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Planning Policy
Planning Services
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham, Kent
ME4 4TR

Our Reference: [REDACTED]

19 February 2024

Dear Sir / Madam

Hoo St Werburgh Neighbourhood Plan consultation

This submission is made on behalf of our client AC Goatham & Son in response to the Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Neighbourhood Plan document dated December 2023 and noted as Regulation 15 Version V4.8.

AC Goatham and Son supports the broad principle of planning for growth on the Hoo Peninsula. It supports the key principles of planning for new services, protecting and enhancing the environment.

As the largest topfruit (apple and pear) grower in the country, AC Goatham and Son are extremely proud of their Hoo heritage and the continued successful expansion of their third-generation business to feed the nation.

It is therefore pleasing to see the neighbourhood plans support toward new facilities for local food growing under Policy H008. However, we consider it pertinent to change the wording of Policy H008(10) from:

“Development should have no adverse impacts on allotments, orchards and other facilities for local food growing, and new facilities for local food growing will be supported”;

to:

“Development should have no adverse impact on allotments, orchards and other facilities for local food growing, and new facilities for local and national food growing and the development needed to complement this will be supported.”

We also note the criteria set out at Policy H008(11) that sets out:

“Development should not lead to the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land”.

Respectfully we think this should be amended to:

“Development should not lead to the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land unless it encourages investment in infrastructure that complements agricultural development or other public services”.

In addition to this, it may suitable to list AC Goatham and Son in the local business list at Page 20. If not by specifically by name and reference to being the largest topfruit grower in the country and a large local employer then perhaps as *“An agricultural packhouse and cold storage facility”*.

The reasons for the various suggested changes are so that it can be clearer that the Neighbourhood Plan provides the opportunity to support development that itself can encourage increased levels of investment in fruit production more widely, albeit that it could result in the loss of orchard or more versatile agricultural land in situ.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours faithfully

