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11 May 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Planning for growth on the Hoo Peninsula consultation

Thank you for providing Kent County Council (KCC) with the opportunity to comment on the "Planning for growth on the Hoo Peninsula" consultation.

The County Council has reviewed the consultation document and would like to raise the following comments for consideration.

Transport Strategy

The impact of a development of this scale on the wider road network will need to be carefully considered and impacts on the strategic road network, especially at M2 Junction 1 and on Kent's local road network, will need to be fully assessed. As work progresses, it is requested that Medway Council works closely with Highways England and KCC on mitigating any potential adverse impacts.

It will also be imperative to work closely with Highways England in assessing the cumulative impact on the road network of any future growth on the Hoo Peninsula in conjunction with the Lower Thames Crossing, and the proposed improvements to the A228 and A289.

It is encouraging to see a focus on promoting sustainable travel (such as walking, cycling and the use of public transport) as an integral part of the growth of the Hoo Peninsula. Any masterplan work should seek to ensure that walking and cycling routes are well connected with the wider Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, including other proposed upgrades and improvements. The County Council also recommends that facilities for electric charging points should also be fully integrated into the design.

The County Council recognises the challenges that will be faced in unlocking the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and utilising the funding to deliver the necessary infrastructure within the required timescales. The County Council would be interested to understand whether Medway Council has considered an alternative means of delivery, should the HIF funding not be able to be used as a mechanism for delivery.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

KCC is committed to working in partnership with Medway Council to achieve the aims set out in the KCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan¹ and the Medway Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The partnership aims to provide a high-quality PRoW network, which will support the Kent and Medway economy, provide sustainable travel choices, encourage active lifestyles and contribute to making Kent and Medway a great place to live, work and visit.

The PRoW network provides significant opportunities for outdoor recreation and active travel across the region. Both the County Council's Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan² and Medway Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan highlight the lack of existing off-road equestrian access provision, and the proposed growth on the Peninsula provides an opportunity to address this issue. New routes with higher user rights could be created, and the potential for establishing new equestrian provision and cycle routes as safe alternatives to existing on-road routes could be explored.

Opportunities and Constraints

There is an opportunity to improve, connect and enhance the PRoW network of the Peninsula, which is described within the consultation document as fragmented, for walking, cycling and equestrian users. The access over the A228 Peninsula Way would need particularly careful consideration for all users to ensure connectivity between the villages of Chattenden, High Halstow and Hoo St. Werburgh. An assessment of the road crossings should be made to determine the type of infrastructure that is required to ensure safe and secure road crossing facilities for all Non Motorised Users (NMUs). The incorporation of sustainable access opportunities for the local population, ensuring they are not dependant on private vehicle use, would enable the ease of movement and reduction of short car journeys, encouraging a modal shift to pedestrian, cycling and alternative transport away from the car.

The aims for improved mobility and quality of pedestrian experience are supported and could include equestrian users and cycle routes, as off road connections are segregated from main roads by means of green buffers. Accessibility for users with limited mobility will also be important.

¹ https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/90491/Rights-of-Way-Improvement-Plan-2018-2028.pdf

² https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/90567/Countryside_Access_Improvement_Plan_20072017.pdf

The impact on quiet rural lanes would need to be considered for construction and operational phases of development. There would be a risk that if these road links are used as haulage routes or vehicular traffic substantially increases along the lanes, it could deter public use of the PRow network.

The four principles

The landscape-led development principle (principle 1), which looks to integrate access provision with greenspace and encourage natural amenity, is supported. The quality of the environment through which access routes pass is as important as the construction of the route. Connectivity across the scheme for all users should be seamless and KCC would support the use of and enhancement of the PRow network to achieve this.

In respect of principle 2, KCC would strongly support the shift to walking and cycling movements away from car journeys. High quality design will be critical in creating spaces that are safe, secure, and encourage the public to walk, cycle, ride and connect with the outdoor environment. Cycle facilities should be a key element, for residential and commercial areas.

In respect of principles 3 and 4, the County Council is supportive of the emphasis on walking and cycling to connect green infrastructure and local amenities and would highlight the need for accessibility for all levels of user and for all levels of mobility to be included. A scheme of this scale will need to address the integration of existing and new neighbourhoods and PRow can be an integral part of this.

Neighbourhood Characters

Masterplan work, incorporating any necessary improvements to infrastructure that can develop safe walking and cycling routes, both within a new development and connecting it to the wider environment, will be vital – and the Medway ROWIP, KCC ROWIP and the Kent 'Good Design Guide'³ will be helpful tools to help shape the proposed neighbourhoods. Designing places to enable increased levels of active travel participation will also improve public health and well-being and air quality, by reducing short vehicle journeys and vehicle congestion.

Hoo Framework Plan

The England Coast Path (ECP), due for opening in 2020, passes through the Hoo Peninsula (see attached Map). This is a new National Trail being created by Natural England. The long-distance walking route will eventually circumnavigate the entire English coastline. As part of this work, a coastal margin has been identified, which includes all land seaward of the trail. Much of the coastal margin is open access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Opportunities should be taken to enhance the trail where possible (such as creating new access rights for cyclists and equestrians, establishing new links with the ECP to create

³ <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/regeneration-policies/kent-design-guide>

circular routes, improving the surface of the trail and replacing infrastructure to enhance accessibility).

The scale of growth proposed at the Hoo Peninsula would create a significant impact on PRow networks and would add to the pressure and importance of the PRow network surrounding the Peninsula, as residents seek opportunities for outdoor recreation and leisure in the countryside. It is therefore critical that consideration is given to these links, to ensure they are not degraded. With the likely increase in usage, opportunities should be taken to make significant improvements to the existing PRow, as they will increasingly serve as sustainable transport links and provide opportunities for recreation and employment.

Considering the scale of this project and the wide range of NMUs who will be affected, it may be beneficial to establish an overarching access strategy. This would ensure there is a joined up approach for delivering an action plan that would benefit all path users.

Minerals and Waste

It is recognised that within Medway, there is reliance on the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (NPPF) and the National Planning Policy for Waste (2014) (NPPW), in lieu of specific policies within the adopted Local Plan.

The County Council notes that this consultation document does not address minerals and waste safeguarding matters. The County Council recommends that in planning for growth on the Hoo Peninsula, there should be consideration of waste safeguarding matters, given the absence of explicit safeguarding of waste infrastructure in the NPPF and NPPW.

The Council does not anticipate growth in the Hoo Peninsula to affect any minerals infrastructure; however, it may affect important economic materials (sand, gravel and brickearth superficial deposits). Therefore, minerals and waste safeguarding should be acknowledged. This could be in the form of an assessment to review if any sterilisation will occur, and an assessment as to whether it is acceptable. This could be linked to the emerging Medway Local Plan.

Heritage Conservation

The County Council would like to see further consideration of heritage in respect of potential growth plans on the Hoo Peninsula. The area has a wide-ranging and fascinating past that can be used to shape the planned growth and contribute significantly to an attractive life in the future and the wellbeing of residents and visitors alike.

Although the consultation document is high level, it is clear that the proposed growth will impact significantly on very important heritage assets. The County Council notes

that only some of these assets are designated and KCC has sought to review the range of assets more fully below. Many of the non-designated assets, however, are of high quality as those that are protected and need to be given careful attention during the master-planning process.

For such a sensitive area, and for such an extensive proposal, the County Council recommends that a formal, detailed baseline assessment is prepared by a heritage specialist. This will need to include greater detail than the baseline heritage assessment prepared as part of Medway's Heritage Strategy. The assessment should review all relevant heritage information, including Historic Environment Record data and historic mapping, but particularly the results of the Historic England Hoo Peninsula area survey⁴, as well as other relevant research projects such as the Medway Valley Palaeolithic Project⁵. It should identify the ways that the proposal will impact on heritage assets. The assessment can also suggest ways that the heritage can contribute to the proposal more positively, for example, by helping new build integrate effectively with existing developments and serving as high quality green infrastructure and routeways.

The County Council is aware that Medway Council is currently preparing a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) application 'Whose Hoo?'. There is a significant opportunity for the lottery project to support the goals of the New Vision for Hoo St Werburgh by helping the local communities integrate the changes proposed in the Vision into their existing structures in ways that conserve what is so special about the Hoo Peninsula. The County Council recommends that irrespective of whether the NLHF application is successful or not, the initiatives and projects identified could be supported by Medway Council.

It should also be noted that the County Council has sought to provide a high level heritage and archaeological assessment of each of the Neighbourhood Character Areas as set out within the consultation document (Appendix 2).

A New Vision for Hoo St Werburgh

Built heritage

The built heritage of Hoo St Werburgh and the Hoo Peninsula more widely has a number of key themes that policies could develop and support.

The fortifications of Grain constitute one of the most powerful and varied sets of defence sites in the country. These could play a much greater role in Medway's tourism industry, which could be particularly important given the range of challenges faced by that part of Medway. There are additional defence sites along the Medway that could be incorporated into river-based tourism, even if some, such as Fort Hoo and Fort Darnet could not be visited. These include the Medway Council owned Upnor Castle, an existing tourist site whose potential may not yet be fully realised. Within the Hoo Peninsula the remnants of the Second World War GHQ Stop Line

⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/discover-and-understand/rural-heritage/hoo-peninsula/>

⁵ http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/medway_eh_2009/

forms one of the most complete military landscapes of the Second World War in Kent and in conjunction with the nearby military remains at Chattenden, could again play an important economic and social role in this growth area. Further to the west, Cliffe Fort and Slough Fort also have further tourism development potential.

The exploitation of the Thames Estuary for industrial purposes has also left a wealth of historic remains that can be seen today in the form of wharves, jetties, hard landings and structures. These were constructed to serve a range of industries but the most important of these may have been the gunpowder and explosive industries that flourished in the area, particularly at the Curtis and Harvey Explosives Works at Cliffe. Many of these remains will be clearly visible to people using the coastal path and provide an excellent opportunity for interpretation. Across Medway there are numerous industrial structures that may not be listed buildings, but which nonetheless form key components in the area's character and which would be suitable for sympathetic re-use rather than wholesale replacement.

Townscape and landscape

Settlements have a historic character that go beyond just Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. The urban environment as a whole contributes to historic character. Elements in this environment, such as streets and street patterns, structures, furniture, surfaces, boundaries, open and green space (such as squares and urban parks) help to give settlements a sense of place even when they may not warrant protection as Conservation Areas.

For rural settlements, as is the case for the villages of the Hoo Peninsula, careful thought needs to be given to how the built townscape form articulates with the surrounding landscape. There is a clear and appreciable historic link between the agricultural/horticultural land of the Hoo Peninsula and the rural settlements and farms that it supported.

The opportunities and constraints section notes the aim that key view points are “to be protected and easily accessible”. In identifying such viewpoints, account should be taken of views to and from heritage assets and how development might affect the setting of key heritage assets.

Sustainable urban Drainage Schemes

Sustainable urban Drainage Schemes (SuDS) may have both direct and indirect impacts on the historic environment. Direct impacts could include damage to known heritage assets – for example if a historic drainage ditch is widened and deepened as part of SuDS works. Alternatively, they may directly impact on unknown assets such as when SuDS works damage buried archaeological remains. Indirect impacts are when the ground conditions are changed by SuDS works, thereby impacting on heritage assets. For example, using an area for water storage, or improving an area's drainage can change the moisture level in the local environment. Archaeological remains in particular are highly vulnerable to changing moisture levels which can accelerate the decay of organic remains and alter the chemical constituency of the

soils. Historic buildings are often more vulnerable than modern buildings to flood damage to their foundations.

When SuDS are planned, it is important that the potential impact on the historic environment is fully considered and any unavoidable damage is mitigated. This is best secured by early consideration of the local historic environment following consultation with the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) and by taking relevant expert advice. KCC has recently produced advice for SuDS and the historic environment. It provides information about the potential impact of SuDS on the historic environment, the range of mitigation measures available and how developers should proceed if their schemes are believed likely to impact on heritage assets.

Design Frameworks and Development Frameworks

There are a number of key studies and resources that should underpin any consideration and use of Medway's historic environment:

- Kent Historic Environment Record - a database of archaeological sites, historic buildings and landscape features in Kent and Medway⁶
- The outputs of the Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project – a major project carried out by Historic England from 2009 – 2012 that examined all aspects of the peninsula's heritage⁷
- Kent Farmsteads Guidance (2012) for developers and planners considering development in the countryside⁸
- Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001)⁹

Principle 1: A landscape-led development

The brochure refers to the “natural landscapes” of the Hoo Peninsula, but these are not just natural landscapes, they are also “historic landscapes”. The landscape of the Hoo Peninsula is a product of man's adaption and management of the peninsula and its estuaries through fishing and the farming of crops and livestock over thousands of years. The low-lying areas of the peninsula have been shaped by the reclamation of the estuary, from at least the time of the Norman conquest, to provide improved salt-marsh grazing for livestock. Similarly, the pattern of fields, lanes and trackways have developed over centuries, and continue to evolve in response to changing agricultural practices. In many places on the peninsula, the arrangement of modern fields can be directly related to the pattern of medieval farming, demonstrating a high level of landscape continuity. Below the ground there will be archaeological evidence that shows how people have settled on and farmed the peninsula since Neolithic times.

⁶ <http://www.kent.gov.uk>

⁷ <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/discover-and-understand/rural-heritage/hoo-peninsula/>

⁸ <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance/historic-farmsteads.html>

⁹ http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/kent_hlc_2014/

The benefits of green infrastructure

If properly designed, the County Council considers that green infrastructure has the potential to help new development be better integrated into the existing rural and urban landscape by ensuring that it fits into the grain of what is already there. The pattern of roads, tracks and lanes on the Hoo Peninsula has been used for centuries to link Medway's towns, villages, hamlets and countryside. By taking advantage of these existing and historic routeways, people will be able to move through the area while retaining the historic geography of the region, but also following routes more likely to be accompanied by historic hedgerows and planting. This has the potential to unite heritage and ecology to help people access and enjoy features more easily and naturally.

Using historic routeways also allows designers to incorporate heritage assets to provide features of interest. In turn this will help people accessing the green infrastructure to become more aware of and value Hoo's heritage which will in turn assist their conservation and re-use. For example, the Hoo area has links to internationally important fortifications at Grain. Green infrastructure can also be used to support tourism in Medway by linking historic sites and landscapes such as the Chatham Lines, Rochester Castle and Cathedral and the historic explosives works of the Hoo peninsula.

To fully appreciate the Peninsula's landscape character and incorporate it into green infrastructure effectively, it is first important to understand it. The main method for investigating historic landscape character is by historic landscape characterisation. This is a method of assessing the pattern of tracks, lanes, field boundaries and other features that comprise the historic character of the modern landscape. This has been completed for the Hoo Peninsula and KCC recommends that Medway Council draws on the research to identify connectivity between the heritage assets of the area.¹⁰

Green infrastructure also makes an important contribution to health. Historic England has released research that demonstrates how heritage actively supports health and well-being through contributing to a generally more attractive environment, allowing activities that encourage participation and inclusion and by encouraging outdoors activities.

Medway's blue infrastructure network

Hoo's blue infrastructure network also has a strong heritage component. The coastline of Medway has been exploited by humans for millennia. Traces of this activity remain visible and accessible. This heritage includes defence sites such as the remnants of the Second World War GHQ line (Hoo St Werburgh), coastal industries such as the many prehistoric, Roman and medieval salt-mounds in the marshes, sea-walls and drainage ditches across the north Kent marshes and coastguard stations, jetties and wharves, all survivals of Medway's maritime history. All this rich heritage can be used to support the blue infrastructure network and

¹⁰ <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/discover-and-understand/rural-heritage/hoo-peninsula/>

attract new audiences. Similarly, any works associated with the creation of the blue infrastructure must ensure the conservation or enhancement of any heritage assets affected.

Principle 2: Access and movement

When identifying key walking and cycling routes across the area, consideration should be given to how the heritage assets of the peninsula might be better connected so that they can best appreciated, understood and enjoyed. Creating linked trails based around key heritage themes (e.g. defence, industry, agriculture) might be one way to maximise the positive benefits that the area's heritage can bring.

Principle 4: An attractive and tailored built form

The principle of carefully considered design that is tailored to the place and is informed existing character is welcomed and accords with the objectives of the NPPF. The County Council recommends that the illustrative photographs should show housing which accord with the principle.

New buildings do not have to be exact replicas of historic styles; they do not have to be limited to local materials, but they should respond to the local area – the existing shapes, proportions, layouts, density, palette and grain of a place should be used to inform new design.

Biodiversity

The County Council notes that the Hoo Peninsula is surrounded by the Medway Estuary and Marshes, the Thames Estuary and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ramsar sites and Special Protection Areas (SPA); which have primarily been designated for their wintering bird interest. The main impact on the designated sites is likely to be the impact from recreational pressure and there is a need to ensure a strategic mitigation approach¹¹.

Given the recreational impacts associated with the designated sites, the County Council recommends that consideration is given to these sites and their issues when considering growth on the Hoo Peninsula.

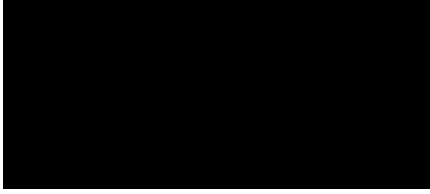
The County Council is aware of the progress being made with a Cumulative Ecological Impact Assessment as part of the wider work associated with this proposal. It is anticipated that the impact on biodiversity and designated sites will be fully considered as plans for growth in this area are progressed.

KCC would welcome continued engagement as plans progress for potential growth opportunities on the Hoo Peninsula.

¹¹ <https://birdwise.org.uk/>.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Stephanie Holt-Castle

Interim Director – Environment, Planning and Enforcement

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Appendix 1: English Coastal Path Map







Appendix 2: Kent County Council Heritage Conservation commentary on Neighbourhood Character Areas

Map A: Key map - Iwade to Grain

Report number and title

- IGR 1** Ridham Dock to Kingsferry Bridge (Map IGR 1a)
- IGR 2** Kingsferry Bridge to Raspberry Hill (Maps IGR 2a to IGR 2c)
- IGR 3** Raspberry Hill to Funton Brickworks (Map IGR 3a)
- IGR 4** Funton Brickworks to Lower Halstow (Maps IGR 4a to IGR 4b)
- IGR 5** Lower Halstow to Shoregate Creek (Map IGR 5a)
- IGR 6** Shoregate Creek to Otterham Quay (Maps IGR 6a to 6b)
- IGR 7** Otterham Quay to The Strand Leisure Park (Maps IGR 7a to IGR 7d)

- IGR 8** The Strand Leisure Park to Frindsbury (Maps IGR 8a to IGR 8e)
- IGR 9** Frindsbury to Burnt House Farm (Maps IGR 9a to IGR 9d)
- IGR 10** Burnt House Farm to Stoke Creek Crossing (Maps IGR 10a to IGR 10b)
- IGR 11** Stoke Creek Crossing to Grain Crossing (Maps IGR 11a to IGR 11c)
- IGR 12** Grain Crossing to Grain Esplanade (Maps IGR 12a to IGR 12c)

-  Extent of proposals
-  Extent of proposals in each chapter
-  A road
-  B road
-  Minor road
-  Railway & station



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Appendix 2: Kent County Council Heritage Conservation commentary on Neighbourhood Character Areas

Village living in Chattenden

Although the Chattenden village centre is some distance from the main Chattenden military site, there are nonetheless several heritage assets that could be affected by the proposal. On the Kitchener Road roundabout, part of one of the former 1961 guardhouses survives alongside the main access road into the barracks. At Copse Farm, three concrete Second World War (probably) barrack huts also survive. At the junction of Kitchener Road and Chattenden Lane the former Garrison Church still survives, albeit as a civilian church. All three of these sites are located in the area identified as the 'indicative neighbourhood centre'. In the event of major development in this area, it will be important to ensure that those structures which are retained keep some of their context in terms of setting and interpretation so the military origins of the area remain in the local memory.

In the angle of the land between Broad Street and the Ratcliffe Highway, aerial photographs have suggested former field systems of unknown date. Also running through this area from the main Chattenden village site was a small-gauge railway from Chattenden to Hoo.

In the area south and west of the proposed village centre, there are numerous remains of the area's military past. These include a former nineteenth and twentieth century Naval military railway that connected munitions and military depots around Hoo, a 1950s wireless transmitter station at Beacon Hill, the remains of a Second World War Naval Signal Station, the scheduled Second World War blockhouse and beacon, a Cold War air-raid shelter, a Second World War pillbox and a First World War anti-aircraft battery. There are also areas of First or Second World War practice trenches on Beacon Hill. This complex of sites would suit being brought together in a trail or other form of interpretation both to help maintain the green space between settlement areas and to retain memory of the military origins of the Chattenden area.

Finally, recent archaeological investigations at Chattenden in response to housing development have revealed important, but previously unknown, archaeological sites including evidence for Mesolithic activity and Anglo-Saxon settlement. These discoveries highlight the potential for further important, but unknown, archaeological sites to exist within the proposed growth area. Any future masterplan for the area would need to have sufficient flexibility to take account of important archaeological discoveries. This will likely require a comprehensive programme of desk-based, non-intrusive and intrusive assessment and evaluation prior to any detailed masterplanning.

Parkland living in Deangate

Deangate is located in a highly significant military landscape dating originally to the late nineteenth century use of the area as a major magazine establishment. Although much of the site has been demolished, numerous magazines and protecting earthworks, as well as later defences, still survive. During the Second World War, the entire site was defended by an arm of the General Headquarters Stop Line that ran from Hoo St Werburgh to Higham Marshes. A 2014 survey by Historic England has mapped the route of the Stop Line and its

accompanying pillboxes, earthworks and defences, which essentially follow the route of Dux Court Road as far as Wyborne's Wood before turning west. Four of the pillboxes in this area of the GHQ Line have been designated as listed buildings and several features relating to the Lodge Hill Magazine. Between Hoo St Werburgh and the magazine also formerly stood the Deangate Second World War radar station, which included gun emplacements and ancillary structures.

Rural Town Living in Hoo St Werburgh

Past archaeological investigations in the area have discovered extensive prehistoric and Romano-British remains in the vicinity of Hoo. The alignment of a Roman road linking the Hoo Peninsula to Roman Watling Street is projected to run to the south of the former Chattenden Barracks close to the development area. To the north-west of the area, within the Lodge Hill enclosure, a Romano-British cemetery has previously been identified and a further occupation site has been found south of Hoo between the village and the shoreline. The village itself contains built heritage assets such as the church and it is important to protect the long views towards them. There are also Saxon and Medieval remains although the site of the seventh century nunnery has yet to be identified. The landscape also contains numerous survivals of the Second World War associated with the GHQ Stop Line that runs from the foreshore south-east of Hoo to the north of Lodge Hill where it turns west.

Riverside Living in Cockham Farm

The Cockham Farm area has an extensive heritage. Both north and south of Stoke Road, cropmark complexes and field boundaries have been observed in aerial photographs although the dates of the complexes are unknown.

Along the route of the Saxon Shore Way, a number of well-dated archaeological discoveries have been made. Palaeolithic artefacts have been recovered from a brickearth pit to the south-west of St Werburgh's Church in Hoo in the 1930s. A late bronze age occupation site was discovered during a watching brief in 1999. An iron age coin and torc were found close to Hoo village. A Romano-British cemetery and occupation site was found in 1894 near Cockham Cottages. The lost 7th century nunnery may exist either within the village or perhaps within the Cockham Farm area and other middle Saxon features are known from the area south of the village.

Along the coast can be seen numerous examples of more recent heritage assets. Although Roman remains have been found at Hoo Marina Park, most of the remains relate to the maritime use of the coastline. The most significant site is the scheduled seventeenth century Cockham Wood Fort built by Sir Bernard de Gomme as a response to the Dutch Raid. Despite its scheduled status the fort is included in the national Heritage at Risk register where it is described as at risk of immediate further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric if no solution for its conservation and management is agreed. There are also numerous wharves, jetties and quays, as well as several examples of wrecked barges dating from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries.

In addition to the maritime activity, there are several important twentieth century military assets along the coast. The GHQ Stop Line meets the coast at this point and the junction was defended by at least eight pillboxes and anti-landing sites.

Contemporary living by the New Rail Station

Prehistoric cropmarks enclosures and features have been seen in aerial photography between Sharnal Street and Tunbridge Hill and also around Tile Barn Farm. A number of prehistoric to Saxon discoveries were made during Isle of Grain gas pipeline works most notably, a Late Bronze Age settlement or probable possible funerary site and a possible Late Bronze Age small scale industrial site. A Romano-British industrial site with a probable pottery kiln was also found.

The Second World War GHQ Line runs south-east to north-west through the western end of the area and as described above (see Deangate), contains many surviving heritage assets of importance. The indicative illustration appears to show extensive new development, including the location of a proposed neighbourhood centre between Ropers Lane and Bells Lane. The area is crossed by part of the General Headquarters (GHQ) stop-line between Hoo St Werburgh and Higham Marshes; a notable surviving example of anti-invasion defence. It is an important remnant of the Second World War defended landscape of the peninsula and is a well-preserved example of this type of defence, which is part of a major chapter in the national story. A group of pillboxes are located along the edge of the existing development along Bells Lane, two of which are listed (Grade II). The stop-line comprised an anti-tank ditch, pillboxes (both anti-tank and infantry), barbed wire entanglements, road-blocks and other features. The surviving remains form a coherent pattern of defence linked to the local topography. Extensive development here would result in the loss of part of the stop-line and would be harmful to the setting of the listed pillboxes.

Village Living in High Halstow

The area is centred on High Halstow village, which retains its medieval core and includes a medieval church and tithe barn and several medieval buildings. Within the village, however, older remains have been discovered including Bronze Age and prehistoric features. Outside the village several enclosures and cropmarks have been seen in aerial photographs. Metal detectorists working around the village have discovered numerous examples of artefacts, particularly from the iron age to the medieval period.

Immediately to the east of the area is the Fenn Street Second World War air defence post with associated radar station. The area also forms the northern extremity of the GHQ line in Kent/Medway and there are several surviving pillboxes and other features.

The area is also crossed by several industrial and military tramways such as the Port Victoria Railway, the Chattenden Naval Tramway and the Kingsnorth Light Railway.

The indicative illustration shows development between the existing village and Sharnal Street on a ridge of higher ground that forms part of the 'spine' of the Hoo Peninsula, with views towards the Thames to the north and the Medway to the south. The site may have been a favourable location for past occupation, having access to a range of natural

resources. A number of Late Iron Age gold coins have been found to the north of High Halstow, whilst remains of Bronze Age date have previously been recorded south of the village. Within the illustrated development area itself various crop marks and soil marks have been observed indicating the presence of buried archaeological remains and landscapes. These crop and soil marks include a ring ditch (possibly representing the ploughed out remains of a prehistoric burial mound), along with enclosures and other features. The area also has some potential to contain remains of Pleistocene/Palaeolithic interest.

A Thriving Employment Hub in Kingsnorth

Although archaeological investigation at Kingsnorth has been piecemeal, there have been a large number of discoveries in the area.

Lower Palaeolithic organic material has been found well preserved at Kingsnorth Power Station where a possible Mesolithic core was also found.

A possible Neolithic pottery sherd and a leaf-shaped arrowhead were found at Kingsnorth in 1998/1999.

A hoard of Bronze Age implements was found at Roper's Farm in 1973 and a number of features interpreted as representing later prehistoric land-divisions were excavated in 2001. A probable late bronze age cremation deposit was found at Damhead Creek Power Station in 1998/9. Several linear ditches, pits and postholes in the Kingsnorth area over several years, together with features suggesting both ritual use and more general occupation also suggests that the Kingsnorth area was being widely used in the Bronze Age.

Many of the bronze age sites in the Kingsnorth area extended into the early iron age. In addition, a possible late iron age round-house was found within an enclosure with pits, and may represent a stock enclosure with associated field boundaries. The quantity of pottery found suggests that the occupation or activity in the area was short-lived and many have ended or been greatly reduced by c.50 BC.

The coast at Kingsnorth has produced numerous Roman archaeological discoveries. The Medway estuary was, in Roman times, an important regional centre for salt and pottery production and there are more than 60 records in the Kent Historic Environment Record relating to Roman pottery vessels and salt kiln materials in the Kingsnorth area. There have also been discoveries of trackways, postholes and pits and an early Christian inhumation cemetery.

The area seems to have been used less intensively in the early medieval and medieval periods, though some agricultural use persisted. During the post-medieval period much of the landscape was farmed although the increasing use of the area for industrial purposes is shown by the number of barge hulks that can be seen along the coastline.

During the twentieth century the industrial and military use of the areas greatly intensified. The attempt to develop the Isle of Grain as a ferry terminal led to the construction of the Port Victoria railway from the late nineteenth century though it continued well into the twentieth century. In c. 1912 the Naval Airship Station was constructed as an experimental station and

later a training school. By 1920 it had been largely abandoned though the site was re-used as an oil refinery from the 1930s. Significant archaeological features relating to the Naval use may still survive at the site and some buildings belonging to the airship station survive within the present industrial estate.