of part of the airport, I would rather it was offered on a long-term lease. Although your representative stated that financially this could work, the Duke of Westminster leases his properties and he is one of the richest men in the country.
55							
56	no houses. Improve Strood	when was the last time Medway built a new school from the ground up?	turning right into airport as you once could. Probably blocked off by saying people as did the Hawkins flyover	see enclosed map. half infrastructure exists	keep second runway as revenue source to airport	dump the hotel plan. Sort out Buckmore Park facility (although not in Medway)	two pages of comments saved as a separate PDF document why new units when the city estate has vacant lots (last time I went). Vehicle access/exit on Rochester/Maidstone Road will be terrible. The paramount objective should be the airport for planes and helicopters
57	safeguards the airport	possible job ceation	may attract more investment	attract more business aircraft	extend to attract executive jets	improve the road access	reducing the overall site area could in the future be a retrograde step.
58	That you aren't planning to close the airport	You are making provision for MAPS in the development		Additional traffic the development will cause	Do we actually need this development?		There are already empty units across Medway, why do you need to build new ones? Surely the money would be better spent improving existing development! Additional traffic in the area will make getting out of Davis Estate even more difficult than it presently is!! Do you intend to improve this junction, or will I be force to use other ways to leave the estate (through Walderstade)?
59	You don't plan to close the airport	You intend to have somewhere for MAPS		Additional traffic the plan will generate	Closing of one of the runways		In the proposal it appears that you looked at the road junctions where access will be to the new development, but have paid no attention to the other junctions in the area, the roundabout at the junction of Shirley Avenue, Horsted Retail Park and Maidstone Road is already a very busy junction and at times can prove very difficult to get off Davis Estate without any of the additional traffic this development will generate!!! Secondly, from the drawings of the proposed estate, has anyone thought to consult a lorry driver? Only industrial estates result in lorries making deliveries and your design shows that you are intending to have cul-de-sac's on the site which are not easy for lorries to turn in, normally resulting in vehicles having to either reverse in or out of these roads, increasing the chances of accidents!!!
60	25 Year lease	gerater involvement by the council		make sure the new entrances on the A229 are good			
61							

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	What three things do you like about the masterplan? banking to shield industrial area	concrete runway	safeguarded site as used open space	What three things could we do to improve the masterplan?			Do you have any other comments on the proposals? looks a fine scheme,if the airport are happy that they can operate on the new airstrip as shown, hope the airfield works are complete before any industrial works are allowed to take place, and signed off as finished....just to make sure that the industrial area is not created and then the airport left with a half finished project.but it does look a good compromise. traffic, as everyone will say is busy at peak times,and creating another 1000 jobs will add another load of cars vans lorries utilising the bridgewood area..... m2 jct a229, the roundabout has just been relined and will be far better once people use the lanes they are supposed to be in, but also the traffic lights have been rephased this means there is so much standing traffic actually on the roundabout waiting for green lights that traffic cannot enter the roundabout due to it being all blocked up, someone needs to take the bull by the horns and stop traffic only from entering the roundabout, and not stopping on it, this will let all traffic going around to... continued belowget off running on the roundabout bluebell hill jct m20, needs traffic lights desperately,that work and let traffic get on the roundabout safely from maidstone, aylesford and chatham, this must be part of the scheme bluebell hill, is dangerous at the top, coming from chatham where the m2 traffic merges, the dotted white line needs to be made double solid and the inner lane that stops so abruptly, must be continued over the brow of the hill to do away with the pinch point, where everyone wants to be in the outside lane coming up bluebell hill to the top, the inside lane goes off, but lane 2 should be remarked to allow traffic to filter off at the roundabout slip, this will do away with the huge long single queue that goes way down the hill at times, and do away with the dover marking that is inside the walderslade one "crazy" would have thought toys r us roundabout would need improving, but having seen the plans,looks like road access will be from laker road to industrial area, so our davis estate end looks to be pretty unaffected hopefully, extra housing traffic not being part of this scheme i think the plans look good,and if the jobs come off, and the airport is allowed to continue its purpose then this can only be a good thing. Will be good to see further plans as they are announced

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Addendum – Detailed Comments on “Rochester Airport – the Future”

I am generally in favour of the development of an industrial site on the north-western portion of the airfield at Rochester Airport, provided that all facilities at Rochester Airport are significantly improved, as follows:

- Implementation of a paved runway and taxiways with a parallel grass strip (alignment 02/20) replacing the two hardened grass runways, to provide an airport which does not have to close because of water-logged runways.
- Improved infrastructure Rochester Airport to support greater use by single and twin-engined aircraft, helicopters and light aircraft, excluding all aircraft types which exceed current noise levels.
- Improved infrastructure Rochester Airport to support additional aviation engineering facilities and private flying. Note that the majority of the buildings on the site are more than seventy years old, have been poorly maintained throughout the period and suffer from high maintenance and running costs, now being basically inadequate for their intended purpose.
- Improved public facilities at Rochester Airport (restaurant, shop, toilets, etc.).
- Improved infrastructure Rochester Airport to support Kent's aviation heritage, e.g. MAPSL, including new workshops (with lower maintenance costs), with the potential for developing an Aviation Heritage Centre, commemorating, but not limited to, Short Brothers at Rochester and the Battle of Britain.

However, there are a significant number of issues which need to be considered in detail and issues that need to be resolved before I would be able to fully support the development.

Firstly, I believe that the land on which Rochester Airport is sited was provided by the former land-owner to the then City of Rochester under a controlled contract which precluded any other use for the land. It is essential to understand how the conditions of this original contract impact the change of use of the land and whether the proposed intent to sell off, or otherwise use, part of the site for other commercial undertakings is, in fact, legal. This may also include the other commercial developments previously constructed on the periphery of the Rochester Airport site.

Secondly, assuming that this change of use is legal, I am surprised by the apparent lack of Council planning that has underpinned both the initial tender of the site and the current outline plans. To this end, the following points must be resolved before a full and meaningful response to the draft proposals can be given, and members of the public must be allowed to comment on the detailed plans before implementation.

- What guarantees are to be provided that investment in the facilities at Rochester Airport will result?
The current development plan is unclear whether, once the north-western portion of the airfield is closed for redevelopment along the lines of the plan, the investment in the facilities at Rochester Airport are guaranteed, particularly if there is a low take-up of the development sites available, hence the envisaged revenues do not materialise. If the north-western section of the airport site is closed for redevelopment, the paved runway and taxiways, plus the grass strip must be guaranteed.
What will the size (length and width) and thickness of the paved runway? What types of aircraft will be permitted to fly from the runways? Is a paved taxiway to both ends of the runway proposed, or will it be necessary to back-track on the runway, limiting use?
- What is the number and type of premises that are proposed to ensure that any development would be viable in releasing the funds for the regeneration of Rochester Airport?
Without this knowledge, the impact on the surrounding area of the change of use of the part of the airfield which is closed cannot be accurately assessed.
Two buildings of considerable size exist which are currently leased (or possibly owned) by BAE Systems within its security fence, but have remained empty for many years. Part of one of these was formerly used by Medway Council as its Innovation Centre. Many other empty or part-used industrial buildings exist within the Medway area on (so-called) business sites. None of these existing buildings have attracted the incoming investment that Medway Council now predicts for the development of Rochester Airport.
How confident is Medway Council that the changes at Rochester Airport will actually bring investment to the area? How proven are the models that are used?
What actions are being undertaken by Medway Council to ensure that the area will be developed as a science and technology hub and not just be given over to general usage?
- What are the proposals for access / egress of road transport to / from those premises, since modifications will be needed to the road network in a very congested area to meet the needs of those people and services using the proposed development?
The roads in the area remain extremely congested at peak periods despite three major road schemes being implemented in the last thirty years at significant cost to improve traffic flow.
 - a) The main access to the new industrial development via the Maidstone Road, Rochester (B2097) from the Bridgewood Roundabout is narrow and unsuitable for the commercial traffic even for the current levels of traffic. Widening the road would also reduce the screening of traffic noise from

Addendum – Detailed Comments on “Rochester Airport – the Future”

the M2 and High Speed Rail Link in the Nashenden Valley immediately to the west, itself an area of special scientific interest, already destroyed due to M2 and rail link. Some traffic would be expected from the Rochester direction but the road access to Maidstone Road from the A2 and town centre is difficult; the Weeds Wood residential area to the north could be adversely affected.

- b) Access on the A229 to and particularly from Rochester Airport, Holiday Inn and the Innovation Centre is both difficult and dangerous at most times, and itself causes increased congestion at both the Bridgewood Manor and the Davis Estate roundabouts. Increasing the availability of Rochester Airport itself would not be expected to significantly increase the amount of traffic, but growth of the Innovation Centre and a possible additional "low cost" hotel on the site would have considerable impact, making a bad situation much worse. The impact of the new housing "rabbit warren" on the site of the former Mid Kent College has also to be considered.

- What are the proposals for utility services, e.g. water, electricity, gas, sewerage, drainage, etc for those premises and what is the impact on the surrounding area?

Utility services throughout the whole of the south east of England are currently very stretched, particularly for water, sewerage and drainage, and industrial development on Rochester airport will increase those pressures. How and where will the new demands be met, what new infrastructure is required and what action will be taken to minimise the impact to road transport during upgrades?

- What is the predicted employment level for the development and hence the need for parking during operational hours? N.B. "1000 skilled jobs" implies a total workforce of double that figure.

It is expected that most of those employed within the industrial development will arrive and depart by car, with single person car usage. Adequate car parking for that number of people and vehicles must be integral in the development. Note that for the current industrial sites already on the peripheral of the airfield, there is already a significant amount of on-road parking caused by limited space for car parking. The current schemes show no provision for car parking.

What public transport facilities will be provided if the aim is to reduce the impact on the environment?

- What is the expected change in noise level heard by local residents?

Currently, the airport does not achieve its allowable utilisation, and that allowable utilisation is unlikely to be exceeded due to the changes. Rochester Airport existed before many of the residents moved to (or were born in) the area; clearly those benefitting from the current low noise (low utilisation) should have no valid claim if the utilisation rises to nearer the allowable level, but will be form a pressure group.

There will be more aircraft traffic on the runway (alignment 02/20), but higher approach angles should be achievable with the paved runways, reducing the noise footprint. Areas affected by the closed runway (currently very under-utilised) will benefit, but these are clear of significant residential areas.

All local residents and others will be severely affected by the increase in the traffic noise, pollution and inconvenience on the surrounding roads due to the new industrial area. Medway Council must address this issue.

It is noted that, should any of the proposals for a Thames estuary be successful, Rochester Airport would no doubt be of significant benefit to Medway Council through its use as a light aircraft gateway, initially during construction and later during operation. Medway Council will have minimal control on the decision and, by improving the facilities at this stage, stand to gain if the decision to build the estuary is successful.

The Medway Aircraft Preservation Society currently occupies a few of the buildings on Rochester Airport. It has gained a high reputation for its activities which enhances the reputation of Medway. However, it is severely hampered by its current 70-year-old run-down buildings. Improved facilities, possibly integrated with an Aviation Heritage Centre (separately operated) would further enhance both Medway and Kent as tourist destinations; the site is ideal, as Rochester Airport is close to both the M2 and M20.

I trust that the views on the future of Rochester Airport solicited by Medway Council using this form will be properly considered, both now and at a detailed planning stage. Experience of the manner in which Medway Council handled comments from the public on the proposals for the Chatham Waterside Bus Station proved that public comments were contemptuously ignored on that occasion: I refer you to "**Approval by Planning Committee on 27 January 2010**" "**Planning Application Number MC/09/2545**", beginning with the paragraph "*Ten further letters from 6 additional households have been received which relate to:*" followed by 20 bulleted points; this is on page 13 of 31 in the PDF file provided to me by Medway Council. All of the very relevant concerns identified in those bullet points are totally ignored within the planning approval document.

I note that the public comments on the Chatham Waterside Bus Station were solicited without prior to full details of the proposals being available to those who commented, with a short time for response, as is the case on this occasion. All Medway residents, businesses and users should be advised directly by the Council and should be provide with an adequate time to respond to a full proposal.

Appendix 4: Consultation responses - other submissions

Email 1

Thank you for your time in answering questions at the Exhibition at the Innovation Centre.

I have a dual interest in the proposals both as a local resident and as a Director of a leading publisher of aviation books and a major aviation enthusiasts organisation. We are therefore interested in the continued operation of the airport since a number have closed in recent years whilst others are under threat of development. The proposal for a 25 year lease to the airport management has therefore a considerable stabilising effect.

I would support the proposals as outlined although will obviously be interested to see what changes might be made in the final submission. The development of the airfield facilities particularly for MAPS is a good thing and will hopefully allow them to display their skills more clearly and thus attract additional visitors.

The perhaps major issue is traffic, both aerial and by road. The siting of the new industrial area with access from Rochester-Maidstone road will obviously raise issues regarding the additional road traffic and its effect on the junction with the A229/M2 junction. At the other end of the airfield, although not directly affected by this proposal, the junction marked as Horsted Gytratory is already a problem for access from City Way particularly since the development of housing on the site of the old college. I understand that this is being looked at by the Council and, although perhaps outside of this remit needs fairly urgent attention to avoid the possibility of a major accident at that location.

From an aviation point of view I believe people will wish to know the length of the proposed hard runway and the type of aircraft which it will accommodate. The concern being either larger aircraft or even perhaps small private jets and the potential additional noise. Whilst a hard runway should assist in expediting take offs there is still the landing aspect.

I appreciate that the programme is only at the initial stages but I will be happy to provide any further input if you consider this appropriate.

Email 2

I am writing to you today to express my opposition to the Rochester Airport redevelopment proposals. I visited the display at the Innovation Centre at the Airport with its reassuring photographs of biplanes that misrepresent the likely future use of the airport.

The consultants on duty knew very little and were unable to answer concerns meaningfully.

Getting to the point; no information seems to be visible at the presentation regarding Rochester Airport's lamentable safety record and the numbers of light aircraft crashes that have been documented and their causes (mainly pilot error and failure due to mechanical fatigue).

The original airport had an area of land allocated for aircraft to ditch in. This land is now occupied by the schools in Warren Wood and densely populated residential areas, leaving no escape routes for aircraft experiencing mechanical or other problems.

You have only to listen to today's news headlines on the BBC to reinforce the fact that even high-tech commercial airlines run by the likes of British Airways, experience mechanical failures and forced landings. If this were to happen at Rochester Airport with its new proposed NW pointing runway, the results of an out of control aircraft crashing on thickly populated residential areas would be unthinkable.

The so-called attractive investment opportunity pales when safety is seriously considered, that is of course if there is a real opportunity to benefit the community with this project. I am not a financial expert in these matters, but scant study of the likely financial returns from this questionable project indicate likely monetary returns that would be minuscule in comparison to even a basic savings account rate available on the local high street. I would certainly be seeking redress for negligence if a financial advisor saddled me with such an investment!

The Rochester Airport redevelopment plans are complex and beyond the scope of an email to fully explore. It is my belief that a full public meeting should be held where the concerns of local residents and other rate payers of the Medway Towns, and alternative safer and more profitable uses for the airport site can be properly expressed and then investigated.

The stated reluctance to hold such a meeting by the representatives at the Innovation Centre presentation does nothing to inspire confidence, in fact, given the appalling reputation for the dubious honesty of some politicians, some might speculate that there might be interests lurking in the background that might not stand up favourably to public scrutiny.

Re: Rochester Airport – the future: Development Proposals

As a long time resident near the airport I write to record my views on the development proposals for Rochester airport after visiting the public exhibition at the Innovations Centre last week.

First to thank those involved for the quality of the proposals, their presentation and the knowledge and enthusiasm of those answering questions.

I am sad to see the prospect of the airfield becoming still smaller.

I am encouraged to see a proposal that seeks to resolve the years of conflicting debate about the airport.

Clearly the large aeronautical and commercial visions for, and achievements of, the airfield from the last century do not apply to the current part of this. It is difficult to conceive what the future should be for it.

There is value in Rochester having an airfield. The distinguishing value of the Medway area is the great variety of features that it has which collectively are its wealth and the basis for its future. Many unique. The airport is one such. Measuring that true value against simple measures of land value is difficult.

My concern at the exhibition is that we might be trying to release land value, improve the airfield utility but then have a new airport set up that has no future but only additional running and capital cost which then force the subsequent total loss of the airfield facility to Medway's unique wider overall appeal.

A lot rests on whether the single runway airport can support itself. I have therefore contacted two pilots I know who have used the airport. One as a private flyer, the other a one time flying pupil, later instructor there and now, for many years, an international airline pilot.

Talking to the private flyer he was pleased to see a hard runway having been frequently frustrated by water logged ground preventing flight. His belief was that the original land had once been made to drain well but that system had been disrupted by later perimeter developments. A hard access connection from the proposed new paved runway to hanger and its hard standing, would be an extra advantage.

The other particular aspect of the airfield which he drew attention to was the fluctuating cross winds which result from the otherwise useful closeness of the field to the North Downs ridge. The extent of the disruption to flying from these varying cross winds could be reduced by switching runways. Not possible in the proposed one runway scheme. Continues/

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...I continued. On balance, he felt that there would be greater flying possible from the new proposal than from the existing larger grass field. He highly valued greater flying time.

The now commercial pilot replied to me in writing so I can give, in italics below, his views more or less as he wrote them:

He starts with, 'Wow. Interesting stuff!'

Interestingly he also then immediately mentions deep memories of waterlogged ground preventing flying. Then mentions that paved taxiways to the proposed paved runway would valuably enhance the use.

He continues:

'I remember that nearly all my flying was from runway 20 so the loss of 34/16 is probably not all that significant - it will give the students a bit more crosswind landing experience and will reduce the noise on approach over Robin Hood Lane!

I'm not sure I quite follow the argument about the paved runway reducing noise. Take off runs will be reduced but the power used will be the same. In a commercial situation, reduced thrust is used where possible to reduce noise and increase engine life but this would not be so for a little Cessna. Perhaps if the aircraft gets into the air sooner, it gets further away from houses sooner but the difference would be fairly marginal.

I've lots of happy memories of those creaky old buildings - the waterlogged flying school and the scruffy greasy spoon cafe. They certainly had a bit of character! It's always sad to see things contract but the benefits may just outweigh this.'

I live almost exactly in line with runway 34/16. However I have lived here over 35 years and do not have an objection to the aircraft, although because of wind direction they are nearly always passing over me when landing (which is quieter). I may have a different view if planes were usually taking off in my direction.

The new proposal would probably see nearly all flights now taking off over the built up area of the towns. The hard runway, free of waterlogging, will allow more opportunity for flying. Together with better other facilities, total use of the airport may therefore rise. Indeed this is an underlying aspiration of the scheme. Newer aircraft may be quieter but the future total amount (not necessarily intensity) of noise from the scheme would be increased over the built up areas. That may be a problem from choosing 34/16 as the runway to close?

At present the airport is visible but not easily accessible for general public. There is peripheral parking and viewing but best access to view means crossing the field and a runway using the traffic light system which all seems rather daunting to many people. That is a pity. The second stage enhancement of entrance and public access which the new proposals will encourage will be good and will integrate the valuable understanding that Medway is proud of having an airport that all can go and visit and see and watch aircraft.

I think it would be excellent to have a realistic sustainable future for Medway's airport. We don't know how aviation will adapt in this century. The dockyard has changed but still has lots of boats and other associated value. With a good up to date airport scheme along the lines of the proposal, the outcome for aircraft may well also surprise us with the extent of its success in enhancing the wider appeal of Medway.

Email 4

We met last week at the Medway Innovation Centre during the exhibition of the proposed development of Rochester Airport. I said that I would send you an e-mail to record my objection to this plan.

I am against the plan to close down one of the grass runways and to retain runway 02/20 with the introduction of a new parallel paved runway. The use of a sole runway will significantly increase the safety risk to local residents and therefore I would strongly suggest that a safety assessment be undertaken to identify the impact on safety before the proposed plan is implemented. Should this safety assessment find that the increased risk is un-acceptable and/or greater than the current level, then the proposed development cannot go ahead. Aircraft already do not follow the correct flight path and frequently bank over Cloisterham Park estate during take-off and landing. Therefore there is already an increased risk that should be addressed independently of any proposed single runway development. One of the selling points in the literature talks about safeguarding the future of the airport. Medway Council must also safeguard the lives of residents and this must take paramount importance over any other overriding benefits. Accidents do happen, one aircraft crash landed in a BAE Systems car park around 10 years ago so this cannot be allowed to happen over residential areas. Medway Council will be held responsible should they approve this plan and will be held accountable should this event occur.

A single runway will obviously increase air traffic in the 02/20 runway direction which will have a detrimental impact on the quality of the lives of residents directly under the flight paths. Medway Council should assess the impact on the quality of life of the residents and if found significant, should not allow a single runway to be developed and used. This will be determined by the type and size of aircraft that will be allowed to use the runway and therefore this should be limited to protect the quality of lives of the local residents should the proposed development of a single runway go ahead.

I also have a concern of the impact on property values if such development goes ahead. I would expect Medway Council to cover any shortfall in property values as a result of the development.

There will also be an impact on the general traffic in the area. Has a full traffic assessment been undertaken and did this include the impacts in conjunction with the new housing development on the old Horsted College site.

I would also like further information regarding the types of aircraft that would use the new paved runway and what the operating conditions will be. Will there be any restriction on the number of flights, particularly over evenings, weekends and bank holidays. Will aircraft using the runway be limited to lower noise emissions and can anti-noise measures be introduced.

In Summary I object to the development of a single runway on the grounds of;

- Unacceptable increased safety risk
- Unacceptable impact on the quality of the lives of local residents
- Detrimental impact on property values
- Increased traffic congestion

Please take this e-mail as formal objection to the proposed development of Rochester Airport.

Email 5

Which of the following best describes your interest in the proposals?

As a local resident **Local Resident** As a business owner

*Other
(Please state)*

What three things do you like about the draft masterplan?

1. That the masterplan is trying to create jobs.
2. That the council has invited the public to the masterplan exhibition and soliciting comments/feedback from the public so that the draft proposals can be influenced and changed for the good of the wider community.
3. I don't like anything else about the master plan as the councils first priority should be for the safety and wellbeing of their community. It falls woefully on the first point and appears to favour the strategic business success of the Airport operator over air else. Notwithstanding the former issue the draft masterplan disappoints in nearly all areas. It is superficial on fundamental issues like traffic, noise, pollution cost to the tax payer and should be regarded as a concept for further public debate.

1

What three things could we do to improve the masterplan?

1. Consider a redesign of the site and airport proposal by moving the Business/Technology Park area to the east side of the airport (See attached proposals A1). If possible the airport should be retained for private leisure flying only without a concrete runway.
2. Provide clear details on safety, cost to the tax payer, possible types of aircraft, limitations of use so that a more informed determination can be made by the electorate/residents. The current publicity material boarders on propaganda with no substance or facts. Whilst I have some nostalgia for the airport and support continuation for leisure activity. It should remain a small provincial flying club and not be turned into a commercial operations with one runway concentrating air traffic over a densely populated residential area.
3. Provide a 2 year extension to the current 5 year airport operators lease to allow more time for public consultation and design. This masterplan appears to be being rushed through without the correct due diligence, openness and public meetings/debate.

Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Yes I have. Please see below and continuation sheets.

I would submit that most long term residents of the area have a nostalgic perspective on the airport. It is influenced by memories of ice creams at the Rochester air displays in the 1960's when summers were always hot and long. It is therefore understandable to want to protect such iconic memories and preserve green open spaces.

People do not like change and any support for the airport by residents is probably based on its current topology. The masterplan and public literature appears to build on such affection without mentioning the severity on their safety, cost and environmental impact.

Outlined below are my considerations, observations comments and recommendations on the masterplan proposal in priority order. Specifically:

1. Safety of residents
2. Financial cost to the community.
3. Environmental impact to the local area.
4. Compliance with Draft Core Strategy paper Jan 2012.

Lastly, I will provide some conclusions and recommendations along with alternative options for the masterplan which I have already socialised with a small number of local residents. Reaction has been extremely favourable from even those who formerly supported the retention of the airport. I would like the council to consider the alternative proposals in equal merit to that of the current masterplan.

Safety of residents.

When the airport was first opened in 1933 three primary design parameters will have been:

- The types and capability of aircraft to use the facility
- Weather and wind conditions at the site.
- Safety take-off and landing drop zones.

2

Emergency services attending airport incidents and crashes may conflict with other residential/community demands. Police, Fire and Ambulance services are already stretched through cutbacks. The additional liability of a commercialised and leisure airport with higher probability of accidents will unfairly put more demand on our vital emergency services and threaten the safety of the community.



The masterplan shows a potential concrete runway some 118 metres longer than the existing grass 02/20 runway (which it will replace). If the Planning application for the concrete runway is successful the end of it will be about 135 metres from a house at the top of City Way and approximately 945 metres in length.

The refusal by the council to provide a copy of the specialist consultants TPS safety report (which features in the masterplan exhibition material) on confidentiality grounds is completely unacceptable.

Whether wittingly or not the mention of the TPS report within the safeguarded zones presents an image of professional safety consideration to residents. My perspective is that the statement distracts and misleads local concerns on safety.

Whatever the motive for withholding the document. It exposes the council to speculation that it has no care for residents safety and that the invite to the exhibition was an exercise to promote the retention and commercialisation of the airport without publishing the full facts.

Perhaps the report was commissioned to simply determine the maximum length of the proposed concrete runway with respect to houses at the top of City Way.

The masterplan states that the concrete runway will make the area quieter and help aircraft to operate better. However, it will permit the airport operator to over exploit the runway increasing air traffic substantially.

The new concrete runway will also permit much larger twin turbo propeller aircraft to regularly use the facility. Dependent on wind direction flights will be either in or out over densely populated residential properties in nearly all weathers.

Another area of safety concern is human error or fallibility in the air traffic control and ground management. The potential mix of commercial and private/hovice fliers in one airspace using a single runway offers greater opportunity for collision.

It is clear from the AAIB incident reports that structural and mechanical accidents happen. A good example is the Manston Airport 12th January 2012 Polar helicopter crash which was

Noise was a lesser consideration as the surrounding neighbourhood at the time was sparsely populated. Warren wood, Davis estate, Cloistrum Park, Horsted and much of the Wilson avenue area were orchards and not built. Pollution was not even thought about.

The original design of the airport with multiple grass runways was based on technical parameters, capability of the aircraft and pilot/crew safety.

Over the years subsequent councils have approved large social building projects without consideration of preserving drop zones for aborted take-offs. They have sold off airport land on both east and west sides restricting aircraft movements to a point which may already be considered dangerous.

The masterplan appears to lose sight of the founding principals of the airports design given that many of the light aircraft are basically no different to that when the facility was first opened. The masterplan shows a single directional runway for historic and leisure aircraft which because of wind conditions are not normally bound to a single direction for take off and landing. We may see aircraft get blow off course and out of control.

Humans have not evolved much since the 1930's and still prone to making mistakes which cannot be removed or ignored when considering safety.

Weather has changed significantly over the years due to ozone depletion and other documented factors. It is predicted that the weather will become more turbulent and severe in the future. Is it wise therefore to restrict the airport configuration to one in/out direction where sudden wind shear could easily disrupt the flight path of incoming aircraft over a highly populated area. It could easily result in a fatality.

A review of incidents/accidents reported to the Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) for Rochester Airport is very disturbing. Since 1980 there have been 40 reported incidents/accidents (some fatal) 18 of which have happened since 2000 when Rochester Airport limited was formed. They are all associated to aircraft, helicopters and other flying machines using the facility. The safety record for the site is far from stainless.

The review shows that since Rochester Airport Ltd took control of the site in 2000:

- **The average number of accidents/incidents on an annual basis has increased.**
- **50% of the incidents/accidents are attributed to Pilot Error.**
- **38.9% are from mechanical and metal fatigue of aircraft.**
- **11.1% are from infrastructure.**
- **A 22.2% increase in Pilot Error incidents/accidents during the tenure of Rochester Airport Ltd over the previous 20 years.**

From the review it is clear that accidents are going to happen and the probability of a fatal crash into populated residential area will increase with higher volume of aircraft using the facility.

The masterplan proposes the concentration of all flights onto a single north/south aligned runway (02/20) pointing directly to a highly populated residential area.

The following photograph captures the severity of a minor incident. It does not take much imagination to picture what devastation to property and lives should the aircraft have crashed into a heavily populated residential area.

caused by metal fatigue. The pilot was killed and it was fortunate that the craft was over open countryside.

Helicopter pilot training flights from Rochester are often needlessly seen hovering above residential areas when ample open fields are available to the south of the airport. There is already a blatant disregard for residents safety and disturbance by the operators.

However well maintained helicopters, aircraft and the like are, structural and mechanical failures will happen. The council or CAA are powerless to prevent them. They can only make recommendations to avoid or reduce a similar thing in the future. Sadly this is often after someone has been killed or seriously injured.

People who enjoy flying accept the risks. The masterplan makes no consideration for the safety of those below other than a cursory look at perimeter building heights.

An increase in air traffic will raise the probability of a serious accident or incident which could be fatal not only for the pilot/passengers but also residents.

Neither the Airport operator or Council can mitigate or prevent such a disaster. The masterplan proposal for the reconfiguration of the existing runways **aids and abets** the likelihood of a serious and fatal incident.

Residents may take some solace from the fact that in the Airport Lease Tender document the Council has indemnified itself for a minimum of £10 million against claims arising from the operation of the airport. Is this the value Medway Council puts on residents property and lives?

In summary the masterplan proposal for Rochester Airport needlessly **endangers** the lives of local residents through the concentration of air traffic onto a single runway and its open encouragement to a limited liability company to exploit the facility.

It is recommended that the masterplan is significantly changed to protect the future safety of the local community. The current masterplan proposal is completely unacceptable.

Financial cost to the community.

No specific or budgetary costs for the reconfiguration of the airport are mentioned in the masterplan exhibition material or local mailings.

A review of the recent airport operators Tender document states that the council is to contribute a large sum of tax payers money (not to exceed £4 million) towards the cost of paving the runway and facility upgrade.

The Council Cabinet papers dated 18th December 2012 confirms the above budgetary amount to be allocated for the improvements to the airport.

The Cabinet paper and those of other council meeting minutes appear to be biased towards making sure the Airport operators business plans are successful. There are no comments or figures to support the tax payers investment.

The masterplan states that the airport is a vital asset and that the community wants to protect it. However, there is no tangible or demonstrable evidence to support the validity of such a proclamation. Visibility of professional due diligence and likely cost to the community will change peoples perspective and tolerance to the proposal.

5

Once an investment of £4 million of public money is made in the airport infrastructure. Medway council will become beholden to keep the operator in business for the 25 year lease.

There appears to be no risk analysis on the public money investment/expenditure should the airport operator go bankrupt. As a consequence the Planning Board process may be compromised to ensure the success of the airport and avoid Medway Council embarrassment through the waste of public money.

Interestingly those residents in the concentrated flight path based on the safety concerns outlined above **will be paying to have their lives endangered** if the current masterplan is not changed.

Unsurprisingly most people I have asked find the investment **completely unacceptable**.

The airport operator currently pays between **£30-40 thousand** a year to lease the facility from the council. A ball park calculation based on average number of flights per day reveals that council tax payers could be subsidising each aircraft by approximately **£30** for every takeoff or landing over the next 25 years.

Residents I have spoken with are extremely annoyed by such a wasteful expenditure during times of austerity and pay freezes.

The return on investment (ROI) to assist the airport operator to achieve business plans and objectives may be construed as a subsidy using public money.

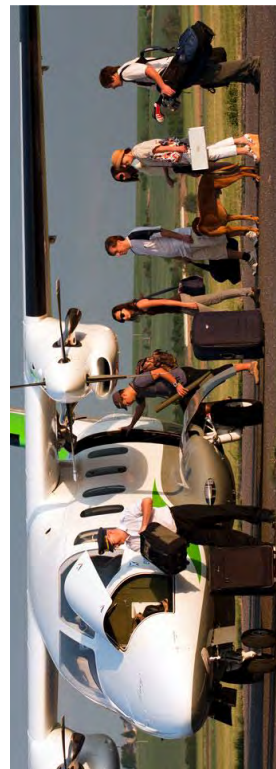
Cabinet papers suggest that the possible lease or sale of land after the airport is reconfigured will return the tax payer investment. However, if the airport was closed then the investment would NOT be needed. Other possibilities for the land could be considered which would benefit a wider base of the community and possibly make the site more attractive to multimillion pound corporations looking to invest in the Business/Technology Park.

In summary the masterplan without significant public money expenditure renders it a concept rather than a proposal. It does not look a good investment.

I would recommend that full fiscal due diligence be completed and made public before a 25 year lease is signed.

Environmental impact to the local area

As highlighted previously the paving of the runway will permit significantly larger aircraft to use the airport. Shown below is a typical aircraft that could be regularly flying in and out of the airport for taxi or cargo purposes.



6



The short takeoff and landing aircraft are easily capable of lifting off fully loaded (with either 19 passengers or cargo) on the proposed concrete runway.

Whilst every effort is made to make them quiet I would recommend councillors visit an operational airport using such aircraft.

The takeoff noise is significant due to having to bring full thrust before moving off. The masterplan and publicity material is correct in saying takeoff will be quick as the rate of ascent is steep. However landing still requires a reasonably level approach which will necessitate flying for some length over residential areas. This will be very noisy.

It is clear from the finances that without such aircraft Rochester airport will not survive. Possibly not as large as a Boeing 747 but in the future who knows what size of aircraft will be able to use the airport.

Whether club flyers realise it or not, they too will be squeezed by commercial drivers (similar to Biggin Hill). They will be marginalised and ultimately forced to move. The characteristics of the airport will be completely changed and any nostalgic affection by residents will turn to disdain.

The difference between councillors support for the expansion and commercialisation of Rochester airport and that of its opposition to the estuary airport remains questionable. Both pollute the atmosphere, increase carbon footprint, are noisy, smell and present a liability to the community should anything fail.

Residents may conclude that some councillors have double standards or personal agendas.

The 1000+ jobs creation is commendable but the lack of tangible business strategy beyond schematics does not instil confidence. However, most are willing to accept we should try and build jobs.

The master plan does not contain a sound strategy for the additional traffic created by the business/technology park on the west side of the airport.

A simple calculation shows that if only 50% of the 1000 employees use cars during the 2 hour morning rush a car arrives at the site every 14.4 seconds and during the evening leave at the rate of one every 10.8 seconds. Cars do not arrive or leave at uniform rate so the road infrastructure needs to be well planned and able to cope with the additional load.

There will need to be a significant upgrade of the road system to support not only the new jobs but

also the Horsted housing development. Road infrastructure and build is very expensive.

The Master plan shows most access via the B2097 for the new Business/Technology Park. However, the road infrastructure at the Bridgewood gyratory, M2 junction and City Way are already congested at peak times. Traffic flow to and from the B2097 is less than satisfactory currently.

In addition the Sikh temple on the airports west side industrial site generates a significant amount of traffic and parking on worship days.

It is difficult to determine whether the primary driver for the master plan is the creation of jobs or Medway council prestige?

The airport reconfiguration will not revitalise the area. However a high tech business park may achieve Council aspirations providing it has well designed road infrastructure, good prominence and enjoyable working environment.

The co-location of a noisy, dangerous and environmental unfriendly commercial airport alongside a high tech business park will reduce the value of the land, restrict its use and ultimately cost the tax payer even more money through lost revenue.

Residential homes in the direct flight path of the reconfigured airport are likely to see a drop in price given the safety issues and disturbance.

The build of the Technology Park on the west side without good road infrastructure feeding onto the A229 is a mistake.

I would recommend an urgent revision of the masterplan to bring the new Business/Technology Park to the east side of the airport where a new junction could be created on the single lane section of road on the A229 between the Davis Estate and Horsted development.

In summary the current masterplan in trying to save the airport severely compromises good road infrastructure needed to attract large corporations to invest in a Business/Technology Park.

The masterplan has not been thought through properly on a financial basis and likely to waste public money.

Compliance with Medway Draft Core Strategy paper Jan 2012.

The Rochester Airport Futures exhibition literature provided 13-14th May states that the planning policy for the airport is mainly set by the Medway submission of the Draft Core Strategy (2012).

The draft core strategy states:

"Facilities at Rochester Airport need reinvestment and upgrading and the current operator is working closely with the council to see how this might be achieved, while also ensuring that adjacent land can be fully utilised for employment purposes. Investigations are ongoing and it is expected that a masterplan covering both the airport and surrounding land will be agreed in the near future."

The draft Core Strategy document reveals:

1. The Airport does not have a heritage status similar to the Dockyard, Castle, City etc.

2. Medway already has an abundance of tourist and heritage attractions.
3. The Airport does not feature in the Medway futures transport framework (8.18 LTP3).
4. The Airport expansion and continuation will undermine (CS 2.55) carbon emission reduction and air quality improvements within the Medway area.

Whilst the airport is occasionally used by the police helicopter it is not a vital or strategic element of their operation. The air ambulance is no longer stationed at the airport. Neither require a full airport facility for staging or paved runway.

The draft Core Strategy sets an ambitious target of 21,500 additional Medway jobs to be created between now and 2028.

The majority of Medway's workforce is located south of the river. To alleviate future traffic movement and congestion employment opportunities need to be in close proximity of the workforce. The loss of large amounts of land to housing projects over the years now makes the Rochester Airport site a vital element in achieving predicted employment levels.

From the draft Core Strategy it is clear that the Airport operation has no tangible benefit or contribution to building a better Medway. It has been systematically compromised by previous councils through land disposal. To restrict it further increases the danger to local residents. The needs and aspirations of Medway outlined in the Core Strategy override the airports retention.

The retention of the airport based on a petition over 10 years old is not an accurate indicator of local support for its protection today. The original petition was to keep the airport open in its current topology and character. The Masterplan proposal seeks to radically change its layout and leave residents dangerously exposed.

An informed poll on the airports closure today underpinned with clear documentation on why and what will replace it. Will I believe produce a positive outcome for its closure.

I submit that the proposed Airport Futures masterplan has lost sight of Medway's core objectives and vision. The council in their negotiations with Rochester Airport limited have acquiesced to a solution which substantially undermines the success of the Core Strategy by:

- Not considering alternative solutions for the land which better support the community and its needs.
- Placing a priority on the Airport Operators long term business plans over those of the community.
- Investing up to £4M in the Airport facility which could be used more effectively on other vital projects.
- Locking the Airport land into a 25 year lease and removing future flexibility/options for the land moving beyond 2014.
- Ignoring carbon emission reduction and renewable energy obligations and targets.

In summary the Airport Masterplan severely jeopardises the success of the Core Strategy health and revitalisation of the area.

9

Conclusions.

The following is evident from the masterplan review:

- The current proposal endangers local residents lives.
- The investment of public money into the airport cannot be justified.
- That the financial cost to the Medway tax payers may be substantially more through no ROI, reduced value of Business Park land and reduction in local house prices.
- Additional noise, pollution and general environmental impact with commercialisation of the airport will change the character of the facility severely.
- There will be additional demand on already stretched emergency services.
- The offer of a 25 year lease on the airport is unwise until a final solution for the Business/Technology Park is ratified.
- The Airport reconfiguration/expansion adversely impacts and undermines Medway area Carbon Reduction Commitments.
- The Medway Draft Core Strategy targets and objectives are significantly compromised by the airports retention.

Recommendations.

- That the masterplan is significantly changed to protect the safety of the local community.
- The current proposal needlessly endanger lives.
- That a full fiscal due diligence and risk analysis be completed and published before a public hearing.
- That an extension of no greater than 2 years is offered to the current airport operator until a workable solution is built and ratified by the public at an open hearing.
- Urgent review of the masterplan be undertaken to determine the merits, benefits and logistics of bringing the Business/Technology Park to the east side of the airport.
- As part of the Councils fiduciary obligation to the tax payer other options for the use of the airport land should be explored which do not endanger lives are fiscally responsible and support Medway Carbon Emission Reduction Commitments and targets.
- A full public hearing should be convened to ratify any future solution for the site.
- The masterplan is revised based on adverse impact to Medway's Carbon Emission Reduction commitment.
- The Airport Masterplan should be revised to avoid conflict and compromise of Medway's Draft Core Strategy objectives, targets and vision.

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Alternative Proposals and considerations.

There appears to be a negative perception on what might happen to the airport land should it be necessary to close the operation.

A rumour that the airport land would be sold for housing and in the words of one councillor, "concreted over" if the masterplan is rejected is outrageous. Such a statement can only be designed to herd local residents into accepting the proposal out of fear of the alternative.

The absence of any alternative options for the site by Medway Council speculatively supports a notion that a minority of people wanting to exploit the airport for whatever personal reason are actively peddling misinformation to alarm residents.

The Council are combating residents concerns about the commercialisation, over use of the concrete runway and safety by referring to the fact that the proposal will be subject to a robust planning application.

Why then should local residents put their trust in the Planning board process when those perpetuating the "concrete it over" misinformation have no confidence in the Planning board to protect our green spaces themselves?

It is clear that the current masterplan is plagued with significant, environmental, financial and safety issues. I have therefore built a number of alternatives which address most of the inadequacies of the current proposal.

The following two options are not exhaustive and other creditworthy solutions may exist.

Proposal (A1) attempts to retain the airport as a sport/leisure facility yet satisfy Medway councils Business/Technology Park aspirations. However, similar to the existing plan the encroachment on the airport land makes it difficult to support on safety grounds. A clear benefit to the private flyer is that without a concrete runway their use of the facility is better safeguarded from marginalisation by commercial influences similar to that experienced at Biggin Hill.

Proposal (A2) is a solution for the wider community benefit which retains Medway Council aspirations to create 1000+ jobs. The business/technology park similar to the proposal A1 will remain approximately 44 acres in size.

A community park at the south point of the airfield and facilities would be maintained through income generated by a solar farm installation. The park would be approximately 23 Acres in size.

In sympathy with the Medway Draft Core Strategy (2.51) Provide more opportunities for cycling and walking). The park would be equipped with a perimeter all weather family cycling track to provide a safe learning area for small children with parents plus a walking lane.

Access to the community park would utilise the old Airport road access from the A229. An additional pedestrian access between the Business/Technology park at its southerly point would encourage lunch time walks and exercise for employees.

The Park would be protected from glare by a raised bund at the north point which would hide the solar panels from view and present a pleasant outlook for visitors.

Some facilities and buildings at the park could be renovated to support MAPS activities. Consideration should also be made for electric model remote controlled car surface.

Subject to further work and planning application a 5MWp photovoltaic solar farm could be accommodated in the west section of land comprising approximately 35 acres. The farm would not be overlooked by residential properties and surrounded by industrial/ business park units.

A new park and ride combined with Sikh temple parking to be built on the north west portion of land. Entry and exit to the parking area would be from Laker road. This would alleviate parking problems on worship days and provide additional parking facilities for Dickens Festival etc. Such an infrastructure investment supports Core Strategy (2.47) Invest in public transport infrastructure).

The power generated by the solar farm could be used to supplement the new business park or other council projects/buildings local to the area. Sheep would graze on the land to maintain grass height.

If the land were leased to a Solar Farm provider rather than council owned and operated. After the 20/25 year lease the land would be returned to the Council for continuation of the solar farm (council would take control of the installation) or have the operator remove it so that the Business or recreational park could be expanded.

Alternatively the council could elect to invest in the solar farm themselves to enjoy significant revenue streams from FIT and greater flexibility in the use of the generated electricity.

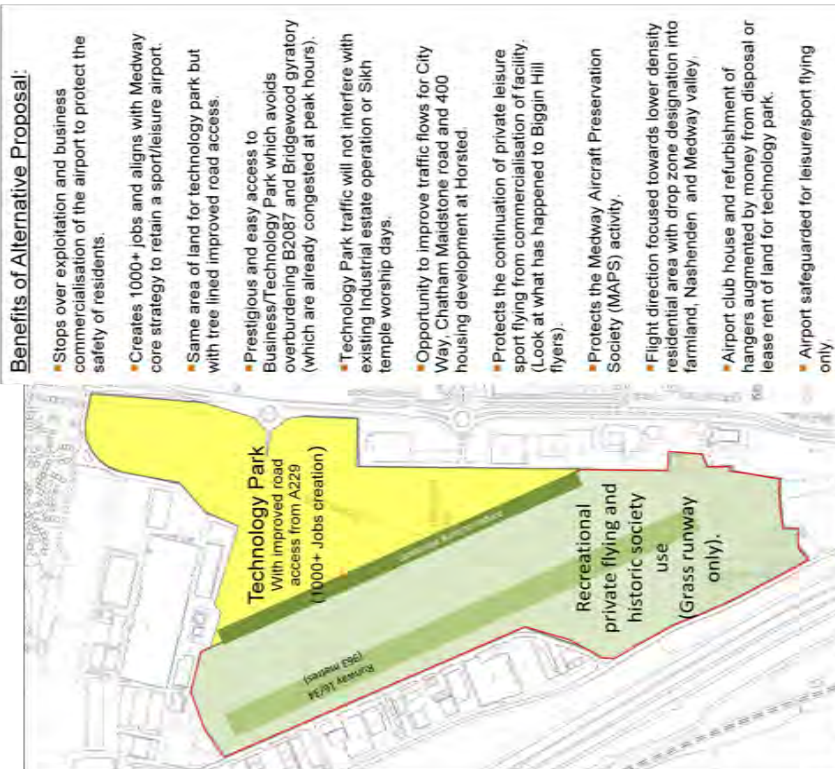
Tenders to supply and operate the solar farm would be governed by Medway council procurement process.

For site reconfiguration options please see attached schematic and benefit bullets.

I will be pleased to discuss the ideas further.

Alternative Rochester Airport Futures proposal schematic.

(Revised A1 Plan issue 2.0)



Benefits of Alternative Proposal:

- Stops over exploitation and business commercialisation of the airport to protect the safety of residents.
- Creates 1000+ jobs and aligns with Medway core strategy to retain a sport/leisure airport.
- Same area of land for technology park but with tree lined improved road access.
- Prestigious and easy access to Business/Technology Park which avoids overburdening B2087 and Bridgewood gyratory (which are already congested at peak hours).
- Technology Park traffic will not interfere with existing industrial estate operation or Sikh temple worship days.
- Opportunity to improve traffic flows for City Way, Chatham Maidstone road and 400 housing development at Horsted.
- Protects the continuation of private leisure sport flying from commercialisation of facility (Look at what has happened to Biggin Hill flyers).
- Protects the Medway Aircraft Preservation Society (MAPS) activity.
- Flight direction focused towards lower density residential area with drop zone designation into farmland, Nasheden and Medway valley.
- Airport club house and refurbishment of hangars augmented by money from disposal or lease rent of land for technology park.
- Airport safeguarded for leisure/sport flying only.

- No possibility of leisure flying compromised by short take off twin turbo passenger services or air taxis.
- No requirement to rely on the Council Planning Board to restrict commercialisation of the airport.
- No noisy and environmentally unfriendly turbo prop commuter/cargo aircraft.
- No £4M of taxpayers money invested in the reconfiguration or subsidy to a commercial company.

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Alternative Rochester Airport Futures proposal schematic.

(Revised A2 Plan issue 2.1) Closure of Airport.



Benefits of Alternative Proposal:

- Creates residents community park and recreational ground with family all weather cycle track and model car area.
- Access to community park via existing airport access road with pedestrian access at southern point of Business/Technology Park for employee recreation/lunch and exercise.
- Low capital investment for reconfiguration of site which safeguards green space.
- Offer a 25 year 35 acre Solar farm lease with sheep grazing to generate income to support maintenance cost for community park.
- An environmentally friendly 5MWp solar farm will support the equivalent of 1,500 houses and contribute to UK 2020 Governmental target for green energy production.
- Improved carbon footprint for Medway with no visible detriment to residential area.
- Solar farm compliments and creates feeling of high technology area. Power generated could be used by businesses on the new Technology park or existing industrial units to west. This will increase attractiveness to invest in area.
- No residential danger from flying activities.
- Approximately 44 acre business/Technology park creates 1000+ jobs and aligns with Medway core strategy.
- Tree lined A229 at intersection with Technology Park to create green space appearance.
- Prestigious and easy access to technology Park with possible aircraft heritage sculpture on roundabout.
- Avoids overburdening B2087 and Bridgewood gyratory (which are already congested at peak hours).
- Technology Park traffic will not interfere with existing industrial estate operation or Sikh temple worship days.

- New community Park and (to be combined with Sikh Temple parking at North West corner. Entry/Exit from Laker Road.
- Opportunity to improve traffic flows for City Way, Chatham Maidstone road and new 400 housing development at Horsted and enhance property values.
- Will increase the value and attractiveness of Business/Technology land for jobs investment.
- Retains and Protects the historical aircraft society (MAPS) activity within the park area.
- Medway draft Core Strategy aligned with low or neutral taxpayer cost.
- Design significantly benefits the Medway community from a safety, financial and environmental perspective.

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Appendix 2

Rochester Airport Masterplan Consultation Draft

June 2013



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The Vision

Rochester Airport and adjoining land will be developed as a strategic gateway and economic hub. The existing general aviation airport will be retained and improved and high value economic activities provided on surplus land to create skilled employment opportunities. This will capitalise on the presence of the existing BAE facility. An opportunity to enhance working aviation heritage facilities as a public visitor attraction will also be achieved. The open outlook provided by the airport will be retained and improved. Over the longer term reinvestment will be encouraged on the Laker Road and Airport industrial estates and other adjoining sites. This will establish Rochester Airport as an economic location of real significance and a model for the area.

1 Introduction

1.1 Rochester Airport is owned by Medway council and is a vital part of Medway's future economic prosperity. The council wants the airport and adjoining land to provide a strategic gateway to Medway and an economic hub. This hub will create skilled employment opportunities that will capitalise on the presence of the existing BAE facility, so establishing Rochester Airport as an economic location of real significance and a model for the area.

1.2 Medway council is committed to retaining and improving the airport. The airport's facilities are nearing the end of their economic lives, and investment is needed to secure the airport's medium to long-term future. Medway has developed a strategy of making the airport 'smaller but better' with improved facilities for users and visitors. The main change will be removing one of the two grass runways, and constructing a new hard-surfaced runway and parallel grass runway on the alignment of the existing 16/34 runway. The proposed changes are explained in more detail in chapter 2.

1.3 These changes will free up land for employment-led development next to the airport. New development provides the opportunity to:

- meet Medway council's aspirations for the area by creating a hub for knowledge-based employment; and
- release value from council-owned land, so helping to fund improvements to the airport.

1.4 In addition to new employment, the development of the area will:

- enhance working aviation heritage facilities as a public visitor attraction;
- retain the open outlook westwards across the airport; and
- over the longer term, encourage reinvestment on the Laker Road and Airport industrial estates.

1.5 Whilst there are planning policies identifying the area as a hub for high quality employment, there are no specific policies that protect the airport. This document is intended to set out clear policies for both the airport and the surrounding area by providing a masterplan. It has been subject to initial public consultation and Sustainability Appraisal, and so has followed appropriate planning procedures for the masterplan to be given significant planning weight.



Figure 1.1: Location of the masterplan area

1.6 This document provides guidance on the principles of development, including land uses, access and building heights. However, as it is a masterplan for the long-term, it does not dictate the detail of exactly what buildings will look like and where they will be located. This level of detail will be set out in planning applications that come forward after this masterplan is adopted.

1.7 Planning applications that come forward in the future will be required to clearly explain the impacts of environmental issues such as traffic generation and noise, and how the proposals will address any impacts. Local people will be consulted on any planning applications.

2 The future of the airport



Figure 2.1: Extract from Medway public information leaflet, December 2012

Introduction

2.1 First established in 1933, the Rochester Airport site is owned by Medway council and has been leased since 2000 to an airport operator - Rochester Airport Limited (RAL). Many of the buildings and facilities on the airport are reaching the end of their useful life. This means that Medway needs to consider how to safeguard the important aviation activity that happens at the airport and help improve community access to this unique facility.

2.2 Rochester Airport is important to many people living in Medway and is something that Medway council has committed to securing a long-term future for. The council has been working for a number of years to identify a financially viable way to protect the airport and provide greater public access for aviation and heritage/leisure use.

2.3 Working with airport specialists and neighbouring businesses including BAE Systems, the council has evaluated a number of different options for the future of Rochester Airport. The proposals shown in Figure 2.1 above show Medway's preferred approach to improving the airport. This was set out in a leaflet that was circulated to local people in December 2012.

2.4 Following on from the publication of the leaflet, Medway has worked to safeguard the future of the airport by:

- completing a process of inviting tenders for an airport operator to work in partnership with the council to carry out improvements to the airport, and to manage it long-term. RAL has been selected as the preferred operator, and is working closely with Medway to develop detailed plans for the airport; and
- producing this masterplan to provide a clear vision for the future of the airport area.

The proposals for the airport

2.5 This masterplan is not intended to provide a detailed masterplan for the future development of the airport. Instead, it sets out broad principles for the airport and the areas next to it. These broad principles provide a balance between certainty as to what will happen and flexibility to allow for detailed design decisions to be made later. However, improving the airport will involve:

- major improvements to existing airport facilities on their current location on the airfield;
- better public access to the site for heritage, leisure and tourism;
- a new permanent home for the nationally recognised Medway Aircraft Preservation Society (MAPS);
- creation of new parallel paved and grass runways to replace the existing 02/20 grass runway, as well as improvements to navigation aids and outdated facilities; and
- closure of the old 16/34 grass runway.

2.6 The benefits of these improvements will include:

- safeguarding Rochester Airport as a 'smaller but better' sustainable airport with improved facilities for Medway residents and visitors;
- releasing new land for job creation - with the potential to eventually create up to 1,000 new skilled jobs;
- providing a new aviation heritage attraction to encourage more visitors to Medway;
- preserving the existing green view of the airport from Maidstone Road, as well as reducing aircraft noise around the airport through the use of a paved runway; and
- creating opportunities to attract private sector investment into Rochester Airport by offering a 25 year lease alongside a council contribution to the overall development.

Key airport questions answered

2.7 Initial consultation with local people has been an important part of the process of producing this masterplan. An initial consultation report has been produced separately, and this sets out the key issues raised by local people. The main concern raised during consultation was about the future operation of the airport, with people wanting to know the detail of the types of aircraft, numbers of flights and as well as understanding where new facilities may go.

2.8 As RAL is developing its plans for the future of the airport in parallel with the process of producing this masterplan, it is not possible to provide detailed information on the airport at this stage. However, improvements to the airport will need planning permission. Local residents and businesses will be consulted on the planning application and will have the opportunity to put forward views about the proposals.

2.9 However, it is possible to answer some of the questions raised by local people at this stage:

What kind of aircraft will use the airport? The type of aircraft are expected to remain similar to those that currently use the airport, with the airport's core business remaining as leisure flyers, along with helicopter and air taxi uses. It will not become a busy passenger or cargo airport as the runway is not long enough. Examples of aircraft are shown overleaf.

Will the airport be busier? The airport currently handles around 35,000 aircraft movements per year or 96 movements per day. This varies from year-to-year, and the variation is due to a number of factors - fluctuating demand for emergency services and how economic conditions affect leisure flights, for example. There are currently no restrictions on the number of flights. If planning permission is granted for the improvements, it is likely that a restriction on the number of flights will be imposed. RAL have suggested that the total annual movements is capped at 50,000 per annum or 137 per day. A very busy summer day is predicted to be 400 to 500 movements, compared to a peak of around 360 movements now. Careful monitoring will be in place to check the number of flights. Thus, there is potential for the airport to be busier than it currently is, but this would be up to a clearly defined limit.

The paved runway will mean that - in the case of inclement weather - flights can be spread throughout the day rather than concentrated in 'weather windows'.

Will having just one runway reduce safety? The paved runway will improve safety - a grass runway is slippery when wet and can be boggy. Runway 02/20 is currently used for around 70 per cent of the time, as it has a better alignment in relation to wind direction than runway 16/34. It is anticipated that less than 10 per cent of the time the airport will be unusable due to high crosswinds. Each aircraft (and some operators) has individual crosswind limits. It is down to the individual pilot or operator to assess wind conditions at the time of flight. This is one of the many calculations made by all pilots prior to getting in their aircraft. It has been assessed that the airport will lose far fewer flights to crosswinds than currently to unsuitable field conditions.

Will there be more noise? Having a paved runway means that aircraft will be able to accelerate more quickly than on grass and take off earlier. This means that they will have climbed much higher before they pass over homes near the airport - which will result in less noise than at present.

What about hours of operation? There are currently no restrictions on when the airport can be used. It is likely that a restriction will be imposed if planning permission is granted. RAL have suggested maximum core operating hours of 7:30 am to 7:30 pm. Home based aircraft will retain the right to operate up until dusk or 9.00 pm as now. Emergency services and military will be able to use the airport 24 hours per day (as is the case at present).

Will there be more road traffic to/from the airport? There may be an increase in leisure road traffic at weekends and bank holidays but it is not envisaged that this will increase substantially during the working week from current levels.

Examples of smaller aircraft



Figure 2.2: Cessna C172



Figure 2.3: Spitfire



Figure 2.4: Police helicopter

Examples of larger aircraft



Figure 2.5: Cheyenne



Figure 2.6: Socata



Figure 2.7: Caravan

3 The masterplan area



Figure 3.1 Aerial view

Introduction

3.1 This chapter provides a description of the area covered by this masterplan and the technical issues that the masterplan will need to address. The chapter is organised under the following headings:

- land ownership;
- urban design;
- engineering and environmental issues; and
- safeguarding.

Land ownership

3.2 Creating one parallel runway opens up land surrounding the improved airport for development. The masterplan area encompasses several areas of land around the airport, and these are shown in Figs 3.1 and 3.2.

- A** Land currently occupied by part of the 16/34 runway.
- B** Land on a long lease to BAE Systems, partly used by BAE Systems for car parking.
- C** The Innovation Centre - there may be opportunities to extend this successful business location.
- D** Vacant land to the south of the Innovation Centre owned by Medway council.
- E** Woolmans Wood Caravan Park. This is in private ownership.
- F** Potential for some new development within the airport area.

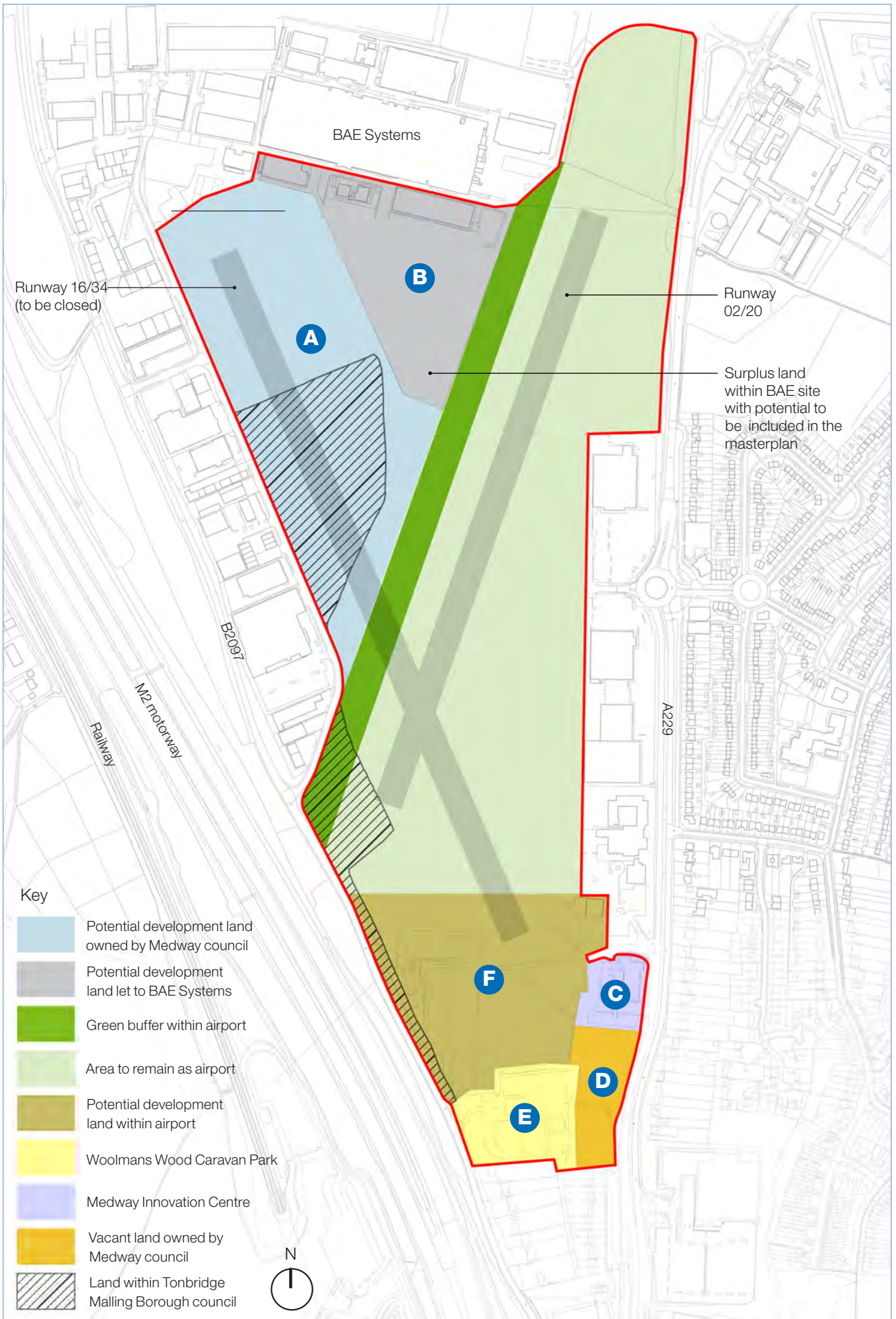


Figure 3.2: Plan showing the masterplan area

Urban design

3.3 It is important to understand the character of the masterplan area and its immediate context. This helps to guide the masterplan - are there areas where character is special and needs to be preserved? Is there an opportunity to improve the character of the area through new high quality development? Are there opportunities to improve the quality of the existing employment areas over time, so that the area as a whole is improved?

3.4 How the masterplan area connects with the local area is also important - where can vehicular access be provided? Where do pedestrians need to get to?

3.5 This urban design section addresses these two issues: character and access.



1: BAE Systems

- Mixture of industrial sheds and office accommodation.
- Between one and five storeys.
- Surrounded by perimeter fence. No public access in to or through this area.
- No uniformity between building styles and ages, varying heights, between one and five storeys.



2: Horsted Retail Park

- Double height retail units with parking - set back from Maidstone Road, Chatham.
- Holiday Inn Hotel - low rise between one and three storeys - separate access from retail units.
- Frontages vary - central part fronts on to A229 and forms relatively strong relationship with road.



3: Airport

- Varied accommodation including: 2 Hangars, Flight School, Aircraft Preservation Society, gun club, cafe, control tower, museum, function room.
- Some accommodation in poor condition and in need of replacement.
- Two grass runways.



4: Laker Road Industrial Estate

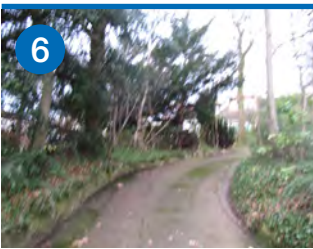
- Variety of varying office and industrial/manufacturing uses. No frontage to B2097.
- Accessed along Laker Road.
- No uniformity in building types, materials, heights or forms.
- Frontages along Laker Road are not uniform a - variety of fronts and backs overlook the airfield. This gives a somewhat untidy appearance.





5: Rochester Airport Industrial Estate

- Variety of building types including offices and industrial. Some leisure and retail uses along B2097 (above). More formal frontage makes this part of the site seem more organised.
- No uniformity in building types, materials, heights or forms - results in a somewhat untidy appearance.



6: Southern area

- Heavily treed Woolmans Wood has 'private' character with limited views from outside the site.
- Vacant land presents unattractive frontage to the A229.

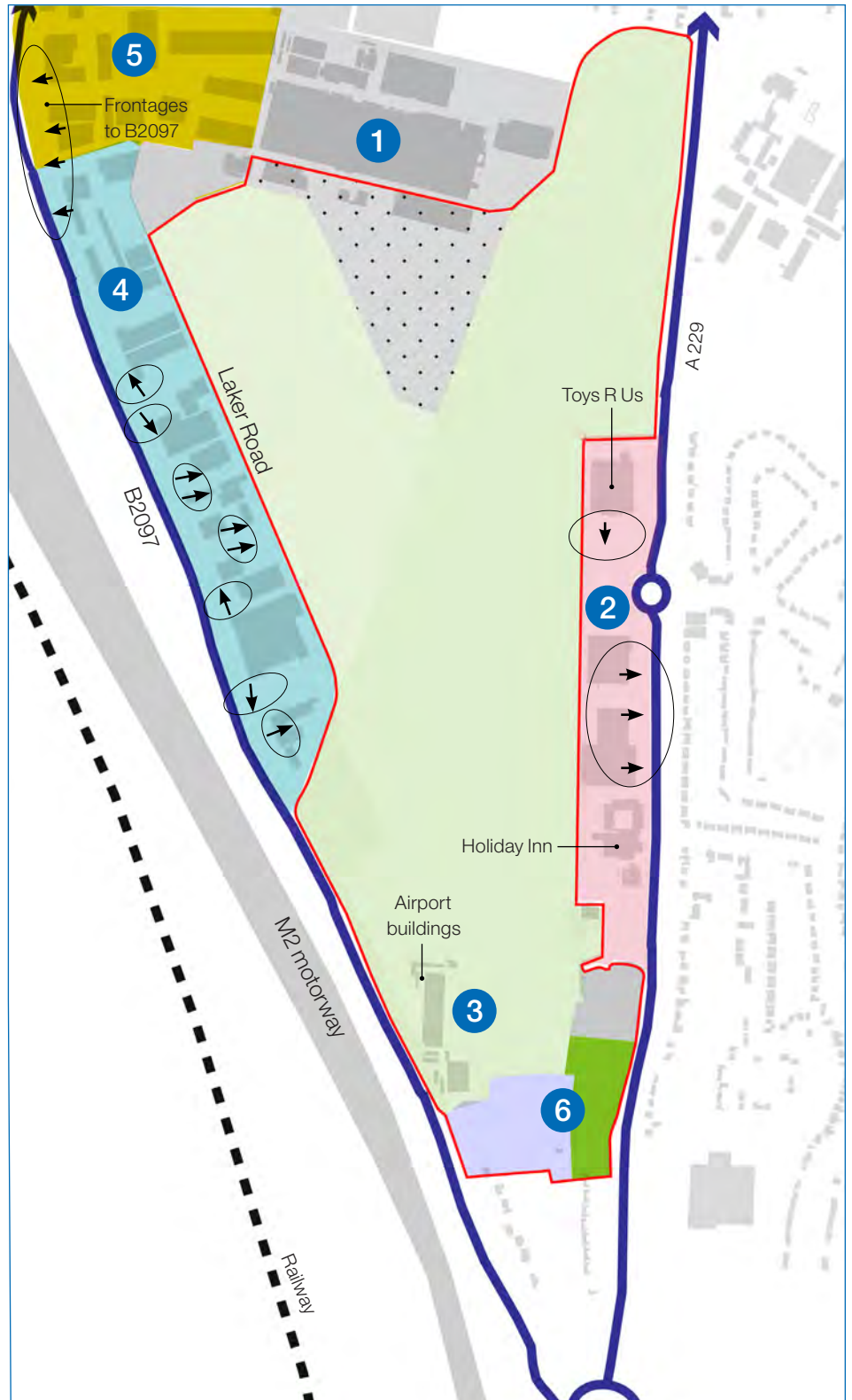


Figure 3.3: Plan showing character areas

Access and circulation: urban design issues

3.6 In its wider context, the site is well-connected to the road network. However, access onto the airport is limited. The main access is from the Maidstone Road, Chatham, which is poorly signed and is shared with a hotel at the southern end of the airport's eastern boundary and Medway's Innovation Centre, the latter of which hosts in excess of 200 jobs. The main access becomes busy at rush hour times and can cause delays to vehicles leaving the site.

3.7 As the main airport accommodation is located on the southwestern side of the field, access to this area is taken close to the southern end of runway 16/34. As this is crossed by aircraft, the road is controlled by a traffic light system operated from the control tower. Queues can build up here when there is a high level of runway usage. Emergency access points are located at the southwestern, eastern and western boundaries.

3.8 The aim of the masterplan is to deliver new employment-led development that can meet Medway's aspirations for high quality jobs, along with improved access to the airport facilities, particularly those to which the public wish to gain access (such as MAPS). An essential part of the masterplanning process is therefore to create high quality, legible access points (or 'gateways') to the new development. The site is challenging in this regard. Figure 3.4 opposite highlights the key opportunities, and these are:

- 8: the existing primary access to the airport from the A229;
- 4: from the southern corner of Laker Road, which has the advantage of taking drivers straight into the development area; and
- 3: direct access via Lankester Parker Road.



1: Entrance to Rochester Airport Industrial Estate

- No access to development land and no visual connection with airfield.



2: Entrance to Rochester Airport Industrial Estate

- No access to development land - potential to connect to Laker Road?



3: Entrance to Laker Road Industrial Estate

- Public access to industrial and business space along Laker Road.
- Visual connection to airfield.



4: Entrance to Laker Road Industrial Estate

- Visual connection to airfield, although obstructed by trees.
- Potential to develop buildings as gateway.



5: Airport (back door)

- Not currently legible as a point of entry.



6: Entrance to caravan park

- Secluded entry point amongst heavy planting.



7: Entrance to freehold development land (not used)



8: Primary access

- Innovation Centre naturally marks entry.
- Access from A229 Road is difficult.
- Visual connection to the airport is weak.



9: Marconi Way

- Public access to existing park and ride.
- Access to BAE Site (private /secure only).
- No access to airfield currently.



Horsted Retail Park

- Serves retail units.
- Visual connections with airfield.
- No potential for vehicular access to airport land.

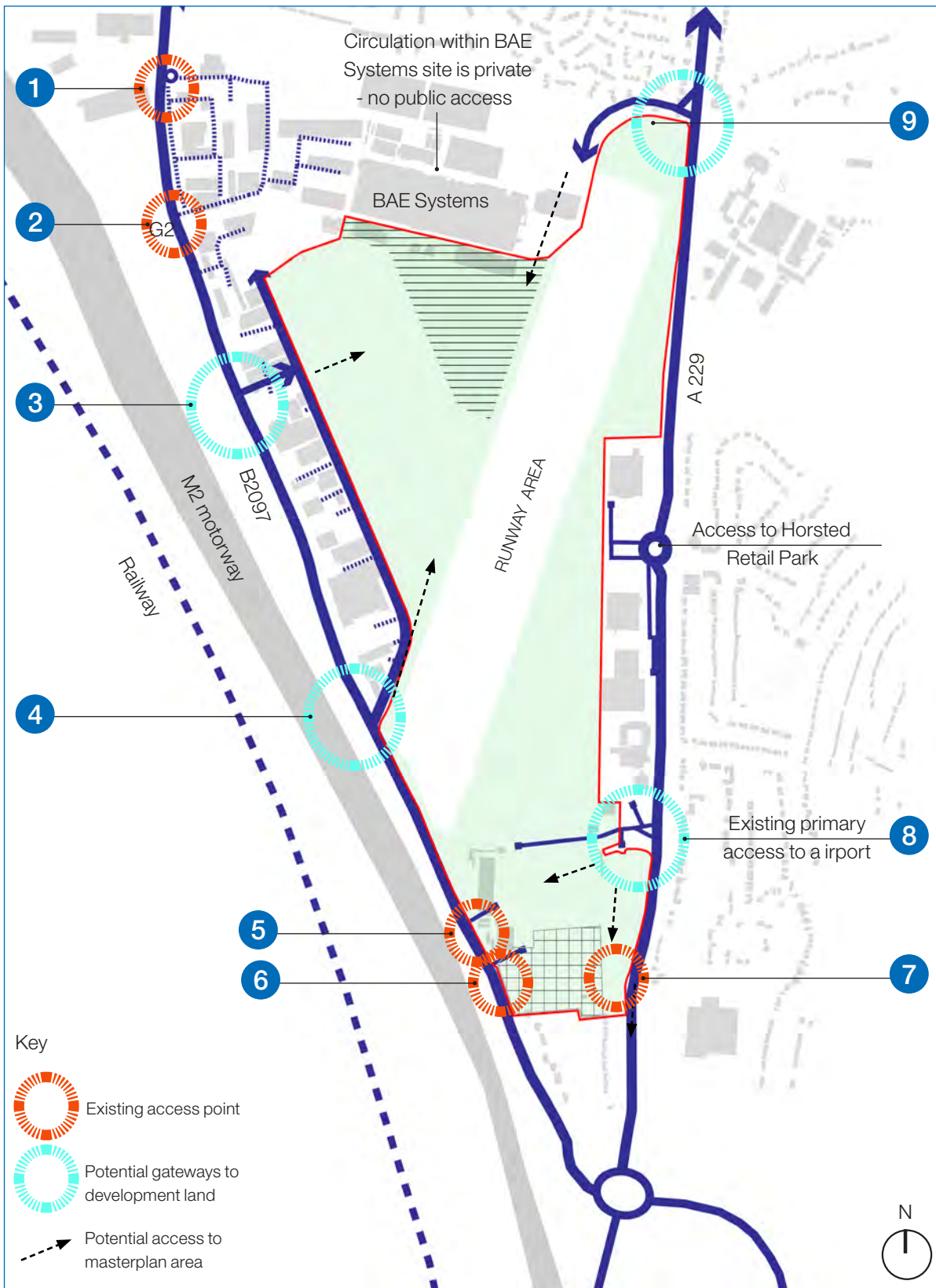


Figure 3.4: Access and circulation plan

Engineering and environmental issues

3.9 The key engineering and environmental issues considered at this high-level masterplanning stage are:

- access and circulation: technical issues;
- site history, and in particular the potential for ground contamination, unexploded ordnance and underground features from the Second World War; and
- ecology, trees and landscape.

3.10 Noise has been considered in relation of the proposed uses - that is, checking that employment, hotel and cafe/restaurant uses and the airport are compatible. Detailed technical issues, including noise, will be considered at planning application stage.

Access and circulation: technical issues

3.11 **Existing road network:** The masterplan area is bounded by the A229 Maidstone Road to the east and the B2097 Rochester Road to the west. These roads meet to the south of the site at the Bridgewood roundabout interchange with the A229 continuing to the south via a grade-separated flyover and a signalised roundabout giving access to the B2097 and the A2045 Walderslade Woods which runs to the south and east of the junction.

3.12 To the south of the Bridgewood roundabout is another grade-separated junction which connects the A229 to the link road leading east to the M2 motorway. The M2 grade separated interchange also gives access to the A2045 to the east meaning that there is some route choice available for drivers travelling between the A229, M2 and A2045.

3.13 Towards the north, the B2097 Rochester Road, Rochester becomes the B2097 Maidstone Road, Chatham as it approaches Rochester town centre. The A229 Maidstone Road continues north and meets the Horsted Gyratory where the A229 City Way continues north to Rochester town centre and the A230 Maidstone Road, Chatham continues northeast to Chatham town centre.

3.14 **Walking and cycling:** The majority of the existing pedestrian and cycle facilities are to the east of the airport with limited facilities in the vicinity of the B2097. There are

no footways on a section of the B2097 to the south of Laker Road. Existing pedestrian facilities include a signalised crossing on the A229 providing access to the Davis Estate area and southbound bus stops on Maidstone Road. There is a cycle route along the A229 consisting of both on-street and off-street paths. This route connects the Walderslade area with Rochester town centre.

3.15 **Public transport:** The area is served by a number of bus routes, primarily service 101 which runs via the A229 to Maidstone in one direction and Chatham and Gillingham in the other direction. In addition to this route there is service 185 which runs between Chatham and Lordswood and Walderslade. On the western side of the site, service 142 operates via Warren Wood between Blue Bell Hill village and Rochester and Chatham.

	Peak	Daytime	Evening
101	4 per hour	4 per hour	1/2 hourly / hourly
185	hourly	hourly	-
142	-	hourly	-

Table 3.1: Weekday frequency of local bus services

3.16 Most buses used on the 101 carry a distinctive colour scheme to create awareness of the frequent service. The 101 buses are fully accessible with ramps at the entrance to allow those in wheelchairs to board and alight with ease. The buses are fitted with free Wi-Fi capability.

3.17 The bus stops closest to the Innovation Centre are located adjacent to and opposite the Holiday Inn. Facilities comprise only a bus stop flag on the southbound stop and a bus stop flag and shelter with seating on the northbound stop. The southbound stop is accessible via the signalised pedestrian crossing further to the north across the A229.

3.18 **Potential transport improvements:** The location of the site means that it is most accessible by private car. Whilst there are opportunities for improvements to walking, cycling and public transport, a key consideration is the operation of major junctions in the local area. The key junctions are:

Horsted Gyratory: Medway council has developed a three mini-roundabout improvement scheme. This is being tested

and the geometric layout fine-tuned. There may be a need to explore traffic lights to assist:

- BAE traffic exiting the site in a southbound direction, although major delays have not been observed; and
- egress from the proposed new fire station which is to be located at the currently disused park and ride site.

The potential for safeguarding a strip of land around the airport boundary for any future highway improvements / pedestrian or cycleway should be explored.

Retail Park access: At busy times there is sometimes congestion within the retail park which can block back to the main road. Similarly there were times when exiting the retail park was thought to be difficult. The roundabout takes a lot of Asda traffic with traffic approaching Asda from the south having to make a u-turn at this roundabout. The same applies to traffic heading south from the Innovation Centre / hotel. There are proposals for a new Asda at Chatham Docks which is likely to change the catchment area of this store and may have the effect of reducing traffic on this section of the road network.

Innovation Centre / Hotel access: This is currently a left-in / left-out junction. There is potential for fully signalised 'all-movements' junction, which could relieve the retail park junction by also taking the u-turning Asda traffic. This masterplan recommends that this is explored at detailed design stage.

Bridgewood Roundabout: No issues were identified in terms of capacity or operation of this junction. This junction was not included in the Highways Agency study of the M2 junction as it was not deemed to interact with the roundabouts or traffic signal junctions leading to the motorway. There is potential that, if required, there was room to further increase capacity at the roundabout by adding flares/lanes.

3.19 Overall, whilst there are some existing issues of congestion, there would appear to be opportunities to improve capacity.

3.20 The majority of new development is proposed on the western side of the site, where access by public transport and walking and cycling is currently poor. There is an opportunity to work with the operator to improve the 142 bus service. This service currently diverts into Laker Road, where there are stops but no shelters. Opportunities could

include improving the frequency of services, improving bus shelters and routing the bus through the new development area.

3.21 There are limited opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycle access along the B2097 south of Stoney Lane. However, there is an opportunity for this masterplan to provide a pedestrian / cycle route along Laker Road. This could then be linked to pedestrian / cycle improvements to the B2097, to the north of the masterplan area.

3.22 Should the Marconi Way access road be improved in the future, there is an opportunity to incorporate better pedestrian / cycle access into this.

3.23 Individual planning applications that come forward in line with this masterplan will need to include a Transport Assessment (TA) and provide improvements, if required.

Site history and ground conditions

3.24 The 1938/39 maps show the airport and buildings. These consisted of hangars and a flying training school were constructed in this period. The Shorts Brothers factory is not shown at the northern end of the site although the three main hangars were constructed in this period for the manufacture of Shorts Stirling Bombers, it was normal not to identify military targets on the 1930's OS series maps. Also built at this period was the Pobjoys factory towards the northwest corner of the BAE site.

3.25 Little development of the airfield is shown post-war until the addition of a new hangar at the southern end of the site between 1990 and 2002. The BAE works to the north of the site grew progressively post war. The only other significant change to the site is the construction of the Rochester Airport Industrial Estate to the West and recent construction of the Innovation Centre in the Southeast corner.

3.26 The site was a major strategic target in World War Two and was bombed three times in August 1940 leading to extensive damage of the Shorts factory at the northern edge of the site. A plan has been obtained showing the location of bombs but no information has been obtained indicating that there are any known unexploded bombs. Any development will require appropriate risk assessment as there is clearly a residual risk.

3.27 The site is recorded as having been mined with pipe mines (Source: Brief History of Rochester Airport by Preston and Moulton; October 1992). These were long pipes laid transversely under runways and filled with explosives. Designed to deny the runways in the event of invasion, they were reported as having been removed but caution needs to be taken. There are at least two other sites in the UK where residual live pipemines have been located needing removal and suitable precautions need to be taken in any development to ensure that all mines have been removed.

3.28 There is generally a higher risk of contamination in areas of World War Two usage particularly the old fuel filling point and ARP shelters. Asbestos is likely to be found locally in made ground. It is likely that low level Radium 226 contamination could be found on site in areas of old incineration. Radium 226 is typically found in luminescent paint on old aircraft dials. Investigations will be required and remediation may be needed as part of any development.

3.29 Generally it is not expected that the site will contain extensive obstructions and ground bearing on the head or underlying chalk should be adequate for normal foundations. There are reports about underground solution features which should be considered by developers.

Ecology, trees and landscape

3.30 There is no ancient woodland within the masterplan area and no rare plant species. Some of the trees within Woolmans Wood Caravan Park are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Any masterplan should aim to retain these trees and, if any are required to be removed, replace them with appropriate species elsewhere on the site. The wooded character of this part of the masterplan area must be maintained.

3.31 Peters Pit Special Area of Conservation (SAC) covers an area of 70 acres (28.3 hectares) and is located approximately 1.8 miles (3km) to the south-west of the masterplan area. It is designated on the basis that large great crested newt populations have been recorded breeding here. There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) reasonably close to the masterplan area. These are:

- Wouldham to Delting Escarpment (SSSI) covers 768 acres (311 hectares) and lies approximately 1 mile (1.5km) south west from the site.
- Halling to Trottiscliffe Escarpment SSSI covers 1,494 acres (605 hectares) and lies approximately 2.8 miles (4.5km) north west of the site.

3.32 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) that lie within the vicinity of the site include Baty's Marsh 26 acres (10.4 hectares) and is located approximately 1.5 miles (2.5km) north of the site, and Boxley Warren 205 acres (83 hectares) is located approximately 1.8 miles (3km) south of the site.

3.33 Development of the masterplan is unlikely to impact upon these designated sites due to the distances and barriers (major roads and the railway) that exist between the site and these areas, which mean that accessing these sites is difficult.

Safeguarding

3.34 The height of any proposed development must take account of a continued use of the airport as an operational airfield.

3.35 In 2012 Medway council and BAE Systems appointed TPS to carry out an option study to study potential aerodrome layouts to enhance the viability of Rochester Airport.

3.36 This study developed the council's intentions to close runway 16/34 and the construction of a paved runway. Two layout options were presented, one on the existing runway alignment and the other on an alignment which is slightly rotated relative to the existing.

3.37 The cost difference between the two options was very little and both had both advantages and disadvantages. Although the rotated option made better use of the shape of the airfield and provided longer runways with fewer obstacles, it required changes to aircraft routes, which may be difficult to achieve. The existing runway alignment option released substantially more land in the vicinity of the Innovation Centre. This masterplan is based on the existing runway alignment - the precise alignment will be the subject of agreement with the operator, but it is expected to be broadly as set out by TPS.

3.38 TPS's study provides 'safeguarding' plans which define the areas of land that may be released for development and the maximum height of buildings and other structures that may be accommodated. Figure 3.5 opposite provides a simplified version of TPS's safeguarding plan, showing the developable areas as being defined by the five metre height contour, with permissible height increasing with distance from the runways.

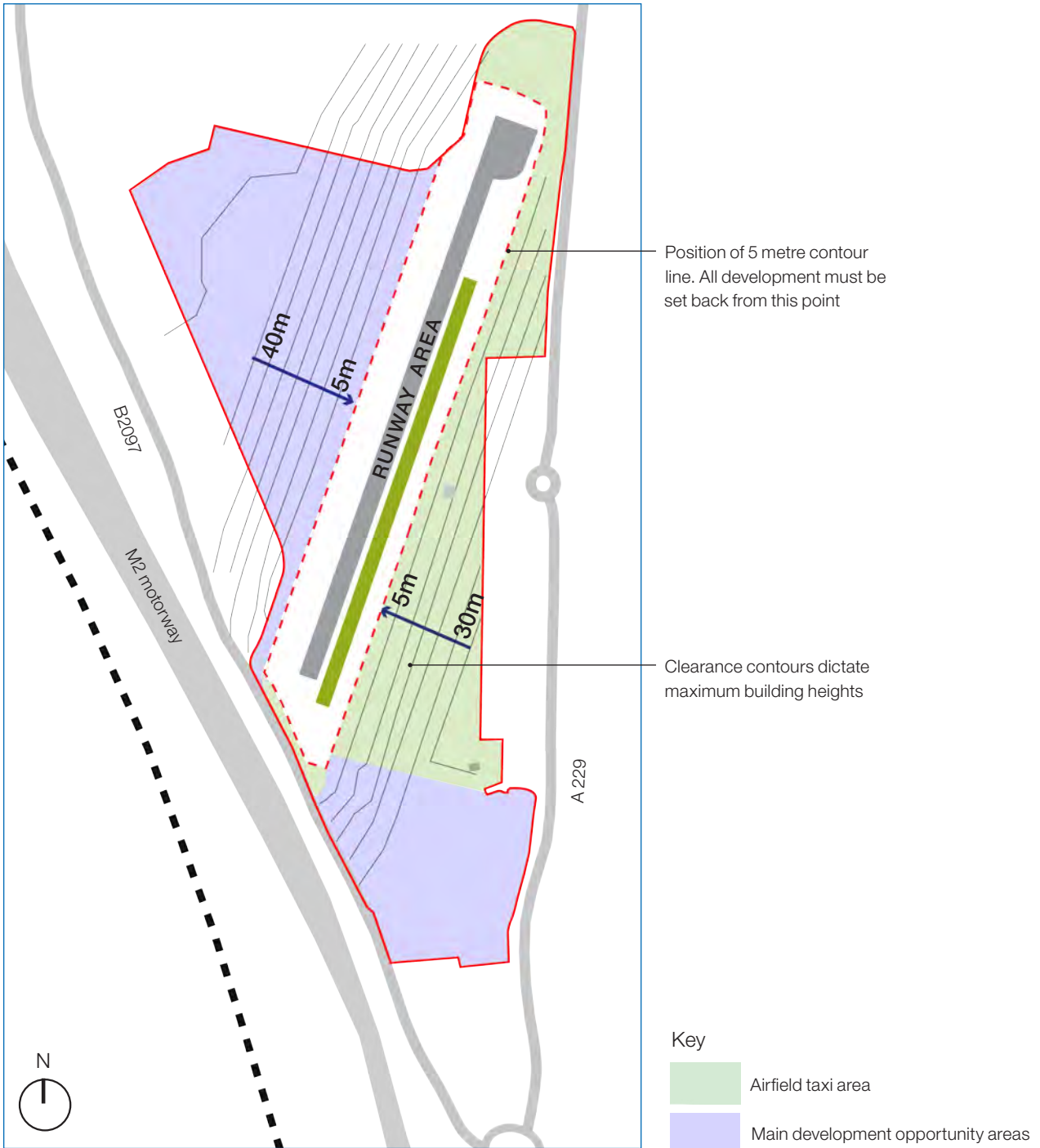


Figure 3.5: Safeguarding showing developable areas

4 Planning policy context

Introduction

4.1 The planning authorities for the airport are Medway council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough council (TMBC). As landowner, Medway liaises closely with TMBC on airport-related issues. The planning policy context for the masterplan area is set by:

- the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- the saved policies of the Medway Local Plan (2003);
- the Medway Local Development Framework (LDF) Submission Draft Core Strategy (2012);
- the Tonbridge and Malling council Core Strategy (2007); and
- the Tonbridge and Malling Development Land Allocations DPD (2008).

4.2 In addition, the following documents are of relevance to the masterplan:

- the Medway Economic Development Strategy for 2009 – 2012; and
- the Medway Employment Land Review Consolidation Study 2010.

4.3 The Draft Core Strategy's overall spatial vision includes reference to Rochester Airfield, and envisages it as a technology and knowledge hub. The most relevant policies are therefore centred around economic development at both the local and national level.

Economic development

4.4 The introduction to the economic development chapter of the Submission Draft Core Strategy states that the immediate strategy must be about creating the right conditions for future growth and taking advantage of specific local opportunities on offer. BAE Systems at the airfield is recognised as one of the 'specific local opportunities' and the Draft Core Strategy states:

"BAE Systems at Rochester Airfield. This is by some way the area's largest private sector employer and the company is a global leader in its field. The company itself has identified opportunities for spin-off activities and land is available to

develop complementary operations. This could create an economic 'cluster' of considerable significance. Future commercial development should be concentrated on advanced manufacturing and software engineering to foster growth in these sectors."

4.5 The draft policy CS17: Economic Development states that the 'council particularly recognises ...the continuing opportunities at, and in close proximity to, Rochester Airfield to develop a technology and knowledge based cluster.'

4.6 The policy approach set out in the Draft Core Strategy accords with NPPF in relation to building a strong, competitive economy, particularly:

- the requirement in paragraph 20 for local planning authorities to plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century; and
- the requirements in paragraph 22 to: set out a clear economic vision and strategy: identify strategic sites for local and inward investment to meet anticipated needs over the plan period; and plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries.

4.7 The Medway Employment Land Review Consolidation Study identifies the amount of land and floorspace required to provide for 21,500 jobs up to 2026. This study was commissioned before the Core Strategy plan period was extended to 2028 and the jobs target is now lower. The land and floorspace figures therefore need to be reviewed. For the moment, the requirements for the 'M2 Access Sub Area' are set out as 183,747 square metres (sqm) on 32.25 hectares of land. There is sufficient floorspace overall to meet the identified employment requirements. However, within the M2 Access Sub Area there is a deficit of potential employment land of some 134,000 sqm. From a planning perspective, therefore, land at Rochester airfield is important to meeting the M2 Sub Area's need for employment land.

4.8 Chapter 10 of the Draft Core Strategy sets out area policies. In relation to Rochester, however, the potential employment sites identified in Table 10.5 of the Core Strategy do not include the airfield. As the land requires the reconfiguration of the airfield to become available for development, it has not yet been included as delivery remains uncertain until the Rochester Airport Masterplan is in place as a masterplan.

4.9 Medway council's Economic Development Strategy 2009-12 sets out its ambition, vision and strategic priorities for Medway's economic growth. Rochester Airport's future development accords directly with several of Medway's strategic economic priorities:

SP1 – sector development: This priority highlights a need to “*explore opportunities for inward investment that play to the area's particular strengths...*” and also “*promote sector-specific interests in relation to other priorities, not least Skills Development and Employment Space*”.

4.10 Particular strengths at Rochester Airfield include BAE Systems and the Innovation Centre. The potential for opportunities for growth that relate to these two existing uses are explored in the property market chapter of this report.

SP2 and SP3 – skills development / higher education: These strategic priorities identify specific actions to “*link skills development with proposed physical developments and related short and longer term job opportunities*”, and to “*Encourage much higher numbers of graduates to stay within the area, whether to establish businesses or seek employment*”.

4.11 Development of new commercial infrastructure aimed at producing goods and services that demand higher levels of skills will increase the opportunity to retain locally trained graduates from Medway's universities and Mid Kent College. A flexible masterplan can set a framework for a range of opportunities, including a mix of commercial and potentially some educational development.

SP4 – employment space: This strategic priority directly identifies Rochester Airport for future development consideration, recommending that an appraisal of the airfield and neighbouring sites is undertaken to identify any additional opportunities for employment space that do not prevent aviation use and are complementary to existing co-located businesses. This masterplan study provides this appraisal.

4.12 Tonbridge and Malling planning policy does not include specific policies relating to the airport. In terms of employment, the borough's Employment Land Review indicates that:

- B1 office requirements are expected to increase, but existing supply already exceeds this need (although this is concentrated at Kings Hill);
- B2 requirements are set to decline, and there will be surplus of land for this sector across the borough; and
- requirements for B8 are expected to increase. However, this is expected to be accommodated on existing sites that become vacant as B2 demand decreases.

4.13 The main thrust of Tonbridge and Malling employment-related planning policy is therefore around retaining existing employment sites. The Laker Road

Estate is identified on the Proposals Map as Safeguarded Employment Land. Those areas of the airport falling within TMBC's area are identified as 'Urban Areas' - Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy seeks to direct new development to these areas.

Transport and movement

4.14 The draft Core Strategy states:

“Facilities at Rochester Airport need reinvestment and upgrading and the current operator is working closely with the council to see how this might be achieved, while also ensuring that adjacent land can be fully utilised for employment purposes (see Economy chapter). Investigations are ongoing and it is expected that a masterplan covering both the Airport and surrounding land will be agreed in the near future.”

4.15 Draft policy CS24 states that “The council will continue to work with the operator of Rochester Airport to objectively consider the future of the general aviation facility, bearing in mind its co-location with a strategic employment opportunity.”

4.16 More generally, Policy CS24 of the draft Core Strategy sets out a series of actions in relation to the transport network. These include:

- The highway system will be proactively managed to minimise congestion, through the operation of urban traffic management and control systems, the development of a quality bus network and selective junction improvements in congestion/air quality hotspots.
- Car growth will be balanced by increasing the capacity, reliability and quality of public transport.
- Walking and cycling networks will be extended, catering particularly for local journeys but also sub-regionally, including in conjunction with new developments.
- All significant development proposals will be subject to an agreed transport assessment, which includes an assessment of the potential to encourage modal shift away from private car use.

Summary

4.17 This masterplan has been produced in order to meet the requirements of the above policies to secure high quality employment within the Rochester Airport area.

5 Design framework and guidance

Introduction

5.1 The purpose of this masterplan is to provide clear guidance on Medway council's aspirations for the future of the area, setting out parameters for the type of development that will be encouraged and supported. The development of the area is likely to take place over several years and, as such, it is important that the masterplan is sufficiently flexible to accommodate changes in market demand, transport modes and building technology.

5.2 This chapter provides a series of design framework plans that set out the key parameters for future development. These are:

- Land use;
- Access;
- Building heights; and
- Urban design.

5.3 The chapter also provides design guidance for buildings and landscape. The framework plans and the design guidance will be used to inform future detailed designs for each part of the overall masterplan. These detailed designs will go forward as planning applications, each supported by a Design and Access Statement (DAS). Each DAS must demonstrate how the proposals accord with the principles set out in this masterplan.

Land use

5.4 Figure 5.1 sets out the Land Use Framework Plan. This plan sets out the land uses that will be permitted within each parcel. Land uses not identified on the plan and below will not be permitted.

- A** B1 and/or B2 employment uses will be permitted. B8 will only be permitted if it is ancillary to predominantly B1 and/B2 development.
- B** B1 and/or B2 employment uses will be permitted. B8 will only be permitted if it is ancillary to predominantly B1 and/B2 development.
- C** The existing Innovation Centre (use class B1) will be retained.
- D** Mixed-use development that supports the employment function of the wider masterplan area is encouraged in this area. Development that comprises two or more of the following uses will be permitted: B1 employment, C1 hotel, ancillary A3 (restaurant or cafe) and A4 gym.
- E** Woolmans Wood currently operates as a successful caravan park. Should the landowners wish to bring it forward for development, B1 and/or B2 employment uses will be permitted.
- F** The refurbishment and / or redevelopment of existing airport buildings will be permitted. New airport-related facilities will be permitted. B1 and/or B2 employment uses that are ancillary to airport operations (eg aircraft maintenance) will be permitted.

Mixed-use development at the 'gateway' to the site where it is easily accessible to the public will be supported. Mixed-use development may include the following uses: A3 (restaurant or cafe) and A4 (drinking establishment).

5.5 Operational airfield uses will be permitted within the remainder of the airport area.

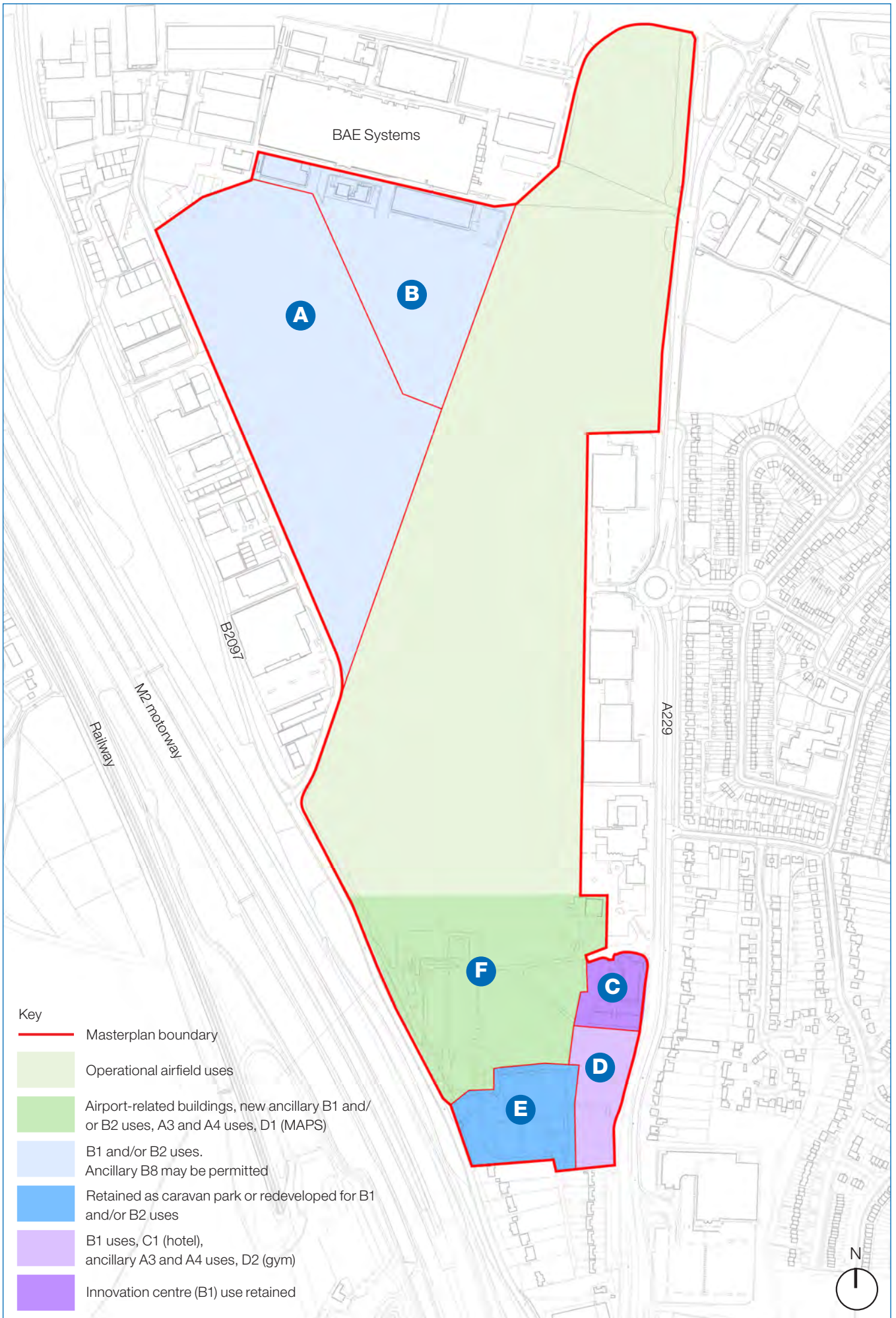


Figure 5.1: Land Use Framework Plan

Access

5.6 Access to the northern employment area (sites A and B) will be provided from the Maidstone Road, Rochester (B2097) via Laker Road and Lankester Parker Road.

5.7 A Transport Assessment (TA) will be required for planning applications in this area. The TA must assess traffic flows and junction capacity, and identify improvements if required. It is likely that the following junctions will require improvement:

1. Lankester Parker Way / Maidstone Road, Rochester
2. Laker Road
3. Laker Road / Rochester Road

5.8 Should the land leased to BAE come forward for development, the potential for a vehicular access to the masterplan area from BAE's land shall be explored.

5.9 Reducing reliance on the private car is important. There is an opportunity to create a dedicated pedestrian / cycle way alongside Laker Road. Together with improvements to the existing network north of the masterplan area, this has the potential to improve walking and cycling in an area that is currently very poor.

5.10 There is potential for working with the bus operator to improve services to the new employment area, including increasing frequency, improving bus stops and routing buses through the new development.

5.11 Should the Marconi Way access road be improved in the future, opportunities for a dedicated pedestrian / cycle route should be explored.

5.12 In addition to a TA, any planning application(s) must be accompanied by a Travel Plan. The Travel Plan should set out measures for reducing travel by private vehicle, including encouraging the use of public transport, car sharing, travel by cycle and on foot.

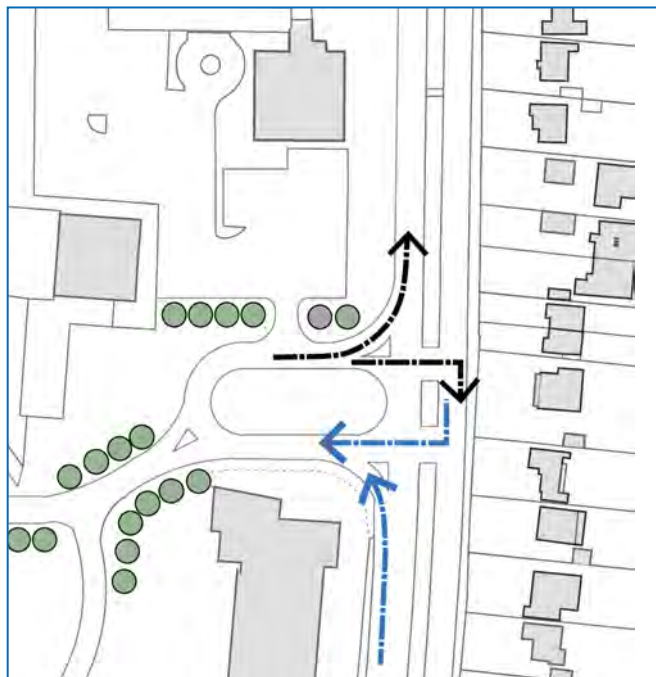


Figure 5.2: Illustration of potential junction improvements

5.13 Access to the airport and southern development area (sites C, D, E and F) will be provided from the Maidstone Road, Chatham (A229). The potential for improving this junction should be explored as part of more detailed design work for this area. Any planning applications must be accompanied by a TA and a Travel Plan.

5.14 Access to site D shall be provided via an access road along the western boundary of site C. This access road could be designed to provide future access to site E, should it come forward for development.

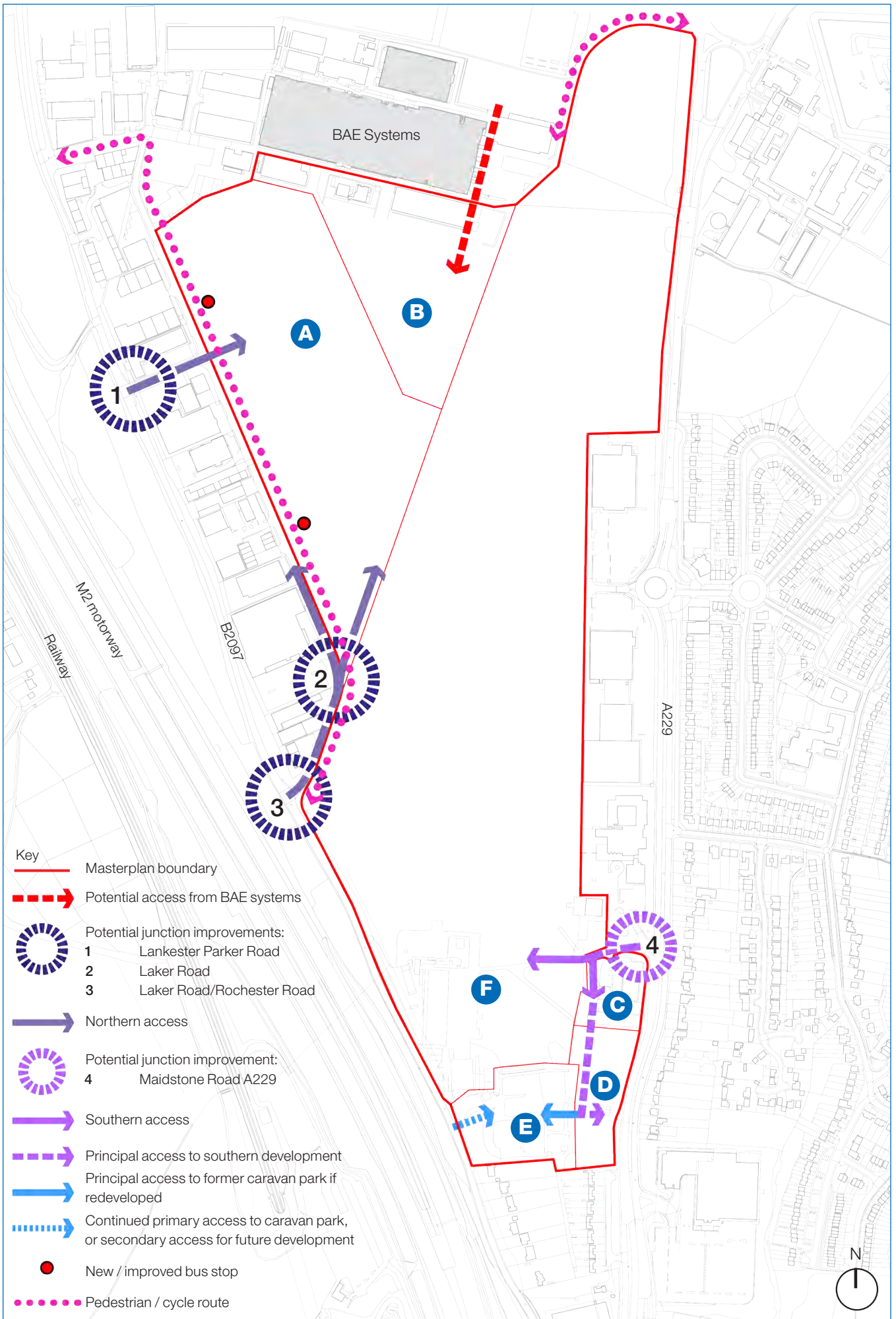


Figure 5.3: Access Framework Plan

Building heights

5.15 Detailed design of buildings and other structures will be established at planning application stage. Figure 5.4 opposite sets out the maximum heights that will be permitted for buildings in the masterplan area.

- A** Maximum building height normally two storeys. Up to four storeys permitted subject to:
 - B** ■ airport safeguarding considerations; and
 - urban design justification - i.e. fulfilling requirements to create a landmark building in a specific location.
- C** The existing Innovation Centre (use class B1) will be retained.
- D** Maximum building height three storeys. Relationship to a residential dwellings to the south of the site must be carefully considered and provide a suitable open gap.
- E** Maximum building height normally two storeys. Three storeys permitted subject to satisfactory relationship to adjacent residential dwellings.
- F** Maximum building height three storeys subject to airport safeguarding considerations.
- F** Height to be determined by operational requirements and airport safeguarding considerations.

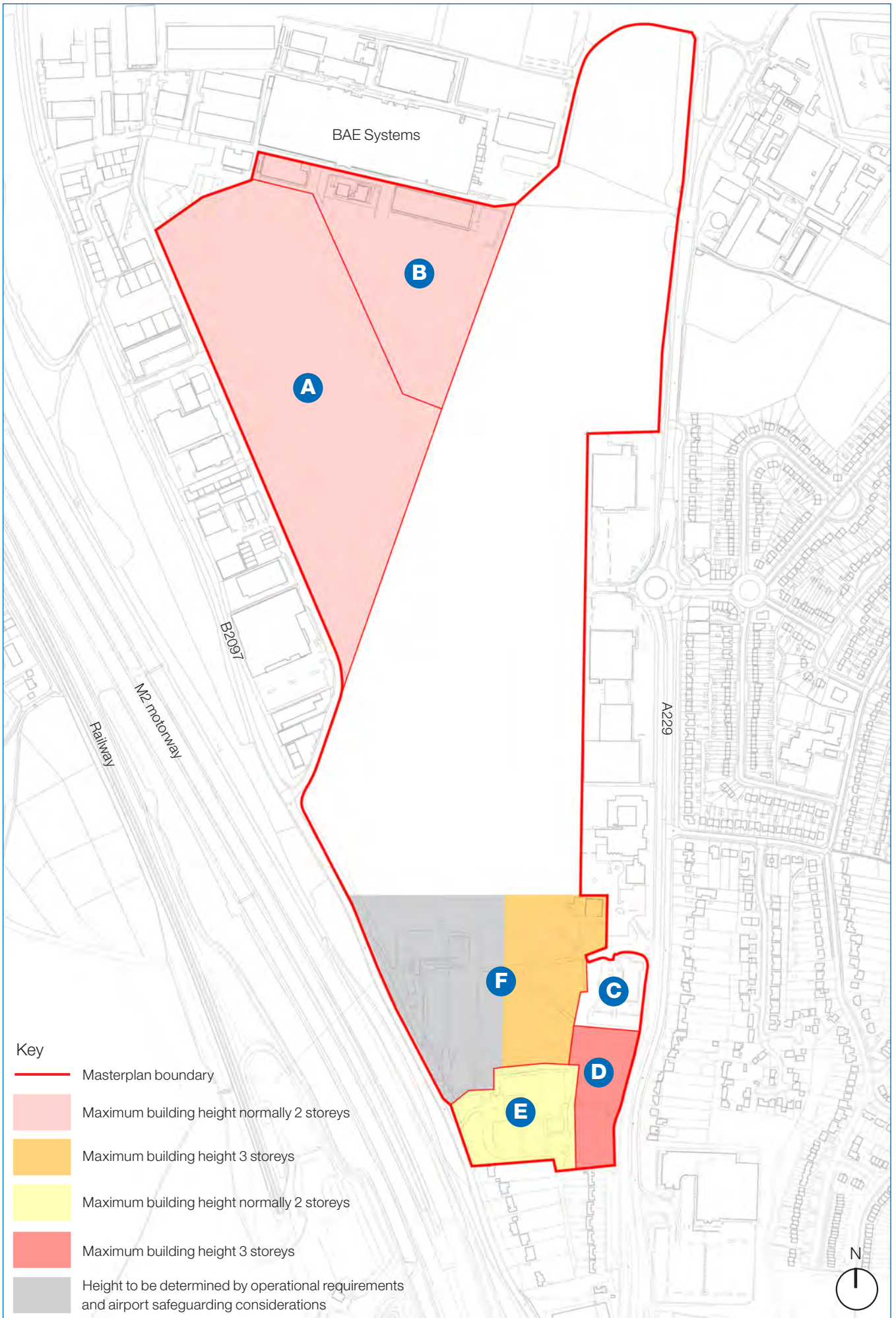


Figure 5.4: Building Heights Framework Plan

Urban design

5.16 There is an opportunity for new development to create a distinctive, high quality employment-focussed 'quarter' that improves the character of the area. Figure 5.5 sets out the key urban design principles that new development will be expected to incorporate, and these are explained below.

Northern area

- The key gateway from Laker Road must be designed to give a high quality approach to the employment area. Buildings and landscape must be designed as a coherent whole, so that the views northwards are of attractive buildings set within a green landscape. Tree planting along the new access road will help to reinforce the importance of this access.
- There is an opportunity to create a dedicated pedestrian/ cycleway along the Laker Road frontage. The landscape and route should be designed together.
- Key building frontages within this gateway area must be designed to respond appropriately and positively to the views into the area.
- Laker Road must be given a strong, positive character that upgrades the existing setting by:
 - creating a green landscaped strip along the eastern side of Laker Road, incorporating tree planting at regular intervals; and
 - locating new development so that buildings positively address Laker Road and frontages are set back a consistent distance for the whole length of the road.
- The road leading into the development from the Lankester Parker Way / Laker Road junction is an important access point, and must be designed so that it is perceived as a major access. This design approach must include:
 - designing tree planting into the street, so giving it a character and quality that contrasts with non-tree-lined streets. There will need to be designed to respect airport safeguarding height restrictions; and

- locating new development so that buildings positively address the road and frontages are set back a consistent distance for the length of the road until it meets the boundary with the land occupied by BAE.

Southern area and airport

- The gateway from the Maidstone Road, Chatham must be designed to give a high quality approach to the airport. Buildings and landscape must be designed as a coherent whole.
- Building frontages onto the Maidstone Road, Chatham must reflect the setback of the Innovation Centre, creating a similar positive relationship with the road.
- The wooded character of Woolmans Wood must be maintained. If any trees forming part of a TPOd group are proposed to be removed, a landscape plan shall demonstrate how this loss would be compensated through new planting.

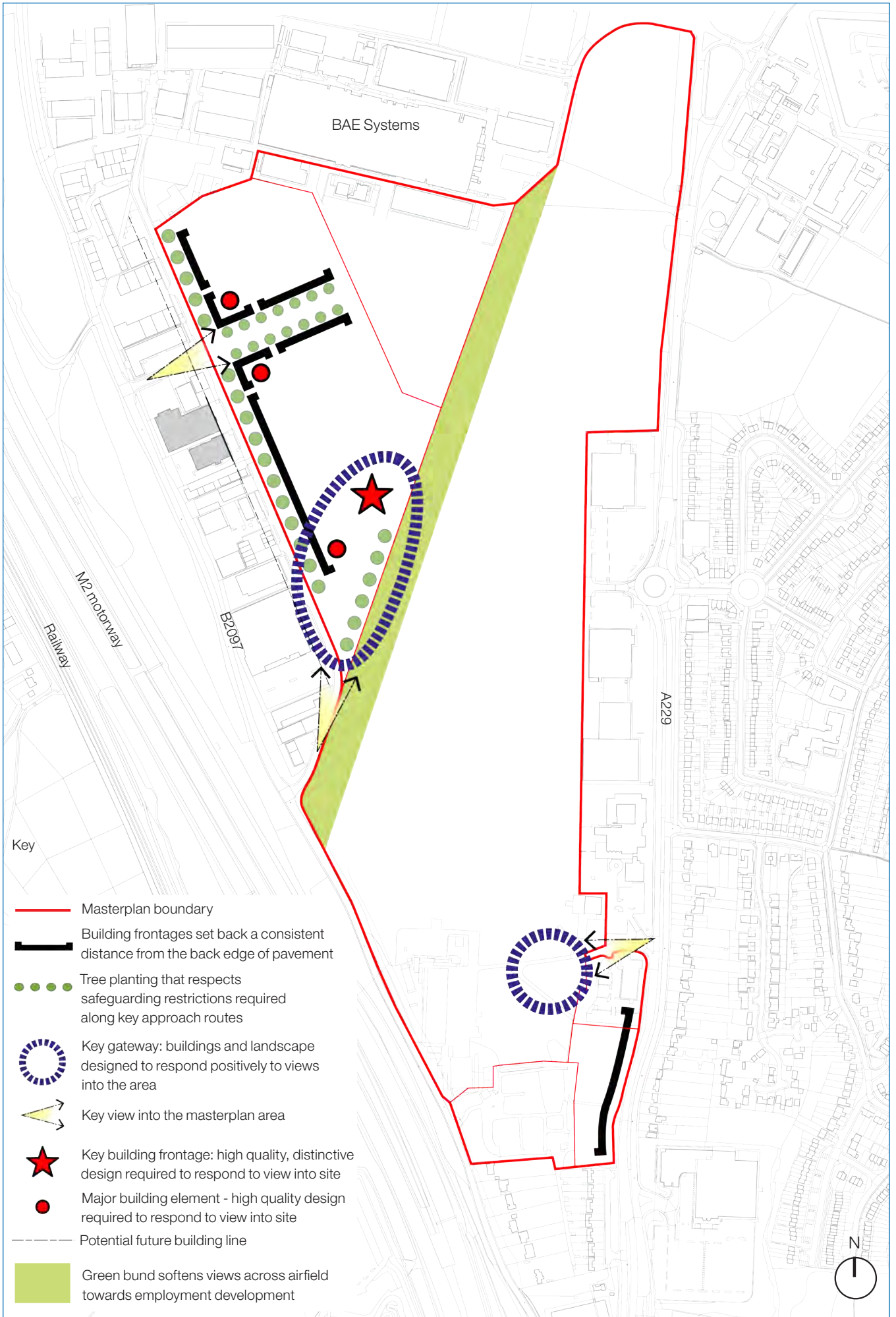


Figure 5.5: Urban Design Framework Plan

Design guidance

5.17 As set out above, the masterplan will not be developed in one go, but will be built out over time. The northern employment area, in particular, will be constructed in a series of phases. A consistent and coherent approach to the design of buildings, streets and spaces is important to achieving a high quality employment quarter.

Northern employment area

5.18 This section provides guidance for the northern employment area that focuses on:

- consistency of building frontages;
- consistency of height;
- materials and signage;
- landscape;
- street hierarchy and design; and
- parking and servicing.

5.19 **Consistency of building frontages:** The most important way of achieving a coherent layout is to design buildings so that the frontages are set back a consistent distance from the back edge of pavement. Secondly, building frontages must be designed to positively address the street that serves them. This means that:

- buildings should be setback a consistent distance from the back edge of the footway for the entire length of the street. This setback distance may vary between streets of different types within the overall layout;
- building fronts should face the street that serves them, with windows and a main entrance fronting onto the street. The rear of buildings must not address the street;
- wholly blank elevations to the street must be avoided - some windows and doors are essential;
- the setback from Laker Road is especially important to creating a high quality first impression to the employment area. The setback must accommodate a linear row of tree planting in a grass verge of similar vegetation and a pedestrian / cycle route.



Figure 5.6: Strong tree planting along the Laker Road frontage as in this example is important to create a high quality 'first impression'. NB: Height will need to respect airport safeguarding restrictions.



Figure 5.7: Above and left: Consistent building heights help to give a coherence even though materials vary.



Figure 5.8: Breaking the general maximum height is appropriate for 'landmark' buildings in specific locations.

5.20 **Consistency of height:** Figure 5.4 sets the maximum height parameters for each part of the Masterplan area, with the height within the northern employment area normally being two storeys. The following principles apply:

- single storey buildings will be permitted, but these must be located so that they form a coherent group;
- single storey buildings must not be randomly located amongst two-storey buildings;
- single storey buildings should not normally be located on key viewlines into the site. Where they are located on key viewlines, the buildings shall incorporate a two storey element specifically designed to respond to the viewline; and
- buildings higher than the normal two storeys will be permitted only where they perform a clear urban design function - for example, a cluster of three storey buildings defining a key junction of major streets.

5.21 **Built form, materials and signage:** Employment buildings are essentially simple rectangular buildings. However, there is a risk that very simple buildings are (i) monotonous in appearance; and (ii) difficult to understand - where exactly *is* the main entrance? Built forms that help to create richness and variety are encouraged, for example:

- defining the main entrance through the use of projecting bays and a change in materials;
- creating a vertical rhythm that breaks down the bulk of an otherwise large building - for example, by expressing the vertical structure that underpins the building; and
- creating strong corner elements that respond to viewlines.

5.22 Using a reasonably limited palette of materials can help support the coherence created through consistent building lines and carefully considered heights. Materials that endure over time (such as brick) are generally preferred. However, it is recognised that lightweight cladding is often appropriate to employment buildings. Where such lightweight materials are used, roof overhangs need to be carefully considered so as to ensure that cladding is protected and is not adversely affected by rainfall - i.e. overhanging roofs are preferred.



Figure 5.9: Building designed to respond to its corner location.



Figure 5.10: Different approaches to creating richness. Above: a clear corner and defined entrance. Right: vertical rhythm creating by projecting bays and a change in materials.



Figure 5.11: A limited palette of materials helps create a coherent development.

5.23 A consistent, limited palette of materials should be used for groups of buildings along the same street. The palette of materials may vary across the site, but must be used in a controlled manner to create distinct character zones, avoiding a random visual appearance.

5.24 Locations for company signage should be positively designed into building elevations, so that signs stuck onto buildings are avoided. The location of signage should normally be consistent across building groups. However, where a building is designed specifically as a landmark, its signage may vary from the buildings around it.

5.25 **Landscape and street hierarchy:** Good design of streets and spaces is critical to achieving a high quality employment hub. A key aim of this masterplan is to secure a development where the design of the streets helps (i) to promote a high quality identity; and (ii) people to understand where they are within the area and find their way around.

5.26 Figure 5.5 sets out the basic principles of the urban design framework, which seeks to:

- improve Laker Road through tree planting and consistent building frontages, so creating a high quality first impression; and
- create two key vehicular entrances, one from the corner of Laker Road and one from Lankester Parker Way.

5.27 The two streets that form the key vehicular entrances must be designed to look and function as the most important streets within the northern employment area - that is, be at the top of the hierarchy of street types. These streets must include tree planting to create distinctive boulevards that contrast with other streets in the area. This approach will not only create a high quality first impression but also help people find their way around the development - to use the urban design jargon, these two distinctive streets will help create a 'legible' place.

5.28 The area will include a large amount of car parking. Parking areas should be designed to be attractive by:

- avoiding large areas of tarmac, breaking up the surfacing with block paving or other appropriate materials;
- reducing the visual impact of parked cars through landscape such as trees and hedges; and



Figure 5.12: A The two main vehicular entrances must be designed as distinctive 'boulevards' that promote a high quality identity.



Figure 5.13: A The visual impact of car parking should be reduced - for example, through landscaping.



Figure 5.14: A Whilst the majority of car parking should be to the rear of buildings, it is helpful to locate a small amount of visitor and disabled parking at the front, along with cycle parking for visitors.

- creating clear, direct pedestrian routes through the car park to building entrances.

5.29 **Parking and servicing:** The location and design of parking and servicing areas can have a significant impact on the appearance of employment areas. The aim of this masterplan is to minimise the visual impact of car parking and servicing on the ‘public’ side of the buildings as far as possible by:

- locating the majority of car parking to the rear of buildings. Large areas of parking in front of buildings should generally be avoided;
- encouraging rear parking areas to be designed as positive courtyards that are shared by more than one unit;
- locating some visitor parking at the fronts of buildings and - where appropriate - on street so that visiting drivers can easily understand where they are meant to park;
- design delivery and maintenance areas so that they are to the rear or side of buildings, incorporating turning areas away from the main public ‘fronts’ of buildings.

5.30 The buildings onto Laker Road are unlike other buildings in this area, in that they need to positively front Laker Road but potentially will mainly be served from within the northern development. This means that they do not have clear ‘fronts’ and ‘backs’, and will therefore need to be designed to look two ways. Car parking in front of these buildings will be permitted, but must be well designed and landscaped to minimise the visual impact of parked cars and avoid a long, uninterrupted run of car parking. There are opportunities to locate servicing between the buildings.

5.31 Cycle parking for employees should be designed into the schemes. Cycle parking should ideally be provided within buildings. Where it is provided outside, it should be provided with a canopy and be well overlooked for security.

5.32 Cycle parking for visitors should be provided at the fronts of buildings. Such cycle parking need not be covered.

5.33 All buildings must include well-designed refuse stores that enable pallets and other refuse containers to be stored out of sight.

Existing employment buildings

5.34 The existing employment buildings on Laker Road are in a range of different ownerships. As and when proposals for improvements or redevelopment come forward, the council will encourage these to be in line with the principles set out for the development of the northern employment area. That is:

- where possible, buildings should meet a consistent building line as shown in Figure 5.5 on page 25;
- the heights of buildings should generally be two storeys. Where single storey buildings are proposed, two storey elements (e.g. a corner providing office accommodation) are encouraged;
- use a limited palette of materials that reflects the material used in the new buildings on the opposite side of Laker Road;
- design refuse and servicing areas so that they are to the rear or side of buildings - avoid locating them on the Laker Road frontage;
- where refuse storage areas are visible from Laker Road, screen them to minimise their visual impact; and
- continue the approach of locating the majority of car parking between buildings rather than in front of them. Design boundary treatments onto Laker Road to minimise the visual impact of cars and reflect the landscape approach on the northern employment area - i.e. include tree planting where possible.

Southern area and airport

5.35 This section provides guidance for the southern area and airport that focuses on:

- building lines along the Maidstone Road, Chatham;
- built form, materials and signage;
- landscape; and
- car parking and servicing.

5.36 **Building lines along the Maidstone Road, Chatham:** The Medway Innovation Centre is a very positive building, projecting a high quality image and identity. New development to the south of it should reflect its quality. As set out above, a consistent building line helps to achieve a sense of coherence - new buildings should therefore be setback the same distance from the back edge of footway as the Innovation Centre.

5.37 **Built form, materials and signage:** Whilst this masterplan does not seek to dictate the style of new buildings within the southern area:

- the Innovation Centre's palette of materials should be used as the basis for new buildings along the Maidstone Road frontage; and
- the scale and massing of the Innovation Centre should be reflected in new buildings.

5.38 Signage should be positively designed into building elevations, so that signs stuck onto buildings are avoided.

5.39 **Landscape:** the frontage onto the Maidstone Road should be designed to extend the same landscape treatment as adjacent to the Innovation Centre.

5.40 Any future development of Woolmans Wood should preserve the wooded character of this site.

5.41 A green bund shall be provided along the western boundary of the airport land. This must be designed to soften views towards the employment area from the east. The highest part of the bund must be below five metres.

5.42 **Car parking and servicing:** Car parking and servicing must not be located between new buildings and the Maidstone Road. As with the existing Innovation Centre, parking to the sides of buildings is permitted so long as landscape is designed to minimise its visual impact on the Maidstone Road frontage.

5.43 **Airport gateway:** There is an opportunity for redevelopment of the airport to create a welcoming public gateway to the airport. This could include relocating the Medway Aircraft Preservation Society (MAPS) and including new uses such as a cafe / restaurant. High quality buildings that reflect the site's historic and current use as an airport will be welcomed.

6 Illustrative masterplan

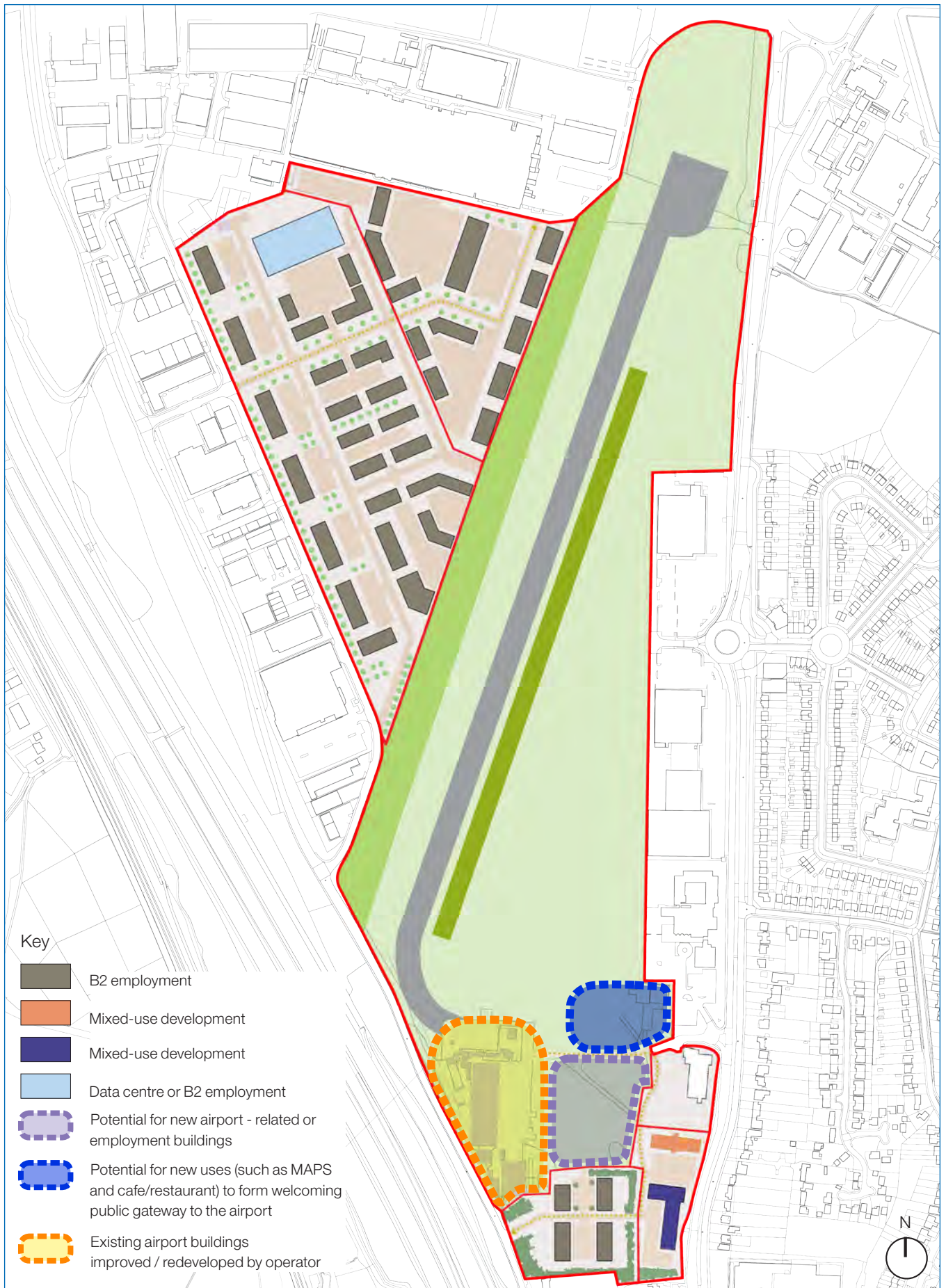


Figure 6.1: Illustrative masterplan

