

# Diversity impact assessment

<b>TITLE</b>
Medway Local Plan – Pre-Submission Regulation 19, June 2025
<b>DATE</b>
June 2025
<b>LEAD OFFICER.</b>
Catherine Smith, Head of Planning Policy
<b>1 Summary description of the proposed change</b>
What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation?
<p>The Medway Local Plan serves as the principal planning policy document for Medway, as part of the Council's Development Plan. Medway Council is preparing a new Local Plan to guide development and growth across the area up to 2041. On adoption this will replace the Medway Local Plan, 2003.</p> <p>This statutory plan aims to balance the need for housing, jobs and services with environmental protection and sustainable development. Once adopted, the updated Local Plan will provide a framework for future development and will be used to make decisions on planning applications in Medway. The new plan will allocate land for development across Medway, and update policies to protect the natural and historic environment, and support communities and the local economy.</p> <p>The preparation of the new Local Plan has involved extensive public consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, and collation of a wide ranging evidence base to inform the content of the new Local Plan.</p>
<b>2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment</b>
<p>E.g. Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user. E.g. Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile</p>
<p>This assessment has referred to the evidence base collated for the preparation of the Local Plan. This includes studies and assessments related to housing, employment, infrastructure, transport, and the environment. Key documents include the Local Housing Needs Assessment, 2025 (LHNA), which evaluates demographic trends and housing requirements, the Viability Assessment, which examines the economic feasibility of proposed developments and the Sustainability Appraisal, which is the process of informing and influencing the preparation of the development plan to optimise its sustainability performance. Additional evidence includes the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and Retail Needs Assessment Update (2025).</p> <p>The preparation of the new Local Plan has involved extensive public consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012. The most recent consultation concluded in</p>

# Diversity impact assessment

September 2024, with feedback helping shape the draft plan. Issues raised included access to services and housing suitable for different community sectors.

## 3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to:

Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

(insert Yes when there is an impact or No when there isn't)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	N	Y	Y
Disability	N	Y	Y
Gender reassignment	N	N	Y
Marriage/civil partnership	N	N	Y
Pregnancy/maternity	N	Y	Y
Race	N	Y	Y
Religion/belief	N	Y	Y
Sex	N	N	Y
Sexual orientation	N	N	Y
Care experience	N	Y	Y
Other (e.g. low income groups)	N	Y	Y

## 4 Summary of the likely impacts

Who will be affected?

# Diversity impact assessment

How will they be affected?

## Age

- Development focused on housing and nearby services that cater to the specific needs of older people and students will be supported (Policy T4: Supported Housing, Nursing Homes and Older Persons Accommodation, Policy T5: Student Accommodation, Policy T12: Learning and Skills Development, Policy T26: Accessibility Standards).
- Enhanced access to healthcare facilities will be supported (Policy T27: Reducing Health Inequalities and Supporting Health and Wellbeing)

## Disability

- Developments designed to meet the specific requirements of disabled individuals will be encouraged (Policy T4: Supported Housing, Nursing Homes and Older Persons Accommodation, Policy T26: Accessibility Standards).
- Expansion and improvement of educational facilities will be supported (Policy T12: Learning and Skills Development).
- Developments incorporating the maximum walking distances to bus stops, to benefit a wide range of people with differing levels of walking ability will be supported (Policy T26: Accessibility Standards).

## Gender Reassignment

- No identified impact.

## Marriage and Civil Partnership

- No identified impact.

## Pregnancy and Maternity

- Support for family-oriented housing and affordable housing will help ensure suitable accommodation for families (Policy T3: Affordable Housing).
- Expansion of educational facilities will be promoted to meet growing needs (Policy T12: Learning and Skills Development).
- Multi-use facilities that include spaces for physical activities will be encouraged (Policy T29: Community and Cultural Facilities, Policy T28: Existing Open Space and Playing Pitches, Policy DM21: New open space and playing pitches).
- Protection and enhancement of open spaces and playing fields will be prioritised (Policy T28: Existing Open Space and Playing Pitches, Policy DM21: New open space and playing pitches.)

## Race

- Development addressing the specific needs of Gypsies and Travellers will be supported (Policy T10: Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation).

## Religion

# Diversity impact assessment

- Delivery of sustainable infrastructure, including faith spaces, will be supported (Policy T29: Community and Cultural Facilities).
- Existing social and cultural infrastructure facilities will be prioritised for protection (Policy T29: Community and Cultural Facilities).

## **Sex**

- No identified impact.

## **Sexual Orientation**

- No identified impact.

## **Care Experience**

- Developments catering to the needs of disabled individuals will be encouraged (Policy T4: Supported Housing, Nursing Homes and Older Persons Accommodation).
- Improved provision of educational facilities will be supported (Policy T12: Learning and Skills Development).

## **Socio-Economic Disadvantage**

- Affordable housing on development sites will contribute to reducing social and economic inequalities (Policy T3: Affordable Housing).
- Developer contributions will support community benefits, including infrastructure improvements (Policy S24: Infrastructure Delivery).
- Employment and training opportunities for local residents will enhance skills and employability for socio-economically disadvantaged groups (Policy T12: Learning and Skills Development).

## **5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?**

What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?

Are there alternative providers?

Can demand for services be managed differently?

It is considered that the proposed Medway Local Plan 2041 provides for sustainable development and can improve equality of opportunity.

## **6 Action plan**

Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
N/A (see response to question 5)		

# Diversity impact assessment

## 7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be: to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate, consider alternatives, gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

The recommendation is to progress the Local Plan through the required process (Regulation 19), and towards independent examination and adoption.

## 8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that the recommendation can be implemented, sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned, the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

### Assistant Director

Mark Breathwick, Assistant Director, Culture and Community

### Date of authorisation

June 2025