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*By email only*

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Dear Mr McCormack and Mr Hendley

## **STATEMENTS OF COMMON GROUND**

Thank you for your Guidance Note (ref: MLP/ED13). I note paragraphs 27, 28 and 29 regarding statements of common ground (SoCG), specifically the deadline of Thursday 13 August to submit further SoCGs. I am writing to provide an update on the progress of all SoCGs.

I set out the current position on updating submitted SoCGs and on finalising further SoCGs below.

### Submitted SoCGs

1. The SoCG with Prescribed Bodies (ref: A12.1) has been updated.
  - The Environment Agency is considering an appraisal of flood defences and anticipates providing a response by 14 August. I will send this to you as soon as possible and would like to request 27 August as a 'longstop' deadline.
2. I am pleased to have signed an update to the SoCG with National Highways (ref: A12.2) which is attached to this letter.
3. Following a review of matters set out in the submitted SoCG with Maidstone Borough Council (ref: A12.3), I consider there is no need to update this document. Please note Maidstone Borough Council has withdrawn the emerging Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document.
4. The SoCG with Kent County Council concerning Waste Management and Minerals Supply (ref: A12.4) is the final version.
5. Following meetings with Thurrock Council on 14 November 2024 and 6 May 2025, the Council issued an Initial Proposed SoCG concerning strategic waste management to Thurrock Council, dated 2 June 2025 (ref: A12.5). The Council's planning officers have contacted Thurrock Council to request its response on five occasions. If Thurrock Council responds, I will send this to you as soon as possible.

### Further SoCGs

1. In my response (ref: MLP/ED6) to your initial query No.3 (MLP/ED5), I indicated the Council's intention to produce a SoCG with Southern Water and UK Power Networks.
  - I am pleased to have signed a SoCG with Southern Water which is attached to this letter.
  - No SoCG with UK Power Networks will be forthcoming, but ongoing collaboration has been established.
    - In April 2025, the Council's planning officers engaged with representatives from UK Power Networks to inform the relevant content in 3.4 of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (ref: B2).
    - In July 2025, the Council's planning officers shared Medway's development forecasts with UK Power Networks.
    - The UK Power Networks 'Regional Planning Dashboard' and 'LAEP+ Planning Tool' will facilitate ongoing collaboration on network capacity planning and investment.
2. In my response (ref: MLP/ED6) to your initial query No.3 (MLP/ED5), I also indicated the Council's intention to produce five SoCGs with planning agents promoting strategic sites.
  - The Schedule of Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) (ref: MLP/ED15) and paragraph 28 of your Guidance Note (ref: MLP/ED13) provide helpful context and scope in preparing SoCGs with planning agents.
  - In our previous correspondence (MLP/ED6 and MLP/ED10), I noted additional work to produce an outline design and costings of an interim scheme (i.e. within the highway boundary) for junctions on the A228 that require mitigation early in the plan period. This additional work is not new evidence; rather, it is informing the drafting of SoCGs with planning agents, and it will inform the commissioning of a 'Monitor and Manage Mitigation Strategy' (see 9.2 of the Medway Local Plan 2041, ref: A1).
3. Considering the forgoing, and to properly reflect on the content of your MIQs within the SoCGs, I am requesting an extension to Monday 14 September, i.e. the day before your opening hearing session and well in advance of the Phase 2 hearings, to submit these further SoCGs.

I hope this request is acceptable and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Dave Harris

Chief Planning Officer