

**Medway Council**  
**Planning Committee**  
**Wednesday, 8 April 2026**  
**6.30pm to 9.02pm**

**Record of the meeting**

**Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee**

**Present:** Councillors: Stamp (Chairperson), Jones (Vice-Chairperson), Anang, Bowen, Etheridge, Field, Filmer, Gilbourne, Hamandishe, Hamilton, Peake and Vye

**Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Campbell (Substitute for Myton)  
Williams (Substitute for Pearce)

**In Attendance:** Councillor Crozer (agenda items 5 and 6)  
Councillor Nestorov (agenda item 7)  
Councillor Pearce (agenda items 5 and 6)  
Councillor Sands (agenda items 5 and 6)

Julie Francis-Beard, Democratic Services Officer  
Hannah Gunner, Principal Planner  
Dave Harris, Chief Planning Officer  
Peter Hockney, Service Manager, Development Management  
Joanna Horne, Lawyer  
Madeline Mead, Principal Planner  
Steven Ward, Highways Consultant

**834 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gulvin, Myton and Pearce.

**835 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 11 March 2026 was agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairperson as correct.

The Committee were advised of the following, as set out in the supplementary agenda advice sheet.

Minute number 771 – Page 18 – Planning Application MC/25/1506 Shaftesbury House, Upnor, Rochester, ME2 4XB

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The agreed reason for refusal is set out below:

The use of the building for a 13 person House of Multiple Occupation in a location without access to day to day facilities by foot or regular public transport and without the provision of adequate parking for all residents or rooms the development would provide low cost accommodation in an area that would be unsuitable to meet the needs of the occupants and, therefore, not achieve sustainable development, in particular the social objective of delivering a range of homes provided to meet the needs of present and future generations with accessible services, contrary to paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

### **836 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were none.

### **837 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests**

#### Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

#### Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

#### Other interests

Councillor Etheridge stated that he often attended meetings of Frindsbury and Cliffe Woods Parish Councils and explained that if any planning applications were ever discussed there, which were due to be considered by the Medway Council Planning Committee meeting, he would not take part in the discussion at the Parish Council meetings.

Councillor Williams referred to planning applications MC/23/1934 - Land at Ratcliffe Highway, Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester Kent and MC/24/2022 - Land west of Hoo St Werburgh and stated that although he was a member of The Independent Group, he had not been involved in the representations submitted by the Group for the two planning applications, which had been signed by Councillor Crozer, Councillor Pearce and Councillor Sands only.

### **838 Planning application - MC/23/1934 Land at Ratcliffe Highway, Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester Kent**

#### **Discussion:**

The Principal Planner discussed, in detail, the outline planning application (all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of up to 240 residential dwellings, including 25% affordable housing, together with a new vehicular

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access point from Ratcliffe Highway, open space, landscaping and associated works.

The Principal Planner advised the Committee that as the applicants had lodged an appeal against non-determination the report and recommendation were to ascertain the views of the Committee should they have been in a position to make a decision. Those views would then be used as the formal Council response to the appeal.

The Principal Planner brought Members' attention to the supplementary agenda advice sheet which included a representation and a rebuttal to the case officer's report from the Independent Group.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Crozer addressed the Committee as Ward Councillor and raised the following concerns:

- It was noted that Medway's Infrastructure Strategy had fundamentally changed following the loss of £170m Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) funding from Homes England, with concerns that proposed mitigation relied on infrastructure funding that no longer existed.
- Concerns were raised that approving a further 240 dwellings without the guaranteed strategic road and rail improvements would be unsustainable and would worsen congestion.
- The Hoo Peninsula was described as having a single access route via Four Elms Hill, which was already operating at capacity. Congestion was said to present safety risks, including delays to emergency services and trapping thousands of residents when the route was blocked.
- Proposed financial S106 contributions towards improvements at Four Elms Hill and Sans Pareil roundabouts were considered insufficient to address existing transport impacts, with transport on the Peninsula being described as poor. This application was described as offering no immediate benefit, amounting to a "road to nowhere".
- It was noted that without public transport in place from day one, each of the 240 new dwellings would increase reliance on private car use and add pressure to the highway network.
- Members were urged to refuse the application, citing outdated infrastructure assumptions, conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework's sustainability requirements and the Local Plan's emphasis on directing growth to areas with sustainable infrastructure.
- That the Local Plan supported housing delivery in areas where existing infrastructure could be enhanced, rather than continued development on the Hoo Peninsula.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Pearce addressed the Committee as Ward Councillor and raised the following concerns:

- He urged Members to refuse this planning application and uphold the adopted Development Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.
- It was argued that the proposal conflicted with the adopted plan and lacked sustainability.

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- Concern was raised about the reliance on the emerging Local Plan that was not adopted and was subject to examination issues.
- Strong objections were made to transport and access arrangements which included unresolved bus provision and unsafe pedestrian and cycle links.
- The proposal was said to rely on uncertain infrastructure and access from the adjacent Taylor Wimpey site.
- The planning application was described as premature, overly reliant on future assumptions and not required to meet the housing need.
- He stated that the Committee should defend the adopted development plan, defend the Neighbourhood Plan, defend the Hoo and Chattenden community and refuse this application and support the non-determination at appeal.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Sands addressed the Committee as Ward Councillor and raised the following concerns:

- He urged refusal of this planning application and referenced the irreversible loss of open countryside on the Hoo Peninsula and harm to the area's character.
- Concerns were raised that the site lay within a highly sensitive ecological setting, which was close to internationally protected habitats along the Thames Estuary.
- He stated that existing hedgerows and fields formed functioning habitats and should not be regarded as empty land, with any loss being permanent.
- Reference was made to the National Planning Policy Framework, with the view that uncertainty regarding harm to protected habitats justified refusal.
- The proposed development would place additional pressure, on already congested road networks, limited access routes and strained local services.
- He acknowledged that housing was needed, however, development should not proceed in unsuitable locations.
- Harm arising from the development would be clear, significant and permanent and would outweigh any benefits and he stated that the Committee should support local residents, protect the landscape and refuse the application.

The Committee discussed the planning application noting the concerns raised by the Ward Councillors.

The Chief Planning Officer explained that an appeal in respect of this planning application (and the subsequent planning application) had been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on the grounds of non-determination, prior to the matter being considered by the Planning Committee. He explained that there were, at present, three appeals relating to large scale residential-led developments all being heard at Public Inquiries in May and June 2026, all relating to non-determination. Members would recall from a recent Committee

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meeting, the first non-determination appeal related to a proposal for 800 homes and a primary school in Wainscott. That application was part of a number of speculative proposals that had either been submitted or were about to be submitted. This situation highlighted the importance of having an up to date adopted Local Plan. The current Local Plan was significantly out of date, being adopted in 2003 and had been intended to run until 2006.

The Wainscott proposal related to a site that was not allocated in the emerging Local Plan. The applicant was stating that the Council did not currently have a five-year housing land supply, currently (3.1 years) and that their site was ready for development. The applicant applied for non-determination as soon as possible within the planning process, despite having unresolved objections which included objections from National Highways and having no fundamental discussions regarding S106 mitigation matters.

The Chief Planning Officer considered that once the Local Plan was adopted, it would become far more difficult for large scale, non-allocated, resident-led developments to be granted on appeal. This, therefore, represented a “window of opportunity” for the applicants. Following the Rosewell procedures the developers could move rapidly to an appeal Inquiry ahead of Local Plan examination.

As Gladman did not own the land the subject of their application, it was probable that they had lodged an appeal against non-determination for contractual reasons.

Taylor Wimpey may have other reasons to lodge their appeal, which could include moving from one completing site in Hoo to the proposed site providing development continuity. They may also be aware, and be impacted, by other appeals such as the ones at Wainscott (Richborough).

The Chief Planning Officer advised that Members should also note that, contrary to some reports in the press, Taylor Wimpey had submitted further information as recently as January 2026, and then proceeded to appeal against non-determination not even allowing time for the Local Planning Authority or consultees (including the public) to consider or comment on that information. It was, therefore, incorrect to suggest that the application could have been determined in 2025.

Medway Council was under significant pressure from speculative planning applications, it was necessary to ensure that the right developments were in the right places with the right infrastructure and that could only be done effectively through the Local Plan process. Medway Council's Local Plan had now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and the Council had received their initial response. Their initial comments were not unusual and were a normal part of the process.

The Chief Planning Officer confirmed the Council regularly engaged with officers at the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to ensure the proposed

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spatial strategy and overall direction of the emerging Plan was reasonable and sound. As part of that engagement, PAS had arranged for an experienced Local Plan Inspector to review the Regulation 19 Plan and supporting documents. The Local Plan Inspector then reviewed the material in full and provided feedback. Officers had also been encouraged by MHCLG and PAS to use the Inspectorate pre-submission checklist process. This was designed to identify plans that were ready for submission and would provide guidance to plans that were close to being ready. The Council had received guidance through those processes and followed it in full before submitting the plan.

All Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) would receive initial responses from the Inspectors once their plan had been submitted. The Council would be formally responding by 27 April 2026, clarifying what had been done, explaining the reasoning and setting out any further steps the Council would take in the coming weeks.

The Council discussed the Inspector's letter with its legal advisers and were working with two very experienced Planning Barristers on a way forward. In terms of the appeals, the Council remained satisfied with the weight being attached to the emerging Local Plan within the officer's report.

The Chief Planning Officer stated that the S106 process was not perfect. In an ideal world, infrastructure would be delivered first, followed by the development. Unfortunately, infrastructure had to be paid for and that funding usually come from the development coming forward.

In relation to the urban area, Members would be aware that the Council had taken a brownfield first approach, looking at capacity of those sites before considering other options such as greenfield site. The emerging Plan proposes around 40% of the housing on brownfield land. There was a statutory housing need to meet, not only in term of numbers but the actual needs and demands of residents and in this respect not everyone wished to live in flats in town centres.

As a result, urban, suburban and rural areas all have a role to play. Medway's housing need is 1,636 dwellings per year. The best year Medway had ever delivered was 1,300 homes in a year. Last year, delivery was closer to 700. The only realistic way we would meet our housing need would be through an adopted Local Plan.

The Local Plan would provide for around 24,500 homes up to 2041. That was a large number of homes and it was important that the necessary infrastructure be delivered alongside them and that could only be achieved through an adopted Local Plan.

In this case, officers were recommending no objection to this application.

The Committee discussed the application in detail and the comments that the Chief Planning Officer made including the lack of infrastructure, loss of agricultural land, traffic and congestion and inadequate bus services.

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Members also acknowledged the housing crisis and due to the fact that the Council did not having a five-year housing supply, were concerned with how many children were currently living in temporary accommodation.

The Chief Planning Officer clarified again that the current Local Plan was out of date, and that all housing sites that were assigned between 2003-2006 had been developed. A new adopted Local Plan was needed to meet housing needs.

The Chief Planning Officer explained that the HIF bid was on an assumption of around 12,000 homes being delivered on the Peninsula. Under the emerging Local Plan, the number of proposed homes on the Peninsula was significantly lower.

Members acknowledged how important a Neighbourhood Plan was, however, a Neighbourhood Plan did not promote sites, a Local Plan would do that.

Members discussed whether they could vote for a refusal, however, the Chief Planning Officer stated that he would not be able to defend any refusal on this particular site.

The Chief Planning Officer confirmed that if Members followed the officers recommendation of approval Inquiry, Medway Council's Planning Authority would attend the appeal hearing regarding the S106 contributions. He also stated that the Independent Group would be a Rule 6 Party at the Inquiry in defence of their objections to the proposed development.

### **Decision:**

**The Committee agreed that if an appeal had not been made the decision would have been to:**

**Approval** subject to:

A. Section 106 agreement to secure the following (the figures set out below reflect those included in the draft Reg.122 which are part of ongoing discussions/negotiations with the applicant):

i) NON-FINANCIAL

- Min 30 % affordable homes:
  - 62% affordable rent
  - 38% shared ownership
- Provision of a road link with no ransom strip up to the boundary with the adjacent Land West of Hoo site that will provide pedestrian, cycle and bus linkages through the site going forward.

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### ii) FINANCIAL

- Up to £54,475.20 towards improvements to facilities and equipment to Hoo Library and/or the community mobile library serving the Hoo Peninsula (£226.98 per unit x 240 units).
- Up to £60,441.60 towards **community facilities** (£251.84 per unit x 240 units) in Hoo including but not limited to a new community centre in Pottery Road and a new community hub.
- Up to £25,833.60 towards **youth development** across the Hoo Peninsula including but not limited to development of new youth facilities and enhancements of existing provision ensuring access to essential equipment and materials, and engagement of trained instructors (£107.64 per unit x 240 units).
- Up to £841,620 towards improvement and expansion of **open space and outdoor sports facilities** at Deangate Community Park and/or Cockham Wood Parkland and/or Hoo Wetlands and/or Hoo Common and/or Kingshill Recreation Ground, Hoo.
- Up to £18,000 towards improvements and enhancements Public Rights of Way (**PRoWs**) RS104, RS105 and RS100 including signage, drainage, wayfinding and access improvements, lighting surfacing and vegetation management if required to local) (£75 per unit x 240 units).
- Up to £88,754.40 towards improved civic space and gateways including greening, street furniture, paving, lighting and signage (**public realm**) in the Parish of Hoo and Chattenden (including greening, street furniture, paving, lighting, signage etc) (£369.81 per unit x 240 units).
- Up to £80,311.20 towards improvements to Hoo **Sports** Centre including but not limited to the development of gender-neutral changing area including improved shower facilities with increased accessibility for families, schools and disability users which enable the help and supervision of carers and development of a yoga studio to support mental well-being of residents. (£334.63 per unit x 240 units).
- Up to £57,081.60 towards **waste** containment facilities the maintenance and improvement of local bring centres and waste education and promotion. (£237.84 per unit x 240 units).
- Up to £68,908.80 towards **social care** services to meet the needs of the increased, aging population within 3 miles of the development including but not limited to community equipment

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provision, day care and activity services, personal care assistants, carer support services, home care provision and technology-enabled care solutions. (£287.12 per unit x 240 units).

- Up to £480,000 toward **Health – Primary Care** towards a new healthy living centre in the Parish of Hoo and Chattenden to provide appropriate level of enhancement to accommodate increase in patient numbers. (£2,000 per unit x 240 units).
  - **Education**
    - a. Up to £728,376.00 towards the provision of **nursery** education within a new two-form entry or three-form entry primary school in Hoo.
    - b. Up to £1,787,832.00 towards the provision of **primary** education within a new two-form entry or three-form entry primary school in Hoo.
    - c. Up to £1,437,041.01 towards the provision of **secondary** education within a new six-form entry secondary school in Hoo.
    - d. Up to £229,193.14 towards the provision of **sixth form** education within a new six-form entry secondary school in Hoo.
  - Up to £2,267,040 towards a package of **transport mitigations** including but not limited to Four Elms roundabout, Sans Pareil roundabout, local roundabouts in Hoo and sustainable transport improvement on the Hoo Peninsula (£9,446 per unit x 240 units).
  - Up to £403,610.40 towards a **strategic environmental programme** on the Hoo Peninsula to protect designated sites and areas of significant flood risk, either now or in the future. To include conservation and enhancement of Lodge Hill SSSI, the Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA, Ramsar site and SSSI. (£1,681.71 per unit x 240 units).
  - Up to £80,997.60 for **Bird Disturbance Mitigation (SAMMs)** to make financial contribution to take mitigating measures to protect wintering birds habitat areas from the additional footfall/visitors that will result from the development. (£337.49 per unit x 240 units).
- B. Conditions 1 to 38 as set out in the report for the reasons stated in the report.

**839 Planning application - MC/24/2022 Land west of Hoo St Werburgh**

**Discussion:**

The Principal Planner discussed, in detail, the outline planning application (with all matters reserved except access) for the construction of up to 450 dwellings, commercial floorspace (up to 500sqm), community use building (up to 500sqm), associated public open space, landscaping, outdoor sports facilities, drainage and earthworks.

The Principal Planner advised the Committee that as the applicants had lodged an appeal against non-determination the report and recommendation were to ascertain the views of the Committee should they have been in a position to make a decision. Those views would then be used as the formal Council response to the appeal.

The Principal Planner brought Members' attention to the supplementary agenda advice sheet which included representation and a rebuttal to the case officer's report from the Independent Group.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Crozer addressed the Committee as Ward Councillor and raised the following concerns:

- Members were urged to support the officer's recommendation of refusal.
- Concern was raised that the proposal would lead to the coalescence between Hoo and Chattenden and would conflict with the Hoo Neighbourhood Plan and the emerging Local Plan.
- He highlighted a fundamental failure of transport infrastructure to support the proposal given the loss of the £170m HIF investment in the A228 and rail networks.
- Approval of 450 dwellings would have severe impacts on an already over-capacity network with a single access route on and off the Peninsula.
- It was noted that Active Travel England could not support the scheme, due to insufficient evidence.
- Significant concerns were raised regarding school capacity, road safety, bus services and being a car-dependent scheme causing more congestion.
- Serious concern was expressed regarding the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) consultation zone constraints, including high-pressure gas pipelines, which were viewed as dangerous and unsuitable for this scale and density of development.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Pearce addressed the Committee as Ward Councillor raised the following concerns:

- He stated a more robust and defensible reason for refusal was required.
- Concern was expressed that the site lay outside the built-up confines of Hoo, in open countryside, representing a major housing development beyond the settlement boundary and, therefore, a conflict in principle.

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- He suggested that too much weight was given to the emerging Local Plan, while the adopted Hoo Neighbourhood Plan carried full statutory weight. It was also noted that the Neighbourhood Plan sought to protect settlement separation, landscape character and deliverable transport solutions.
- The proposal was described as unsustainable and vehicle-led, with the Design Review report at Appendix 2, confirming the car-dominated travel patterns.
- It was noted that Active Travel England could not support the development and that walking and cycling issues remained unresolved.
- Further concerns were raised regarding drainage, flooding, ecology and the urbanisation of the Hoo Road – Chattenden Valley.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Sands addressed the Committee as Ward Councillor and raised the following concerns:

- The Hoo Neighbourhood Plan was emphasised as playing a vital role in the planning process and should not be treated as a secondary or optional consideration.
- The Neighbourhood Plan must be taken into account in the decision-making. Its locally led nature was highlighted, reflecting community priorities, including maintaining separation between Hoo and Chattenden through green buffers.
- Concern was expressed that the proposal appeared to circumvent the Neighbourhood Plan policies and lead to settlement coalescence and countryside loss.
- Reference was made to housing pressures, alongside concern about housing delivery models and the impact of meeting housing targets on rural areas.

The Committee discussed the planning application noting the concerns by the Ward Councillors and some Members considered that one reason for refusal was not strong enough. However, the Chief Planning Officer advised that he had to defend all reasons for refusal and it was important to not just add reasons to pad out areas of concern that could not be properly defended as this would weaken the strong case set out in the recommended refusal.

Members acknowledged that a physical separation was required between Chattenden and Hoo and they discussed, that over time, new residents would create their own identity and become part of the community.

Members agreed to give delegated authority to the Chief Planning Officer and to add a second reason for refusal if the applicant decided not to agree the S106 contributions. Wording to be agreed in consultation with the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Opposition Spokespersons.

**Decision:**

**The Committee agreed that if an appeal had not been made the decision would have been to refuse this application.**

**Refusal**

- 1 Although the principle of residential-led development on the site is supported, the proposal fails to provide a sufficient and effective landscape buffer capable of functioning as part of a strategic landscape corridor and would also adversely and unnecessarily exacerbate landscape and visual impacts as a result of developing this site. The proposal would result in the perceived coalescence of Hoo and Chattenden, and as a result would not successfully maintain the separate identity and character of those settlements. As such, the Development would conflict with the underlying objectives of Policy BNE25 of the adopted Local Plan; Policy H008 of the Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2040; Draft Policies SA8, and S4 of the Regulation 22 Medway Local Plan 2041.

**840 Planning application - MC/26/0094 54 Woodlands Road, Gillingham, Medway ME7 2DS**

**Discussion:**

The Service Manager - Development Management outlined the application in detail for the change of use of existing dwellinghouse (Class C3) to care home together with construction of a two storey side extension and dormer window to rear to provide additional living accommodation within roof space with associated external alterations.

The Service Manager – Development Manager brought Members’ attention to the supplementary agenda advice sheet which set out further representations.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Nestorov addressed the Committee as Ward Councillor and raised the following concerns:

- It was noted that previous applications had sought permission for a wide range of uses for this site.
- Residents raised concerns that the property may have been sold and that the correct notices may not have been served, potentially resulting in a procedural flaw.
- The site was located on a busy road close to a school, with congestion at peak time and an access point close to a pedestrian crossing, raising highway safety concerns.
- The proposal was considered not to meet safety standards with ongoing concerns about inadequate parking provision.
- It was noted that the proposed assisted living could involve up to 12 staff, adding further parking pressures.

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- Reference was made to a previous refusal on similar grounds and Members were urged to refuse this planning application.

The Committee discussed the planning application noting the concerns raised by the Ward Councillor.

The Service Manager – Development Management confirmed that parking provision for staff was available. He acknowledged that, while the site was located very close to the crossroad and a busy junction, it had been in use for a number of years and was, therefore, likely to have accommodated children and young people as part of a family dwelling during that time. He confirmed that while the property may have been sold, there were no procedural flaws in the processing of the planning application.

The Service Manager – Development clarified that room sizes met with the standard guidelines and that the dormer window was agreed under permitted development.

It was commented that where the Committee approved planning permission for children's care homes, this approval related only to planning terms and that the permission for the Children's Care Home to operate was granted by Ofsted.

### **Decision:**

**Approved** with conditions 1 to 5 as set out in the report for the reasons stated in the report.

**Chairperson**

**Date:**

**Julie Francis-Beard, Democratic Services Officer**

Telephone: 01634 332012

Email: [democratic.services@medway.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@medway.gov.uk)