Duty to Cooperate Statement Proposed Submission Document

Medway Council

Regulation 19 June 2025

Versions

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Appendices

Appendix A: Record of Engagement Activity

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and structure

- 1.1.1 This statement outlines how Medway Council ('the Council') has prepared the Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission Document (Regulation 19 Stage) in accordance with Duty to Cooperate (DtC) legislation. It sets out how and when, in the preparation of the document, the Council has engaged with representatives of identified DtC bodies that are prescribed in the relevant legislation.
- 1.1.2 This statement is a 'living document'; it will be updated as strategic planning matters evolve, or if new strategic planning matters arise, or if additional organisations need to be engaged prior to the submission of the Local Plan.
- 1.1.3 This statement will set out each strategic planning matter and the evidence base along with any actions, outcomes and ongoing cooperation. A record of all engagement activity is shown in the Appendix.

1.2 Legislation

- 1.2.1 The DtC was introduced by the Localism Act 2011, and is set out in section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities and county councils in England, and prescribed public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of local plans.
- 1.2.2 A strategic matter is defined as sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, including (in particular) sustainable development or use of land for or in connection with infrastructure that is strategic and has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas.
- 1.2.3 Other public bodies, in addition to local planning authorities, are subject to the DtC as set out in Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

1.3 Strategic context

1.3.1 Medway sits at the mouth of its great river on the north Kent estuarine coast, bordered by the Thames to the north and the Kent Downs to the south. The five historic towns linked by the A2 form a complex urban conurbation, which retains the distinct identities of the individual towns. The urban area is surrounded by a network of villages on the Hoo Peninsula and the Medway Valley, alongside marshes and mudflats, wooded hills, productive farmland and strategic energy and minerals operations built up around the wharves. Much of the countryside and estuary is of international importance for its environmental qualities, including designated Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty. Land to the west of Medway forms part of the London metropolitan Green Belt.

- 1.3.2 The River Medway is a key asset, providing a strong sense of place and identity. However, the river bisects the area and movement is constrained by four crossings. The severance caused by the river, established commuting flow patterns and travel behaviour, the legacy of post-war development designed for the car, generous car parking provision in dense employment areas and the existing public transport offer make for a challenging environment in which to accommodate Medway's development needs. Medway's location in north Kent gives rise to additional opportunities and challenges associated with wider growth in the Thames Estuary.
- 1.3.3 Medway Council is the local planning, transport, minerals and waste authority for the unitary authority area.
- 1.3.4 Medway's local housing need, as a direct output from the Standard Method, is 1,636 per annum.
- 1.3.5 The 2025 Employment Land Needs Assessment (ELNA) identified the following minimum need for employment floorspace:
 - 204,000 sqm of industrial floorspace.
 - 36,500 sqm of office floorspace.
- 1.3.6 Figure 1 shows the location of Medway in relation to neighbouring local planning authorities:



Figure 1: Location of Medway

1.4 Statement of common ground

- 1.4.1 A statement of common ground is a written record of agreements that have, or have not, been reached on key strategic matters, including the process for reaching agreements.
- 1.4.2 The Council anticipates the need to agree a final composite statement of common ground with the following strategic bodies:
 - Gravesham Borough Council;
 - Maidstone Borough Council;
 - Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council;
 - Swale Borough Council;
 - Kent County Council;
 - Environment Agency;
 - Natural England;
 - Historic England; and
 - National Highways.
- 1.4.3 An initial proposed composite statement of common ground has been prepared and will be updated throughout the plan-making process.

2 Housing Requirement

2.1 Overview

- Medway's local housing need is set out in the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA), dated February 2025.
- The LHNA found that Medway is a distinct housing market area with links to neighbouring authorities, particularly Swale and Maidstone, in terms of commuting and migration flows.
- Affordability ratios and dwelling stock figures have been released since February 2025. At the time of writing, as a direct output from the Standard Method, Medway's local housing need is 1,636 per annum, or 24,540 over the new plan period, i.e. 2026/27 to 2040/41.
- The relevant Planning Practice Guidance (PPF) states that the Standard Method output represents a minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in an area and that an authority can choose to pursue a higher figure where that is appropriate.
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the relevant PPG requires the disaggregation of the local housing need figure to assess the size, type and tenure of housing needed. The LHNA applied the long-term balancing housing markets model to determine the future demand for housing by size and tenure based on the profile of the population.
- The LHNA presented the size of owner-occupied accommodation required in Medway in 2041, in comparison to the size profile recorded in the sector at the start of the plan period. The LHNA found that of new owner-occupied housing 25.7% should have one bedroom, 26.1% two bedrooms, 16.5% three bedroom and 31.7% four or more bedrooms. The analysis was repeated for private rented, First Homes, Shared Ownership and Affordable Rented/Social Rented housing.
- The LHNA identified an overall requirement for 18.6% of housing to be Affordable Rented/Social Rented and 11.0% affordable home ownership, of which 5.6% could be Shared Ownership and 5.4% First Homes, would reflect the mix of housing that would best address the needs of the local population.
- Medway Council commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to provide a robust assessment of current and future need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in Medway. The contractor issued a letter, dated 11 June 2025, to Medway Council about the pitch needs for gypsies and travellers as:
 - 41 pitches for households that met the planning definition.
 - o up to 15 pitches for undetermined households.
- The GTTA identified the plot needs for travelling showpeople as:
 - o four plots for households that met the planning definition.
 - up to four plots for undetermined households.

- On the 12 June 2025, an application to convert a former park and ride site in Wigmore was granted on appeal by a planning inspector. Planning conditions limit occupation of the site 10 touring caravans.
- At the time of writing, a retrospective application to facilitate the extension of an existing gypsy and traveller site for an additional eight pitches at High Halstow is to be determined.
- Medway Council will explore the potential to provide more provision of its public site at Cuxton through intensification and/or expansion.
- In DtC meetings, Medway Council has consistently stated its intention to meet its housing requirement, subject to the emerging evidence base.
- The 'Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review 2021-38' was adopted in 2024, while Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and Swale Borough Council are at an early stage of local plan-making. Plan-making stages set out in a respective Local Development Scheme are similar for Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council.
- Gravesham Borough Council has maintained a longstanding request for Medway Council to accommodate an estimated unmet housing need of 2,000 homes through responses to consultations and during DtC meetings.
- Medway Council's Sustainability Appraisal (SA) included two reasonable alternative growth options that included Gravesham's calculation of unmet housing need. It is important to note that growth options without Gravesham's calculation of unmet housing need performed better in the SA.
- Medway Council's Land Availability Assessment demonstrates a sufficient housing land supply, with a buffer/surplus of 203 homes.

2.2 Evidence base

- Local Housing Needs Assessment
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Land Availability Assessment

2.3 Strategic bodies

- Gravesham Borough Council
- Maidstone Borough Council
- Swale Borough Council
- Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

2.4 Actions

- Medway Council requested further information from Gravesham Borough Council to demonstrate their calculation of unmet housing.
- Medway Council published GTAA in 2024.

2.5 Outcomes

- Medway Council has consistently stated its intention to meet its housing requirement, subject to the emerging evidence base.
- Medway Council has not received an assessment of land availability from Gravesham Borough Council, therefore two reasonable alternative growth options in the SA that included Gravesham's calculation of unmet housing need cannot be justified.
- No other requests to accommodate unmet housing need have been received through responses to consultations or during DtC meetings with other local planning authorities.

2.6 Ongoing cooperation

• Medway Council will arrange a DtC meeting with Gravesham Borough Council to conclude discussions about Gravesham's calculation of unmet need in Summer 2025.

3 Strategic Sites

3.1 Overview

- Medway Council, Gravesham Borough Council and Maidstone Borough Council have cooperated on land to the west of Strood and the Capstone Valley.
- Engagement with Gravesham Borough Council led to the reconsideration of three adjoining Green Belt sites in Medway to the west of Strood. These sites were subsequently deemed suitable, available and achievable in the LAA.
- By 2041, land to the west of Strood, together with Chapter Farm in the Gravesham borough, will comprise a cross-border sustainable location for up to 4,000 homes. It will also comprise two primary schools, a secondary school, employment land and a local centre. It will provide a transition between the urban edge of Strood and maintain the identity of the rural settlement of Three Crutches.
- It is important to note that the three sites in Medway, to the west of Stood, could come forward as independent developments, regardless of Gravesham Borough Council's emerging local plan, for 1,280 homes. Having consulted National Highways, this was a key factor in the consideration of Chapter Farm as a cross-border site allocation in Medway Council's Strategic Transport Assessment, which excluded the wider development in Gravesham. Gravesham Borough Council's equivalent assessment is being carried out by the same consultant.
- However, the collaborative approach of both authorities bringing forward their respective land parcels to deliver a sustainable location for growth provides the basis for demonstrating the exceptional circumstances for releasing land in the Green Belt.
- In recent years, development at East Hill and Gibraltar Farm both in the Capstone Valley – has been granted consent following planning appeals. More recently, the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2024 allocated land adjoining the Medway administrative area at Lidsing for mixed-use development, including 2,000 homes. Maidstone Borough Council is preparing a Lidsing Garden Settlement Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- Medway Council's Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan includes a site allocation policy for large-scale development in the Capstone Valley. By 2041, the Capstone Valley will comprise a sustainable urban extension of up to 3,958 new homes, a primary school, a secondary school and a local centre. The site allocation policy is supported by a concept plan, which includes the indicative layout for Lidsing.
- The concept plan shows multi-functional green infrastructure corridors extending across the areas of Medway and Maidstone.

- A new secondary school, which will be part-funded by the Lidsing Garden Settlement, is required early in the plan period. Abbotts Court Farm, which is owned by Medway Council, has been identified as the optimum site to accommodate a new secondary school, subject to compensation for the loss of development value.
- A new primary school, phased in the latter part of the plan period, is likely to be located within the Mill Fields site.
- Improvements to M2 junction 4 will be funded and delivered by the Lidsing Garden Settlement development.

3.2 Evidence base

- Land Availability Assessment
- Strategic Transport Assessment
- Interim Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Green Belt Review
- Landscape Character Assessment
- Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework
- Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy

3.3 Strategic bodies

- Gravesham Borough Council
- Maidstone Borough Council
- National Highways

3.4 Actions

- Both Gravesham Borough Council and Maidstone Borough Council responded to Medway Council's Regulation 18a (2023) and Regulation 18b (2024) consultations.
- Numerous, regular meetings have been held between representatives of Gravesham Borough Council and Medway Council, most recently to guide consultants appointed by Gravesham Borough Council on an emerging masterplan.
- Numerous, regular meetings have been held between representatives of Gravesham Borough Council and Medway Council, most recently to guide the Lidsing Garden Settlement SPD.
- Medway Council identified Abbotts Court Farm as the optimum site to accommodate a new secondary school, subject to compensation for the loss of development value.

3.5 Outcomes

• Improvements to M2 junction 4 will be funded and delivered by the Lidsing Garden Settlement development in the Maidstone borough. This

has helped to ensure development viability for sites in the Capstone Valley.

- A new primary school and a new secondary school will help to provide for future residents of Lidsing.
- Multi-functional green infrastructure corridors extending across the areas of Medway and Maidstone are more likely to deliver on the objectives of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

3.6 Ongoing cooperation

- Development proposals for land to the west of Strood, together with Chapter Farm in the Gravesham borough, will adhere to a landscape-led masterplan, to be approved by Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council.
- Gravesham Borough Council's traffic modelling, which is being carried out by the same consultant, may take the same approach as Medway Council, i.e. following advice from National Highways. In which case, Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council may consider commissioning traffic modelling of the full cross-border site of 4,000 homes to inform the mitigation scheme required for M2 Junction 1.
- Medway Council will consult Maidstone Borough Council in the applicant's preparation a green infrastructure strategy, an open space strategy and an approved masterplan for the Capstone Valley.
- Representatives from Medway Council will continue to attend Lidsing Garden Settlement SPD meetings.
- A representative from Medway Council will attend a weekly Lidsing SPD Transport Matters Meeting.
- Medway Council will respond to the Lidsing Garden Settlement SPD public consultation.

4 Green Belt

4.1 Overview

- The Metropolitan Green Belt terminates in the west of Medway, with less than five per cent of the Medway unitary authority area designated as Green Belt. Larger areas of contiguous Green Belt are located within the neighbouring boroughs of Gravesham and Tonbridge and Malling.
- Site promoters have submitted representations to all three authorities about cross-border sites, i.e. Chapter Farm (Gravesham) and Holborough Quarry (Tonbridge and Malling).
- Engagement with Gravesham Borough Council led to the reconsideration of three adjoining Green Belt sites in Medway to the west of Strood. Development on Gravesham land would compromise the ability or the remaining Medway Green Belt to perform its functions effectively. The prospect of a comprehensive site coming forward in this location would render this location more sustainable and better aligned to the Medway Local Plan. This provides the basis for justifying exceptional circumstances for the release of Green Belt land in this location.
- Medway Council has prepared a Green Belt Review and has identified most parcels of land to the west of Strood as Grey Belt land. Whilst these sites could come forward as individual proposals, there are more benefits from a comprehensive scheme. This provides the basis to justify exceptional circumstances and to deliver sustainable development with the supporting infrastructure.
- Medway Council and Gravesham BC officers have engaged in collaborative work, commissioning and progressing a masterplan to inform strategic site allocation policies for respective local plans. Further work is required to help bring this site forward through engagement with developers and preparation of a landscape-led masterplan which will be the basis for determining planning applications. Gravesham Borough Council is commissioning a Green Belt Review.

4.2 Evidence base

- Medway Green Belt Review (2025)
- Gravesham Stage 2 Green Belt Study (2020)
- Tonbridge and Malling Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment: Exceptional Circumstances (Strategic) Note (2022)

4.3 Strategic bodies

- Gravesham Borough Council
- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

4.4 Actions

- Both Gravesham Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council responded to Medway Council's Regulation 18a (2023) and Regulation 18b (2024) consultations.
- Planning officers worked collaboratively to commission Green Belt reviews, including a bid to secure funding.
- Planning officers worked collaboratively to commission a masterplan for the land to the west of Strood/Chapter Farm site.
- Planning officers from Medway Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council visited the Holborough Quarry site.

4.5 Outcomes

- The collaborative masterplanning work to inform both Medway's and Gravesham's policies has concluded.
- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council is undertaking a Green Belt review and a landscape character assessment. This work will assess land parcels promoted as a cross-border site with Medway.

4.6 Ongoing cooperation

• Development proposals for land to the west of Strood, together with Chapter Farm in the Gravesham borough, will adhere to a landscape-led masterplan, to be approved by Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council.

5 Natural Environment

5.1 Overview

- Medway has a rich and diverse natural environment, including areas designated of international and national significance for wildlife. These include the Medway and Thames estuaries and marshes Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites; the Kent Downs National Landscape, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National and Local Nature Reserves.
- Designated and non-designated habitats and landscapes are under pressure from a range of impacts, including climate change, urbanisation and recreation, and there are declines in biodiversity.
- The Council works in partnership across the county and sub-county geographies in developing and implementing policies and projects to conserve and enhance the natural environment. These include the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, North Kent Bird Wise and the Kent Downs National Landscape.
- In planning for a high level of development needs, the Local Plan has the potential to place additional pressure on the natural environment, but new policies can also help to support higher quality planning of green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity net gain in development.
- The Kent Downs National Landscape unit provides more detailed advice on National Landscape matters for Natural England.

5.2 Evidence base

- Landscape Character Assessment
- Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework
- Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Medway Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
- Medway Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- North Kent Bird Wise Strategy, Bird Disturbance Study and Visitor Survey
- Environment Agency Medway Estuary and Swale programme

5.3 Strategic bodies

- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Kent County Council
- Kent Downs National Landscape Unit

5.4 Actions

- The strategic bodies have responded to Medway Council's Regulation 18a (2023) and Regulation 18b (2024) consultations.
- The Environment Agency, Natural England and the Kent Downs National Landscape unit have provided advice on potential site allocations and policy wording in the Medway Local Plan.
- Meetings have been held with the strategic bodies throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, discussing development options and sites, and policies.
- Representatives of the strategic bodies have participated in workshops on environmental matters informing the preparation of the Local Plan.
- Natural England officers have provided specific advice in relation to the Local Plan HRA and SA, and attended meetings with the Council and its SA and HRA consultants.

5.5 Outcomes

- The Council has reflected the advice of the strategic bodies in the content of the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan.
- Work on the HRA has assessed the change in AADTs (both alone and incombination) for all road links within 200m of a European site in our study area against the 1,000 AADT screening threshold. This exercise has indicated that there are exceedances of the 1,000 AADT threshold for a number of road links within 200m of European sites.
- Medway Council will appoint an air quality consultant to obtain air quality modelling data. This data will be interpretated against the published critical levels and critical loads for each habitat type. The outputs of the air quality modelling will be analysed in the context of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process.
- The outputs of the air quality modelling will be analysed in the context of the HRA process, which will include a detailed ecological interpretation of data and potential habitat survey where required, in line with NE's guidance.
- Natural England supports a strategic approach to securing the natural environment in the context of significant development on the Hoo Peninsula, and views that this approach could provide effective mitigation.
- The Council will progress details and governance for the strategic environmental programme prior to submission of the Draft Local Plan.

5.6 Ongoing cooperation

• The Council will continue to engage with the strategic bodies leading to the submission of the draft plan for examination.

- The Council will publish an interim HRA with the Regulation 19 Pre Submission Local Plan, and will produce an updated HRA, with the outcomes of the air quality technical assessments, and further details of the Hoo Peninsula Strategic Environmental programme prior to submission of the plan for examination. Natural England has accepted this approach.
- Natural England has agreed to review and provide advice on the further update to the HRA.
- Natural England supports the Council in establishing a Hoo Peninsula strategic environmental programme.

6 Historic Environment

6.1 Overview

• Medway is rich in heritage and has a longstanding, positive working relationship with Historic England.

6.2 Evidence base

- Medway Heritage Strategy
- Chatham Design Code
- Medway Heritage Asset Review (2025)
- Star Hill to Sun Pier Development Framework (2024)

6.3 Strategic bodies

- Historic England
- Kent County Council

6.4 Actions

- Historic England and Kent County Council have responded to Medway Council's Regulation 18a (2023) and Regulation 18b (2024) consultations.
- Historic England has consistently responded to Medway's consultations on Local Plan, evidence base gathering, supplementary planning documents and development frameworks, including the Star Hill to Sun Pier Development Framework.
- Historic England has provided in-depth advice to progress evidence base work.
- Kent County Council has supported Medway Council in providing sitespecific assessments.

6.5 Outcomes

• Historic England's advice and Kent County Council's support has helped to shape strategic, development management and site allocation policies.

6.6 Ongoing cooperation

• Medway Council's planning and regeneration officers will continue to work with Historic England in preparing an update to the Heritage Strategy, in collaboration.

7 Strategic Road Network and Major Road Network

7.1 Overview

- National Highways is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN), comprising of motorways and all-purpose trunk roads in England.
- Medway Council is the local transport authority.
- Kent County Council is the neighbouring local transport authority.
- Figure 2 shows SRN and Major Road Network (MRN) routes spanning in and around Medway.



Figure 2: M2 Junctions

- Figure 2 shows the locations of M2 junctions 2, 3, 4 and 5. Junctions 2 and 4 are within Medway.
- M2 Junction 1 is located to the west of Medway where the M2 merges with the A2 and the A289 of the MRN. The final Forecast Report, and specifically the Merge/Diverge Assessment, has identified the need to mitigate M2 Junction 1.
- Improvements to M2 junction 4 will be funded and delivered by the Lidsing Garden Settlement development in the Maidstone borough.
- M2 junction 5 improvements were completed in 2025.
- The MRN includes the A228, via Cuxton and Halling, into Tonbridge & Malling and the A229, via Blue Bell Hill, into Maidstone.
- Kent County Council is developing a business case for the Blue Bell Hill Improvement Scheme.

• The Lower Thames Crossing, a new road that will connect Kent and Essex through a tunnel beneath the River Thames, has been granted development consent.

7.2 Evidence base

- The Strategic Transport Assessment (STA) has informed the preparation of the new Local Plan. It involves iterative assessments of cumulative impacts associated with committed development and future development up to 2041. The STA has identified the necessary interventions, phasing and funding of mitigations for future development.
- The STA comprises the following documents:
 - Data Collection Report;
 - Local Model Validation Report;
 - Forecasting Methodology Report;
 - Forecast Report (2024);
 - Forecast Report (2025);
 - Merge/Diverge Assessment;
 - Mitigation Concept Plans and Costings;
 - Mitigation Trigger Point Assessment;
 - Proportionality Assessment; and
 - Transport Strategy.

7.3 Strategic bodies

- Gravesham Borough Council
- Maidstone Borough Council
- Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
- Swale Borough Council
- National Highways
- Kent County Council
- Gravesham Borough Council
- Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

7.4 Actions

- The Medway Transport Model was developed using a cordon of the Kent Transport Model. A draft Data Collection Report and a draft Local Model Validation Report were sent to both National Highways and Kent County Council.
- The STA methodology was developed in consultation with both National Highways and the neighbouring local transport authority, Kent County Council.
- All relevant strategic bodies responded to Medway Council's Regulation 18a (2023) and Regulation 18b (2024) consultations, having received outputs before publication.

- Monthly meetings have been held between representatives of the National Highways Spatial Planning Team and Medway Council and their respective traffic modelling consultants, when required.
- The National Highways Spatial Planning Team committed to prioritising any email correspondence.

7.5 Outcomes

- A draft Data Collection Report and a draft Local Model Validation Report were approved by both National Highways and Kent County Council. The Medway Transport Model was declared fit for purpose.
- The STA methodology was approved by both National Highways and the neighbouring local transport authority, Kent County Council, to enable the scenarios testing to begin early in the plan-making process.
- Relevant strategic bodies could consider outputs before the start of formal consultations. Their representations helped to change the scope of the STA, including the forecast year changing from 2040 to 2041, and the need for a transport strategy.
- Technical matters were resolved in a timely manner about:
 - o a historic consent on the Isle of Grain;
 - o trip rates for consented flexible use classes at Kingsnorth;
 - the certainty/status of developments outside Medway, such as the Lidsing Garden Settlement and Highsted Park;
 - treatment of potential cross-border site allocations; and
 - o sensitivity testing for the Lower Thames Crossing.
- Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council engaged the Thames Estuary Growth Board about M2 Junction 1. Lobbying activity could help to secure forward funding for the business case and mitigation scheme.

7.6 Ongoing cooperation

- Monthly meetings will continue to be held between representatives of the National Highways Spatial Planning Team and Medway Council and their respective traffic modelling consultants, if required.
- On occasion, representatives from Kent County Council and neighbouring local planning authorities will continue to be invited to the monthly meetings.
- STA outputs will continue to be shared with representatives of National Highways, Kent County Council and neighbouring local planning authorities before publication.
- A representative from Medway Council will attend a weekly Lidsing SPD Transport Matters Meeting.
- A representative from Medway Council will continue to attend quarterly A229 Blue Bell Hill Project Board meetings.
- Representatives from Medway Council will attend Lower Thames Crossing technical working groups.

8 Air Quality

8.1 Overview

- Medway Council has a statutory duty to monitor, review and assess air quality in Medway under the Environment Act 1995. This involves comparing the measured and predicted pollutant levels to national air quality standards and objectives.
- There are four areas in Medway where air quality does not meet the objectives for the pollutant nitrogen dioxide. Medway Council has designed four air quality management areas in Central Medway, Pier Road, Rainham High Street and Four Elms Hill.
- Medway Council published guidance in 2016 to help applicants to prepare an air quality assessment, if required.
- The Air Quality Management Area on the A2 via Newington has been identified as a strategic planning matter in DtC meetings with Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council, given the established commuting flows between Medway and Swale. Meanwhile, a large-scale housing development to the east of Rainham was promoted in the early plan-making process.
- In preparing the Interim Habitats Regulations Assessment, Natural England has advised that it "... will need to consider both transport and wider development related (for example, those resulting from any industrial development allocations) air quality emissions. Our advice remains that the air quality assessment should consider potential impacts arising from eutrophication (nitrogen), acidification (nitrogen and sulphur) and direct toxicity (ozone, ammonia and nitrogen oxides) as detailed in the Interim Assessment."

8.2 Evidence base

Interim Habitats Regulations Assessment

8.3 Strategic bodies

- Natural England
- Kent County Council
- Swale Borough Council

8.4 Actions

 As part of the Interim Habitats Regulations Assessment, and in line with Natural England's guidance, the change in average annual daily traffic (AADT) flows have been assessed (both alone and in-combination) for all road links within 200 metres of a European site against the 1,000 AADT screening threshold. This has indicated that there are exceedances of the 1,000 AADT threshold for a number of road links within 200m of the following European sites.

• For the Regulation 19 plan-making stage, Medway Council will publish an Interim HRA which does not conclude on air quality impacts at European sites.

8.5 Outcomes

- A large-scale housing development, which was promoted in the early plan-making process, to the east of Rainham was not allocated in Medway Council's Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan.
- Medway Council will appoint an air quality consultant to obtain air quality modelling data. This data will be interpretated against the published critical levels and critical loads for each habitat type. The outputs of the air quality modelling will be analysed in the context of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process.

8.6 Ongoing cooperation

- Medway Council is a member of the Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnership. Data and information about air quality throughout Kent is combined and shared through the partnership's dedicated website, KentAir.
- Prior to submission of the Local Plan, Natural England and Medway Council will cooperate on the detailed ecological interpretation of data and the potential need for habitat survey. The final Habitats Regulations Assessment will conclude on air quality impacts at European sites.

9 Flood Risk and Water Management

9.1 Overview

- The Environment Agency has a strategic overview of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion, as defined in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
- The Lower Medway IDB and the North Kent Marshes IDB works in partnership with Medway Council and other authorities to manage and reduce the risk of flooding.
- Medway Council is a Lead Local Flood Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Medway Council is also a Coastal Protection Authority under the Coastal Protection Act 1949.
- Medway is at risk of flooding from a number of sources, including tidal and surface water flooding, as well as flooding from groundwater, streams and ditches.
- Representations from the Environment Agency highlighted the need to deliver strategic flood risk infrastructure and river enhancement.
- Medway Council commissioned a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), which considers the risk of flooding from all sources to inform a Sequential Test and an Exception Test, and provides guidance for the completion of site-specific flood risk assessments.
- Medway is an area of serious water stress as identified by the Environment Agency.
- Southern Water and Southeast Water are the statutory water suppliers for Medway, with Southern Water supplying water to most of the area and Southeast Water supplying Halling.

9.2 Evidence base

• Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

9.3 Strategic bodies

• Environment Agency

9.4 Actions

- The Environment Agency responded to Medway Council's Regulation 18a (2023) and Regulation 18b (2024) consultations.
- The Council published surface water management plans for Hoo, Rainham, Lower Stoke and Middle Stoke in 2024.
- Medway Council shared spatial datasets and a housing trajectory with Southern Water.

9.5 Outcomes

- The SFRA identifies the requirements for flood risk assessments to support planning applications. The SFRA also sets out guidance for surface water drainage and a sustainable drainage proforma for applicants.
- As part of the 'Frindsbury Peninsula Opportunity Area', the north-western and southern end could be designed to flood. This could avoid the need for 'hard' flood risk infrastructure to protect Chatham and Strood town centres, while creating new inter-tidal habitat.
- Representations from Southern Water, and the subsequent sharing of spatial datasets and a housing trajectory, will determine infrastructure requirements.

9.6 Ongoing cooperation

• Medway Council and Southern Water will need to conclude infrastructure requirements by 2041 for water supply and wastewater.

10 Minerals Supply

10.1 Overview

- Medway Council, as Minerals Planning Authority (MPA) for Medway, is responsible for ensuring sufficient supply of minerals and safeguarding mineral resources and infrastructure.
- Land won resources include sharp sand and gravel (mainly Hoo Peninsula), with no significant soft sand or crushed rock resources locally.
- The Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA) (and Minerals Topic Paper (2025)) highlight limited land-won reserves (0.441 Mt sharp sand and gravel; 9.25 year landbank).
- Medway relies significantly on imported aggregates, particularly marinedredged sand and gravel, brought in through its strategically important network of safeguarded wharves and rail depots.

10.2 Evidence base

- LAA updated annually using the latest sales and reserve data summarises Medway's supply/demand balance and role in regional flows. Latest version published in 2024 utilises 2023 data. A version taking account of 2024 data will be published in late 2025.
- Medway Minerals and Waste Topic Paper provides information on mineral resources, imports, infrastructure capacity, and supply gaps informed by the LAA.
- SEEAWP membership provides additional regional context, aggregating South East data on production, imports, and flows.

10.3 Strategic bodies

- Kent County Council, as neighbouring MPA, supports cross-border cooperation on minerals safeguarding, aggregate flows, and future supply planning.
- The South East England Aggregates Working Party (SEEAWP) is a regional technical advisory group set up under the UK Government's 'Managed Aggregates Supply System' (MASS) framework. SEEAWP comprises mineral planning authorities (MPAs) across the south east of England (including Medway Council), along with industry representatives (such as from the Mineral Products Association), the Crown Estate (for marine dredging), and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). SEEAWP is the key forum for coordinating evidence, data, and monitoring related to the supply and demand of construction aggregates across the South East. SEEAWP provides exchange, scrutiny of LAAs, and coordinated response to regional supply challenges.

• Medway has also liaised with East Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council, the South Downs National Park Authority and other regional MPAs to prepare a SoCG on aggregate supply and safeguarding (2022).

10.4 Actions

- Maintained constructive dialogue on aggregate supply and demand through SEEAWP meetings and data returns.
- Engagement has taken place with Kent County Council (KCC) to prepare a SoCG (2024) that recognises cross-boundary supply, the need for safeguarding, and identification of areas for potential new extraction.
- Cooperation with KCC and regional partners to monitor and address emerging supply issues or infrastructure pressures.
- An annual LAA has been prepared reflecting land-won, marine-won, recycled and secondary aggregates, incorporating SEEAWP advice.
- Safeguarded critical wharves and rail depots to secure capacity for imports and onward distribution, aligning with NPPF and MASS principles.
- Reg 18 consultation on Draft minerals policies (2024) (T30 to T33)
- Identified new 'areas of search' for sand and gravel extraction to ensure future supply resilience.
- Responded to consultation feedback by reinforcing safeguarding and confirming cross-boundary supply role.

10.5 Outcomes

- Shared understanding with Kent and regional MPAs on continued reliance on Medway's marine import infrastructure for aggregate supply.
- Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) with Kent and South East MPAs set out shared understanding of regional aggregate movements, resource limitations, and mutual reliance on marine imports and need for associated supply infrastructure.
- SoCG with KCC countersigned by SEWPAG.
- Responses to the Reg 18 Plan consultation indicated strong support for cross-boundary cooperation.
- Incorporated robust safeguarding provisions into draft policies to protect existing supply capacity.
- Confirmed mutual recognition of Medway's limited indigenous resources and its reliance on imports, particularly soft sand from Kent and crushed rock via marine/rail.
- Identification of 'areas of search' for future sharp sand and gravel extraction.
- No objections raised by SEEAWP partners or KCC concerning Medway's minerals planning approach proposed at Regulation 18 stage.

- Strong alignment of Medway's minerals policies with the Managed Aggregates Supply System (MASS), supporting steady and adequate supply at local and regional levels.
- Protection of key import infrastructure (wharves handling ~1.9 Mt/year marine aggregate, below ~4.3 Mt/year capacity) ensures resilience in supply chains.
- Coordinated cross-boundary planning ensures that Medway's sharp sand and gravel output can contribute to Kent's supply, and Kent's soft sand resources can help meet Medway's needs.
- Draft Minerals Policies (Reg 19) include updated safeguarding measures for minerals infrastructure and resources, identifying Minerals Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) and Consultation Areas (MCAs).

10.6 Ongoing cooperation

- Maintain active engagement through SEEAWP annual monitoring, SoCG updates, and LAA review processes. Continued participation in SEEAWP meetings and data sharing exercises.
- Review of the SoCG with Kent as part of future plan making.
- Active engagement with Kent's and Medway's LAA preparation and review processes.
- Future updates to the Medway Local Plan will be developed in consultation with Kent, SEEAWP, and regional partners to maintain consistent approach to minerals, in particular aggregate, supply matters.
- Continue cross-boundary planning dialogue, particularly regarding longterm safeguarding and potential compensatory capacity where necessary.

11 Waste Management

11.1 Overview

- Medway Council is the Waste Planning Authority for its area, responsible for planning the future management of all waste streams (Local Authority Collected Waste (LACW), Commercial & Industrial (C&I), Construction/Demolition (CDEW), hazardous waste, wastewater, agricultural and low-level radioactive waste).
- Medway relies on regional infrastructure for some waste streams, notably landfill capacity in Thurrock and hazardous waste treatment elsewhere.
- Key principles relating to strategic matters:
 - Plan for net self-sufficiency: ensure sufficient capacity to manage an equivalent amount of waste to that arising within Medway, accounting for necessary imports/exports.
 - Apply the proximity principle: prioritise managing waste as close to source as feasible, making use of regional or specialist facilities only where justified.

11.2 Evidence base

- The Waste Needs Assessment (WNA, 2024) and Minerals and Waste Topic Paper provide the evidence base for forecasting arisings, capacity needs, and cross-boundary movements.
- Specific Medway WNA 2024 Update report on 'Strategically Significant Cross-Boundary Movements' identifies key export destinations for waste arising in Medway which include the following: Kent (non-inert waste), Thurrock (landfill), Southwark (Materials Recycling Facility utilised for LACW), and Suffolk (hazardous waste).
- South East Waste Planning Advisory Group (SEWPAG) SoCG (2020) sets out regional principles for waste planning and including thresholds for strategic flows (10,000tpa inert, 5,000 tpa non-hazardous; 100 tpa hazardous) requiring active engagement under DtC.
- SEWPAG membership provides regional data, joint principles on capacity and movements, and joint position statements on key matters.
- Register of correspondence tracks bilateral discussions with neighbouring Waste Planning Authorities.

11.3 Strategic bodies

- Kent County Council: key partner on cross-boundary flows and infrastructure provision/safeguarding (in particular 'other recovery').
- Thurrock Council: hosts non hazardous landfill capacity used by Medway's residual municipal waste, formalised under the draft SoCG.

- London Borough of Southwark: operates the Southwark Integrated Waste Management Facility, processing ~15,000 tpa of Medway's dry recyclables under commercial contract.
- South East Waste Planning Advisory Group (SEWPAG): regional body supporting strategic cooperation on approaches to waste planning, landfill provision, other recovery (e.g. Energy from Waste) capacity and hazardous waste
- Medway Council membership of SEWPAG provides access to a regional forum for addressing strategic waste flows, capacity gaps, and regional infrastructure planning (in particular landfill and 'other recovery').

11.4 Actions

- Undertook targeted DtC engagement with all authorities receiving strategically significant waste flows (Kent, Thurrock, Southwark, Suffolk, etc.) using thresholds from SEWPAG SoCG.
- Statements of Common Ground with Kent (July 2024), Thurrock (June 2025 (Draft)), and Southwark (March 2022) document cross-boundary arrangements and cooperation.
- Mapped cross-boundary capacity dependencies, especially for hazardous waste, non-inert waste recovery, and landfill, to inform robust plan approach.
- Reg 18 consultation on Draft waste policies (2024) (T34 to T40 and DM23) including safeguarding of existing waste facilities and encourage new capacity aligned with the Waste Hierarchy.
- Analysis of consultation responses (Reg 18) informed refinement of recycling, landfill diversion, and recovery targets.
- Responded to consultation feedback by strengthening commitments to net self-sufficiency and the proximity principle, recognising some specialist waste streams necessarily require export.

11.5 Outcomes

- Achieved agreement with key receiving WPAs on the continuation of strategic waste movements, documented in SoCGs and confirmed via correspondence records.
- Draft SoCG with Thurrock (2025) covers ongoing use of Ockendon landfill for non-hazardous waste.
- SoCG with Southwark (2022) formalises the arrangement for managing Medway's dry recyclables at Southwark's IWMF.
- The emerging Local Plan (to 2041) aims to ensure sufficient waste management capacity, move waste up the waste hierarchy, and achieve net self-sufficiency, in line with national policy.
- Updated policies to ensure Medway maintains sufficient recycling, recovery, and processing capacity to meet anticipated needs through

2041, aligned with national targets (e.g., 65–70% recycling by 2035–2041).

- Safeguarding policies included in the draft Local Plan to protect waste infrastructure and require compensatory capacity if loss is proposed.
- Ensured no significant objections from DtC bodies at Regulation 18 stage regarding Medway's waste strategy, reflecting constructive engagement and shared understanding.
- Confirmed that Medway's reliance on specialist external facilities (e.g., hazardous waste treatment, Thurrock landfill) is reasonable, justified, and supported by hosting authorities.
- No capacity concerns raised by neighbouring WPAs regarding Medway's exported hazardous or specialist wastes, indicating effective cooperative planning.
- Sustained access to landfill capacity in Thurrock for non-hazardous municipal waste, supporting continuity of disposal arrangements.
- Efficient recycling outcomes through partnership with Southwark IWMF, maximising the use of high-quality, regionally significant infrastructure.
- Alignment with SEWPAG's regional net self-sufficiency and waste hierarchy principles, ensuring Medway's planning does not place disproportionate burden on neighbouring areas.

11.6 Ongoing cooperation

- Review SoCGs with Kent, Thurrock, Southwark, other relevant WPAs and SEWPAG, updating as strategic issues evolve or new dependencies arise.
- Continuous engagement through SEWPAG to monitor regional waste planning trends, shared capacity issues, and opportunities for collaborative solutions.
- Ongoing bilateral dialogue with Kent, Thurrock, and other receiving authorities to monitor imported/exported waste streams, address any capacity changes, and update policies as required.
- Integration of waste planning commitments into the next stages of the Medway Local Plan, ensuring future plan iterations reflect evolving regional and national waste management requirements.
- Participate in SEWPAG participation to monitor regional waste capacity trends and coordinate future planning responses.
- Monitor cross-boundary waste movements and capacity utilisation through regular data sharing, correspondence, and SEWPAG engagement.
- Continue engagement with all WPAs receiving strategic flows from Medway, especially in light of future capacity constraints or contract changes (e.g., post-2035 LACW contract).

Appendix A

Record of Engagement Activity

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