

Medway Local Plan Examination: Matters, Issues and Questions Phase 1 Hearings 30 July 2026

Matter 6: Natural Environment

Policy DM1 Flood and Water Management

6.34 Is Policy DM1 consistent with national policy and how it deals with flooding, in particular tidal flooding, and the sequential test, and how has this informed the allocation of sites including those in Flood Zone 3?

We consider Policy DM1 to be consistent with National Policy. However, we do not believe that Policy DM1 has been implemented in regard to the sequential test, and how this has informed the allocation of sites including those in Flood Zone 3. More specifically, it has not been demonstrated how the sequential test has been applied within the Level 1 SFRA and has informed site allocations. This is because 37 sites located in Flood Zone 3 have been taken forward to the SFRA Level 2 assessment. Of these 37, 23 sites are located within or partially within Flood Zone 3b. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear in that *more vulnerable* development is incompatible with Flood Zone 3b. It is not clear what alternative sites, at lower risk have been considered through the application of the sequential test. Therefore, it is not clear how the authority have used Policy DM1 to undertake the sequential test to be compliant with NPPF.

6.35 Is Policy DM1 reflective of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (B6.1 to 6.5), as SFRA was published in November 2025?

Policy DM1 states that 'Medway Council will manage flood risk first by avoiding, so far as possible, development sites in current and future medium and high flood risk areas, considering all sources of flooding, including areas at risk of surface water flooding'. As stated in response to 6.34, we support the intentions of Policy DM1. However, we have previously identified a number of outstanding issues within the SFRA (B6.1 to B6.5) which are inconsistent with DM1 and have not been addressed. This means that whilst DM1 is not reflective of the SFRA, the SFRA does not provide evidence to support the proposed allocations. The Environment Agency have previously made detailed comments on the SFRA at the Regulation 19 stage (June 2025) when the documents were in draft and again, when they were published in November 2025. In response to 6.37 we have re-iterated our comments in relation to the November 2025 update of the SFRA (B6.1 to 6.5). The need for development plans to be informed by an up-to-date SFRA is further supported by paragraph F1:

Assessing flood risk for plan-making (1a) in the update to the National Planning Policy Framework on the 17 August 2026.

6.36 Where there is reference to an updated SFRA (paragraph 4.8.24) to inform site allocations going forward, is this the SFRA (November 2025) (B6.1 to 6.5)?

This is for Medway Council to confirm but we reiterate, it is not clear how the updated SFRA (November 2025) has informed site allocations. The sites that were allocated in the draft SFRA (May 2025) and published within the Regulation 19 supporting documents remain within the updated SFRA of November 2025.

6.37 Have the Environment Agency's views been sought on the SFRA (B6.1 to 6.5)?

The Environment Agency were consulted on the updated SFRA (B6.1 to 6.5) in December 2025 after we provided a formal response to the Regulation 19 consultation, where the SFRA Level 1 and 2 were in draft.

The Environment Agency provided the following response on the SFRA (B6.1 to 6.5).

Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

We acknowledge that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has largely been updated to include the latest flood risk information from the North Kent Coast (Domain 2, 2024), as well as the New National Modelling and National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping that the Environment Agency have produced.

Section 2.6 states that 'the entire coastline benefits from defences with the exception of Allhallows-on-Sea', however there are areas that currently do not have formal flood defences present, for example areas of natural high ground or river walls. The same is reflected Appendix A.2 '*watercourses and defence infrastructure*'.

Section 2.6 'Flood Defences' refers to flooding shown in the 2115 results of the EA numerical flood model of the North Kent Coast. This should be updated to reference the North Kent Coast (Domain 2, 2024) modelling.

Appendix A.4 shows the Potential Risk of Flooding (Current day – undefended). However, the LPA should be aware that the Flood Map for Planning has recently been updated in November 2025. This update will use local flood modelling of the North Kent Coast (Domain 2, 2024) and the New National Model (NNM) produced as part of NaFRA2.

Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

We acknowledge that the SFRA has been updated to include the most recent local flood modelling of the North Kent Coast (Domain 2, 2024). However, there are still a number of 'more vulnerable' residential site allocations in Flood Zone 3 and 3b e.g. site allocation CHR14. This is against NPPF and is not clear from the SFRA how it's passed both the Sequential and Exception tests.

We have provided site specific comments on the proposed sites listed within the Site Summary Tables and detailed within Appendix A.1 Site Location Map.

Sequential Test report

The Sequential Test Report still doesn't demonstrate how the Level 1 SFRA has informed the site allocations. This is because 37 sites located in Flood Zone 3 taken forward to the SFRA Level 2 assessment, 23 sites are located within or partially within Flood Zone 3b (Section 7.3, page 14). It is clear from assessing the individual site allocations and the Level 2 SFRA that some of the sites taken forward to the Exception text are unsuitable for development. It is not clear what alternative sites at lower flood risk have been disregarded through the application of the Sequential Test in the development of the local plan. The National Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification within the National Planning Practice Guidance says that more vulnerable development in Flood Zone 3b should not be permitted.

In addition, we have the following points of clarification:

- Section 6 – does not acknowledge the coastal Medway Estuary and Swale strategy (2019) which is a key strategic flood risk plan for the area, which proposes the nature and timing of flood risk interventions for managing tidal flood risk.
- Section 7. *Application of Sequential Test* we would again like to draw your attention to the more detailed site-specific comments we have made for the sites that are listed in the Level 2 SFRA and displayed within the Appendix A.1 Site Location Maps.

Site Specific comments:

Reference	Appendix	Use	Flood Risk Comments
CCB15	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_6	Residential led	This area would benefit from strategic flood defences as proposed by the MEAS Strategy. Contributions should be sought from the developer.
SNF8	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest flood risk. Strategic flood defences in this area will be required, we recommend contributions are sought from the developer.
CCB20	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_6	Residential led	This area would benefit from strategic flood defences as proposed by the MEAS Strategy. Contributions should be sought from the developer.
SNF17	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest flood risk. Strategic flood defences in this area will be required, we recommend contributions are sought from the developer.
CHR14	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_5	Residential led	Whilst part of the site of the site is flood zone 1, a significant part is flood zone 3b. We would oppose any development other than water compatible development within flood zone 3b. We would have no objection to residential development on the parts of the site within flood zone 1. Any development should include means of safe access and this may require appropriate on site

			flood mitigation to avoid increasing flood risk elsewhere.
HHH32	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_2	Residential led	The site lies within flood zone 3. The preferred option of the Medway Estuary and Swale Strategy is for No Active Intervention in this area from around 2040 onwards. This will increase the risk of failure of the defences which will make the proposal unsafe during its lifetime.
HHH12	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_2	Residential led	The Medway Estuary and Swale Strategy states that this is a No Active Intervention frontage. This site has the potential to be a coastal change management area. The southern portion of the site will be vulnerable to coastal erosion. Any allocation should be supported by a coastal vulnerability assessment.
SNF41	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest flood risk. Strategic flood defences in this area will be required, if these works are not undertaken for this site developer contributions would be required.
SNF35	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	We are aware that planning permission exists to undertake land raising and flood defence works, to minimise flood risk to the site. However, flood risk remains surrounding this site allocation which would impact access and egress without further improvements to existing flood defences. As such we have no objection in principle.

SMI6	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_7	Residential led	We would object to any more vulnerable development proposals within the Flood Zone 3b and measures should be in place to ensure that the lock gates remain functional including access. Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest risk. Before any works to develop the site take place, suitable flood defences must be in place to mitigate the risk of flooding to St Mary's Island including consideration of how flood risk assets around the site allocation (including the existing lock gates) will be raised, replaced or managed in the future.
FP11	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4 & Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_6	Residential led	A section of the site lies within flood zone 3b. We would object to any more vulnerable development proposals within Flood Zone 3b. Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest flood risk. Strategic flood risk defences may need to tie into highground this site in the future, so the developer would need to work with relevant risk management authorities.
AS28	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_1	Residential led	This site lies within flood zones 1, 2 and 3. A site specific flood risk assessment would be required. The community of Grain risks becoming completely isolated and transport links do benefit from wider flood protection. Consideration should be given to seeking contributions towards flood defence infrastructure for the wider community.

CCB27	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_6	Residential led	This area would benefit from strategic flood defences as proposed by the MEAS Strategy. Contributions should be sought from the developer.
GN6 (previously GN16)	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_7	Residential led	We would object in principle to any more vulnerable development proposals within the functional floodplain. Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest risk. If this site is to be allocated the LPA should be satisfied that there is safe access and egress.
SR49	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_2	Residential led	We have no objection in principle to development on this site. However, the site will become at flood risk during the lifetime of the development and therefore the proposal should be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment. The SFRA should be used to inform suitable development sites.
SNF15	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	A considerable section of the site lies within flood zone 3b. We would object in principle to any more vulnerable development proposals within the flood zone 3b, as it is contrary to guidance in the NPPF. Strategic flood defences in this area will be required, developer contributions would be required.
SNF23	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	Strategic flood defences in this area will be required, we recommend contributions are sought from the developer.

CCB21	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_6	Residential led	Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest flood risk. This area would benefit from strategic flood defences as proposed by the MEAS Strategy. Contributions should be sought from the developer.
CCB24	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_6	Residential led	This area would benefit from strategic flood defences as proposed by the MEAS Strategy. Contributions should be sought from the developer.
SNF30	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	This site lies entirely within Flood Zone 3. Strategic flood defences in this area will be required, we recommend contributions are sought from the developer.
CCB31	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_6	Residential led	The majority of the site lies in Flood Zone 1. However, the Southwest boundary is in Flood Zone 3, so any development layout should ensure there is site access into Flood Zone 1.
RWB2	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_5	Residential led	We would oppose any development other than water compatible development within flood zone 3b. Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest risk. Any flood risk assessment must demonstrate that there is no displacement of flood water, and that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

SNF34	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	Strategic flood defences in this area will be required. If these works are not undertaken for this site developer contributions may be required. Before any works to develop the site take place, suitable flood defences must be in place to keep the development safe for its lifetime. Safe access and egress should also be considered by the local planning authority before this site is considered for development.
SR48	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_2	Residential led	Any development of the site should take the sequential approach, steering development towards the areas at the lowest risk.
CCB7	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_6	Residential led	Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest flood risk. This area would benefit from strategic flood defences as proposed by the MEAS Strategy. Contributions should be sought from the developer.
FP14	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4 & Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_6	Residential led	This area would benefit from strategic flood defences as proposed by the MEAS Strategy. Contributions should be sought from the developer.
SNF38	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	The entirety of the current site sits within flood zone 3b. We recognise that this is a previously developed site and so the LPA should have regard to Table 2: flood risk vulnerability and flood zone incompatibility of the flood risk planning policy guidance. It would only be suitable for more vulnerable development once a strategy for appropriate flood protection has been confirmed and the scheme implemented.

CCB25	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_7	Residential led	A small section of the site lies within Flood Zone 3b. We would object in principle to any more vulnerable development proposals within the functional floodplain. All development within flood zone 3b should be limited to water compatible development. Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest risk.
SNF31	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	Strategic flood defences in this area will be required. We recommend contributions are sought from the developer.
SNF24	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	Strategic flood defences in this area will be required. We recommend contributions are sought from the developer.
CCB8	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_6	Residential led	Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest flood risk. This area would benefit from strategic flood defences as proposed by the MEAS Strategy. Contributions should be sought from the developer.
GN15	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_7	Residential led	This site lies mainly within flood zone 3b and so areas within Flood Zone 3b should be restricted for water compatible development. We would object in principle to any more vulnerable development proposals within the functional floodplain. We recognise that this is a previously developed site and so the LPA should have regard to Table 2: flood risk vulnerability and flood zone incompatibility of the flood risk planning policy guidance. Any more vulnerable development

			proposals should be outside of flood zone 3b.
RWB25	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	A section of the site lies within Flood Zone 3b and so this area should be restricted for water compatible development. For the remainder of the site more vulnerable development will only be acceptable, if appropriate flood defence works take place. Any proposed development must also demonstrate that the proposed development is set back from the tidal Medway and provides an adequate access margin to the flood defence, to undertake future maintenance. A FRAP will be required for any works within 16m from the landward toe of the defence. This, together with the extent of Flood Zone 3b may place significant constraints on development at this site.
GN3	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_7	Residential led	Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest risk.
HHH22&HHH31	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_2	Residential led	We would have no objection to residential development on this site in flood zone 1. Any development on the site should take a sequential approach, steering development to Flood Zone 1.
SR53	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_4	Residential led	We have previously made detailed comments reagrding the Frindsbury Peninsula Opportunity area in our response to the Regulation 19 consultation. The Frindsbury Peninsula Planning Framework needs to include a detailed a strategic flood risk management plan or study which would be required in advance of

			developing the Frindsbury Peninsula Opportunity area.
CCB35	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_7	Non-residential led	Any development on the proposed site should take a sequential approach, steering development to areas of the lowest risk.
SMI6	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_7	Non-residential led	Any detailed proposals for the site must consider the latest flood risk modelling of the North Kent Coast, within their site-specific flood risk assessment.
HHH35	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_2	Non-residential led	The preferred option of the MEAS Strategy will include a new embankment along Jacob's Lane. A small part of this site will benefit from this proposed embankment and so contributions may be required towards flood defences from any proposed development here.
HHH36	Appendix_A.1_Site_Location_2	Non-residential led	The area lies within flood zone 3. It is currently protected by existing flood defences maintained by the Environment Agency. However, flood defence infrastructure is likely to need replacing/improving before any works to develop the site take place due to aging flood defence infrastructure. If flood defences are not improved for the site by the developer then developer contributions would be required.

We are aware that Medway Council are working on refining the red line boundaries for a number of sites to clarify where development is appropriate on the site.

Since this consultation in December 2025 we have not seen evidence of the red line boundaries being refined for any of the proposed sites.

6.39 What does ‘coastal squeeze’ (Policy DM1 criterion towards the top of page 52 of the Plan) mean and what would be the Environment Agency’s role in this?

Coastal squeeze has been defined in the ‘What is Coastal Squeeze? - summary’ and ‘What is Coastal Squeeze? – technical report’ supporting documents which can be found on the GOV.UK webpage [What is coastal squeeze? - GOV.UK](#).

Coastal squeeze is now defined as *‘the loss of natural habitats or deterioration of their quality arising from anthropogenic structures or actions, preventing the landward transgression of those habitats that would otherwise naturally occur in response to sea level rise in conjunction with other coastal processes. Coastal squeeze affects habitat on the seaward side of existing structures.’*

6.41 Under the ‘Water Supply’ section of the policy, how are Groundwater Source Protection Zones and Principal Aquifers defined for the purposes of the policy and what does a ‘suitable’ risk assessment mean?

We have provided links to the relevant pages on GOV.UK [Protect groundwater and prevent groundwater pollution - GOV.UK](#) and [Groundwater source protection zones \(SPZs\) - GOV.UK](#)

In terms of suitable risk assessment our published guidance ‘[Land contamination risk management \(LCRM\) - GOV.UK](#)’ outlines the approach which should be adopted when managing this site’s risks to the water environment.

6.42 Is foul water drainage and wastewater a matter for the Plan and therefore justified, or else solely for statutory undertakers?

The plan should consider foul water drainage and wastewater as development will need to connect to the existing system and this should only be permitted in areas where there is sufficient capacity. We need to ensure that foul water is considered for development to make sure that we reduce risk to ground and surface water bodies.