

**Medway
Local Development Scheme
2020 - 2023**

August 2020



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1. Introduction

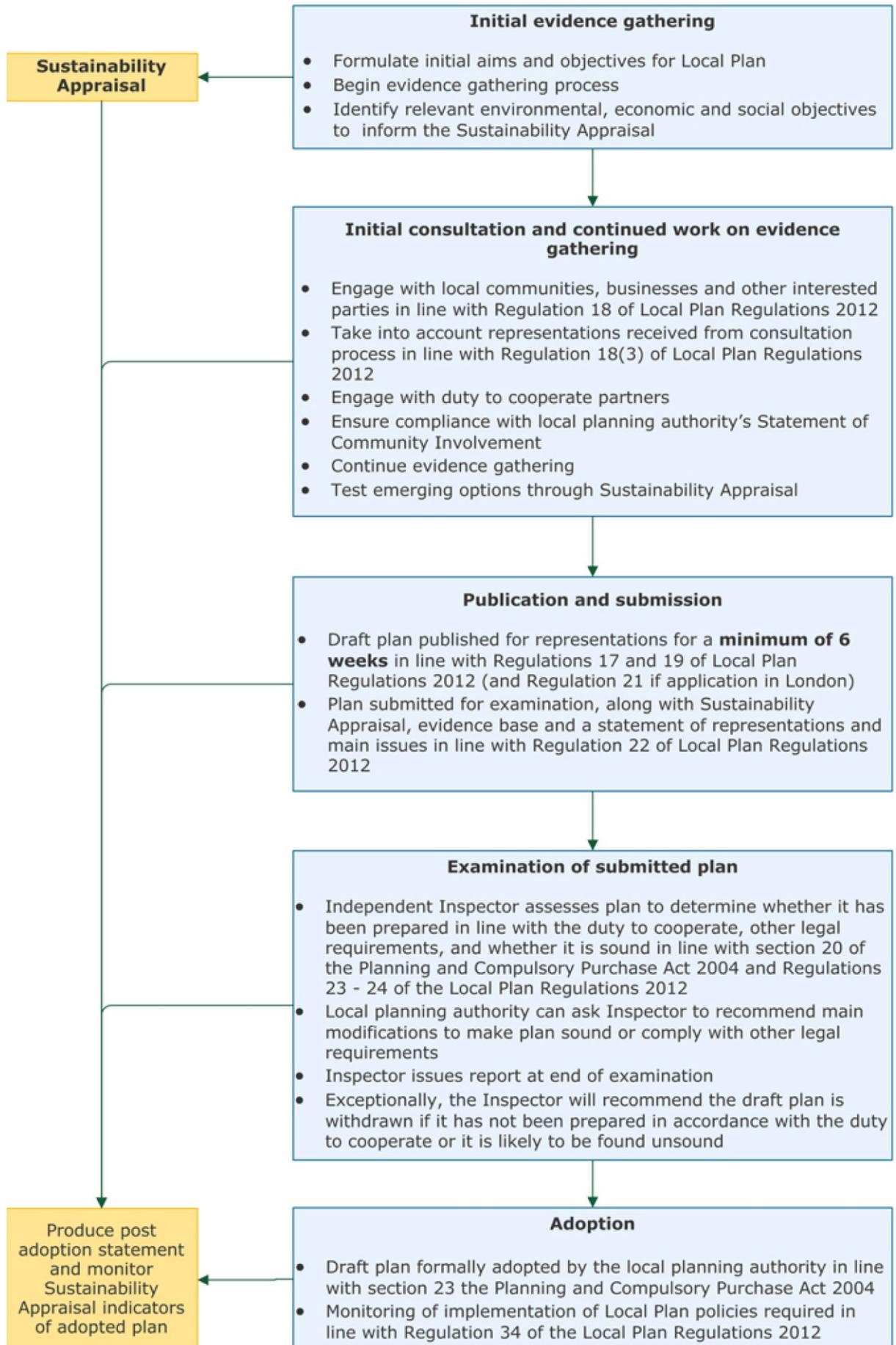
- 1.1 This Local Development Scheme provides an updated programme for the production of a new local plan that will provide the basis for development policy in Medway. The scheme covers the period from 2020 to 2023, and updates the Medway Local Development Scheme published in December 2019. The council has produced a revised Local Development Scheme to reflect the current position in the plan making process. This updated scheme was approved by the Council's Cabinet on 4 August 2020, and it takes effect from 14 August 2020.
- 1.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004¹, as amended, requires local planning authorities to prepare, maintain and publish a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The first Medway Local Development Scheme was published in April 2005, and the Council has periodically reviewed the scheme to ensure its accuracy and that it aligns to the current legislative and local context. Local planning authorities must revise their local development scheme at such time as they consider appropriate, to ensure that it is up to date. The LDS provides public information on the process and timetable for the preparation and review of local development documents, and is used by the Council to help plan resources and workstreams. It allows the community and stakeholders to find out about the Council's intentions for the planning policy of Medway, and when they can participate in the plan making process.
- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in July 2018 with further updates in February 2019, and has reiterated the role of development plans to manage growth. Local planning authorities have a statutory duty to prepare and update local plans for their area. The government has provided further details on its expectations for plan-making in Planning Practice Guidance. The Secretary of State has extended powers to intervene in plan making where progress is unsatisfactory, and has taken up this power where he considered that planning authorities had not made sufficient progress.
- 1.4 The current development plan for Medway is made up of the saved policies from the Medway Local Plan adopted in 2003, together with some earlier saved policies specific to waste and minerals. Details of the saved policies that form the development plan are set out on the council's website at:

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/15>

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/146/current_planning_policies/2

- 1.5 The Council has clear ambitions for Medway's successful growth, continuing the regeneration of urban waterfront and centres, and wider development supported by infrastructure investments. Our regeneration strategy, Medway 2035², sets out aspirations for a Waterfront University City, connecting innovation, people and place. The Council is committed to driving growth that delivers benefits for all. This is being followed through in our Covid recovery plans.
- 1.6 The Medway Local Plan is a key means of setting the vision for Medway's growth and mapping out the strategy and policies to achieve our aims. The Council is aware of its ageing Local Plan and is committed to the adoption of a new Local Plan guiding Medway's development into the late 2030s. This has been a complex and lengthy process, and substantial work has been carried out to support the preparation of the draft plan.
- 1.7 The Council has shown a willing attitude to plan positively for the area's significant development needs, considering the sensitivities of the built and natural environment, and addressing challenges of infrastructure capacity. We have engaged with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the Planning Advisory Service, to provide updates on the preparation of the Medway Local Plan, and demonstrate that the Council is committed to positively planning for the development needs of the area.
- 1.8 The Council has carried out three rounds of formal consultation at 'Regulation 18' stage of the plan preparation process. The Council undertook an initial Regulation 18 'Issues and Options' consultation in early 2016. A further consultation stage on 'Development Options' was held in 2017. Representations made at the Development Options consultation stage requested that the Council explicitly consider a development option that did not include reference to development on land at Lodge Hill, Chattenden. This would provide greater clarity in assessing the potential impact of development on a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. Therefore the Council provided a further opportunity to make representations, through a Regulation 18 consultation on a Development Strategy document in 2018.
- 1.9 The process for the preparation of local plans is set out in the diagram below, provided in Planning Practice Guidance.

² Available at: https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/3615/medway_2035



2. Update to Local Development Scheme

- 2.1 The Council's work on the new Medway Local Plan is the focus of this Local Development Scheme. The new local plan will cover the period 2020-2037. The Local Plan will cover the whole of Medway, and will be prepared in conformity with national planning legislation, specifically the National Planning Policy Framework, 2019. On adoption it will replace the saved policies from the Medway Local Plan 2003. The Local Plan is a Development Plan Document (DPD).
- 2.2 The new local plan will include strategic policies, including for waste and minerals, and a number of local policies to manage development. It will also have a policies map and provide for land allocations to meet development needs for housing and employment.
- 2.3 The Council has collated a comprehensive evidence base to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan. It has published the information as it is prepared and made it available on the Council's dedicated Local Plan webpages:
https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/519/future_medway_local_plan/2
- 2.4 The Council will meet the requirements of sustainability appraisal throughout the plan preparation process, carrying out iterative appraisals of the sustainability of the options, proposals and draft policies in the emerging Local Plan and prepare reports setting out the findings. This will be carried out at the key stages of plan preparation. The Council will consult on the Sustainability Appraisals in line with its Statement of Community Involvement. The recommendations from the Sustainability Appraisals will be addressed in the emerging Local Plan.
- 2.5 Work on the local plan has identified that lack of infrastructure capacity presents major constraints to growth in Medway, particularly the scale of development needs projected for the area, using the Standard Method for calculating Local Housing Need. The Council submitted a bid to government's Housing Infrastructure Fund for £170m to invest in major transport improvements and environmental measures that would facilitate strategic growth on the Hoo Peninsula. In November 2019, the Council was informed that the bid was successful and work is underway to deliver the programme of investments. This is critical to the assessment of growth options and informing the spatial strategy in the draft plan. The Council has consulted on a 'Planning for Growth on the Hoo Peninsula' document in Spring 2020, seeking comments on principles to guide potential strategic growth. Further guidance will be published with the draft Local Plan, and the Council will consider the

most effective planning policy mechanism to manage sustainable growth.

- 2.6 The outcome of the HIF bid was later than anticipated and this had implications for the Local Plan programme. A key strand of the Local Plan evidence base is the Strategic Transport Assessment that identifies the impacts of potential development on the transport networks. Medway Council has engaged with Highways England throughout this work, but the process has been complex and lengthy. Highways England has provided updated advice to the Council on the need to specifically assess the potential impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing, with proposed local plan growth. This has extended the work programme for the completion of the Strategic Transport Assessment to December 2020. The findings will then need to be assessed and addressed in other key evidence base documents and the content of the draft plan. The publication of the draft plan at Regulation 19 will therefore follow the completion of the Strategic Transport Assessment.
- 2.7 This document represents the updated programme for the production of the new local plan. The Council has revised the LDS to reflect updated timing for the completion of core components of the evidence base. The revisions to the Local Development Scheme relate to the published dates for the key stages of plan preparation as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Key milestones for Medway Local Plan

Stage	Date
Regulation 18 – Issues and Options consultation	Jan-Feb 2016
Regulation 18 – Development Options consultation	Jan-May 2017
Regulation 18 – Development Strategy consultation	March-June 2018
Regulation 19 – Publication of draft plan	Spring 2021
Submission of plan for Examination	December 2021
Adoption (determined on outcome of Examination)	December 2022

3. Neighbourhood Plans and other policy documents

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Plans were introduced in the Localism Act in 2011. They are not compulsory, but when duly prepared they are a statutory document that forms part of the development plan. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted

local plan, and have regard to any emerging local plans or relevant development plan documents. Communities in Medway have shown increased interest in preparing neighbourhood plans for their local areas. Once the plans are 'made', or adopted, they will form part of the development plan for Medway. Currently there are four Neighbourhood Areas designated in Medway, for the purpose of producing a neighbourhood plan:

- Cliffe and Cliffe Woods – designated June 2015
- High Halstow – designated June 2018
- Hoo St Werburgh – designated December 2018
- Arches (Chatham) – designated August 2019

3.2 Cliffe and Cliffe Woods is preparing to carry out its 'Regulation 14' consultation on its draft neighbourhood plan in Autumn 2020, before submitting it to Medway Council to progress to examination. The timing for the 'Regulation 14' consultations for High Halstow, Hoo St Werburgh and Arches (Chatham) have not yet been agreed by the neighbourhood planning groups. The Council anticipates receiving the draft neighbourhood plans from these areas in 2021. Further details of neighbourhood plans in Medway and support available from the Council are available on the Council's website at:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/142/neighbourhood_planning

3.3 In preparation for the new local plan, the Council has reviewed its Statement of Community Involvement. This has recently been updated to take account of the public health measures introduced to address Covid. This provides the basis for effective and meaningful engagement in the preparation of the new Local Plan. The Statement of Community Involvement is published at:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policies/141/medway_statement_of_community_involvement

3.4 The Council makes use of supplementary planning documents to provide guidance and certainty on bringing forward development. It promotes the use of masterplans and development briefs for regeneration sites, as a core component of the area's growth strategy. It has also produced guidance on developer contributions and obligations to assist in the development process. A full list of the supplementary planning documents and other policy documents is set out on the Council's website at:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/146/current_planning_policies/4

- 3.5 The Council is preparing a Local Development Order, jointly with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to support the development of a key employment site at Innovation Park Medway. This covers a defined area on the border of Medway near Rochester Airport, that has been identified by both Councils as a key location for a new business park. The Councils have consulted on the proposals, with adoption of the LDO anticipated in late 2020.
- 3.7 The emerging Local Plan is informed by work on infrastructure planning and delivery. The Council has not progressed a Community Infrastructure Levy, and continues to use Section 106 agreements as its preferred mechanism to collect developer contributions. We are completing work on infrastructure funding in line with the whole plan Viability Assessment and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan being produced for the draft plan.

4. Resources and project management

- 4.1 Medway Council has strong corporate commitment to the adoption of a replacement Local Plan, and the importance of this work is recognised and supported across the authority. The Medway Local Plan will be produced by the Council's Planning Service, with the work being led by the Planning Policy team. The service is supported by the specialist technical skills and knowledge of other teams, including Environmental Protection, Regeneration Delivery and Public Health.
- 4.2 The Council will seek to use its processes of community involvement and engagement and its Duty to Cooperate activities and organisations to help inform and develop the plan, making effective use of intelligence and resources. This will include the preparation of Statements of Common Ground in relation to strategic cross border planning matters. Officers have held early discussions with neighbouring local planning authorities and other statutory organisations regarding the preparation of Statements of Common Ground. The council has led on the establishment of strategic planning and transport groups across north and mid Kent. The Council will manage the delivery of the Strategic Transport Assessment through a Statement of Common Ground with Highways England that commits both parties to sharing of information and collaborative working. The plan will be supported by a comprehensive evidence base, including housing, employment, retail, transport, heritage, infrastructure, viability and the natural environment.

- 4.3 The Council has established management and reporting structures to support the delivery of the local plan, including the use of briefings and reporting to senior managers and members throughout the plan preparation process. Risk management is integral to reporting and monitoring. The Planning Service regularly reviews work streams on the local plan, to take account of new legislation and significant changes in the local context. There is a dedicated cross party member advisory group supporting the production of the local plan.
- 4.4 The Council recognises that the plan preparation process has been protracted, through a combination of factors, such as the submission of the HIF bid, details of the Strategic Transport Assessment, significant variation in the calculation of housing development needs over the plan period, and consideration of potential development at Lodge Hill. Much technical work supporting the preparation of the new Local Plan has been completed. There is a clear work programme up to the publication of the draft plan, and an understanding of the inter-relationship between work streams and technical assessments. The Planning Policy team will review progress on this work programme on a monthly basis, and identify where action needs to be taken to address slippage, challenges or other issues that could impact on the timing for the publication of the draft plan.

Reporting progress

- 4.5 The Council will publish this updated Local Development Scheme on its website and make it available for inspection at the Council's offices at Gun Wharf, at an appropriate time, respecting emergency measures introduced to address Covid-19. There is a dedicated page on the council's website for the LDS:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policies/597/local_development_scheme_and_monitoring

- 4.5 Progress on the Local Plan and supporting activities, such as demonstrating that the Duty to Cooperate is being met in the preparation of the plan, is reported annually in the Authority Monitoring Report. The report will show the progress being made on the Local Plan, and the degree of compliance with the LDS. The Authority Monitoring Report is published each December on the Council's website:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/597/local_development_scheme_and_monitoring/2

5. Contact information

Further information about Medway's planning policy work is available on the Council's website at:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy

You can contact the Planning Policy team at:

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