

Sevington Inland Border Facility, Ashford

Economic Benefits Statement

Assessing the economic benefits generated by current operations at Sevington
Inland Border Facility



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Sevington Inland Border Facility Economic Benefits Statement

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Sevington Inland Border Facility Economic Benefits Statement

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1 Introduction

This Economic Benefits Statement has been prepared by Stantec's Development Economics Team on behalf of the Department for Transport (DfT), His Majesty's Revenues & Customs (HMRC) and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (hereafter the 'Applicant') in support of a full planning application for the retention of the existing Inland Border Facility and Border Control Post (hereafter the 'IBF') at Sevington near Ashford in Kent.

1.1 Existing Permission

The application for the Special Development Order (SDO) for the site was submitted on 20th November 2020, pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) of the overarching SDO (statutory instrument) and granted on 1st December 2020. Subsequently the most recent SDO, granted 2022, comprised the following:

"The temporary use of land until 31 December 2025, operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week, for an Inland Border Facility for use in different phases by Department for Transport, HM Revenue & Customs/Border Force, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Port Health Authority (PHA) and Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy for border readiness, CTC, ATA Carnet, SPS, CITES and other customs related checks, and market surveillance activities, and ancillary Covid19 testing and facilities. The proposed development includes the laying out of up to 855 Goods Vehicle parking spaces, capacity for 260 Goods Vehicles in 42 entry lanes, 357 staff car parking spaces, formation of a new permanent access (main access to the M20 junction 10a link road) and an emergency access/small vehicle ejection point to the north, access off Church Road into the staff car park, emergency access points off Highfield Lane, diversions and extinguishments to PROWs, the erection of buildings and structures for border processing purposes within the development plot area of up to 34,500m² (HMRC, BCP and FM plots) to a maximum height of 8.5m, provision of 24 (19 permanent and 5 reserved) refrigerated semi-trailers covering an area of approximately 870m² associated with the Defra facility, water tank and pump house for sprinkler system, FM cabins, additional storage and additional Defra ancillary infrastructure, security fencing and noise attenuation bunds and fences to a combined maximum height of 5m, CCTV columns to a height of 8m, lighting columns to a maximum height of 12m, drainage, including the installation of surface mounted attenuation storage tanks and all associated engineering works, Site preparation works and extensive hard and soft landscape works. Approval is also sought for additional Site wide ancillary infrastructure covering a maximum development area of 500m² (including back-up generators, marshal gate cabin and emergency exit, GRP Critical Load MCCB Chamber and GRP Busbar Chamber) and for land levelling, construction of bunds and landscaping associated with the creation of biodiversity enhancements on the land east of Highfield Lane".

The requirement for the SDO was a matter of national importance for the timely delivery of border infrastructure in the wake of the United Kingdom (UK) exiting the European Union (EU). The requirement for the IBF was to facilitate checks on good moving under a Common Transit Convention and provide customs checks on non-transit imports and exports.

1.2 Proposed Application

Temporary planning permission is due to expire on 31st December 2025. As checks continue to be required, the proposed Application seeks the retention of the existing operations at the Sevington IBF. The planning application is for full planning permission for the existing operations of Sevington IBF.



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Sevington IBF acts as a location for checking inbound and outbound goods to and from the UK, providing a location for the Border Control Post (BCP) and inspections. While initially conceived as a temporary measure to address the immediate challenges posed by the UK exit from the EU, Sevington IBF has proven essential in managing customs checks, border processes, and the UK's biosecurity. The designation of Sevington as a suitable location for a Border Control Post (BCP) serving both Eurotunnel and the Port of Dover underscores its strategic importance.

New regulations introduced in April 2024 necessitate physical checks on high and medium-risk food and plant goods. Sevington Border Control Post (BCP), which is located within the IBF site, is crucial for complying with these regulations, preventing the spread of disease, and safeguarding the supply of safe food and products to UK consumers. By securing full planning permission, it ensures the long-term viability of this essential infrastructure.

Sevington was chosen for its strategic location on the M20, providing direct access to the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel. The site includes parking areas for HGVs and other vehicles. There are security measures and facilities to enable the checking of commercial consignments entering and exiting the sites. There are also office buildings, staff amenities, and basic driver facilities – including toilets and access to water.

Since opening in 2021, Sevington IBF has played a positive role in the local community, supporting employment and contributing over £2 million annually to the local economy, benefiting nearly 40 small and medium-sized businesses¹.

1.3 Report Layout

This Statement will review the economic and socio-economic implications of the current IBF operations not being retained. It will emphasise the IBF's role within the local economy and focus on the established employment creation and local impact of the Site, set out as follows:

- Section 2 will review the relevant economic policy and guidance that supports the retention of the Sevington IBF.
- Section 3 will assess the economic benefits generated by the operating facility, focusing on the retention of local employment.
- Section 5 will assess the socio-economic impact of not retaining the operations at Sevington IBF, discussing the potential unemployment effect.

¹ [Sevington Inland Border Facility: Background](#)



2 Policy and Strategy Guidance

Economic Policy guidance, at both a national and local level, support the function and active operation of Sevington IBF. The recently updated National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) is transparent in its drive for sustainable economic growth and recognises the importance of facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy and targeted growth sectors.

Sevington IBF is recognised within the Ashford Borough Local Plan as a key strategic employment site. The need to support existing businesses and retain job opportunities is reiterated throughout the Local Plan and the Ashford's Corporate Strategy.

Below we discuss how national and local policy and strategy initiatives support the retention of an active and functioning employment site that facilitates sustainable trade.

2.1 National Planning Guidance and Strategy

2.1.1 National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)² sets out the Government's planning policies for England. It establishes three core dimensions of what constitutes sustainable development. Concluding that the planning system should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Paragraph 8 discusses the three overarching objectives that guide the delivery of sustainable development, two of which being economic and social development:

Economic: to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

Social: to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being

Paragraph 85 refers to planning policies and decisions needing to create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. It states that³:

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (December 2024) National Planning Policy Framework

³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (December 2024) National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 86, page 24



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. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

The NPPF notes that Planning policies should⁴:

Pay particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy, including by identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics;

Importantly, it is recognised (Paragraph 87) that planning decisions should acknowledge and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This is particularly relevant when considering the need for the Sevington IBF. The NPPF concludes that decision making should make provision for:

a) clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for new, expanded or upgraded facilities and infrastructure that are needed to support the growth of these industries (including data centres and grid connections);

b) storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations that allow for the efficient and reliable handling of goods, especially where this is needed to support the supply chain, transport innovation and decarbonisation; and

c) the expansion or modernisation of other industries of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth and resilience.⁵

Sevington IBF acts as a facilitating infrastructure to the operations of other industries. The location of the Site is very particular and vital to the functionality of the service and industries.

2.1.2 Invest 2035: the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy

Invest 2035: the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy will set out the Government's vision for a modern industrial strategy centred on growth. Its primary objective is to drive growth, by taking advantage of the UK's unique strengths and untapped potential, enabling the UK's world-leading sectors to adapt and grow, and seizing opportunities to lead in new sectors. Sevington IBF acts as a facilitating component to the proposed growth set out within the Industrial Strategy. It is an active and vital service preventing unsafe goods entering the UK from both EU and non-EU countries, acting as a mechanism to support sustainable economic growth.

⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (December 2024) National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 87, page 24



2.2 Local Policy Guidance and Strategy

2.2.1 Ashford Borough Council Adopted Local Plan (2019) 2011 – 2030

The Local Plan (LP) establishes a policy and delivery framework that provides guidance to ensure that the Council's planning and land use aims for the Borough are achieved up to 2030.

The vision set out within the LP states that Ashford Borough will meet employment and investor needs. It refers to supporting development with the necessary infrastructure and services, and sustainable and accessible locations⁶.

In order to deliver the vision, the LP refers to a number of strategic objectives in the form of Policy SP1. Policy SP1 – Strategic Objectives includes the following directives:

To focus development at accessible and sustainable locations which utilise existing infrastructure, facilities and services wherever possible and makes best use of suitable brownfield opportunities.

To provide a range of employment opportunities to respond to the needs of business, support the growing population and attract inward investment.

Sevington is identified within the LP as one of four key strategic employment sites across Ashford, recognised to provide for a range of employment types and uses with the opportunity to cater for some of the larger scale employment uses that are less suited to higher density, mixed use environments.

One of the main objectives of the Council is to retain job opportunities within the Borough, and the link between employment uses and local residents. Policy SP3 - Strategic Approach to Economic Development Job Growth and Economic Prosperity states that in order to achieve a sustainable economy there is the intention to deliver 63 hectares of new employment land and a total of 11,100 jobs in the Borough between 2014-30. This will be achieved by the promotion and development of the employment locations identified within this LP and the retention of the existing industrial/commercial/business land.

2.2.2 Ashford Borough Council Corporate Plan 2022-2024

The Corporate Plan sets out Ashford's ambitions for targeted growth, to be a productive, innovative, and responsible town. The ambition set out in the Strategy aims to create a thriving, productive local economy that supports a range of business and industries, offering good work to local people.

Objective TG1 seeks to increase productivity and job opportunities and the establishment of sustainable, knowledge based and creative industries in the borough.

⁶ Ashford Local Plan 2030 (2019) 2011-2030, page 8



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The Strategy states that it will deliver the following, with the target that the Borough attracts and grows businesses and industries that are innovative and sustainable that benefit local employment and incomes:

- Support existing dynamic businesses to expand and grow
- Work to attract inward investment to the borough
- Encourage businesses to develop and use green processes

2.3 Summary

National and local policy express the need to support sustainable economic growth. National policy and future growth strategies target the expansion of growth sectors. Storage and distribution operation is discussed with the NPPF as an industry that relies on suitably accessible locations, and the efficient and reliable handling of goods, especially where this is needed to support the supply chain. Sevington IBF acts a facilitating mechanism to industry growth, ensuring the safe import and transport of food and products to UK consumers. Established operations at Sevington mean the UK is actively capable of supporting immediate growth.

At a local level, the importance of retaining employment and attracting inward investment is a key action within Ashford. Sevington IBF is a significant source of established and sustainable employment in the area, providing local jobs for residents.

Active operations at Sevington IBF mean it is currently both well placed to support national growth initiatives but also sustain local employment.



3 Economic Benefits

The Application seeks to retain the existing operations associated with IBF and Border Control Post. The IBF was strategically chosen for its location on the M20 with direct access to the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel. The Site is active and functioning, conducting vital inspections on imports and exports, ensuring that commercial consignments comply with tax, customs, and biosecurity regulations.

Since becoming operational in 2021, the IBF has not just become a vital mechanism for sustainable and safe trade but also a proven employment location. The following section will consider the economic benefits generated as a result of current operations and highlight the economic consequences of not retaining the current services.

3.1 Operational Employment

3.1.1 Existing Operational Staff

Current IBF operations support a range of occupations across a number of Government organisations. Table 3.1 outlines the main Applicant departments (HMRC and DEFRA) and the associated employment.

There are around 941 IBF staff working, as set out in Table 3.1. This is considered conservative as staff numbers for some departments, including Live Animal Handlers, are not known. This classifies the IBF Site as significant employer within the area.

Table 3.1: Operational Employment

| Government Department | Number of Jobs |
|---|----------------|
| HMRC | |
| <i>Front Office Staff</i> | |
| <i>HMRC Staff</i> | |
| <i>Border Force Staff</i> | 615 |
| <i>Other commercial partners</i> <i>(including Sodexo, Kuehne & Nagel, Tivoli, DVSA)</i> | |
| DEFRA | |
| <i>PHA</i> | |
| <i>APHA (Plants)</i> | 326 |
| <i>APHA (Animals)</i> | |
| <i>Front Office</i> | |
| Current Unknown | |
| <i>Live Animal Handlers -</i> <i>current employee number unknown as 3rd party</i> <i>employment not yet finalised.</i> | - |
| Total known Jobs | 941 |



3.1.2 Estimated Full Time Equivalent

The Applicants have confirmed that operations offer flexible and part-time employment. Due to the number of internal organisations, data relating to the established working hours profile is not available. Therefore, to establish the flexible working profile and understand the potential FTE, an average working hours profile has been utilised based on the existing working pattern across Ashford.

Across Ashford 74% of the resident workforce are employed full time and the remaining 26% employed part time. Based on this, it is estimated that 696 of the IBF jobs are full time positions, and 245 are part-time. This would equate to approximately 819 FTE working at the IBF.

3.1.3 Gross Value Added Generated of Direct Employees

Direct operational employment activity will generate economic output, measured through the generation of Gross Value Added (GVA). GVA is a measure of economic output, distributed through retained profit and wages. GVA is a measure of the operations contribution to the economy.

Based on a regional average GVA per worker, associated with the transport and storage industry, per annum, sourced from Oxford Economics⁷, current employees could generate a gross direct GVA of approximately £38.1m per annum.

The assessment defines the IBF operations as falling with the transportation and storage industrial sector. This sector is deemed to capture the IBF operations most appropriately as the IBF operations facilitate freight and cargo handling/movement via the ports, which is an industrial subset of the broader transportation and storage sector. Within this industry, there will be a wide range of occupations from administrative to management roles and elementary/processing roles, capturing IBF activities.

3.1.4 Gross Indirect Impact

Current IBF operations have an established supply chain, supporting industries across a range of industries. To estimate the gross number of indirect jobs supported by current IBF operations the HM Treasury Green Book (HM Treasury, 2022) Place Based Employment Multiplier⁸ have been applied. These multipliers apply only where an intervention creates jobs in 'tradable' sectors, i.e. those the output of which is sold mostly outside the local area.

It is estimated that the current IBF employment operations support around 205⁹ gross indirect jobs, generating around £12.4m in GVA per annum. These jobs will support a range of industries and occupation types across the economy.

⁷ Oxford Economics (2023), UK Local Authority District Forecasts July 2021 (2015-2021 average), regional GVA per worker.

⁸ HM Treasury (2022) The Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation, Box 26

⁹ HM Treasury (2022) The Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation, Box 26, assumption based on the central employment effect multiplier.



3.1.5 Wages

The IBF employees a large workforce, who subsequently generate wages that facilitate economic growth. Data relating to the IBF wage profile is not currently obtainable. Therefore, based on the average annual gross salary across Ashford and Kent, Table 3.2, it is estimated that the IBF workforce generates around £28.4m in wages per annum.

Table 3.2 Average Gross Annual Workforce Wage (Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2024)

| Geography | Gross Annual Wage |
|-----------|-------------------|
| Ashford | £33,981 |
| Kent | £35,491 |
| Average | £34,736 |

3.1.6 Facilitating Trade

The IBF acts as a vital mechanism ensuring safe management of customs checks, border processes, and the UK's biosecurity. These services are essential to safe import activity. Given the Government's pro-growth agenda, it should be considered that the IBF site is established and operational. This means it is immediately equipped to support growth actions and the resulting necessary border control services.

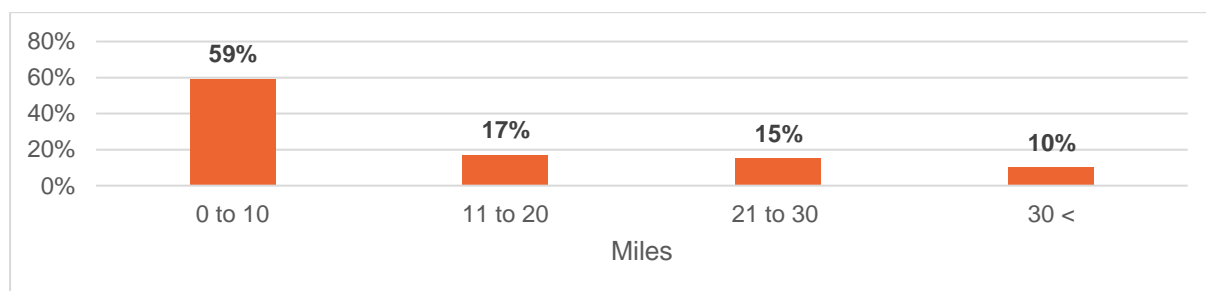
3.2 Local Economic Value

3.2.1 Economic Benefits to Ashford

3.2.1.1 Local Employment

The IBF is an important local employer. Around 59% of staff, accounting for 555 of employees (483 FTE) live within 10 miles of the site. A further 17% commute within 10 miles to 20 miles (accounting for 160 employees). Based on this over 75% of staff commute within 20 miles of the Site.

Figure 3.1: Employee Distance Travelled to Work



Source: Applicant



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Figure 3.2 visually sets out the 10 mile employment area. Across the 10 mile employment area approximately 78%¹⁰ of the population live within Ashford Borough. Utilising this existing population distribution proportion, it is estimated that of the IBF 555 employees living within the 10 mile radius, 433 resident within Ashford Borough. This highlights the local employment relationship the IBF has with Ashford's resident labour force.

Figure 3.2: IBF Employment Radius (Source: Applicant)



Legend

- ★ Site
- 10 Mile Employment Area
- 20 Mile Employment Area
- Local Authority Boundary

¹⁰ 2021 Census



3.2.1.2 Local Wages

The existing population distribution across the 10 mile employment area has been utilised to estimate the proportion of IBF workers who live in Ashford, equating to 433 (377 FTE). Based on the average regional wage for the transport and distribution industry, these Ashford based employees would generate around £13.1m in wages per annum. The majority of these wages will be spent within Ashford, supplementing local economic growth.

3.2.1.3 Local Expenditure

Experian provide up to date retail and leisure expenditure data for all local authorities across the UK. Experian report (Experian Retail Planner Data, 2023 prices) that the average annual per person expenditure on convenience (food), comparison (non-food), and leisure goods and services for Ashford is as follows:

- Convenience - £2,720 per household per annum;
- Comparison - £4,054 per household per annum; and
- Leisure - £4,625 per household per annum.

Experian conclude that the total per person spend across Ashford is £11,399. Based on the estimated 444 IBF employees residing in Ashford, these employees will generate an annual convenience goods expenditure of £1.2m; comparison goods expenditure of £1.8m; and expenditure on leisure goods and services of £2.1m. A total annual expenditure of £5.1m.

A proportion of expenditure will be spent within the local area and beyond. For example, around £0.7m of the total commercial expenditure generated by employees is expected to be spent on restaurants, cafe etc s. Employees are projected to spend around £0.1m on recreational and sporting services. This emphasises the positive contribution the IBF has on local businesses as a result of supporting local employment.

3.2.2 Local Community Investment

The commercial partners operating within the IBF have established links to the community, making commitments to contribute to the local environment surrounding the Site. Over the year July 2023 to 2024, this included the following:

- Actions to strengthen the employee network and better understand the makeup of the workforce. For example, 'This is me' was launched by Sodexo in order to better understand colleagues backgrounds and focus attention on current gaps and develop strategies for employees to develop.
- For example, The Safety, Audit, and Environmental Team has taken a significant step forward by developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) in Nepalese to support language needs.



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- Developing a 'Time to Talk' initiative which encourages open communication among colleagues and promotes engagement, positive mental health and wellbeing. This has produced a £5,287 social return on investment.
- Increasing training opportunities to staff within green and climate change actions. There are commitments to train 200 people per year on carbon literacy. Around 816 training hours were delivered, with 102 training places gifted to disadvantaged groups.
- Creating mentorship Programmes with local suppliers, seeking to help mentee organisations break through inequalities and potential barriers when looking to engage in public and private sector supply chains.
- Supporting SMEs within the local community. Around £2.38m was spent with SMEs, supporting 37 SMEs across the supply chain. It has been concluded that this has produced a £637,769 social value return on investment.
- Establishing the 'Training suit', which reached out to a variety of organisations. Over 55 SMEs and VCSEs received training. 67 individuals received training.
- 148 volunteer hours and £1,700 raised for local communities and good causes.
- A Community Good Fund is being set up to support local societal and environmental priorities.

3.3 Summary

Sevington IBF is an established employment location supporting a large number of Ashford and Kent based working residents. If the Site were not retained this would negatively impact the current advantages benefiting Ashford and Kent residents, including:

- The IBF is an active and established local employment use
 - The IBF is an established local employment use supporting 941 direct jobs (819 FTE), and further 205 across an active supply chain. Together estimated to generate £38.1M in GVA per annum.
- Around 59% of its staff live locally within 10 miles, supporting the retention of local labour.
 - Around 59% of the staff live within 10 miles of the IBF site.
 - It is estimated that approximately 433 of the staff live within Ashford (377 FTE).
- The majority of wages generated by the 941 employees supports the local economy within Ashford and across Kent.
 - The 941 staff are estimated to generate around £28.4m in wages, of which approximately £13.1m are received by employees living within Ashford.
- IBF has a founded and committed community network.
 - The commercial partners operating within the IBF have established links to the community. This includes a range of programmes that are currently delivering local social value initiatives (see page paragraph 3.2.2).

If retention of the IBF site is not granted consideration will have to be given to the following:

- Potential unemployment should the facility relocate.
- The impact of unemployment on the local area of Ashford and across Kent.
- The impact of a loss of wages on the local economies within the employment area.



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- The need to establish a location that meets all the operational needs.
- The time needed to relocate and establish operations, and what this means for border security.
- The expense, resource and time to re-hire in a new location and re-train staff.
- The negative impact on the existing community connections and social value networks already created.



4 Socio-Economic Impact

This section reviews the potential socio-economic consequences of not retaining the IBF. It will review the impact across Ashford as well as the wider 20-mile employment area (excluding Ashford), including the wider South East as a comparison.

Sevington IBF operates a necessary and vital service towards border control. These operations are mandatory, and therefore if retention is not granted at the current Sevington IBF site these services will need to relocate. This will have consequences on the local socio-economic profile.

There are currently over 941 IBF employees. Relocation would still require this level of employment for the facility to function. Therefore, should retention not be granted, these jobs will need to be relocated. The result of which could be unemployment of existing employees. The degree of which would depend on the relocation distance.

4.1 Absorbing the Potential Increase in Unemployment.

4.1.1 Economic Activity

2021 Census data indicates that across Ashford there are approximately 2,593 economically active residents classified as unemployed, accounting for 2.4% of the economically active resident population (aged 16+). There are a further 18,976 unemployed residents across the wider 20 mile employment area, equivalent to 2.5% of the economically active resident population (aged 16+). The level of unemployment across both study areas is representative of the wider South East regional level.

Data provided by the Applicant indicates that the Sevington IBF supports around 941 employees. 59% of the workforce live within 10 miles (16 km) of the Site, up to 76% within 20 mile (32km). Around 15% live between 21 to 30 miles from the site, leaving just under 10% who travel more than 30 miles.

Across Ashford there are 2,593 unemployed residents. It is estimated that 444 IBF employees live within Ashford. If the retention of the Site was not granted and operations were forced to relocate, worst case this could result in an increase of 444 unemployed residents within Ashford. This could potentially increase the number of unemployed residents by around 30%.

Around 160 employees commute between 10 and 20 miles to the IBF. Should relocation increase this commute to an unfeasible level for those employees this would increase unemployment across the 20 mile employment area by just under 1%. This could potentially impact unemployment levels across the local authority areas of Canterbury, Swale, Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, Rother and Folkstone and Hythe.

A further 226 employees live over 20 Miles from the Sevington IBF, equating to just under a quarter of the work force. Assuming worst case, relocation could potentially impose unemployment on this proportion of the workforce who currently travel the furthest.



Table 4.1: Economic Activity

| | Ashford | Ashford | 20 Mile Employment Area | 20 Mile Employment Area | South East |
|---|---------|---------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| Economically active (excluding full-time students) | 64,829 | 60.7% | 422,759 | 55.9% | 60.1% |
| Economically active (excluding full-time students):In employment | 62,236 | 58.3% | 403,783 | 53.4% | 57.6% |
| Economically active (excluding full-time students): Unemployed | 2,593 | 2.4% | 18,976 | 2.5% | 2.5% |

4.1.2 Job Density

Table 5.2 sets out the job density data over the period 2019 to 2022 (2022 being the most recent data release). It demonstrates the change in job density over the operating period of the IBF up to 2022.

It is evident that over this operating period the job density within Ashford has reduced from 0.97 to 0.90. Across the wider 20 mile employment area, the job density decreased from 0.86 to 0.80. Both study areas demonstrate a greater decline in job density than the average reduction observed across the region.

This suggests that assuming worst case and the retention of the IBF is not granted, This could result in resulting in potentially 715 residents becoming unemployed within a 20 mile radius of the Site. This would put stress on the existing unemployment mechanisms and increase employment competitions.

Table 4.2: Job Density

| | 2019 | 2022 |
|-------------------------|------|------|
| Ashford | 0.97 | 0.90 |
| 20 Mile Employment Area | 0.86 | 0.80 |
| South East | 0.90 | 0.87 |

4.1.3 Distance Travelled to Work

A review of the existing commuting data, 2021 Census data, indicates the distance Ashford residents across the study area travel to work. Assessing only residents who travel to work, not including those who work from home or work offshore/in no fixed location, Census data indicates that of those who commute to work, 59% travel less than 10km/6.2 miles, up to 74% travel less than 20km/12.4 miles.

A similar proportion is observed across the wider 20 Mile Employment Area, with 78% of residents travelling up to 20km (12.4 miles), around 10% traveling between 20km and 30km (up to 18.6 miles).

Currently around 59% of the IBF employees commute within 10 miles/16 km. Census data indicates that 74% of Ashford residents travel up to 12.4 miles/20 km, within only 12% travelling up to 18.6 miles/30km. This suggests, based on existing commuting trends, that if relocation of the Sevington IBF



operations where to result in a commuting distance beyond 12.4 miles a large proportion of the existing local employees would be discouraged to commute the distance.

Table 4.3 also suggest that current Sevington IBF employee who commute between 10 miles and 20 miles are a minority amongst the resident workforce across the 20 miles employment area, given that only 10% of residents are recorded to travel between 12.4 miles/20 km and 18.6 km/30 km.

Table 4.3: Distance Travelled to Work

| | Ashford | 20 Mile Employment Area | South East |
|---|---------|----------------------------|------------|
| Less than 2km (up to 1.2 Miles) | 21% | 22% | 22% |
| 2km to less than 5km (up to 3.1 Miles) | 27% | 18% | 22% |
| 5km to less than 10km (up to 6.2 Miles) | 11% | 17% | 19% |
| 10km to less than 20km (up to 12.4 Miles) | 15% | 21% | 19% |
| 20km to less than 30km (up to 18.6 Miles) | 12% | 10% | 9% |
| 30km to less than 40km (up to 24.9 Miles) | 5% | 4% | 4% |
| 40km to less than 60km (up to 37.3 Miles) | 3% | 4% | 3% |
| 60km and over (over 37.3 Miles) | 6% | 4% | 3% |

Source: 2021 Census

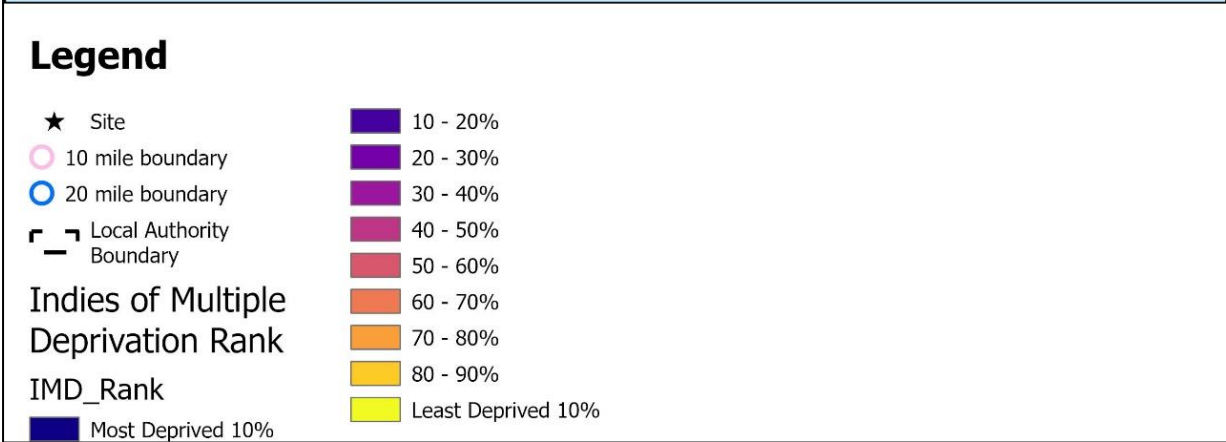
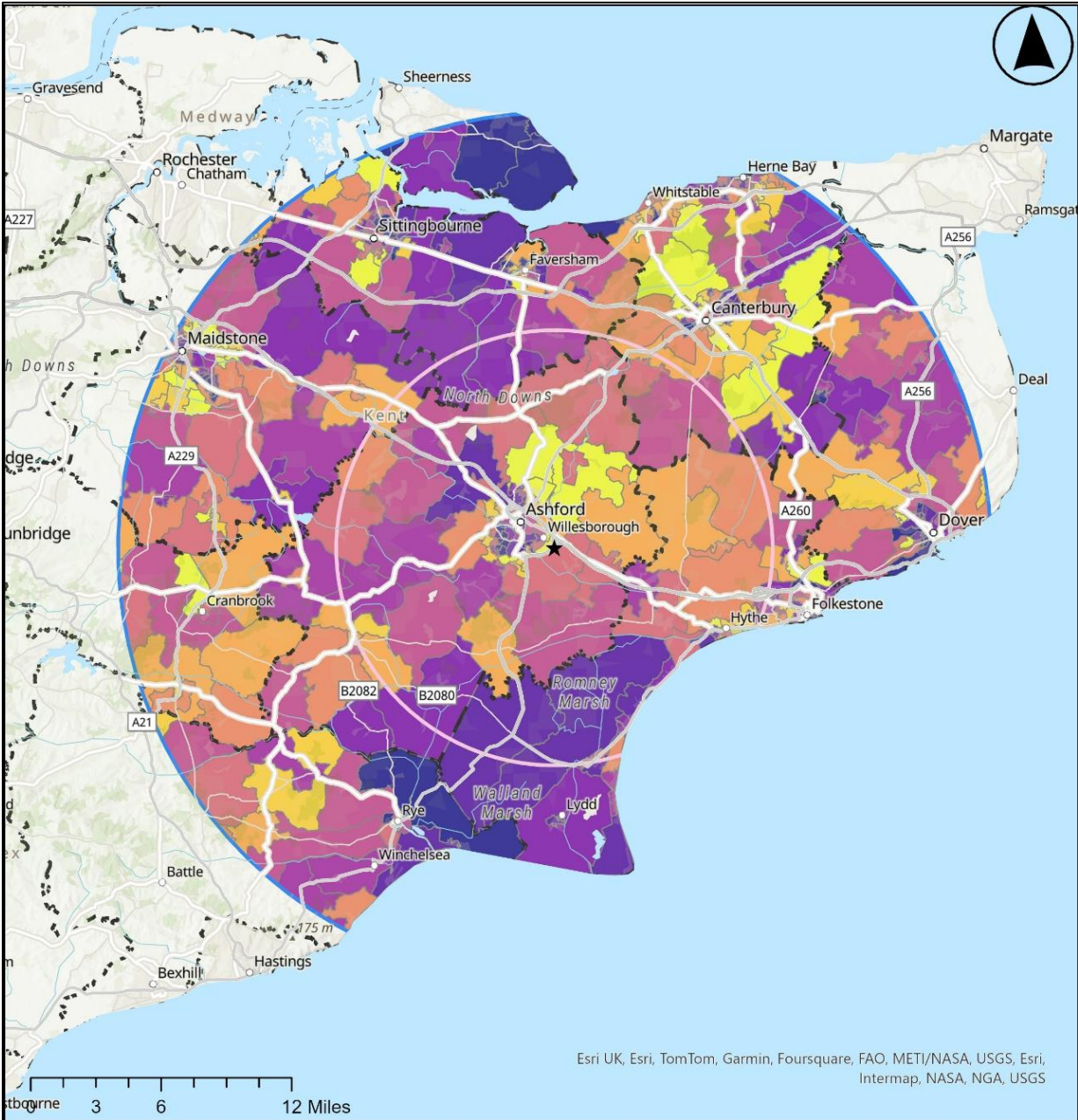
4.2 Deprivation Profile

Figure 4.1 sets out the employment deprivation according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 by rank. It illustrates employment deprivation increasing outside of central Ashford, but also highlights areas within central Ashford which are considered to have high levels of employment deprivation, see Figure 4.2.

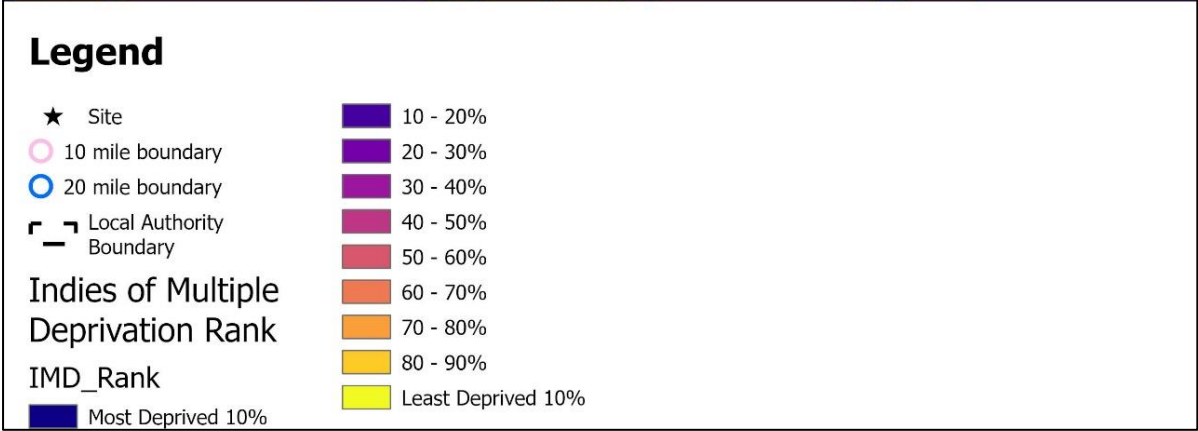
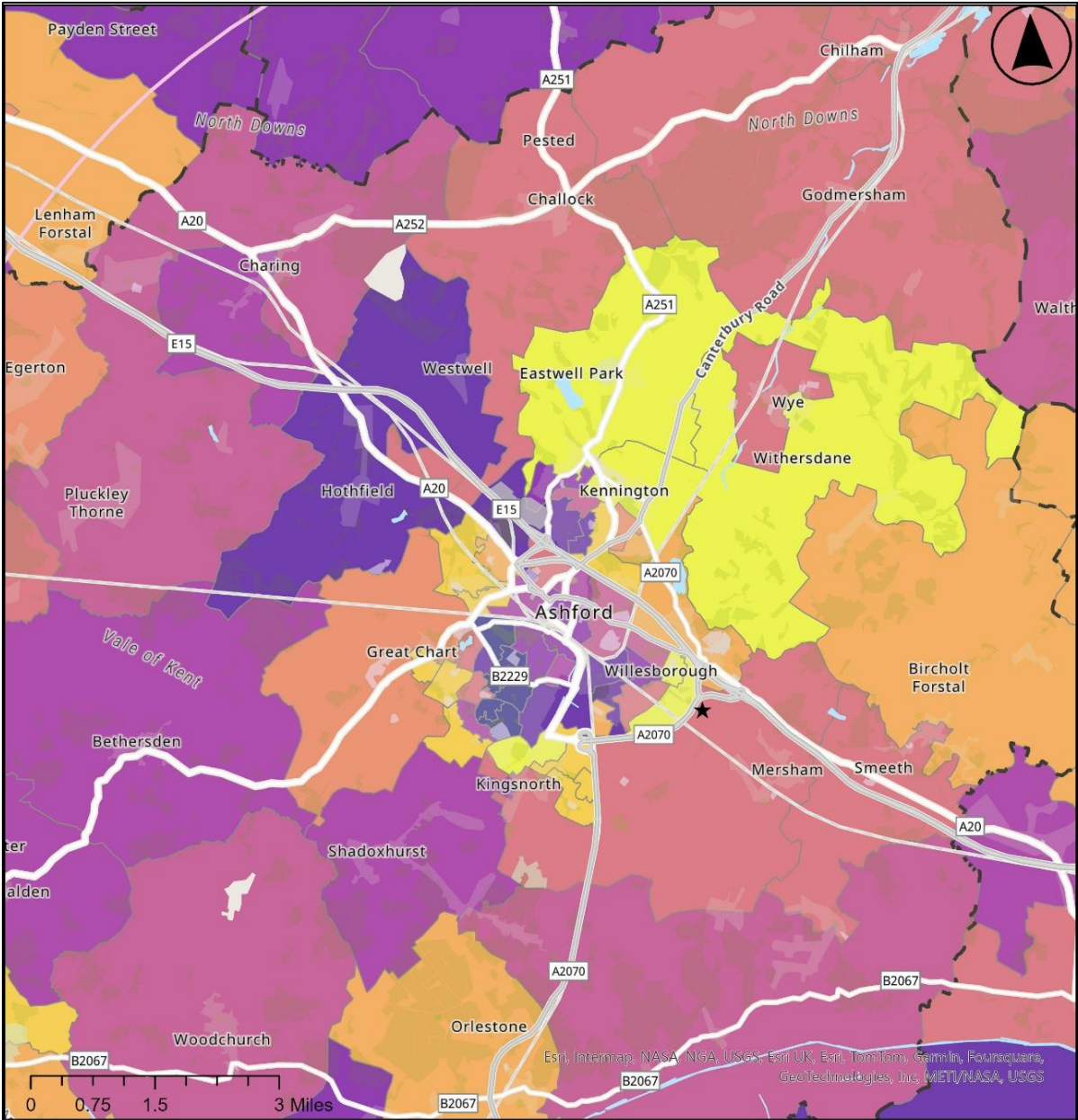
It is evident from Figure 4.1 that areas within the 10 and 20 mile employment suffer with employment deprivation. Not retaining current IBF operations, with the worst case resulting in unemployment due to relocation, could further affect unemployment deprivation within these areas, either directly as a result of job loss or through a reduction in employment opportunity as existing employee become competitors for local job opportunities.



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4.3 Summary

Socio-economic data has demonstrated that the socio-economic consequence of not retaining the IBF is the potential increase in unemployment due to relocation. Deprivation data indicates that areas within the 10 and 20 mile employment areas suffer with pockets of employment deprivation. Therefore, unemployment as a result of relocation would put pressure on the existing unemployment context. There are around 2,900 economically active residents within Ashford. This could potentially increase by 31% should retention of the IBF not be granted and the staff become unemployed.

It is evident from the distance travelled to work data that Ashford residents prefer to access local employment opportunities. Therefore, if retention is not granted the IBF will need to relocate to a site that meets the needs of the transport and logistics network, as well as remaining within a feasible commuting distance to retain staff.



5 Conclusion

It is evident from this report that the IBF should be viewed as a facilitating mechanism to support safe trade and future growth. The location of the site meets the particular need of the transport and distribution industry, allowing it to respond quickly and meet future increases in service demand. Because it is essential, if not retained, operations would need to relocate. Relocation of the IBF would impact its current role, as well as future operations. This would also require time and resource.

Importantly the IBF should be viewed as an established and significant employment use within the local area. A significant number of employees live locally within Ashford, as well as within Kent. Therefore, wages generated directly benefit local economies and growth.

The IBF is considered to generate the following benefits:

- The IBF is an active and established local employment use
- The IBF is an established local employment use supporting 941 direct jobs (819 FTE), and further 205 across an active supply chain. Together estimated to generate £38.1M in GVA per annum.
- Around 59% of its staff live locally within 10 miles, supporting the retention of local labour. It is estimated that approximately 433 of the staff live within Ashford (377 FTE).
- The majority of wages generated by the 941 employees support the local economy within Ashford and across Kent.
- The 941 staff are estimated to generate around £28.4m in wages, of which approximately £13.4m are received by employee living within Ashford.
- IBF has a founded and committed community network.

The commercial partners operating within the IBF have established links to the community. This includes a range of programmes that area currently delivering local social value initiatives. If the Site was not retained this would negatively impact the wider community.

Not granted retention will have a significant effect on the local labour force. Depending on the relocation distance, this could cause a significant increase in local unemployment levels across Ashford and Kent.

The following would need to be considered if retention is not granted, and the site is relocated:

- The impact of unemployment on the local area of Ashford and across Kent.
- The impact of a loss of wages on the local economies within the employment area.
- The need to establish a location that meets all the operational needs.
- The time needed to relocate and establish operations, and what this means for border security.
- The expense, resource and time to re-hire in a new location and re-train staff.



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- The negative impact on the existing community connections and social value networks already created.



