

**STATEMENT OF MARGATE CIVIC SOCIETY
HON SECRETARY : G M ORTON**

19 April 2021

MCS has already argued for deferral of this (and any other large estate) development on the grounds that the current Local Plan is seriously out of date.

- On October 6 Christopher Pincher as Housing Minister accepted in the Parliamentary submissions that his allocations were based on a faulty algorithm – economic development at scale is further 'up country' (Northern Powerhouse, Midlands Engine, OxonCantab Arc all diametrically afar from East Kent)
- Until the local Airport situation is resolved Thanet's Plan must be in limbo – if no Airport then not much Power in Powerhouse Thanet and even if Airport we shall be hard put to find for present employment needs let alone the prospect of a further population growth of maybe 25% coming from outside (with their cars no doubt) since indigeneous growth is flatlining at best
- But the likely source of that extra 25% is no longer driven by the needs of the Metropolis which is thought to be post-Brexit in decline to the tune of a million people and added to that should be the pressure to residentialise redundant office space and the Mayor's stated claim to 'do something' about the 100,000 AirBnB accommodations so that 'social cleansing' is no longer the imperative
- The revised Local Plan has to catch up on the 'online phenomenon' effect only precipitated by the pandemic with consequences to the 'Big Boxes' at Westwood Cross as already demonstrated in shopping malls in the USA : John Lewis is aiming to convert a substantial slice of its estate, Debenhams Leicester is becoming 300 flats, the SAGA site is an early 'victim' of homeworking, Such accommodation as Thanet really needs is affordable social renting and the government is waking up to this overall need with inter alia a Brownfield Fund – the Prime Minister has prioritised brownfield over greenfield and Thanet should be doing the same, Preservation of prime agricultural land should not be an 'also ran'