

**Examination of the Medway Local Plan 2041****Inspector Andrew McCormack BSc (Hons) MRTPI****Inspector Darren Hendley BA (Hons) MA MRTPI****Programme Officer: Louise St John Howe****Telephone: 07789 486419****Email: louise@poservices.co.uk****Address: PO Services, Unit 162298, PO Box 7169, Poole, Dorset BH15 9EL****Examination Website: <https://medway.oc2.uk>**

Mr Dave Harris
Chief Planning Officer
Planning Service
Medway Council

By email only

28 September 2026

Dear Mr Harris,

Medway Local Plan 2041 – Examination: Post Phase 1 Hearings

1. We are writing to you following the completion of the Phase 1 Examination Hearings for the Medway Local Plan 2041 (the Plan). This letter is intended to provide information and guidance on matters that require further work and its content does not infer our final conclusions on the soundness of any matters within the Plan, which will be set out in full in the Inspector's Report once we are satisfied that all necessary work has been completed and consulted upon.
2. We seek to conduct the Examination as effectively, efficiently and as pragmatically as possible, with openness and fairness to all participants. With that in mind, having now read and heard the submitted evidence relating to our Matters 1 to 8 at the hearings, we confirm that we are satisfied that the Examination can proceed to the Phase 2 Hearings. However, this is dependent upon the completion of some further consultation relating to the Plan's evidence base which the Council will need to complete over the coming weeks.

Evidence Documents Consultation

3. During the Phase 1 Hearings, the Council submitted several new evidential documents to the Examination that it refers to in support of the submitted Plan. We understand that these documents have not previously been available to all interested parties or consulted upon in relation to the Plan. The Council has therefore been asked to clarify and confirm these through a full and final list of new documents that the Council seeks to rely upon during the Examination. This includes documents already submitted and others it intends to submit. To

ensure fairness to all interested parties and participants and provide openness and transparency in the process, we recommend consultation takes place as soon as possible. The documents are listed below.

Examination Library Reference	Title of Document
ED24 A-F	Various Statements of Common Ground with Medway Council and parties
ED25	Medway Local Plan - Interim Year Assessment (Jacobs) – 2 July 2026
ED26	Medway Local Plan – Interim Year Assessment Medway 2031: Interim Junction Modelling and Mitigation (Jacobs) – 7 August 2026
ED27	Medway Flood Defences – High Level Appraisal
ED30	Medway Council: Updated Proposed stepped housing requirement and land supply – Medway Council (16 September 2026)
ED30A	Medway Council: Updated Proposed stepped housing requirement and land supply – Medway Council (16 September 2026) – Explanatory Note
To Be Confirmed	Medway Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework - <i>Final Version 2026 (draft previously published with Regulation 18b consultation in 2024 for comments)</i>
To Be Confirmed	Technical note on further justification for stepped housing trajectory based on Strategic Transport Assessment
To Be Confirmed	Technical note - Viability Assessment review of Southern Water request to consider greater water efficiency standards

4. As the Phase 1 Hearings have progressed, the Council has indicated its willingness to work to address these matters and it is in this spirit that we anticipate that the Council will undertake the tasks we have set proactively and as efficiently as possible. From discussions with the Council at the end of the Phase 1 Hearings, it was indicated to us that consultation on documents will take place between Monday 5 October and Monday 26 October. The Council would then have a further week to respond to any representations received on those documents leading to submitting the representations and the Council's Response to us on Monday 2 November. This timescale is acceptable and we support the Council in proceeding on that basis.

Action Points and Draft Schedule of Main Modifications to the Plan

5. There are other tasks which the Council has been asked to complete following the completion of the Phase 1 Hearings. These are as follows.
 - a. To provide us with an up-to-date schedule of progress on the Action Points identified during the Matters discussed at the Phase 1 hearings. This schedule is to include all Action Points including a record of those that have been addressed and those still to be completed with a date of completion or anticipated completion identified. We note that the Council has provided us with an up-to-date Action Point Schedule as things stand at the time of this letter. However, we ask the Council to also provide an update to the schedule on Friday 9 October 2026 showing where Action Points stand at that time. This updated schedule should be received by **5pm on Friday 9 October**;
 - b. We understand that the Council is compiling a schedule of proposed main modifications to the Plan. It would be helpful to us if the Council could provide a draft schedule (as it stands) for information only at this stage, now that the Phase 1 Hearings have been completed. We ask that this is also provided by **5pm on Friday 9 October 2026**.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

6. Further to this, as was discussed at the end of the Phase 1 Hearings, we note the progress the Council is making with regard to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and we have had particular regard to the Council's letter to us on the matter, dated 14 September 2026 (Ref: ED28). We await the Council's decision on 15 October and appreciate that further separate consultation on the proposed new site will need to be undertaken. Accordingly, it seems sensible to us to wait until that consultation is complete and the responses have been considered before discussing the particular matter in relation to the Plan. Therefore, we consider that one possible approach may be to hold a separate hearing on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation at a later date, to be arranged after the Phase 2 Hearings. Further consideration of this will take place in due course.

Matters, Issues and Questions – Phase 2 Hearings

7. Subject to the Council confirming to us that the consultation set out in Paragraphs 3 and 4 above can be commenced as we have specified, our Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) for the Phase 2 Hearings will be published on **Thursday 1 October 2026**. These MIQs should be placed on the Examination Webpage as soon as possible once issued along with the relevant details of the consultation. The Phase 2 MIQs should be responded to on the same basis as set out for Phase 1 (see our Guidance Note ref: ED13). The deadline for receipt of Hearing Statements is **5pm on Thursday 29 October 2026**. The details on the Draft Programme of the Phase 2 Hearing Sessions, the dates and confirmation of the venue will follow shortly, alongside the publication of our Matters, Issues and Questions for Phase 2.
8. We appreciate the constructive engagement shown by the Council and all participants during the Phase 1 Hearings. We will endeavour to ensure that any potential delays to the Examination can be avoided wherever possible. On that basis, we would respectfully encourage the Council not to continue to seek the submission of any further supporting evidential documents wherever possible unless we specifically request them to do so. It is expected that all evidence upon which the Council relies in relation to the submitted Plan should already be before the Examination. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council and all other interested parties in a positive and constructive manner as we proceed with the Examination.
9. If there is anything that is unclear within this letter, please contact us via the Programme Officer, Louise St John Howe for clarification. Please also ensure that this letter is published on the Examination Webpage as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew McCormack and *Darren Hendley*

INSPECTORS