



**Medway Core Strategy and Revocation of the
South East Plan**

Statement by Medway Council

20 March 2013



Introduction

In a letter dated 7 March 2013 the Inspector wrote to representors in the following terms:

“On 28 February 2013 the Secretary of State laid in Parliament a statutory instrument to revoke, partially, the Regional Strategy for the South East (modified to retain Policy NRM6: Thames Basin and Heaths Special Protection Area) which will come into force on 25 March 2013.

If you wish to make a representation on a matter you consider will be affected by the revocation, as far as the matter relates to the Medway Core Strategy examination, please respond to the Programme Officer by 5pm on Friday 22nd March.”

This statement sets out Medway Council’s response.

Timeline to Revocation

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government first announced the Government’s intention to revoke regional spatial strategies (RSS) on 6 July 2010. This coincided with a report concerning the pre-publication draft core strategy that was due to be considered that evening at an overview and scrutiny committee meeting.

Given the significance of the announcement the report was withdrawn from the agenda and it resulted in a three-month delay to the programme. However it also meant that the pre-publication draft and the subsequent publication draft and submission draft versions of the core strategy were all prepared in anticipation of the revocation of the RSS.

Submission Draft Core Strategy

This is reflected in various references in the submission draft core strategy, including the following:

- 1.26 *The Core Strategy is being prepared at a time when changes are being made to the planning system. The Coalition Government intends to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, the South East Plan in Medway’s case, and further changes have been made in the Localism Act 2011.*
- 1.28 *... The policies and proposals contained in the Core Strategy are therefore considered to be robust and evidence-based irrespective of the weight to be attached to the South East Plan.*
- 1.29 *This document contains some references to the South East Plan. Whilst it is likely to be abolished soon references to it are nonetheless retained, since it has been relevant in the preparation of the Plan.*

- 3.13 *When the South East Plan was being prepared Medway Council supported the proposed housing requirement for the area of an average of 815 dwellings per year for the 2006 to 2026 period. This was considered to represent a realistic balance between meeting local needs and contributing to growth in the Thames Gateway, a national priority area for both growth and regeneration.*
- 3.14 *This remains the case and it is intended that the 815 per year average be rolled on to the end date for the Core Strategy of 2028.*
- 7.14 *It also applies the following hierarchy in terms of meeting need:*
3. *Source land won resources, maintaining at least a seven year landbank of permissions based on the sub-regional apportionments from the evidence base of the South East Plan*
- 7.16 *The likely revocation of the South East Plan will mean that Medway no longer has to make provision to meet a sub-regional apportionment for secondary aggregates of 0.2 million tonnes per annum (mtpa). However it is national policy to seek to substitute primary aggregates with secondary sources and significant amounts of this material are derived from the construction and demolition waste stream. Accordingly it is considered that Medway should make provision for the 0.2 million tonnes per annum previously envisaged.*
- 7.19 *In terms of native land won aggregates the Government has indicated its support for regional apportionments envisaged in the South East Plan. In Medway's case that is 0.18 mtpa. This equates to 2.7 million tones for the period 2010-25 and a land bank of planning permissions at any one time of 1.26 million tonnes (equal to 7 years of production) throughout the life of the plan".*

Other Examination Documents

The matter was further taken into account in the run up to the Core Strategy Examination. The Background Paper on Conformity (LD01) contains the following:

- 2.3 *"The Coalition Government has made clear its intention to revoke regional spatial strategies for some time and a mechanism to achieve that is contained within the Localism Act 2011. However, the strategies remain in force until they have undergone environmental assessments of the impact of their revocation. Given this situation section 4 of this paper assesses*

the conformity of the Submission Core Strategy with the South East Plan.”

It will also be recalled that Matter 1e, discussed at the hearing on 12 June 2012, dealt with this matter by considering whether the core strategy was in compliance with the RSS. It is the Council’s recollection that it was acknowledged then that revocation was likely prior to adoption.

The matter was also referred to during other hearings and the Council is content that participants were both aware of the issue and had an opportunity to raise it.

Conclusions

Given this background it is the Council’s opinion that the impending revocation of the South East Plan has been fully anticipated, is reflected in the submitted Core Strategy and has been considered at hearings already held. It therefore has no further representations to make on this matter.