



Hoo Saint Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Mrs Sherrie Babington

4, Birkhall Close, Walderslade,

Chatham, Kent, ME5 7QD

Telephone: 01634 868855 – Fax 01634 868855

Email: clerk@hoopc.org

28th October 2023

Hoo and Chattenden St Werburgh Parish Council

Comments in respect Local Plan Consultation Document Published by Medway Council 2023

Medway Council's vision is to "achieve growth for all" to make Medway an excellent place to live, work, learn and visit, but it does not seem to take in consideration, in this statement, for those living and working, on the Peninsula.

The need for new homes, must not detract from the need for an adequate planning process and there must be no shortcuts of the need for proper public consultation. This must never be overlooked or ignored, despite how attractive the site might look to developers and planners. The public opinion must be taken into consideration when attempting to meet the need of Central and Local Government development targets.

It is our belief, that before any developments as proposed in the Local Plan Consultation document should fit all three of the following criteria, to become a sustainable development, those being;

Economic - is the land used in the correct location?

Social - does it meet provision of accessibility to sufficient local services?

Environmental - saving natural resources, minimising pollution, respecting the existing natural environment.

It is important in all scenarios, that the harm to both the unique character and the appearance of the Peninsula cannot be underestimated.

We do not believe that a full sustainability plan has been made or sufficient information published.

We believe that the new consultation documents still place the major development being put onto the Peninsula and particularly Hoo St Werburgh. Why is this necessary?

Why is the allocation for development not proportionally, evenly, and fairly spread across all communities in Medway?

The Peninsula, which has only one major road on, and off it, there is only so much transport capacity. Which in the opinions of many, has now been exceeded with recent housing and commercial

developments, rapidly increasing the problems of 'bottlenecking' the transport system on and off the Peninsula at peak times. So why do Medway continue to target it with large scale housing developments, and from the consultation document, it would appear that the local area is to face increasing Commercial Development. This will bring increasing pressure on the traffic infrastructure, and will add to the increasing Air Pollution problems.

Any local plan is always going to include an increase in housing on the Peninsula, however achieving it, in a sustainable way without harming the Peninsula's natural environment, will need very careful planning, and will need to take in the hopes and needs of those living within the Peninsula already.

The need of a walk in medical centre/cottage hospital is paramount importance to accommodate any extra homes and would make it less challenging for residents to access Medway Hospital, and of course would relieve stress on an often-failing local hospital.

The phrase "affordable housing" is overused and needs much more information on how to define affordable, no mention of "suitable" housing. Given the increase in older population, single storey buildings should be available close to medical and community facilities with good public transport links.

There is also a need for single occupancy homes with an ever-increasing number of people living alone, and of course homes for local born and locally employed people on the Peninsula with a large element of starter homes.

And the need for nursing and care homes is all part of any local community.

And of course, the creation of open recreational areas not only for use of the young and families but from the older people too.

The Hoo Peninsula has had more than its fair share of developments over the last local plan period, But there will be an urgent need for new investment in our area, and with that in mind we have some suggestions for your consideration

To take advantage of all empty property space above shops in high street and shopping centres, which could be developed into compact accommodation, and a complete rethink of large office spaces like Mountbatten House, that could, with encouragement and financial support, be used for single occupancy Use.

The logical conclusion would be to build on areas around Capstone Valley and other smaller areas in the urban area of the Medway Towns with less valuable land.

The advantages of this would be: -

- 1) The farmland is grade 3.
- 2) There is a thriving shopping centre not far away at Hempstead Valley and a bit further down Hoathway, Gillingham Business Park with many large retail outlets, a skating rink, medical facilities, vets, and much more, and a large Tesco and garden centre on the other side of the road. This area alone is the size of Hoo St Werburgh Village.

- 3) Have the council sought to liaise with the neighbouring authority to build up to the Motorway and provide an enhanced road link. There are many miles of open countryside to the south of the motorway easily accessible to residents.
- 4) There is already a large country park and ski slope on the doorstep for the residents to enjoy.
- 5) The area is very close to the M2 providing excellent road links to London and the coast.
- 6) Ash Tree Lane could be improved to give better access to Gillingham from North Dane Way.

Medway is already listed as an area of "Water Stress" and so any developments must be water friendly so rainwater transfer facilities must be incorporated to all new developments.

The use of school sports facilities should be encouraged especially at a time when the council continues to allow social and sports clubs on the Peninsula to be closed down and built on.

Medway council should discourage unwarranted development on agriculture lands, we must protect the high-quality farming land, and the history we have in arable and fruit farming on the Hoo Peninsula. Once this land is concreted on its gone forever

Air quality in and around the Medway tunnel and of course Four Elms Hill and Wainscott areas is a major concern, and any increase in road traffic will exacerbate the levels of nitrogen dioxide. The apparent identification of Medway One as the principle area for expansion of Commercial and Employment opportunities will only increase the already excessive domestic and commercial traffic on the local roads. Thus increasing the Air Pollution levels.

The use of Lodge Hill as a country park would be give not only those on the Peninsula but the whole of Medway a green lung for leisure and recreation and would give much needed health benefits to the whole of Medway's population. In addition the planned expansion of the proposed Green Spaces needs to go ahead, but in the current economic climate there would appear to be no funding to proceed.

Before any further development of the Peninsula can begin, there must be a major investment in the local infrastructure, with improved Public transport, Major Road improvements, Increased medical/dental facilities, increased shopping facilities and improved Leisure facilities. It is important to note that before any further developments, either Domestic or Commercial are approved, these increased facilities must be provided.

Yours faithfully

S Babington

Mrs S Babington
Parish Clerk
Hoo St Werburgh Parish Council