

Medway Local Plan: EIP Hearings

Response to Questions

Reg 20 Submission ID: E.47

INSPECTORS' MATTER 7 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Policy SI2: New Employment Sites

Q7.19 How were the proposed new employment sites selected, and why are they considered the most appropriate locations when compared with reasonable alternatives?

- I.1 Esquire Developments has a commercial interest in allocation HHH19 at Deangate Retail Park (Flanders Farm) which it promoted through the Council's Call for Sites and is included in the Council's Land Availability Assessment (ID: B1, page 400) and also confirms the Site to be unconstrained.
- I.2 The Local Plan (ID: A1) proposes significant growth on the Peninsula (circa 5,600 homes). To accommodate its sustainable expansion, there is a significant case for the Local Plan to secure new employment provision on the Peninsula (B13 - Retail & Town Centre Study, 2025), to go hand in hand with housing delivery.
- I.3 The delivery of such sites as HHH19 will secure new employment opportunities that will support the Peninsula to function without reliance on Strood, Rochester or Gravesend, which require travel by car and use of the Four Elms Hill. The Local Plan identifies unsustainable travel patterns from the Peninsula, which exacerbate congestion and contributes to poor air quality on Four Elms Hill, a designated air quality management area (ID: A3.2 - Sustainability Appraisal - Vol 2). Therefore, the strategy and allocation of employment uses on the Peninsula seeks to provide for sustainable growth, which reduces car use and congestion, while achieving air quality improvements.
- I.4 This supports Local Plan's spatial strategy to meet Medway's development needs in full while prioritising sustainable growth, reducing the need to travel and to provide a good range of services in Hoo St Werburgh.
- I.5 Further, the commercial uses proposed at HHH19 serve to meet the identified employment floorspace needs for Medway for a minimum of 204,000sqm of industrial floorspace (ID: B12 - Employment Land Needs Assessment).

- 1.6 A number of permissions have already been granted on the Peninsula, including at High Halstow (Site HHH26) and Hoo (Site HH11 and Appeal pending at Site HHH8). Esquire Developments also forms part of the wider Consortium (subject to separate representations) delivering the remaining strategic allocations on the Peninsula, including applications currently in preparation (Site HHH6).
- 1.7 Significant housing development is therefore already coming forward and the delivery of Site HHH19 (which also delivers significant retail floorspace) will ensure employment provision comes alongside housing. It will also add to the diversity of floorspace available, complimenting existing/permitted employment sites on the Peninsula such as Medwayone (Site HHH36)
- 1.8 The allocation of the Site by Medway has been informed by consultation with Esquire Developments in the preparation of the Plan to ensure that the Site and its proposed allocation is commercially deliverable.

Q7.20 What evidence demonstrates that the proposed employment allocations are deliverable, including landowner support, market demand, infrastructure provision and the absence of significant constraints?

- 1.9 As set out in response to Q:19, Esquire Development's promoted Site HHH19 through the Council's call for sites and is reflected in its Land Availability Assessment (ID: B1) confirming the Site to be "suitable", "available" and "achievable" for employment within the first five years of the Local Plan. In doing so, it confirms the Site is not constrained.
- 1.10 The Site has been promoted through the progression of the Local Plan and engagement with the Council, to ensure the allocation responds to market demand including future demand as a result of the planned expansion on the Peninsula. To meet the demand early in the Plan period, a planning application is being prepared for submission at the end of the year.
- 1.11 The allocation is not preclusive of delivery through infrastructure requirements beyond those detailed in the policy allocating the Site (Policy SA8 and SA14) and would therefore not impact the viability of the development and are deliverable as part of any future planning application.
- 1.12 The delivery of the Site (includes retail and employment uses) will make a significant contribution to the Local Plan's Strategic Objectives (ID: A1, Section 2.2) and enable sustainable growth on the Hoo Peninsula.

Q7.21 How has the Council ensured that the infrastructure necessary to support the new employment sites, including transport, utilities and digital connectivity, will be delivered in a timely manner?

- I.13 Site HHH19 accessed via Peninsula Way and has ready access to utilities and digital connectivity, which are not considered to be a constraint to the delivery of the Site.
- I.14 The employment sites, specifically HHH19 has been modelled in the Council's Transport Modelling (BI8.1, Table 9-3) thus ensuring that it has been accounted for in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (ID: B2) and as such highway infrastructure is not considered to be a constraint to development. As set out in response to Question 7.19, the delivery of site HHH19 will also contribute to reducing more broad impacts of development on highway infrastructure by providing local employment opportunities assisting with the internalisation of traffic movements on the peninsula.
- I.15 The Site is not reliant on other infrastructure delivering delivered and can be delivered early within the Plan period (as confirmed in response to Q7.20) to support the significant permitted and planned development on the Peninsula, which is also driving market demand in this location.