

CHATHAM DOCKS – ARCELORMITTAL KENT WIRE LIMITED

REPRESENTATIONS ON MEDWAY LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION SEPTEMBER 2024

Submitted via email to planning.policy@medway.gov.uk

1 Summary

- 1.1 We act for ArcelorMittal Kent Wire, the occupier of a large proportion of the Chatham Docks site. ArcelorMittal Kent Wire's site has been proposed for residential led development in the draft Local Plan. If their site was redeveloped, ArcelorMittal Kent Wire would be forced to cease operating from Chatham Docks.
- 1.2 ArcelorMittal Kent Wire's landlord, Peel Waters, has submitted a planning application for the redevelopment of the southern part of their site. The application is currently the subject of an article 31 Holding Direction, noting the significant impacts for the British economy were the redevelopment to go ahead, with the loss of a substantial part of the British steel market including products essential for construction.
- 1.3 As a result of this planning application, ArcelorMittal Kent Wire have considered the potential to relocate their Chatham Docks operation to another site, however it has not been possible to identify an appropriate alternative site. Geographical constraints are very important to the business. ArcelorMittal Kent Wire consider that they would likely have to move their Chatham Docks operation outside the UK were Chatham Docks to close, with considerable impact on Britain's reinforced concrete supply. ArcelorMittal Kent Wire has supplied Crossrail, HS1, HS2, the Lower Thames Crossing, the Thames Tideway Tunnel, Heathrow Terminal 5, the O2 Arena, Wembley Stadium, the Emirates Stadium, the London Stadium, the A13 road upgrade, the M4 smart motorway, the Shard, the Silvertown Tunnel, and the United States' new London embassy, illustrating its importance to the strategic infrastructure projects. Were it forced to relocate overseas, Britain would face increased costs and the volatility of international supply, with greater carbon consequences. This is an issue that is not considered at all in the identification of Chatham Docks as a residential led site.
- 1.4 ArcelorMittal Kent Wire also put forward their vision for further investment at the site as a continuing industrial operation, with benefits for UK steel and the economy, retaining the unique non-tidal dock and its associated carbon benefits. This is summarised in the SPPARC Masterplan, also submitted alongside this representation.
- 1.5 In addition to submitting summaries of ArcelorMittal Kent Wire's comments on the draft Local Plan and supporting documents via the consultation portal, we set out as a whole their representations below.

2 Draft Local Plan Comments

2.1 Vision

[Puyat Jacinto & Santos](#) ► [Link Legal](#) ► [Zaanouni Law Firm & Associates](#) ► [LuatViet](#) ► [For more information on the firms that have come together to form Dentons, go to \[dentons.com/legacyfirms\]\(https://www.dentons.com/legacyfirms\)](#)

Dentons is a global legal practice providing client services worldwide through its member firms and affiliates. Dentons UK and Middle East LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales under no. OC322045. It is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, SRA Number 447523 and the Law Society of Scotland. A list of its members is open for inspection at its registered office: One Fleet Place, London EC4M 7WS. Any reference to a "partner" means a person who is a partner, member, consultant or employee with equivalent standing and qualifications in one of Dentons' affiliates. Please see [dentons.com](https://www.dentons.com) for Legal Notices.

98000038.1

- 2.1.1 Neither the draft Local Plan nor the supporting documents provide any reasoned conclusions for the redevelopment of Chatham Docks away from strategically significant steel manufacturing. The identification of Chatham Docks as an indicative residential-led development site is not explained. There is no indication that the Council have considered the spatial and location uniqueness of the docks, nor the consequences of redeveloping them as homes in the draft Local Plan or supporting documents. This is an inadequate approach to the loss of the last non tidal dock in the South East, with a failure to properly grapple with, or consider at all the particular features of the site in determining its future use. The draft Local Plan does not consider the impact on the UK construction industry, the carbon impacts of losing a facility for water based transport and replacing it with road based transport, the loss of skilled jobs. There is only a superficial assessment of the economic impact, a lack of proper consideration of the unique features of the docks, and a flawed employment land assessment. There is no analysis which allows a comparison of all of the relevant sustainability effects to assess the replacement of a key industrial facility, that of ArcelorMittal Kent Wire, with a housing led development. Further, there is no assessment of the "net" position where ArcelorMittal Kent Wire's operation is lost from Chatham Docks and replaced by a housing led, light industrial scheme.
- 2.1.2 The draft Local Plan states in its strategic objectives that growth will be directed to the most suitable locations. We submit the strategic objective itself is too vague to serve its purpose – it is unclear what it would or would not justify and therefore is not a proper basis for alternative testing or assessment of soundness. Further, as detailed in our representations, in relation to employment, critical economic infrastructure, and lack of proper alternative testing, the strategy would not put the growth in the most sustainable places.
- 2.1.3 There is no assessment of the proposal for the residential led redevelopment of Chatham Docks. One of the supporting documents, the Chatham Docks Employment Report, considers the economic impact of a mixed use redevelopment of Chatham Docks but in a superficial way without proper consideration of construction industry wide impacts from the loss of UK production of essential steel products. Further, it does not explain its conclusion regarding the viability of Chatham Docks, relocation costs and the use of agency staff. Noting the very widely drawn strategic objective, the Council has so far failed to produce (or rely on) any evidence which properly appraises the pros and cons of the two visions for the Site.
- 2.1.4 If Chatham Docks were redeveloped as a residential led development, ArcelorMittal Kent Wire's operation at Chatham Docks would be lost, alongside the businesses of other operators and the potential for future dock-based enterprises. ArcelorMittal is the world's leading integrated steel and mining company, with a presence in more than 60 countries, and the largest operator at Chatham Docks. Through their operation at Chatham Docks ArcelorMittal Kent Wire is a major supplier of steel products essential for construction, including 30% of Britain's reinforced concrete steel supply.
- 2.1.5 ArcelorMittal Kent Wire's landlord, Peel Waters, has submitted a planning application for the redevelopment of the southern part of their site. The application is currently the subject of an article 31 Holding Direction, noting the significant impacts for the British economy were the redevelopment to go ahead, with the loss of a significant part of the British steel market including products essential for construction, as detailed further above. This is issue that is not considered at all in the identification of Chatham Docks as a residential led site.
- 2.1.6 In addition to flaws in the consideration of the loss of Chatham Docks as a strategically important non tidal dock for transshipment and manufacturing, we note that the Council's Draft Viability Assessment, whilst containing some propositions we do not agree with including on housing

delivery, finds that the residential redevelopment of Chatham Docks does not generate positive values.

- 2.1.7 ArcelorMittal Kent Wire strongly supports the Council's ambitions for boosting jobs and investment in Medway in the draft Local Plan - particularly in considering the future of Chatham Docks.
- 2.1.8 Chatham Docks is a 400-year old commercial port and is a vibrant, working dock operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The docks employ over 800 people – many of whom are local. There are also existing jobs in the supply chains. Overall, there are over 2000 jobs dependent on the docks.
- 2.1.9 To enable 'all people' to 'thrive' Chatham Docks must be both supported and protected in the draft Local Plan. The draft Local Plan must strike a balance in identifying new sites for housing but not to the detriment of existing jobs and existing important employment generating uses
- 2.1.10 ArcelorMittal Kent Wire notes that 'Medway is a leading economic player in the region'. Therefore, future housing development in Medway must not be at the expense of existing viable employment generating sites.

2.2 NPPF

- 2.2.1 We consider that the draft Local Plan is not in accordance with paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the **NPPF**), stating:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:

- (a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects"

- 2.2.2 As detailed further, we consider that the draft Local Plan is flawed in failing to consider the development needs of the area, and the nation as a whole, in promoting the redevelopment of ArcelorMittal Kent Wire's facility, severely impacting the supply of essential construction materials. The impact of this is not weighed in the plan nor the sustainability appraisal. There is a failure to align the housing growth needed, with at a basic level the infrastructure needed to supply to relevant building materials. There is further a lack of consideration given to the loss of an industrial site uniquely situated on a non-tidal dock, which allows lower carbon water-based transport, and the consequent green house gas emission consequences from instead moving products longer distances and with greater reliance on road based transport.
- 2.2.3 In addition, we do not consider the draft Local Plan is in accordance with "building a strong, competitive economy" section of the NPPF, nor the amendments to the relevant sections the Government is currently consulting on. Clearly, the proposed residential redevelopment of ArcelorMittal Kent Wire's facility does not "help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development". The proposal puts at risk the whole of ArcelorMittal Kent Wire's operation at Chatham Docks, which will likely have to leave the UK if the redevelopment goes ahead, and so clearly preventing any investment in the meantime. There is a failure throughout the draft Local Plan to recognise the

impact on wider economic growth, where a key producer of the steel products needed for construction would be lost to the UK.

- 2.2.4 In particular, the draft Local Plan does not properly identify sites for commercial development which meet the needs of a modern economy amendments, pursuant to paragraph 84(b), further demonstrating the inadequacy of the sustainability appraisal in considering alternatives, as set out further below. As detailed previously, AMKW's materials have been pivotal in high-profile, nationally significant infrastructure projects, clearly demonstrating their role in meeting the needs of a modern economy. The importance of the land use AMKW relies upon, supported by the NPPF, is not reflected in the draft Local Plan.
- 2.2.5 Further, the draft Local Plan does not pay sufficient attention to the proposed amendments to paragraph 85, in particular the recognition of the importance of decarbonisation and reliability in the supply chain. Chatham Docks, by virtue of its location on a non-tidal dock, is able to use water-based transport. Were the site to be redeveloped for residential led development in accordance with the draft Local Plan, the new occupiers would not make use of that water-based transport. The option to use water-based transport would be lost forever. AMKW have sought to identify alternative sites but have concluded they would likely need to relocate outside the UK. This would have both carbon consequences, as materials would need to be transported longer distances, and likely with more reliance on road-based transport, and also on supply chain security. If AMKW were forced to close, the 30% of Britain's reinforced concrete steel would instead have to be supplied from elsewhere.

2.3 2.2 Prepared for a sustainable and green future

- 2.3.1 Chatham Docks utilises river-borne and sea-borne transport to receive raw materials and to send out finished products, a lower carbon alternative to road-based transport. If Chatham Docks is redeveloped as a residential led development, ArcelorMittal Kent Wire will be forced to relocate, likely outside the UK, leading to longer journeys for their steel products essential for UK construction projects, including those associated with sustainable energy development.
- 2.3.2 The carbon impact of this has not been properly considered by as part of the draft Local Plan process.

2.4 2.2 Supporting people to lead healthy lives and strengthening our communities

- 2.4.1 Chatham Docks is a 400-year old commercial port and is a vibrant, working dock operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The docks employ over 800 people – many of whom are local. There are also existing jobs in the supply chains. There are over 2000 jobs dependent on the docks.
- 2.4.2 Chatham Docks must be both supported and protected in the new Local Plan. The new Local Plan must strike a balance in identifying new sites for housing but not to the detriment of existing jobs and existing important employment generating uses.

2.5 2.2 Securing jobs and developing skills for a competitive economy

- 2.5.1 ArcelorMittal Kent Wire strongly supports the Council's Strategic Objectives to secure jobs and develop skills for a competitive economy – these objectives must be carried forward in continuing to protect Chatham Docks in the draft Local Plan.

- 2.5.2 The current Local Plan protects existing employment uses for Chatham Docks and states in Policy ED1: Existing Employment Areas that *'proposals for development resulting in the loss of existing industrial, business or storage and distribution development to other uses will not be permitted.'*
- 2.5.3 In addition, Policy ED9: Chatham Docks states, 'port-related development and an expansion of the commercial port, as defined on the Proposals Map will be permitted.'
- 2.5.4 If the Council is truly seeking to 'boost the performance of the local economy by supporting local businesses to grow and innovate...' and 'build on existing strengths and expertise, such as engineering...and raise the profile of key sectors...' then these protections for Chatham Docks must be carried forward into the draft Local Plan.
- 2.5.5 Chatham Docks employs local people who rely on its operation for their livelihoods. It must not be lost and redeveloped for housing.
- 2.5.6 Approximately 180 ship movements a year take advantage of the non-tidal Docks when they are fully operational– it is a very sustainable operation taking full advantage of the Dockside access. The dock use cannot be re-located, there is no other suitable site in Medway for its operation.
- 2.5.7 ArcelorMittal Kent Wire has submitted a series of technical reports to Medway Borough Council to demonstrate that Chatham Docks is viable and has a future, and that forcing the current operation to close does not make economic sense.

2.6 2.2 Boost pride in Medway through quality and resilient development

- 2.6.1 There is no proper assessment of the proposed loss of the ArcelorMittal Kent Wire facility versus the residential led proposal to ascertain whether what is proposed is a quality and resilient development. The lack of proper assessment prevents evidence-based judgments being made.
- 2.6.2 Given the significance of the port and its unique features as a non-tidal dock within Medway and the South-East, we consider there must continue to be a policy within the Local Plan which specifically supports the docks and its uses. We submit an alternative proposal for the Docks, the SPPARC Masterplan, alongside these representations.

2.7 2.3 Spatial Development Strategy

- 2.7.1 ArcelorMittal Kent Wire objects to any development proposal which supports the closure of Chatham Docks and which supports the loss of existing employment.
- 2.7.2 The draft Local Plan must strike a balance in identifying new sites for housing but not to the detriment of existing jobs and existing important employment generating uses employing local people within the Borough.
- 2.7.3 It is imperative that Chatham Docks continues to be protected within the draft Local Plan in recognition of its unique locational attributes as a site protected for port-related development including industrial, business or storage and distribution development both as a designation on the Proposals Map and in Policies within the draft Local Plan.

2.8 3.2 Preferred spatial growth option

- 2.8.1 There is no assessment of the proposal for the residential led redevelopment of Chatham Docks. The Chatham Docks Employment Report considers the economic impact of a mixed-use

redevelopment of Chatham Docks but in a superficial way without proper consideration of the loss of UK production of essential steel products. The issue is not adequately considered by the Sustainability Appraisal. Noting the very widely drawn strategic objective, the Council has so far failed to produce (or rely on) any evidence which properly appraises the proposed redevelopment.

2.9 Policy S1: Planning for Climate Change

- 2.9.1 Chatham Docks, by virtue of its location on a non-tidal dock, is able to use water-based transport. Were the site to be redeveloped for residential led development in accordance with the draft Local Plan, the new occupiers would not make use of that water-based transport. AMKW have sought to identify alternative sites but have concluded they would likely need to relocate outside the UK. This would have carbon consequences, as materials would need to be transported longer distances, and likely with more reliance on road-based transport.

2.10 Policy S5: Securing Strong Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 2.10.1 Chatham Docks is vital to maintaining a *'robust...blue infrastructure network...'*
- 2.10.2 The river-borne and sea-borne traffic associated with Chatham Docks allows direct sustainable connections with the rest of the South-East and with European ports, rather than just lorry deliveries in and out. These options would be lost were Chatham Docks to be redeveloped for uses not requiring water-based transport, and with displaced industry instead relying more on road-based transport with consequent carbon impact.

2.11 Policy S10: Economic Strategy

- 2.11.1 The Local Plan puts forward policies in relation to employment land needs, whilst acknowledging that it is based on an assessment from 2015, updated in 2020. We submit that a more up to date assessment is required to accurately consider the need for employment land. The information provided to date is an insufficient basis for the Council's apparent identified need to "regenerate" Basin 3. We do not consider that a need to "regenerate" the site has been identified, especially given that it is currently occupied by a viable key employer.

2.12 Policy S11: Existing employment provision

- 2.12.1 Policy S11 is wholly inconsistent with the proposals for Chatham Docks. Chatham Docks would not meet the test for non-employment redevelopment, as proposed by the draft Local Plan, as it is neither no longer appropriate or viable nor has there been no market interest in the in the site, nor has been market for a reasonable period (of 12 months). This demonstrates again the lack of consistency within the draft Local Plan, and the failure to properly consider of the redevelopment of Chatham Docks and its wider consequences.
- 2.12.2 The sustainability appraisal makes no reference to Chatham Docks and the conflict of the residential redevelopment in the consideration of this policy, indicating the inadequacy of its approach. The sustainability appraisal states that "the Council's criteria to ensure that redevelopment of employment sites only occurs where detrimental effects can be avoided". This is clearly not the case in relation to Chatham Docks. That neither the Council policy nor the sustainability appraisal consider a balancing approach demonstrates a lack of understanding of the planning process in general and Chatham Docks in particular.

2.13 Policy S14: Supporting Medway's culture and creative industries

2.13.1 There are superficial references to the use of waterfront site for regeneration and tourism aims, without proper consideration of the unique locational characteristics of Chatham Docks. Due regard is not had to properly identifying sites for commercial development which meet the needs of a modern economy, pursuant to paragraph 84(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework and the amendments proposed to it. Further, this policy does not take into account the proposed amendments to paragraph 85, in particular the recognition of the importance of decarbonisation and reliability in the supply chain. The draft Local Plan fails to engage with these emerging national requirements. Draft Policy S14 identifies Chatham Docks as a site where "locally distinct clusters of cultural facilities, venues and related creative uses" will be supported. This policy clearly indicates a failure to engage with the significance of the non-tidal docks and the opportunity they provide for businesses who require access to water and cannot easily relocate, or in fact be accommodated elsewhere in the region. Further, there is no balancing of the carbon impact of losing water-based means for industrial sites. There is no detailed assessment of the current uses and the likelihood of a cluster of cultural uses being successful or even likely here. The policy does not appear to be based on any more detailed assessment than an assumption that cultural facilities near water would be visually attractive, without recognising the unique facilities from a carbon and industrial perspective which would be lost. The sustainability appraisal does not grapple with this at all, in a clearly inadequate manner.

2.13.2 This is contrary to National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 86(b), which requires planning policies should "set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period". Instead, a rather superficial approach appears to have been taken.

2.14 Vision for Access and Movement in Medway

2.14.1 The draft Local Plan states "[t]he integration of land use and transport planning has an important role to achieve net zero. In short, the planning of new development needs to shift from a mitigative to a creative approach, i.e. leading with a vision". However, the draft Local Plan does not put this in to practice when considering the proposals for the Chatham Docks site. Rather, it is inconsistent when proposing land uses at the Docks which do not require access to the water and would not make use of water-based means of transport, and which would force existing businesses which use water based transport for bulky industrial products to relocate. We submit that residential uses could be located in a large range of areas, without any particular need for proximity to water or a dock which would cease to be operational if residential uses replaced existing businesses. The draft Local Plan has failed to grapple with the importance in transport terms, among others, when proposing residential redevelopment.

2.15 Carbon impacts of transport

2.15.1 Whilst the draft Local Plan acknowledges that "[t]he levels of change required are unprecedented and equate to an 80 per cent reduction in carbon emissions from surface transport by 2030" there is a failure to protect the current low carbon means of transport by continuing water-based uses at Chatham Docks. The draft Local Plan does not assess the loss of the non-tidal docks and their importance for industries relying on water-based transport, with consequent carbon consequences. Current and future operators at the Chatham Docks who use water-based transport for materials and products would have to relocate and instead use road-based means of transport, potentially over longer distances, producing more carbon at a time of acute concern about the environment, and contrary to other statements in the draft Local Plan itself regarding net zero. In ArcelorMittal Kent Wire's case, were the docks to be redeveloped, they would likely be forced to relocate overseas,

with products supplied to the South East travelling much longer distances with connected carbon consequences

- 2.15.2 We consider this failure to be material, in particular in failing to consider downstream carbon consequences contrary to the UK's transition to low carbon future pursuant to NPPF paragraph 8.

2.16 Riverside infrastructure - Policy T21

- 2.16.1 Policy T21 states "Riverside infrastructure associated with the transport of minerals, waste and other defined materials will be safeguarded in accordance with national planning policy. The existing network of piers, jetties, slipways, steps and stairs will be safeguarded to support the potential for visitor and river taxi services and to accommodate visiting vessels, while any new facilities will be encouraged."
- 2.16.2 This is clearly in conflict with the proposals in relation to Chatham Docks. In practice, it is the current occupiers at Chatham Docks which mean the lock gates giving access to the basin are kept in a condition that they can be opened (noting the issues caused periodically when disrepair means they cannot be opened). In a residential redevelopment scenario, there would no longer be tenants in the docks who would require and apply pressure to ensure that the lock gates were kept functional, nor pay a service charge connected to their maintenance. In the event Chatham Docks was redeveloped for residential use, we consider it highly likely the riverside infrastructure would be lost, in direct contravention of this draft policy. We understand that as well as the current occupiers who use the docks for the supply of raw materials and the export of finished materials via the facilities at Chatham Docks, the Royal Navy also have the ability to access Pool 2 via Chatham Docks, which would be prevented if the lock gates were fixed shut.
- 2.16.3 Paragraph 9.5.4 states "[t]he Riverside Infrastructure policy intends to reinforce Medway's strategic location in the Thames Estuary. Ports, docks and wharfrage will be safeguarded to support existing business sectors and to attract businesses requiring such facilities where feasible." We strongly agree with this statement. However, we consider that the draft Local Plan does not implement this conclusion when considering the redevelopment of Chatham Docks for non-maritime uses, in direct contravention of this draft policy. The draft Local Plan does not appear to have considered that the proposed residential led application would cause the docks to be lost for good. No assessment at all is given regarding the loss of Chatham Docks, not even one considering "where feasible" as stated in the policy. This is an inconsistent and unreasoned position.
- 2.16.4 There is no engagement with this issue in the sustainability appraisal.
- 2.16.5 We consider there are a number of issues with the River Medway Frontage Uses and Opportunities, which fails to properly consider Chatham Docks, in particular by appearing to failing to recognise the locational importance of the docks and appearing to assume Peel's redevelopment aspirations will come to pass without considering their uniqueness, omitting to fully consider the current activities at the docks, including significant increases in employment numbers, and the opportunities available for development of the industries currently operating rather than redevelopment.

2.17 Policy S24: Infrastructure Delivery

- 2.17.1 The draft Local Plan states "The Council will seek the timely and effective delivery of infrastructure for strategic and smaller sites to support the local economy and meet the needs of Medway's communities. The Council will also seek to protect existing infrastructure assets and safeguard land where required for new infrastructure." However, in its proposals in relation to Chatham Docks, it clearly fails to protect infrastructure assets as the proposed residential redevelopment will lead to the

loss of lock gates and their means of giving access to a non-tidal dock, a key and unique infrastructure asset. Further, there is no consideration of the loss of the ArcelorMittal Kent Wire facility as a result of the proposed redevelopment of their site, and the impact that will have on region wide infrastructure projects where the steel products needed for construction are no longer produced locally and may be less available, need to travel long distances, and be at greater cost.

2.18 Policy T34: Safeguarding of Existing Waste Management Facilities

- 2.18.1 The proposed redevelopment of Chatham Docks will also impact the waste processing use to the north of the basin. We note that the draft Local Plan states "The proximity principle requires mixed municipal waste collected from private households to be disposed of, or be recovered, in one of the 'nearest appropriate installations'". We also note that paragraph 12.4 states that "the presumption is that existing consented waste management facilities are safeguarded from loss to non-waste uses, or from proximate development that may limit or hinder their operation". This is in direct contradiction to the impact of the Chatham Docks redevelopment proposals in the draft Local Plan, which would inevitably lead to the closure of the four waste management facilities shown on the draft Policy Map on the northern part of the Chatham Docks site.

Supporting Documents

3 Policy map

- 3.1 ArcelorMittal Kent Wire strongly objects to the designation of Chatham Docks for 'residential-led development.' The proposed allocation is unreasoned and contradicts other draft Local Plan policies which seek to support existing businesses and their growth and seeks to safeguard docks.. It fails to recognise the strategic and locational significance of the docks, and is not supported by evidence.
- 3.2 Residential-led development will result in the closure of the Docks and the loss of existing, viable jobs, and the loss of a unique non-tidal dock in the region. Chatham Docks is a vibrant, working dock operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The docks employ over 800 people – many of whom are local. There are also existing jobs in the supply chains. Overall, there are over 2000 jobs dependent on the docks. The dock use cannot be re-located, there is no other suitable site in Medway for its operation.
- 3.3 ArcelorMittal Kent Wire requests that this designation is removed and requests that the docks are designated and continued to be protected for dock use.

4 Chatham Docks Employment Report

- 4.1 The report fails to properly grapple with the loss of ArcelorMittal Kent Wire from the region and the UK and wider implications for the construction industry as a whole, instead considering theoretical new jobs figures as local mitigation. During the writing of the Chatham Docks Employment Report, the managing director of ArcelorMittal Kent Wire sought to meet with the authors of the report, but this offer of a meeting was not taken up.
- 4.2 The report's premise is flawed as it does not consider the unique locational characteristics of Chatham Docks – the analysis itself states that navigation restrictions, number of berths and berth lengths were not considered for the proposed alternative sites. It considers three scenarios (1) do nothing; (2) Chatham Docks close in 2025 and 14 businesses **not reliant** on access to river/dock infrastructure are relocated "within available spare capacity within Medway"; and (3) Chatham Docks close in 2025 and 8 businesses **reliant** on access to river/dock infrastructure are relocated "within

available spare capacity within Medway". It is fundamentally flawed as it does not demonstrate that there is spare capacity for those businesses reliant on river/dock infrastructure.

- 4.3 For a number of the operators, Aecom conclude that the closure of the docks would lead to a greater number of road miles. However, there is no consideration of the carbon impact.
- 4.4 The report does not consider any scenario with an intensification of port dependant or other uses at the Docks, increasing the economic benefits it generates, demonstrating the same lack of proper consideration of alternatives as elsewhere in the draft Local Plan process.
- 4.5 The "benefits" included at paragraph 6.5 in response to the loss of jobs and annual GVA does not include any justifications. There are also a number of errors/inconsistencies, such as Peel's employment figures and cargo volume estimates are considered, without ArcelorMittal Kent Wire being given the opportunity to respond, and noting they would have more accurate figures and a failure to consider the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic when looking at shipping volumes (paragraph 4.13);

5 River Medway Economic Frontages Uses Study

- 5.1 We consider there are a number of issues with the River Medway Frontage Uses Study, which fails to properly consider Chatham Docks, in particular by appearing not to recognise the locational importance of the docks and assuming Peel's redevelopment aspirations will come to pass. The Study does not recognise the uniqueness of the docks, nor fully consider the existing uses and significant increases in employment numbers. Nor does the Study consider the opportunities available for development of the industries currently operating rather than redevelopment, providing a one-dimensional summary rather than an assessment.

6 Employment Land Assessment

- 6.1 The draft Local Plan puts forward policies in relation to employment land needs, whilst acknowledging that it is based on an assessment from 2015, updated in 2020. Whilst the update is being undertaken, we consider that a material amount of change will have taken place in the period 2015- 2024, especially given the covid 19 pandemic, an increase in working from home and subsequent changes in where workers live and how they commute. We submit that a more up to date assessment is required to accurately consider the need for employment land. The information provided to date is an insufficient basis for the Council's apparent identified need to "regenerate" Basin 3. We do not consider that a need to "regenerate" the site has been identified, especially given that it is currently occupied by a viable key employer.

Interim Sustainability Appraisal

- 6.2 An interim sustainability appraisal was published alongside the draft Local Plan. This assessment was fundamentally flawed in its consideration of Chatham Docks as a development site. In particular, Chatham Docks was ranked 4th in the "economy and employment matrix" based on proximity to employment sites (page 42). There is a fundamental misunderstanding of the economic impact of the redevelopment of Chatham Docks in the interim Sustainability Appraisal – there is no consideration of the impact of the loss of the current operation, locally, regionally and nationally in the loss of a key facility producing steel products needed for the construction industry. This is a fundamental error, and not an impact which can be assessed from considering how far the site is from other employment sites.

- 6.3 As detailed further below, we consider that the Sustainability Appraisal did not meet the requirements of Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 including a failure to:
- (A) identify strategic objectives
 - (B) identify reasonable alternatives
 - (C) assess reasonable alternatives at equivalent level of detail.
- 6.4 The strategic objectives do not recognise the unique spatial characteristics of Chatham Docks, and whilst some of the strategic objectives cut across some of the material issues in relation to the closure of the docks, there is no adequate consideration. For example, strategic objective one is climate change mitigation, and objective 12 is economy and employment. Chatham Docks was scored highly against economy and employment strategic objective, on the basis that it is located near to employment sites. This demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding about the nature of the docks and the operations located there, in particular their national importance in the supply of steel products for construction, where the loss of a significant production facility is deemed to be acceptable as the new residents would have short journeys to jobs elsewhere.
- 6.5 The sustainability appraisal refers to the preference for "brownfield first" without any appreciation of the existing operations which would be lost as a result of the redevelopment of Chatham Docks. Instead, it is treated as an empty site without looking at the economic impact of losing 30% of Britain's reinforced concrete steel supply. The sustainability appraisal scores the spatial development strategy as "++", clearly indicating a lack of appreciation of the wider impact of forcing ArcelorMittal Kent Wire to close its Chatham Docks facility and likely leave the UK. The methodology for assessment of economic and employment impacts appears to be superficial (page 72 of Part 2), as borne out by its conclusions.
- 6.6 The consideration of climate change does not consider the loss of water-based transport, nor the need to bring steel construction materials from overseas rather than from Kent to the South East. There is no consideration at all of the loss of the non-tidal dock, which should be recognised as a unique feature which once lost cannot be replaced.
- 6.7 The approach taken by the sustainability appraisal in relation to the identification of reasonable assessments is fundamentally flawed. The assessment considers only alternative sites for housing development, without consideration of the other important types of land uses impacted by the draft Local Plan and what reasonable alternatives might be considered to their wholesale redevelopment.
- 6.8 Both as a consequence of this approach to identifying reasonable alternatives and in its approach generally, the assessment of reasonable alternatives is inadequate. The Sustainability Appraisal merely scores each site against a matrix with no consideration of the bigger picture – namely, the beneficial economic impact of locating housing elsewhere in order to not cause UK wide economic harm by closing ArcelorMittal Kent Wire's facility, and local economic harm from loss of skilled jobs, which in this scenario would be replaced with housing and not even speculation about different employment uses. The "identified adverse impact" in table 8.11 in relation to economy and employment identifies "loss of employment floorspace" but does not make any specific reference to Chatham Docks and reaches an apparently superficial conclusion that any adverse impact can be fully mitigated by draft policies which seek to safeguard employment areas, with no consideration of the policy conflict regarding the residential redevelopment of Chatham Docks and/or whether the alternative development contemplated could allow the current dock uses to continue, and what the economic impact of that would be.

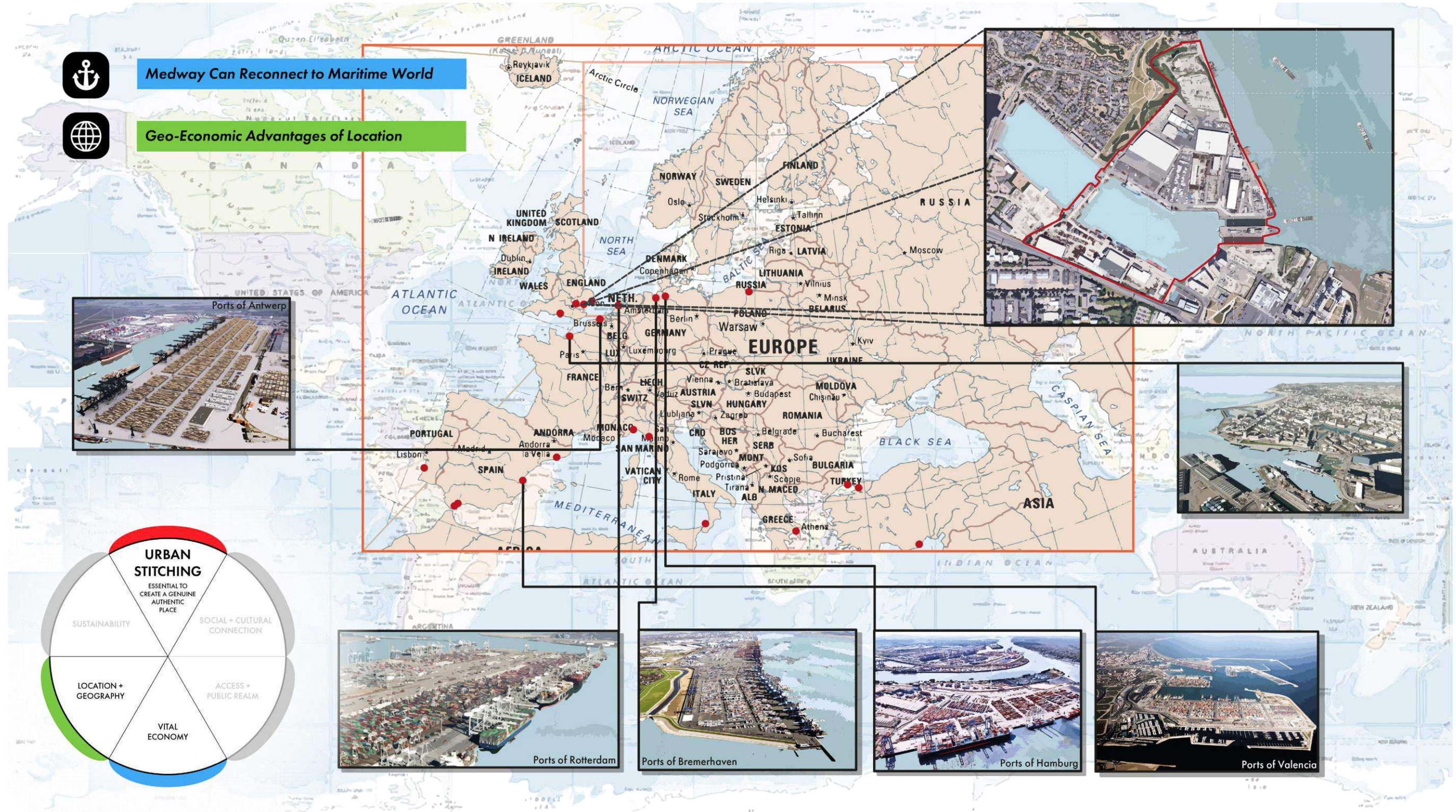
7 Viability Assessment

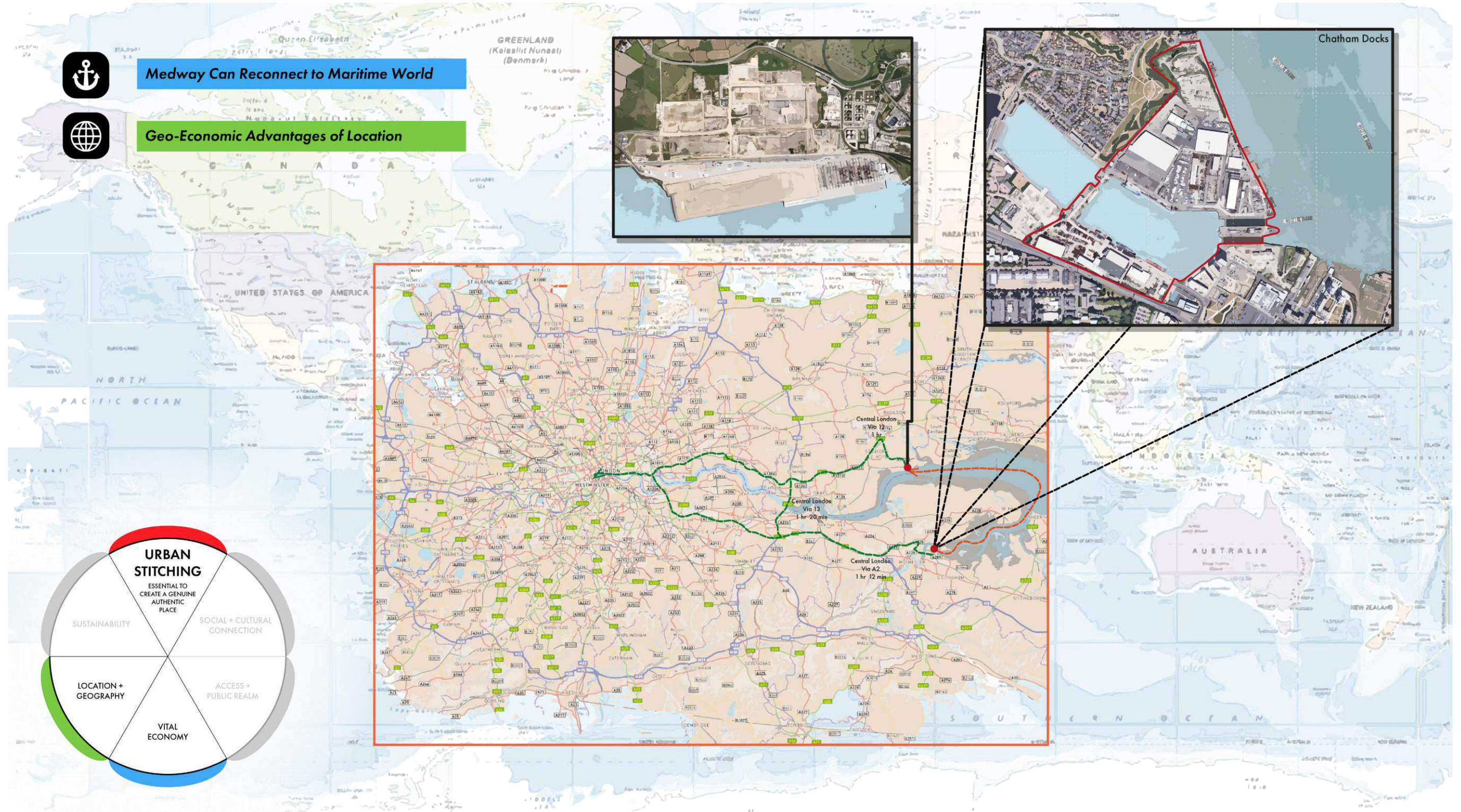
- 7.1 We note that the Council's Draft Viability Assessment, whilst containing some propositions we do not agree with including on housing delivery, finds that the residential redevelopment of Chatham Docks does not generate positive values. We note that the viability assessment was prepared in 2021 and we note detailed consideration will be required of the updated report.

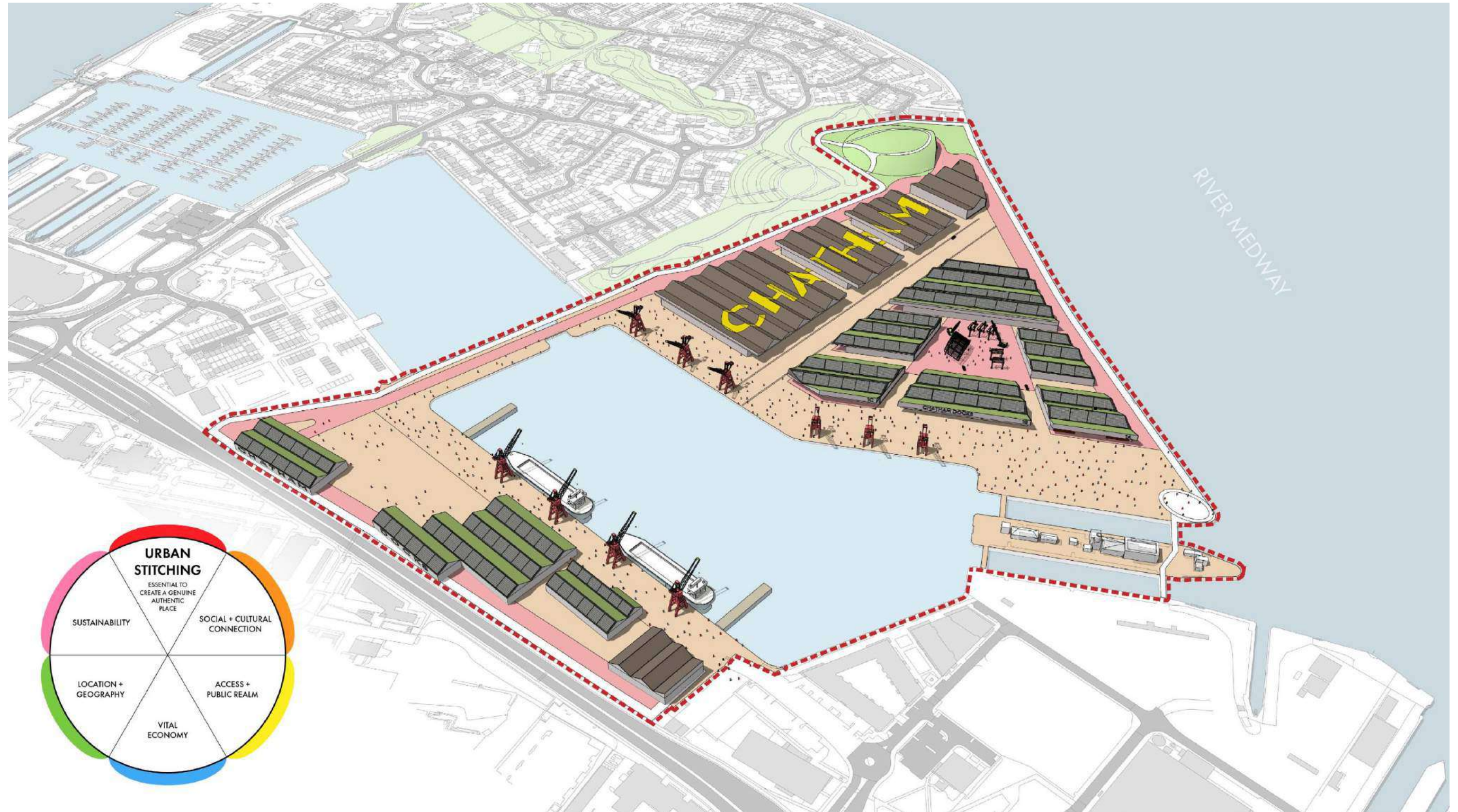
CHATHAM DOCKS

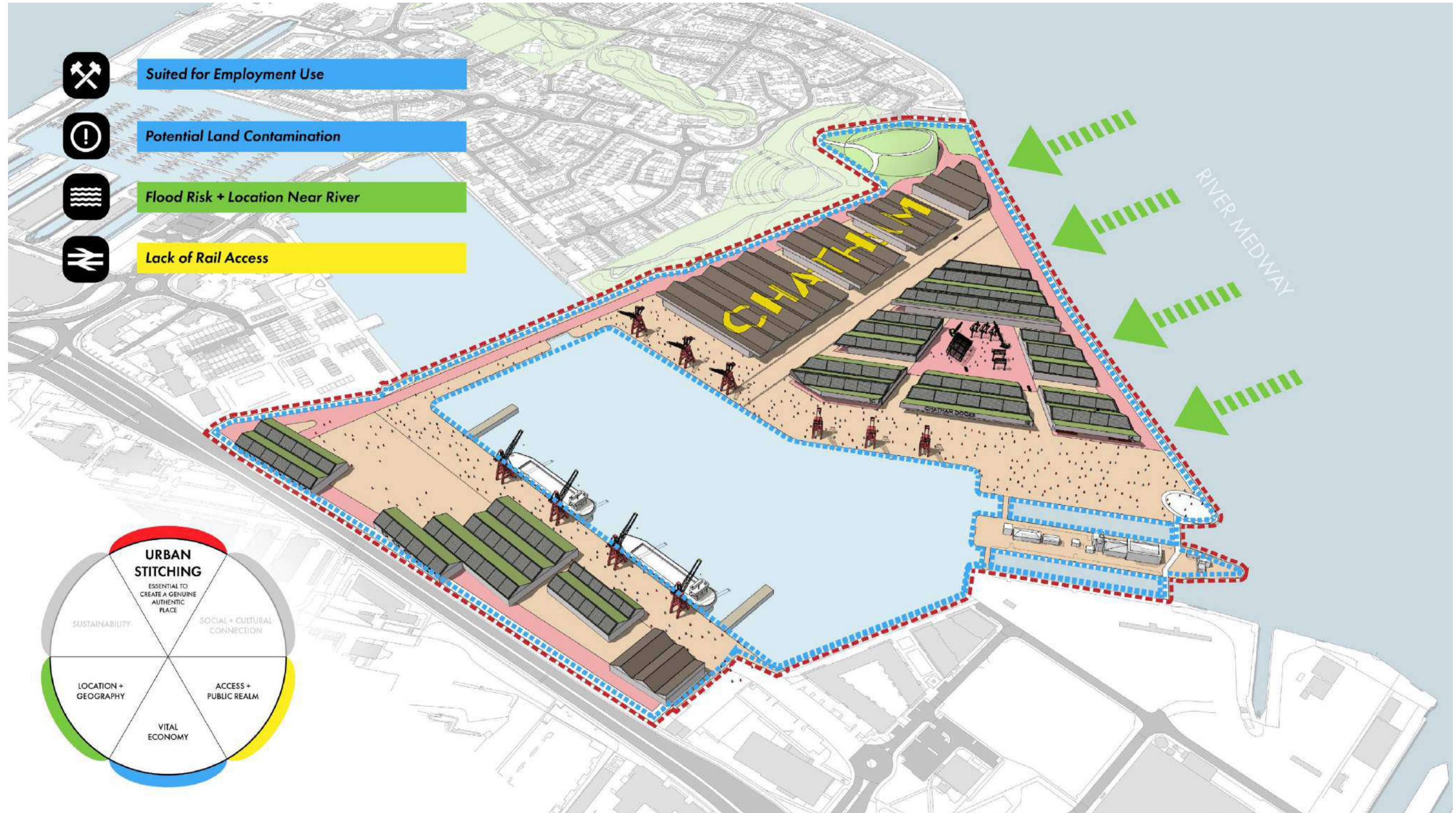
The Masterplan Vision





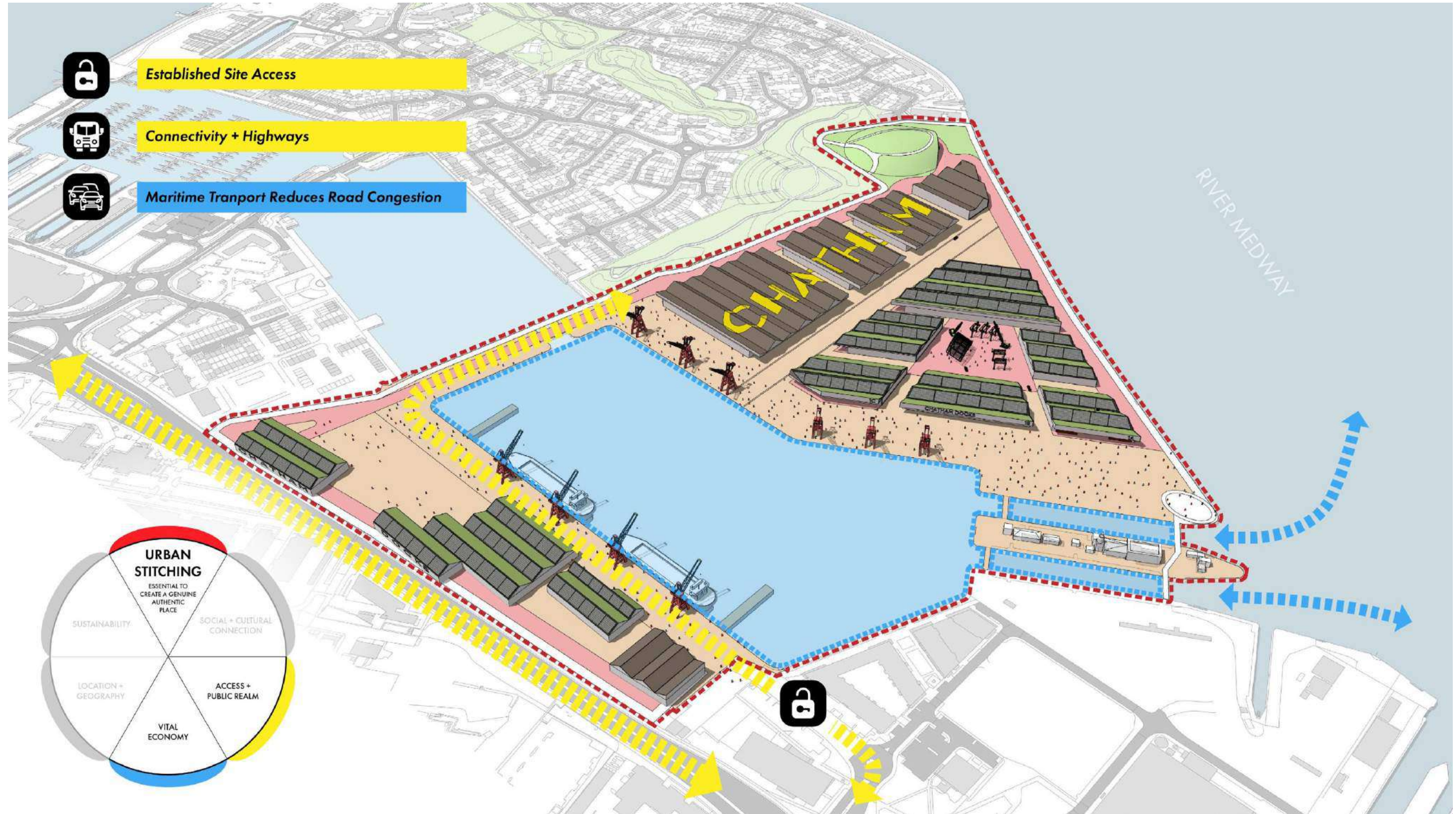


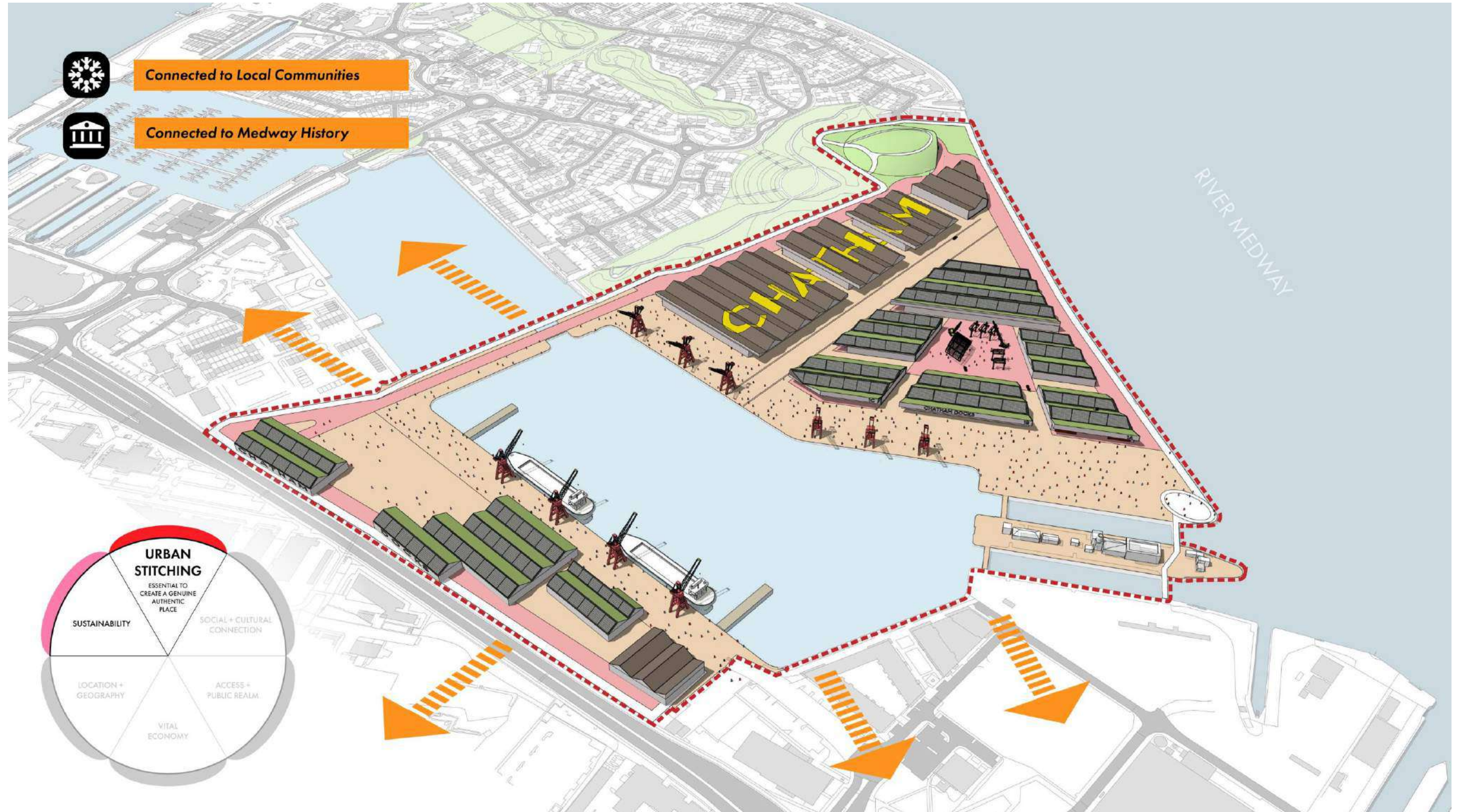


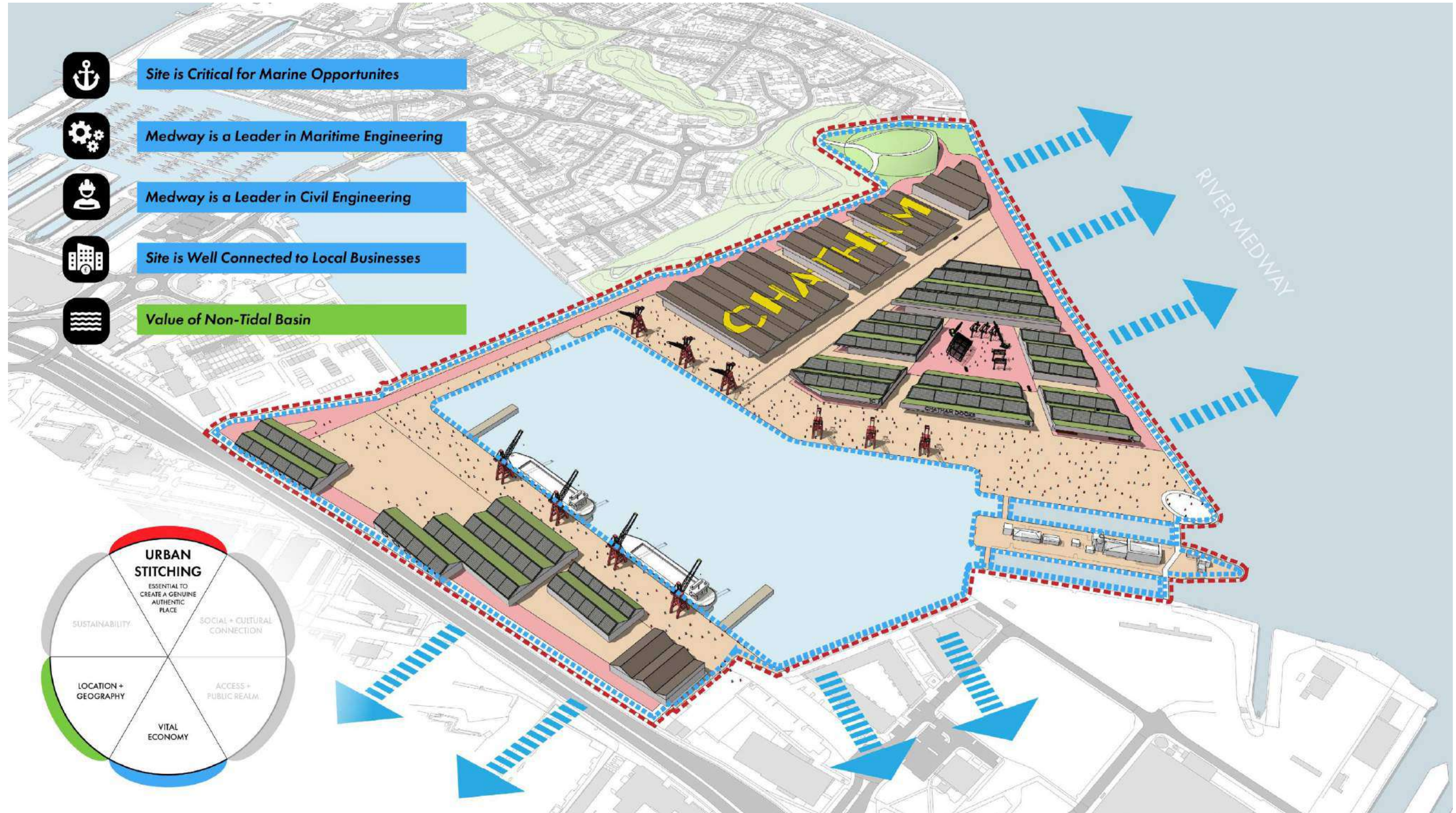


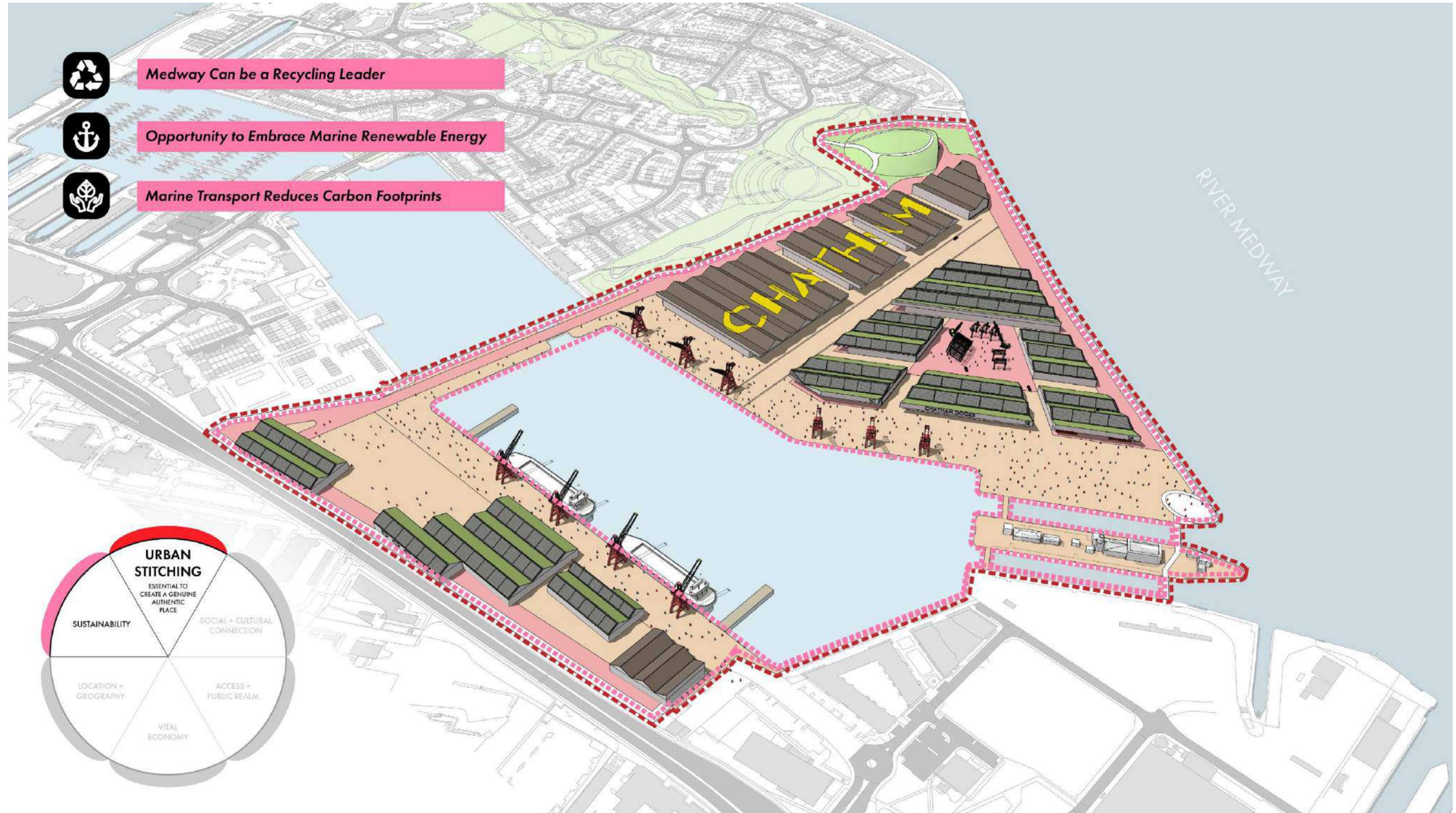
The Masterplan Vision

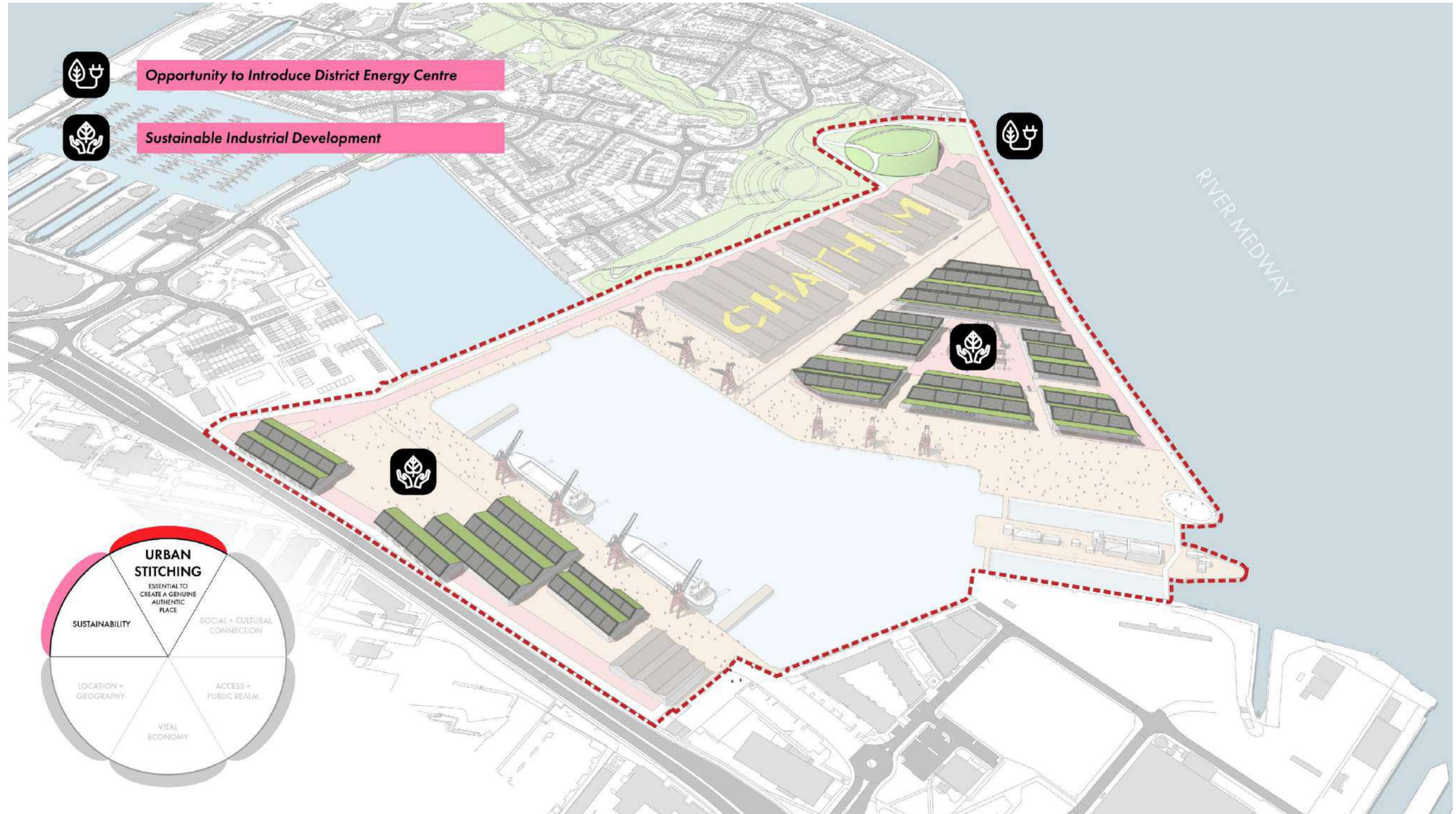
A Sustainable Approach – Use of the River for Primary Access











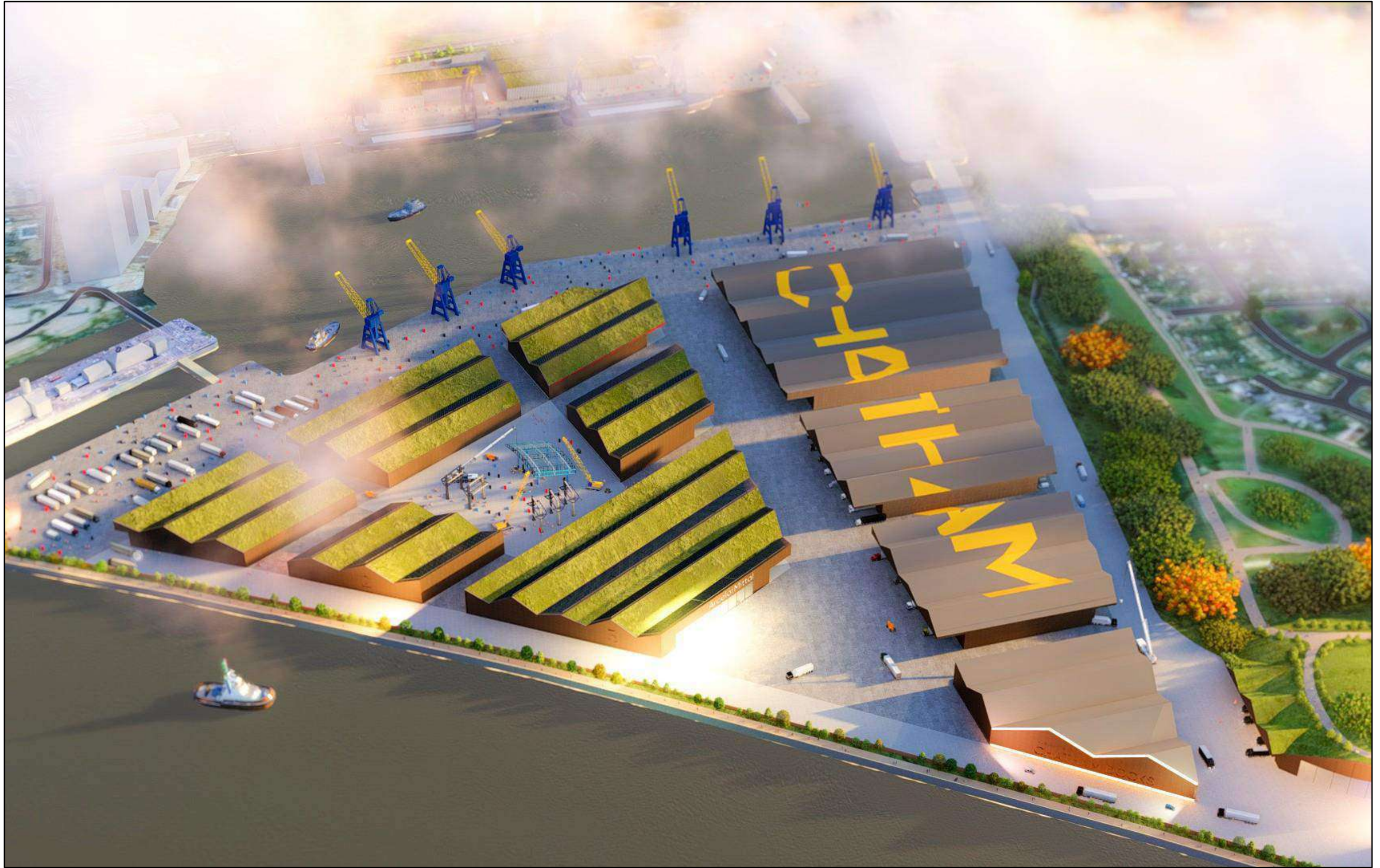
The Masterplan Vision

A Green Approach through Renewable Energy and Public Access to the River with a Green Pedestrian Route

Chatham Docks
SPPARC





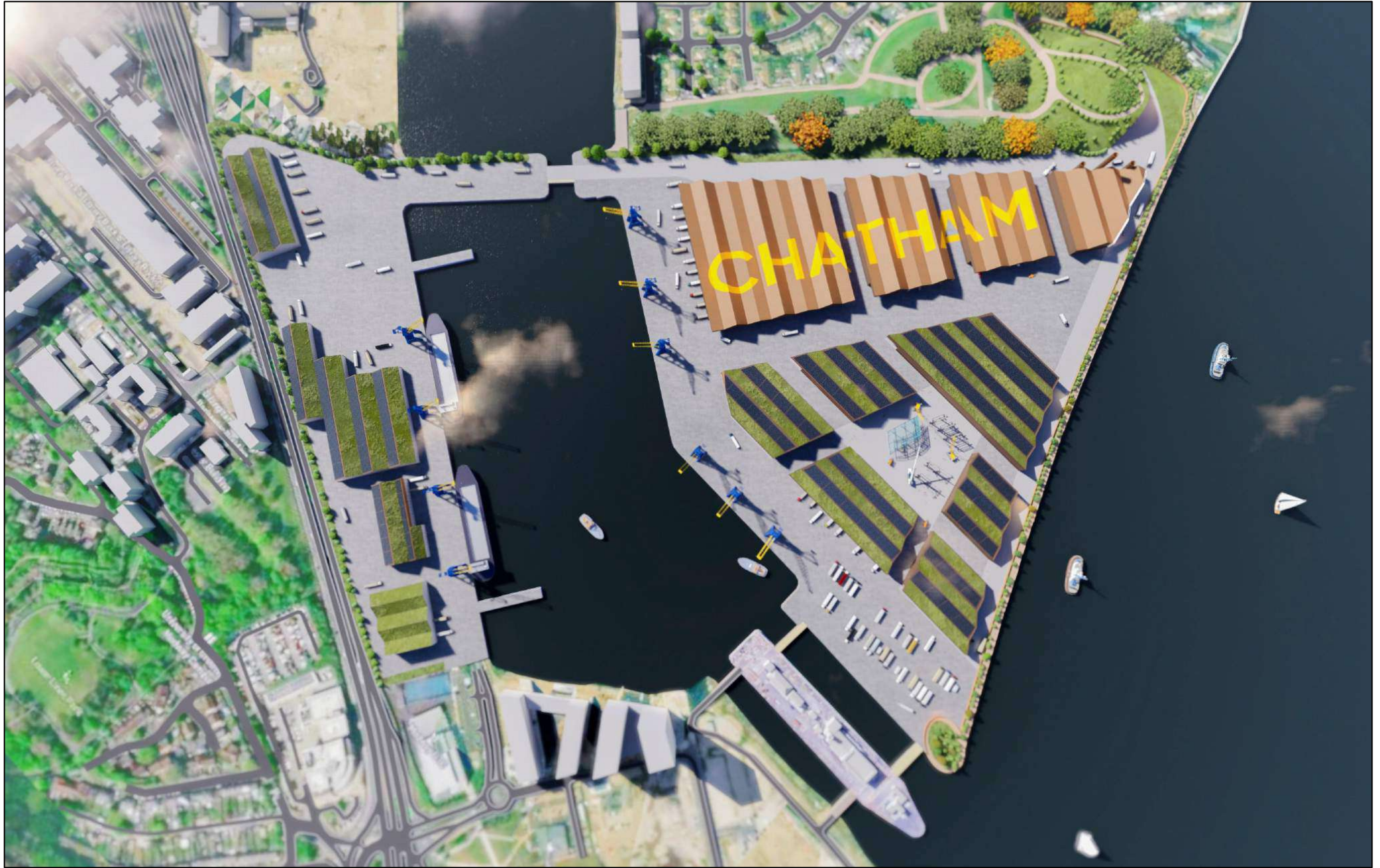








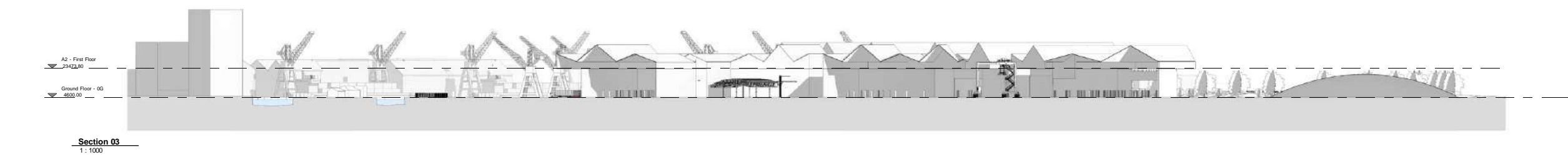
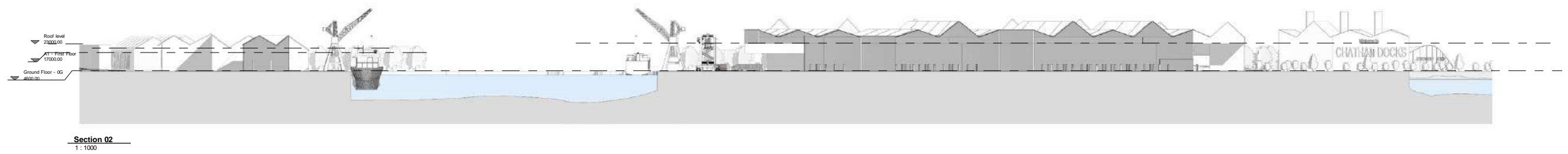
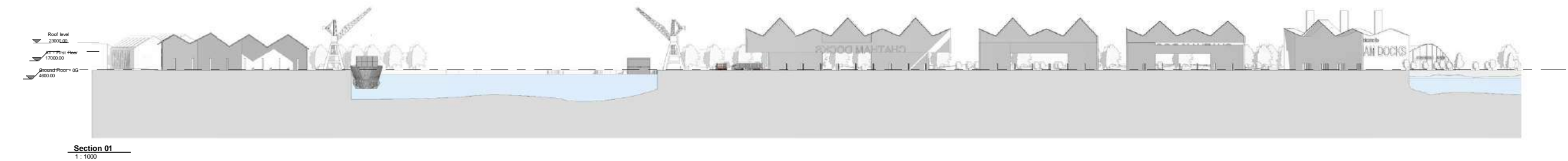






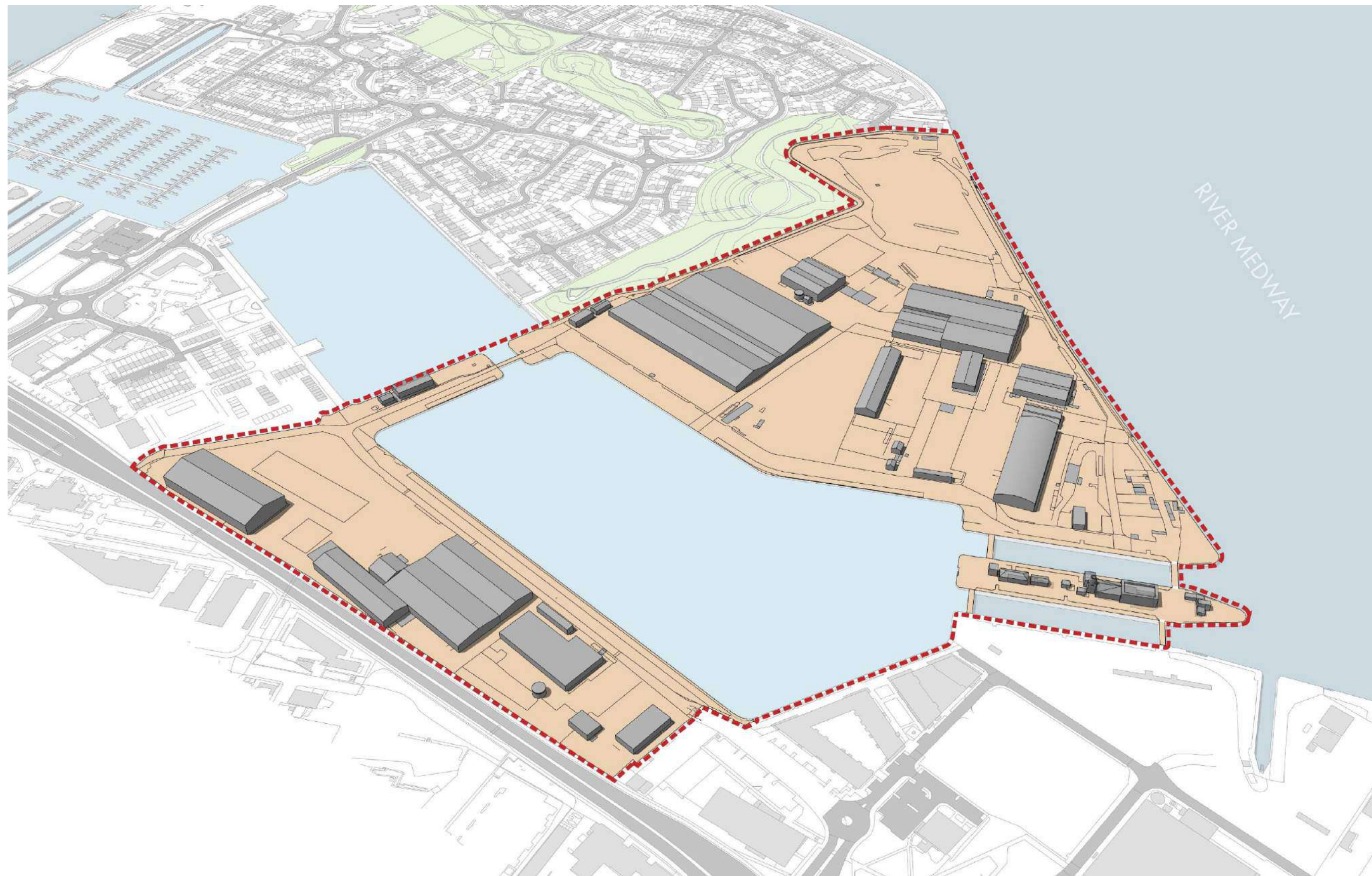


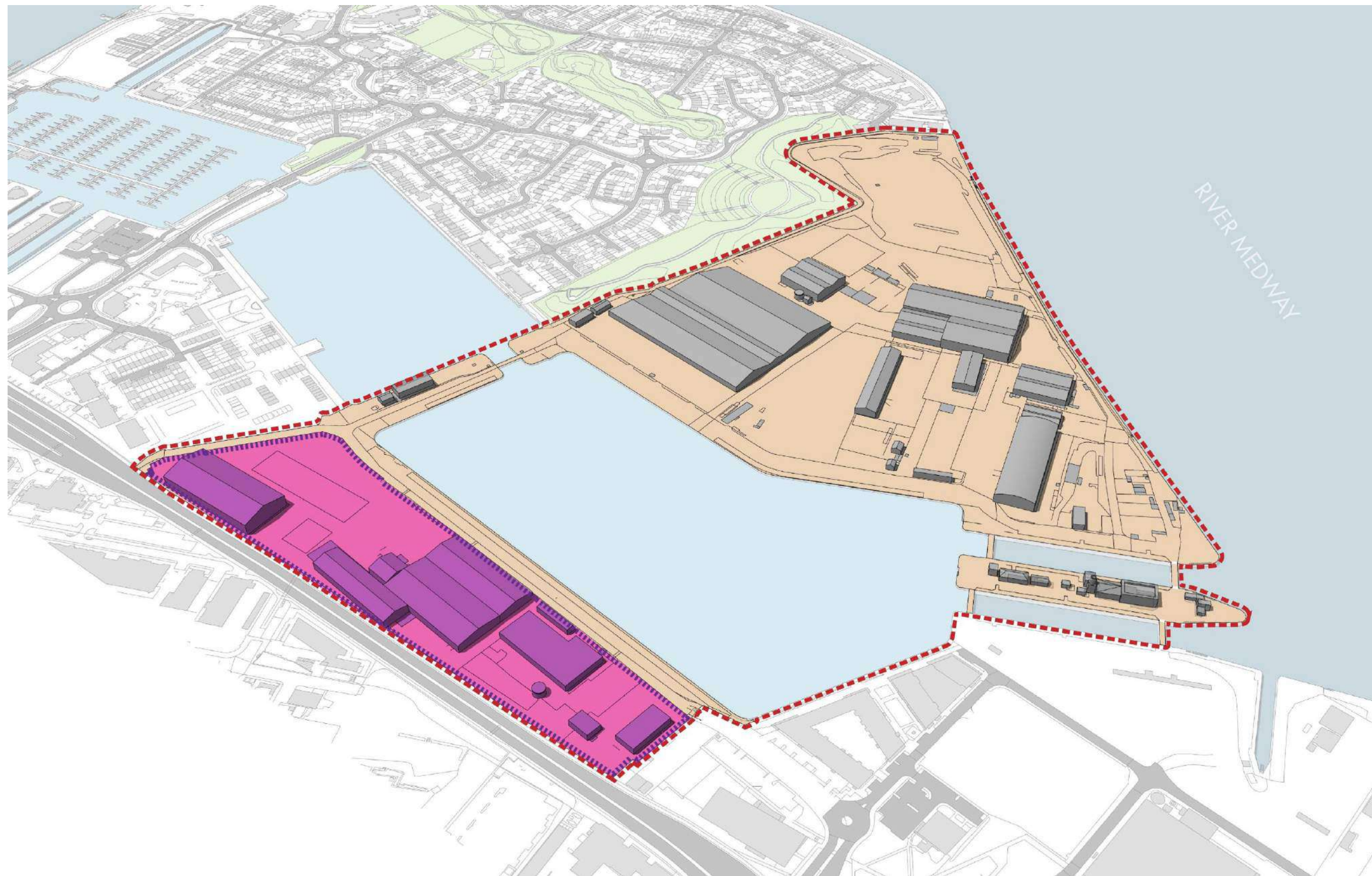


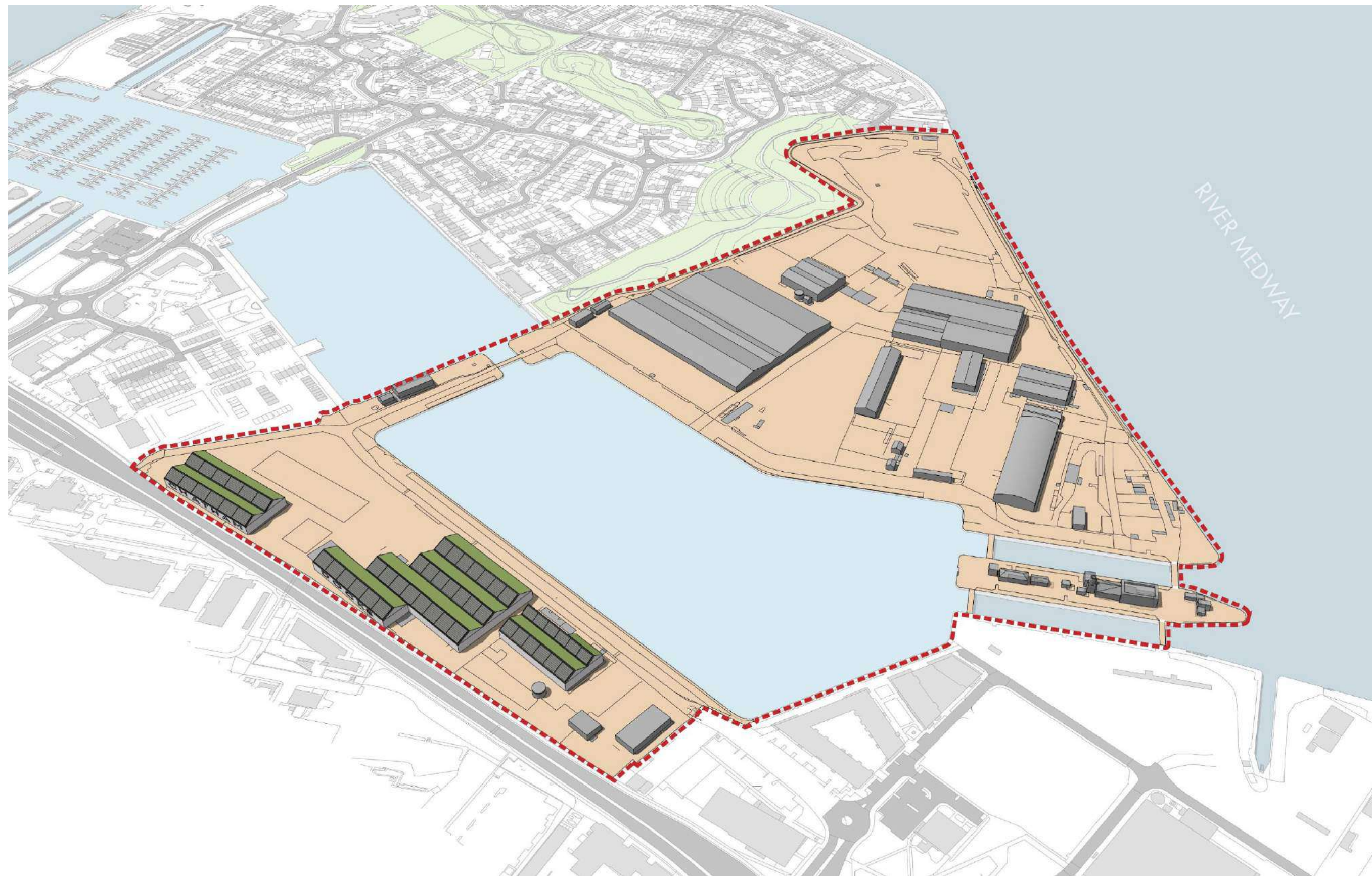


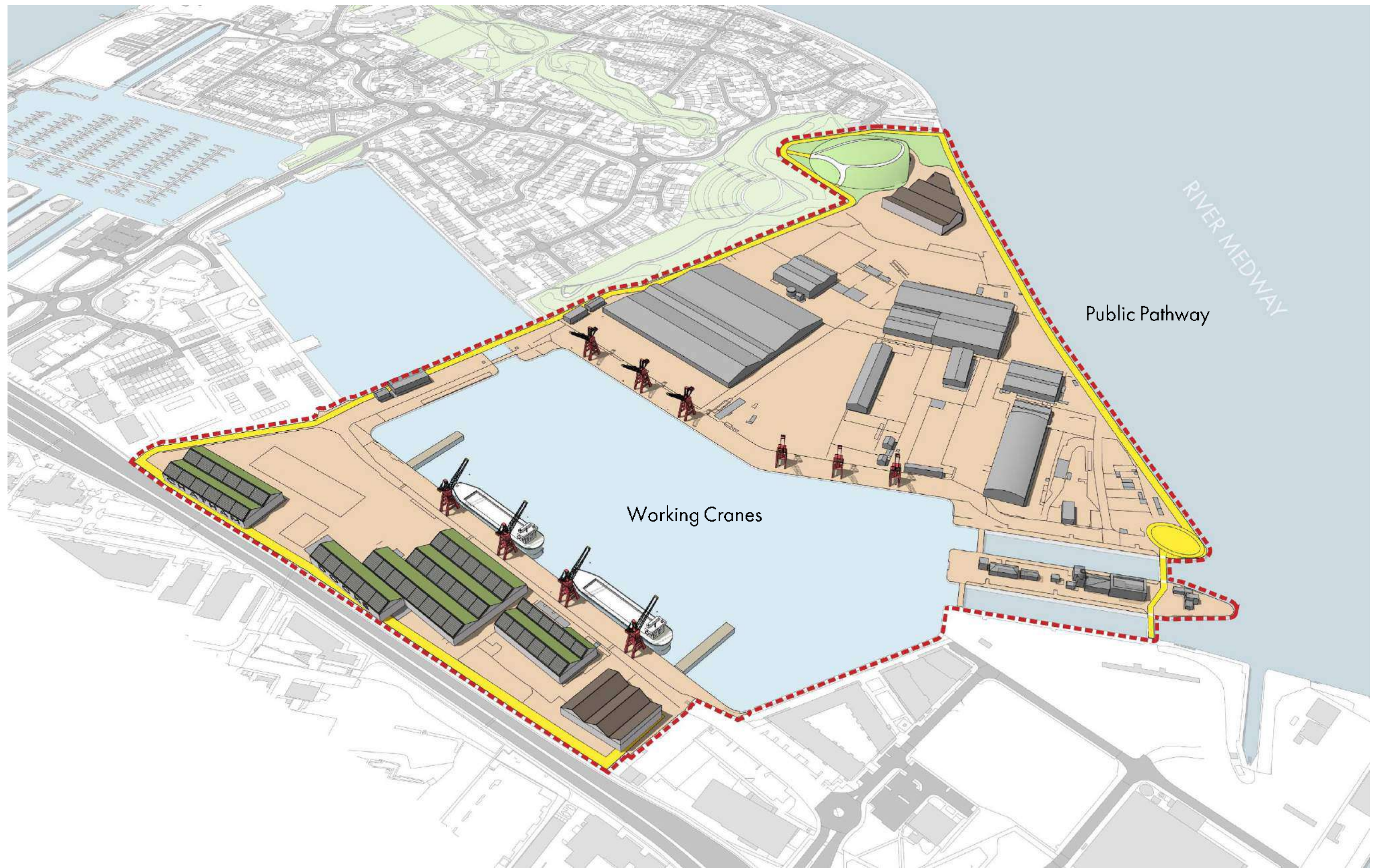
CHATHAM DOCKS

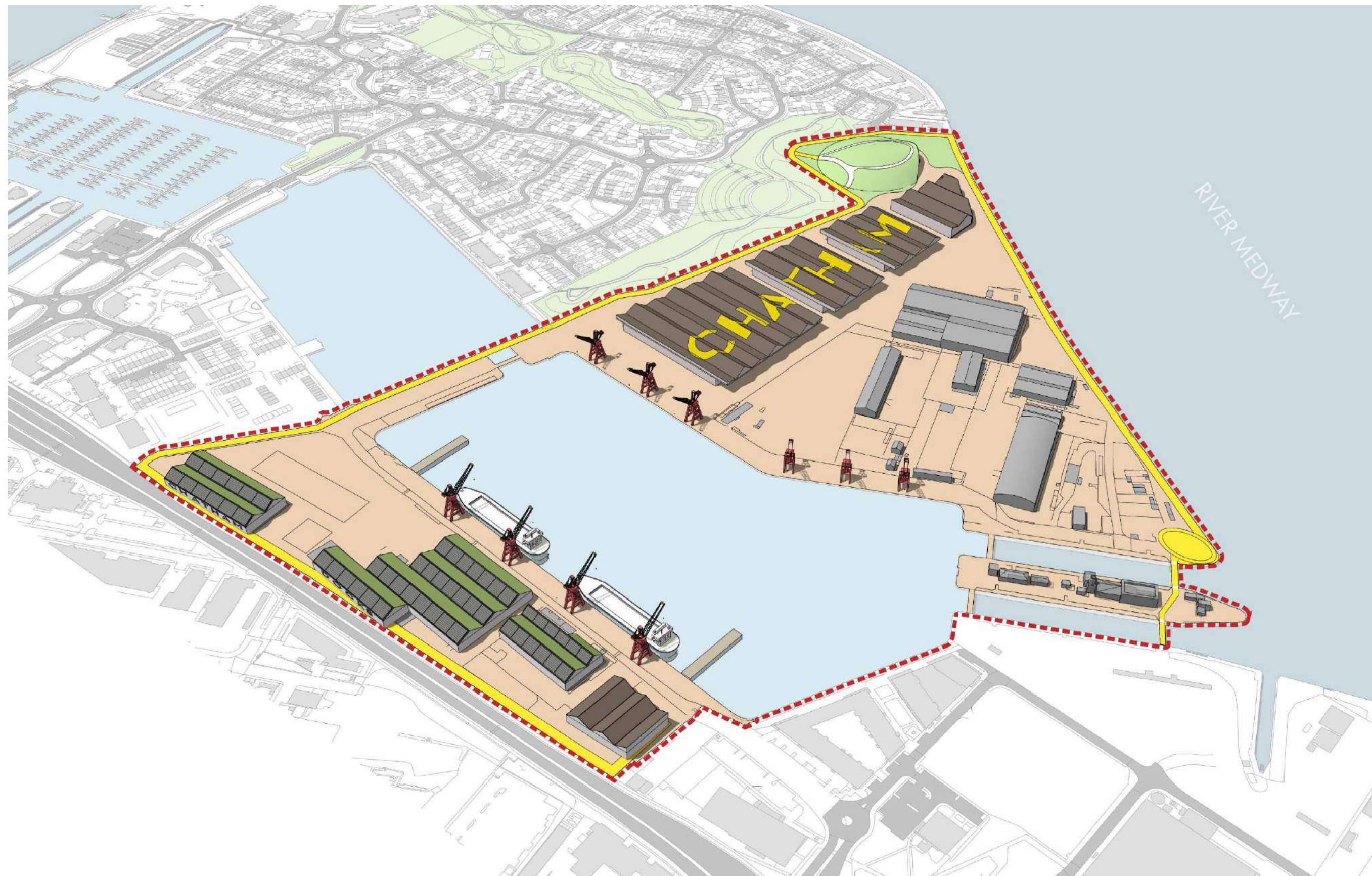
Deliverability

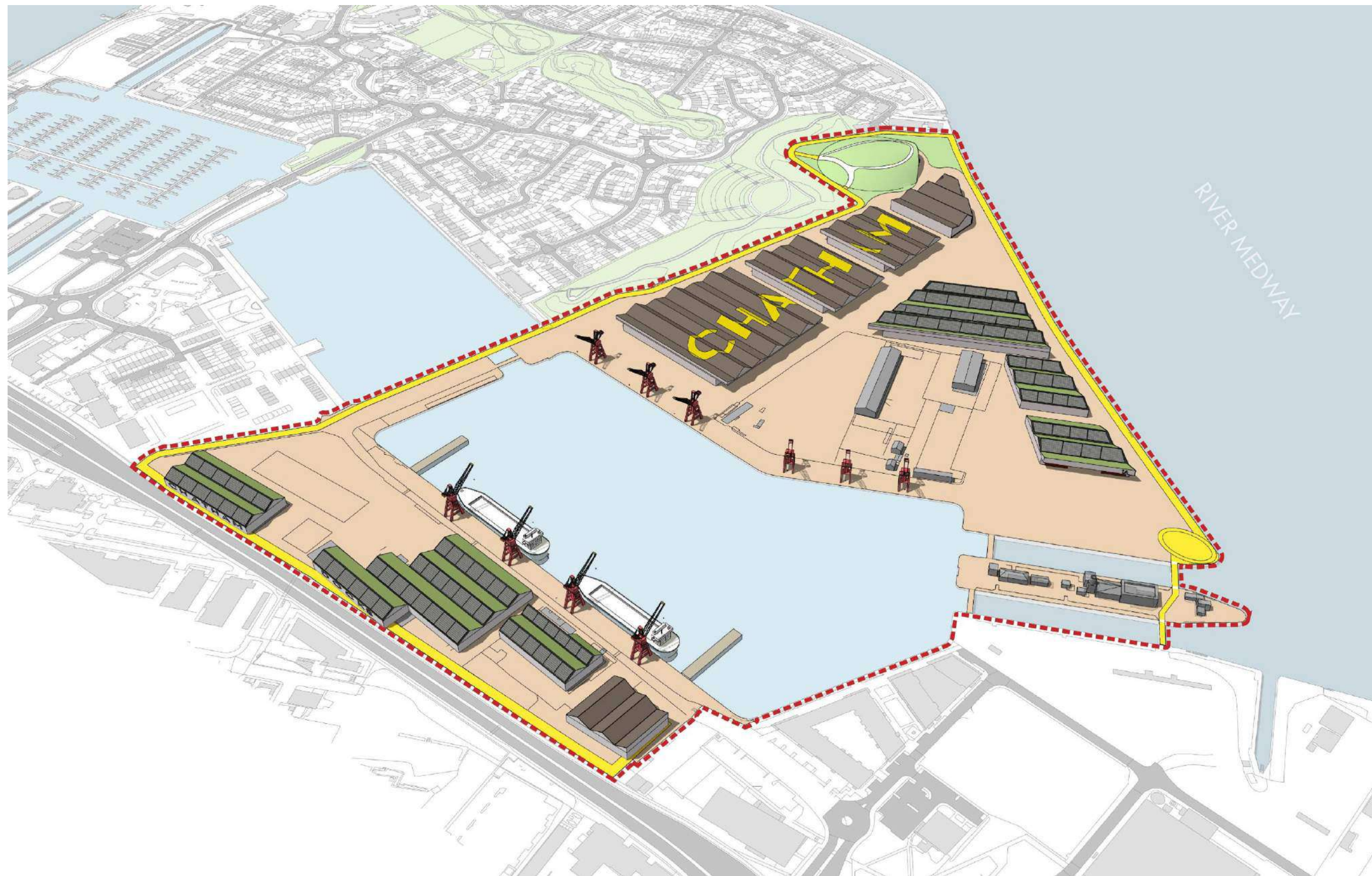


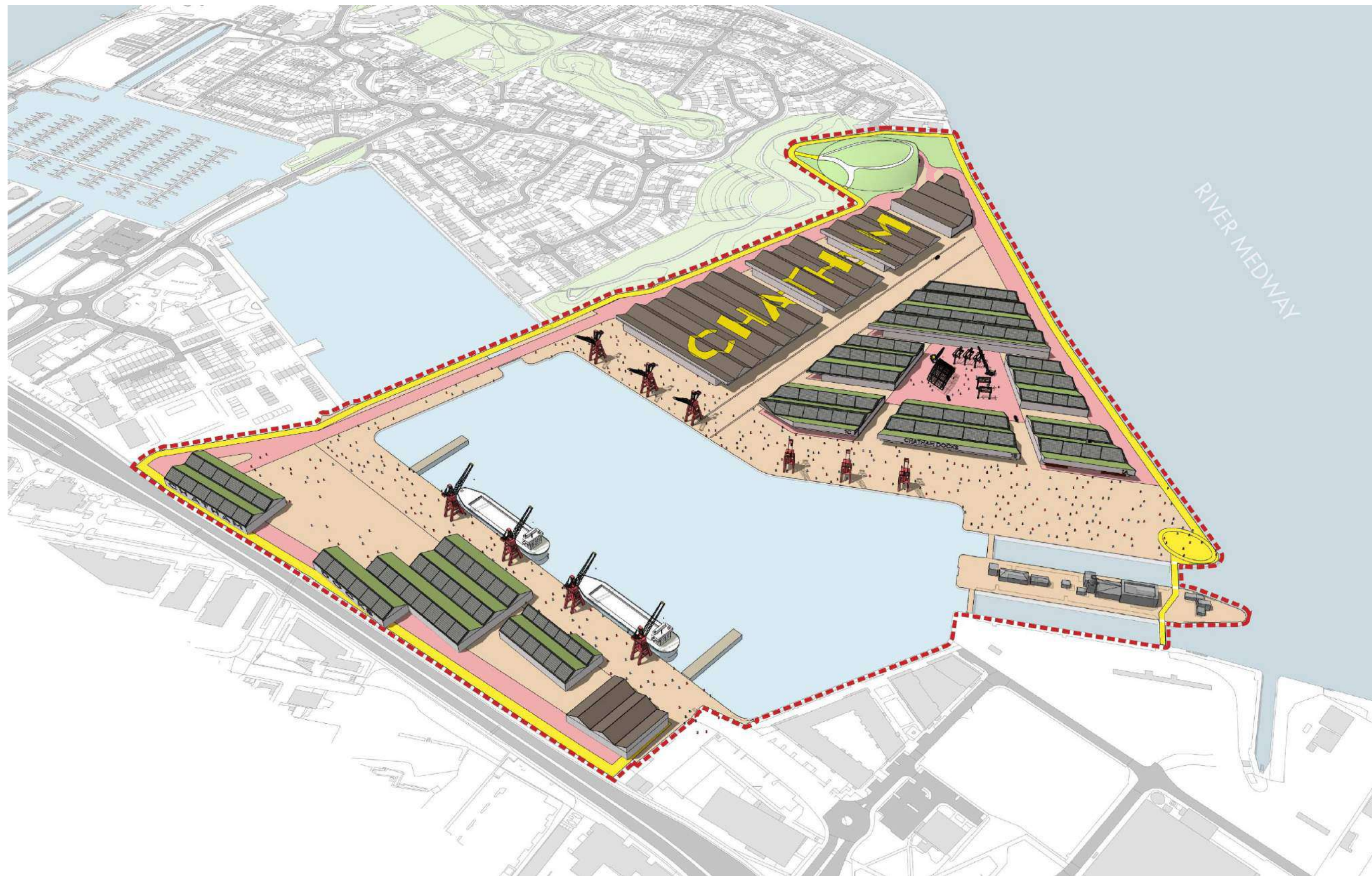












In Excess of **ONE**
million Sq/ft of
Employment Space
Created



Site Plan
Ground Floor Plan







PROPOSED AREA SCHEDULE		
BLOCK	Area	
	m ²	ft ²
Existing 1	4,637	49,913
Existing 2	9,944	107,037
D1	2,600	27,986
D2	2,823	30,387
A1	16,861	181,492
A2	9,800	105,487
A3	5,100	54,896
A4	4,419	47,566
B1	2,174	23,401
B2	3,572	38,449
B3	13,599	146,380
C1	4,609	49,611
C2	2,915	31,377
C3	3,309	35,618
E1	10,970	118,081
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	97,332	1,047,682



Mr Richard Hicks, CEO Medway Council,
Planning Policy,
Regeneration, Culture & Environment,
Medway Council,
Gun Wharf, Dock Road,
Chatham, Medway ME4 4TR



T: 01634 333111

By email: planning.policy@medway.gov.uk

17th September 2024

Dear Mr Hicks,

Medway Council Regulation 18 Local Plan Consultation Response to Questions 6, 36, 39, 40 and 43 on behalf of SEGAS Sailing Club.

Introduction:

SEGAS Sailing Club makes a valuable contribution towards the health and wellbeing of residents, provides a sport and leisure facility which is open to all, and enjoys the support and appreciation of the local community, local Ward Councillors and the local MP. We would be grateful if you could confirm Medway Council will take this Consultation response into account as it further develops and refines its 2041 Local Plan and apologise for the delay in sending it owing to holidays.

Consultation Response to Questions 6, 36, 39, 40 and 43:

Question 6

Has the draft Medway Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework identified the correct key issues and assets, and provide effective guidance for strengthening Medway's green infrastructure?

The National Planning Policy Framework must be considered in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. In the section on Plan-making: Strategic policies, paragraph 20 says: *'Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places (to ensure outcomes support beauty and placemaking), and make sufficient provision for: a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, **leisure** and other commercial development.....'*

The Medway Local Plan 2041 Regulation 18 Consultation Document says: under 2.3 Spatial Development Strategy (page 25). *'The development strategy for Medway prioritises regeneration, making the best use of previously developed land and directing investment to urban waterfront and centre opportunity areas.' The urban waterfront regeneration programme from Strood to north Gillingham will link to renewed centres and places.'*



However, waterfront regeneration can be a threat to existing waterfront leisure activities such as sailing, because residential development has a higher land value and can drive out existing community sporting and leisure facilities like the SEGAS Sailing Club which help contribute towards the creation of a truly sustainable community.

Under section 4.5 Landscape Protection and the Environment, the Consultation document says: (page 37) *‘4.5.2 Blue infrastructure in its many forms is an important feature of Medway. Water has determined the location of Medway’s towns, with water the driving force for the location of settlements and industry. Water has shaped, and continues to shape, the heritage and character of the landscape.’*

Policy S5: Securing Strong Green and Blue Infrastructure, says: *‘The Council will conserve and enhance the network of green and blue infrastructure across rural and urban Medway..... Opportunities will be sought to promote and enhance the public rights of way network, including national trails, long distance paths and the wider footpath network, bridleways and cycle routes, to address existing gaps in connectivity and extend appropriate access along the riverside, and other cross border links.’*

We would support this policy, particularly where it provides greater access to existing community sporting and recreation facilities, like the SEGAS Sailing Club. But the draft Medway Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework has not identified the correct key issues and assets, because it focuses on Green Infrastructure and barely mentions Blue Infrastructure at all.

SEGAS Sailing Club is located in Area 2 Wider Urban Medway, where the Framework lists 21 Priorities, of which only three even mention blue infrastructure and only one relates to the waterfront (the coastal path) – a key issue and asset.

- *Establish and promote the England Coast Path through this area.*
- *Deliver green and blue infrastructure improvements in the Chatham, Strood and Gillingham Town Centre Masterplans and incorporate more green and blue infrastructure into the public realm.*
- *Link with Medway’s Cultural Strategy – seeking cultural input into green and blue infrastructure regeneration projects.*

With greater shoreside access, there is huge opportunity for increased water-based tourism, and encourage people to visit by sea. Many foreign tourists already use the river to visit the Medway area arriving by boat from Holland, France and other places in the UK. The historic aspects of the river are a big draw to sailors as well as the public.



Indeed, the proposed increase in housing/population requires a commensurate increase in leisure and community facilities. There are currently several clubs and organisations accessing the river, like SEGAS Sailing Club, but there is limited access except through these and so an increase in public launch and landing sites would support the leisure activities of an increased population.

SEGAS Sailing Centre is also covered in the draft Medway Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework under Area 6 – River Medway. Here the top Priority for this Area is:

‘Place the river at the heart of Medway’s ambitious regeneration programme, sensitively regenerating the waterfront, creating improved access to and along the river and regenerating the town centres and public realm near the river.’

As explained earlier, an *‘ambitious regeneration programme’* will drive out existing land uses of community interest, like SEGAS Sailing Club. The Framework underestimates the value of the river both as a natural asset and as a leisure facility. Indeed, waterfront regeneration and residential development could create barriers to delivering the full leisure potential of the river – particularly where it threatens the existence of much-loved community water sports facilities.

Policy T13: Tourism, Culture & Visitor Accommodation says as *‘Medway grows over the plan period, our communities and visitors require improved and new community, cultural and creative facilities, public realm and open space, **leisure uses**, walkways and cycle routes, and visitor accommodation.’* *‘The potential to achieve greater value from the use of Medway’s River frontage is a key aspect of the Council’s regeneration and tourism aims.’*

We repeat, this cannot be achieved if existing sport and leisure facilities, like SEGAS Sailing Club are lost or diminished because of wider regeneration and private developer interests. Blue infrastructure is a valuable natural asset and in its new Local Plan, Medway Council should encourage more water-based sport and leisure facilities along the river which can contribute to the local economy and help create healthy, sustainable communities.

SEGAS Sailing Club is located on the banks of the River Medway. Naval history here dates back hundreds of years from the time of Alfred the Great, through to the burning of the British fleet by the Dutch in the 17th Century, the Napoleonic wars of the late 18th and early 19th centuries through two world wars to the present day. From here, naval, commercial and leisure craft have nosed their way out of the estuary into the wider world. That tradition continues today, from the mouth of our old coaling creek, where club users regularly sail into the chop of the North Sea. The creek has also seen club single handed sailors set off and return home from a circumnavigation.



Throughout this time, local residents have played a continuous role in the building of ships, the provision of skilled workers and artisans together with the seamen to serve in those vessels. The waterfront and the Sailing Club itself are much loved by the local community.

Reference to Medway's River Strategy study is missing both from the consultation and from the Local Plan. While we acknowledge the River Strategy is an advisory document only, the advice should be given due weight and consideration, given the river is a valuable resource and fine natural asset which should be protected and enhanced for the benefit and enjoyment of all.

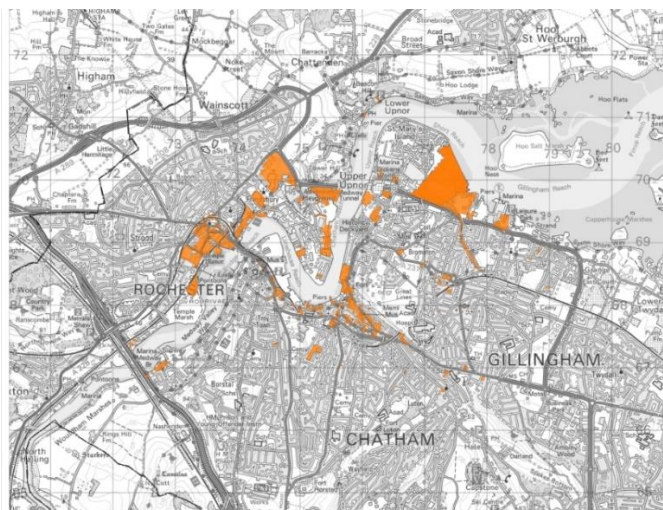
Finally, the Policies in the draft Medway Local Plan 2041 and the draft Medway Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework need to be properly aligned to give due weight and respect to the type of development that would genuinely create a healthy, active waterfront and to protect existing water-based sport and leisure provision.

Question 36

Are there any core health and wellbeing issues or opportunities missing from the policy?

Policy T27: Reducing Health Inequalities and Supporting Health and Wellbeing (Page 176), says: *'Promoting active and healthy lifestyles through the design of new development, including applying Active Design principles, improving the green and blue infrastructure network, enhancing the quality and accessibility of play and recreation opportunities, expanding the network of attractive walking, wheeling and cycling routes and public transport.'*

Again, we would wholly support this Policy, but it seems to be indirect contradiction with other Policies. For example, the Medway regeneration maps shown below include the land owned by SEGAS Sailing Club:



Title: Urban Regeneration Sites





The current 2003 Local Plan defines the Sailing Club as a Leisure area under Policy L13 and is part of a wider water-based leisure complex within the locality of The Strand, which is adjacent to an area designated under Policy 06, Proposed Open Space. The key policies state:

Policy L1 – Existing Leisure.

In order to maintain existing levels of provision, development which would result in the loss of leisure facilities will not be permitted unless it can be shown:

- (i) that similar or better replacement is made elsewhere within the same catchment area, which is well located in relation to the primary or secondary road network and is readily accessible by public transport, pedestrians, and cyclists; or
- (ii) that there is no longer a need for the facility, and it is unsuitable to an alternative leisure use; or
- (iii) that the site is located for other development in the local plan.

Policy L13 - Water Based Leisure.

The development of water-based leisure facilities along the river Medway will be permitted, subject to the following criteria:

- (i) there is no adverse effect on nature conservation interests; and
- (ii) there is adequate land-based access for pedestrians, cyclists, and road traffic; and
- (iii) it does not prejudice the amenity of local residents, adjoining uses or other users of the river Medway.

Medway's Regulation 18 Consultation document says '*Responses to earlier rounds of consultation on the emerging Local Plan called for greater recognition to be given to health in planning for Medway's future..... In line with the World Health Organisation's definition, health refers not just to the absence of disease but also. Wellbeing refers to wider purpose and meaning, life satisfaction and positive emotions and relationships.* '

It is vital that the existing provision of water -based sport and leisure facilities which contribute towards positive *physical, mental and social wellbeing*, like SEGAS Sailing Club, are maintained and supported within the new Medway Local Plan 2041, and that new facilities are developed in direct proportion to the growth in population and housing. Policies L1 and L13 should be 'saved' and retained within any future Medway Local Plan, and development which would result in the loss of leisure facilities should not be permitted.

These are core health and wellbeing issues and opportunities which are missing from the policy

Question 39

How can the local plan ensure that development is inclusive and accessible for all members of our community, including people with disabilities?



Medway's Regulation 18 Consultation document says '*Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair and systematic differences in health between different groups of people. Currently there are significant health inequalities across Medway. In our least well-off neighbourhoods, men are dying 10 years earlier than those in the most well-off. For women the life expectancy gap is 7 years, mainly due to circulatory disease, cancer and respiratory disease. Ill health is often concentrated in the most deprived areas, and Medway has 37 neighbourhoods ranked in the 20% most deprived areas nationally. Medway's population is also changing with implications for planning. The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 24% by 2040, with a particularly large increase of 55% in those aged 85+.*'

The Local Plan has a key role to play in reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing, but it cannot do this if existing, valued leisure facilities are lost in the process.

Medway's Regulation 18 Consultation document says 'In 2023 Medway Council conducted a Better Health Survey.....

*'Key themes across both surveys included a healthy environment, opportunities for **physical activity and social connections**, access to healthy and affordable food, and better access to health and care services.*

With the increasing proportions of older people and greater diversity in our communities there will also be challenges ahead to make sure that the needs of all are met..... ensure that residents have equal access to opportunities for good health and the factors that contribute to it such as employment, housing, and participation in community life.

*Health, social care, community, **sport and leisure facilities are important in enhancing people's quality of life**. They also perform wider health and wellbeing functions, helping to build inclusive communities, promoting healthy lifestyles and protecting green spaces for reflection and relaxation.'*

This statement should be expanded to include 'protecting blue spaces for reflection and relaxation' and again illustrates the Council does not afford the same value to blue spaces as to green spaces. Sailing is an activity that can be enjoyed by people of all ages. Indeed, the SEGAS Sailing Club has several octogenarian sailors who regularly sail into the North Sea.

Chapter 8 of the NPPF makes it clear that local planning authorities have a responsibility to promote healthy communities. It says that "*planning policies and decisions should...enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs*" and should "*take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing **for all***".

Gillingham Gas Works, sited on the river Medway gave access to coal barges via a purpose-built creek allowing for the unloading and processing of coal on site. With the coming of the



transition from coal to natural gas, production of gas on site ceased and a few local employees asked for permission to use this derelict land to store a few sailing dinghies. Next came a storage shed, followed shortly by the formation of a club. A Government Act requiring all large employers to provide Sports and Social facilities saw a larger Club House built and employees from all over the Southeast invited to join.

SEGAS Sailing Club has grown over 50 years. As well as sailing, motor boating, canoeing and paddleboarding, the club is a social centre echoes of the local charity, “Men with Sheds,” in this case, the sheds float. The club also has wild water swimming, with more than 50 members, art and yoga classes and a club drop in. Still with some of the original retired SGN members, (now aged over 80 years old), the club is very much used by residents and is currently merging with a local charity, Medway Watersports Center. In collaboration with this local charity, which operates from an adjacent site, the SEGAS Sailing Club’s complementary approach offers training and experience to schools and local youth at a cost and manner which makes it truly accessible.

The local plan can ensure that development is inclusive and accessible for all members of our community, including people with disabilities, partly by protecting existing all-age sports and leisure facilities like SEGAS Sailing Club, so they are not lost in the rush to ‘regenerate’ waterfront areas.

Question 40: The designation of land as Local Green Space allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably proximity to the community it serves; b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land. Please use the online map to identify a green area for consideration as designated Local Green Space.

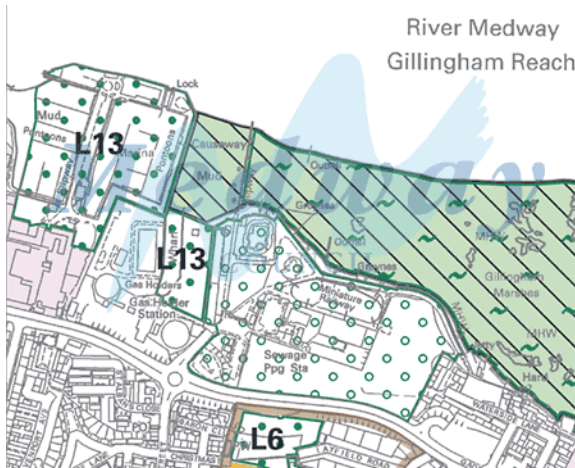
While we do not have any proposals for the designation of land as Local Green Space, we do propose that valuable waterfront assets like SEGAS Sailing Club are protected by designations of Open Space.

National planning policy defines open space as *‘all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.’*



Medway's Regulation 18 Consultation document says *'Alongside the provision of new open spaces, it is important that existing publicly accessible open spaces are protected for future generations. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, is protected through national planning policy. Such areas should not be built on unless the site is surplus to requirements, equivalent or better facilities will be provided or the development is for alternative sports or recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss.'*

We propose that valuable waterfront assets like SEGAS Sailing Club are protected by designations of Open Space and propose those areas currently covered by Policies L13 are also designated as Open Space, to protect them from development. The areas are shown in the map below:



The last two years have seen:

- The Royal Engineers Yacht Club being evicted from its site in Chatham Dockyard.
- Allhallows Y.C. Closure. /www.kentonline.co.uk/medway/news/yacht-club-founded-in-1964-closes-295187/
- Gillingham Marina closure of Chandlers/ Yacht Brokers / Workshops for re-development. The nearest major boat indoor repair facilities are now in Suffolk
- SEGAS Sailing Club threatened with closure by reduction in site of 90%

Additional protection is afforded by Paragraph 70 of the National Planning Policy Framework which specifies that planning decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.

"70. To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:



- *plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments,*
- *guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs,*
- *ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community,*
- *ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services."*

Finally, as explained earlier, in NPPF para.74 it is provided that 'open space should not be built on unless clearly shown to be surplus to requirements. Failure to comply can result in the quashing of any planning permission in breach of this policy.'

Question 43

Align infrastructure provision in line with this growth – how can we balance growth and new infrastructure requirements with funding gap?

The provision and protection of blue and green infrastructure is vitally important and, as stated in the section on Delivery on the draft Medway Blue & Green Infrastructure Framework, it can only really be achieved through partnership working. The Framework says:

'Delivering this strategy will require partnerships between many organisations and individuals and across many Medway Council teams.....

The aims in this strategy are not all within the remit of Medway Council to deliver but are considered important in order to set out an ambition for Medway. They will require funding, which will also entail working with partners, local communities and developers to secure; and new and innovative ways of working. Local communities, schools, universities, community organisations and individuals all have an important role to play in improving green and blue infrastructure.

To achieve many of the objectives in this strategy requires partnership working, not only between local authorities and organisations, but with local communities as well.....'

Delivering the provision and protection of blue and green infrastructure can be delivered in partnership working and through grant funding, for example a Press release in October 2023 announced "The National Lottery Heritage Fund started a 10-year journey with Medway Council that will transform the area's heritage. Medway is one of the first nine places to benefit from a share of £200m targeted to unlock the potential of their heritage."



Medway Council chose the Strand Leisure Park for its bid and the SEGAS Sailing Club was invited onto the Task Group to play a critical role in the preparation of the funding bid.

Delivering the provision and protection of blue and green infrastructure can also be achieved, in part, through scheduling Assets of Community Value (ACV), like SEGAS Sailing Club, which has 50 years' established leisure use and is in deprived area of Medway. The Sailing club has support from local Councillors to be retained as a community facility and is part of a wider leisure complex within the area.

The concept of ACVs was introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and given effect by the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012 in September 2012. ACV registration applies to a piece of land or building which is deemed to have community value either now or in its recent past, which furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community. This includes cultural, sporting, or recreational interests. To qualify as an ACV, the building or land must '*in the opinion of the authority*' have an actual current use that furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community (which could be cultural, sporting or recreational) and it is realistic that this use of the property will continue. The SEGAS site is registered as a 'successful application' in the Medway Register of Assets of Community Value. It was registered on 20th April 2023 (ref: MPL0022440.) The reason for listing states:

'The Council considered that the application and supporting evidence demonstrates that the use of SEGAS Sailing Club furthers the social wellbeing and social interest of the local community, and it was realistic to think that it could continue to do so within the next five years.'

'The Council reached that conclusion on balance because the application showed that the club current use furthers the social interest or social wellbeing to the local community albeit that it is largely limited to those who become members of the club there is also community use of the facilities on organised event days and overall, the application met the criteria as set out in S88 (1) of the Localism Act 2011. Accordingly, the group has demonstrated that the land furthers the social wellbeing and social interests of the local community.'

In October 2012, the Department for Communities and Local Government issued some non-statutory guidance for local authorities, suggesting the listing of a property as an ACV could be a *material consideration* in determining a planning application for a change of use.

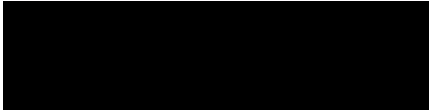
There is no doubt that ACVs like SEGAS Sailing Club, which are maintained, used and cherished by the local community can help align infrastructure provision in line with the growth planned in the draft Medway Local Plan 2041, and can also help balance growth and new infrastructure requirements – despite the funding gap.



Conclusion:

We hope you find this consultation feedback helpful. SEGAS Sailing Club is keen to make a positive contribution to Medway Council's work, as it further develops and refines its 2041 Local Plan.

Yours sincerely,



Valerie Owen OBE
BSc, BArch, RIBA, DipTP, MTRPI, MRICS, ACI Arb, CEnv, FRSA
for Le Vaillant Owen

MEDWAY LOCAL PLAN 2041 - EXHIBITIONS COMMENTS FORM

Your Name:

Contact Details (Email/Address):

Rochester Airport hauled.

The council is consulting on potential options for development and policies, as part of our work on a new Local Plan for Medway. Your comments will help us to prepare our draft Local Plan that will be published in 2025. We will record your comments and hold your contact details as part of our work on the Local Plan.

You can view more information on our website at: medway.gov.uk/FutureMedway and make detailed comments online. You can also see how we use your details in this work on the Local Plan.

What are the key issues that you want the plan to address, and how?	<p>Re look at Chatham Docks. Try to retain the Vibrant docks and workforce. Once this facility has gone it will never return. Rochester Airport is mentioned. "Thank you". However I think the council are missing a significant asset. Rochester Airport can unlock many opportunities for Medway and the surrounding area. Being part of the strategic Airport network its significance should not be ignored. Most areas that can boost an Airport benefit from having an airport.</p>
Which of the growth options do you prefer and why?	<p>Option 3 with modifications as with all these plans it's a balancing act.</p>
What are the most important issues for you in planning new developments?	<p>Infrastructure - Road network is not working now. How can it support more? - Medical Centers - Hospitals - Schools - Water Supply All of the above need road infrastructure.</p>
Do you have any wider comments on the plan?	<p>Nothing mentioned about the additional burden on our Roads re New Tunnel crossing the Thames + The Big Current issue around Blue Bell Hill Both these are significant threats to Medway.</p>

Please hand back this completed form to staff at the event, or contact us at:
 Planning Policy Team, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR
 Email: planning.policy@medway.gov.uk Telephone: 01634 331629