

MC/23/2463

Date Received: 6 November 2023
Location: Civic Centre, Esplanade, Strood, Rochester
Proposal: Creation of site access and entrance into the site together with associated works.
Applicant Agent: Medway Development Company Ltd
DHA Planning
Mrs Lucy Wilford
Eclipse House
Eclipse Park
Sittingbourne Road
Maidstone
ME14 3EN
Ward: Strood North & Frindsbury
Case Officer: Amanda Barnes
Contact Number: 01634 331700

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 14th February 2024.

Recommendation - Approval with Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

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

Received 4 January 2024

32153-T-03 Rev P1 - Refuse Vehicle Tracking

32153-T-02 Rev P1 - Vehicle swept path analysis construction vehicles

32153-H01 Rev P2 - Construction Access

23113-BDC-C-XX-XX-EL-0611 Rev P02 - Proposed Levels

23113-BDC-C-XX-XX-EL-0511 Rev P03 - Proposed Drainage

23113-BDC-C-XX-XX-CS-0631 Rev P02 - Enabling works access road longitudinal section

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

- 3 Prior to the commencement of the development a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Environmental Management Plan shall include amongst other matters details of hours of construction working; measures to control noise affecting nearby residents; wheel cleaning/chassis cleaning facilities; dust control measures; pollution incident control, site contact details in case of complaints and details of the precautionary mitigation for bats and breeding birds detailed within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CGO Ecology; November 2023). The construction works shall thereafter be carried out at all times in accordance with the approved CEMP, unless any variations are otherwise first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Required prior to commencement of development to ensure the development does not harm the residential amenity of the surrounding neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 4 No development approved by this planning permission shall commence until a strategy to deal with the potential risks associated with any contamination of the site has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. This strategy will include the following components:
1. A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:
 - o all previous uses.
 - o potential contaminants associated with those uses.
 - o a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors; and
 - o potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.
 2. A site investigation scheme, based on (1) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.
 3. The results of the site investigation and the detailed risk assessment referred to in (2) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.
 4. A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (3) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action. Any changes to these components require the

written consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: Required prior to commencement to ensure that the development does not contribute to, or is not put at unacceptable risk from, or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution in line with paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

- 5 If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development shall be carried out until the developer has submitted a method statement and obtained written approval from the Local Planning Authority. The Method Statement must detail how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with.

Reason: To ensure that the development is undertaken in a manner which acknowledges interests of amenity and safety in accordance with Policy BNE23 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 6 Prior to any part of the permitted development being occupied a verification report demonstrating the completion of works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to, and approved in writing, by the local planning authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met.

Reason: To ensure that the site does not pose any further risk to human health or the water environment by demonstrating that the requirements of the approved verification plan have been met and that remediation of the site is complete. This is in line with paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

- 7 Piling or any other foundation designs using penetrative methods shall not be permitted other than with the express written consent of the Local Planning Authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated by a piling risk assessment that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to groundwater. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not contribute to, or is not put at unacceptable risk from, or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution caused by mobilised contaminants in line with paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

- 8 No development including any excavation works shall take place until a specification and timetable for the implementation of archaeological field evaluation works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological field evaluation works shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the archaeological interest in the site in accordance with Policy BNE21 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

For the reasons for this recommendation for approval please see Planning Appraisal Section and Conclusions at the end of this report.

Proposal

This application is seeking permission for the creation of the site access and entrance into the Site together with associated works. The advanced infrastructure works are required to facilitate the wider redevelopment of the Site, which will be subject to a separate Full planning application.

The works comprise the re-establishment of the Site access in the location of the current access which formally served the wider Civic Centre site when it was in use. The primary route into the Site and the associated earthworks are required to deliver the access and include ground raising.

The gradient of the Site will be increased up to an infill level of 6m, with the access road being constructed with a 1:25 gradient from the signal stop line continuing 12m into the Site. A 3.0m wide shared footway / cycleway will be implemented as part of this design, along the eastern side of the main carriageway and a 2.0m wide footway will be provided on the opposing side of the carriageway. The banking to the roads will be temporary, ahead of the wider site coming forward, when the wider site will be raised to the level of the new road. The final surface finish of the road will be determined through the future Full application for the wider Site, allowing any required changes to the surface material to respond to the layout/landscape design.

A temporary surface water outfall will be used to utilise the existing drainage on the Site whilst planning is sought for the wider site development. All works within highway-maintained land will be completed as part of the Full application for the wider site, where a stage 1 design will be provided including improvements to the infrastructure on A2 within the vicinity.

Relevant Planning History

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| MC/17/3472 | Application for Prior Notification under Schedule 2 Part 11 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the demolition of existing office/warehouse building.
Prior Approval not required 17 November 2017 |
| MC/17/1172 | Construction of new flood defences at the Phase 1 (Civic Centre) site, Strood, including sheet pile walls and ground raising, and removal of existing flood defence wall and demolition of Civic Centre building and other ancillary works.
Approved 30 November 2017 |

MC/22/2589

Application for non-material amendment to planning permissions MC/17/1172 and MC/18/1477 to move the flood wall and flood gate on the former civic centre site, the details of which were approved under discharge of condition application MC/18/1477 pursuant to condition 8 of planning permission MC/17/1172, 4.2m to the southwest, and revised cladding details of the wall to match the cladding to the main sheet pile wall already constructed.
Withdrawn 1 December 2022

Representations

The application has been advertised on site, in the press and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Kent Wildlife Trust, and Royal Society for the protection of Birds have also been consulted.

KCC Ecological Services have advised that they have reviewed the ecological information submitted as part of the application and advise that sufficient information has been provided to determine the planning application.

The submitted information has detailed that the site is a mixture of hard standing, scrub and areas of sparsely vegetated land. As the site has only become vegetated in the last 18 months an Open Mosaic habitat is unlikely to have established to the extent that it is considered a priority habitat quality.

Invertebrates were confirmed within the vegetated areas and the site may be used by breeding birds and foraging bats. This application is only for creating an access and therefore areas of habitat to support any invertebrates can be largely retained even when taking in to account any drainage works proposed outside the redline boundary. However, the future proposal for this site is for housing and therefore any vegetation within the wider site will be cleared. They advise that any application to be submitted with the housing proposal must demonstrate how the landscaping has been designed to support invertebrates.

The ecological report has made a number of precautionary recommendations to avoid an impact on protected and notable species. This includes designing any lighting to minimise light spill during construction and clearing any vegetation outside of the breeding bird season. They advise that these measures must be included within the Construction Management Plan (CMP) if planning permission is granted and must be a requirement of condition wording of the CMP. Therefore, they recommend that the CMP condition wording includes the following line:

- Details of the precautionary mitigation for bats and breeding birds detailed within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CGO Ecology; November 2023)

National Highways have advised that they offer no objection to the application.

Environment Agency have advised that planning permission could be granted to the proposed development as submitted subject to conditions with regard to contamination and piling.

The applicants have been provided with a full copy of the EA letter so that they can consider the detail required to fulfil the recommended conditions.

The Rochester Bridge Trust have written to advise that they object to the planning application because of the adverse impact on the Trust's assets (the Rochester Bridge ('the Bridge')) and surrounding land.

They have queried the planning status of a drawing.

Should the Council be minded to approve this application (or any future application) then it is important that appropriate planning conditions are put in place to manage and control the development. This should include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- Provision of Construction Environmental Management Plan, detailing how the Bridge will be protected.
- A 'pre' and 'post' conditions survey of the Bridge in order to assess any damage caused by construction vehicles.
- A construction route should be agreed which limits impact on the local road network, noting that any reduction in capacity of the ahead movements at the junctions at either end of the bridges causes major congestion and long delays.
- A condition to ensure the site is returned to its pre-development state if the residential application is refused.
- Construction access to be restricted to being via Knights Road with the exception of vehicles that are over-height.

Signal Junction Operation – More information is required.

Signal Junction Capacity – Impact on the operation of signals at the junction needs to be carefully assessed in terms of traffic flows on the A2.

No operational traffic modelling has been presented, nor any flow information and/or construction vehicle estimates by which such a determination can be made.

Signal Junction Visibility - Notwithstanding that there are some existing and historic visibility issues given the unusual angle which Esplanade approaches the junction, the proposed configuration also does not meet the typical requirements for junction intervisibility, nor is this indicated on the submitted drawing. Where the requirements of DMRB CD123 are not achieved, it would be required that the Designer justify why the appropriate standard cannot be achieved, and to show that the deviation does not result in a design where risk is reduced as much as is reasonably practicable.

Given that the access would be used by larger vehicles, and that these are likely to be turning slowly and have a number of significant blind spots, design mitigation would have to be included to reduce risk. This could include actions such as increased intergreen/interstage times (with a consequent reduction in signal capacity), clearance of obstructions or relocation of the stop line to bring it closer to the junction.

Drawing 32153-H01-P1 (in appendix to the DHA Transport Technical Note) appears to show changes to the Old Bridge parapet and steps (Figure 2.4), both of which are owned by the Trust. Neither proposed change is practical since the structure is listed, and the parapet is supported by the bridge off-ramp such that the bridge carriageway is considerably higher than the Esplanade highway. The proposed changes to the kerb lines on the Old Bridge are also not considered acceptable because they would reduce the space available to pedestrians at a well-used crossing point.

Construction Vehicle Tracking - Construction vehicle tracking has been included in the Application (drawing reference 32153-T-01-P1). This illustrates tracking of a 12.0m rigid truck and a 16.5m maximum legal UK articulated vehicle. In both cases the tracking shows that inbound and outbound travel from the site cannot take place between two such vehicles without clashes along the full length of the new access route. Additionally, tracking for either vehicle shows significant path clashes at the turning points into/out of the site. In the absence of any construction vehicle estimates, or proposed management regimes, it is not known how this can operate adequately. Currently, large vehicles needing to access this area are directed to turn right-in (and never left-in) because the junction cannot be made safe and suitable for an inbound left turn by large vehicles without unacceptable impact on the junction operation, listed structures or pedestrian safety.

Furthermore, the junction is the point of interface between the segregated cycle lane on the Old Bridge and the shared cycleway/footway on the Strood side of the junction. Increased numbers of heavy vehicles turning left across the cycleway at this critical point would introduce considerable extra 'left hook' collision risk to cyclists, though as noted above, this is not considered physically possible in any case. No measures appear to have been included to mitigate these additional risks.

The construction vehicle tracking drawing also does not appear to be overlaid with the proposed new signal access configuration so it is unclear as to whether the vehicle tracking can be safely and successfully achieved in relation to the new kerb configurations. Of greatest relevance, the paths clash significantly in the area which the new stop line is proposed. If a vehicle (potentially of any dimension) is waiting to exit at the site stop line, then a large vehicle may not be able to enter the site. In the worst case, an inbound vehicle may have to wait obstructively on A2 High Street (blocking through-traffic, the pedestrian crossing and the cycle route) until the egress route is cleared or may become trapped after having started to turn in, potentially leading to vehicles reversing back out on to A2 High Street into traffic.

Construction Vehicle Routing - No construction vehicle tracking is shown for vehicles arriving from the northwest (Strood) though as mentioned above this is the only acceptable movement for large vehicles needing to access the Esplanade. Equally, no tracking is shown for large vehicles leaving to travel southeast (into Rochester) therefore it is not known if this can be successfully achieved, notwithstanding the issues identified above.

Given that the construction vehicle tracking drawings show vehicle entry from the southeast (Rochester) and exit to the northwest (Strood) only, it is possible that this is because a routing strategy could be in place to control the approach and departure

routes to the site. However, in the absence of any construction logistics information forming a part of the planning submission, it is unclear if this is the case and, if it is the case, how this is specified and would be managed, controlled and enforced. As above, it is considered that a left turn off the Old Bridge into the Esplanade is very unlikely to be safely achievable in any event.

It would seem prudent that a Construction Logistics Plan / Construction Traffic Management Plan should form part of the Application at the determination stage as these matters are material in planning terms and so should not be left to a condition discharge.

Alternative Access Route - There is an alternate route into the site from the rear, via Knight Road. This is considered more suitable access for construction traffic, although it is noted that there is a height restriction of 13 foot or 3.9m. Nevertheless, it is considered that the majority of vehicles could still access the site via this route, with only occasional large loads required to use the proposed access off of the Esplanade.

Marshalling and Abnormal Loads - As part of the Construction Logistics Plan a clear plan should be provided to demonstrate how larger vehicles (and/or abnormal loads) which are required to use the Esplanade access are marshalled into / out of the site to avoid conflict with incoming / outbound vehicles as well as non-motorised users.

The CLP should also be clear as to which vehicles can use the alternative route into the site and when / where the Esplanade access would be required. If the Esplanade access is required, then this should only be used outside of peak traffic hours so that it minimises conflict with other road users and does not cause delays on the local network.

Road Safety Audit - It would be prudent for a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit to be undertaken of the Esplanade Junction proposals at the planning stage for these enabling works.

Pedestrian Crossing on Site Access Arm - The existing Esplanade arm of the Esplanade Junction has a pedestrian crossing controlled zone included, albeit the crossing is uncontrolled/'walk-with-traffic'. The proposed new arrangement does not show a marked controlled crossing zone which could imply the omission of a pedestrian crossing. As this existing crossing forms a part of the limited number of pedestrian routes between Strood and Rochester and pedestrians predominantly use the Old Bridge footway, they are required to cross the road at this location. This crossing is an important link in the local active travel network. Any proposed change to this arm together with the proposed increase in heavy vehicle traffic should integrate pedestrian facilities and should seek to improve the crossing in line with prevailing local and national policies.

Esplanade Downgrade Configuration - The existing Esplanade access is proposed to be reduced in status to a maintenance access with retractable bollards. The access is located forward of the stop line on the site access arm and is not under signal control. Though the secondary signal head for the site access may potentially be visible, this access is not under control and therefore risks vehicles leaving the maintenance area and entering into a live junction, in addition to sharing many of the

visibility issues identified above. This is likely to pose a hazard to other junction users and the maintenance vehicle itself.

In addition, the set-back of the retractable bollards is such that only small vehicles (such as cars and short wheelbase vans) can fully leave the carriageway to wait for the bollards to operate; any larger vehicles would block the carriageway. In any case, as discussed above, this entry would conflict with pedestrians crossing and could not be used if there were pedestrians waiting to cross.

Planning Policy - Given the above issues highlight a number of potential safety issues to road users and to pedestrians, the Trust considers that the requirements of policies T2 and T3 of the Local Plan have not been satisfied.

Development Plan

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003 (the Local Plan). The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF) and are generally considered to conform. Where non-conformity exists, this is addressed in the Planning Appraisal section below.

Planning Appraisal

Principle

The Site is located to the east of Strood, with commercial/ retail units to the north-west, the River Medway to the south/south-east and the A2 and railway line to the east. Jane's Creek, a small inlet of the River Medway is to the south-west. The Site lies within the wider former Strood Civic Centre site and comprises an area of 3,140sqm of land used as hardstanding/made ground.

Within the Local Plan Proposals Map, this site is unallocated 'white' land. Since the establishment of the Local Plan the Strood Waterfront Development Brief 2018 (SWDB) and Strood Town Centre Masterplan 2019 (STCM) set out that the wider Civic Centre site is a key waterfront site.

The vision for Strood Waterfront is for the creation of a residential-led development with appropriate supporting commercial uses including leisure and food/drink opportunities to enliven street frontages and public spaces.

This current application for the site access and associated infrastructure represents the next phase in the redevelopment of the Civic Centre Site, it provides the opportunity to commence works early helping to facilitate the delivery of the wider site and as such is considered to be acceptable in principle.

Layout and Design

The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Paragraphs 131 and 135 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of good design and Policy BNE1 of the Local Plan is a general, criteria-based policy for all development.

It seeks appropriate design in relation to the character, appearance and functioning of the built and natural environment.

The proposal will involve land level changes with the gradient of the Site increased up to an infill level of 6m, with the access road being constructed with a 1:25 gradient from the signal stop line continuing 12m into the Site. These changes will create a change to the appearance of the site within the street scene, however the banking to the roads will be temporary ahead of the wider site coming forward, when the wider site will be raised to the level of the new road. The final surface finish of the road will be determined through the future Full application for the wider Site, allowing any required changes to the surface material to respond to the layout/landscape design and as such it is considered the applications in accordance with Policy BNE1 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 131 and 135 of the NPPF.

Amenity

Policy BNE2 of the Local Plan requires all development to protect those amenities enjoyed by nearby and adjacent properties. It states that the design of development, should have regard to: (i) privacy, daylight, and sunlight; and (ii) noise, vibration, light, heat, smell and airborne emissions consisting of fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust and grit; and (iii) activity levels and traffic generation.

Due to the location of the site with regard to residential properties a condition is recommended on any permission for a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be submitted. Subject to this condition no objection is raised, and the application is considered to be in accordance with Policy BNE2 of the Local Plan and paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF.

Contamination

Due to previous industrial use of the site conditions regarding the use of piling, and contamination are recommended to be attached to any permission to ensure that the development does not contribute to, or is not put at unacceptable risk from, or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution.

Subject to these suitably worded conditions the application is considered to be in accordance with Policy BNE23 of the Local Plan and paragraph 180 and 189 of the NPPF.

Ecology

The submitted information has detailed that the site is a mixture of hard standing, scrub and areas of sparsely vegetated land with no Open Mosaic Habitat capable of being a priority habitat. This is due to the fact the site has only become vegetated in the last 18 months so it's unlikely that the habitat would have established to the extent that it was priority habitat quality.

Invertebrates were confirmed within the vegetated areas and the site may be used by breeding birds and foraging bats. However, as this application is only for creating an access, areas of habitat to support any invertebrates can be largely retained.

Any further enhancements for the wider site and habitats, along with additional surveys will be completed as part of any subsequent application for the wider residential development.

The ecological report made a number of precautionary recommendations to avoid an impact on protected and notable species. This includes designing any lighting to minimise light spill during construction and clearing any vegetation outside of the breeding bird season. It is recommended that a condition requiring details of the precautionary mitigation for bats and breeding birds detailed within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is included within the CEMP on any approval.

Subject to this condition the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies BNE37 and BNE38 in the Local Plan and paragraph 186 of the NPPF.

Heritage and Archaeology

Whilst the Site is not located within a conservation area nor are there any listed buildings within the Site, it is within close proximity to a number of notable built heritage assets, including Rochester Bridge and Castle.

The proposals do not introduce any built form into the Site, however they do include works for the access road and land raising to facilitate future residential development on the wider site and while it is considered there would be no issues with regard to the impact on the above ground heritage the level changes could have an impact on below ground archaeology.

The application is accompanied by an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment. The assessment provides a good account of the character and significance of archaeological remains known or predicted to be present at the Site. The assessment highlights that the Site contains (or has the potential to contain) a range of archaeological remains. In crude terms these might be subdivide into:

- deeply buried Holocene alluvial deposits of paleoenvironmental interest and associated Prehistoric (and potentially Romano-British) archaeology associated with wetland exploitation. Such deposits might be expected across all of the development site, albeit buried at depth beneath more recent made ground.
- less deeply buried medieval and post-medieval remains, including evidence for medieval water-management and later medieval and post-medieval buildings and structures. These remains are focussed in the eastern part of the Site.

The present application is concerned with advanced infrastructure works, primarily the re-establishment and formation of a Site access together with associated drainage and land-raising. The drainage works have the potential to impact archaeological remains, and based on the submitted information it is anticipated that this will primarily impact the less deeply buried medieval and post-medieval remains in the eastern part of the Site. The impact of the proposed land-raising on the ability to adequately access and investigate archaeological remains prior to future development is also of concern.

The proposed advanced infrastructure works have the potential to impact buried remains of archaeological interest. It is therefore recommended that provision be made in any forthcoming planning consent for a programme of archaeological works to be secured by condition.

Subject to the aforementioned condition the proposal is not considered to result in harm to identified built or archaeological heritage assets and is in accordance with Policies BNE18, BNE20 and BNE21 of the Local Plan and paragraph 203 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk

The Site is located within Flood Zone 3; however, it is subject to flood defences and is it is considered to be at a low risk of flooding. Based on the submitted information and the type of development proposed it is recognised that SuDs implementation will be completed with any future scheme, therefore no conditions are recommended at this stage and the application is considered to be in accordance with Policy CF13 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 165 and 166 of the NPPF.

Access and Parking

The Site is located on the eastern side of Strood and south of the A2 High Street which connects to Rochester via the Bridge. There are two existing vehicular accesses to the Site that will be retained for the development. The main access is directly off the A2 High Street via Esplanade (as per the existing hoarding gate) and the secondary access off the A228 Knight Road. Immediately north of the primary access, Esplanade forms a signalised junction with the A2 and Canal Road.

The proposal consists of site enabling works via the primary access. A 6m wide internal access road will be constructed and a 2m footway is proposed on the northern side of the carriageway. The Indicative Access Arrangement plan illustrates both internal works and the proposed future access arrangements to ensure tie-in when the full development application is submitted.

The future access arrangements include traffic signals and the reconfiguration of the eastern arm of the A2 / Canal Road / Esplanade signalised crossroads. The Esplanade will be downgraded to a vehicle crossover and will be for maintenance access only with retractable bollards provided to restrict access.

The Rochester Bridge Trust have objected to the proposal based on highway and pedestrian safety concerns for the indicative junction reconfiguration, traffic impacts on the local highway network and the lack of sufficient evidence to support construction impacts. Whilst these comments do consider the internal works, the comments are primarily related to the proposed full application which will be subject to separate planning permission and assessment. It is acknowledged that a full Transport Assessment including site access design, Stage 1 Road Safety Audit, road collision analysis and traffic assessment (including modelling) will take place as part of the full planning application process.

Following the submission of revised plans, the construction tracking plans indicate safe manoeuvres into and out of the Site.

The applicant has submitted an interim Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as part of the application. The Interim CEMP notes access to the Site will be achieved via the primary access off the A2 High Street and secondary access from A228 Knight Road. Construction vehicles will avoid use of the Rochester Bridge and will be restricted to right-in / left-out only to and from the A2 (west). Via the secondary access, vehicles will turn right on to Knight Road and follow the one-way system to the A2. Only cars and LGVs will route via the A228 Knight Road given the 3.9m height restriction associated with the railway bridge. HGVs will be restricted to A2 High Street / Esplanade / Canal Road junction. This approach is welcomed. A full CEMP is required to be submitted prior to commencement on the Site, subject to this condition the development is considered to accord with paragraph 115 of the NPPF and Policies T2 and T3 of the Local Plan.

Local Finance Considerations

There are no local finance considerations due to the extent of works proposed.

Conclusions and Reasons for Approval

The principle of future residential development on the wider Site has been established through the Development Plan, Strood Waterfront Development Brief 2018 and Strood Town Centre Masterplan 2019. The application represents the next step in preparing the Site for redevelopment. The principal of the infrastructure application is therefore considered acceptable.

As set out above the proposal will deliver a suitable access into the Site, with associated earthworks facilitating its future development. The proposals will not result in any significant impact with regard to design, amenity, highway safety, ecology and flood risk and is therefore considered to be acceptable in this regard and is in accordance with the Local Plan and NPPF.

The application is being referred for Committee determination due to the representation from the Rochester Bridge Trust that expresses a view contrary to the Officers recommendation.

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection on Medway Council's Website <https://publicaccess1.medway.gov.uk/online-applications/>