# Innovation Park Medway

## LVIA Addendum

## 3 December 2019

## Introduction

### Background to addendum

In June and July 2019, consultation on the LDO and Design Code for Innovation Park Medway (IPM) was undertaken and included an assessment of effects on the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which formed part of the Environmental Statement (ES) consultation documents.

Natural England and the Kent Downs AONB Unit were consulted and provided written responses. Natural England requested further information on the visual impact resulting from the proposed development on key areas within the AONB.

This addendum provides further information on visual matters relating to those key areas, defined below in section 1.1.2, provides clarification for the judgments reached and should be read alongside Chapter 11 of the Environmental Statement and associated appendices.

### Key areas

In consultation with Natural England, the key areas within the AONB have been defined as the publicly accessible areas, such as Public Rights of Way and areas of public open space (including land with permissive access), in and around Nashenden Down Nature Reserve.

These areas are set out in Chapter 11 of the ES (paragraphs 11.6.25 – 11.6.33) and relate to users of the Nature Reserve and its associated permissive routes and users of Public Rights of Way, along which runs the North Downs Way, represented by viewpoints 6, 7 and 8.

In response to comments from the AONB Unit, an additional viewpoint has been included within the scope of this addendum to capture views from the North Downs Way near Public Right of Way MR6 (viewpoint 10).

## Baseline

### Baseline update

Since Chapter 11 of the ES was written, the visual environment of the site has changed. Two developments located along the scarp slope between the AONB and the IPM site have been constructed and now form part of existing baseline conditions.

The developments, identified on drawing 6278\_300 (see Appendix 1), are as follows:

* 17/02655/FL – Construction of industrial units to the west of Rochester Road. (Phase 1 complete with a second phase granted planning permission)
* MC/19/0558 – Construction of 11 industrial units at former D/X Freight Site, west of Maidstone Road.

### Updated site photography

To record the changed baseline, a site visit was undertaken in October 2019. Photographs were retaken for viewpoints 6, 7 and 8, and these are provided with Appendix 2. The photopanels have also been extended to illustrate a broader extent of the scarp slope and ridge seen in views from these locations.

During the site visit, it was noted that planting along the permissive bridleway within Nashenden Down Nature Reserve has grown noticeably since the ES Chapter was written. The planting is being managed as woodland and over the course of a few years will obscure views of the proposals from viewpoint 8. An additional viewpoint (viewpoint 9) is included with this addendum and is taken from a location at a lower elevation but where views towards the site will remain open.

Visualisations have been produced for all four viewpoints and are included with Appendix 3.

## Assessment of Visual Effects

### Viewpoint Analysis

Viewpoints 6, 7, and 9 are representative of locations within the AONB where open views towards the rising scarp slope and ridge (located beyond the AONB) are available. The viewpoints demonstrate the extent to which existing development is visible along the lower and upper slopes of the scarp and along the ridgeline.

As illustrated by the viewpoints, existing development is not limited to the BAE buildings or the industrial estates immediately surrounding the site. HMP Rochester and HMP Cookham Wood, comprising large scale buildings, are clearly visible along the top of the scarp, as are other buildings defining the edge of the urban area. In combination with the recently constructed industrial units on the upper slopes of the scarp between the site and the AONB, built development along the scarp and skyline is frequently visible. The road and rail infrastructure towards the lower slopes of the scarp, including the prominent Stoney Lane overbridge that rises towards Rochester Road, also contribute to the built environment. The presence of existing development, as described above, reduces the scale of visual effect of the proposed development from the key areas within the AONB.

From viewpoints 7 and 9 within the AONB, Small scale effects would occur, where there would be a minor alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline would be largely unchanged, despite discernible differences.

From the lower slopes within the AONB, where the proposed buildings would be largely screened by trees along the scarp slope and trees along Rochester Road, with tops of proposed buildings visible just above the treeline, effects would be of Small-Negligible scale, as demonstrated by viewpoint 6.

From viewpoint 8, the scale of effect, in the medium term before the planting obscures views, would be Small scale, reducing to Negligible, including during winter months, once the foreground woodland has matured.

### Visual Receptor Groups

Nashenden Down Nature Reserve was assessed in Chapter 11 (11.6.24 – 11.6.27) of the ES as being of High-Medium sensitivity. This judgement on Sensitivity was reached by combining the Susceptibility and Value of the receptor group, following the methodology set out in Chapter 11.2 of the ES.

The Value of the receptor group was assessed to be High, given its location within the AONB. Susceptibility was judged to be Medium given the amount of existing development within views. The introduction of additional development along the scarp would not be uncharacteristic of views towards the urban edge of Chatham and, as such, the susceptibility of the users (their ability to accommodate similar development) is lower than if there was little or no development visible along the scarp slope and ridge.

The recent introduction of development along the more exposed scarp slopes and skyline further reduces the Susceptibility of the receptor group, although for the purposes of the impact assessment the Sensitivity judgement remains High-Medium.

The assessment of effects on Nashenden Down Nature Reserve remain the same as those presented in Chapter 11 of the ES, i.e. of Moderate significance, although it is worth noting that visibility from the highest point of the receptor group (represented by viewpoint 8) would reduce over time as foreground woodland matures, such that effects on a permanent basis would be Negligible from this location.

### Key Routes

The North Downs Way National Trail was assessed in Chapter 11 (11.6.28 – 11.6.33) and consideration was given to views in winter months, when vegetation lining the route would be more permeable.

Photography and visualisations for viewpoint 10 are provided in Appendix 4, demonstrating that, where gaps in vegetation along the trail allow, for a short stretch of the route between Burham Hill Farm and Hill Road, the proposals would be seen clearly in the context of existing industrial and employment areas. Visual effects, at worst, would be of Slight significance.

### Effects on the Kent Downs AONB

Effects on the special characteristics, qualities and reasons for the designation of the Kent Downs AONB, from a visual perspective, remain unchanged from those presented in Chapter 11 (11.7.1 – 11.7.3) of the ES.

### Viewpoint Summary

| Viewpoint | Distance, direction | Scale of effect | Adverse, Neutral, Positive |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6 – AONB - North Downs Way | 1.4km, north-west | Small-Negligible | Neutral |
| 7 – AONB - Nashenden Down Nature Reserve (Permissive Footpath) | 1.5km, north-west | Small | Adverse |
| 8 – AONB - Nashenden Down Nature Reserve (Permissive Bridleway) | 1km, west | Small (Medium term)  Negligible (Permanent) | Neutral |
| 9 – AONB - Nashenden Down Nature Reserve (Permissive Bridleway) | 0.9km, west | Small | Adverse |
| 10 – AONB - North Downs Way | 1.7k, west | Small-Negligible | Neutral |

Table: Summary of Visual Effects

| Receptor | Comments | Distance/ Direction | Sensitivity | | Magnitude | | Significance | Positive /Neutral /Adverse |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Visual Receptor Groups | | | | | | | | |
| Nashenden Down Nature Reserve |  | 560m, west | High-Medium | | Medium-Low | | Moderate | Adverse |
| Key Routes | | | | | | | | |
| North Downs Way National Trail | Stretch of the route between Burham Hill Farm and Hill Road | 1.4km, west | | High | | Low-Negligible | Slight | Neutral |
| Stretch of the route between viewpoint 7 and railway overbridge | Low-Negligible | Slight | Adverse |
| Overall effect on route | Negligible | Minimal | Neutral |
| Landscape Designations | | | | | | | | |
| Kent Downs AONB | Views out of the AONB | 100m, west | High | | Low-Negligible | | Slight | Adverse |
| Overall effect on Kent Downs AONB | Negligible | | Minimal | Neutral |

Appendix 1 – Site Location, Context and Viewpoints

Appendix 2 – Photopanels for viewpoints 6, 7, 8, and 9

Appendix 3 – Visualisations for viewpoints 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Appendix 4 – Photography and visualisations for viewpoint 10.