

Offices at Maidstone East/Sorting office (RMX1(2))

1. Action point 8.9 (following Session 8 - Employment) requested that the Council amend this policy to include reference to office provision in the allocation policy for Maidstone East so as to marry with existing text in paragraph 13.12 which already allows for such provision.
2. The Council considers that this site can make a specific contribution to office needs and proposes a change to the policy and supporting text to state that the site can deliver 3,500sqm of additional office floorspace. The proposed change is appended to this note.

Overall Supply of Office floorspace

3. There is a forecast requirement for 24,000sqm of additional B1a and B1b floorspace between 2014 and 2031. The table below sets out identified sites (> 500sqm) which will contribute towards this requirement
 - a. Local Plan allocations (as proposed to be amended)
 - b. Specific office schemes completed since 1st April 2014
 - c. Specific office schemes consented since 1st April 2014

SOURCE	SQM
Supply: Allocations:	
EMP1(1) Mote Road	(indicative) 500sqm
EMP1(5) Woodcut Farm	(minimum) 7,500sqm
RMX1(2) Maidstone East	3,500sqm
Supply: completions (1st April 2014 onwards)	
Maidstone Library, St Faiths Street (MA/15/505223)	1,000sqm
Supply: consents (1st April 2014 onwards)	
Paul Sandby Court, Turkey Mill Business Park (MA/16/502359/FULL) (floorspace additional to that permitted in MA/12/2257)	816sqm
Mandarin Chef, Lower Stone Street (MA/15/505504/FULL)	660sqm
TOTAL	13,976sqm Rounded to 14,000sqm

'Phasing' of Need

4. The table below shows the cumulative requirement in tranches up to 2031

	2014-16	2016-2021	2021-26	2026-31
Cumulative requirement (sqm)	-235	8,094	16,602	24,000

5. This illustrates that there is a pipeline of specific identified sites sufficient to meet needs until late 2024/early 2025. There are therefore sufficient, identified sites to ensure that needs for the short term and for the medium term can be met. The supply comprises a mix of sites that provide for the town centre office market (Mote Road, Maidstone East, Maidstone Library, Mandarin Chef) and for the office/business park market (Turkey Mill, Woodcut Farm)

6. This supply will be supplemented by;

- Further 'windfall' sites which will come forward over the plan period (such as those completed/consented sites identified in the table above).
- The Woodcut Farm supply is a minimum requirement and there is therefore potential for this site to deliver above 7,500sqm.

Proposed Main Modification to RMX1(2) – Maidstone East and former Royal Mail Sorting Office

Amend paragraph 13.12

13.12 Office uses will be an important component of the mix of uses on the site. The site is in a highly sustainable location adjacent to Maidstone East station which will benefit from improved services to London in 2018 and with good access to Junction 6 of M20. Housing is *also* seen as an important supporting use on this site. Residential development could be delivered in separate blocks either to the west of the site or possibly south of the railway line fronting Brenchley Gardens, or on upper floors above the retail development. ~~Additionally, a subsidiary element of office development would be acceptable provided this does not compromise the retail requirements for the site expressed in policy RMX1(2).~~

Amend the first paragraph of Policy RMX1(2) as follows;

Maidstone East and former Royal Mail Sorting Office, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for development for up to 10,000m2 comparison and convenience retail, 3,500sqm of offices (B1a) and approximately 210 dwellings. ~~[Office floorspace would also be appropriate as part of the mix of uses on this site –omit this change~~

which was proposed in response to Action Point 8.9 1. In addition to the requirements of policy H1, planning permission will be granted if the following criteria are met.

Amend criterion 1 of Policy RMX1(2) as follows;

1 The provision of up to 10,000sqm of comparison and convenience shopping floorspace, 3,500sqm of offices (B1a) and some 210 dwellings. The submission of a retail impact assessment is required which demonstrates that the National Planning Policy Framework's impact test is met.

Reason: to ensure the Local Plan is positively prepared in respect of B1a office floorspace provision.