

Planning Committee – Supplementary agenda No.1

A meeting of the Planning Committee will be held on:

Date: 4 June 2025

Time: 6.30pm

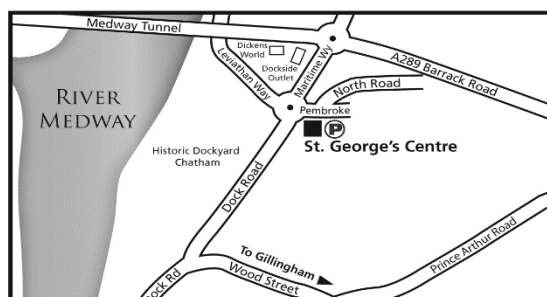
Venue: St George's Centre, Pembroke Road, Chatham Maritime, Chatham
ME4 4UH

Items

- 13 Additional Information - Supplementary Agenda Advice Sheet (Pages 3 - 10)**

For further information please contact Julie Francis-Beard, Democratic Services Officer on Telephone: 01634 332012 or Email: democratic.services@medway.gov.uk

Date: 4 June 2025



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Medway Council
Planning Committee – 4 June 2025
Supplementary Agenda Advice

Page 16 – Planning Application MC/24/2495 Go Outdoors, The Brook, Chatham, Medway ME4 4NZ

Representations

Three additional letters of objection received raising the following concerns:

- Building heights are over 6 storeys and therefore do not comply with the Chatham Design Code or Arches Neighbourhood Plan.
- Traffic and parking impacts.
- Lack of infrastructure such as GP surgeries and hospitals.
- Lack of affordable housing.

A further letter of objection from the Arches Chatham Neighbourhood Planning Group has also been received raising concerns in respect to affordable housing, design, highways impacts, amenity. They have also commented in relation to the S106 contributions.

A copy of their letter is attached.

Page 66 – Planning Application MC/25/0204 Former University College for the Creative Arts, Fort Pitt Hill, Chatham, Medway ME1 1DZ

Recommendation

Amendment to condition 24:

Prior to the installation of any external lighting within each phase or sub-phase of the development, details of such lighting and a lighting plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include height, position, external appearance, any shielding, light intensity, colour, spillage (such as light contour or lux level plans showing the existing and proposed levels) and hours of use. The lighting plan shall also:

- Take into account measures as described in paragraph 11, Recommendations of the Bat Dusk Emergence Survey report;
- Identify those areas/features on site that are particularly important for bats;

- c) Show how and where external lighting will be installed and takes account of the 'Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting' (Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals).

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the plan and shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: To limit the impact of the lighting on the wildlife and with regard to Policies BNE37 and BNE39 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

Representations

KCC Ecology have commented on the submitted Preliminary Roost Assessment (Bats) and Bat Dusk Emergence Survey and raise no objections. They consider that the surveys undertaken are adequate and no further surveys are required with regard to bats.

Planning Appraisal

Bats

The existing structure contains potential roost features which may support roosting bats.

A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken on the building and assessed the building as low suitability to support bats during the active season. However, vandalism had occurred to the building and the ecologist confirmed that all windows and doors had to be fully boarded by the end of April to minimise the risk of bats discovering new access points into the building through open window and door openings, otherwise the suitability of the building to offer potential for bat roosting would increase.

A walk through of the building was conducted on the 14 May 2025 by a different ecologist. The report stated that that all potential gaps had been boarded up tightly and uniformly across the building, leaving no potential bat access. As such it is considered that the building has a low suitability for roosting bats during the active season and negligible suitability during the hibernation season.

A bat emergence survey was undertaken on the 14 May 2025 and no bats were seen or recorded emerging or re-entering the building. No further surveys are required with regard to bats.

The surrounding areas (green park, and line of trees) provide excellent quality foraging habitat for bats. Artificial lighting has been proven to significantly impact on the behaviour of insects, birds, bats, and other nocturnal mammals, including those which will potentially benefit from any proposed landscaping and enhancements. A condition is recommended for details of all external lighting to be submitted.

Subject to the imposition of the recommended condition, the application is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies BNE37 and BNE39 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF.

**Page 180 – Planning Application MC/24/1204 91 Rolvenden Road,
Wainscott, Rochester, Medway ME2 4PF**

Recommendation

Amendment to condition 2 to include additional block:

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Received 27 March 2025
Block Plan Showing Drop Kerb and Stores

Received 7 April 2025
Proposed Plans and Elevations
Existing and Proposed Street Scene
Existing and Proposed Parking Section

Received 3 May 2025:
Site Location Plan and Block Plans

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

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Nick Roberts
Planning Service
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
ME4 4TR

Tuesday, 27 May 2025

Application Ref: MC/24/2495
Location: Go Outdoors, The Brook, Chatham, ME4 4NZ
Representation Type: Objection

Dear Nick,

We previously commented on this application in our objection dated 20 February 2025, noting the proposals conflicted with policies of the Arches Chatham Neighbourhood Plan (ACNP).

Since our objection we are incredibly disappointed that neither the applicant, Arpenteur Nightingale Ltd, nor their agent, Tetlow King Planning, have acknowledged or responded to our concerns. Both parties have failed to directly communicate and meaningfully collaborate with our neighbourhood forum, a statutory consultee in this area of Chatham.

A second meeting between representatives of our forum and the Case Officer, DM Manager and Senior Urban Design Officer took place on 21 May 2025. We were advised that the application would be recommended for approval with conditions. As the application remains non-compliant with the Neighbourhood Plan, our position remains unchanged and we maintain our objection.

At this stage it is crucial to recognise Medway Council's clear dereliction of duty in upholding up-to-date planning policy. Our Neighbourhood Plan has been rigorously tested and consulted upon via three stages of public consultation and an independent examination to ensure its policies are legally robust and viable.

While we understand the challenges in bringing forward development on this constrained brownfield site, approving the scheme with no amendments publicly disregards the democratic mandate of the Neighbourhood Plan, which gained the support of over 700 residents in the 2024 referendum. The way in which this application has been determined again undermines the public's trust in planning decisions and erodes confidence in this Local Planning Authority.

We accept that the policy environment rapidly evolved whilst the applicant developed its proposals in 2023/24, with our Neighbourhood Plan adopted in May 2024 and Medway Council's Chatham Centre Design Code adopted as an SPD in June 2024. However, the application was submitted half a year after their adoption and it will be determined more than a year post-adoption. There has been very reasonable time for both the applicant to amend their proposals and for Medway Council to require policy compliance as far as possible. In our view, simply promising better outcomes with other applications such as the Buzz Bingo site is shortsighted and sets a poor precedent.

In the following sections we have provided further comments on the application, informed by our recent meeting with Medway Council. Please refer to our initial objection dated 20 February 2025 for a comprehensive assessment of the proposals against the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Affordable Housing

In our initial objection we outlined the importance of affordable housing provision and highlighted concerns over the lack of clarity on the quantum proposed for this application.

Paragraph 6.12 of the Affordable Housing Statement confirmed an assessment in the form of an 'open book viability appraisal' would be undertaken. An open book approach ensures the LPA handles the assessment in a responsible and transparent way that allows public scrutiny.

Paragraph 59 of the NPPF 2024 states that:

'All viability assessments, including any undertaken at the plan-making stage, should reflect the recommended approach in national planning practice guidance, including standardised inputs, and should be made publicly available.'

We are now aware that a Financial Viability Assessment (FVA) of the proposals was carried out on 14 February 2025. At the time of writing this representation the FVA has not been made available via the Planning Portal for public scrutiny prior to a decision on the application. The applicant has also not updated the Affordable Housing Statement to reflect the conclusion of the FVA and to clearly state their position on the matter of affordable housing for further public consultation.

Our neighbourhood forum received the FVA on 23 May 2025, just a fortnight before the Planning Committee date of 4 June 2025.

The FVA concluded that no affordable housing can be provided on-site, off-site, or as a financial contribution in lieu. This was calculated on the basis of the 25% affordable housing requirement in the Medway Local Plan, but the FVA did not account for the lower threshold of 10% provided in our Neighbourhood Plan.

As a result, the application is in conflict with Policy HO1 of the ACNP and Policy H3 of the Medway Local Plan. We believe this would be the largest town centre development in Medway without a single affordable home for the local community.

Design

We are informed by Medway Council that a second design review panel with Design South East occurred in April 2025 in the absence of the applicant and our neighbourhood forum. Therefore, we are unaware of the panel's comments and recommendations.

No design amendments have been made in response to our initial objection, and as such the application remains contrary to Policies HO2 and HO7 of the ACNP.

Highways

Active Travel

Medway Council officers clarified that public access to the central amenity space ('Community Amenity A3') is likely to be permitted during daylight hours only, and would be managed as part of the Build to Rent scheme. The applicant has still not provided us with information on the access arrangements to this amenity space, therefore we cannot assess the application against Policy ST2 of the ACNP.

Car Parking

The application represents the largest car-free development in Medway, providing only five parking spaces for 319 homes. A parking stress survey has not been submitted as required to demonstrate the potential impact to parking availability in streets surrounding the application site. The flawed methodology of the Transport Statement has also not been addressed.

Until we have received the required information, the application remains in conflict with Policy ST4 of the ACNP.

Amenity

Our comments in relation to the quality of outdoor space and outlook have not been addressed, therefore the application fails to satisfy Policy HO6 of the ACNP.

Section 106 Contributions

We welcome prospective discussions with Medway Council on the S106 obligations for this application to secure much-needed investment in this area of Chatham. We would not support further investment into areas that have already received significant funds, such as Chatham Waterfront and the Great Lines. In our discussions we will propose potential improvements in line with the Community Action Plan set out within our Neighbourhood Plan.

Officers should consider a 'clawback' clause in the Heads of Terms in the event the developers' profit for the site exceeds expectations, so that further S106 funding could be received.

Conclusion

As the largest residential development in the town centre, this site had an important opportunity to lead by example in meaningfully regenerating Chatham. Instead, our community is faced with yet another proposal that falls short of meeting policy requirements. It brings into question the purpose of planning policy — not guidance — if it is to be disregarded so easily, undermining efforts to bring forward a new Local Plan and masterplanning in The Brook area.

Over 700 local people supported our Neighbourhood Plan expecting a reset in the approach to development. Disappointingly, this application has allowed poor planning to persist.

We understand the proposals will be rushed to the Planning Committee within a week. We would like to be given the opportunity to present our position and make clear the basis of our objection.

Yours sincerely,

Arches Chatham Neighbourhood Forum

Sketch Studio, 13 Military Road, Chatham, ME4 4JG

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