

Our Ref: RP/09243/JW/CBC 30-11

Karen Syrett
Spatial Policy Manager
Colchester Borough Council
P.O. Box 884
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30 November 2009

Dear Karen

Wilkin & Sons Limited

We refer to the above and to the concerns expressed in the representations made by Maldon District Council (MDC).

We understand that MDC has raised the following issues:-

- Employment Allocation for factory is not justified.
- Why does the allocation extend beyond the development boundary without details of the need for expansion?
- Mitigation is required to prevent coalescence.

Taking each issue in turn we would comment as follows:-

Justification for the Employment Allocation

Wilkin and Sons has been employing local people since 1885 and is today the largest employer of local people in the area. The majority of staff live in Tiptree and many reside in neighbouring villages such as Tollesbury, Tolleshunt Knights and the Tothams. The factory complex has evolved and developed over the last 124 years and now extends to some 3.2 hectares, which straddles the development boundary splitting the factory complex almost in two. Ancillary jam producing plant and buildings extend further outside the development boundary and most of the land that extends south towards Tudwick Road is associated in some way with the employment use.

Given the scale of the factory complex and its importance to the economy and community of Tiptree, it is entirely appropriate to designate the site an employment area. The designation will protect the site and will give an important presumption in favour of development for employment

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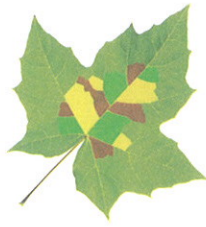
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purposes. The presumption in favour will allow the factory to develop and expand in the future, removing any uncertainty regarding the land use status of the site.

The need for a larger allocation

The factory complex has developed over the last 124 years and some of the earlier structures do not meet the latest modern standards. Wilkin and Sons Limited is an international brand of repute and it needs to keep pace with modern food and technical standards to maintain market share and to continue to develop new markets and to maintain its existing workforce. To do this, the company requires state of the art premises, which maintain current production levels, whilst providing opportunities to diversify and grow the business, employing greater numbers.

There are two ways of doing this; one, by moving production to suitable premises away from Tiptree and two, by redeveloping the existing site.

Moving from Tiptree would result in over 200 job losses in what is a small rural community, ending a longstanding cultural and economic association with the village. It will also severely damage the brand, which is synonymous with Tiptree, playing a significant marketing role for the company, such as its web address, www.tiptree.com. There are few employers of this scale in the rural area and so, maintaining employment and stimulating growth is key to the success of the rural economy. Rural jobs are more precious than those in urban locations as they allow the workforce to live and work in their community, thereby supporting other key services and reducing the need to travel.

The Board of Directors at Wilkin and Sons Limited wish to stay in Tiptree for as long as possible. However, they are a commercial business and recognise that sentiment would be unlikely to come before the long term success of the company. By securing a formal employment allocation for the whole site, the long-term future of the business in Tiptree will be protected and obviate any need to find new premises away from the area.

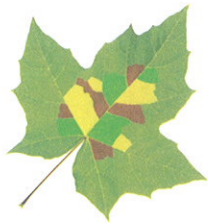
With the objective of remaining in Tiptree, the company has commissioned a feasibility study to develop new production facilities at the Factory Hill site. The key advantages of doing this are their existing workforce is in place, they do not have a land purchase cost and they can work towards an almost seamless transition between old and new. The development of a new factory would be programmed to maintain production in the current premises, whilst the new factory is constructed.

The extension of the employment allocation beyond the development boundary is essential to allow the transition from old to new to take place. Without the allocation, there would be no possibility of a new factory on the site and the company would be forced to consider other options outside of the area. Given the age and condition of the current factory, the decision to move or redevelop on site would be made in the plan period. The employment allocation is vital to the continued success of the business, its future as a local employer and the long term stability of Tiptree as a sustainable community.

Mitigation to avoid absence

The feasibility study commissioned for the new factory included a bespoke scheme for new factory premises to the south of the existing complex. The plan enclosed illustrates the envisaged footprint

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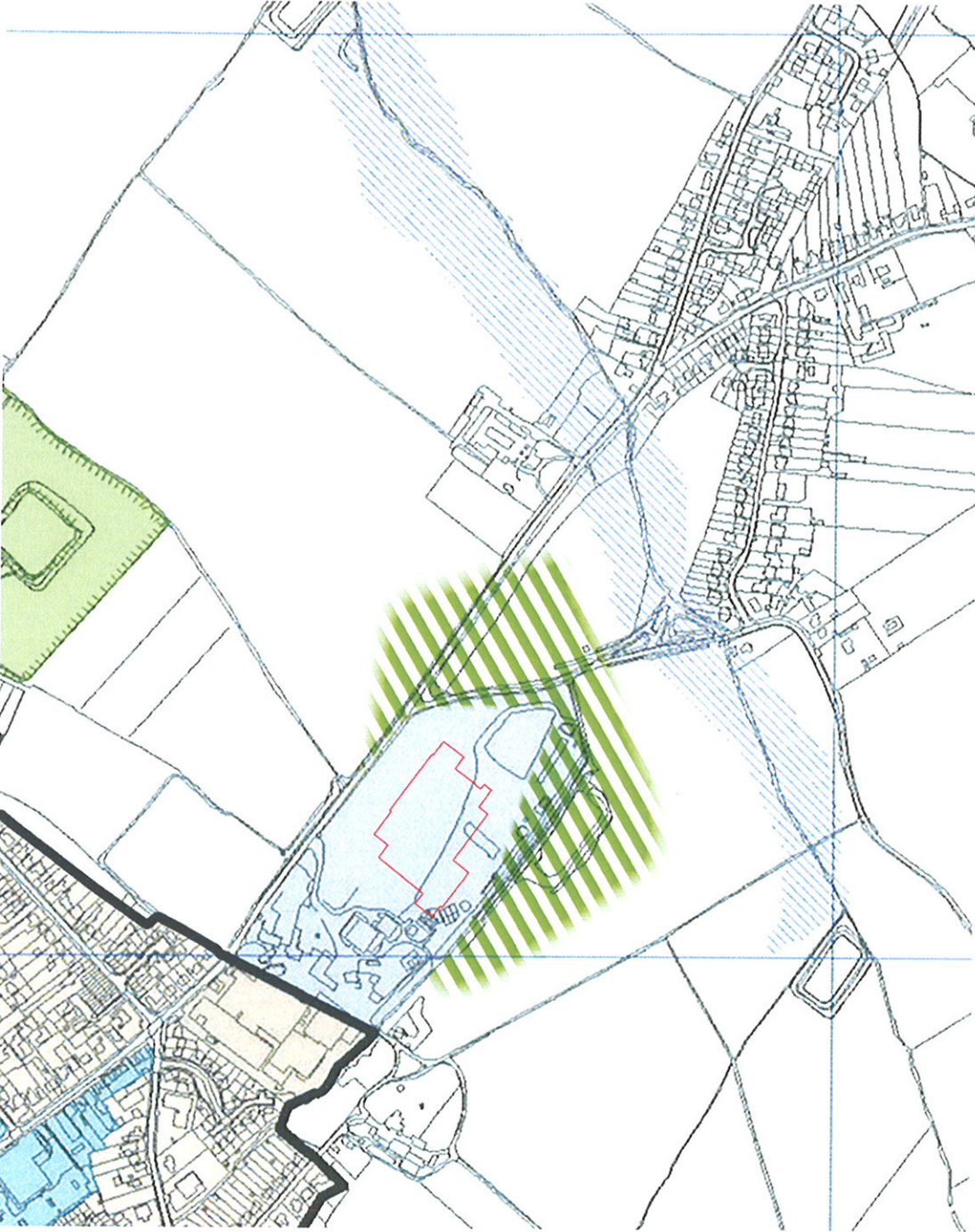
on the site. However, it is quite possible that the building could be sited closer to the development boundary, as some of the buildings south of the main factory could be demolished, without a loss of production. It should be noted that even if the factory was to remain in the location envisaged, there would remain a 300m separation between settlements. Within that separation, all development could be prohibited by countryside policies and it should be noted that all of the land is in the ownership of Wilkin and Sons Limited, so its future use could be controlled in a Planning Obligation. In any event, a significant amount of the land falls within floodzone 2 and 3, which would further reduce any development potential.

Having full control of the land would also allow for some strategic landscape measures, which would mitigate the impact of development. The need for mitigation could be written into the policy or it can be secured by negative planning conditions.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

ROBERT POMERY BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



Key



Strategic Landscaping



Proposed factory



Flood plain



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Drawn by C.K.C.
Approved by R.P.
Revision Detail/Date

Title **EMPLOYMENT
ALLOCATION PLAN**
Scale **N.T.S**
Date **11/09**

Drawing Number **09243/03**
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