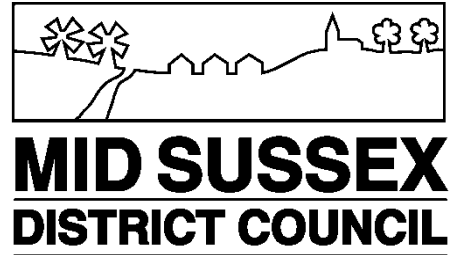


**Mid Sussex
District Council**



Site Allocations DPD

MSDC-02e: Matter 5 - Local Economy

14th May 2021

Matter 5 - Are the policies to manage and promote the Local Economy and Employment Areas and Allocations sound?

5.1 SA9: Science and Technology Park

*Policy SA9 allocates land for a **new science and technology park**; it is located to the north of the A2300, whereas the District Plan policy DP9 is for a high-quality business park to the south of the A2300.*

*(i) Is there a **compelling economic case** for the implementation of this scheme?*

MSDC Response

- 1.1. One of the four aims of the Sites DPD, as set out in the Executive Summary [DPD1, page 4] is to “allocate a site for a Science and Technology Park west of Burgess Hill in line with policy requirements set out in District Plan policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development”. District Plan policy DP1 therefore sets the broad location for the Science and Technology Park with proposed policy SA9 refining it to a specific site within the broad location.
- 1.2. The economic justification for both the principle of a Science and Technology Park, and the location “west of Burgess Hill” was evidenced and examined during the preparation of the District Plan. As summarised in MSDC-01 (1.1), the identification of a Science and Technology Park within the District Plan was based on a number of factors:
 - The identification of this location within Coast to Capital’s Local Enterprise Partnership’s “Strategic Economic Plan” (2014) which recognised the positive impact on the wider region and beyond.
 - The need to deliver the Council’s objectives for economic growth; desire to provide potential for high GVA jobs in a location which contains a highly skilled and educated workforce, to reduce out-commuting; and encouraging high quality development of land and premises to meet the needs of a 21st century businesses and supporting the development of knowledge clusters and high-tech industries.
 - The adjacent allocation of 3,500 dwellings at the Northern Arc – therefore providing significant employment opportunities in close proximity to the Council’s largest strategic allocation within the District Plan
 - The findings of the Burgess Hill Employment Sites Study [E3] which concluded the potential, feasibility and market for a Science and Technology Park of this scale in this location.
- 1.3. These factors are still relevant, and no evidence suggests otherwise – the conclusions of the Burgess Hill Employment Sites Study are still valid and the Northern West Sussex EGA Update [E2, para 10.57-10.59] commented on its function.
- 1.4. The Council has demonstrated its strong ambitions for economic growth by promoting the Science and Technology Park within the District Plan. The delivery and implementation of the Science and Technology is an aim within the Council’s adopted Economic Development Strategy (2018). These ambitions are now supplemented by the need to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 1.5. The refinement of the broad location to a specific site in SA9 will provide greater certainty, set out detailed policy requirements in order to seek and secure mitigation, provide certainty for those looking to invest in/occupy the site and support any future funding bids. It will therefore significantly support economic growth and recovery within Mid Sussex at a time when it is most urgently required.
 - 1.6. The Council is actively working with the promoter of SA9. This has included detailed discussions related to highways mitigation (see response to (v) below), phasing, branding & marketing and initial discussions related to delivery (such as information/processes required to support future planning applications including the potential for a Planning Performance Agreement).
 - 1.7. The site promoter's response to the Regulation 19 consultation [#688 – Vail Williams] contains a Positioning Document setting out further details on Market Demand (section 12), Target Occupiers (section 13), Target Occupying Sectors (section 14) and Market Testing (section 15). This is in addition to details provided to the Council during the site selection process [SSP4, Appendix 2]. The site promoter will also respond in more detail within their own statement to this question (a Statement of Common Ground will be prepared on this matter).
 - 1.8. The Council is therefore satisfied that the site promoters are equally confident of there being an economic case to deliver the scheme in due course, led by Vail Williams who have considerable experience of the local commercial market.
-

*(ii) Is the **changed location**, from the south of the A2300 in policy DP9 to the north of the A2300 in policy SA9, justified? Does the Council consider that policy SA9 is consistent with policy DP9, or does it consider that policy SA9 supersedes policy DP9?*

MSDC Response

- 1.9. The location of the Science and Technology Park has not changed and was never located 'south' of the A2300. The 25 hectares south of the A2300 referred to in DP9 is a separate allocation for a Business Park. The proposed science and technology park location has not changed since adoption of the District Plan. Policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development which identified a broad location "to the west of Burgess Hill" for a Science and Technology Park. The location set out in SA9 is within this broad location. The Council's response to ID-01 [MSDC-01, Q1.1] sets out a detailed explanation of how the Science and Technology Park proposal (SA9) relates to the District Plan.
- 1.10. Policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development refers to two specific employment allocations:
 - 25ha of land as a high-quality business park at Burgess Hill to the east of Cuckfield Road – this is also referred to in DP9: Strategic Allocation to the north and north-west of Burgess Hill i.e. "the Northern Arc". The predominant purpose of this site is to meet local needs and includes E(g), B2 and B8 uses.
 - The development of a Science and Technology Park broad location to the west of Burgess Hill. The broad location is now being refined to a specific site in Sites DPD policy SA9. The predominant purpose of this site is to meet local, sub-

regional and regional needs restricted to uses that conform with the definition of a Science and Technology Park (as defined in DP1 and SA9)

1.11. Site Selection Paper 4 [SSP4, para 2.4-2.9] explains that the 25ha site is made up of two elements:

- **15ha** on a site named “The Hub”, which is partly complete and occupied with planning applications in place to deliver the rest¹.
- **10ha** at the Northern Arc strategic development.

1.12. SSP4 explains that the approved Masterplan for the Northern Arc concluded that it was only possible to bring forward 4ha of employment land within the site as opposed to the 10ha previously planned for. However, monitoring has shown that the loss of 6ha has been met elsewhere (on sites that are now complete – Former Handcross Garden Centre, Handcross and Land West of Cophorne, Cophorne). Figure 1 below places the Science and Technology Park (DP1/SA9 – ~50ha), The Hub (15ha, part of the site referred to in DP1/DP9) and Northern Arc (4ha, part of the site referred to in DP1/DP9).

1.13. As demonstrated by figure 1 and explained above, the Science and Technology Park broad location set out in DP1/SA9 is separate, and in addition to the allocation in DP1 and DP9 for a high-quality business park. The Science and Technology Park allocation (SA9) is therefore consistent with DP9 and will not supersede it, as they concern two different things.

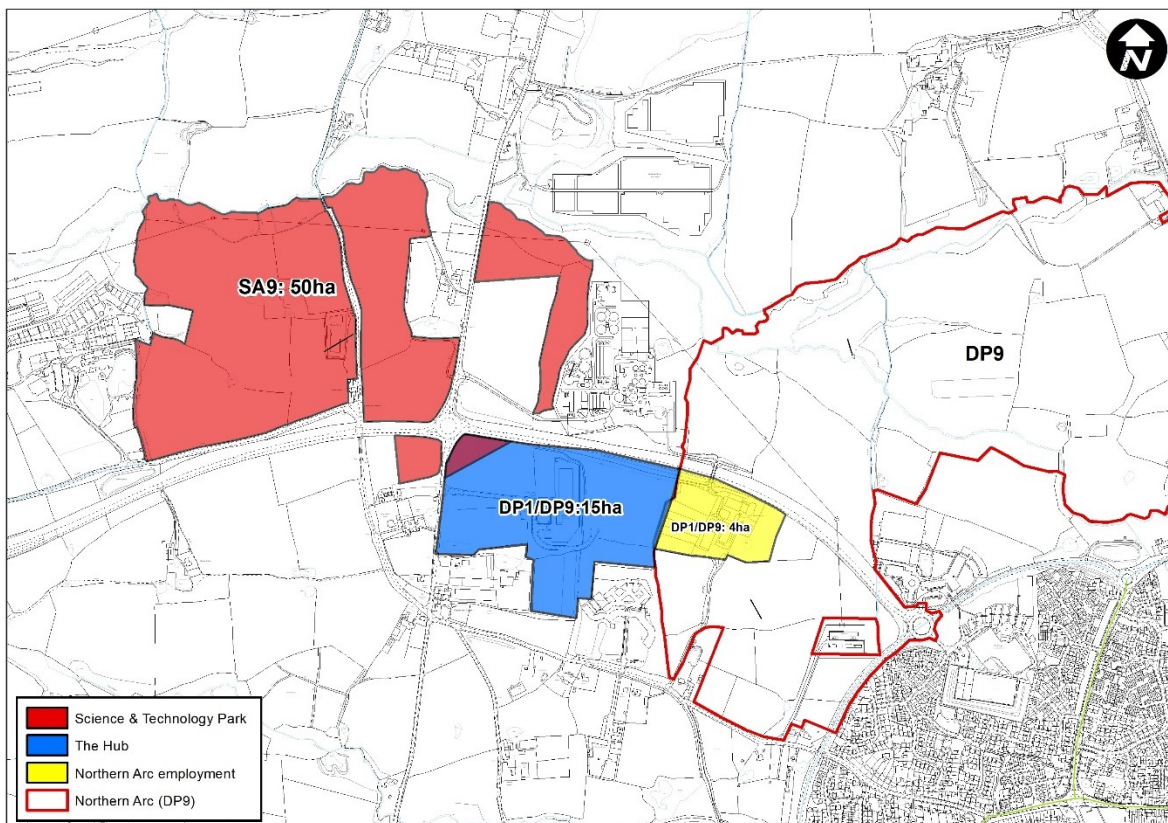


Figure 1: Comparison between DP1, DP9 and SA9

¹ Outline permission for whole site (DM/19/2641). Two plots complete and occupied. REM granted (DM/20/4546) for one of the four remaining plots.

*(iii) Is the recent economic downturn in the **Crawley/Gatwick** area a strong argument for proceeding more cautiously, with a significantly smaller scheme, say closer to the proposed size in policy DP9?*

MSDC Response

- 1.14. There is no clear evidence that any economic downturn in this areas will be sustained in the medium term and Gatwick have recommenced work on airport expansion, influenced by the High Court decision on expansion at Heathrow.
- 1.15. In additional as noted in Q5.1(ii), the Science and Technology Park broad allocation (DP1) and specific allocation (SA9) is different and separate to the high-quality business park proposed in DP9.
- 1.16. The evidence base supporting the Science and Technology Park, including size and location justification which was established within the adopted District Plan, refers to an approximate 50ha site which is capable of containing 100,000m² of employment floorspace supporting a minimum of 2,500 jobs. It is this scale of development that is supported in the Coast to Capital Strategic Economic Plan, recognising the positive impact a site this size would have within the region. It is this scale that is being promoted by the site promoter.
- 1.17. In addition, the Government’s “Build Back Better” plan for growth (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth-html>) identifies the following sectors and technologies that will shape the UK’s future. These are:
- Life sciences
 - Digital and creative industries
 - Clean energy
 - Fintech
 - Defence and security
- 1.18. These are the types of sectors which are appropriate for a Science and Technology Park and will help support a future high growth and sustainable and secure economy.
- 1.19. Infrastructure to stimulate economic growth and recovery in Burgess Hill is progressing at pace and has been designed to support the proposals outlined in policies DP1, DP9 and SA9. A gigabit capable superfast fibre network is nearing completion, allowing ultrafast connectivity. The network will connect Digital and Technology businesses in Crawley and Brighton, with a new innovative Digital Exchange being created locally. The network has been funded by the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport with full support from the District Council. This exciting project will be incredibly attractive to businesses in the sectors likely to occupy the Science and Technology Park.
- 1.20. As with all employment allocations and permissions, delivery is subject to favourable market conditions and finding likely occupiers. The Positioning Statement provided by the site promoter [SA9.1, page 33) indicates the phasing for this site. It anticipates 0-2 years for phase 1, and a 2-3 year roll out for each subsequent phase – 5 phases in total. This will align with market demand and requirements. Therefore, development will proceed in phases to reflect market conditions and be able to tailor each phase to

attract interested occupiers at each stage. The Council agree that this is a sensible approach given economic cycles and recovery following Covid-19.

- 1.21. At present, the full impact of Covid-19 on the national, regional and local economy is not known in full detail. This will be investigated in more detail during the District Plan Review process which has commenced. However, it is recognised that the Science and Technology Park allocation is a long-term ambition which will not only provide for economic growth opportunities during the nation's economic recovery but is likely to deliver additional employment land post-recovery. The relative short-term impacts from Covid should not mean that these long-term ambitions should be scaled back or delayed.
- 1.22. The impact that the COVID pandemic has had on the aviation and associated industries is well documented. Passenger numbers at Gatwick fell by 78% in the year ended to 2020 and this has hit the airport and aviation related industry severely, particularly those industries that serve Gatwick and other airport related business operating in and around Crawley. However, the aviation industry will recover and Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) anticipate a return to pre-pandemic levels within 4 years. GAL's confidence in this is demonstrated by the recommenced work of the Northern Runway Project.
- 1.23. The Northern Runway Project is seeking the use of the current emergency runway on a full-time basis for departing aircraft. It is a National Infrastructure Project, and a Development Consent Order (DCO) will be sought for the scheme. GAL currently anticipate submission of the DCO to the Planning Inspectorate in Summer 2022.
- 1.24. The current economic downturn is short term, and recovery is anticipated during the Plan period. The allocation of SA9 will therefore enable and facilitate economic recovery in Mid Sussex.

*(iv) Are the impacts of an enlarged science and technology park on the **physical infrastructure**, e.g. drainage, flood relief (bearing in mind its location in a flood plain) and the gas network, justified?*

MSDC Response

- 1.25. The size and scale of the Science and Technology Park (SA9) is unchanged compared to the broad location identified in District Plan policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development. The Science and Technology Park: Potential Locations Assessment [E4] accompanied the District Plan and considered the impacts of each potential location on physical infrastructure.

- 1.26. In relation to the specifics of site SA9:

Drainage and flood relief

- 1.27. The site promoters for SA9 have commissioned a suite of technical assessments [SA9.1 – SA9.10] relating to key environmental considerations for developing the site. The Positioning Statement provides an overview of their vision and demonstrate that detailed consideration of the technical assessment reports has directly influenced the master planning for the site and indicative phasing.

1.28. A Strategic Drainage and Watercourse Assessment (SA9.4) has been undertaken to inform the indicative masterplan and scale of development. The report identifies that the River Adur causes flooding along a narrow margin along the northern edge of the site, which extends to 60m at its maximum; the majority of this area is within flood zone 3 with smaller areas within flood zone 2.



Figure 2: Extract from EA Flood Map [SA9.1, page 19]

1.29. The consultants' reports indicate that surface water and mitigation with appropriate design and layout can successfully address the areas of flooding. Opportunities for SuDs and Green Infrastructure as well as Ecological enhancement are also being considered and are addressed in the site promoter's Positioning Document and evidence base submitted as part of their representation [SA9.1 and #688 – Vail Williams].

1.30. Policy SA9 includes specific requirements to ensure the north of the site (within Flood Zone 2 and 3) remains undeveloped. It also requires a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment to support future planning applications. The Environment Agency [#713 – Environment Agency] responded to the consultation at Regulation 19 stage. They concluded that the Sites DPD is in accordance with legal requirements and is sound. In particular, they support the site-specific requirements in SA9.

Gas network

1.31. The site promoter has also developed a utilities strategy supported by technical evidence, provided by Charles D Smith Associates [SA9.12 and SA9.16]. They state that whilst it is envisaged that the implementation of sustainable energy principles will mean that natural gas is not the first choice for heating most buildings, there may be a requirement for some forms of warehousing and certain processes in laboratories where a supply of natural gas may be required. Their investigation includes an application to Southern Gas Network (SGN) to request a capacity check, providing flow rates for each phase and seeking confirmation of the point of connection to the network. SGN confirmed availability without network reinforcement and to identify a

connection point on Gatehouse Lane. No site-specific objections were received by SGN at Regulation 19 stage [#624 – SGN].

- 1.32. Since the Regulation 19 stage and in response to SGNs representation, the site promoter has undertaken further engagement with SGN to secure assurance that capacity exists and the proposed point of connection is acceptable; details of which can be found in the site allocation library [SA9.16].
- 1.33. The evidence submitted by the site promoter demonstrates the proposed quantum of development can be accommodated within the developable area of the site, avoiding developing within areas of flood zone 2 and 3. Their utilities strategy and investigation demonstrate that there is sufficient capacity without the need for network reinforcement and has established a point of connection close to the site.
- 1.34. The allocation of SA9 is therefore justified, with any impacts mitigated by policy requirements.

*(v) Is the impact of an enlarged science and technology park on **the highways network**, justified in terms of traffic congestion and vehicular and pedestrian safety; does the highways network need to be improved to achieve a satisfactory level of mitigation, and if so, is a highway/transport improvement scheme deliverable at the same time as the implementation of the proposal?*

MSDC Response

- 1.35. The scale of the proposed detailed allocation for SA9 remains the same as the broad allocation in the District Plan under DP1. Extensive work has been undertaken in support of the detailed allocation in the DPD to ensure the full extent of any transport impacts of the S&TP are understood, can be properly mitigated and the measures are deliverable.
- 1.36. As set out in the council's response to ID1 [MSDC-02] the Regulation 18 iteration of the Strategic Transport Assessment [T6] identified two junctions as being forecast to be 'severe', associated primarily with the Science and Technology Park (S&TP):
 - A23 / A2300 Southbound On-Slip, Burgess Hill; and
 - A27 / B2036, Ansty
- 1.37. The latest iteration of the Strategic Transport Assessment [T7] prepared in support of the Regulation 19 Sites DPD, identifies, and models proposed mitigation required to remove the severe impacts at the remaining two junctions. The mitigation primarily consists of widening to the A23 southbound to three lanes from A2300 Southbound Off-slip to B2118/Mill Lane Off-Slip and the model demonstrates there is an in-principle mitigation solution to address the impacts of the S&TP.
- 1.38. A Transport and Mobility Working Group, consisting of MSDC, West Sussex County Council (WSSCC), Highways England (HE) and the site promoter, was established. The Working Group have met on a regular basis to discuss and agree detailed mitigation requirements, including design options, extent and phasing in order to confirm feasibility and delivery of the proposed mitigation package. The Working Group signed a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) in December 2020 [DC17] which agreed an

in-principle solution exists and it sets out the approach to agreeing a final mitigation package (as updated in the May 2021 SoCG [DC26]). The agreed approach to determining a mitigation package prioritises sustainable travel measures, including a detailed Mobility Strategy which sets out extensive proposed measures and interventions to reduce reliance on the private car, followed by physical interventions (in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 108 and 110(a)).

- 1.39. Sustainable transport measures have been prioritised ahead of physical mitigation schemes in accordance with draft policy requirements for SA9 and SA GEN and NPPF paragraph 108. Where additional impacts remain, the site promoter has progressed with extensive traffic modelling to determine and refine the package of highway mitigation; details of which are set out at section 4.0 of the updated SoCG (May 2021) [DC26] and are focused around the Hickstead junction interchange (east and west), the A2300 and the mini roundabout at Ansty. The designs have continued to be refined in consultation with WSCC and HE and have undergone a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA).
- 1.40. In respect of the Ansty junction and the A2300 junction with the Northern Arc the outcome raised no safety concerns by the Safety Auditors and this work has been validated by both the Highway Authority and Highways England. In respect of the A2300/Cuckfield Road and site access design the minor safety issues raised have been addressed by the designer and an amended plan issued. This work is currently being reviewed by the Highway Authority. In respect of the A2300/A23 interchange the audit is undergoing review by Highways England.
- 1.41. There are three potential options for highway mitigation for the A23/A2300 junction.
 - 1) Lane-gain, within existing highway boundary
 - 2) Parallel-merge, within existing highway boundary
 - 3) Lane gain, using third-party land
- 1.42. Two of these (1 and 2) are contained within the highway boundary or on land within the promoter's control, however one of these (1) deviates from standard - the design has been through the rigorous Stage 1 RSA to Highways England's Road Safety Audit standard GG 119. Option 3 contains a small area approximately 1.5m in width (106m² area in total) adjacent to the eastern boundary of the A23. Option 2 is also being explored for the A23 which would not require a full lane gain to achieve the required capacity improvement, however this option is at an early design stage.
- 1.43. There are anticipated to be no barriers to physical delivery of the mitigation package, following completion of the current review process and the evidence base demonstrates that there is more than one potential option that could be implemented on the A23. The Council is satisfied that there is a feasible solution and that proportionate evidence to support an allocation has been supplied and agreed - the final agreed approach will be determined at planning application stage and in accordance with the policy requirements set out in SA9.
- 1.44. A further stage of modelling work has also been undertaken by the promoter to demonstrate the refined physical mitigation package effectively mitigates the impacts of the S&TP development to demonstrate a 'worst case scenario'. The target trip reduction, as set out in the Mobility Strategy has then been applied to the model outputs to determine the impacts on junction performance to inform the draft phasing strategy for the S&TP development.
- 1.45. The draft policy wording for SA9 requires an allocation wide masterplan and phasing strategy is approved as part of any application which shall include all the transport

mitigation required to deliver each phase and shall be developed in consultation with WSCC and HE.

- 1.46. The indicative phasing strategy for the physical mitigation package is set out at section 4.0 of the updated SoCG (May) [DC26] and identifies key triggers for the physical mitigation required to deliver each phase of development. The RAG table illustrates each element of the physical mitigation is split into 'zero mode-shift' and 'target mode-shift' (as agreed within the Mobility Strategy) to demonstrate when each element of the physical interventions would be required as a 'best' and 'worst' case; this would be influenced by the success of the Mobility Strategy and the background traffic levels at that time. The total mode shift would be monitored as part of the final phasing strategy secured through a detailed planning application to ensure appropriate mitigation is provided and to ensure the objectives of the mobility strategy are met.
- 1.47. The Transport and Mobility Working Group are continuing to progress with securing further transport evidence and demonstrate deliverable solutions exist to mitigate the highway impacts associated with the S&TP. The council is confident the evidence as set out in the updated SoCG [DC26] is sufficient to justify deliverability of the S&TP site. Some high-level cost estimates for construction of individual schemes have been undertaken by the site promoter and shared with the Working Group to inform viability and deliverability of the works.
- 1.48. The SoCG [DC26] refers high-level construction cost estimates for the physical mitigation to identify the deliverability and viability/affordability of the improvements. This, along with the associated evidence base developed in the lead up to the hearings, is more extensive than would be considered an "adequate and proportionate" evidence base in accordance with paragraph 31 of the NPPF and is more akin to that which would be required for a detailed planning application. However, in the interest of continuing a positive working relationship with HE and WSCC HA to frontload the application process and aid delivery, the evidence base has continued to expand and demonstrate the mitigation package is deliverable throughout each phase of the delivery of the S&TP.
- 1.49. To ensure the S&TP will have no unacceptable impacts on the road network, policy SA9 includes specific requirements seeking highways mitigation. The required phasing strategy will need to include measures to mitigate impacts on the Strategic Road Network and will require consultation and agreement by WSCC HA and HE to enable each phase to be delivered.

*(vi) Can the policy go beyond being aspirational and effectively deliver in **sustainable transport** terms, or is a heavy car dependency inevitable?*

MSDC Response

- 1.50. The Science and Technology Park proposal is accompanied by a Mobility Strategy which aims to achieve the overall mode-shift of 10%. It's location, adjacent to the district's largest strategic housing site of 3,500 dwellings and in close proximity to the district's largest town mean that there is confidence that the sustainable transport aims are deliverable.
- 1.51. Burgess Hill contains two train stations (Burgess Hill and Wivelsfield) on the London to Brighton mainline. Burgess Hill also benefits from a sustainable transport network which is currently being upgraded through a £21million, government backed

improvement programme called 'Place and Connectivity' which itself seeks to achieve a modal shift of 15%. The Place and Connectivity Programme aims to supplement and upgrade existing links between Burgess Hill and Wivelsfield stations, the town centre and the business park (DP1) and Science and Technology Park (SA9) in the A2300 area. This project is progressing well with individual schemes completed or nearing completion.

- 1.52. Policies SA9 and SA GEN require a hierarchical approach to providing transport mitigation:
- the first priority is to mitigate development impacts by maximising sustainable transport interventions
 - remaining impacts must then be addressed through physical mitigation measures.
- 1.53. This approach is in accordance with NPPF paragraph 108, and is fully embodied in the extensive transport work undertaken by the site promoter with the Transport and Mobility Working Group on the S&TP. The Transport and Mobility Working Group includes the Council, site promoter, West Sussex County Council and Highways England. The ongoing work by this group has resulted in the ambitious and detailed Mobility Strategy which has been agreed by all parties in a SoCG [DC17 and DC26].
- 1.54. As noted in the council's response to ID-01 [MSDC-01, paragraph 1.2), the Science and Technology Park is only 250m from the boundary with the Northern Arc development, the largest strategic allocation in the District Plan for 3,500 homes, which is currently under construction. The site is also adjacent to the 15ha District Plan employment allocation, 'The Hub' which is located on the opposite side of the A2300, adjacent to the southern boundary of the S&TP. It is in a sustainable location.
- 1.55. The location of the S&TP and the Hub, adjacent to the largest housing allocation in the District Plan, contributes towards meeting one of the Strategic Objectives of the District Plan, to provide opportunities for people to live and work in their communities, reducing the need to commute (Objective 8).
- 1.56. As set out in the site promoter's Positioning Statement [SA9.1] there are significant benefits and opportunities associated with being so closely connected with the Northern Arc development. There are multiple sustainable transport options which include pedestrian and cycle connectivity with the Northern Arc and the wider settlement area of Burgess Hill, linking in with bus and train connections via the town centre. The S&TP therefore contributes to the delivery of the Northern Arc urban extension and provides further opportunities to improve connectivity and enhance green links with the settlement.
- 1.57. The Mobility Strategy for the S&TP will also build on the work being undertaken for the Place and Connectivity Programme which is being delivered as part of the Burgess Hill Growth Programme. The Place and Connectivity Programme is a fully funded package of projects across the town, a number of which are already complete or under construction and are aimed at creating safe, direct and attractive walking and cycling routes and high-quality public spaces to encourage people to choose to travel by sustainable modes. The image below identifies the extent of the improvement projects across the town, associated with the Place and Connectivity Programme which was most recently consulted on during May and June 2020.

Place and Connectivity Programme

Public Engagement May-June 2020

Accessibility and connectivity improvements at:

- 1 Burgess Hill to Haywards Heath Greenways
- 2 Wivelsfield Railway Station area
- 3 Burgess Hill Railway Station area
- 4 Town Centre - Church Road / Church Walk
- 5 Town Centre - Western Gateway
- 6 Victoria Business Park
- 7 Townwide Green Links
- 8 Triangle Leisure Centre area
- 9 Bus Infrastructure improvements
- 10 Proposed cycle parking

Part of the BH Growth Programme

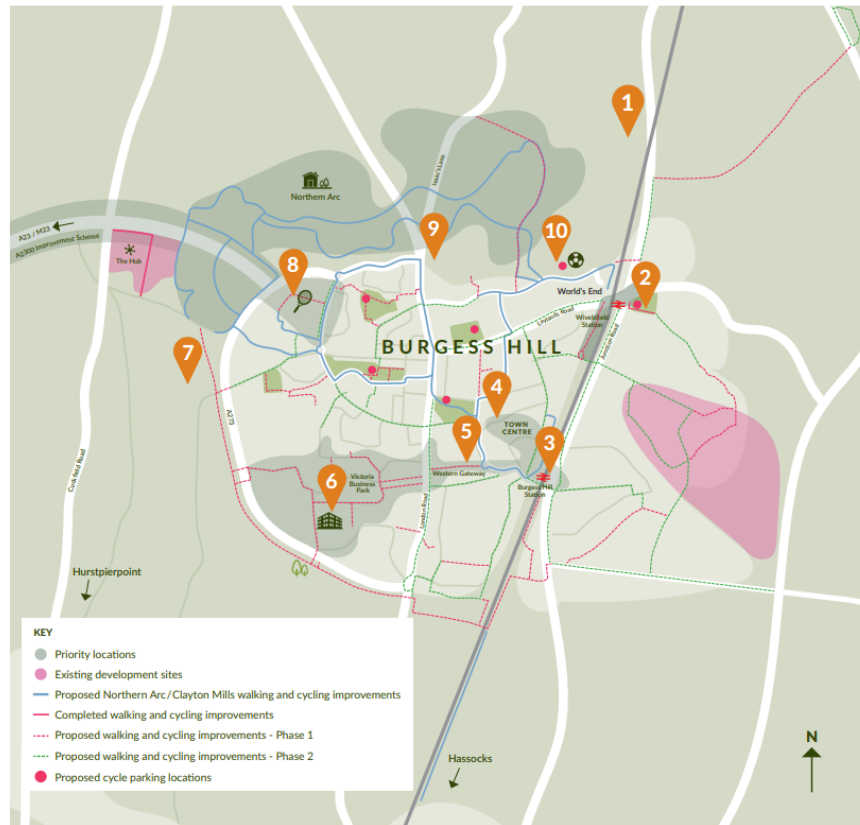


Image link: <http://burgesshill.net/perch/resources/02burgess-hill-map-a4-final.pdf>

Figure 3: Place and Connectivity Programme

1.58. The Mobility Strategy developed by the site promoter in consultation with the wider Working Group is far a broader and more comprehensive package of measures and initiatives than that which was modelled in the Strategic Transport Assessment [T7] which only assumed a 3% shift away from car in relation to the S&TP. The Mobility Strategy is based on evidence of a detailed understanding of predicted travel patterns of the future workforce from key origins to the S&TP. The Strategy identifies that targeting Burgess Hill (including the Northern Arc) will have the greatest impact on overall trip numbers and using effective demand management options, coupled with employee incentives, a target of 50% modal shift from Burgess Hill to the S&TP site and return has been demonstrated as realistic.

1.59. A Mobility Strategy includes a wide range of measures and incentives for non-car based travel and targets an overall mode-shift of 10%, as an average across the whole site, to sustainable modes. In addition, a site wide Travel Plan in accordance with paragraph 111 of the NPPF will be secured, as identified in the Mobility Strategy [SA9.11 paragraph 5.20 and 5.21] to promote sustainable travel across the site to will include additional incentives on a more bespoke level, focusing on the individual business/occupier requirements and operations. Monitoring of the success of the Mobility Strategy/Travel Plans would be secured at the detailed planning application stage to ensure the measures are robustly implemented and continued throughout the build and life of the development. As noted in response to 5.1(v) above, monitoring of the modal shift will also be necessary to inform the phasing of physical mitigation measures.

1.60. Monitoring of the success of the Mobility Strategy/Travel Plans would be secured at the detailed planning application stage to ensure the measures are robustly

implemented and continued throughout the build and life of the development. As noted in response to 5.1(v) above, monitoring of the modal shift will also be necessary to inform the phasing of physical mitigation measures.

- 1.61. The SoCG [DC17] and Council's response to ID-01 [MSDC-01, q1.4] provide further detail. Such measures include:
- Wide range of walking and cycling measures and infrastructure
 - Realistic and attractive incentives for non-car travel from the surrounding Burgess Hill area
 - On-site car club scheme
 - Bus service improvements – this is also supported by a bus viability study

*(vii) Are there any significant **environmental impacts**, resulting from this scheme and how can these be satisfactorily mitigated?*

MSDC Response

- 1.62. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) assessed two sites for the proposed S&TP against the 19 employment related criteria to determine the most appropriate site; the proposed location for SA9 and the location south of the A2300 which previously formed the only option for the broad location for policy DP9 of the District Plan. By virtue of the close proximity of the two locations (north and south of the A2300), the assessment conclusions in the SA and the site selection process [SSP2 – SSP4] were similar, with neither of the options highlighting any significant environmental impacts. However, there are several key criteria where there is a distinguishable difference between the two in relation to flood risk, ancient woodland and highways, where the proposed location for SA9 scored higher. Neither option identified any likelihood of environmental impacts that could not be satisfactorily mitigated.
- 1.63. Site Selection Paper 4 [SSP4] identifies through the more detailed site assessment stage, further information pertaining to 14 elements was sought from each of the site promoters. Elements 3 and 4 in particular sought to explore landscape impacts arising from the development and details of sites constraints and strategy for overcoming them.
- 1.64. The responses are contained at Appendix 2 of SSP4. The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted by the promoter for SA9 demonstrates that 4-storey buildings would have a limited impact on wider views. The master planning, supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal also demonstrates the development reflects appropriate densities and spaces between the buildings to respect the countryside setting whilst the topography of the site will ensure development is screened by existing mature landscaping and hedgerows.
- 1.65. The site promoter has continued to engage with the council and has establish an extensive evidence base in support of the proposed allocation. The promoter has undertaken a number of investigative assessments to determine the extent of likely environmental sensitivities associated with the site and have drawn on the findings to produce a detailed Positioning Statement [SA9.1 – SA9.9] and indicative masterplan. The indicative proposals demonstrate 40% of the site area is retained as green space, maximising green infrastructure and links to enhance connectivity. Initial drainage and flooding assessments have also informed the masterplan and demonstrate with the implementation of a drainage strategy, introduction of SuDs and Green Infrastructure, the quantum of development can be accommodated on site.

- 1.66. Draft policy requirements for SA9 set out site specific requirements for a future planning application to ensure the proposed development does not dominate the local landscape and to ensure matters including flood risk and drainage are fully addressed. These site-specific requirements are in addition to the requirements of SA GEN regarding environmental impacts and the overarching requirements of the District Plan. Any detailed planning application which follows the allocation in the Sites DPD, will be required to undertake further technical assessments to inform the planning strategy for limiting the impact on the environment.
- 1.67. The council are satisfied that the extensive evidence base produced in support of the proposed S&TP allocation demonstrates that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposal that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.
-

*(viii) Would the implementation of policy SA9 result in an **excessive amount of employment development in one location** and if so, would this be sustainable?*

MSDC Response

- 1.68. The response to Q5.(i) demonstrates the clear economic justification for a Science and Technology Park of this size and in this location. This evidence led to the broad location identified within District Plan policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development.
- 1.69. It is not the role of the Sites DPD to re-evaluate the principles that were agreed within the District Plan in relation to size, location and overall sustainability of the Science and Technology Park as these are already established. The role of the Sites DPD is to identify the specific site (within the broad location) for the Science and Technology Park and set policy requirements for its delivery.
- 1.70. The Science and Technology Park (S&TP) is approximately 48.75ha in size. The site promoter's Positioning Document [SA9.1] identifies over 100,000m² of employment floorspace and potential to accommodate a minimum of 2,500 jobs. This accords with the Coast to Capital Strategic Economic Plan (2014) which supported the Science and Technology Park, recognising its potential to impact positively on the wider region and beyond, supporting high end economic and business growth across the Coast to Capital and South East LEP areas. This quantum translated directly to policy DP1 and then to the specific site which forms SA9.
- 1.71. The implementation of SA9 would not result in an excessive amount of employment development in one location – the Coast to Capital Strategic Economic Plan, District Plan evidence base (e.g. Economic Growth Assessment [E1 & E2], Burgess Hill Employment Sites Study [E3] and Science and Technology Park: Potential Locations Assessment [E4]) all accounted for the size and location of the proposed S&TP and did not identify any issues in relation to its size.
- 1.72. National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 82 recognises the need for planning policies to address specific locational requirements of different sectors, including clusters of like-minded industries. Specific reference is made to creative or high-technology industries, which the S&TP is focussed on. The S&TP proposal recognises the need to cluster industries together, and to be successful and thrive, a critical mass is required. A site of the size proposed enables this critical mass to be achieved at the same time as making sufficient provision for ancillary uses such as

hotel/creche/convenience stores/café which enable networking and a degree of self-sufficiency. These types of uses may not be sustainable should the site not reach a critical mass.

- 1.73. The site promoter is confident that the site as proposed is sustainable and that there is sufficient interest and demand in the market to sustain it. The site is proposed to be delivered in a number of phases (5 in total) which will enable the site promoter to test the market at each stage and respond accordingly in terms of specific quantum, uses and specification for buildings.

(ix) Are there any implications from the new Use Class E (Commercial, business and service), which could influence the effectiveness or even justification of policies SA2-SA9?

MSDC Response

- 1.74. Changes to the Use Classes Order came into effect from 1st September 2020. The intention behind the changes is to provide greater flexibility for businesses to adapt and respond to unexpected economic challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic, with particular focus on town centres and high streets. The changes see the introduction of Use Class E, replacing previous use classes A, B and D and combining them into one class. Whilst on one hand this provides greater flexibility to move between uses (changes within the same class are not considered development, therefore planning permission is not required) there are unintended consequences which are relevant to the Sites DPD.
- 1.75. The employment evidence base supporting the District Plan and Sites DPD [E1, E2 and SSP4] is concerned with establishing the district's employment need. These calculations have historically been based on the forecast number of jobs in sectors related predominantly to uses B1: Business, B2: General Industrial and B8: Storage or Distribution. From 1st September 2020, class B1: Business has now been revoked and placed in Use Class E alongside other uses such as retail, nurseries and indoor sport.
- 1.76. Site Selection Paper 4 [SSP4, Appendix 1] sets out the district's employment land calculation, identifying a 10-15ha requirement based on anticipated growth in use classes B1, B2 and B8. It identifies a plan-period (2014-2031) requirement of 7.53ha for office use (B1).
- 1.77. The NPPF (paragraph 20a) requires plans to make sufficient provision for employment. The Sites DPD proposes allocations (SA2-SA9) to meet this requirement and refer to use classes B1, B2 and B8 within the policies themselves. The change to the Use Classes Order could mean that land allocated for office could be lost to another use within class E without requiring planning permission. This would mean that a genuine requirement for office space would not be provided for. The Council is satisfied that there is justification for allocating land for employment uses in order to ensure that employment needs are met.
- 1.78. The Council has suggested a minor modification (M01) to the Sites DPD to address this [DPD2]. This would involve removing reference to B1/B2/B8 and replacing them with 'Business', 'General Industrial' or 'Storage or Distribution' respectively. Alternatively, reference could be made to Use Class E(g) with respect to offices. This would enable specific uses to be sought on the allocated sites in order to meet the established need for such uses, and would therefore improve effectiveness in light of the recent use class changes.

- 1.79. Planning applications would be assessed against the requirements set out for each policy, in this case SA2-SA9. In addition to the policy requirement, it may be necessary in some cases to use conditions and/or planning obligations to place restrictions on uses within Class E, for example, by referring to Use Class E(g) with respect to offices.
- 1.80. With respect to policy SA9: Science & Technology Park, there are additional requirements with respect to uses. No reference is made to former use class B1 in this policy – instead uses must fall within the definition of a Science Park set out in the policy. The only reference to the Use Classes Order is that B8: Storage and Distribution would not be supported. This policy is therefore unaffected by the changes to the Use Classes Order.

*(x) Is the **impact of Covid-19 on the local economy** significant, and if so, is there a case for changing any or all of policies SA2-SA9?*

MSDC Response

- 1.81. The evidence base supporting the District Plan – the Northern West Sussex Economic Growth Assessment (2014) [E1], subsequent 2020 update [E2], and employment forecasts used for the Sites DPD [SSP4, Appendix 1] are based on pre-Covid data. However, it is important to note that:
- The overall impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is not yet known – any forecasts commissioned at this point are likely to be based on numerous assumptions and therefore may not be reliable
 - The Sites DPD plan period is to 2031, therefore allowing sufficient time for recovery and growth post-Covid
 - The allocation of employment sites within the DPD will contribute towards economic recovery and growth
- 1.82. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council published its Economic Recovery Plan 2020/21 [E5] to lay the foundations for economic recovery. Mid Sussex has historically been resilient to economic shocks such as recessions, the ERP notes that Mid Sussex had the lowest proportion of jobs in ‘shut down’ industries compared to the rest of West Sussex and ranked 247 out of 382 district for the impact on Gross Value Added (GVA) placing it amongst the 35% least affected districts.
- 1.83. West Sussex County Council’s “Business West Sussex – Impact of Covid-19 on the West Sussex Economy” (<http://www.businesswestsussex.co.uk/covid19snapshot>) provides a monthly snapshot of the impact of Covid. Mid Sussex has the lowest claimant count rate (Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit) in the County (3.7% compared to a West Sussex average of 5.6% and South East average of 5.4%).
- 1.84. As noted in response to Q5.2 below, of the 8 employment allocations (SA2 – SA9):
- Four (SA3 / SA5 / SA6 / SA7) have received planning permission, have submitted an application, or are at appeal
 - One (SA4) is engaged in seeking pre-application advice and is looking to submit an application
 - Two (SA2 / SA8) have submitted positive responses to the Regulation 19 consultation
 - One (SA9) is in constructive and continued engagement [DC26] and is in discussions with the Council regarding a Planning Performance Agreement.

- 1.85. Given the relative resilience of the Mid Sussex economy, the fact the Sites DPD is a long-term plan, and the continued support for the Site Allocations by site promoters – who recognise the demand within the market and the need for economic growth and recovery – the Council is confident that no amendments are required to policies SA2 – SA9 as a result of Covid-19.

5.2 Policies SA1 – SA8

Are policies SA1-SA8, for additional employment allocations, justified and deliverable, and are they sufficient to meet the needs of the District during the plan period?

MSDC Response

- 2.1. The Council considers the proposed employment allocations SA1-SA8 are justified and deliverable and are sufficient to meet the residual Plan needs during the Plan Period. The District Plan Review, which has started, will be the appropriate opportunity to review employment needs for the next Plan period, including how any unmet needs of the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) can be addressed.

Employment need

- 2.2. The Introduction to the Sites DPD Topic Paper [TP3] provides a summary of the residual requirement for employment. District Plan Policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development seeks to support economic growth within the district. Due to the increase in housing requirement during the District Plan examination, the Sites DPD presents an opportunity to assess the amount of employment land required as a result. Policy DP1 makes clear that the strategy for meeting employment needs includes the allocation of further sites within the Sites DPD.
- 2.3. Updated employment forecasts [SSP4, Appendix 1], commissioned by the Council to take account of the recent employment forecast statistics, identified that a total requirement of around 35 to 40 hectares of employment land is needed up to 2031. As 25 hectares employment land has already been allocated within District Plan Policy DP1, this leaves a residual requirement of 10-15 hectares to be allocated within the Sites DPD.
- 2.4. The Sites DPD also reflects changes in circumstances since the District Plan was adopted. This includes the reduction in proposed employment land at the Northern Arc (Burgess Hill) – originally allocating 10ha but reduced to 4ha, and additional employment land commitments since adoption (totalling 6.3ha) which make up for this shortfall. These are set out in detail within Site Selection Paper 4: Employment [SSP4].
- 2.5. In addition, District Plan Policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development identifies a broad location for a Science and Technology Park to the west of Burgess Hill, to support research and development and provide high quality employment for the wider area. The principle of the allocation within the District Plan and location itself was based upon a range of documents which assessed deliverability, market demand, feasibility and suitability. The Sites DPD seeks to allocate a specific site for the Science and Technology Park (SA9). The employment land and jobs generated by the Science and Technology Park are therefore in addition to the smaller scale allocations proposed to directly meet the District's local need and reflect the Council and Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP's) aspirations for economic growth.

Site selection

- 2.6. The Introduction to the Sites DPD Topic Paper [TP3] outlines the site selection process for the proposed employment allocations. A total of 18 employment sites were either promoted to the Council through the 'Call for Sites' process or identified as having employment potential in the SHELAA. The sites submitted fell into three broad areas:
- 'at Bolney Grange'
 - Around the A2300, Burgess Hill
 - 'Other', i.e. spread throughout the district.
- 2.7. The robust site selection process assessed the sites against the various criteria; Site Selection Paper 2: Methodology for Site Selection and Site Selection Paper 4: Employment Sites detail the process [SSP2 and SSP4]. The Sustainability Appraisal [SUS1] assesses the relative merits of the three broad areas and concluded that Bolney Grange and 'Other' were the most sustainable broad locations.
- 2.8. Following assessment against the site selection criteria and consideration within the Sustainability Appraisal, ten sites were considered suitable for allocation as employment sites. Four adjacent sites were combined to make one allocation (SA5), therefore, there are only seven sites allocated in the Sites DPD.

Policy SA1: Sustainable Economic Development – Additional Site Allocations

- 2.9. The Sites DPD Policy SA1: Sustainable Economic Development – Additional Site Allocations allocates six additional sites for employment use, plus expansion at Bolney Grange Business Park, totalling approximately 17ha. Detailed policy wording for each of the employment site allocations is set out in Policies SA2-SA8.
- 2.10. Policy SA1 supports employment development at the additional employment site allocations where:
- Proposals follow a comprehensive approach involving the community, local planning authority, development and other key stakeholders; and
 - Where development meets the requirements set out within SA GEN: General Principles for Site Allocations and the Policy Requirements (Policies SA 2 to 8) [...]; and
 - are in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

Regulation 19 representations

- 2.11. The site promoters for the employment sites have confirmed their support for the allocations in their representations:
- SA2 – West Sussex County Council [Representation ID number 1431]
 - SA3 – Hargreaves [Representation ID number 1482]
 - SA4 – St Modwen Developments [Representation ID number 654]
 - SA5 – London Town Property Holdings [Representation ID number 1656]
- 2.12. Those site promoters who did not submit a Regulation 19 representation have confirmed their support for the allocations through the information submitted to support the proposed allocations or through the submission of a planning application:

- SA3 – Extant planning permission and a further planning application submitted (DM/21/0831)
- SA5 – Planning appeal in progress on the grounds of the amount of TAD contribution to be included in the Section 106 planning obligation (DM/20/0521)
- SA6 – There is a resolution to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a satisfactory Section 106 planning obligation (DM/20/2640)
- SA7 – Planning application awaiting decision (DM/20/2332)
- SA8 – Information provided to support the site allocation [SA8.1-SA8.5]

2.13. In addition, SA4 has provided information to support the proposed site allocation [SA4.1-SA4.6] and has submitted a request for pre-application advice and this is in progress. It will help to inform the submission of a planning application.

2.14. All of this information for the proposed employment site allocations demonstrates the demand for and deliverability of the sites.

Summary

2.15. As demonstrated above, the robust site selection process and assessment through the Sustainability Appraisal has shown the proposed employment site allocations to be justified and effective. Meeting the residual employment requirement and ongoing engagement with the site promoters means the Sites DPD has also been positively prepared. The Council also considers the proposed employment site allocations to be consistent with national policy, in particular, paragraphs 80 and 81 of the NPPF [O3] and because the approach to the allocation of employment sites has been tested through the Sustainability Appraisal [SUS1].

Regarding policy SA3, given that planning permission exists for B uses, should the policy be amended to reflect this?

MSDC Response

2.16. There is an extant planning permission on proposed site allocation SA3. At the Regulation 19 consultation stage, the site promoter requested that the policy wording be amended to include reference to B8 Storage & Distribution use as allowed for by the extant planning permission [Representation ID number 1482]. The Council agrees to this change [C1.2] and has included it as a proposed minor modification [DPD2 – MM11].

2.17. As explained in the Sites DPD Topic Paper [TP3], a further minor modification is proposed for all the employment site allocations to take account of the recent changes to the Use Classes Order [DPD2 – MO1], specifically the new Use Class E for Commercial, Business and Service. However, as the employment requirement has been based on the anticipated forecasts in each of the three former use classes (B1/B2/B8) and these requirements need to be met (as opposed to being potentially 'lost' to other uses in Class E) it is suggested that a minor amendment is made to the Sites DPD employment allocations SA1 - SA8 (see response to Q5.1(ix) above). This amendment will ensure that specific uses are referred to in the policy requirements (e.g. Office, Business, Light Industrial, General Industrial or Storage & Distribution) rather than by reference to the Use Classes Order, to ensure that all forecasted need can be met.

- 2.18. The Council considers this to be a justified and effective strategy whilst being consistent with national policy.
-

Regarding policy SA4, is the proposed comprehensive landscaping scheme sufficient in its size, design and location to retain the strategic gap between Crawley and Copthorne? What is the response to suggestions that the entire area should be retained as open space with significant tree planting?

MSDC Response

- 2.19. The proposed site allocation SA4 was appraised favourably in Site Selection Paper 4: Employment Sites [SSP4] and the Sustainability Appraisal and, therefore, it is proposed for allocation as an employment site. The robust site selection process concludes that the site (SA4) is within the boundary of a mixed-use scheme (including 500 dwellings and employment land); the housing elements are under construction. The site represents an extension to the employment area currently proposed. The labour market is very strong due to its location adjacent to the A23/M23 and close proximity to East Grinstead, Crawley and Gatwick. The first of the two units within the currently consented adjacent employment land has already been delivered and Gatwick Airport Limited has taken a 15-year lease on it.
- 2.20. In addition to the requirements included in Policy SA GEN, the policy wording for SA4 includes a requirement to: 'Provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme for the site in order to create an appropriate setting and landscaped context for the new development. A landscape screen should be included on the southern boundary of the site to ensure it would not be dominant in the landscape'. The indicative plans and illustrative CGI views provided by the site promoter show a landscape screen (SA4.4, SA4.5 and SA4.6).
- 2.21. The site promoter's Regulation 19 representation [Representation ID number 654] acknowledges the need for landscaping and adds that:
- 'New planting in and around the park and around the building to complement existing vegetation will ensure that it does not appear dominant and help to screen it in views from the A264 and the site access road to the south and east'.*
- 2.22. There is no strategic gap between Copthorne and Crawley – this is an old Local Plan allocation that has now been superseded by a coalescence policy in the District Plan (DP13: Coalescence) and is therefore not marked on the policies map. The proposed site allocation is within the built-up area. The emerging neighbourhood plan for Copthorne does not refer to a strategic gap either. District Plan Policy DP13: Preventing Coalescence seeks to maintain the separate identity of settlements. The proposed landscaping and landscape screen will help to maintain the separate identity of Copthorne and retain the sense of leaving Crawley before arriving at Copthorne.
- 2.23. The original application for development for the wider site proposed to retain this site (SA4) as informal open space with planted trees. However, as mentioned above, this site is now within the built-up area boundary and no longer in a strategic gap. The proposed landscaping and landscape screen for the employment site allocation will help to mitigate any impacts and these will be assessed further at the time of a planning application.

2.24. The site promoter has submitted a request for pre-application advice and this is in progress. It will help to inform the submission of a planning application and it is considered that matters of landscaping can be addressed at this stage.

Should policy SA5 require a landscaping scheme to minimise the impact on views from the SDNP? Could the B8 element be met through the existing Hub site? Would this allocation contribute to the overdevelopment of employment land when considered in relation to the nearby Northern Arc?

MSDC Response

2.25. Bolney Grange is an existing industrial estate to the north of the A2300, between Burgess Hill and Hickstead. It is well established, with low vacancy and good strategic links by virtue of its location. It is home to a mix of uses. The (now superseded) Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004) specifically supported the redevelopment and expansion of Bolney Grange, similarly the Bolney Neighbourhood Plan supports the expansion subject to meeting certain criteria. It was therefore considered sensible for the promoted sites at Bolney Grange to be considered together [SSP4].

Landscape

2.26. In its Regulation 19 representation, Bolney Parish Council requested the requirement for a landscaping scheme to be included in the policy wording to minimise the impact on views from the South Downs National Park [Representation ID number 784]. It should be noted that the South Downs National Park Authority did not raise this in its Regulation 19 representation [Representation ID number 777].

2.27. The Council considers that this requirement is adequately set out in Policy SA GEN. The landscape considerations included in this policy are applicable to all allocations and, therefore, there is no need to repeat the requirements in Policy SA5 [C1.2]. Policy SA GEN requires a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) on any rural or edge of settlement sites. The LVIA will need to inform the site design, layout, capacity and any mitigation requirements. A Landscape Strategy will also need to be provided to identify how natural features on site have been retained and incorporated into the landscape structure and design of the site and informed the landscaping proposals for the site.

The Hub

2.28. District Plan Policy DP1 states that there is a requirement for 543 jobs per annum. The District Plan evidence base [E3.1, E3.2 and E4] equated this to 25ha of employment land. Policy DP1 states that this will be met through the allocation of 25 hectares of land at The Hub in Burgess Hill as well as allocating further sites through a Sites DPD. Updated employment forecast prepared to inform the Sites DPD indicates an increased employment requirement of around 35 to 40 hectares up to 2031. The Sites DPD therefore seeks to allocate 8 employment sites as well as land for a Science and Technology Park. The District Plan together with the Sites DPD makes sufficient allocations to meet the identified employment need to 2031.

2.29. The Hub site is partly complete with planning applications in place to deliver the rest.

Northern Arc

- 2.30. The need for the employment allocation SA5 has already been demonstrated above. This position was reflected in District Plan Policy DP1. This policy allocated 25ha of land at Burgess Hill:
- 15ha at The Hub
 - 10ha at the Northern Arc strategic development.
- 2.31. Site Selection Paper 4: Employment Sites [SSP4] explains that since the adoption of the District Plan in March 2018, the approved masterplan for the Northern Arc has concluded that it is only possible to bring forward 4ha of employment land within the site, as opposed to the 10ha previously planned for. This shortfall of 6ha has been met by two windfall sites and so does not need to be re-provided through the Sites DPD.
- 2.32. The robust site selection process has been based on the availability of sites as set out in Site Selection Paper 4: Employment Sites [SSP4]. This assessment explains that the collection of four sites at Bolney Grange are small in scale. They represent small extensions to the business park, which would enable existing businesses to expand or new businesses to occupy, ensuring economic prosperity of the industrial estate. The four sites are unconstrained and perform positively against the site selection criteria. Site Selection Paper 4 goes on to conclude that there is significant committed housing and employment in Burgess Hill, including the broad location for a Science and Technology Park. Therefore, there are only two small scale (circa 1ha) sites proposed which are located on an existing industrial estate (SA2 and SA3). It is proposed to allow for extensions to Bolney Grange Industrial Estate to enable the site to expand and continue to operate effectively and successfully.
- 2.33. The Council considers that the proposed employment allocation SA5 results in a justified and effective strategy for the Sites DPD.

Should policy SA6 require a site-specific lighting plan to reduce light pollution? Is development necessary given the proximity of The Hub site?

MSDC Response

- 2.34. There is a resolution to grant planning permission for this site subject to the completion of a satisfactory Section 106 planning obligation (DM/20/2640). The committee report for the planning application included the following with regards to lighting:

'In respect of lighting, no details have been provided in respect of the type of lighting to be installed as part of the development. This can be controlled by a condition requiring such details. However, due to the context of the site with lighting on the adjacent highways networks, and the proposed enhanced screening on the boundaries of the site, it is not considered that there would be significant detriment to the amenities of nearby residential properties.'

- 2.35. The committee report recommends the inclusion of the following condition:

No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Details of lux levels and times of use together with a report to demonstrate its effect on nearby residential properties shall be supplied. It is recommended that the information be provided in a format that demonstrates compliance on the ILP Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light. The information shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All lighting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the character of the area and amenity of local residents and to accord with Policy DP29 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 - 2031.

- 2.36. Light pollution impacts are also already addressed by District Plan Policy DP29 and are included within Policy SA GEN of the Sites DPD. As such, the Council considers that lighting can be addressed at the planning application stage [C1.2]. The Council considers this to be a justified and effective approach to this issue.

The Hub

- 2.37. District Plan Policy DP1 states that there is a requirement for 543 jobs per annum. The District Plan evidence base [E3.1, E3.2 and E4] equated this to 25ha of employment land. Policy DP1 states that this will be met through the allocation of 25 hectares of land at The Hub in Burgess Hill as well as allocating further sites through a Sites DPD. Updated employment forecast prepared to inform the Sites DPD indicates an increased employment requirement of around 35 to 40 hectares up to 2031. The Sites DPD therefore seeks to allocate 8 employment sites as well as land for a Science and Technology Park. The District Plan together with the Sites DPD makes sufficient allocations to meet the identified employment need to 2031.

- 2.38. The Hub site is partly complete with planning applications in place to deliver the rest.

Can the impact of policy SA7 on the setting of the AONB be satisfactorily mitigated?

MSDC Response

- 2.39. The current policy wording for SA7 includes the requirement for a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements, including a comprehensive landscape scheme in order to minimise impact on the AONB. The site is wholly within the AONB rather than in its setting.
- 2.40. In its Regulation 19 representation [Representation ID number 642], the High Weald AONB Unit recommended that the policy wording should be amended in relation to the need to conserve and enhance the High Weald AONB. This was agreed by the Council and the changes to the policy wording have been included as a proposed minor modification [C1.2 and DPD2 – Modification M12]. The policy wording would then read: 'Undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements, including a comprehensive landscape scheme in order to conserve and enhance the landscape of the AONB'.
- 2.41. Natural England (the statutory consultee) also supports the requirements of a LVIA to consider the potential impacts on the special qualities of the High Weald AONB [Representation ID number 710].
- 2.42. However, as noted in the Major Development in the High Weald AONB Topic Paper [TP1], the site allocation is previously developed land adjacent to the A23 and other employment uses. There are limited views of the site and it is not considered tranquil due to the proximity of the A23 and the vehicle scrap yard. The major development assessment for this site concludes that it is considered that the potential for a significant adverse impact on AONB purposes is low, however, there may be opportunities for the site to contribute to some of the High Weald AONB Management Plan objectives and these should be explored further at the planning application stage.

- 2.43. A planning application has been submitted for this site (DM/20/2332) and is currently awaiting a decision. A Design and Access Statement, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Ecology Report, and a Tree Survey and Impact Assessment have been submitted as part of the planning application documentation. Along with other consultees, the High Weald AONB Unit has submitted a consultation response to the planning application and made some recommendations in respect of the proposed development.
- 2.44. The robust site selection process included AONB as a Planning Constraint as one of the assessment criteria for employment sites [SSP2]. Site Selection Paper 4: Employment Sites [SSP4] explains that it is proposed to allocate this site (SA7) for employment use because it is a small-scale site anticipated to have a low impact due to the existing buildings on site. The site performs positively against the site selection criteria, in particular due to its location adjacent to the main transport corridor (A23) and Crawley. The site assessment records that whilst the site is wholly within the AONB, development of this site is likely to have a low impact. The High Weald AONB Unit and Natural England provided advice as part of the site selection process and this informed the site assessment. As such the Sites DPD has been positively prepared and it is a justified and effective strategy consistent with national policy.
- 2.45. The Council considers that the policy requirements in Policy SA7, Policy SA GEN and District Plan Policy DP16 will mean that any impact on the AONB can be satisfactorily mitigated.

Should policy SA8 recommend a minimum barrier of 50m on the eastern border between the development and ancient woodland?

MSDC Response

- 2.46. The current policy wording for SA8 requires a minimum 15m buffer between the ancient woodland to the east of the site and any development on the site of the proposed allocation. This aligns with the requirements already set out in District Plan Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows.
- 2.47. In its Regulation 19 representation, the Woodland Trust [Representation ID number 2360] raised concern about the proximity of ancient woodland to the proposed site allocation SA8. The Woodland Trust recommended that a minimum 50m buffer should be maintained between the development and the ancient woodland, including through the construction phase, unless the applicant can demonstrate how a smaller buffer would suffice. The Council has no evidence to suggest Bensonhill Wood has any special circumstances that would warrant making an exception to the usual 15m buffer and extending it to 50m.
- 2.48. It should be noted that Natural England in its Regulation 19 representation raised no concerns with the size of the buffer between the ancient woodland and the development [Representation ID number 710]. Natural England supports the current policy wording and requirements in line with Natural England's standing advice. This standing advice states:

'For ancient woodlands, you should have a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage. Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond

*this distance, you're likely to need a larger buffer zone. For example, the effect of air pollution from development that results in a significant increase in traffic.'*²

- 2.49. As such, the Council is not proposing to amend the policy wording in SA8 to increase the buffer from 15m to 50m [C1.2]. The Council considers the current policy wording in SA8 to be justified and consistent with national policy.

5.3 SA34: Existing Employment Sites

*Appendix A comprises a list of **existing employment sites**, which are protected by policy SA34. How effective is the Plan in protecting existing and allocated employment sites from other uses, e.g. housing? Should the Plan set out the parameters of an 'independent assessment' in relation to the attractiveness of the market, and the likelihood of future employment uses on these sites, and over what period of time?*

MSDC Response

- 3.1. The purpose of policy SA34 is threefold:
- To prevent the loss of employment land
 - To provide support for intensification/redevelopment within existing employment areas in order to encourage growth on-site to provide flexibility and grow-on space for existing occupants; and
 - To provide support for expansion of existing employment sites, where proposals meet a number of requirements.
- 3.2. The Council has identified its Existing Employment Sites (Appendix A) to provide clarity with regards to the types of site (and their boundaries), to which this policy applies.
- 3.3. It is recognised that permitted development rights allow for change of use from office use (previously Use Class B1, now E(g)) to residential (C3) and that there is little protection that can be offered by a policy in this regard. The recent (September 2020) changes to the Use Classes order which amalgamate office use into Class E with a number of alternative uses, will also reduce the effectiveness of this policy with respect to offices. The Council would be prepared to make a minor modification to this policy if required.
- 3.4. However, the other employment uses set out in SA34, B2: General Industrial and B8: Storage & Distribution, would require planning permission to change use to housing (for example) and therefore this policy protects these uses from such a change – therefore ensuring the current supply of employment land in these uses is maintained.
- 3.5. Policy SA34 places the emphasis on the applicant to demonstrate that the site/premises are no longer needed and/or viable for employment use when seeking permission for any loss of employment space in the areas identified by SA34. Recognising that each employment space is different, and a range of circumstances may apply related to their viability, the Council feels that it would be difficult to apply a set of standards/parameters/time scales for any assessment or justification and that justification should be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, the District Plan

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

Review can review this position in more detail in light of any new economic evidence commissioned to support the Review.

5.4 Housing / Employment Balance

*Is the Plan likely to maintain, enhance or detract from a sustainable **housing/employment balance** in the District, or is it more appropriate to consider Mid Sussex in relation to its near neighbours, such as Brighton and Crawley? Is there a balance between housing provision and maintaining an adequate supply of employment land?*

MSDC Response

- 4.1. District Plan policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development sets the strategy and requirement for economic development. The policy reflects the total additional number of jobs required within the district over the plan period as an average of 543 per annum. This figure was derived through the District Council's modelling of which the housing requirement in DP4 was a key component. The requirement of 543 jobs per annum is therefore closely linked to an increase in population as a result of growth set out in DP4 and provides the balance between anticipated housing growth and number of jobs required to accompany it.
- 4.2. This was described within the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) that formed the evidence base for the District Plan and is closely aligned to the findings of the Economic Growth Assessment [E1] which forecast an economic need of 521 jobs per annum.
- 4.3. Site Selection Paper 4 [SSP4, para 2.3] explains that, in land terms, 543 jobs per annum equated to a 25ha employment land requirement which was allocated in its entirety in the District Plan (policy DP1). SSP4 goes on to explain that (para 3.2), as a result of monitoring, forecasting related to an increased housing requirement through the District Plan examination process, and impacts of Permitted Development rights, additional employment allocations were sought in order to maintain the balance between housing and employment growth. This identified a residual requirement of an additional 10-15ha of employment land – the Sites DPD allocates 7 employment sites totalling 17.45ha to meet this requirement with a small over-supply for flexibility and resilience.
- 4.4. The allocations in the Sites DPD are therefore proposed to enhance the housing and employment balance. The District Plan contains the strategic objective "8 – To Provide opportunities for people to live and work within their communities, reducing the need for commuting" [DPD5, page 8] and the quantum and location of sites within the DPD have been proposed in this context.
- 4.5. In addition, DP1 includes the broad location for a Science and Technology Park. The specific site for allocation is identified in the Sites DPD in policy SA9 (Q5.1 provides full details regarding the justification). This site has been allocated to deliver the Council's objectives for economic growth; desire to provide potential for high GVA jobs in a location which contains a highly skilled and educated workforce, to reduce out-commuting; and encouraging high quality development of land and premises to meet the needs of a 21st century businesses and supporting the development of knowledge clusters and high-tech industries.
- 4.6. The S&TP site is adjacent to the allocation of 3,500 dwellings at the Northern Arc (District Plan policy DP9)– therefore providing significant employment opportunities in

close proximity to the Council's largest strategic allocation within the District Plan as well as providing job opportunities to nearby neighbours Brighton and Crawley, as well as within the wider-region.

5.5 Mixed Use Areas

*Is there scope to consider **mixed use areas** where there is evidence of underuse/closure of industrial/commercial uses?*

MSDC Response

- 5.1. The Employment evidence base [E1, E2 and SSP4] identify a need for employment floorspace in use classes B1: Business, B2: General Industrial and B8: Storage or Distribution. It is important to allocate sufficient land for these uses in order to meet this need in the first instance and to provide sufficient policy protection to prevent the loss of existing employment uses as far as possible. It is recognised, however, that in some instances sites become unviable – District Plan policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development provides flexibility to allow other uses where it can be demonstrated there is no prospect of continued use or the loss is outweighed by benefits. Sites DPD Policy SA34 reiterates this.
- 5.2. Each of the employment allocations (SA2 – SA9) sets out the appropriate employment uses for each site – either B1 (to be amended to E(g)), B2 or B8. Only where one of these uses has been deemed inappropriate (e.g. industrial uses adjacent to a residential area) have these been restricted. Flexibility will ensure the employment sites are viable and feasible for development, with the onus on the applicant to justify the quantum of any use on site. The site-specific requirements for SA2 – SA9 also include enabling “non-business” uses in addition to business uses where there is justified by evidence.
- 5.3. Similarly, policy SA34: Existing Employment Sites provides the flexibility of use within B1 (to be amended to E(g)), B2 and B8. It too allows for alternative uses (with the exception of residential) where it is supported by the evidence.
- 5.4. One of the main aims of the Sites DPD is to meet residual employment needs. The District Plan Review, which has commenced, will provide the opportunity to re-assess DP1: Sustainable Economic Development and apply additional protection or flexibility if required. This will be supported by updates to the evidence base which can assess current under-use, conditions in the market and need, which in turn will provide the basis for any further potential for flexibility (e.g. consideration of mixed use areas) on a strategic basis.

5.6 Town Centres

*Policy DP2 in the District Plan sets a framework for promoting the key **town centres** as retail and commercial centres. Does this policy need to be updated, e.g. in relation to its parameters for primary and secondary frontages, in the light of the Covid pandemic, changes to the Use Classes Order or other commercial trends? Should the Plan aim for a town centres first approach for office development?*

MSDC Response

- 6.1. The role of Town Centres is evolving, particularly in light of the Covid 19 pandemic and recent changes to the Use Classes Order. However, the Council do not believe the Sites DPD is the correct vehicle for considering this strategic issue, and that this policy would be better reviewed (and updated if necessary) during the District Plan Review which has commenced.
- 6.2. The Council's response to Matter 1 (Q1.2) sets out the 4 aims of the Sites DPD and justification, namely to meet residual housing and employment needs, allocation of a Science and Technology Park, and additional policies needed to support these allocations. Consideration of other policies within the District Plan, such as the Council's approach to town centre development, do not fall within the scope of the Sites DPD.
- 6.3. Early work on the District Plan Review process has commenced. This will involve a detailed review of all District Plan policies against the criteria set out in the NPPF (paragraph 33) which includes changing circumstances in the local area. This review could include the appropriateness of primary and secondary shop frontages, updated economic and retail evidence – particularly the impacts of Covid-19, and an assessment of the likely impacts as a result of changes to the Use Classes Order in relation to town centre uses.
- 6.4. Should an update be required as a result of these considerations, the District Plan Review would incorporate additional or revised policies on such matters. The adopted Local Development Scheme [P1] anticipates Regulation 18 consultation to begin on the District Plan Review by the end of 2021, with adoption in 2023.
- 6.5. Regarding a policy related to Town Centres first for offices, this is a strategic issue that could be considered during the District Plan Review process. This would enable the Council to consider the need and demand for Office space within its updated employment evidence and assess options for how this could be delivered.

5.7 Other commercial, retail or employment policies

*Are there any **other commercial, retail or employment policies** which are needed in this Plan or are the more strategic policies in the District Plan sufficient to provide the appropriate guidance for Mid Sussex for the remainder of the plan period?*

MSDC Response

- 7.1. As set out in the response to Matter 1 (Q1.2) the scope of the Sites DPD is limited to the 4 aims set out in the DPD itself [DPD1, page 4]. The inclusion of five additional policies (SA34 – SA38) are proposed as they directly support the site allocations or growth associated with them. It is not within the scope of the DPD to consider any other additional policies, which would be better considered through the District Plan Review process which has commenced, with adoption expected in 2023.
- 7.2. The policies within the Sites DPD ensure that employment needs are met in full. Policy SA34 provides policy support for expansion, intensification and redevelopment to assist with the retention of businesses within Mid Sussex – allowing existing businesses to grow and thrive and to ensure there is a balance between jobs and houses. This in turn has sustainability benefits, such as reducing the need for residents to out-commute.

7.3. The allocations (SA1-SA9) and employment policy (SA34) within the Sites DPD supplement existing policies within the District Plan, namely:

- DP1: Sustainable Economic Development
- DP2: Town Centre Development
- DP3: Village and Neighbourhood Centre Development

7.4. Given the suite of policies within the District Plan, as well as National Policy, the Council do not consider that any further policies are immediately required within the Sites DPD given its scope. However, these policies will be reviewed and (if required) updated through the District Plan Review process which is the appropriate vehicle for considering strategic policies of this nature.