

SECTION D
DEVELOPMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Background Documents: the deposited documents; views and representations received as referred to in the reports and included in the development proposals dossier for each case; and other documents as might be additionally indicated.

Item D1

Construction of a new rail station (Thanet Parkway) and associated access, car parking and infrastructure, at Cliffsend, Thanet – TH/19/1696 (KCC/TH/0256/2019)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 2 September 2020.

Application by Kent County Council (Transport Strategy Team) for the **construction of a new rail station (Thanet Parkway)** consisting of two platforms connected via an existing underpass (to be refurbished), with stair and lift access, and associated infrastructure including vehicle and cycle parking, public announcement system, drainage, security and lighting, landscaping, level crossing upgrade works, and vehicle, pedestrian and cycle access including the creation of a vehicular access onto the A299 Hengist Way, with associated highway works, and a footway/cycleway link to Clive Road at **Cliffsend, Thanet – TH/19/1696 (KCC/TH/0256/2019)**

Recommendation: subject to compliance with the agreed Memoranda of Understanding
PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO and conditions.

Local Members: Ms Karen Constantine, Mr Paul Messenger,
Ms Emma Dawson, and Ms Liz Hurst **Classification:** Unrestricted

Application Site and Surroundings

1. The 9.27ha triangular shaped application site is located to the north western edge of the village of Cliffsend, approximately two miles west of the town of Ramsgate, on the southern edge of the Thanet Peninsula. The wider surrounding area of the application site is mostly rural, with large scale open arable fields and small villages, with the urban area of Thanet (Broadstairs, Ramsgate and Margate) located to the east of the peninsula. The application site is largely flat agricultural land, with an elevated tree lined railway embankment running along the southern site boundary from the south west to the north east. The A299 Hengist Way lies to the north of the application site, and runs under the railway line by means of an underpass in the north east corner of the application site. Agricultural fields lie beyond the A299 Hengist Way, with Canterbury Road West to the north, beyond which lies Manston Airport (approximately 0.6 miles to the north of the site).
2. The village of Cliffsend is split by the existing railway line. The main route through the centre of the village (Foads Hill/Foads Lane) which runs north to south, crosses the railway line at the Cliffsend level crossing, to the north east corner of the application site. The village of Cliffsend lies predominately to the south east of the application site, with the northern section of the village to the north east of the site. The nearest residential properties lie immediately to the south east of the application site and include properties in Earlsmead Crescent, Old Hall Drive and Beech Grove. Properties in Foads Lane and Clive Road lie to the north east. Beyond an agricultural field to the south of the site, Cottingham Road runs east to west, from which access is gained to a small number of residential properties in Lavender Lane, and St Augustine's Golf Club. Beyond the

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western site boundary lies further open and flat agricultural land before meeting the A256 Richborough Way.

3. To facilitate access, the application site includes a section of the A299 Hengist Way, a footway link to Clive Road to the north, a link to Cottington Lane to the south west. The Cliffsend and Sevenscore Level Crossings are also included within the application site as upgrade works are proposed as part of the Thanet Parkway development.
4. Public Right of Way (TR32) runs from Cottington Road to the south, along the edge of the railway embankment, under the railway line via an underpass which is located to the rear of properties in Earlsmead Crescent, then follows the railway line to the east before crossing the A299 Hengist Way and extending to the north.
5. The application site is not within a Conservation Area and nor are there any Listed Buildings within or immediately adjacent to the site boundaries. However, St Augustine's Cross, a Scheduled Ancient Monument which is Grade II Listed, is located to the south of Cottington Road, approximately 90 metres to the south of the application site. Five other Listed Buildings are located within a kilometre of the site but physically separated from it by existing built development.
6. A total of six designated sites for nature conservation are located within a 2 kilometre radius of the application site, all to the south/south east of the site:
 - Thanet Coast Special Area of Conservation (SCA);
 - Sandwich Bay Special Area of Conservation (SCA);
 - Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area (SPA);
 - Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Ramsar Site;
 - Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marches Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and
 - Sandwich Bay and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve (NNR)
7. Recent planning permissions have been granted by Thanet District Council for housing developments in the local area. The most notable and relevant to the application site and its immediate surroundings are as follows:
 - Application reference OL/TH/17/0151 (Land north of Cottington Road and east of Lavender Lane) – Outline application for the erection of up to 41 dwellings including access (N.B. Construction underway);
 - Application reference OL/TH/17/0150 (Land adjacent to Oakland Court to the south of Cottington Road) – Outline application for the erection of up to 23 dwellings including access (N.B. Construction underway); and
 - Application reference OL/TH/17/0152 Land east of 40 Canterbury Road West – Outline application for the erection of up to 62 dwellings including access;

Other development proposals in the area, such as Manston Green (OL/TH/14/0050 - 785 dwellings), have been assessed by the applicant in the application documents, although they are not in the immediate vicinity of the application site.

8. In addition to the above, a Development Consent Order (DCO) application was submitted by 'RiverOak Strategic Partners Limited' to re-open Manston Airport as a freight airport. The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on the 9 April 2018 and subsequently approved by the Secretary of State for Transport (SoS) in July this year. The (DCO) has granted permission for the development of Manston Airport into a dedicated air freight facility able to handle at least 10,000 air cargo movements

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per year, whilst also offering passenger, executive travel, and aircraft engineering services. In making his decision, the SoS considered that there was a clear case of need for the proposed development and that significant economic and socio-economic benefits would flow from the development. Both of these factors were given substantial weight in the decision making process, and balanced against other material planning considerations.

9. As outlined above, the application site is currently agricultural land. In terms of its Agricultural Land Classification the land is considered best and most versatile and, reflecting this classification, the application site is also designated within Natural England's Character Area (NCA) 113: North Kent Plain and described as a 'very productive agricultural area with predominately high quality soils characterised by arable use'.
10. The application site is located within the Wantsum North Slopes Landscape Character Area, a Groundwater Source Protection Zone and partly within (the A299 Hengist Way) Thanet's Urban Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
11. This planning application was received prior to the recent adoption of the new Thanet District Council - Local Plan to 2031, the development plan prepared by the District Council. The initial processing of the application was therefore considered against the previous Thanet Local Plan 2006. The Thanet Local Plan 2006 Policy Map showed that the application site was outside of the defined boundary of the urban and village confines and was therefore defined within the Thanet Local Plan 2006 under saved Policy CC1 as countryside. The application was therefore advertised as a departure from the Development Plan, as that was the case when the application was submitted. However, at a meeting of the District Council on the 9 July 2020, Thanet District Council adopted the Thanet Local Plan to 2031 meaning that the Thanet Local Plan 2006 is no longer relevant to the determination of this application. Policy SP46 of the newly adopted Local Plan (see paragraph 47 of this report for more detail) safeguards the application site for a new railway station. Further land in the vicinity of the application site is also allocated for housing development.

Environmental Impact Assessment

12. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The ES considers and environmental effects of the proposed development through both construction and operational phases, and sets out the proposed mitigation measures necessary to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects on the environment. The ES was accompanied by a non-technical summary, and appendices (figures) which contain detailed survey work regarding a range of matters including landscape, ecology, noise and air quality. An addendum to the ES was submitted on the 9 June 2020. The application has been advertised in accordance with the requirements of the above Regulations.

Background/Case of Need

13. Although paragraph 47 of this report will set out the relevant Planning Policies to take into account in the determination of this application, it is important to set out the background and strategic transport policy support for the provision of a new station in Thanet, specifically Thanet Parkway.

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14. The applicant advises that improving rail access to East Kent has been a priority for Kent County Council (KCC) since 2010 when it was first identified in *Growth without Gridlock: A transport delivery plan for Kent and the Local Transport Plan for Kent (2011-2016)*. It remains a priority in KCC's latest *Local Transport Plan 4; Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-2031)* (LTP4) published in July 2017,
15. Strategic Transport Priorities set out in LTP4 support the need for 'Journey time improvements and Thanet Parkway Railway Station', which seeks to deliver a new railway station to significantly improve rail connectivity, particularly within East Kent, London and the wider area by providing access to mainline and high speed services. In particular;
 - Delivery of a Thanet Parkway railway station aims to address the issue of poor accessibility that discourages major employers from locating in the area due to currently being beyond the 'magic hour' time from London. Regeneration in East Kent is considered to be dependent on improving accessibility.
 - The estimated journey time from Thanet Parkway to London St Pancras would be just over 20 minutes shorter than from Deal to London St Pancras, therefore enhancing the accessibility of the wider area of East Kent.
 - Delivery of Thanet Parkway railway station is considered to improve rail connectivity between East Kent, London, and the wider Kent areas, and provide increased attractiveness of East Kent, helping to achieve the LTP4 outcomes of economic growth and minimised time connection, and affordable and accessible door-to-door journeys.
 - The station would also provide access to greater employment opportunities for local residents and increase the attractiveness for investment in the nearby Discovery Park Enterprise Zone (located approximately 3 miles to the south of the application site, north of Sandwich) and numerous surrounding business parks in Thanet. It would also support local housing growth.
16. Further, in 2011 KCC published its *Rail Action Plan for Kent* which sets out the principal objective to ensure that rail services fully meet the needs of the County's commuters, residents and visitors. One of the major priorities for action identified improvements to rail journey times between Ashford and Ramsgate, and to London, via the proposed Thanet Parkway Railway Station at Cliffsend. The creation of a Parkway Station in Thanet is stated to be a key driver for the economic regeneration of deprived wards throughout East Kent, facilitating new employment, education and business opportunities.
17. With regard to delivering strategic economic objectives, the proposed development also supports the aims of the *Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF)* which is prepared by KCC and Medway Council. The GIF provides a framework for identifying and prioritising investment in infrastructure and also for testing the impact of innovation on the way in which public services are provided. In considering existing transport capacity issues, the GIF makes reference to the planned major improvements to rail journey times and connections to London to support economic growth, including Thanet Parkway.
18. The proposed development is also a regional priority for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEDP). Delivery of Thanet Parkway would support their objectives by facilitating the delivery of new houses and employment space in coastal areas, promoting investment in the

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former Manston airport site and reinforcing the success of Discovery Park Enterprise Zone (located approximately 3 miles to the south of the application site, north of Sandwich). Thanet Parkway Station is specifically referenced in SELEP's *Strategic Economic Plan 2014 (SEP)*, which also identifies the need for Local Growth Fund (LGF) transport investment in Thanet Parkway 'as a priority to reinforce the success of Discovery Park and support investment in Manston, as well as in the Westwood Relief Strategy, eliminating the major bottleneck impacting on employment and commercial growth in Thanet Central Island'. SELEP has awarded Thanet Parkway Station a provisional allocation of £14 million LGF funding.

19. In August 2020, an additional £12 million of funding for Thanet Parkway was also secured via the 'Getting Building Fund' (an initiative announced by the Prime Minister in June 2020 to invest in housing and infrastructure projects to support economic recovery across the Country).
20. In addition to the above, at a National level, the principle of improvements to the Country's transport infrastructure to support economic growth, enhance connectivity between businesses, goods and people, and encouraging a sustainable low-carbon economy, are set out in the *National Infrastructure Plan (2014)*, the *DfT Single Departmental Plan 2015-2020, Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon* (white paper published by the DfT in 2011), *Door to Door; A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration* (DfT, 2013), *Transport Investment Strategy* (DfT, 2017) and the *National Infrastructure Assessment* (published by the National Infrastructure Commission in 2017).

Previous planning application (withdrawn)

21. An application (KCC/TH/0105/2018) was submitted in May 2018 seeking approval for a railway station at this site. Following consultation and review of responses received, that application was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant in November 2019. The primary distinction between the development as now proposed and the previous withdrawn application is that the previous proposal included an elevated footbridge to facilitate access across the operational railway. Various consultees, including the County Council's Landscape Advisor and Conservation Officer, expressed concern over the design and height of the footbridge and its subsequent wider landscape impact. Following the withdrawal of the previous application, the applicant reconsidered how to facilitate access across the railway line and is now proposing in the current application to utilise an existing underpass beneath the railway which would link the two platforms.

Proposal

22. This application has been submitted by Kent County Council and proposes the construction of a new rail station with associated car parking, access, landscaping and other ancillary works at land at Cliffsend in Thanet. The applicant states that the purpose of the proposed development, here on referred to a Thanet Parkway, is as follows:
 - to support future investment and economic growth in East Kent by improving rail connectivity to London and other Kent centres;
 - to expand rail accessibility to series of key development site including Discovery Park Enterprise Zone, Manston Park, EuroKent Business Park, and the former Manston Airport site; and

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- to provide additional car parking capacity to supplement existing provision at Ramsgate Station.
23. In summary, the proposed development comprises a two-platform station located on the existing Ashford International to Ramsgate Line serving high speed and mainline services to London, including a forecourt and associated car parking. Pedestrian access is to be provided from the south of the railway line via the existing public right of way (PROW), TR32 and pedestrian and cycle access is to be provided from north of the A299 Hengist Way, from Clive Road. A new signalised junction is required to provide vehicular access to the proposed development from the A299 Hengist Way. The following section of this report will describe the various physical and operational components of the development in turn.

Additional/Amended Information Following Submission

24. This application was submitted on the 15 November 2019, and subsequently publicised and consulted on. Following that initial consultation, the applicant amended the scheme to address consultee comments, including an objection from Southern Water which related to the proximity of the built development on site to a water main. The amended proposal was submitted on the 9 June 2020, and a summary of the changes made are as follows:
- increase in the number of electric vehicle parking bays;
 - amended kerb line onsite to facilitate easier bus access;
 - inclusion of a pedestrian walkway across the western car park to link to the station entrance, which has resulted in a loss of 2 parking spaces, bringing the total to 297 plus pick-up/drop-off spaces. The walkway through the car park is raised to also provide a speed attenuation feature. New crossing point has also been included in the eastern car park;
 - reconfiguration of the infiltration pond to achieve the easement required by Southern Water;
 - revision to the platform structure so that it spans over the water main at the point where the main passes under the railway embankment;
 - relocation southwards of the lift shaft and staircase on the Down platform (i.e. north of the embankment) to achieve the required easement;
 - relocation of the passive provision for a future station building towards the car park to achieve the required easement (passive provision in this scheme means an allocated space and so there is no material impact on this application as a result of this change);
 - reduction in size of area for cleaning store/sub-station to achieve required easement.
 - minor adjustment to orientation of Secondary Means of Escape staircase on the Up platform (south side of the embankment) to achieve required easement
25. In addition to the above, the landscaping scheme was also amended to reflect the changes outlined above, and also to amend tree species and proposed planting locations to comply with Southern Waters guidance on tree planting in proximity to a water main.

It is the amended proposal that will be discussed throughout this report, unless stated otherwise.

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The Station

26. The station is designed to be unstaffed (the train operating company can choose to post staff there) with two platforms located atop the existing railway embankment, approximately 6m above existing ground levels. Subject to detailed design, each platform would measure up to approximately 250m in length and be approximately 2.6m in width. The platforms would be capable of accommodating trains of up to 12 carriages in length. Each platform would include customer information displays, waiting shelters, a passenger help point and driver only operation viewing facilities. Closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras and public address speakers will be mounted on lighting columns at the back of each platform (see paragraphs 35 to 38).
27. The existing underpass, through which PROW TR32 runs, would be refurbished to provide suitable access between the two platforms, and to allow access from the car park to the platform south of the railway line. The existing underpass would be upgraded as part of this development, including surfacing works (it is currently unsurfaced), lighting, and CCTV. Step-free access to both platforms would be provided via two 16-person lifts located outside of the railway embankment profile next to the proposed staircases on either side of the underpass. The north lift would serve the forecourt and the north platform, whilst the south lift would serve the south platform.
28. The applicant advises that the external materials would be finalised at detailed design stage, but would be chosen to provide a high quality architectural style, whilst also being functional and durable – in accordance with Network Rails safety standards. Blockwork cladding is proposed at the lower levels of the station, the stairs would be enclosed with a powder coated rigid perforated metal panel to allow visibility of passengers, and platform structures would incorporate tactile paving and appropriate surfacing. Acoustic fencing (2.4 metre high) would enclose the platforms on both sides of the embankment.

Level Crossings

29. The proposed development would also necessitate the upgrading of two level crossings, Sevenscore level crossing where Ebbsfleet Lane North crosses the railway line, and Cliffsend level crossing where Foads Lane crosses the railway line. These upgrade works are included within the planning application. Cliffsend level crossing is proposed to be upgraded from an Automatic Half Barrier (AHB) to a full Manually Controlled Barrier (MCB) - a crossing with a barrier that extends across both lanes of the road, separating the railway and the road entirely when down. This would be monitored by CCTV or obstacle detection via radar, and modelling assumptions used within the Transport Assessment reflect the worst-case scenario of barrier down times of 180 seconds.
30. Sevenscore level crossing would remain an AHB (a crossing where the barriers cover half the road). However, there would need to be changes to the signaling to account for the introduction of stopping trains at the new station.

Station Forecourt and Entrance

31. The forecourt area, proposed to be located at ground level to the north of the railway line, adjacent to the car park, would provide the focus of activity for the station. It would link the car park, bus stops and cycle storage to the entrance of the lift shafts, stairwell and underpass for access to the platforms. The forecourt would include at least one ticket vending machine and further customer information displays. Cycle parking for 40

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bikes would be located beside the entrance as well as two bus shelters and real time passenger information for waiting passengers. A substation and a brick finished modular unit (approximately 22m² floor area and 2.5metres in height) with facilities including a welfare room, cleaner's storage, and toilet is proposed to be located in the forecourt. An area is also identified for the future provision of a station building, should that be required (not included within this application).

Station Car Park

32. Parking provision will allow for 317 car parking bays. This includes 16 disabled bays, a dedicated area for motorcycles, 60 spaces offering electric car charging points (30 active, 30 passive), a dedicated area for pick up/drop off, accommodating 20 vehicles including taxis. The car park would have lighting columns and CCTV cameras to aid security (see paragraphs 35 to 38 below). In addition, pedestrian walkways would link the car park to the station entrance, and landscaping would be incorporated into the car parking area. Car parking ticket machines will be provided within the car park at appropriate locations to ensure a short walking distance from all car parking spaces.

Access

33. The proposed development would involve highway improvement works to provide access from the westbound lanes of the A299 Hengist Way. This involves the following:
- a signalised 'left in / left out' T-junction with dedicated turning lanes that would provide access to/from the station at the A299 Hengist Way;
 - widening of the westbound lane on the A299 Hengist Way to provide a dedicated left turn for Thanet Parkway Station;
 - diversion of farmers access track to accommodate the station access; and
 - a two-way single access road within the application site to provide vehicular access and egress between the A299 Hengist Way and Thanet Parkway Station. This would have a nominal carriageway width of 6.75m.
34. Pedestrian access is proposed to be provided from the south using the existing railway underpass which connects to the existing PROW (TR32) that runs adjacent to the railway line. An additional footpath/cycleway is proposed to the north of the station connecting to Clive Road. This additional footpath/cycleway would pass along the southern edge of the proposed car park and over the A299 Hengist Way following the existing PROW and farm access track. Once north of the A299 Hengist Way, the proposed footway/cycleway would run along the eastern edge of the field and connect with Clive Road.

Lighting/Public Address System/CCTV

35. The lighting within the car park and all external areas is proposed to be light emitting diode (LED) street lighting mounted on columns. All columns within the car park would be approximately 5m tall and all other external area columns would be approximately 8m tall, with final details to be confirmed at detailed design, pursuant to condition. The platforms would be illuminated by linear LED luminaires. The lighting within the enclosed underpass, stairs and waiting shelters would be ceiling mounted LED linear luminaires to illuminate the floor level. Lighting for the underpass and car park is proposed to be on a light and movement sensor, with light levels taking into consideration the CCTV and requirement for facial recognition. Exact lux levels would be determined at detailed design.

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36. Emergency lighting is to also proposed in the waiting areas, the underpass and areas outside the station which form part of an emergency escape route. Further, lighting at Cliffsend level crossing is proposed, which would be on a light sensitive sensor, with a minimum level of 55 lux maintained. No additional lighting would be required at the Sevenscore level crossing.
37. A Long Line Public Address (LLPA) system is proposed for all publicly accessible areas of the station platforms. The LLPA system would include approximately 38 projection loudspeakers (approximately 2.5 watts), 19 on each platform. The LLPA system would be provided in accordance with the relevant British Standards as well as Network Rail Standard The LLPA system would be split into two zones, with Zone 1 and Zone 2 being Platform 1 and 2 respectively. Each zone would then be split into two sub-zones; one for the center portion of the platform and one for the outer ends of the platform, allowing for the LLPA system to be configured to mute the outer ends of the platforms during certain hours. An Induction Loop system (IL) is proposed to enable passengers with hearing difficulties to listen to the LLPA announcements. Four Ambient Noise Sensors (ANS) are proposed to assess the ambient noise volume level and then adjust the zone speaker volume as required, enabling the speakers to be quieter when there is little noise but to be louder if a train is standing on the platform.
38. The station, platforms and underpass would be fully covered by CCTV, with no substantial 'blind spots' anywhere within the station premises. Approximately 32 Security CCTV cameras are proposed to provide general monitoring of the car park, drop-off and pick-up areas, bicycle racks and parking machines and offer a means of protecting the safety and security of the public. The design is compliant to the relevant British Standards as well as taking considerations from the British Transport Police (BTP) regarding security CCTV positioning and coverage. Help Points would also be provided at each lift access points and as the foot of each set of stairs.
39. It is proposed to provide a new 11kV/400V sub-station that would be used to power the proposed development. This substation would be approximately 5m wide by 5m deep by 3m tall and is proposed to be located within the forecourt area.

Drainage

40. The proposed surface water drainage strategy uses permeable paving across large areas of the application site, which would attenuate storm water before releasing it slowly into the ground. A swale and infiltration basin (storm water balancing pond) have also been incorporated into the design to manage surface water runoff from the adjacent undeveloped land, which would minimise the risk of flooding to the railway station and car park. Due to the distance between the proposed development and the nearest public sewers, a cesspit is also proposed.

Landscaping

41. To the north and south of the railway line and to the west of the existing railway underpass, existing trees along the embankment would need to be removed to facilitate construction of the station platforms and associated infrastructure. It is proposed that the majority of the railway embankment in this location would then be seeded with a rough grass mix and intermittently planted with scrub, with trees only included where they do not present a danger to the operation of the railway (all planting must meet Network Rail guidance). Trees would be planted along the foot of the railway embankment to the

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south of the railway line. Existing trees and vegetation on the embankments to the east of the existing railway underpass are to be retained and protected during construction.

42. Tree and hedgerow planting are proposed along the perimeter of the car park and along the railway embankments. A large area of grassland is proposed to the east of the car park, with perimeter trees. Within the car park, further tree planting is proposed, along with low-growing shrubs and ground cover planting. The proposed swale and infiltration basin would be seeded with a suitable wildflower grassland mix to enhance biodiversity. A number of areas of tree planting would be supplemented by a native 'scrub mix' composed of flowering and fruiting species to support birds and other wildlife. In addition, a hedgerow with native trees is proposed along the western boundary of the application site to create a defined field boundary. A belt of native scrub and trees is also proposed along the northern boundary where there is more space. Over time this is intended to develop into a strip of woodland, connecting with the proposed field boundary along the western boundary, linking with the existing and proposed planting along the railway embankment

Construction Phasing

43. The development is anticipated to be constructed in phases, broadly set out as follows:

Phase A

- Junction enabling works (vegetation clearance on the A299 Hengist Way)

Phase B

- Creation of temporary construction access from the A299 Hengist Way (to be the permanent access upon completion), and associated street lighting.

Phase C

- Site set up (construction compound, site hoarding etc) and enabling works, including construction access from Cottington Road
- Vegetation clearance

Phase D

- Construction of station and car park works

Phase E

- Level crossing and signalling works (to be undertaken by Network Rail)

Operation

44. It is proposed that the station is unstaffed, so no permanent staff presence is anticipated. However, the train operating company could choose to post staff at the station when operational. The station would be served as a minimum by the existing services on the following routes:

- i) London Charing Cross - Tonbridge - Ashford International - Canterbury West - Ramsgate (Mainline); and
- ii) London St Pancras International - Ebbsfleet International - Ashford International - Canterbury West – Ramsgate - Margate (High Speed).

45. It is predicted that there would be a peak frequency of four to six trains per hour stopping at the station, which would provide a connection to London St Pancras in

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approximately 1 hour 9 minutes and connection to Stratford International in approximately 1 hour 2 minutes. The first service from the proposed development would depart at 04:57 to London and the last arrival will be at 01:18 from London on weekdays with services starting at 07:14 and ending at 00:25 on Sundays, based on the May 2019 timetable. These times are subject to change following the Ashford to Ramsgate Journey Time Improvements project.

46. Provision for parking for motorcycles would also be included within the car park at the proposed development. Bus access is proposed, and it is anticipated that Stagecoach buses would divert from their current route to serve the station. As detailed above, improved pedestrian and cycle access is also proposed.

Planning Policy Context

47. The most relevant Government Guidance and Development Plan Policies as summarised below are pertinent to the consideration of this application:

- (i) **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019** and the **National Planning Policy Guidance** (March 2014), sets out the Government's planning policy guidance for England, at the heart of which is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The guidance is a material consideration for the determination of planning applications but does not change the statutory status of the development plan which remains the starting point for decision making. However, the weight given to development plan policies will depend on their consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the development plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given). Proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay (*paragraph 11*).

In determining applications, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decisions in a positive and creative way, and decision takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

In terms of delivering sustainable development in relation to this development proposal, the NPPF guidance and objectives covering the following matters are of particular relevance:

- significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (*paragraph 80*);
- consideration of whether the opportunities for sustainable transport have been taken up and safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people. Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use should be identified at the plan making stage and pursued (*paragraph 102*);
- whether impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity or congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree. Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe (*paragraph 109*);

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- achieving the requirement for high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Planning decisions should ensure that developments would function well and add to the overall quality of an area; be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; establish and maintain a strong sense of place, creating a welcoming and distinctive place to live, work and visit; include an appropriate mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible (*paragraph 127*);
- public rights of way should be protected and enhanced, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users (*paragraph 98*);
- planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and site of biodiversity or geological value; recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside – including the economic and other benefits of best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland’ minimise impacts on, and provide new gains for biodiversity; prevent new and existing development from contributing to unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution; and remediating and mitigating derelict, contaminated and unstable land where appropriate (*paragraph 170*);
- the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where a project is likely to have significant effects on a habitat site (*paragraph 177*);
- planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including the setting) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage assets conservation and any aspect of the proposal (*paragraph 190*).

(ii) **Development Plan Policies**

(i) **Thanet District Council - Local Plan to 2031 (Adopted at the meeting of the District Council on 9 July 2020)**

The following policies are relevant to consideration and can be summarised as:

Strategic Policy

Policy SP04 The aim is to accommodate inward investment in job creating development, the establishment of new businesses and expansion and diversification of existing firms.

Policy SP26 Development proposals should demonstrate how they respect and respond to the character, key sensitivities, qualities and guidelines of the relevant landscape character areas (*NB. The site is within the Wantsum North Slopes*). All development should seek to avoid skyline intrusion and the loss or interruption of long views of the coast and the sea, and proposals should demonstrate how the development will take advantage of and engage with these views. Development proposals that conflict with the above principles will only be permitted where it

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can be demonstrated that they are essential for the economic or social well-being of the area. In such cases, landscape impacts should be minimised and mitigated as far as possible.

- Policy SP28** Sites of International Nature Conservation Importance will receive the highest level of protection. Where possible applicants should incorporate measures to avoid or mitigate any adverse impacts.
- Policy SP30** Development proposals will, where appropriate, be required to make a positive contribution to the conservation, enhancement and management of biodiversity and geodiversity assets resulting in a net gain for biodiversity assets. Sites should be assessed for the potential presence of biodiversity assets and protected species. For sites where important biodiversity assets, including protected species and habitats including SPA functional land, or other notable species, may be affected, an ecological assessment will be required to assess the impact of the proposed development on the relevant species or habitats. Planning permission will not be granted for development if it results in significant harm to biodiversity and geodiversity assets, which cannot be adequately mitigated or as a last resort compensated for, to the satisfaction of the appropriate authority.
- Policy SP35** All development is required to provide high quality and inclusive design, sustainability, layout and materials.
- Policy SP36** The historic or archaeological significance of Heritage Assets should have due regard to ensure conservation and enhancement of Thanet's historic environment.
- Policy SP37** New development must take account of the need to respond to climate change by minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change through the use of up to date technologies, efficient design and appropriate siting and positioning of buildings.
- Policy SP43** The Council will work with developers, transport service providers, and the local community to manage travel demand, by promoting and facilitating walking, cycling and use of public transport as safe and convenient means of transport. Development applications will be expected to take account of the need to promote safe and sustainable travel. New developments must provide safe and attractive cycling and walking opportunities to reduce the need to travel by car
- Policy SP44** Development generating a significant number of trips will be expected to be located where a range of services are or will be conveniently accessible on foot, by cycle or public transport.
- Policy SP45** Development proposals will be assessed in terms of the type and level of travel demand likely to be generated. Development will be permitted only at such time as proper provision is made to ensure delivery of relevant transport infrastructure. Where appropriate, development will be expected to make a proportionate contribution to the provision,

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extension or improvement of walking and cycling routes and facilities and to highway improvements.

Policy SP46 Land west of Cliffsend is safeguarded for a new railway station. Proposals will be required to specifically demonstrate satisfactory vehicular access arrangements from the A299, suitable level of car parking, integration with wider public transport services, mitigation of any noise impacts on sensitive receptors, compatibility with the landscape character of its location and located to minimise the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

Development Management Policies

Policy E16 Apart from allocated sites, planning permission will not be granted for significant development which would result in the irreversible loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

Policy CC02 Development is required to manage surface water resulting from the development using sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) wherever possible. SuDs design and a robust long-term maintenance plan should be included as an integral part of the master planning and design process, incorporating multi-functional benefits for people and wildlife.

Policy QD01 Development must be designed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and have resilience to function in a changing climate, both meeting sustainable design requirements and using resources sustainably.

Policy QD02 Development must promote or reinforce the local character of the area and provide high quality inclusive design and be sustainable in all other respects. Development must:

- 1) Relate to the surrounding development, form and layout and strengthen links to the adjacent areas.
- 2) Be well designed, respect and enhance the character of the area paying particular attention to context and identity of its location, scale, massing, rhythm, density, layout and use of materials appropriate to the locality. The development itself must be compatible with neighbouring buildings and spaces and be inclusive in its design for all users.
- 3) Incorporate a high degree of permeability for pedestrians and cyclists, provide safe and satisfactory access for pedestrians, public transport and other vehicles, ensuring provision for disabled access.
- 4) Improve people's quality of life by creating safe and accessible environments and promoting public safety and security by designing out crime.

External spaces, landscape, public realm, and boundary treatments must be designed as an integral part of new development proposals and coordinated with adjacent sites and phases. Development will be supported where it is demonstrated that:

- 5) Existing features including trees, natural habitats, boundary treatments and historic street furniture and/or surfaces that positively

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contribute to the quality and character of an area are should be retained, enhanced and protected where appropriate.

6) An integrated approach is taken to surface water management as part of the overall design.

7) A coordinated approach is taken to the design and siting of street furniture, boundary treatments, lighting, signage and public art to meet the needs of all users.

8) Trees and other planting is incorporated appropriate to both the scale of buildings and the space available, to provide opportunities for increasing biodiversity interest and improving connectivity between nature conservation sites where appropriate.

- Policy TP01** Development proposals which would have significant transport implications shall be supported by a Transport Assessment and where applicable a Travel Plan. These should show how multi-modal access travel options will be achieved, and how transport infrastructure needs arising from the expected demand will be provided.
- Policy TP02** Development will be expected to be designed to facilitate safe and convenient movement by pedestrians including people with limited mobility, elderly people and people with young children. Proposals should provide and enhance safe and convenient walking routes including specifically connection to and between public transport stops, railway stations, town centres, residential areas, schools and other public buildings.
- Policy TP03** Development should consider the need for the safety of cyclists and incorporate facilities for cyclists into the design. Sustainable development generating travel demand should provide convenient cycle parking and changing facilities.
- Policy TP04** Development proposals will be expected to take account of the need to facilitate use of public transport and should consist of or incorporate improvement of passenger waiting facilities, measures to improve personal security, improved accessibility for people with mobility limitations, bus/rail interchange facilities and secure cycle storage.
- Policy TP06** Proposals for development will be required to make satisfactory provision for the parking of vehicles.
- Policy TP10** Development is required to implement traffic management measures to ensure best use of the highway network in terms of safety, traffic capacity and environmental conditions.
- Policy GI01** Development which would materially harm nationally designated sites including Site of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserve or Marine Conservation Zone will not be permitted and mitigation measures will be required to maintain the integrity of the site, and where possible, measures implemented to enhance and improve connectivity to the designated sites.

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- Policy GI02** Development with a detrimental impact on locally designated wildlife sites will not be permitted unless suitable mitigation can be provided either on or off site within Thanet.
- Policy GI06** Development likely to have a significant landscape implications should be supported by a landscape survey and demonstrate how landscaping and green infrastructure will be provided to enhance the setting of the development.
- Policy HE01** Developers should submit information with the planning application that allows an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset.
- Policy SE01** Development with the potential to pollute will only be permitted where the impact upon existing and proposed land uses and the environment can be effectively and adequately minimised.
- Policy SE03** Development on land affected by contamination should fully consider the impact on human health, public safety and the environment including underlying groundwater resources.
- Policy SE04** Development in Ground Water Protection Zones, which have the potential to result in a risk of contamination to groundwater sources, will not be permitted unless adequate mitigation measures can be implemented.
- Policy SE05** Development should promote the use of sustainable low emission transport to minimise the impact of vehicle emissions on air quality, ensuring that users are not significantly adversely affected by air quality and include mitigation measures where appropriate.
- Policy SE06** Development proposals that generate significant levels of noise must be accompanied by a scheme to mitigate such effects, bearing in mind the nature of surrounding uses. Proposals that would have an unacceptable impact on noise-sensitive areas or uses will not be permitted
- Policy SE08** Development that includes the provision of new outdoor lighting should be designed to minimise light glare, light trespass, light spillage and sky glow to ensure there is no adverse impact on residential amenity, the character of the surroundings and prevent disturbance to sites of nature conservation interest and protected of vulnerable species.

Other Material Considerations

48. In addition to the considerations arising from the planning policy section above, local finance considerations and various strategy documents are also material considerations for the determination of the application. In respect of the latter, many are identified by the applicant in their case of need (see paragraphs 13 to 20) but are repeated here for ease of reference.

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- (i) **The local finance consideration arising from s43 of the Localism Act 2011.** Section 43 amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (determination of applications for planning permission: general considerations) such that in the determination of a planning application, the local planning authority must have regard to:
- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,
 - (b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and
 - (c) any other material considerations

Section 70(4) of the 1990 Act (as amended) defines a local finance consideration as a grant or other financial assistance that has been, that will or that could be provided to a relevant authority by a Minister of the Crown. In this case, the financial assistance arising from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Getting Building Fund of £11.999m and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership Local Growth Fund (LGF) of £14m are local finance considerations material to the application. The Getting Building Fund is an initiative announced by the Prime Minister in June 2020 to invest in housing and infrastructure projects to support economic recovery across the Country. Growth Deals are a long term programme to revitalise local economies. The South East Growth Deal runs from 2015-2021 and was signed by the then Transport Minister and Chairman of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) in 2014.

In deciding an application for planning permission where a local financial consideration is material, decision takers need to ensure that the reasons supporting the decision clearly state how the consideration has been taken into account and its connection to the development.

- (ii) **The Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-2031) (LTP4) published in July 2017.** Journey time improvements and Thanet Parkway Railway Station' are identified as one of the Strategic Transport Priorities which seeks to deliver a new railway station to significantly improve rail connectivity, particularly within East Kent, London and the wider area by providing access to mainline and high speed services. Improving rail access to East Kent has been a priority for Kent County Council (KCC) since 2010 when it was first identified in Growth without Gridlock: A transport delivery plan for Kent and the Local Transport Plan for Kent (2011-2016).
- (iii) **The Council's Rail Action Plan for Kent 2011** sets out the principal objectives to ensure that rail services fully meet the needs of the County's commuters, residents and visitors. One of the major priorities for action is improvements to rail journey times between Ashford and Ramsgate, and to London, via the proposed Thanet Parkway Railway Station at Cliffsend. The creation of a Parkway Station in Thanet is stated to be a key driver for the economic regeneration of deprived wards throughout East Kent, facilitating new employment, education and business opportunities
- (iv) **The Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF)** prepared by KCC and Medway Council which provides a framework for identifying and prioritising investment in infrastructure and also for testing the impact of innovation on the way in which public services are provided. In considering existing transport capacity issues, the GIF makes reference to the planned major improvements to rail journey times and connections to London to support economic growth, including Thanet Parkway.

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- (v) The proposed development is also identified as a regional priority for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP). Construction of Thanet Parkway would support their objectives by facilitating the delivery of new houses and employment space in coastal areas, promoting investment in the former Manston airport site and reinforcing the success of the nearby Discovery Park Enterprise Zone. Thanet Parkway Station is specifically referenced in SELEP's **Strategic Economic Plan 2014 (SEP)**, which also identifies the need for Local Growth Fund (LGF) transport investment in Thanet Parkway 'as a priority to reinforce the success of Discovery Park and support investment in Manston, as well as in the Westwood Relief Strategy, eliminating the major bottleneck impacting on employment and commercial growth in Thanet Central Island'.
- (vi) In addition to the above, at a National level, the principle of improvements to the countries transport infrastructure to support economic growth, enhance connectivity between businesses, goods and people, and encouraging a sustainable low-carbon economy, are set out in the *National Infrastructure Plan (2014)*, the *DfT Single Departmental Plan 2015-2020, Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon* (white paper published by the DfT in 2011), *Door to Door; A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration* (DfT, 2013), *Transport Investment Strategy* (DfT, 2017) and the *National Infrastructure Assessment* (published by the National Infrastructure Commission in 2017).

Consultations

49. **Thanet District Council** strongly support the proposal and comment as follows:

"Thanet District Council (TDC) are strongly supportive of the Thanet Parkway Station project. This is recognised directly in Council's Corporate Statement 2019-2023, approved by full Council in October 2019, which supports infrastructure improvements including the Parkway Station to support inward investment, local enterprise and housing growth. The Local Plan includes recognition of this supportive position within Policy SP46. In accordance with the policy, we expect consideration of the following factors in the determination of the application by Kent County Council:

- 1) Satisfactory vehicular access arrangements should be provided from A299.
- 2) Suitable level of car parking to serve the station should be provided.
- 3) Integration with wider public transport services.
- 4) Mitigation of any noise impacts on sensitive receptors.
- 5) Compatibility with the landscape character of its location.
- 6) Located to minimise the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

Dover District Council supports the application. The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Licensing comments as follows:

"You will be aware the case of the proposed development has evolved over a number of years and is supported by Dover District Council (DDC). I am mindful of the substantial consultations that have taken place as part of the process and that, overall the proposals have been very well received.

From DDC's perspective, it is evident that improvements to accessibility are required to East Kent in general and to the locality and the catchment area in which the new railway station at Cliffsend is located.

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You will be no doubt be aware that considerable progress has been made at the nearby Discovery Park Enterprise Zone and work is underway to realise its full potential in terms of bringing forward a mixed use development on the site. The issue of transport and accessibility for Discovery Park remains as strong today as when it was made during the early development of the Enterprise Zone. In fact, this is even more important given the fact that it is the intention of the new owners to bring forward the site for a mixed use development.

Dover District Council, therefore, continues to support the proposals for a railway station at Cliffsend as this will facilitate improved accessibility for the future growth and development of the Discovery Park Enterprise Zone alongside other opportunities that may emerge in the locality. In supporting the application for the new railway station at Cliffsend I should make the point that DDC expects that there will be no dilution of rail services to either Sandwich, Deal or Dover as a consequence of the service connections to be made to Cliffsend railway station.

I should be grateful if you would take into account DDC's comments in reaching a decision on this planning application.”

Cliffsend Parish Council no comments received to date.

Minster Parish Council raise strong objection to the proposal and comment as follows:

“The proposal is based on improved access to London to encourage investment in one of the most deprived areas in the UK. It is stated that reducing the journey time by 3 minutes and improving parking will achieve this aim. There are already 7 railway stations in Thanet and a further one in nearby Sandwich. Two of these stations are less than 2 miles from the proposed Parkway site.

The Local Plan (Policy SP45) and the Design & Access statement refer to protection of the environment and mitigation of climate change. Yet this project is to be built on Grade 2 agricultural land in a rural area, with a significant loss of mature trees and will result in more car journeys to access it, making use of the 299 parking spaces. History suggests development along this fast rail line will result in the urbanisation of a corridor of land stretching through from Cliffsend to Stourmouth, thus even more environmental destruction.

The Planning Application Supporting Statement includes Table 4.1 setting out 6 options with their advantages and disadvantages. We refer here to the first two options. The first option is to deliver a new railway station, giving 3 advantages: high frequency train service to London in less than an hour, shortest distance for a shuttle bus and a good marketing tool to attract investment. It sets out one disadvantage of a high initial cost. The second option is to increase parking provision at Ramsgate Railway Station, giving 3 advantages: lower cost, high frequency service to London in an hour, and available in a shorter timescale than building a new station. It sets 2 disadvantages: lack of available land for additional parking and it "would not have the same environmental impact as a new railway station,".

We are therefore expected to accept that in excess of £34 million is to be spent on building a new station within 2 miles of two existing stations rather than find a location for additional parking, based on the above perceived 'advantages,' and the much-overstated reduction in journey time. Furthermore, assurances have

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been given that Minster Station will remain operational. However, it is clear from the Planning Application Supporting Statement that this is not the case. It states, "Minster Station is currently only served by mainline services and with limited parking, this is not a station which will meet the needs of local residents current and in future."

In summary, the construction of Parkway Station is not justified either in terms of economic or social need; and therefore, this ever-increasing sum of money would be better spent in addressing so many other needs in this deprived area."

Manston Parish Council no comments received to date.

Ramsgate Town Council no comments received to date

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation raise no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the following matters:

- the submission of a Construction Management Plan prior to each phase of the development commencing;
- provision of wheel wash facilities during construction;
- the submission of details of the permanent bus shelter facilities prior to bus services commencing, and thereafter ongoing retention;
- provision of measure to prevent surface water discharge onto the highway;
- provision and permanent retention of vehicle parking spaces prior to use of the site commencing;
- the submission of details of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points as indicated on the application drawings, and thereafter ongoing retention;
- the submission of details of secure, covered cycle parking facilities prior to use of the site commencing, and thereafter ongoing retention;

As part of this application, and to address concerns raised regarding potential parking on local roads (see paragraph 54 below), the applicant has submitted a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which sets out an agreement between the applicant and the Highways, Transportation & Waste Directorate. Under the agreement, the applicant commits to monitoring on-street parking within a 600m radius of the new station after opening in comparison to levels prior to opening through means of a parking beat survey, i.e. a count of on-street parked vehicles. Should on-street parking levels after opening be found to significantly increase affecting residential amenity, the applicant commits to implementing measures to alleviate the concern up to a total capped value of £15,000 (including survey costs). Options could include the introduction of a controlled parking zone (CPZ) in the residential streets surrounding the new station. It is of note that a CPZ would need to be implemented in conjunction with Thanet District Council and be subject to consultation with the local community and the Thanet Joint Transportation Board as appropriate.

Highway and Transportation advises that the MoU addresses potential concerns over parking displacement within surrounding local roads. Highways and Transportation also comments as follows:

"The proposed Thanet Parkway Station (TPW) forms a part of the emerging Thanet Transport Strategy (TTS), which in turn underpins the Thanet Local Plan (TLP). It represents an important piece of transport infrastructure to

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encourage increased use of rail-based travel in the locality, by complimenting the existing stations within the district with improved vehicle access and vehicle parking offer. It is also identified as a strategic priority within KCC Local Transport Plan 4 and is consistent with several national transport planning policies/strategies including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Whilst it is important to recognise the strong policy position for TPW, it is equally important that its access strategy is appropriately designed and does not create overbearing residual impact on the surrounding highway network, or highway safety issues. It is equally important to recognise the status of TPW as a complimentary transport-based infrastructure to encourage sustainable travel and relieve parking pressure around existing stations in the locality.

The proposed TPW would improve access to rail services within Thanet and parts of Dover District. It would also provide access to rail services for Cliffsend residents, a village which is currently very limited in terms of sustainable travel options. TPW is likely to have a modest impact on the local road network and the proposed site access is likely to have enough spare capacity to accommodate a significant increase in flows over and above local plan growth.

Some approach arms of local junctions at Sevenscore and Lord of the Manor are identified as being over capacity within the future and TPW would create a moderate level of additional queuing and delay. However, these forecasts are based on very robust modelling outputs. They take no account for future highway improvements that may be delivered as local plan growth is realised or potential travel mode shift in Cliffsend. There is also a robust level of allowance for theoretical recommencement of freight activities at Ramsgate Port, which may or may not materialise in the future.

The site access is located in a challenging position in terms of topography and road geometry. The proposed access differs to the previous [withdrawn] planning application, with an all movements signal junction now being replaced by a less complex left in left out signal junction arrangement. The access has been subject to an independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) and is acceptable from a road safety perspective. There are benefits and disbenefits to the current station access proposals, with a reduction in the amount of delay to traffic on the A256 Hengist Way (compared to the previous scheme) being an advantage, and an increase in journey distance/time for those accessing the station (including any future bus services) from the west of the station being a disadvantage. On balance, whilst a suitable all movements access arrangement would be the preferred solution (particularly for future bus access), the current proposals are not considered to be objectionable. It is recommended that should funding/land availability circumstances change, that the applicant consider the provision of a suitable all movements access, as this would enhance access and the attractiveness of the station.

Bus service provision at the proposed station can be reviewed closer to the opening of the station (and then periodically in line with TLP growth). Following initial discussions, it would appear that there are no immediate plans by commercial bus operators to stop at the station, however it is eminently sensible to provide areas within the site for future bus services, as there are plans to link potential development at Manston Airport (if permitted) to the station via a shuttle bus arrangement.”

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With regard to the Manston DCO decision made in July 2020, Highways and Transportation are satisfied that no additional survey work is required.

Environment Agency raise no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the submission of a remediation strategy to deal with risks associated with land contamination, submission of a verification report regarding the remediation strategy, ceasing of work should unexpected contamination be found, control over the infiltration of surface water to ground, and restrictions on piling and other foundation designs using penetrative methods. Advice and guidance is also provided with regard to the disposal of waste material.

The County Council's Flood Risk Team (SuDs) raise no objection to this application subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the submission of a detailed surface water drainage scheme prior to the commencement of the development (except for necessary enabling works and site clearance), and the submission of a verification report pertaining to the above prior to first occupation/use of the development.

Southern Water raise no objection to this application and are satisfied that the proposal would not adversely affect Southern Water apparatus. However, ongoing dialogue between the applicant and Southern Water would be required during the construction of the development. Advice and guidance is provided with regard to the protection of apparatus, sustainable drainage, surface water, petrol interceptors and land drainage.

The County Council's Biodiversity Officer raises no objection to this application subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the submission of a biodiversity plan demonstrating biodiversity net gain, the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan for the protection of bats, reptiles, badgers, hedgehogs and breeding birds, and the submission of details of a sensitive lighting scheme that aims to minimise and avoid impacts to foraging and commuting bats.

It is noted that the Construction Environmental Management Plan would ensure that construction activities would not adversely impact on protected species. During the operational phase however, the Environmental Assessment concludes (precautionary given the current lack of detailed lighting proposals) that there would be a moderate adverse (significant) residual impact of lighting on bat activity.

Kent Wildlife Trust no comments received to date.

Natural England raise no objection to the application and consider that the proposed development would not have significant adverse impacts on statutory protected nature conservation sites or landscapes.

CPRE Kent Thanet Branch raise objection to the application, and question the need for the station. It is not considered that the development would be sustainable, nor would it add to the overall quality of the area or establish a strong sense of space, as required by the NPPF. CPRE Thanet do not consider that the development would positively affect employment opportunities in Thanet, and question the financial viability of the scheme. It is stated that more jobs should be provided within Thanet, not provide another station for commuters to travel out of the area. It is also suggested that the introduction of the Parkway Station would not improve journey times but could add to existing journey times from stations already operating in Thanet, and that existing stations are able to accommodate passenger demand. Should existing passengers revert to using the

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Parkway Station, existing stations may close, and traffic movements in the area would increase.

In addition, CPRE Thanet note that the proposed site is flat Grade 1 Agricultural land - the best and most versatile quality in terms of its Agricultural Land Classification, and stress the vital importance of safeguarding such land resource for agricultural use. The list of potential environmental impacts seems to focus on positive benefits, with no recognition of negative impacts, and it appears to ignore the need to assess the consequential and wider impacts.

CPRE Thanet conclude that the proposed Thanet Parkway is not the right solution to deliver the benefits that are claimed. Further alternatives such as enhanced coordination of bus transport to “feed” existing stations need to be explored and compared with the environmental disbenefits of a new station. CPRE Thanet’s interpretation of the proposals is that the Parkway is a country car park for the railway and would greatly increase car traffic, contrary to all planning policies. Rail growth which replaces car journeys is clearly beneficial, but the Parkway is predicated on providing more car parking places, not fewer.

Historic England do not wish to offer any comment on the application, and suggest we seek the views of our specialist conservation and archaeological advisors.

The County Council’s Archaeological Officer raises no objection to this application and comments as follows:

“The submitted Written Scheme of Investigation is a suitable scheme of works to address the archaeological mitigation of the scheme impacts. A suitably worded condition that secures the implementation of these works in accordance with a timetable that will be agreed directly with the County Archaeologist should be imposed. Any changes to the scheme of works should be agreed with the County Archaeologist.”

The County Council’s Conservation Officer raises no objection to this application and comments as follows:

“The historic assets that are likely to be affected by the proposal are three farmsteads within 1km of the application site (Thorne Farm and Sevenscore Farm to the west and Cliffsend Farm to the south) and St Augustine’s Cross to the south of the site. Negative visual effects would result from the removal of mature tree screening from the railway embankments and the construction of new platform structures above the embankments.

If this application is approved, it is essential that the proposed landscaping scheme is carried out. This would help to mitigate the visual effects of the development over the long term by screening the new platform structures once the re-planted trees have matured.

Overall, the negative visual effects on the setting of the historic assets in the area of the application site are likely to be of minor significance. We therefore do not wish to raise an objection to this proposal.”

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The County Council's Noise Advisor raise no objection to the application, subject to conditions securing the provision of the acoustic barriers to the rear of the platforms, and the submission of Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) for each construction phase to detail, amongst other matters, noise control measures and provision of suitable mitigation where necessary. The Noise Advisor further comments as follows:

“The noise chapter (of the ES) includes a robust assessment of the operational rail noise impact. The findings support the original view that train noise will be no worse than the baseline scenario. This conclusion was achieved by undertaking additional noise monitoring at a similar station [Birchington-on-Sea] in order to differentiate and compare high speed passing train noise (current situation) with noise from a train arriving at a station (proposed situation). The measured data showed that an arriving train was slightly quieter than a passing train, but the actual train arrival event was slightly longer. The net effect was a marginal higher noise level of 0.4 dB. Amey have reviewed this additional section in detail and support the conclusion that a 0.4 dB change in noise is negligible (and not a perceptible change) and is therefore acceptable. The introduction of a 2.4m acoustic barrier at the rear of the platforms is also welcomed and addresses any concerns regarding potential disturbance from brake squeal and engine acceleration at receptors to the north-east and south-east of the station site.

The previous comments made by Amey (*relating to the previous planning application which was withdrawn*) highlighted the potential for adverse noise effects from the location of the site compound and recommended that the location be reviewed. The current application continues to show the compound location unaltered although three access points have now been identified. The use of Network Rail's Foad's Lane access point would be used only for out of hours use during rail blockades and the main site access would be the temporary roads off Hengist Way and Cottington Road. These changes are welcomed although it will remain important that the control measures for the construction compound (and the works in general) are addressed by a robust Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) including the provision of suitable mitigation where necessary.

In summary, the key noise issues have been satisfactorily addressed. However, it is recommended that provision of a comprehensive CEMP detailing noise control measures is conditioned as is the provision of acoustic barriers to the rear of the platforms. The applicant has suggested that separate CEMP documentation be submitted for each phase of the works, and this is considered to be a pragmatic and satisfactory methodology for delivering noise control measures.”

The County Council's Air Quality Advisor raise no objection to the application, subject to a condition securing the submission of Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) for each construction phase to detail, amongst other matters, dust control measures and provision of suitable mitigation where necessary.

The County Council's Landscape Advisor raise no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the following matters:

- Tree retention and protection of trees to be retained, including root protection areas;

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- The submission and approval of a scheme of landscaping and tree planting prior to the commencement of the development (apart from enabling works and site clearance), including the provision of early tree planting if possible;
- Implementation of the approved landscaping scheme in the first planting season following completion of the development, and replacement of any trees/plants that are damaged/diseased/dead within 5 years from the completion of the development;
- Any mounding proposed must be agreed by the County Planning Authority;
- All tree work to be undertaken in accordance with BS3998:2012 'Recommendations for Tree Work'.

The County Council's Public Rights of Way Officer raises no objection to this application subject to a condition of consent requiring the submission and approval of a scheme of access and construction works setting out any path alignment, surfacing, width and signage details within 6 months of the date of the permission, and a further condition requiring the delivery of the approved works prior to first use/occupation of the development.

The Ramblers no comments received to date.

Network Rail fully supports the introduction of Thanet Parkway Railway Station and considers that the new station would provide numerous benefits including improved rail passenger journey time between Thanet and London, supporting the overall regeneration of the Isle of Thanet.

Kent Police Designing Out Crime Officer provides advice and guidance with regards to designing our crime and crime prevention, and requests that, should permission be granted, further dialogue be undertaken with Kent Police, in addition to British Transport Police.

Health Protection Agency (Public Health England) state that they would not normally comment on this type of planning application unless there were specific chemical & environmental hazard concerns. Impacts on public health from local air quality, noise and contaminated land fall under the remit of the local planning authority.

Ramsgate Heritage and Design Forum remain supportive of the parkway concept as part of the overall strategy for improving rail accessibility to the East Kent sub region but have reservations regarding the design and landscaping. The removal of the elevated footbridge reduces the impact of the station structure on the landscape and this is welcomed. However, the design is still considered to be utilitarian and would, due to its form, massing and materials, sit uncomfortably in its rural setting. To enliven the visitor experience and use of the existing subway commissioning of a public art project should be considered. The changes to restrict vehicle ingress and egress to the westbound carriageway of Hengist Way is sensible, but consideration should be given to reducing the speed limit on this section of the road.

The Broadstairs Society object the application and are of the view that the application should not proceed until the future of Manston Airport is determined. A decision was due on Manston on May 2020 but this was delayed. Assuming the airport is given approval, it is not clear how many people using the airport would want to use the station. Most people living in Broadstairs who commute the London would continue to walk to Broadstairs Station. The Society also has concerns about the fact that the station would not be staffed.

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Local Member

50. The application site straddles the border of two divisions, Ramsgate and Birchington & Rural. The County Members for both divisions, Ms Karen Constantine (Ramsgate), Mr Paul Messenger (Ramsgate), Ms Emma Dawson (Birchington & Rural), and Ms Liz Hurst (Birchington and Rural) were notified of the application on the 10 December 2019. All four County Members were also notified of the submission of additional and amended information, including the addendum the Environmental Statement, on the 15 June 2020. No written views have been received.

Publicity

51. This application was publicised by an advertisement in a local newspaper, the posting of 8 site notices and the individual notification of 195 residential properties.
52. The submission of additional and amended information, including the addendum to the Environmental Statement, was publicised by an advertisement in a local newspaper, and the posting of 12 site notices. Neighbour notification was suspended by the County Council at that time due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so an additional 4 site notices were posted in local residential streets surrounding the application site. Members will be aware the neighbour notification is a discretionary publicity requirement.

Representations

53. In response to the publicity, 35 letters of representation were received in response to the initial consultation, 29 raising objection to the scheme, and 6 supporting the proposal. An additional letter of support was received from the CEO of Discovery Park.
54. A further 6 letters of representation have been received in response to the advertisement of the receipt of additional and amended information, including the addendum to the Environmental Statement, 4 raising objection, and a further 2 in support (including one from the Margate Civic Society). A summary of the main planning issues raised, including points of objection and support, is set out below:

Need/impact on existing stations

- lack of a case of need and perceived benefit to journey times is minimal;
- the station would negatively impact on journey times from existing stations in Thanet due to the additional stop required;
- the trains cannot travel any faster than they currently do so the time saving is purely due to the stations location, but you have to drive there;
- the people of Thanet do not want or need another station as they have 7 already and two within 3 miles of Thanet Parkway (TPW);
- would TPW result in a reduction of train services at existing local stations/result in their closure?
- the cost of parking and the cost of high speed train travel would be prohibitive so the station would not be used;
- TPW is a waste of public money – the money could be better spent on other needed local facilities or improving existing stations/line upgrades;
- a new station would be more beneficial at Manston Airport;
- the station would not benefit the residents of Cliffsend or Thanet and is not needed;

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Highways and Access Matters

- highway and access concerns including additional traffic and congestion on already congested roads/junction, including the Lord of the Manor and Sevenscore roundabouts;
- access to the station/underpass from Earlsmead Crescent needs to be blocked/prevented. It is not a PROW and it would encourage users of the station to park in local roads to avoid parking costs;
- what will be done to stop station users parking in local residential roads? Will parking restrictions be introduced? The local roads in Cliffsend cannot accommodate additional on street car parking;
- house building in the area is already putting pressure on local roads and adding to existing parking problems, the station will only exacerbate this;
- the main road through Cliffsend does not have a pavement and is not safe to accommodate additional pedestrians/vehicles;
- the station is just a car park, with poor access links by foot and cycle, and limited access by public transport. All TPW will do is encourage people to drive to a station to park, instead of walking to a local station that already exists;
- buses will not access the station due to the proposed access arrangements with a left in and out only;

Landscape Matters, including Design, and Ecological Concerns

- the loss of agricultural land is unacceptable;
- the development would be an eyesore and obtrusive in the rural landscape;
- the visual impact of the development would be detrimental to the local area and would have an urbanising effect on the wider landscape;
- the loss of trees from the embankment would impact on the wider landscape and also result in a loss of habitat;
- the development would have a negative impact on ecology and wildlife, due to a loss of habitat and introduction of hard surfacing and lighting etc;
- additional landscaping and tree planting should be provided, especially within the car parking area;
- off-site tree planting should be provided along the verges of all adjacent main roads to screen the development;
- evergreen planting must be included to screen the development in winter months;
- the external materials proposed are not suitable for a rural location;
- a more suitable location for the station is a quarter of a mile further west, on flat land beyond the new A256 Sandwich Road,

General Matters including Amenity Concerns

- the development is not sustainable;
- the loss of trees from the embankment would remove the screening local residents currently have from the train line and its associated noise, and the replacement planting is not sufficient and will take years to mature;
- increase in air pollution due to additional vehicle trips;
- increase in noise pollution from stopping trains and tannoy announcements;
- increased light pollution;
- loss of privacy and overlooking of local properties from the platforms;
- safety/vandalism/antisocial behaviour concerns regarding an unmanned station;
- the use of an underpass at an unmanned station raises personal safety and crime concerns;
- how can disabled users use this station if unmanned?

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- the station may encourage further house building and development around the village of Cliffsend, urbanising the currently rural area;
- drainage issues and concerns raised by Southern Water need to be addressed;

Support

- the proposal has full support as a major contribution to the regeneration of the area;
- the station would be of great benefit to Thanet, reducing journey times to London, encouraging businesses and commuters to the area;
- the projects merits stand on their own, but with the green light now given to the Manston Airport DCO the station will prove as even more important addition to the local transportation network;
- the underpass is a much better design solution than the previous footbridge.

Discussion

55. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 19 above. Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, this proposal needs to be considered in the context of Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the other material considerations as set out in paragraph 48 of this report, and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. Members should note that the Localism Act requires that where a local financial consideration is material, as in this case, decision takers need to ensure that the reasons supporting the decision clearly state how that consideration has been taken into account.
56. In this case the key determining factors, in my view, are the principle of the development and case of need, local finance considerations, siting and design including landscape and visual impact, access and highway matters, biodiversity, heritage matters and general residential and local amenity considerations. The main issues are discussed below and where appropriate reference is made to the Environmental Statement (ES) and/or detailed surveys carried out in support of the application and to consultees responses/views.

Principle of the Development and Case of Need

57. Whilst there is strong policy support for a Thanet Parkway Station, as set out in paragraphs 49 and 54 of this report, the need for the station and its benefits have been questioned, and objection has been raised to the proposal by Minster Parish Council, CPRE (Thanet), the Broadstairs Society and local residents on this ground. However, it should also be noted that Thanet District Council, Dover District Council, the Ramsgate Design and Heritage Forum, the CEO of Discovery Park and a number of local residents support the principle of the development and consider that Thanet Parkway (TPW) would be a catalyst for employment opportunities and economic growth, and be of great benefit to the local area by improving transport links to London. This strong support is given significant weight by the recent adoption of the Thanet District Council Local Plan to 2031, Policy SP46 of which specifically safeguards the application site for a new Railway Station. Policy SP46 reads as follows:

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Land west of Cliffsend is safeguarded for a new railway station. Proposals will be required to specifically demonstrate all of the following:

- 1) satisfactory vehicular access arrangements from the A299,*
- 2) suitable level of car parking,*
- 3) integration with wider public transport services,*
- 4) mitigation of any noise impacts on sensitive receptors,*
- 5) compatibility with the landscape character of its location, &*
- 6) located to minimise the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.*

58. In addition to the local plan designation, which must be given significant weight in the consideration of this application, as set out in paragraph 48 of this report, improving rail access to East Kent has been a priority for Kent County Council (KCC) since 2010 when it was first identified in *Growth without Gridlock: A transport delivery plan for Kent and the Local Transport Plan for Kent (2011-2016)*. It remains a priority in KCC's latest *Local Transport Plan 4; Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-2031)* (LTP4) published in July 2017. One of the Strategic Transport Priorities outlined in LTP4 is for 'Journey time improvements and a Thanet Parkway Railway Station', which seeks to deliver a new railway station to significantly improve rail connectivity, particularly within East Kent, London and the wider area by providing access to mainline and high speed services.
59. LTP4 sets out the key principles behind the case of need for a TPW station, namely:
 - aims to solve the issue of poor accessibility in Thanet that discourages major employers from locating in the area due to currently being beyond the 'magic hour' time from London. Regeneration in East Kent is considered to be dependent on improving accessibility.
 - enhancing the accessibility of the wider area of East Kent by reducing the estimated journey time from Thanet Parkway to London St Pancras to just over 20 minutes shorter than from Deal to London St Pancras,
 - to improve rail connectivity between East Kent, London, and the wider Kent areas, and provide increased attractiveness of East Kent, helping to achieve LTP4 outcomes of economic growth and minimised connection, and affordable and accessible door-to-door journeys.
 - to provide access to greater employment opportunities for local residents and increase the attractiveness for investment in the Discovery Park Enterprise Zone and other business parks in Thanet. It would also support local housing objectives.
60. As set out in paragraph 48 of this report, TPW is also identified within the *Rail Action Plan for Kent* as one of the major priorities for facilitating improvements to rail journey times between Ashford and Ramsgate, and to London. The creation of TPW is stated to be a key driver for the economic regeneration of deprived wards throughout East Kent, facilitating new employment, education and business opportunities. Furthermore, with regard to delivering strategic economic objectives, the proposed development also supports the aims of the *Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF)* developed by KCC and Medway Council. In considering existing transport capacity issues, the GIF makes reference to the planned major improvements to rail journey times and connections to London to support economic growth, including TPW.
61. The proposed development is also a regional priority for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP). The purpose of these Partnerships is to determine strategic economic priorities, while making investments and delivering incentives to drive growth and create jobs. Delivery of Thanet Parkway would support their objectives by facilitating the delivery of new

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houses and employment space in coastal areas, promoting investment in the former Manston Airport site and reinforcing the success of Discovery Park Enterprise Zone. Thanet Parkway Station is specifically referenced in SELEP's *Strategic Economic Plan 2014 (SEP)*, which also identifies the need for Local Growth Fund (LGF) transport investment in Thanet Parkway 'as a priority to reinforce the success of Discovery Park and support investment in Manston, as well as in the Westwood Relief Strategy, eliminating the major bottleneck impacting on employment and commercial growth in Thanet Central Island'. In recognition of the key role that TPW plays in SELEP's economic strategy, SELEP has awarded Thanet Parkway Station an allocation of £14 million LGF money, subject to planning consent. A further £11.999 million of Government funding from the recently announced Getting Building Fund has also been secured to support economic recovery, subject to planning consent. Further to this, at a National level, the principle of improvements to the country's transport infrastructure to support economic growth, enhance connectivity between businesses, goods and people, and encouraging a sustainable low-carbon economy, are set out in a number of key documents (see paragraph 48)

62. In considering the above, it is clear that there is strong national, regional and local policy support for TPW, and that its delivery is a strategic priority for Kent County Council, as identified within its *LTP4; Delivering Growth without Gridlock* and the *Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework*. There is a strong strategic policy support for the development, but material considerations raised throughout the consultation process need to be considered and addressed, and subsequently balanced against the national, regional and local strategic and policy support for the scheme. In addition to the matters specifically referenced in the newly adopted Thanet District Local Plan, Policy SP46, and the matters raised throughout the consultation process (to be discussed later in this report), the principle of the development and case of need has been questioned. These matters need to be addressed before the principle of the scheme can be accepted.

Manston Airport Decision

63. As set out in paragraph 8 of this report, in July 2020 the Secretary of State for Transport approved the Development Consent Order authorising proposals by 'RiverOak' to open Manston airport as a freight airport. It has been questioned what the implications are of this decision on the case of need for TPW. The applicant confirms that TPW was originally conceived as an airport parkway station to support the forecast expansion in passenger services at Manston. However, those forecast passengers never materialised and ultimately the airport closed in 2014. The need for the station was reviewed at that time and it was found that the project still provided high value for money even without an airport, partly due to the housing growth identified in the Thanet Local Plan, as well as having a strong strategic case in terms of attracting investment to East Kent.
64. As part of the original development proposals, a spur of the High-Speed line to directly connect with the airport terminal was investigated. However, such a project was cost prohibitive and did not justify the required level of investment when a shuttle bus or taxi service could provide the last mile link between a new station on the existing line and the Airport. However, the proposals from RiverOak Strategic Partners are predominantly for a freight airport and, as such, the need for a new passenger railway station is not part of their proposals (albeit they do intend to introduce some passenger services). The applicant advises that the TPW 'Passenger Demand Modelling' has been independently reviewed by several consultants since Manston Airport closed and so they are confident

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that it is robust and accurate. The business case has also been independently verified. Notwithstanding this, should the airport reopen in the future, as planned, the case for Thanet Parkway would only be strengthened and could justify further enhancements, such as a shuttle bus link to the airport.

65. Having considered the information provided above, and in giving the level of strategic and policy support for TPW which is not predicated on a future use for Manston Airport, I am satisfied that the recent decision on the future of Manston would not detract from the case of need for TPW. Further, the reopening of Manston as a freight airport, with limited passenger flights, could strengthen the need for TPW, providing an infrastructure first approach with possible future shuttle links between the two transport hubs.

Journey Time Improvements (JTI)

66. The benefit of the development to journey times has also been questioned, as a key target for TPW is to reduce the journey time to London. However, by adding an additional station on the existing line, 2 minutes is added to any journeys from stations to the east of TPW, arguably offsetting any gain from a high speed (HS1) service. The applicant advises that it has worked together with Network Rail on a scheme to reduce journey times between Ashford International and Ramsgate stations through public crossing and track alignment improvements. The Journey Time Improvement (JTI) scheme is expected to deliver a three-minute saving, with two minutes delivered in the December 2019 timetable and the third minute planned for the December 2021 timetable change. Importantly, these journey time savings have always been envisaged as benefitting the whole Thanet District rather than specifically just Ramsgate.
67. I am further advised that the above would mean that a new station could be accommodated within the existing timetable because it would typically add 2 minutes (through stopping and starting) and this would be offset by the journey time saving whilst the new station would receive the full JTI benefit. An additional 2 minutes has already been included in the timetable from the removal of joining and dividing of HS1 trains at Ashford International (so it is expected to be a total of 5 minutes saved compared to the 2014 timetable). As the JTI saving would offset the increase in journey time from introducing a new station, passengers further along the line would not see a worsening compared to their current service time.
68. On this basis, the existing HS1 services, combined with JTI, would result in an improved perception of the region as a viable place to attract inward investment and provide an invaluable opportunity to bring Thanet to within an hour of London. JTI was awarded funding by the Regional Growth Fund round 2 on the basis of the support it could offer to delivering a new station. With the JTI improvements, TPW could have a journey time of around 60 minutes to London (Stratford International), and of just under 70 minutes to London St Pancras International, improving the perception that East Kent is an easily accessible and attractive place to invest and do business. In my view, this accords with the underlying principles of the development and is in accordance with the strategic objectives of the TPW scheme.

Impact on Existing Local Stations

69. Concern is also raised about the need for an additional station within Thanet when there are already 7, and the potential impact that an additional station could have on the viability of those already operating. With regard to the need for an additional station, as already discussed above, the case for Thanet Parkway station has been founded in

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much research and modelling that has taken place since the prospect of domestic High Speed services being introduced to Kent was first announced. Since then, Thanet Parkway has been adopted into Kent County Council's (KCC) transport policy, most recently *Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock* (2016 – 2031). Further, the station is a key infrastructure requirement to support Thanet's recently adopted Local Plan and is identified in the Thanet Transport Strategy as such. The adopted Local Plan safeguards the proposed development site for a new railway station. Importantly, the station is not designed to divert passengers from Thanet's existing stations but rather to provide additional capacity so that a growing population can have better access to the rail network, as well as to promote economic growth by providing better journeys to other Kent towns and London.

70. In considering the above, I am satisfied that TPW is proposed to address an identified current and future shortcoming in transport provision in Thanet, with the intention of improving the economic performance of East Kent and drive regeneration and investment. I am satisfied that the need for the station has not arisen solely as a result of the deficiencies of existing stations (such as lack of car parking) and an intention to replace them, but rather a need to supplement and improve rail connections to East Kent. However, should permission be granted, the likelihood is that a proportion of the users of TPW would potentially have switched from alternative local stations. In doing so, this could unlock additional capacity at other local stations for further growth within their own catchment areas (due to additional housing for example), the impact of TPW (once operational) on the future viability of existing local stations needs to be considered and assessed.
71. The applicant advises that the business case for TPW has assessed the impact of the proposed station on the surrounding stations and that passenger demand modelling has also been independently verified. TPW is designed to increase overall station capacity in the area to cater for future growth. It would not, therefore, make sense to close any other stations as a result of opening an additional station and I am advised that this is not the intention. For further reassurance, I am advised that it is a complex and difficult process to close a station. The Railways Act 2005 sets out the statutory process for a closure, which includes consultation with passengers and their representative bodies. In this area of the country, the closure of a station can only be proposed by the Secretary of State for Transport, the train operating company (currently Southeastern) or Network Rail. The Department for Transport (DfT) must then come to a view, which must be ratified by the Office of Rail and Road (the regulator).
72. Given the information above, I am satisfied that a case of need for an additional station within Thanet has been demonstrated, and recognize that there is no intention to close any existing stations as a result of TPW. The additional station has strong strategic and policy support and is predicated on an identified need to address current and future deficiencies in rail travel provision in Thanet, with the intention of improving the economic performance of East Kent and drive regeneration and investment. However, local representations have questioned how the provision of an additional station would attract inward investment or help to economy of Thanet. This will be discussed below.

Encouraging Economic Development and Investment – Economic Benefits

73. Thanet Parkway is not just a transport project. It is also aimed at bringing regeneration benefits to East Kent. The business case for the project has looked at the wider economic benefits the scheme would bring as part of developing the strategic case. Kent County Council commissioned a study by Wessex Economics (January 2016),

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which describes how, within the South East, proximity and journey time to London is a key factor influencing local economic performance. There is a direct and observable relationship between the economic performance of localities in the South East and East of England and their distance from London, with areas more distant (measured in time) performing less well. Thanet has historically poor performance because it is, in effect, “at the end of the line” from London. In 2019, Wessex Economics updated this work for Thanet District Council and ultimately came to the same conclusions.

74. This application identifies that the East Kent area is ‘economically disadvantaged’ when compared with West Kent and South East England as a whole. Poor accessibility is one factor that has discouraged major employers from locating in the area, which serves to undermine regeneration and has limited the employment catchment for local residents. Long commuting times to London are often seen as a barrier for new business investment and so improving connectivity is a vital step in unlocking development potential and attracting the necessary investment and job opportunities for local people. TPW would give a headline journey time of around 60 minutes from Thanet Parkway to London Stratford International, and just 69 minutes to London St Pancras. Being around one hour from London reinforces the perception that a place is good for investment. Further, TPW would stimulate additional housing development (allocated in the local plan) because of the improvement to rail services to London attracting skilled residents to the area who could commute to London and other towns in Kent. In turn, that would attract greater levels of inward investment and accelerate the delivery of jobs in the area.
75. It is important to note that Thanet District Council and Dover District Council both strongly support this application, largely on the grounds of TPW supporting inward investment, local enterprise and housing growth. Discovery Park have openly supported the scheme, and local residents have written in supporting the provision of the new station due the reduced journey times to London, encouraging businesses to invest in Thanet. This strong support strengthens the applicant’s business case in that having an accessible station within around an hour’s journey time to London would improve the perception of East Kent as a place to invest. In light of the above, and the strong strategic and policy support for TPW, I consider that TPW would support and encourage inward investment and local housing growth, and attract both commuters and businesses to Thanet. The economic benefits and regeneration opportunities are therefore supported and need to be given significant weight in the determination of this application.

HS1 Capacity

76. It has been questioned as to whether the existing trains (in terms of available space on trains) would be able to accommodate the additional passenger movements generated by TPW. The applicant advises that the capacity of train services was assessed as part of the business case and no issue was found with the trains being able to accommodate the additional passengers at this location. Passengers joining at Thanet Parkway should be able to get a seat. However, it is recognised that capacity coming out of the London termini in the evening peak is less than demand. Consequently, passengers for Thanet Parkway may have to stand for the first part of their journey, as they would now if travelling to Ramsgate. This is not considered a severe impact but has been assessed as part of the business case when calculating the value for money of the project. When the franchise is renewed, it is possible that further HS1 services or longer trains may be specified by the Department for Transport (DfT). Separately, the County Council would push for this when the future franchise specification is being developed by the DfT. In

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considering the above, I can see no reason why the additional passengers that TPW would generate could not be accommodated on the existing rail services, irrespective of any potential future upgrades to services.

Passenger Costs

77. Lastly, with regard to the principle of the development and need, it is suggested by local residents that the cost of parking at the station and using the HS1 service would render it an unviable option for Thanet, and that TPW would therefore not be used. The applicant advises that the pricing strategy for the car park has yet to be determined. However, the passenger demand modelling has assumed a charge of £3.50 per day, which compares favourably with other stations in the County. For example, Ramsgate is £4.80 per day, Margate £3.70 and Sandwich £4.20. The intention is to ensure that Thanet Parkway is attractive to prospective passengers but that operational and maintenance costs of the car park are covered.
78. With regard to rail fares, these are set by the train operating company (Southeastern) in line with the DfT's policy and anything specific in the franchise agreement. Whilst it is recognised that the HS1 service has higher fares than the regular service, the case of need for the station and support from local businesses and residents alike, suggest that passengers would choose to use HS1. It is important to note however, that standard services would also stop at TPW, and that a percentage of passengers are expected to use TPW instead of other local stations, as discussed above.
79. In considering the above, I am satisfied that TPW would be used by passengers choosing to use HS1 and also existing local train services. The station offers competitive parking rates with sufficient parking facilities to cater for demand. A case of need for additional train services and an additional station has been made (as discussed above), and I see reason to disagree with the forecasting undertaken by the applicant, nor the extensive strategic and policy support for the additional station in Thanet. I am therefore satisfied that TPW would be used as forecast.

Summary - Principle of the Development, Policy Support and Need

80. Having considered the above, it is clear that there is strong strategic and policy support for TPW, including the specific designation of the application site for a new station under Policy SP46 of the newly adopted Thanet Local Plan. I accept the applicant's case of need for an additional station in Thanet and am satisfied that the provision of an additional station would not negatively impact upon the existing local stations. TPW would satisfy the strategic objectives of the County Council's *Local Transport Plan 4; Delivering Growth without Gridlock*, specifically the strategic transport priority of Journey Time Improvements (JTI). With regard to economic objectives, TPW supports the aim of the *Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF)* prepared by the County Council and Medway Council, in terms of providing improved journey times and connections to London to support economic growth in East Kent. The proposed development is also a regional priority for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and, at a National level, meets the Government's objectives of improvements to the countries transport infrastructure to support economic growth and enhance connectivity.
81. I accept the principle of the development given the strong policy support and the case of need provided by the applicant, as supported by local, regional and national strategic objectives. The NPPF states that proposals that accord with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved without delay. However, as also set out in the NPPF, and

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referenced in Policy SP46 of the Local Plan, we also need to be satisfied that the development is sustainable and that other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity are considered and assessed in the determination of this application. However, before discussing these matters, it is important to consider the relevant local finance considerations which support the provision of TPW and the implications for decision making.

Funding – Localism Act

82. Whilst monetary matters are not usually a relevant material consideration in the determination of planning applications, in this case, not having regard to the finance considerations in relation to the Localism Act (2011) would arguably mean that the Committee had not assessed all relevant material planning considerations in its decision making. Paragraph 143 of the Localism Act 2011, titled '*Applications for Planning Permission: Local Finance Considerations*' states that local planning authorities should have regard to local finance considerations as a material consideration where they are relevant to the application before them. Local finance considerations are thereafter defined as 'a grant or other financial assistance that has been, or will be, provided to a relevant authority by a Minister of the Crown.
83. As set out in paragraph 48 of this report, TPW is a regional priority for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP). Thanet Parkway Station is specifically referenced in SELEP's *Strategic Economic Plan 2014 (SEP)*, which also identifies the need for Local Growth Fund (LGF) transport investment in Thanet Parkway 'as a priority to reinforce the success of Discovery Park and support investment in Manston, as well as in the Westwood Relief Strategy, eliminating the major bottleneck impacting on employment and commercial growth in Thanet Central Island'. SELEP has awarded Thanet Parkway Station a provisional allocation of £14 million LGF funding.
84. Further, as outlined in paragraph 19, in August 2020, a further £11.999 million of funding for TPW was secured from the 'Getting Building Fund' - an initiative announced by the Prime Minister in June to invest in housing and infrastructure projects to support economic recovery across the Country.
85. The securing of the above funding for the sole purpose of delivering the TPW project should, in this instance, be a material consideration in the determination of this application. It is important to note that Thanet District Council, the East Kent Spatial Development Company and Kent County Council are also part funding the development, but those funding streams are not defined by the Localism Act as a local finance consideration and are therefore not material to the determination of the application. However, the majority of the funding for TPW is secured from 'a Minister of the Crown' (as defined above), and that funding is awarded, subject to planning, on the basis of the strategic and regional importance of TPW and its importance in supporting the regeneration and economic development of Thanet and East Kent.

Siting and Design including Landscape and Visual Implications

86. As referred to above, the application site is allocated in the newly adopted Thanet Local Plan under Policy SP46 for a new railway station. The principle of locating a station on this site has therefore already been tested and agreed through the independent examination by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State and the subsequent adoption of the Local Plan. However, an alternative site for the station has

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been suggested by local residents and concerns regarding loss of agricultural land and wider landscape impacts need to be considered and addressed.

Alternative Site and Loss of Agricultural Land

- 87 It has been suggested that a more suitable location for the station is a quarter mile further west, on flat land beyond the new A256 Sandwich Road. This site is considered by a local resident to be more suitable due to the increased distance from the village of Cliffsend and local properties, and also due to the site being flat so no embankment, thereby reducing the landscape impact of the development. The applicant advises that they did consider this, and other sites, as part of the early options appraisal. However, some of the most critical considerations in the site selection process were the operational railway requirements such as distance from level crossings, being located on a straight section of track and having a minimal impact on signalling. Of all the options considered, the application site best met all the operational requirements of the railway, whilst also having the smallest footprint and therefore minimising loss of agricultural land, as required by Policy SP46 of the adopted Local Plan.
88. As set out in paragraph 9 of this report, the application site is located on best and most versatile agricultural land (classified within the ES as grade 2). Policy E16 of the Thanet Local Plan states that planning permission will not be granted for significant development which would result in the irreversible loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, unless that site is allocated. In this case, the application site is allocated for the use proposed and the principle of the loss of this agricultural land has already been considered acceptable by the Local Plan Inspector. The loss of agricultural land would therefore not be contrary to Local Plan policy. Further, Chapter 14 of the submitted Environmental Statement (Land Use) concludes that the proposed development would result in a loss of approximately 3 hectares of best and most versatile agricultural land, which is regarded as being a negligible (not significant) affect.
89. Given the site's allocation in the newly adopted Local Plan, the operational requirements of the railway resulting in the selection of this site, and the loss of just 3 hectares of agricultural land, which in this case is not contrary to the Local Plan (due to the site's allocation), I am satisfied that the application site is in the most appropriate and practicable location, and that the development is acceptable in that regard. Further, the minimal loss of agricultural land meets the requirements of Local Plan policy SP46. However, the design and landscape implications of the siting need to be considered, in addition to highway and access matters, amenity concerns and other material considerations arising from the publicity and consultation process.

Wider Landscape Impact and Arboricultural Matters

90. As outlined in the opening section of this report, the application site is located to the north western edge of the village of Cliffsend, but set within a rural landscape. When viewed from the north (Manston Airport and surrounding housing), TPW would affect views across the application site to the coast and the six designated sites for nature conservation which are located along the coastline (see paragraph 6). It should also be borne in mind however, that housing development in the area (approved developments and allocated sites) would change the nature of the landscape once constructed. However, it is appropriate to also assess the impact that the development would have on the existing landscape.

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91. As detailed in paragraph 21 of this report, an application was submitted in May 2018 seeking approval for a railway station at this site (KCC/TH/0105/2018). However, following an initial consultation and review of the responses received, that application was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant in November 2019. That application included an elevated footbridge to link the two platforms, the height and visual impact of which met with concern and objection from various consultees including the County Council's Landscape Advisor and Conservation Officer. The applicant has subsequently reconsidered how to facilitate access between the two platforms, and this application now proposes to utilise an existing Victorian underpass within the embankment to provide such access. This change in design has been welcomed by consultees, and of note neither the County Council's Landscape Advisor nor Conservation Officer raise objection to this revised application. However, local residents, Minster Parish Council, CPRE Thanet, and Ramsgate Heritage and Design Forum raise objection and/or concerns over the landscape impact of the scheme, including the impact of tree removal and the design of the station.
92. Thanet District Council Local Plan policy SP46, which allocates the site for a new train station, seeks that factors are considered in the determination of the application by the County Council, including compatibility with the landscape character of its location. The application site is within the Wantsum North Slopes Landscape Character Area and is currently an open agricultural field with a raised railway embankment which is heavily treed. The local landscape would undoubtedly change as a result of the development, it is whether or not that change is acceptable when balanced against other material considerations. Policy SP30 of the Thanet Local Plan seeks to avoid skyline intrusion and loss or interruption of long views of the coast, and further requires development proposals to demonstrate how they respond to the character of the Landscape Character Area.
93. Chapter 7 of the submitted Environmental Statement (ES) has assessed the landscape and visual effects of the development on local receptors during the construction phase and year 1 (winter) and year 15 (summer). The construction phase would inevitably have significant visual and landscape effects, but the ES concludes that these effects are considered to be temporary as they would only last for the duration of the construction works.
94. The development would, due to the need to clear the railway embankments for the installation of the new platforms and lift structures, result in the removal of a number of trees. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Appendix 7-E of the Environment Statement) was undertaken to identify the impacts of the proposed development on trees. A condition survey of the existing trees found that none were high quality trees, most were of a moderate quality and three were of a low quality. A further tree was found to be unsuitable for retention and recommended to be removed regardless of the proposed development.
95. As set out in paragraphs 41 and 42 of this report a landscaping scheme has been developed and proposed as part of this development, which includes proposals for new tree planting along the edge of the railway embankment, as well as within and around the proposed car park. Tree planting within 5m and 10m of the railway line is restricted by Network Rail guidance, however, the smaller trees and native shrubs that are proposed in the areas closer to the railway line would, over time, grow into a wooded area (subject to management by Network Rail). Local residents have suggested the planting of Holm Oaks within the scheme, and further evergreen planting. However, Holm Oak is an invasive non-native tree that can have detrimental effects upon native

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grassland and therefore native wildlife. It also produces large quantities of seeds that germinate readily, and so it can easily spread – particularly affecting chalk grassland, which is found in the local area. Alternative species, such as pines, would however be considered in the detailed landscaping plan which would be secured by condition should permission be granted.

96. The proposed landscaping scheme, in addition to providing replacement embankment/tree planting, also seeks to minimise and mitigate the wider visual impact of the proposed development. Tree and hedgerow planting is proposed along the perimeter of the car park and a large area of grassland is proposed to the east of the car park, with perimeter trees. Within the car park, further tree planting is proposed, along with low-growing shrubs and ground cover planting. A number of areas of tree planting would be supplemented by a native 'scrub mix' composed of flowering and fruiting species to support birds and other wildlife, including pollinating bees. In addition, a hedgerow with native trees is proposed along the western boundary of the application site to create a defined field boundary. A belt of native scrub and trees is also proposed along the northern boundary where there is more space. Over time this is intended to develop into a strip of woodland, connecting with the proposed field boundary along the western boundary, linking with the existing and proposed planting along the railway embankment
97. Whilst it could be argued that additional trees may further soften the impact of the car park, this would result in a loss of parking bays and either the car park footprint would have to be increased or an alternative option such as a decked car park would then be necessary, which would have greater visual impacts. The applicant also advises that the landscaping scheme has been informed by the safety requirements of an operational railway and, unfortunately, this constrains what is possible. In addition to the planting scheme, the applicant has also agreed to consider options such as planters in front of the station entrance at the detailed design stage (should permission be granted) in consultation with Network Rail and the Train Operating Company. The submitted landscaping scheme, which although comprehensive and detailed, would be subject to further detailed design post decision should planning permission be granted.
98. The ES has assessed the landscape and visual effects of the development on local receptors based on the submitted 'outline' scheme. The ES concludes that at the year 1 of operation winter scenario the development would have minor, moderate or major adverse impact depending on the receptor, with the major adverse residential receptors being those to the south of the application site, on the western edge of Cliffsend and in Lavender Lane. However, by the year 15 of operation summer scenario, those impacts have reduced to negligible, minor and moderate adverse. Whilst that moderate adverse impact, which again would apply to the residential receptors to the south of the application site, on the western edge of Cliffsend and in Lavender Lane, is considered to be significant, this should be balanced against the case of need for the development, strategic and local policy support, and the accepted economic benefits of TPW. Further, the ES concludes that TPW's impact on the wider landscape, specifically views across the site from the north towards the protected coastline beyond, would be reduced to minor adverse as the landscaping matures.
99. It should be noted that the County Council's Landscape Advisor raises no objection to this application, subject to the imposition of conditions to ensure that trees to be retained are protected throughout the construction works, and conditions to secure the submission of a detailed scheme of landscaping and tree planting, and its subsequent implementation and management. In addition, the applicant has agreed to consider the

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provision of early tree planting (i.e. early in the construction period) should programming and phasing allow, which would result in the planting scheme reaching maturity earlier than would otherwise be the case. Should permission be granted, such a requirement would be specified within the landscaping scheme condition.

100. In my view the proposal is in accordance with relevant Development Plan Policies, specifically Policy SP26 of the Thanet Local Plan which seeks protection and enhancement of Landscape Character Areas, unless a development is essential for the economic or social well being of the area. In such cases, landscape impacts should be minimised and mitigated as far as possible. Whilst it is accepted that the TPW development would have some adverse effects on the local and wider landscape as identified in the Environmental Statement (ES) and discussed above, I consider that in this instance appropriate mitigations have been detailed in the ES and a demonstration of how the economic and public benefits outweigh those adverse effects has been made. On balance, I am therefore of the view that the landscape impact of the development would, subject to the securing of the mitigation detailed within the ES by the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, not be so significantly adverse as to warrant refusal of this application, especially when balanced against the case of need and accepted economic benefits.

Design Matters

101. In addition to the landscape and visual impacts the development, the design and choice of materials has been questioned. With regard to design, the use of the underpass at an unstaffed station has raised security and personal safety concerns, and the lift shafts are considered to be unsightly. The NPPF and Thanet Local Plan policies, specifically Policy SP35, requires development to be of a high quality with an inclusive design, layout and use of materials.

102. First, with regard to the use of the underpass, this was proposed by the applicant as an alternative to the previous footbridge option, which had a far greater visual impact than the proposal now under consideration. A Public Right of Way (PROW) (TR32) currently runs through this underpass, and that PROW would be upgraded as part of the development (see paragraph 34). The underpass would also be refurbished, and CCTV and lighting would be installed to fully cover the station, the platforms and the underpass with no blind spots. The applicant advises that the design is compliant with British Standards, in addition to adhering the British Transport Police advice regarding CCTV positioning and coverage. Help points would also be provided as each lift access point and at the foot of each set of stairs.

103. It is also recognised that although the station is designed to be unstaffed, the train operating company could post staff to the station in the future should they be minded. Kent Police have been consulted on this application, and have provided general advice with regard to designing out crime and crime prevention, and have requested that, should permission be granted, further dialogue be undertaken between the applicant and Kent Police, in addition to the British Transport Police. The applicant advises that Network Rail have been working with the Designing Out Crime Officer at British Transport Police rather than Kent Police given that the development is a station. However, the security requirements for the station would be fully developed at the detailed design stage, and Network Rail have been advised to liaise with Kent Police in addition to the British Transport Police. Subject to this increased liaison, which I consider should be secured by way of an informative, I am satisfied that the station has

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been designed in such a manner as to minimise the risk of crime, and that the use of the underpass is no more/less safe than the footbridge alternative.

104. With regard to the lift shafts, the wider landscape and visual impact of these has been discussed above as part of the consideration of the impact of the development as whole. The lift shafts enable a step free access to be provided to both platforms and would be located outside of the railway embankment profile next to the proposed staircases on either side of the underpass. Whilst I agree that the design of these structures is fairly utilitarian in nature, I recognise that Network Rail design guidelines are stringent, and the station design has to adhere to those. The design we have before us is a considerable improvement over the footbridge option previously proposed, with the platforms and lifts now being approximately the same height as the tree line along the embankment ridge, whereas the previous design extended well above that to gain the clearance of the tracks. I am therefore of the opinion that the design solution proposed is acceptable in this instance as not only does it have a far reduced visual impact over the previous scheme, it is fit for purpose and meets the design and safety guidelines and regulations imposed by Network Rail.
105. With regard to external materials, the applicant advises that these would be finalised at detailed design stage and would be chosen to be of the highest quality whilst also being functional and durable. Again, the external materials and finishes have to accord with Network Rail's safety standards. The applicant advises that the lower part of the stairs and the lift shafts would be constructed of facing blockwork, which is resistant to graffiti as well as having a pleasant architectural finish. The upper stairs would be covered in metal perforated cladding for which the choice was informed by the Security Steering Group assessment of the station. This material enables visibility of passengers using the stairs from the car park.
106. Having considered the above, it is important to note that the design and materials finish is heavily constrained by Network Rail's design and safety guidelines and must be fit for purpose and work operationally. In this instance, I am satisfied that the design proposed would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the local landscape and would be acceptable in design terms. Should permission be granted however, final details of all materials to be used externally, including colour finish, should be submitted pursuant to condition prior to the commencement of construction of the station. Subject to the imposition of that condition, I am of the view that the development is in accordance with the aims and objectives of development plan policies regarding general design principles.

Summary - Siting and Design including Landscape and Visual Implications

107. Given the site's allocation in the newly adopted Thanet Local Plan, the operational requirements of the railway resulting in the selection of this site, and the loss of just 3 hectares of agricultural land, which in this case is not contrary to planning policy (due to the sites allocation), I am satisfied that the application site is in the most appropriate and practicable location, and that the development is acceptable in that regard. In my view the proposal is in accordance with Thanet Local Plan policy SP26 which seeks protection and enhancement of Landscape Character Areas, unless a development is essential for the economic or social wellbeing of the area. In such cases, landscape impacts should be minimised and mitigated as far as possible. Whilst it is accepted that the TPW development would have some adverse effects on the local and wider landscape as identified in the Environmental Statement (ES) and discussed above, I consider that, in this instance, appropriate mitigations have been detailed in the ES and

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a demonstration of how the economic and public benefits outweigh those adverse effects has been included in the supporting statement. Further, it is important to note that the design and materials finish is heavily constrained by Network Rails design and safety guidelines and must be fit for purpose and work operationally. In this instance, I am satisfied that the design would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the local landscape and, subject to satisfactory details of materials which would be addressed via condition, would be acceptable in design terms. The development is therefore in accordance with the aims and objectives of development plan policies regarding general design principles. I therefore see no reason to refuse the application on these grounds.

Access and Highway Matters, including Public Right of Way

108. As set out in paragraph 54, this application has met with local objection on highway and access grounds, including matters such as capacity of local roads, bus access to the site, cycle and pedestrian access, and parking by station users in residential streets. The NPPF and Thanet Local Plan Policies require development proposals to be accompanied by an appropriate assessment of highway implications, and mitigation to be provided if a development would impact on the transport network or highway safety. Development should only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Chapter 11 of the submitted ES, and the associated Transport Assessment (Appendix 11 A), considers the traffic and transport impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network both during construction and operational phases of the development, and this has been assessed by Highways and Transportation (H&T) in their consideration of the scheme.

109. As set out in paragraph 49 of this report, H&T confirm that Thanet Parkway Station forms a part of the emerging Thanet Transport Strategy, which in turn underpins the Thanet Local Plan. It represents an important piece of transport infrastructure to encourage increased use of rail-based travel in the locality, by complimenting the existing stations within the District with improved vehicle access and vehicle parking on offer. As previously discussed, TPW is also identified as a strategic priority within KCC Local Transport Plan 4 and is consistent with several national transport planning policies/strategies including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Whilst it is important to recognise the strong policy position for TPW, it is equally important that its access strategy is appropriately designed and does not create overbearing residual impact on the surrounding highway network, or highway safety issues. It is equally important to recognise the status of TPW as a complimentary transport-based infrastructure to encourage sustainable travel and relieve parking pressure around existing stations in the locality.

Capacity of the Local Highway Network

110. Before discussing the detail of the scheme in terms of access into the station and parking matters, it is first important to consider whether the local highway network could accommodate the additional vehicle movements that the station would generate. The submitted Transport Assessment has forecast the number of passengers that would use the station using various housing growth scenarios, and from that has forecast the number of vehicle trips that the station would generate. It is forecast that during the highway AM peak (07.30-08.30), TPW would generate 138 vehicle trips. The PM trips are assumed to be the same as the AM, but it is noted that most commuters would return to the station after 18.00, after the main highway movement peak.

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111. The TA also includes Junction Capacity Assessments (JCA) to consider the potential impact of TPW on the local highway network, specifically the Sevenscore and Lord of the Manor roundabouts located on the A299 Hengist Way. Those JCAs also include consideration of housing development in the area, and the potential reopening of Ramsgate Port. Highways and Transportation are satisfied with the survey methodology, and the housing growth and local development scenarios that have been tested. It must be recognised that every application for housing in the area would have to be accompanied by some form of transport assessment, and that each development would be expected to mitigate its own impacts on the highway network. The TA submitted with this application has not considered any such mitigation, and therefore the reality of future scenarios is likely to be better than those forecast. It should also be noted that the reopening of Manston Airport has not been assessed within the TA, but H&T are satisfied that no additional survey work is required in that regard and further consider that TPW would enhance sustainable transport facilities for the airport.
112. The TA identifies that some approach arms of local junctions at Sevenscore and Lord of the Manor roundabouts would be over capacity within the future due to forecast growth, and that TPW would create a moderate level of additional queuing and delay. However, H&T raise no objection to this application, and do not consider that the additional highway movements generated by TPW would have a severe impact on the capacity of a A299 and the Sevenscore and Lord of the Manor roundabouts. As noted above, these forecasts are based on very robust modelling outputs and take no account for future highway improvements that may be delivered as Local Plan growth is realised or potential travel mode shift in Cliffsend. There is also a robust level of allowance for theoretical recommencement of freight activities at Ramsgate Port, which may or may not materialise in the future. I therefore am satisfied that the vehicle movements generated by TPW would not have a severe impact on the A299 and the Sevenscore and Lord of the Manor roundabouts, and therefore is acceptable.
113. In addition to the impact of additional vehicle movements on the A299 and the Sevenscore and Lord of the Manor roundabouts, local residents also express concern that TPW would increase the level of traffic using the local roads in the village of Cliffsend, which are narrow in places and don't all have pavements and, therefore, are considered by residents to be unsafe for additional vehicle and/or pedestrian movements. The majority of local concerns in this regard appear to relate to station users parking in the village of Cliffsend and then walking to the station, rather than paying to use the station car park. This matter will be discussed separately when considering parking matters below. However, given that vehicular access to TPW would be via the A299 only, and that the roads through Cliffsend would not be a short cut or through road to gain access the station, I am satisfied that the local village roads would not be adversely affected by vehicles accessing the station car park.

Access into the station

114. As set out in paragraph 33 of this report, TPW would be accessed via the westbound lanes of the A299 Hengist Way with a signalised 'left in / left out' T-junction. The westbound lane on the A299 Hengist Way would be widened to provide a dedicated left turn for Thanet Parkway Station, and a two-way single access road within the application site would provide vehicular access and egress between the A299 Hengist Way and the station.
115. The applicant advises that alternative options for the access were considered as the project evolved, including a new access road directly from the Sevenscore roundabout.

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However, that would have resulted in a long access road to the station, thereby increasing the footprint of the site on to the adjacent agricultural land, contrary to Local Plan policy SP46. In addition, the roundabout would also need upgrading or enlarging to incorporate an additional arm, and consequently this option was ruled out.

116. As set out in paragraph 49, H&T accept that the site access is located in a challenging position in terms of topography and road geometry. However, the access has been subject to an independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) and is acceptable from a road safety perspective. It should be noted that the previous withdrawn planning application (KCC/TH/0105/2018) proposed an all movements signal junction (i.e. access and egress to both carriageways of the A299). H&T advise that there are benefits and disbenefits to the current station access proposals, with a reduction in the amount of delay to traffic on the A299 Hengist Way being an advantage, and an increase in journey distance/time for those accessing the station (including any future bus services) from the west of the station being a clear disadvantage.

117. H&T conclude that, on balance, whilst a suitable all movements access arrangement would be the preferred solution, the current proposals are considered to be acceptable and in accordance with planning policy. However, it is recommended that should funding/land availability circumstances change, that the applicant consider the provision of a suitable all movements access in the future, as that would enhance access and the attractiveness of the station to residents to the west and improve access for buses in the future.

118. Having considered the above, I am satisfied that the access as now proposed is acceptable on highway safety grounds and therefore see no overriding reason to refuse the application on this ground. However, should permission be granted, I consider that an informative should be added to encourage the applicant to consider the provision of a suitable all movements access in the future should funding/land availability change.

Bus Access

119. The station proposals include facilities for buses so that commercial operators are not prevented from serving the station in future. However, the provision of a bus service that stops at TPW would be a commercial decision for those operators based not solely on demand at the new station but also the influence of new development identified in the Local Plan and the reopening of the Manston Airport site. H&T are satisfied with this arrangement. Although it would appear that there are no immediate plans by commercial bus operators to stop at the station, it is eminently sensible to provide areas within the site for future bus services, as there are plans to link with Manston Airport via a shuttle bus arrangement. Therefore, should permission be granted, a condition would be imposed requiring the submission of details of the permanent bus shelter facilities, and thereafter ongoing retention. Subject to this condition, I am satisfied that the development is designed to accommodate bus services and that the development is therefore in accordance with the underlying principles of Thanet Local Plan policy TP04 and SP46.

Parking Provision including Parking in Local Roads and Prevention of Access from Earlsmead Crescent

120. As set out in paragraph 32 of this report, this application includes the 317 car parking bays. This includes 16 disabled bays, a dedicated area for motorcycles, 60 spaces offering electric car charging points (30 active and 30 passive), and a dedicated area for

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pick up/drop off, accommodating 20 vehicles including taxis. This level of parking provision has not met with objection, and I am satisfied that sufficient car parking is proposed to accommodate the forecast number of vehicle trips to the site, as required by Thanet Local Plan policy TP06. However, should permission be granted, I recommend that a condition of consent be imposed requiring the provision and permanent retention of the vehicle parking spaces prior to first use of the site, and a further condition be imposed requiring the submission of the details of the electric vehicle charging points, and their subsequent provision and retention.

121. Local residents have however expressed concern that users of the station would choose to park in local roads and walk to the site, rather than pay for carparking charges. PROW TR32 would link the application site to the village of Cliffsend and beyond, as is currently the case. There is also an existing informal access from Earlsmead Crescent that links with PROW TR32 as it joins the underpass.
122. With regard to the informal access, it has been suggested that this should be blocked to prevent access to the station from Earlsmead Crescent. This application does not include any formal access to TPW from Earlsmead Crescent, but it is understood that local residents do use the route informally via the garage block to access the fields behind Earlsmead Crescent. To alleviate such concerns regarding future use as an informal access to the station, the applicant has agreed to reconstruct the fencing at the back of the garage block during the construction phase of the project, which would then need to be maintained by the landowner. These works are not included as part of the planning application, however, and would not therefore form part of any approved works. I accept this good will gesture of the applicant, and also appreciate that it is local informal route so there is no planning requirement to divert or stop this up.
123. On-street parking by rail users would not meet the aims of the project, which is designed to be accessed from the A299 rather than increasing traffic on local roads, and nor would it be conducive to a stable revenue stream to cover the operational costs of the car park. The applicant does not want any off-station parking to have a detrimental impact on local residents but recognises that the imposition of parking restrictions may also have negative impacts. Therefore, the applicant intends to monitor post-opening and implement a solution with local resident consultation should this be necessary. The applicant has submitted a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which sets out an agreement between the applicant and the Highways, Transportation & Waste Directorate to address this.
124. Under the agreement, the applicant commits to monitoring on-street parking within a 600m radius of the new station after opening in comparison to levels prior to opening through means of a parking beat survey, i.e. a count of on-street parked vehicles. Should on-street parking levels after opening be found to be of a level than is having an unreasonable detrimental impact on local amenity, the applicant would commit to implementing measures to alleviate the problem up to a total capped value of £15,000 (including survey costs). This could be the introduction of a controlled parking zone (CPZ) in the residential streets surrounding the new station, on which this figure has been based. A CPZ would need to be implemented in conjunction with Thanet District Council and be subject to consultation with the local community. There are a range of options for such a scheme, which could include a 30-minute ban on parking at a time when there is likely to be commuter parking (for example 11:00 to 11:30) or a permit scheme for residents.

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125. Highway and Transportation are satisfied that the MoU addresses potential concerns over parking displacement within surrounding local roads. Should Members be minded to grant permission, the MoU would be approved as part of the application documentation and the applicant would be required to adhere to its contents. In considering the mitigation proposed by the applicant, I am satisfied that car parking on local roads by users of the station would be monitored by the applicant and, if deemed necessary, appropriate parking restrictions could be introduced.

Footway and Cycle links including PROW

126. Pedestrian access to TPW is proposed to be provided from the south using the existing railway underpass which connects to the existing PROW (TR32) that runs adjacent to the railway line. An additional footpath/cycleway is proposed to the north of the station connecting to Clive Road. This additional footpath/cycleway would pass along the southern edge of the proposed car park and over the A299 Hengist Way following the existing PROW and farm access track. Once north of the A299 Hengist Way, the proposed footway/cycleway would run along the eastern edge of the field and connect with Clive Road. The proposed development would not create a new cycleway from the southern entrance to the station through the underpass because this would create an unacceptable conflict between station users (some of whom may be persons of reduced mobility) and cyclists. The cycleway connection is only designed to connect from the bicycle parking at TPW to Clive Road to the north. Nevertheless, the proposed development would improve the surface of the footpath through the underpass and on the southern side of the embankment to the point where the access to the lifts and platform would be. For avoidance of doubt, the definitive route of PROW TR32 would not be changed as a result of the TPW development.

127. Kent County Council's Public Rights of Way Officer initially suggested that the PROW improvements associated with the TPW development should be extended to Cottington Road to the South, and Canterbury Road West to the north. However, housing developments to the north and south of TPW that have been approved by Thanet District Council are both subject to S106 agreements to link with PROW TR32, providing a connection through to the station. Therefore, these links to Cottington Road to the South and Canterbury Road West to the North have already been secured.

128. Having considered the above, the County Council's Public Rights of Way Officer raises no objection to this application subject to the imposition of a condition of consent requiring the submission and approval of a scheme of access and construction works setting out any path alignment, surfacing, width and signage details within 6 months of the date of the permission, and a further condition requiring the delivery of the approved works prior to first use/occupation of the development. In addition, H&T require the submission of details of secure, covered cycle parking facilities prior to use of the site commencing, and their subsequent provision and retention. Subject to the imposition of these conditions, I am satisfied that the development would offer good pedestrian and cycle links. This accords with Thanet Local Plan policies SP44, TP02 & TP03, all of which require new development to have safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle access.

Summary - Access and Highway Matters, including Public Right of Way

129. Thanet Parkway Station forms a part of the emerging Thanet Transport Strategy, which in turn underpins the Thanet Local Plan. It represents an important piece of transport infrastructure to encourage increased use of rail-based travel in the locality, by

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complimenting the existing stations within the district with improved vehicle access and vehicle parking offer. Whilst it is important to recognise the strong policy position for TPW, it is equally important that its access strategy is appropriately designed and does not create overbearing residual impact on the surrounding highway network, or highway safety issues. It is equally important to recognise the status of TPW as a complimentary transport-based infrastructure to encourage sustainable travel and relieve parking pressure around existing stations in the locality.

130. Having considered the content of the submitted ES Chapter 11 and the Transport Assessment, and taking into account the advice provided by H&T and Public Rights of Way, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the local highway network. Although vehicle movements generated by TPW would impact on the A299 and the Sevenscore and Lord of the Manor roundabouts, that impact is not considered to be severe and is therefore acceptable. Further, subject to the imposition of the conditions discussed above, I am satisfied that the development would be designed to accommodate bus access, would have good pedestrian and cycle access, and would have sufficient parking to accommodate the forecast need, including the provision of EV charging bays. The requirements of policy SP46, which allocates the site for a station, with regard to access, parking and public transport provision are, in my view, met by this application. Further, the mitigation proposed by the applicant in terms of monitoring on street car parking and implementing parking restrictions if deemed necessary, as detailed within the submitted MoU, would address the possible issue of users of the station parking in local roads and walking to the site. The works to the level crossings would be undertaken by network rail as part of their routine maintenance and upgrade works, and any highway implications of those works would be considered and addressed by Network Rail, as is usual practice. I am therefore satisfied that the development adheres to the underlying principles of the NPPF and Thanet Local Plan policies regarding highway and access considerations.

Amenity Concerns – lighting, overlooking and air & noise pollution

131. Local residents have expressed concern over the amenity impacts of the development in terms of increased lighting, overlooking/loss of privacy, and increase air and noise pollution. I shall discuss each of these matters in turn in the following section of this report.

Light Pollution

132. Thanet Local Plan Policy SE08 requires development proposals that include the provision of new outdoor lighting to minimise light glare, light trespass, light spillage and sky glow to ensure that there is no adverse impact on residential amenity (and also ecological interests (see paragraphs 143 to 145)). As set out in paragraph 35 and 36 of this report, the lighting within the car park and all external areas is proposed to be light emitting diode (LED) street lighting mounted on columns. All columns within the car park would be approximately 5m tall and all other external area columns would be approximately 8m tall, with final details to be confirmed at detailed design. The platforms would be illuminated by linear LED luminaires. The lighting within the enclosed underpass, stairs and waiting shelters would be ceiling mounted LED linear luminaires to illuminate the floor level. Lighting for the underpass and car park is proposed to be on a light and movement sensor, with light levels taking into consideration the CCTV and requirement for facial recognition. Emergency lighting is also proposed in the waiting

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areas, the underpass and areas outside the station which form part of an emergency escape route.

133. At this stage of the application process, although indicative details are provided, exact lux levels and the position and design of luminaires is not known and would be part of the following detailed design process, should permission be granted. However, the closest residential properties to the development are located to the south of the railway embankment, whereas the main station infrastructure would be to the north. Residential properties to the north would be separated from the station by the existing A299 Hengist way, which is lit, and would be over 250 metres from the development.
134. Chapter 7 of the ES (Landscape and Visual) does address and consider the lighting impacts associated with TPW, and states that the scale and extent of the new lighting would result in localised light spillage, but set in the context of existing road and residential lighting, the impact is assessed as neutral. The impact of light glare on properties to the north of the application site was considered to be minor adverse, whereas the impact of light glare on properties to the south from the lighting of the platforms and underpass was considered to be moderate adverse. However, the platform lighting would not be a direct glare due to proposed acoustic and security fencing, and the underpass lighting would also be low level, set behind existing residential boundary fencing and planting, and would also be activated by motion sensor so not on at all times.
135. By the nature of the development, the introduction of additional lighting in the area is unavoidable. However, that lighting should have a negligible impact on sky glow in considering existing road and residential lighting. I do not consider that properties to the north of the development would be significantly adversely affected by glare from the lighting of the station and car park but accept that properties to the south could be moderately adversely affected. However, this moderate impact has to be balanced against the strategic and policy support for the station, and the case of need and established economic benefits the TPW would bring to the local area. However, to protect the amenity of those properties as far as practicably possible, I consider that, should permission be granted, a detailed scheme of external lighting should be submitted pursuant to condition, including lux levels and light spill diagrams. Subject to that condition, I am satisfied that the development is acceptable on lighting grounds in this instance.

Overlooking/Loss of Privacy

136. Overlooking of properties to the south of the application site has also been raised as a concern. The platform structures would be approximately 6 metres above ground level, with lift and enclosed stair access at the eastern end of the platforms. The rear elevation of properties to the south of the site would be approximately 50 metres from the platforms, and separated by the proposed station infrastructure, existing and proposed planting, and existing boundary fencing. In addition, a 2.4 metre high acoustic screen would run the entire length of the platforms. Such screening, by its nature, is solid and would not allow views out from the platforms to surrounding development. The lift shafts and staircases would also be enclosed, again restricting views out of the site. Whilst I appreciate that the outlook from local properties would change as a result of the development and that until landscaping is mature that change maybe quite stark, that is not an overriding ground for refusal of this application. I am however satisfied that the development is designed to minimise impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents,

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and that overlooking of local properties has been precluded as far as is practicable by fencing and landscaping.

Air Pollution

137. As set out in paragraph 10 of this report, the A299 Hengist Way is included within the Thanet Urban Air Quality Management Area. That AQMA is the only one in Thanet and encompasses the urban areas of Thanet including Ramsgate, Margate, Broadstairs and Birchington. Chapter 13 of the ES has studied in detail the potential air quality impacts of the proposed development and consequently recommended appropriate mitigation measures. The assessment has considered the potential for impacts during the construction phase, including from construction activities and construction road traffic, and from operational road traffic and emissions from the trains themselves, and identified possible sensitive receptors for each phase.

138. The operational phase of the development is concluded as resulting in negligible impacts on air quality, but the construction phase requires mitigation measures to reduce dust and air pollution. The ES considers that a Construction Environmental Management Plan should be submitted prior to the commencement of the main development works setting out dust control measures and suitable mitigation where necessary. The County Council's Air Quality Advisor raises no objection to the application subject to a condition securing the submission of Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) for each construction phase, (see paragraphs 156 and 157) as set out in the ES. I am therefore satisfied that, subject to this condition, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on air quality or the Thanet Urban AQMA.

Noise Pollution

139. Thanet Local Plan Policy SE06 states that proposals that generate a significant level of noise must be accompanied by a scheme to mitigate such effects, bearing in mind the nature of surrounding land uses. In addition to the noise generated by the trains on the existing track, the construction of a station would add additional noise sources both during construction and operation (such as the public address system, see paragraph 37). Local residents have expressed concern over the impact of this additional noise on their amenity.

140. Chapter 12 of the submitted ES includes a robust assessment of the operational rail noise impact which concludes that train noise would be no worse than the baseline scenario. This conclusion was achieved by undertaking additional noise monitoring at a similar station (Birchington-on-Sea) in order to differentiate and compare high speed passing train noise (current situation) with noise from a train arriving at a station (proposed situation). The measured data showed that an arriving train was slightly quieter than a passing train, but the actual train arrival event was slightly longer. The net effect was a marginal higher noise level of 0.4 dB. The County Council's Noise Advisor has reviewed this information in detail and supports the conclusion of the ES that a 0.4 dB change in noise is negligible (and not a perceptible change) and is therefore acceptable.

141. The County Council's Noise advisor also welcomes the inclusion of a 2.4m acoustic barrier at the rear of the platforms as this would mitigate impacts arising from potential brake squeal and engine acceleration at receptors to the north-east and south-east of the station site. The public address system is also considered acceptable, and the ES

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concludes that noise emission from that would be within the recommended limits. The operational phase of the station is concluded within the ES to have a negligible impact, subject to the provision of the acoustic barriers. Subject to the imposition of condition to secure the provision of the acoustic barriers prior to first use of the development, I am satisfied that the station when operating would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of local residents with regard to noise.

142. However, the ES does identify that mitigation is required during the construction phase. The ES considers that a Construction Environmental Management Plan should be submitted prior to the commencement of the main development works setting out noise control measures and suitable mitigation where necessary. The County Council's Noise Advisor raises no objection to the application subject to a condition securing the submission of Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) for each construction phase, (see paragraph 156 and 157) as set out in the ES. I am therefore satisfied that subject to this condition, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the locality as a result of noise. The requirement of policy SP46, which allocates the site for a station, with regard to noise impacts is, in my view, met by this application.

Biodiversity

143. Chapter 8 of the ES includes an Ecological Impact Assessment that considers designated sites, habitats and species on, or in the surrounding area of the application site, which could be affected by the proposed development. It is concluded within the ES that both during the construction and operational phases of the development that designated sites for nature conservation, of which there are six within 2 kilometres of the application site (see paragraph 6), would not be adversely impacted by the development. I am therefore satisfied the development is acceptable in that regard, in accordance with Thanet Local Plan policy GI01.
144. With regard to species on or surrounding the application site, the ES recommends mitigation during the construction phase in the form of the submission and approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan prior to the commencement of the main works. Such a plan would ensure that construction activities would not adversely impact on protected species. Therefore, and in accordance with the requirements of the County Council's Biodiversity Officer, I consider that should permission be granted a condition of consent should be imposed requiring the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan. Subject to that condition, and the mitigation measures contained within that plan, I am satisfied that the construction of the development would not have a detrimental impact on protected species or local wildlife.
145. During the operational phase however, the Ecological Impact Assessment concludes that there would be a moderate adverse (significant) residual impact of lighting on bat activity. It is noted however that the conclusion is precautionary given that the detailed lighting scheme would be submitted pursuant to condition. The County Council's Biodiversity Officer raises no objection to this application, but notes that the Planning Authority should consider this potential 'moderate adverse' impact on bats (as worst case scenario) when determining the application. Should permission be granted, a condition of consent would require the submission of details of a sensitive lighting scheme that minimises and avoids impacts to foraging and commuting bats. There is a potential that the detailed lighting scheme may demonstrate that the impact on bat activity may not be 'moderate adverse', and could be a 'negligible' impact. However, that may not be the case, so that adverse impact needs to be balanced against the merits of

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the scheme and its accepted case of need, economic impact, and strong policy support. In this instance, given the fact that the site is designated for the provision of a railway station, and the role that TPW would take in the regeneration of East Kent, I consider that, on balance the potential 'moderate adverse' impact on bat activity, should that be the case, is an insufficient ground on which to refuse this application.

146. Lastly, The ES states that biodiversity net gain is an aim of the project, with a commitment to take reasonable steps to achieve net gain. Thanet Local Plan Policy SP30 requires development proposals to make a positive contribution to the conservation, enhancement and management of biodiversity assets resulting in a net gain for biodiversity assets. The County Council's Biodiversity Officer recommends that, should permission be granted, a condition of consent be imposed regarding the submission and approval of a biodiversity plan demonstrating biodiversity net gain. Subject to the imposition of that condition and given that the applicants confirm that net gain is an aim of the project, I am satisfied that the proposal accords with the underlying principles of Local Plan Policy SP30, and that the development would achieve biodiversity net gain.

Water Resources, Flood Risk and Ground Conditions

147. As set out in paragraph 24 and 25 of this report, following submission of this application an objection was initially received from Southern Water which related to the proximity of the built development on the site to a water main. The proposal was subsequently amended to address the concerns of Southern Water, including a slight revision to the position of the platform structures, lift shafts and staircases to ensure that built development was outside of the required 6 metre clearance of the truck main, and amendments to the infiltration pond and landscaping scheme. Southern Water subsequently raise no objection to this application and are satisfied that the proposal would not adversely affect Southern Water's apparatus. However, ongoing dialogue between the applicant and Southern Water would be required during the construction of the development. Southern Water have also provided detailed advice with regard to protection of apparatus, sustainable drainage, surface water, petrol interceptors and land drainage. Should permission be granted, I consider it appropriate to append Southern Waters advice to the decision and add an informative to the consent to draw the applicants attention to the matters raised. Subject to that, I am satisfied that the development would not adversely affect Southern Waters apparatus that crosses the site and would meet with their requirements and guidance.

148. The application site is located within a Ground Water Source Protection Zone, and therefore it is essential that drainage from the site does not contaminate ground water resources. The applicant is proposing a surface water drainage strategy for the site, including the use of permeable paving across large areas of the application site, which would attenuate storm water before releasing it slowly into the ground. A swale and infiltration basin (storm water balancing pond) have also been incorporated into the design to manage surface water runoff from the adjacent undeveloped land, which would minimise the risk of flooding to the railway station and car park. Chapter 10 of the ES concludes that the development as proposed would not have an adverse impact on water resources or flood risk, and that the implementation of the drainage scheme would actually have a beneficial effect on flood risk in the vicinity of the site.

149. Both the Environment Agency and the the County Council's Flood Risk Team (SuDs) raise no objection to this application and are satisfied with the outline drainage details provided within the planning application documentation. However, further information is

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required pursuant to planning condition, should permission be granted. Therefore, I recommend that conditions should be imposed to any permission requiring the submission of a detailed surface water drainage scheme prior to the commencement of the development (the main station and car park works), the submission of a verification report pertaining to the above prior to first occupation/use of the development, control over the infiltration of surface water to ground, and restrictions on piling and other foundation designs using penetrative methods. Subject to the above, I am satisfied that the development would not adversely affect the Ground Water Source Protection Zone and would result in an improvement in drainage in the vicinity of the site, in accordance with policies CC02 & SE04 of the Thanet Local Plan.

150. With regard to ground conditions, chapter 15 of the ES has considered this in detail and concludes that when operational, the development as proposed would have a negligible impact on ground conditions. However, in order to protect ground conditions during construction, the Environment Agency require conditions of consent to be imposed, should permission be granted. Subject to the imposition of these conditions, which require the submission of a remediation strategy to deal with risks associated with land contamination prior to commencement of the development (other than enabling works), submission of a verification report regarding the remediation strategy prior to first use of the development, and the ceasing of work should unexpected contamination be found, I am satisfied that ground conditions would not be adversely affected by the development.

Climate Change/Sustainability

151. Chapter 17 of the ES considers the impact of the proposal on climate change and concludes that 'there are no significant residual climate change effects associated with the proposed development'. TPW represents an important piece of sustainable transport infrastructure to encourage increased use of rail-based travel in the locality, by complementing the existing stations within the district with improved vehicle, pedestrian, and cycle access, and infrastructure to support future bus access. 60 spaces offering electric vehicle charging points are also proposed (30 active, 30 passive) which is over 10% of the 297 spaces proposed (317 including 20 drop off spaces). Given the conclusions of the ES, and the inclusion of electric vehicle charging points, and the sustainable urban drainage system that would be implemented, I am satisfied that the proposal includes sustainable design features and would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on climate change.

152. Although not part of this scheme, the applicant is looking into the potential to cover an area of the car park with canopy structures which would accommodate PV panels. Such development would be subject to a separate full and detailed planning application, and the landscape and visual implications of such development would need to be considered at that time. However, I would advise that an informative be added to encourage the applicant to investigate this matter further.

Cultural Heritage/Archaeology

153. As set out in paragraph 5 of this report, St Augustine's Cross, which is a Grade II Listed monument, lies approximately 90 metres to the south of the application site on the far side of Cottington Road. In addition, five other Listed Buildings are located within a kilometre of the site, but physically separated from it by existing built development. The previous withdrawn planning application with the footbridge connection between the platforms, met with objection from the County Council's Conservation Officer due to the impact of that footbridge on the setting of St Augustine's Cross. As can be seen from

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paragraph 49 of this report, the County Council's Conservation Officer now concludes that any negative visual effects arising as a result of the development on the setting of the historic assets in the area are likely to be of minor significance, and no objections are raised. It is also of note that Historic England do not wish to offer any comment on this application.

154. Chapter 9 of the submitted ES has assessed the impacts and effects that the proposal would have on local heritage assets and also concludes that impacts on local listed buildings would be negligible. However, this conclusion is made on the assumption of the provision and maturing of a scheme of landscaping. As also advised by the County Council's Conservation Officer, it is essential that the proposed landscaping scheme is implemented. As set out in paragraph 97 of this report, a scheme of landscaping and its subsequent implementation would be secured by planning condition should permission be granted. Subject to the imposition of that condition, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the setting of local listed buildings, specifically St Augustine's Cross.

155. Chapter 9 of the ES has also assessed the impacts and effects of the proposal on archaeological remains. Further mitigation was advised, in the form of further archaeological investigation. To avoid having to undertake such work post decision (should permission be granted) the applicant has submitted a Written Scheme of Investigation for consideration as part of this application. The County Council's Archeological Officer has assessed this information and considers the Scheme of Investigation to be a suitable scheme of works to address the archaeological mitigation of the scheme impacts. However, it is recommended that a suitably worded condition be imposed to secure the implementation of these work, in accordance with a timetable agreed directly with the County Archaeologist. Subject to the imposition of such a condition, I am satisfied that the development would not adversely affect archaeological interests.

Construction

156. As set out in paragraph 43 of this report, the development is proposed to be constructed in 5 phases. The first of these phases involves vegetation clearance on the A299 Hengist Way to enable the site access to be constructed (Phase B). The County Council's Biodiversity Officer is satisfied that sufficient information has been submitted with this application to enable Phase A to commence without the submission of further information. The works are essentially routine highway maintenance works, and I understand from the applicant that H&T have agreed a programme of works for this. I am therefore satisfied that phase A could commence without the submission of any additional information. Further, phase E (level crossing and signalling works) would be undertaken by Network Rail and would be subject to their own policies and practices with regard to undertaking the works. I do not consider that the County Planning Authority need to see any additional information in that regard.

157. With regard to the main construction phases (B, C & D), I consider that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be submitted to the County Planning Authority for approval prior to the commencement of each phase. The CEMP would need to include and address the requirements of the County Council's Biodiversity Officer to ensure the protection of bats, reptiles, badgers, hedgehogs and breeding birds, the County Council's Noise and Air Quality advisors in terms of mitigation measures required to protect the amenity of the locality from adverse noise and dust arising from construction, and Highway and Transportation to ensure that the local

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highway network would not be adversely affected by construction activities. Hours of working should also be specified within each CEMP, in addition to details regarding contractor liaison with the local community and provision of details of site personnel for local residents to contact should matters arise. Subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the submission and approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan prior to the commencement of phases B, C & D, to include the information specified above, I am satisfied that any adverse impacts arising from the construction phases with regard wildlife, the local highway network and the amenity of local residents would be mitigated as far as practicably possible.

Conclusion

158. This application proposes the construction of a new rail station with associated car parking, access, landscaping and other ancillary works at land at Cliffsend in Thanet. The proposal has given rise to a variety of planning issues, including landscape considerations and loss of agricultural land, design, access and highway matters, ecological impacts, drainage matters, heritage matters, and general amenity concerns, along with the need for the development. These matters have been considered and addressed throughout this report and must be balanced against the strong strategic and policy support for Thanet Parkway (TPW), including the specific allocation of the application site for a new station under Policy SP46 of the newly adopted Thanet Local Plan. The development would satisfy the strategic objectives of the County Councils *Local Transport Plan 4; Delivering Growth without Gridlock*, specifically the strategic transport priority of Journey Time Improvements (JTI). With regard to economic objectives, TPW supports the aim of the *Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF)* prepared by the County Council and Medway Council, in terms of providing improved journey times and connections to London to support economic growth in East Kent. The proposed development is also a regional priority for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and, at a National level, meets the Government's objectives of improvements to the country's transport infrastructure to support economic growth and enhance connectivity. Subject to planning permission, the project stands to benefit from £14 million of funding from SELEP and a further £11.999 million from the national Getting Building Fund, both material considerations for the purpose of determining this application.

159. In determining development proposals, planning legislation states that applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The recently adopted Thanet Local Plan states at Policy SP46 that;

Land west of Cliffsend is safeguarded for a new railway station. Proposals will be required to specifically demonstrate all of the following:

- 1) satisfactory vehicular access arrangements from the A299,*
- 2) suitable level of car parking,*
- 3) integration with wider public transport services,*
- 4) mitigation of any noise impacts on sensitive receptors,*
- 5) compatibility with the landscape character of its location, &*
- 6) located to minimise the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.*

160. I am satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated that the site would have satisfactory vehicular access arrangements from the A299, a suitable level of car parking, and infrastructure in place to enable integration with wider public transport services. Further, as discussed in paragraph 139 to 142 of this report, any noise impacts on sensitive

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receptors would be adequately mitigated. The landscape implications of the development have been considered and assessed in detail and deemed to be acceptable in this case, subject to the implementation of a scheme of landscaping. Further, the location and layout of the development has been developed to minimise loss of agricultural land, and would result in the loss of approximately 3 hectares of best and most versatile agricultural land, which is regarded as being negligible and not overriding.

161. I am therefore satisfied that the application as proposed meets all of the requirements of Policy SP46 and therefore consider that the application is in full accordance with the Local Plan designation. Further, having examined the information included within the submitted Environmental Statement, I am satisfied that, subject to the imposition of the conditions outlined in this report, the development would not have any significant and overriding effects on the environment. In my view, the development would not give rise to any significant material harm and is in accordance with the general aims and objectives of the relevant Development Plan Policies. The NPPF states that proposals that accord with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved without delay.

162. Subject to the imposition of conditions, I am of the opinion that the proposed development would not give rise to any material harm and is otherwise in accordance with the general aims and objectives of the relevant Development Plan Policies and the guidance contained in the NPPF and other material considerations (as set out in paragraph 48 of this report) and is sustainable development. I therefore recommend accordingly that planning permission be granted subject to compliance with the agreed Memorandum of Understanding and conditions.

Recommendation

163. I recommend that subject to compliance with the agreed Memorandum of Understanding **PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO** conditions, including conditions covering:

- the standard 3 year time limit for implementation;
- the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
- the submission and approval of details of all materials to be used externally prior to the commencement of the construction of the station and car park;
- the submission of a detailed scheme of external lighting including lux levels and light spill diagrams, and details of how the lighting aims to minimise impacts to foraging and commuting bats, prior to the commencement of the construction of the station and car park;
- the submission of a biodiversity plan demonstrating biodiversity net gain;
- tree retention and protection of trees to be retained, including root protection areas;
- the submission and approval of a scheme of landscaping and tree planting prior to the commencement of the development (apart from enabling works and site clearance), including the provision of early tree planting if possible;
- implementation of the approved landscaping scheme in the first planting season following completion of the development, and replacement of any trees/plants that are damaged/diseased/dead within 5 years from the completion of the development;
- should any mounding be proposed details to be submitted and agreed by the County Planning Authority;
- all tree work to be undertaken in accordance with BS3998:2012 'Recommendations for Tree Work';

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- the submission of details of the permanent bus shelter facilities prior to bus services commencing, and thereafter ongoing retention;
- provision and permanent retention of vehicle parking spaces prior to use of the site commencing;
- the submission of details of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points as indicated on the application drawings, and thereafter ongoing retention;
- the submission of details of secure, covered cycle parking facilities prior to use of the site commencing, and thereafter ongoing retention;
- the submission and approval of a scheme of access and construction works setting out any path alignment, surfacing, width and signage details within 6 months of the date of the permission,
- the delivery of the approved PROW works prior to first use/occupation of the development.
- the implementation of the archaeological scheme of investigation;
- the submission of a detailed Sustainable Surface Water Drainage Scheme prior to the commencement of the development (works on the main station and car park);
- the submission of a verification report pertaining to the approved SuDs scheme prior to first occupation/use of the development;
- control over the infiltration of surface water to ground;
- restrictions on piling and other foundation designs using penetrative methods;
- submission of a remediation strategy to deal with risks associated with land contamination prior to commencement of the development (works on the main station and car park),
- submission of a verification report regarding the remediation strategy prior to first use of the development,
- development to cease should contamination not previously identified be found to be present at the site;
- installation of the 2.4metre high acoustic barriers to the rear of the platforms prior to first use of the development;
- the submission and approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan prior to the commencement of phases B, C & D, to include details regarding the protection of bats, reptiles, badgers, hedgehogs and breeding birds, mitigation measures required to protect the amenity of the locality from adverse noise and dust arising from construction, measures to ensure that the local highway network would not be adversely affected by construction activities, hours of working, details regarding contractor liaison with the local community and provision of details of site personnel for local residents to contact should matters arise.

164.I FURTHER RECOMMEND THAT the applicant BE ADVISED of the following informatives:

- the applicant is encouraged to consider the provision of a suitable all movements access in the future should further funding/land become available;
- the applicant should give consideration to the inclusion of canopy structures within the car park which could incorporate an array of solar panels. Such development would need to be subject to a separate detailed planning application.
- the applicant's attention is drawn to the advice and guidance provided by Southern Water with regard to protection of apparatus, sustainable drainage, foul and surface water drainage, petrol interceptors and land drainage. The letters containing this advice would be attached to the decision notice.
- the applicant is encouraged to explore the potential to incorporate public art into the development;

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- in addition to dialogue with British Transport Police, the applicant and Network Rail are encouraged to have further dialogue with the Designing out Crime Officer at Kent Police;

Case officer – Mary Green

03000 413379

Background documents - See section heading
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