
MATTER 2: VISION, SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Stantec is instructed by Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land to prepare and submit a Hearing Statement towards the Medway Local Plan in relation to Land West of Hoo, proposed to be allocated for development in Policy SA8 (site ref: HHH8).
2. This hearing statement expands on issues raised in representations submitted to the Regulation 19 consultation by Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land (ref: E181) and the Hoo Consortium (ref: E184) that included Taylor Wimpey at that time. For clarity, in 2025 Taylor Wimpey withdrew from the Hoo Consortium.
3. For context to the ongoing application and appeal on the Site, the planning application (ref: MC/24/2022) was validated in October 2024. Taylor Wimpey submitted an appeal (ref: 6004418) against non-determination and the appeal start date was 18th February 2026. An Inquiry took place in late June and early July 2026, and the appeal decision is currently awaited.
4. This Hearing Statement relates to Matter 2: Vision, Spatial Development Strategy and Strategic Objectives. Taylor Wimpey have expressed their intention to participate in the Hearing Sessions for this topic in support of the allocation of the Site.

The Vision of the Plan

Q2.1 How does the Vision for the Plan express the long-term ambitions for Medway up to 2041?

5. Taylor Wimpey supports the vision in the Local Plan which states: “Housing and economic development needs have been met in full, supported by appropriately phased infrastructure.”.
6. As addressed in our earlier submissions a Regulation 19 stage and as we will address through further hearing statements, it is critical that the Local Plan is supported by evidence to justify the infrastructure requirements and demonstrate that development needs can be met i.e. delivered, having regard to viability.

Q2.4 What are the key factors that informed and shaped the selection of the spatial development strategy of the Plan over other reasonable approaches?

Q2.5 How does the Plan set out the reasons and justification for selecting the preferred spatial development strategy?

Q2.6 How does the spatial development strategy respond to the key constraints and opportunities across Medway and how is this reflected in policy requirements?

7. Taylor Wimpey notes the broad objective within the Local Plan to pursue a 'brownfield first' approach. We acknowledge that prioritising brownfield and previously developed land is supported in national policy and provides an appropriate starting point for determining the most sustainable pattern of development. Positively, the Local Plan acknowledges that development needs cannot be met in full without allocating a significant amount of land outside existing settlement boundaries in sustainable locations, including Land West of Hoo.
8. The availability, capacity and deliverability of brownfield land must be realistically assessed against Medway's housing requirements over the plan period. The key consideration is therefore whether sufficient suitable and deliverable brownfield land exists to meet the identified housing and other development needs. Where there are insufficient brownfield and urban regeneration opportunities to meet identified need, the release of appropriate greenfield land is both necessary and consistent with national policy.
9. A strategy which seeks to restrict development to brownfield land where this cannot accommodate the required level of growth would risk failing to meet Medway's housing needs and would not represent a sustainable or effective approach to plan-making. The spatial strategy must instead strike an appropriate balance between maximising brownfield opportunities and identifying sufficient greenfield land to meet the housing requirement in full. Where a greenfield location can accommodate development sustainably and provide the infrastructure necessary to support new and existing communities, it can make an important contribution to meeting the residual housing requirement.

-
10. The Hoo Peninsula is particularly relevant in this regard. It provides a significant opportunity to accommodate strategic growth at a scale which cannot readily be replicated through the incremental redevelopment of brownfield land within Medway's existing urban areas, or other locations outside of the urban areas in Medway. Strategic growth at the Hoo Peninsula provides opportunities for a significant number of new market and affordable homes (with the potential for delivery early in the plan period), schools, new and enhanced community facilities, employment, open space, improvements to transport infrastructure, and sustainable transport connections.

Q2.9 How does the Plan ensure that the strategic objectives are capable of being delivered within the Plan period?

11. Taylor Wimpey considers that the Local Plan needs to provide greater certainty that its strategic objectives are capable of being delivered within the plan period. This requires more than identifying objectives at the front of the plan. There should be a clear and effective policy framework which translates those objectives into specific, justified and deliverable requirements.
12. The Local Plan does not appear to contain a clear overarching or strategic policy which identifies the key development objectives which the plan is seeking to meet and to establish the scale of growth required and to be delivered. In particular, there is no clear strategic policy which sets out the housing requirement with a clear explanation how the plan intends on meeting and distributing that requirement. This weakens the relationship between the plan's strategic objectives, its spatial strategy and the detailed policies and allocations that seek to meet these objectives.
13. The front-end of the plan provides explanatory text in which the strategic objectives are dispersed throughout but it lacks a strategic policy to clearly identify those objectives. For example, there is no strategic policy which refers to the identified need for housing or sets the overall housing requirement across the plan period. This raises questions around how decision making should be undertaken and how delivery will be monitored and secured. Therefore, there is a need to clearly distinguish between strategic objectives and policy requirements.
14. Greater certainty at the plan-making stage is important to developer confidence. Where developers cannot reasonably establish the policy requirements and associated costs that will apply to a site, this can increase development risk, delay the progression of schemes and, ultimately, undermine the delivery of the housing and other development that the plan's strategic objectives are intended to achieve.

-
15. Taylor Wimpey considers that this issue is particularly important for the Local Plan's strategic allocations and other larger development sites, where substantial upfront investment is required and where delivery is dependent upon a clear understanding of infrastructure, environmental, design and other policy requirements. This is particularly important given the Plan's reliance upon a combination of urban regeneration, suburban development and strategic growth on the Hoo Peninsula.
16. Taylor Wimpey therefore considers that modifications may be necessary to ensure that the Local Plan provides a clear, effective and deliverable framework for achieving its strategic objectives within the plan period. This can be achieved through the inclusion of detailed policies that are sufficiently precise to provide certainty to those responsible for delivering the development required to meet the objectives in the Local Plan.

Strategic Objectives

Q2.10: The Plan sets out that the spatial distribution of new development within Medway is circa. 40% urban regeneration; circa 30% suburban and circa 30% rural (mainly on the Hoo Peninsula). Please could the Council explain, with reference to the evidence submitted, how and why this spatial distribution is the most sustainable, deliverable and therefore appropriate approach to the delivery of new development during the Plan period.

17. Taylor Wimpey supports the spatial distribution in identifying new development in Medway at 40% urban regeneration; circa 30% suburban and circa 30% rural (mainly on the Hoo Peninsula). Based on Stantec's review of the evidence submitted, the assessment of spatial distribution options is presented in the Regulation 19 Sustainability Appraisal Report (Volume 2, principally Tables 5.5 and 5.6) (ref:A3.2) and the Council's Site Selection Topic Paper (ref: B22.1, noting sections 2.4 and 2.5).
18. It is considered that the Hoo Peninsula can accommodate the scale of the development proposed in the Local Plan and are locations that are or can be made sustainable. This includes Land West of Hoo which Taylor Wimpey is promoting and seeking to deliver early in the plan period up to 450 new homes, employment, community facilities, strategic open space, and contributions towards strategic transport and other infrastructure in the area.