

Medway Council 2022
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2022-11-25

Dear Sir/Madam,

Future Hoo – draft Development Framework

Railfuture is Britain's leading and longest-established national independent voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passengers, and freight users, to support economic (housing and productivity) growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities. We seek to influence decision makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in development and transport planning.

We set out below our response to the public consultation closing today.

Vision

Q1a. To what extent do you agree / disagree with the proposed vision?

- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q1b. Please explain your answer to Q1a:

The proposed vision broadly reflects the scale of the ambition and transformation required over the next quarter-century.

Key principles

1. Landscape-led development
2. Accessible and well-connected settlements
3. Vibrant and sustainable communities
4. Attractive and tailored built form

Q2. Please tell us what you think about any aspect of the proposed key principles.

Our particular focus is on the practical application of principle 2, and its impact on principle 3. We are concerned that the short-term limitation of the Housing Infrastructure Fund allocation for rail is inhibiting the scale of intervention required to secure accessibility and sustainability at appropriate levels of quality and attractiveness for future residents, business and visitors.

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
www.railwatch.org.uk

Overall Framework Plan

Q3a. To what extent do you agree / disagree with the Overall Framework Plan?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q3b. Please explain your answer to Q3a:

While a new passenger rail station is essential, the level of service and choice of destinations which it offers will be fundamental for meeting the travel needs of the community most sustainably.

Neighbourhoods

Q4. Please tell us what you think about any aspect of the proposed neighbourhoods. We endorse the narrative for the 'East of Hoo St. Werburgh' neighbourhood as the one adjacent to the proposed passenger railway station.

Any other comments

Q5. Do you have any other comments?

We compare the different rail transport outcomes between two similar-size new communities in different parts of the Thames Estuary. Barking Riverside has recently secured a new rail line extension and station served by a turn-up-and-go quarter-hourly service frequency, through the use of Grampian planning conditions and developer contributions. The Hoo Development Framework must in our view establish the pivotal role of rail as the transport mode of choice for incoming residents and businesses and as enabler of other key principles being secured. That policy commitment must then inform development management decisions and developer contributions, including innovative financial instruments such as land value capture – as pioneered on the freight-only Northumberland Line being upgraded for passenger use with six new stations – which can complement conventional planning agreements. New sources of finance independent of the national Exchequer can allow direct local partnerships to develop incrementally the full connectivity potential of the new transport asset. We are in a position to broker initial conversations.

Yours faithfully,

Roger Blake BA, MRTPI (Rtd), MTPS
Railfuture
Vice-Chairman, London & South East regional branch
Director for Infrastructure & Networks, national Board