



On behalf of
Landlink Estates Limited

**Proposed employment-led development
Salt Box
Bognor Regis**

Planning Statement

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Executive summary

Landlink Estates Limited has applied to Arun District Council for hybrid planning permission for development comprising the erection of a Class B8 warehouse; 2 No Class B1/B8 employment units with associated parking and servicing; Class A1 retail food store with car parking and servicing; 2 No drive thru units with car parking and servicing; car showroom, workshops (including MOT testing) vehicle storage, external display areas, service areas and parking; together with access roads, associated ground and engineering works, landscaping and ancillary works (full) and employment units, parking and servicing areas, landscaping and associated works (outline).

The application proposal represents a modified proposal to that approved at this site by the Council under hybrid planning permission BE/102/17 in December 2017.

The viability of the 2017 planning permission was reliant on grant funding in conjunction with the pre-let of the unit in the north western corner to Warburtons, and a modest amount of commercial development including a hotel, the drive thru restaurants and a pub/restaurant plus gym at the south of the site.

However, an application via a Local Growth Fund application to Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership seeking a £5 million contribution to infrastructure costs was not successful and the applicant has therefore had to consider an alternative mix of uses at the site so that the delivery of the site infrastructure and employment space can be delivered viably.

This revised application follows the same configuration as the approved scheme except that the proposed pub/restaurant, hotel and gym are replaced by a car showroom, and the quantum of small industrial units has been reduced to accommodate an Aldi discount store.

The Salt Box site is a long standing strategically important site in Bognor Regis, allocated for employment development in adopted Local Plan and the subject of a draft Local Development Order for such uses.

Employment development of this site will however only proceed if it is commercially viable. The changes proposed in this application will ensure that the release of the site for employment led development to take place, supporting the creation of between 500 and 1,000 new jobs in Bognor Regis.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement is prepared by Mango Planning & Development Limited in support of a hybrid planning application submitted on behalf of Landlink Estates in respect of the Salt Box site at Bognor Regis. The application comprises:

“Hybrid planning application for the comprehensive development of the Salt Box site comprising:

- a) Full planning application for erection of Class B8 warehouse with fuel island and car parking; 2 No Class B1/B8 employment units with associated parking and servicing; Class A1 retail food store with car parking and servicing; 2 No drive thru units with car parking and servicing; car showroom, workshops (including MOT testing) vehicle storage, external display areas, service areas and parking; together with access roads, associated ground and engineering works, landscaping and ancillary works*
- b) Outline planning application for the development of employment units, parking and servicing areas, landscaping and associated works.”*

- 1.2 The areas covered by both a) and b) are defined on the Proposed Site Phasing Drawing.
- 1.3 This Statement considers the planning policy considerations arising from the proposal and should be read in conjunction with other supporting reports and documentation.
- 1.4 It will outline the differences between this proposal and the form of development that has previously been approved at the site and justify the alterations to the mix of uses proposed. It will demonstrate that the proposed uses remain generally in accordance with national and local planning policy and are essential to ensure the delivery of this strategically important site.

- 1.5 Section 2 of this report provides details of the site and its surroundings. Section 3 details the background to the application site and the policy aspirations for its delivery. Section 4 outlines the application proposal. Section 5 considers the relevant planning policies. Section 6 contains our planning assessment while Section 7 reviews other material considerations. Our conclusions are provided in Section 8.

2.0 The site and its surroundings

- 2.1 The site comprises agricultural land to the north of Bognor Regis, which extends to approximately 12.04 hectares and is generally flat.
- 2.2 The site lies approximately 2.4 kilometres to the north of Bognor Regis town centre on the northern edge of the town. To the north-west of the site is the neighbouring village of Shripney. To the east of the site is the Oldlands Farm employment site which has been partly developed by Rolls Royce and has permission for additional employment uses on Phase 1 to the south of the site, including 2 car showrooms, a bulky goods retail unit, and B8 warehouses. Planning permission has also been granted for a discount foodstore on that site, to be occupied by Lidl. To the south is a caravan site.
- 2.3 The site is bordered by the A29 to the east, Rowan Park and an open field to the south, open countryside to the west and Shripney to the north. Adjacent to the western and southern site boundary is Bersted Brooks Local Nature Reserve.
- 2.4 A site location plan is enclosed at **Appendix 1**.

3.0 Background to the proposed development

- 3.1 The Salt Box site has been recognised as a key employment generating location for Bognor Regis for a number of years.
- 3.2 The site was identified in the deposit draft Local Plan (2014) as part of the Enterprise Bognor Regis Strategic Employment Land Allocation.
- 3.3 It has since been included in the formally adopted Local Development Plan and through the creation of a Local Development Order for the site.
- 3.4 It was against this context that a planning application was submitted and subsequently approved by Arun District Council in December 2017 at the site (Reference BE/102/17).

The consented development

- 3.5 Planning permission was granted on 22nd December 2017 for the following:

“Hybrid application comprising Outline application for development of employment units, warehouse, hotel, 2 No. Drive thru units, public house, gym plus engineering works, landscaping and associated works. Full application for a Warehouse (Class B8) fuel island, car parking, access roads with new entrance from Shripney Road plus engineering works, open space, landscaping and associated works”.

- 3.6 A copy of the decision notice is reproduced at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.7 Parts of the site were approved in outline only and the indicative mix and layout of the development as it was envisaged at the time of that application is shown on the approved Parameters Plan reproduced at **Appendix 3**.

Delivery of the development

- 3.8 The landowner has sought to attract interest from key prospective employers and tenants and bring forward the site in line with the aspirations of the development plan and the extant hybrid planning consent.
- 3.9 Following lengthy discussions with the Council it was anticipated that that the high infrastructure and development costs of bringing the site forward in accord with the development plan's objectives would be supported by grant funding to supplement the receipt from the pre-let of the unit in the north western corner to Warburtons, and the modest amount of commercial development including a hotel, the drive-thru restaurants and a pub/restaurant plus gym at the south of the site.
- 3.10 The applicant subsequently made an application via a Local Growth Fund application to Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership seeking a £5 million contribution to infrastructure costs. The grant, if successful, would have returned a 10.5% developer profit for the development which, while low by commercial standards, was a level that the developer indicated could be accepted.
- 3.11 Despite support from a number of local bodies and the Council itself, the grant application was unsuccessful, leaving a significant funding gap of over £5 million for the delivery of the site infrastructure that is essential in order that the pre-let warehouse space can be brought forward.
- 3.12 Consequently, the developer has sought to make up the shortfall in viability by seeking to change the mix of uses within the development overall and bring in a necessary commercial value to enable the delivery of this important strategic site.

- 3.13 A Valuation and Development Viability Report has been prepared for the developer by Vail Williams and a copy of this is submitted on a confidential basis with this application and explains further the viability constraints and values at the site. In essence, the scheme cannot be delivered without a cash receipt to address the gap left by the absence of the grant funding.
- 3.14 It is these circumstances that have led therefore to the submission of this new comprehensive hybrid planning application.
- 3.15 In viability terms, the additional receipt is generated by accommodating an Aldi foodstore on part of the site frontage and the replacement of the consented pub/restaurant, hotel and gym with a car showroom.
- 3.16 This alternative mix of uses will ensure that the employment led development of this site is commercially viable and will enable the applicant to move ahead with the delivery of the infrastructure and pre-let warehouse space.
- 3.17 The applicant has engaged with Arun District Council throughout the design process attending meetings and liaising with officers in both the Economic Development and Planning Departments during the course of the previous application. A pre-application meeting to discuss these changes was held on 7th December 2018. The comments provided by officers at this meeting have been taken into consideration and addressed by the designers and project team in the evolution of this proposal.
- 3.18 The applicants and their consultants also met with Bersted Parish Council on 11th December 2018 to present the proposals and seek feedback on the draft planning application. At the meeting, the team outlined the background to the proposal, and presented the draft scheme drawings for review and comment.

4.0 The proposed development

4.1 This planning application is submitted as a hybrid application, part in full and part outline. The application comprises:

- a) Full planning application for erection of Class B8 warehouse with fuel island and car parking; 2 No Class B1/B8 employment units with associated parking and servicing; Class A1 retail food store with car parking and servicing; 2 No drive thru units with car parking and servicing; car showroom, workshops (including MOT testing) vehicle storage, external display areas, service areas and parking; together with access roads, associated ground and engineering works, landscaping and ancillary works
- b) Outline planning application for the development of employment units, parking and servicing areas, landscaping and associated works.

4.2 The application is submitted as a hybrid application to allow full details to be submitted for the parcels of land where there is confirmed operator requirements, while retaining flexibility for the delivery of the space where no end user has yet been identified.

4.3 The principal employment building proposed within the full element of the scheme (Unit 2) is designed for Warburtons, which is now contractually committed to the site. Warburtons has an immediate requirement for a Class B8 warehouse for storage and distribution of bread products. A refuelling facility, parking and servicing areas are also proposed to serve this unit.

4.4 This unit has been designed to meet Warburtons' required specification and proposes some minor variations to the detailed elevations that were approved

under the extant permission BE/102/17.

- 4.5 There is also a confirmed operator requirement from Richmond Motor Group to operate a dealership from this location and, as such, permission for their premises is also sought on the parcel of land to the south of the site entrance.
- 4.6 The car showroom comprises three showroom areas, service reception with cafe area and seating, workshop (MOT testing/bays); and sales, parts, restroom and offices.
- 4.7 A total of 221 car parking spaces are provided within this parcel of the site to serve the car sales showroom. These are for demonstration, display, staff, services and visitor purposes and include 6 electric charging points. Storage for 24 bicycles is also provided (12 for staff and 12 for visitors). Two access points provide access into the site, from the northern access road and from the east.
- 4.8 It is also proposed to provide an Aldi discount foodstore on the parcel of land to the north of the site entrance. This store will comprise a convenience store of 1,785 sq m gross internal area, and net sales area of 1,315 sq m, with associated parking and servicing areas.
- 4.9 Two drive thru restaurants are also proposed within the car park of the proposed Aldi store (as proposed in the extant scheme) also accessed from the spine road into the site. Unit 4 extends to 167 sq m gross internal area and Unit 5 extends to 139 sq m gross internal area.
- 4.10 The final element of built development in the “full” part of the proposal is a parade of B1/B8 employment units situated immediately to the west of the Aldi store, with a separate entrance to the estate road. These will comprise two units (Unit 6 and Unit 7) with a total of 1,272 sq m gross internal area combined,

with the potential to be subdivided into smaller individual units.

4.11 The full application also provides for all the necessary highway and landscaping infrastructure for the site as a whole, including the new junction to the highway and the estate roads, together with drainage works and attenuation ponds. This will provide a serviced site to allow for the delivery of the remainder of the outline areas as tenant interest is identified.

4.12 Outline permission is sought for the remainder of the site, with scale and access for approval, and the indicative layouts for these areas are shown on the enclosed drawings. The outline scheme allows for a mix of employment space within Use Classes B1 and B8.

4.13 Overall the following mix and quanta of uses are proposed:

Full Planning Application			
Unit	Description	GIA (sqm)/units	GEA Summary (sqm)/units
Unit 2 (Warburtons)	B8 Warehouse	3545 sq m	3,654 sq m
Unit 8 (Aldi)	A1 Retail	1,785 sq m	1,862 sq m
Unit 4	A3 Drive thru	167 sq m	186 sq m
Unit 5	A3 Drive thru	139 sq m	167 sq m
Unit 9 (RMG)	Sui Generis Car Sales and Associated uses	2121 sq m	2228 sq m
Unit 6	B1/B8	636 sq m	694 sq m
Unit 7	B1/B8	635 sq m	694 sq m
Outline Planning Application			
Unit	Description	GIA (sqm)/units	GEA Summary (sqm)/units
Unit 1	B8 warehouse	10,680 sq m	11,901 sq m
Unit 1 extension	Extension	4,678 sq m	
Unit 3	B8 Warehouse	1,420 sq m	1482 sq m

4.5 The proposal and the design is explained in full in the accompanying Design and

Access Statement and shown on the Proposed Site Layout drawing.

- 4.6 Site access will be taken from the west side of the A29/A259 roundabout as was anticipated and planned for under the terms of the development plan allocation and as approved under the previous permission. Information in relation to trip generation and traffic flows is provided in the accompanying Transport Assessment prepared by ADL Highways.
- 4.14 At this primary access point, buildings have been positioned to create a gateway approach to the site with the commercial uses focussed at this part of the site to provide activity and focus in this area, with the larger employment units set further back into the site.
- 4.15 The northern side of the site abuts the southern edge of Shripney. As required by the draft LDO and the site's allocation and as included in the approved proposal this revised scheme also includes a 100m depth open area ('village buffer') on the northern boundary to help retain a sense of separate identity and contribute to the setting for the village. This area will also accommodate a flood attenuation basin and will include planting of native trees and shrubs and grassland areas that will enhance biodiversity, screen development and contribute to the wooded character of this side of Shripney.
- 4.16 This buffer is a key stipulation of the draft LDO and the site's allocation and the application proposal has been designed to ensure that this important buffer is retained as an important component of this scheme to protect the setting and mitigate impacts upon the village.

5.0 Planning policy

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 Accordingly, this section identifies the relevant policies within the Development Plan for the area and assesses the compliance of the proposal with these policies taken as a whole.

Local policy

- 5.3 The development framework for the site comprises the Arun District Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted in July 2018 and the Bersted Neighbourhood Development Plan, made in 2014.

Arun District Local Plan 2011-2031

- 5.4 Paragraph 2.2 sets out the overarching objectives of the Local Plan and states that:

“The purpose of the Local Plan is to encourage sustainable development and manage future growth whilst ensuring that change across the District is appropriate to meet local need. It will support the strategic provision of homes, employment and shops and will look to ensure that these are carefully co-ordinated with the services and facilities that communities rely on and which are essential to well being and quality of life”.

- 5.5 Policy SD SP1 states that:

“When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will work pro-actively

with applicants to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible and to secure development that will contribute to the social, economic, and environmental conditions south of the National Park through to the coast and throughout its settlements (both coastal and inland)."

- 5.6 The Salt Box site is situated within the "Built Up Area" boundary as defined by the Local Plan where Policy SD SP2 states that development will be focussed and permitted subject to compliance with other policies of the plan.
- 5.7 Policy EMP SP 1 outlines that the Council, with its partners, will promote the sustainable growth of the District's economy to meet the carrying needs of different economic sectors.
- 5.8 It explains that the plan allocates 75 hectares of employment land to provide sufficient flexibility to meet future needs and aspirations. Its objectives include the provision of new high quality employment sites: strategic allocations including Bognor (b); Protecting and enhancing existing employment sites and allocations to meet the needs of businesses subject to regular review and monitoring (f); the integration of other uses and forms of development where it facilitates the delivery of economic objectives and fosters growth and innovation (k): and the provision of appropriately scaled development where such uses complement and are compatible with employment/commercial uses.
- 5.9 Paragraph 8.5.18 notes Enterprise Bognor Regis to be a focus for *"jobs and employment space at a strategic site to the north of Bognor Regis, supported by a range of infrastructure improvements and digital connectivity"*.
- 5.10 Paragraph 8.6.4 outlines the Council's aspiration for a local development order ("LDO") to facilitate early development and accelerate economic growth, granting permitted development rights for *"new business-related development"*.

- 5.11 The site is also allocated as a Strategic Employment Site where Policy EMP SP3 sets out the following:

“Employment is important for people’s health and well-being. It is also place shaping in that it is an essential element of sustainable development. The creation of jobs is central to this Plan and the Council with its partners will support employment land brought forward on a scale and in locations consistent with this policy and these will be protected for the plan period. The strategic allocations will:

- a) Provide significant new employment opportunities to support the objectives of reducing out commuting and creating local jobs;*
- b) Provide employment-led development to support the objective of providing a new role for Bognor Regis Littlehampton and Angmering complementing other new planned investment.*
- c) Provide different types and sizes of employment space to meet a range of modern business and sector needs, capable of accommodating indigenous and inward investment requirements;*
- d) Deliver new infrastructure to meet the requirements of businesses that can provide wider benefits for the sub-region; and*
- e) Need to be developed with consideration and enhancement of landscape character, designated and other protected habitats and species, air and water quality”.*

- 5.12 Strategic employment land allocations are then listed and Salt Box is included as the first of seven allocations in total.

- 5.13 Paragraph 8.7.3 states that the Council will work with partners to promote and improve employment sites particularly those that are recognised as important by working with landowners, agents and businesses, improving connectivity, developing LDOs as appropriate.

- 5.14 As previously detailed, the site forms part of the “Enterprise Bognor Regis’ area subject of a draft LDO. Paragraph 8.8.3 confirms that the Council still propose to adopt this LDO to cover the Salt Box site, in addition to two other sites at Oldlands Farm and Rowan Way.

5.15 Policy EMP DM2 relates to Enterprise Bognor Regis and states that:

“The areas constituting Enterprise Bognor Regis, identified as sites 1-4 of the Strategic Employment Land Allocation, are allocated to promote economic growth in Bognor Regis and the wider Coastal West Sussex sub-region. A phased mix of B1, B2 and B8 uses will be supported where the following are addressed:

- a) Suitable upgrading and provision of access and/or junctions to the A29/A259 and Rowan Way as appropriate;*
- b) A suitable Transport Assessment and Travel Plan demonstrating how the impacts of development can be mitigated and to improve a modal shift towards an increase in sustainable transport;*
- c) Appropriate flood mitigation works;*
- d) Connection to the existing sewerage system off-site at the nearest point of adequate capacity and where located within a flood risk area a sealed sewerage system;*
- e) A suitable habitat assessment, and where necessary, mitigation measures to ensure no overall loss of biodiversity given the importance of the area in relation to wildlife, particularly protected species;*
- f) A high standard of design and landscaping to maximise the ‘gateway’ location of the sites and*
- g) Suitable screening to protect the amenity of existing residents.*
- h) Development proposals incorporating retail, leisure or office development should demonstrate that the proposal satisfies the sequential test and impact test in accordance with national planning policy.*

In order to attract new employment investment, and to realise the Council’s vision for the site, the Council recognises that the provision of non B-class employment development could be appropriate to support sustainable and viable employment development. The inclusion of such non B-class uses will be permitted therefore subject only to the following conditions:

- i) *Compatibility with the predominant use of the site for B-class employment uses;*
- j) *Be of a scale and nature that would not undermine the Plan policies designed to encourage regeneration of Bognor Regis town centre or impact significantly on Chichester City Centre;*
- k) *Be of a scale and nature so as not to generate levels of traffic, cause environmental impacts or involve noise sensitive uses that adversely affect the operations of B-class employment uses on the site; and*
- l) *Class C3 Residential use will not be considered appropriate.*

Development of each site within Enterprise Bognor Regis will not be acceptable on a piecemeal basis; proposals will only be considered in the context of an overarching master plan for each site developed in conjunction with the Council.”

- 5.16 Paragraph 8.8.7 deals with phasing and timescales and states that Salt Box is anticipated to come forward between 2015 -2019 (Phase 1) and 2020-2024 (Phase 2).

Retail policy

- 5.17 With respect to retail development, Paragraph 9.2.1 states that:

“All applications for growth related to the activities in this policy need to comply with the provision set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (28) . For the avoidance of doubt, impact assessment for growth of office, leisure and retail development will be required from a threshold of 1,000 sqm for Town Centres, Large Service Centres and the Six Villages and 200 sqm for village and suburban centres. At any scale, impact may be a material consideration which needs to be addressed and any impact assessment should be appropriate to the scale of the development and address the likely impacts relevant to the proposed development.”

- 5.18 Policy RET DM1 sets the criteria against which applications for town centre uses will be assessed. Sub paragraph (1) sets criteria in respect of design,

accessibility and crime prevention measures. Sub paragraph (3) states that:

“Town centre uses should be accommodated in town centres. Proposals for Town Centre uses outside the centres defined on the Policies Maps will only be permitted if:

- a) The scheme meets the impact tests of the NPPF;*
- b) The scheme is easily accessible by the highway network and public transport;*
- c) The scheme includes provision for access by cycle and on foot;*
- d) The scheme includes appropriate provision to enable access for people with disabilities.*

Applicants proposing retail development on out of centre sites will demonstrate that no suitable site can be found, firstly within the existing town centre or secondly, on the edge of the centre.”

Other policies

- 5.19 In terms of design, Policy D SP1 requires proposals to make the best use of land but reflect the character of the site and local area in their layouts. For major development a contextual analysis is required. Policy D DM1 outlines those aspects of form and design quality that must be considered in new determining planning applications.
- 5.20 Policy ECC SP2 requires all proposals to be energy efficient and where viable to produce 10% of the total predicted energy requirements from renewable or low carbon energy generation on site.
- 5.21 In terms of residential amenity, Policy QE DM1 requires [at (2)] that new development that generates noise must be supported by a noise assessment that provides accurate information about the existing noise environment and likely noise effects of the proposal.
- 5.22 Policy QE DM2 concerns light pollution and requires that applications requiring

outdoor lighting be supported by lighting plans.

- 5.23 Policy ENV DM5 considers biodiversity and requires proposals to be designed so as to minimise impacts of new proposals and to create new elements of biodiversity. Where protected species are identified, surveys are required to inform an understanding of likely impacts and possible mitigation.

Bersted Neighbourhood Plan 2014-29

- 5.24 The Bersted Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in October 2014 and as such forms part of the statutory development plan for the Parish. The overarching objectives of the Bersted Neighbourhood Plan 2014-29 are listed as the following:

- *“Support, encourage and promote a range of shops and businesses and provide an environment for enterprise and tourism to flourish*
- *Preserve and enhance our valued green and open spaces*
- *Maintain the rural aspect of the parish and the open spaces and views*
- *Promote and support safe travel for all*
- *Promote opportunities for people young and old in education, leisure, health care, training and employment*
- *Ensure that the community is supported by an effective infrastructure particularly in relation to drainage and flood protection*
- *Maintain Bersted’s local character, protecting and enhancing its high quality environment and cultural and historical heritage.”*

- 5.25 Policy ES2 “Surface Water Management” states that:

“New development should aim to reduce the overall level of flood risk in the area:

- *Surface water management measures will be required for development*

proposals to ensure that the risk of flooding both on-site and downstream is not significantly increased.

- *The concept of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) as an alternative to conventional drainage will be supported provided that they can be shown to be suitable in the intended location.”*

- 5.26 The Salt Box site itself is situated outside the defined settlement boundary as shown on the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy ES7 “Development Outside of the Built Up Area” states that:

“Development outside of the built up area boundary as shown in Appendix F, development or redevelopment will not be supported.”

- 5.27 Policy GA1 “Pedestrian and Cycle Connections” states that:

“Support will be given to proposals which would increase or improve the network of footpaths, footways and cycleways either by making land available for that purpose or by means of financial contributions through legal agreements or (when adopted for the District) the Community Infrastructure Levy”

National policy – National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.28 The National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) was published in March 2012 and revised subsequently in July 2018, (“NPPF2”) and is an important material consideration. The following policies are relevant to this proposal.

- 5.29 Paragraph 11 of NPPF2 states that plans in decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless:

“the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development

proposed; (as set out at footnote 6) or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. “

- 5.30 Paragraph 80 highlights that 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.
- 5.31 Paragraph 85 indicates that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. It confirms at criterion d) that Planning policies should allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed, looking at least ten years ahead. Meeting anticipated needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses over this period should not be compromised by limited site availability, so town centre boundaries should be kept under review where necessary.
- 5.32 Paragraph 86 states that local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up to date plan. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period of time) should out of centre sites be considered.
- 5.33 Paragraph 89 states that applications for retail outside town centres should be accompanied by an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set threshold, otherwise the default threshold is 2,500 sq. m.
- 5.34 Paragraph 90 confirms that where an application fails the sequential test or is likely to have a “significant adverse impact” on existing/committed or planned investment in a centre or centres or on the vitality and viability on consumer

choice and trade in a town centre it should be refused.

Planning policy conclusions

- 5.35 The application site is situated within the 'Built Up Boundary' for Bognor Regis as defined by the adopted Local Plan, where development is considered sustainable and is permitted in principle. It is allocated specifically as a Strategic Employment Site and its delivery is a key objective of the development plan's overall strategy.
- 5.36 The adopted Plan identifies the aspirations for the site as a strategically important site for the delivery of the employment uses proposed in this application and provides detail on delivery, timescales and uses.
- 5.37 It also acknowledges that an element of non B1/B8 development is likely to be required to ensure deliverability of a viable and sustainable development. (Criterion (h) Policy EMP DM2). Such development would be in accord with the development plan provided that key criteria, relating primarily to the effect on the town centre, are satisfied and that the predominant use of the site remains for B class uses (Criterion (i) Policy EMP DM2).
- 5.38 Criterion (h) of Policy EMP DM2 is satisfied provided that it can be demonstrated that the proposal compliant with the relevant policy tests of impact and the sequential test, as set out in Policy RET DM1.
- 5.39 The development plan also identifies a number of site-specific considerations to which any planning applications must have regard. We consider the compliance of the proposals against these tests in the following paragraphs

6.0 Planning assessment

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission are in accord with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 The development plan and national guidance similarly underscore the principle that proposals which accord with the development plan are inherently sustainable and ought to be supported.

Employment policy

Policy EMP SP3

- 6.3 The application site is allocated as a Strategic Employment site where Policy EMP SP3 encourages “new employment opportunities” [at (1)] and “employment led development” [at (2)]. It also supports proposals that “deliver new infrastructure” [at (4)].
- 6.4 The overarching aim of Policy EMP SP3 therefore is creating employment opportunity and the physical environment where employment can be supported. It also sets as its overall objective job creation rather than specifically job creation within particular use classes.
- 6.5 In this regard the application proposal is entirely compliant with Policy EMP SP3. It will facilitate the delivery of a significant number of employment opportunities, providing employment led development to complement planned new investment, as the policy seeks to achieve.
- 6.6 Arun has a low level of local labour market containment, which means that working age residents disproportionately have to travel to work. In 2011, more

than half (27,200) of Arun's working residents commuted out of the District to work every day, including over 10,500 who travelled to Chichester and 5,700 who worked in Worthing. This lack of local jobs and high level of out-commuting adds to pressure on the already stretched local transport infrastructure, particularly the A27.

6.7 Proposals to build 3,000 new homes to the north of the Salt Box site at Barnham, Eastergate and Westergate (BEW) will add to the requirement for more good quality, local jobs, which this proposed development at Salt Box will provide. Furthermore, the infrastructure components of the development will enable the Rowan Park site, located to the south of Salt Box, to be developed for further commercial uses. This will provide capacity for further additional light industrial jobs.

6.8 The proposal represents a £33.7 million capital investment and will deliver approximately 30,520 sq m of new floorspace, and between 500-1000 new jobs at the site. This figure has been calculated using employment-floorspace ratios assuming 100% occupancy from 2022/3¹.

6.9 Work undertaken to support the application for grant funding to contribute towards the delivery of this scheme by Marshall Regen details how these predicted job figures have been calculated and estimates that:

- A minimum of 509 new jobs will be created (which could rise to 1000 depending on operator demand) including 338 direct new jobs and 132 additional jobs in the wider economy;
- The development is expected to generate £119,656 of additional business rate income, equating to £34,700 in indirect spending in the

¹ Taken from Regen Report produced by Marshall Regeneration 2017.

local economy each year; and

- A £15.8 million annual economic impact to the area.

6.10 The NPPF2 also recognises the employment generation benefits of other uses, as well as traditional Class B1/B2/B8 employment uses, stating that *“applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities”*.

Policy EMP2 DM2

6.11 In terms of the specific employment policies relevant to the Salt Box site, Policy EMP2 DM2 supports a phased mix of B1, B2 & B8 uses where site specific criteria are addressed. As evidenced by the extant permission and the technical reports that support this application these site-specific requirements are capable of being addressed by this proposal.

Criteria (a), (b) & (k) - Transport

6.12 The submitted Transport Assessment and Travel Plan demonstrates that the site can be accessed and serviced safely and that the development will have no impact on the surrounding highway network. It also demonstrates that the proposed parking provision is entirely in accordance with policy requirements to serve the uses proposed.

6.13 Pedestrian and cycle links within, through and surrounding the site have also been enhanced and these are explained within the supporting reports by ADL Traffic and Highways.

6.14 Overall the access arrangements and infrastructure works remain as previously

approved by BE/102/17 and will ensure the development is accessed and serviced safely with acceptable levels of impact on the local highway network.

Criteria (c) & (d) – Flooding and drainage

- 6.15 A drainage strategy has been prepared to accompany the proposed development through the planning process. The strategy demonstrates that the proposed development can comply with the requirements of the NPPF and does not increase flood risk either to or from the development.

Criterion (e) – Biodiversity and Ecology

- 6.16 An Ecological Survey has been undertaken by Aspect Ecology and is submitted with the application. This survey provides a further update to the survey work previously undertaken on behalf of the Council to inform the LDO and establish the existing ecological interests at the site, and provide an appraisal of the likely ecological effects of the proposed development.
- 6.17 The Ecological Appraisal confirms that no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations are present within the application site. The Bersted Brooks Nature Reserve is located immediately to the west and south of the site and accordingly a number of safeguards are recommended that will ensure the nature reserve is not adversely affected by the proposals.
- 6.18 The survey established that the site is dominated by habitats of low to negligible ecological value, with the habitats of greatest ecological value in the form of boundary vegetation which will be retained and incorporated into larger buffer areas. The reports sets out a number of recommendations to ensure the suitable protection and enhancement of the retained boundary habitats, whilst new planting is also proposed to incorporate native species to benefit local wildlife, resulting in significant ecological enhancements.

- 6.19 The report demonstrates that the proposal has sought to minimise impacts on biodiversity and it is considered unlikely that the proposals will result in harm to ecological receptors. Where appropriate opportunities have been taken to provide ecological enhancements as part of the development.

Criteria (f) & (g) – Design and landscaping

- 6.20 At criterion (f) it is stated that a high standard of design and landscaping is required and at (g) that suitable screening is needed to protect the amenity of existing residents.
- 6.21 The landscaping scheme for the Salt Box site was approved under hybrid permission BE/102/17 and this application proposes no significant alterations to the approved landscaping scheme except that topsoil will be retained within the site to facilitate the creation of further landscaped bunding along the northern edge of the built development to provide further screening.
- 6.22 The layout has been designed to sensitively enhance the site and its setting and ensure that screening is sufficient to minimise the visual impacts of the proposed development.
- 6.23 The accompanying Design and Access Statement prepared by Mountford Pigott, with inputs from Boyle and Summers where appropriate, provides an appraisal of the design process and rationale which have underpinned the evolution of the application proposal.
- 6.24 Details in relation to the materials to be used for the detailed elements of the planning application are also provided in the Design and Access Statement and shown on the proposed elevational drawings. The remaining parts of the site, where approval of the layout and design is not sought at this stage are anticipated to follow the same design rationale with a contemporary and

functional style.

- 6.25 The approved redevelopment of the Salt Box site includes a village buffer zone to maintain a sense of separation between the development and Shripney village and conservation area. This 100m wide open area with the extant east-west orientated electricity transmission line will also accommodate a flood attenuation basin, with structural planting along the northern and north eastern site boundary to further screen development and positively contribute to the wooded character of the southern side of Shripney. This is retained in this amended proposal and will provide appropriate screening as required by the Policy.
- 6.26 No effects on the conservation area are likely to arise as a consequence of the development proposal.

Criteria (h) & (j) – Retail / town centre effects

- 6.27 Criterion (h) anticipates that development proposals may include retail, leisure or office uses and outlines the requirement that such aspects are subject to the retail impact and sequential tests.
- 6.28 The retail foodstore and drive thrus proposed as part of this application are assessed against these tests in the Retail Assessment that supports this application.
- 6.29 The text that follows also anticipates the need for non B-class uses on the site to attract new employment investment and “support sustainable and viable employment development” and sets further criteria against which such aspects will be considered.
- 6.30 Criterion (j) requires that proposals be of a scale and nature that would not

undermine the Plan policies designed to encourage regeneration of Bognor Regis town centre or impact significantly on Chichester City centre.

- 6.31 As outlined above, the trading effects of this proposal are considered in the following section of this report. Additionally, this section will consider briefly the effect on investment in Bognor town centre.

Criterion (i) and following text – Maintaining the use of the site predominantly for B class uses / need for a comprehensive development proposals

- 6.32 As outlined earlier in this report, the raison d'être of this revised application is to ensure that the proposed employment development and the infrastructure that is required to support it, is viable. The detailed assessment provided by Vail Williams demonstrates that the funding gap left by the failure to secure the necessary £5m infrastructure funding can only be delivered if the proposed foodstore and car showroom are both permitted.
- 6.33 Policy EMP DM2 requires comprehensive development of the Saltbox site and it is for this reason that we have submitted this revised application rather than sought to amend those parts of the approved scheme where changes were required. The form of this application demonstrates the applicant's commitment to a comprehensive and cohesive form of development for this site.
- 6.34 In terms of the proposed mix of uses, the submitted parameters plan and DAS show that of the 25,807 sq m GIA of floorspace proposed across the two phases of the development, some 21,595 sq m (83.68%) will comprise B class uses. Only 4,212 sq m or 16.32%, will comprise non B class uses.
- 6.35 The viability assessment submitted with the application demonstrates that even with this modest scale of non B class floorspace, the scheme delivers a level of

profit below that which a commercial developer would normally accept. This therefore the minimum level of non B class floorspace that is required to deliver the majority of this site for employment uses.

- 6.36 The use of the site will therefore indisputably maintain B class uses as the predominant use in accord with criterion (i) and the level of non B class floorspace has been properly and fully justified.

Retail policy

- 6.37 As outlined above in the context of criterion (h) of Policy EMP DM2, the submitted Retail Assessment demonstrates that the proposal will not have a materially adverse, let alone significantly adverse, effect on the trading performance of the town centre of Bognor Regis or investment in that centre. The proposal is therefore compliant with criterion (1) of Policy RET DM1.

- 6.38 With regard to criteria (2) – (4), these are addressed fully in the submitted Transportation Assessment by ADL and the DAS prepared by Mountford Pigott. The proposal offers excellent highway connectivity and includes proposals to support and enhance accessibility by non-car modes. Disabled access is also accounted for in the design, as required by building regulations.

- 6.39 Compliance with the sequential test is not a specified criterion of Policy RET DM1 but, as explained above, the proposal has been assessed and no sites within or at the edge of the centre have been identified that can accommodate the proposal.

Other policies

- 6.40 The design and energy sustainability of the proposed development is considered in the DAS and the Energy Statements prepared by Scotch &

Partners. This demonstrates that the application proposals provide a high standard of design and energy efficiency.

- 6.41 The lighting, noise and ecological effects of the proposal have also been considered in technical reports that support the application and have been shown to be acceptable.

Conclusions on planning policy

- 6.42 The above shows that the proposal is in full accord with the employment policies of the development plan, including criteria (g) & (j) of Policy EMP D2 and RET DM1 in respect of retail matters.
- 6.43 The design requirements of Policy D SP1 are explained in the submitted Design and Access Statement, while the requirements of ECC SP2, QE DM11, QE DM2, ENV DM5 are all addressed in the detailed reports submitted with this application.
- 6.44 Overall therefore the proposal is compliant with the requirements of the development plan and is in accord with the development plan. As such the positive presumption in favour of support of the proposal as set out in the Local Plan and also Paragraph 11 of the NPPF2 is engaged in this case.

7.0 Other material considerations

- 7.1 The assessment above has shown that the application proposal is compliant with the relevant criteria of the key policies pertaining to the uses proposed and consequently is in accord with the Development Plan.
- 7.2 We would however also highlight other material benefits of the proposal that weigh in favour of the submissions.

Range and choice of employment opportunities

- 7.3 While the proposed development will create between 500-1000 jobs in accord with the development plan, a further benefit to note is the range and diversity of employment opportunities that will be created.
- 7.4 Forty new jobs will be created at the new Aldi store. Aldi offers exceptional training programmes and encourage staff to progress within the Company, offering an alternative route to management positions. The Company offers both part time and full time positions and flexible working hours.
- 7.5 The car sales showroom proposed by this application will provide 85 new jobs with a mix of full and part time positions, with varied skills from Sales and customers services to technicians, mechanics and valetors. A letter from RMG is enclosed at **Appendix 5**.
- 7.6 Warburtons will offer a diverse range of positions including clerical workers, drivers and warehouse staff.
- 7.7 The proposed starter units will also present opportunities for small businesses to take up space in a hub of business activity.

- 7.8 The two remaining plots of employment land will be serviced and available to support further range and choice of jobs in Bognor Regis.
- 7.9 This diversity of employment maximises the opportunity for Bognor residents to find suitable employment within the site and supports the self-sufficiency of Bognor in the longer term.

Enabling development

- 7.10 The concept of enabling development refers to development that may not ordinarily be acceptable in planning terms but, on the basis that it will bring about overriding associated public benefits, it can be considered to be a valid material consideration in the planning balance. Consideration and determination of enabling development therefore requires the decision maker to balance the degree of any potential harm resulting from the enabling development against the economic, social and public benefits it will bring.
- 7.11 The conclusions of the High Court in its judgment in Thakeham Village Action Ltd [On the Application of] v Horsham District Council [2014] provides support for the notion that the principle of enabling development can be applied to a range of proposals and is not exclusively relevant to the preservation of heritage assets. In considering this particular case, Justice Lindblom stated:

“The scope for enabling development is wide. There are many ways in which it may serve a proper planning purpose. It may fund work of repair or improvement to a listed building. It may fund the protection of a particular habitat. It may fund the provision of a swimming pool for public use, or some other public facility, but that is far from being an exhaustive list of the benefits it may help to provide”.

- 7.12 In Tesco Stores Limited vs Secretary of State for the Environment (1995) Lord Keith of Kinkell stated that:

“First, the question of what is a material (or relevant) consideration is a question

of law, but the weight to be given to it is a matter for the decision maker. Second, financial viability may be material if it relates to the development. Third, financial dependency of part of a composite development on another part may be a relevant consideration, in the sense that the fact the proposed development will finance other relevant planning benefits may be material..... there must be a real connection between the benefits and the development.”

- 7.13 In this case, the proposal has been shown to be compliant with the Development Plan in any event. That the non B-class uses within this proposal are required to enable the employment site’s delivery is nevertheless a factor that weights in its favour.

8.0 Summary and conclusions

- 8.1** This Statement is prepared by Mango Planning & Development Limited in support of a planning application submitted on behalf of Landlink Estates Limited in respect of employment led development of the Salt Box site at Bognor Regis.
- 8.2** This Statement has assessed the proposal against the key policy tests of the development plan, with particular focus on Policy EMP SP3 and EMP DM2 in respect of employment land and the key retail tests outlines in Policy RET DM1 in respect of retail impact and the sequential approach.
- 8.3** It has been shown that the proposal is compliant with the Development Plan and, further, there are material considerations that weigh further in favour of the grant of planning permission.
- 8.4** In this context and against the presumption in favour of the grant of planning permission for sustainable development, planning permission should be granted accordingly.