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# **Medway Council Local Plan 2012-2035**

Development options  
Regulation 18 consultation report



**January 2017**

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# Executive Summary



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## Executive Summary

Medway Council is preparing a new Local Plan to provide direction on the future growth of the area. The aim of the Local Plan is to ensure that Medway grows sustainably, to provide land for the homes, jobs and services that people need, whilst protecting and enhancing the qualities of the area's environment and heritage.

The council consulted on 'Issues and Options' in early 2016. This further consultation document responds to the information gathered then, and represents the next formal stage in preparing the Local Plan.

Medway is one of the largest urban areas in the south east, and is projected to grow to 330,200 people by 2035. The Local Plan must address the need for homes, jobs, shops, services and infrastructure that the area's growing population needs.

The document sets out a vision for Medway;

*By 2035, Medway will be a leading waterfront University city of 330,200 people, noted for its revitalised urban centres, and its stunning natural and historic assets, and countryside.*

Regeneration is at the core of Medway's growth plans and the council's vision for how the area should look by 2035. However, current plans and brownfield sites would not deliver the scale and range of development needed, without some radical changes. The Government requires that the council gives full consideration to all options for meeting development needs. Alternative approaches could involve development on greenfield sites in suburban and rural areas, redevelopment of employment sites for mixed use schemes, and building at higher densities,

This consultation presents four development options that could provide possible approaches to managing Medway's growth over the plan period:

- Maximising urban regeneration opportunities
- Supporting suburban expansion at a significant scale
- Promoting development on the Hoo Peninsula
- Securing urban regeneration and a rural town

The document also sets out suggested approaches to developing policy that would guide development to achieve the ambitions set for Medway's sustainable growth.

The consultation on the Development Options document runs from 16 January to 6 March 2017. Further details are available on the council's website at:

[www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway](http://www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway).







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# **Section 1**

# **Introduction**



# SECTION 1

## Introduction

- 1.1 The council is preparing a new Local Plan for Medway to provide direction on the future growth of the area. The aim of the Local Plan is to ensure that Medway grows sustainably, and to provide land for the homes, jobs and services that people need, whilst protecting and enhancing the qualities of the area's environment and heritage. The Local Plan looks forward to 2035, considering which areas are most suitable for development, and which places need protecting. The plan, once adopted will replace the 'saved' policies in the 2003 Medway Local Plan and the Kent Waste and Minerals Local Plans. It will be used as the basis for making decisions on planning applications.
- 1.2 Government considers that development is best managed where there is an up-to-date Local Plan in place to set out a framework for growth and policies for managing development. The Local Plan is prepared by the council, in consultation with local people, businesses, groups and organisations that have an interest in the area. Medway Council believes the new Local Plan will provide a strong basis for promoting better opportunities for local people, and securing a successful future for the area.
- 1.3 In preparing the Local Plan, the council needs to meet requirements set by Government on how the plan is produced, and what issues it must consider. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) represents the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. The Government makes clear that the purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The planning system performs three key roles in delivering sustainable development:
- An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy;
  - A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, including the provision of a supply of housing required to meet the needs of current and future generations;
  - An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.
- 1.4 The NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan making this means:
- Local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;
  - Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:
  - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or



- specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted (such as Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, land designated as Green Belt, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated heritage assets and locations at risk of flooding).
- 1.5 The council is adhering to Government policy in preparing a new Local Plan for Medway, in planning positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area in line with the objectives, principles and policies of the NPPF.

#### *Preparing the new Local Plan*

- 1.6 The council has set out its timetable for preparing the new Medway Local Plan in the Local Development Scheme, 2016<sup>1</sup>. This aims to produce a plan that can be submitted for independent examination in 2018.

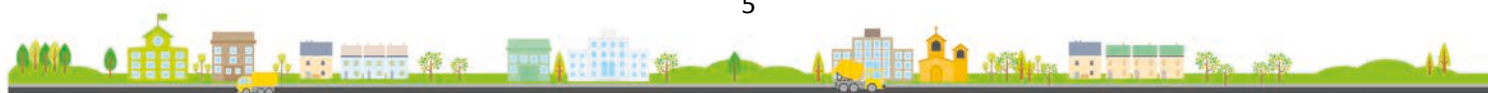
#### **Key milestones for Medway Local Plan**

Stage	Date
Regulation 18 – Issues and Options consultation	Jan-Feb 2016
Regulation 18 – Development Options consultation	Jan-Feb 2017
Regulation 19 – Publication of draft plan	Winter 2017/2018
Submission of plan for examination	Spring 2018
Adoption (determined on outcome of Examination)	2019

- 1.7 This consultation document represents an early stage of work on an emerging Local Plan for Medway. It builds on the work in the 'Issues and Options' document that was published for consultation in early 2016.
- 1.8 Alongside the consultation documents, the council is collating a comprehensive evidence base to inform the content and direction of the Local Plan. These include:
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2015
  - Employment Land Needs Assessment, 2015
  - Retail Needs Assessment, 2016
  - Integrated Growth Needs Assessment, 2016
  - Iterative Sustainability Appraisals and Habitat Regulations Assessment at key stages of plan preparation
  - Viability appraisals
  - Strategic Land Availability Assessment, 2016
  - Strategic Transport Assessment
  - Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and Plan
  - Village Infrastructure Audit
  - Green Belt review
  - Landscape Character Assessment update
  - Green Infrastructure Strategy

<sup>1</sup> Available at:

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningpolicy/localdevelopmentscheme.aspx>



- 1.9 Work is continuing on some of these technical studies, so that the updated evidence base can take account of the findings of this consultation, and inform the content of the draft Local Plan.

#### *Issues and Options Consultation*

- 1.10 In December 2015, the council published an 'Issues and Options' technical consultation document as the first formal stage in preparing a new Local Plan. Consultation was carried out in January and February 2016. The council contacted over 1000 people and groups directly through its Local Plan consultation database, as well as using wider council and partner organisations to raise awareness of the consultation document and encourage people to respond. A number of stakeholder events were organised, including discussion of environmental, health, housing, economic and strategic issues. The council also held meetings and exhibitions in villages and towns across Medway, and attended partnership meetings to discuss the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.11 Over 200 written responses were received from a wide range of local residents, statutory organisations, businesses, interest and community groups, land owners and developers. The representations made reflected the interests of the diverse stakeholders, and there were differing views on the scale of development needed in the area, and how the Local Plan should respond. However there was some shared understanding that development was needed to provide for homes, jobs, services and facilities in the area. Concerns were largely expressed about the impact of potential development on existing transport networks, services and facilities, and the local environment. There were strong views that housing growth could not be seen separately to delivery of infrastructure, such as transport, healthcare, schools and parks.
- 1.12 Information provided in the responses received on the 'Issues and Options' document is available to view on the council's website. An overview of this initial consultation stage is set out in a report also available on the Local Plan pages of the website.
- 1.13 The council has considered the comments made on the 'Issues and Options' document and information provided in the responses. This information has been used alongside technical studies and analysis to produce this Development Options consultation document.

#### *Development Options Consultation*

- 1.14 This report provides an assessment of the current context for Medway's economic, social and environmental conditions and the key issues that need to be addressed in planning positively for the area's future over the lifetime of the Local Plan.
- 1.15 The document provides a draft vision for Medway in 2035 and the strategic objectives that should underpin the approaches taken to the area's balanced growth. This sets out the ambitions the council is promoting for Medway's urban regeneration, whilst strengthening the natural networks of the river, countryside and parks, and



celebrating the area's history. At the heart of this emerging Local Plan is an aspiration to manage growth in Medway to achieve the homes, jobs, infrastructure, shops and services that the area needs, balanced with protection of the environment, heritage and community facilities. Building on the consideration of the comments made on the Issues and Options consultation carried out in early 2016, this document sets out emerging approaches to policies to address the key issues facing Medway's communities, economy, and environment. It does not cover at this stage the detailed policies that would be needed to manage development, but rather seeks to establish a broad direction for policy in the new Local Plan.

- 1.16 This is an early stage of preparing a new Local Plan for Medway. The council is still collecting evidence and carrying out technical studies that will inform the final content of the plan. The council wants to involve local people, businesses, statutory organisations and interest groups in influencing the development strategy and policies of the Local Plan. Effective consultation involves giving people opportunities to be heard at different stages in preparing the plan, and having choices on how Medway should best meet the development needed in the area.
- 1.17 The decision on which locations are most suitable for development is critical for the Local Plan. The council wants to give people a say on the available choices for allocating development sites. This stage of the plan making process must consider options for how development could be allocated across Medway. Therefore this document includes a range of scenarios that could provide the basis for Medway's development up to 2035.
- 1.18 Findings from this consultation will be considered alongside additional technical work to assess the sustainability of the different options and policies. This includes the potential impacts on the transport network, to determine if there are opportunities to adequately address traffic growth, or whether the infrastructure presents fixed limits on the amount of growth that some areas can accommodate. A further Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment will be carried out before establishing a preferred spatial strategy for Medway's growth.

#### *How to get involved in the preparation of the Local Plan*

- 1.19 The council welcomes comments on the draft vision and strategic objectives, the development options and the policy approaches. Consultation responses will be taken into account in setting out a preferred development strategy and supporting policies for the new Local Plan. There will be a further opportunity to comment when the council publishes its draft plan.
- 1.20 The consultation will run from **Monday, 16 January to 5pm on Monday, 6 March 2017**. During this time, the council will be holding events and exhibitions to discuss the Local Plan. You can find out more about these events on the council's website at: [www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway](http://www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway).

All comments must be submitted to the council by 5pm on Monday, 6 March 2017, so that they can be considered as part of this formal consultation stage.

You can submit comments in the following ways:



By post:

Planning Policy  
Regeneration, Culture, Environment & Transformation  
Medway Council, Gun Wharf  
Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR

By email:

[futuremedway@medway.gov.uk](mailto:futuremedway@medway.gov.uk)

Copies of this consultation document are available to view at public libraries across Medway, at the reception desk at the council offices at Gun Wharf, during opening hours, and online at: [www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway](http://www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway)

You can find details of the opening hours of the council offices and libraries at: [www.medway.gov.uk](http://www.medway.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01634 333333.

This information can be made available in other formats by telephoning 01634 333333

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please telephone 01634 335577

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# **Section 2**

# **Vision and**

# **Strategic**

# **Objectives for**

# **Medway 2035**



# Medway 2035 - Vision and Strategic Objectives for the Local Plan

## Context

- 2.1 Medway sits at the mouth of its great river on the north Kent estuarine coast, bordered by the Thames to the north and the Kent Downs to the south. The five historic towns linked by the A2 form a complex urban conurbation, which retains the distinct identities of the individual towns and suburbs. Sitting close to the countryside, the urban area is surrounded by a network of villages on the Hoo Peninsula and the Medway Valley, alongside marshes and mudflats, wooded hills, productive farmland and strategic energy and minerals operations built up around the wharves. Much of the countryside and estuary is of international importance for its environmental qualities.
- 2.2 Medway is one of the largest urban areas in the south east, and has been growing rapidly in recent years to a population of 276,492 by 2015. The population has a slighter younger age profile than the Kent and England averages, and linked to national trends has an increasing number of people over 65 years. This has implications for planning services such as health and education, and ensuring ease of access to local services and facilities. In common with other areas, particularly in the South East, Medway has seen steady growth in recent years, and this is projected to continue over the life of the local plan, to expand the area's population by circa 20%. This growth is projected to reach a population of 330,200 people in 2035. In contrast to other areas in Kent, much of Medway's growth is from natural change, with births outnumbering deaths. This shows through in demand for health and education services.
- 2.3 Medway is similar in size to cities such as Brighton & Hove and Plymouth. However Medway does not enjoy either the recognition, or the range of services and facilities that of a city of this scale warrants.
- 2.4 Medway benefits from a stunning landscape setting, rich heritage, high speed train links, universities, a strategic location in the Thames Gateway, and a diverse offer of services and businesses. However there are areas which need addressing. Medway's economy and skills levels are weaker than competing areas. There are marked inequalities in health, with life expectancy shorter for our residents. Medway is often unfairly associated with negative perceptions. The town centres are not always seen as attractive destinations and vibrant hubs for community activities. In particular Chatham does not provide the scale of retail and leisure facilities that would be expected for a city of its size, and as the centre for wider Medway. Our ambitions should seek to realise the added economic value that a city should provide.
- 2.5 Medway's economy lags behind both the county and national averages. Productivity runs at two thirds of the national performance, and skills levels are notably lower in





Medway. Medway's productivity measured by GVA (Gross Value Added) is the lowest in the South East region. Despite being the largest city in Kent and one of the largest in the South East region, Medway fails to punch at its weight.

- 2.6 Medway's economy is recovering from the closure of the Dockyard in the 1980s, which dealt a severe blow to the local area. There is a well-established urban regeneration programme that has brought universities to Medway, with over 10,000 students, infrastructure investments in HS1, road schemes and railway stations, and new residential, commercial and leisure areas. The council is committed to the continuation of the regeneration programme and this will be at the core of the strategy for the new Local Plan.
- 2.7 The scale of growth Medway is experiencing is challenging. The population has increased by over 10,000 people in the last 3 years. Local people are experiencing the impacts of growth, and are concerned that further increases will result in a deterioration of the quality of life in Medway, placing pressures on infrastructure and services, leading to increasing delays in moving around Medway, longer waits for health services, more competition in getting school places, loss of green spaces and the views that people currently enjoy, and new houses going to people moving into Medway.
- 2.8 A key task for the Local Plan is to manage growth to achieve a more successful, attractive Medway with healthier communities that share in the benefits of development. Development should be seen to deliver benefits – better housing for local people, higher quality jobs, new services and facilities such as schools and parks. Growth can boost the economy, improve our town centres, turn derelict and underused land into attractive modern places to live, work and visit, and achieve the city scale facilities that Medway warrants.
- 2.9 Growth does not mean losing the character of the area. Medway's history, countryside and the river provide the context for future development. The natural and built environment defines Medway, and will be at the core of the Local Plan. The development strategy must show how we can provide land for housing, jobs, infrastructure and services, whilst protecting important environmental and heritage assets, retaining and strengthening the green infrastructure links for people and wildlife.

## **Strategic Context**

- 2.10 The emerging Local Plan fits into the context of a series of strategies, documents and plans that map out ambitions for Medway to achieve its potential as a successful vibrant modern city, that celebrates its heritage and close links to the river and countryside. A number that provide direction for the vision and strategic objectives for the Local Plan are noted below.

### *Medway Council Plan, 2016-2021*

- 2.11 The Medway council plan sets out three key priorities for the area:

- A place to be proud of



- Maximising regeneration and economic growth
  - Supporting Medway's people to realise their potential
- 2.12 The council plan promotes Medway as a great place to work, live, learn and visit, supported by strategies for culture, tourism and regeneration. The council priorities provide a strong basis for the Local Plan in planning positively for Medway's needs, boosting the economy, improving access, delivering new homes, improving residents' health and wellbeing, and caring for the environment. The council aims to boost economic performance through supporting local businesses and attracting inward investment, and targeting the creation of high skilled jobs. Allied to this are aims to raise skills levels and open up employment opportunities for young people. The council plan specifically supports the preparation of the Local Plan to progress the delivery of the regeneration programme and providing homes to meet the need of Medway's residents.

*Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Medway, 2012-2017*

- 2.13 The five key themes are working together to:
- Give every child a good start in life;
  - Enable our older population to live independently and well;
  - Prevent early death and increase years of healthy life;
  - Improve physical and mental health and wellbeing;
  - Reduce health inequalities.
- 2.14 This Strategy seeks to improve the health of Medway's communities, particularly as many residents experience poorer standards of health than national, regional and Kent averages. Promoting healthy eating and physical activity are central to improving health. Planning can help contribute to healthier food environments, such as managing the availability of fast food outlets, and can support increased access to opportunities for physical activity, including formal provision of sports facilities and parks, and making it easier and more enjoyable to walk and cycle as part of daily routines. In the Strategy, Medway aims to be a dementia-friendly community. Planning has a role to play in making it easier for people to move around and to access local services and facilities. Actions to address disadvantage across Medway, through better housing, raising education and skills levels, and employment will contribute to reduction of health inequalities.
- 2.15 A Kent and Medway Health and Social Care Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) is in development that will set out the framework for the integration and planning of health and social care services and facilities.

## **Strategic Regeneration and Growth**

- 2.16 Medway participates in the Thames Gateway regeneration programme, which is a key component of wider regional development and investment planning through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, and its supporting partnerships. Core ambitions relevant to the Medway Local Plan are set out below.



### *South East Local Enterprise Partnership – Kent and Medway Growth Deal 2014*

2.17 This delivers investment as part of the Strategic Economic Plan to unlock economic potential to:

- Substantially increase the delivery of housing and commercial developments;
- Delivering transport and broadband infrastructure to unlock growth;
- Backing business expansion through better access to finance and support, and
- Delivering the skills that the local economy needs.

### *Thames Gateway Kent Plan for Growth, 2014-2020*

2.18 This establishes a vision for North Kent as:

- An area of exciting towns and cities complemented by an outstanding natural environment, providing an exemplar of urban regeneration.
- A thriving business centre attracting leading investors and businesses through its diverse and skilled workforce, high-quality commercial sites and local services, and accessibility to transport links and strategic routes to UK and continental markets.
- An area of strong, integrated communities with harmony between new and existing businesses and residents – where the benefits of development and investment are shared by the whole community.
- A vibrant cultural hub with a thriving social scene and civic pride – attracting a growing student population, bringing youth and vigour to the community.

### *Medway Regeneration Strategy*

2.19 Medway has a long standing commitment to regeneration, and a number of strategies, development briefs and masterplans have informed the transformation of the waterfront and urban areas over recent decades. As the regeneration programme continues, strategies and plans need to be refreshed. A new Regeneration Strategy is being drafted for publication in 2017, and this shares the emerging evidence base and strategic objectives for the Local Plan. It will promote and support the realisation of the ambitions set for Medway's successful growth by 2035.

### *Medway's Cultural Strategy 2014-2019*

2.20 This sets out four strategic priorities:

- Stewardship – preserve, interpret and enhance Medway's heritage, green spaces and public realm for the enjoyment and benefit of current and future generations
- Engagement – increase active engagement and satisfaction with cultural activities to improve quality of life, providing the essential place-making for the significant regeneration that is taking place in Medway
- Prosperity – harness and foster the creative talent within Medway and maximise the opportunities the universities and further education, tourism, creative sector and cultural offer create for Medway's economy.



- Wellbeing – increase active participation to address obesity, mental and spiritual health, promoting active minds, bodies and lifestyles and seeking to address social isolation.
- 2.21 The Cultural Strategy highlights that cultural activities in Medway can offer economic opportunities, contribute to transforming perceptions of the area, and promote healthy and cohesive communities. It recognises the value of celebrating the best of Medway’s past and natural heritage whilst nurturing new activities and outlooks.

## **Strategic Issues**

- 2.22 Medway’s location in the Thames Estuary raises significant cross boundary strategic considerations. Medway is part of the Thames Gateway regeneration programme that seeks to raise economic success and boost the delivery of infrastructure and housing. Proposals for a Lower Thames Crossing, and major developments at Ebbsfleet Garden City and the London Paramount entertainment resort have implications for Medway. There are commuting links to surrounding areas, such as Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling, and to London.
- 2.23 Although two-thirds of house moves in Medway come from existing residents, there are also moves in and out of Medway. Apart from the influence of the London housing market, people moving into the area generally come from places close by, such as parts of Gravesham, Swale and Maidstone. Similarly people moving out of Medway tend to look to neighbouring areas, such as Swale, Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling.
- 2.24 Bluewater has a sub-regional shopping role, and has a major impact on retail patterns across the area, drawing 26% of all comparison spend from Medway. The expansion of the leisure offer at Bluewater could have further implications for Medway’s town centres.
- 2.25 The council works in partnership to secure the natural environmental features of the estuarine landscapes of the north Kent coast, and the Kent Downs. Medway is of regional and national importance in the importation of aggregates and the energy industry. Planning for hospital services in Medway includes residents in parts of Swale.
- 2.26 Further details on the range of strategic matters that the Local Plan must consider are set out in a Duty to Cooperate Scoping Report available on the council’s website.
- 2.27 The council received a broad range of responses to questions on strategic matters in the Issues and Options consultation. The matters raised reflected the diverse interests of residents, statutory organisations, community groups and developers. It was noted that Medway had important relationships with the wider area, and joint working with relevant authorities and organisations was essential to effective planning and development.



## Duty to Cooperate

- 2.28 Medway Council has been preparing its new Local Plan with regard to the Duty to Cooperate on cross boundary strategic issues.
- 2.29 The Duty to Cooperate, introduced in the Localism Act 2011, places a legal duty on local planning authorities to co-operate with one another and with county councils and other prescribed bodies. This is to maximise the effectiveness within which 'activities, such as preparation of development plans, are undertaken as far as they relate to strategic matters. Government policy as set out in the NPPF directs 'local planning authorities to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans'. These strategic priorities are wide ranging and include:
- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
  - the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
  - the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
  - the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
  - climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- 2.30 To effectively coordinate actions on strategic matters in the new Local Plan, the council has made use of established partnerships and collaborative working structures to share information, raise issues and where appropriate develop joint evidence base documents, plans and actions. This includes work on regeneration, economic development, infrastructure planning, and environmental management.
- 2.30 The council has also undertaken specific work in connection with the preparation of the Local Plan to ensure that the Duty to Cooperate is met. This has included a Duty to Cooperate stakeholder event held during the Issues and Options consultation and 1:1 meetings with local planning authorities, statutory organisations and other Duty to Cooperate bodies. Further details on these activities are set out in the Issues and Options consultation report and the Authority Monitoring Report, 2016. Both are available on the council's website at [www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway](http://www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway).



### **Developing a vision for 2035**

By 2035 Medway will be a leading waterfront University city of 330,200 people, noted for its revitalised urban centres, its stunning natural and historic assets and countryside.

Medway will have secured the best of its intrinsic heritage and landscapes alongside high quality development to strengthen the area's distinctive character. The urban waterfront and neighbouring centres will have been transformed into attractive locations for homes, jobs, leisure and cultural activities. The river will be celebrated as the defining feature linking historic and new development, and extended riverside access will connect communities and destinations.

Medway will have established a regional profile for successful and ambitious growth and accrued benefits from wider strategic developments. New development in Medway's towns and villages will have responded positively to the character of the surrounding environment and needs of existing communities.

Planned growth will have delivered a city that its residents have pride in, providing homes for all sectors of the community, supported by infrastructure to deliver education, transport, health and community services. Vibrant and complementary town, local and village centres will provide a focus for community life.

The distinct towns and villages that make up Medway will be connected through effective transport networks, and green infrastructure links supporting nature and healthy communities. The quality of design and public realm will have delivered an accessible city where all can move around safely.

Inequalities in health, education, economic and social opportunities will be reduced.

Medway will have successfully grown its economy, capitalising on its learning quarter of higher and further education providers to raise skills levels; gaining competitiveness from its strategic location, delivering high speed broadband services to businesses and communities; securing and developing its diverse business base and attracting inward investment in a range of quality employment sites.

Medway will be defined by development that respects the character, functions and qualities of the natural and historic environments, in order to reduce the risk of flooding, to manage finite natural resources, and to ensure that important wildlife and heritage assets are protected and opportunities are realised to enhance their condition and connectivity. Medway's growth will promote a low carbon economy, seeking to address and mitigate climate change. Development will be managed to facilitate the sustainable supply of minerals and management of waste.

- 2.31 The Local Plan is an opportunity to establish a positive strategy to guide Medway's development over the next 18 years.
- 2.32 Regeneration is at the core of Medway's growth plans and its vision for how the area should look and function by 2035. The council is committed to promoting and





realising the opportunities for investing in a renewed urban area with high quality development along the waterfront and in town centres that brings homes, jobs, services and new riverside and city links for Medway's communities.

- 2.33 The regeneration of Chatham is central to the success of Medway's development. The town centre and adjacent waterfront will be a focus for community life. In line with wider trends seen in retail, the role of the town centre is anticipated to evolve in response to changes in shopping habits, and strengthen as a revitalised hub for community activities. This will be achieved through investing in quality, extending access, and broadening the offer, particularly in leisure, culture and community activities. There is potential to bring more homes into the central area, boosting potential footfall for local services and businesses, and increasing vibrancy.
- 2.34 Medway has a complex urban conurbation made up of five distinct towns with their wider neighbourhoods. The Local Plan will promote opportunities to secure the functions of the individual towns, responding to their specific characteristics and offers. Rochester Riverside will provide a quality waterfront location for homes, leisure, jobs and services, complementing, and respecting, the unique historic High Street. The Local Plan will support the regeneration of Strood to capitalise on its stunning location overlooking Rochester Castle and Cathedral, its accessibility to high speed rail and motorway links and the availability of redevelopment sites. Gillingham will consolidate its links with the Universities at Medway and its student populations, as well as the wider community. Rainham will retain its attractiveness as a popular place to live, and strengthen its role as a service centre.
- 2.35 Medway's growth over the next 18 years will take place across the borough, and some areas will see significant change. The Local Plan will seek to direct growth to the most sustainable locations that have potential to expand, to secure investment in infrastructure and services, and to respect the character of the local environment. This will help to deliver development that strengthens, rather than detracts from, Medway.
- 2.36 A quality environment can help boost the economy. Businesses are attracted to places that present a good image. In order to achieve the economic ambitions set out in our vision for Medway by 2035, there is a need to address the unfair perception of the area as an uninspiring post-industrial urban conglomeration. The Local Plan has a role in challenging these perceptions, establishing Medway as an attractive city, with an excellent public realm supporting a vibrant cultural life; new development designed to help people walk and cycle to local services safely and easily; and the surrounding rural and water landscapes recognised as part of Medway's character and offer.
- 2.37 The natural and historic environment will continue to inform how Medway looks and functions. The river and estuary of the Medway have defined the history of its urban and rural areas. They are also central to the vision for Medway's future growth. The waterfront regeneration sites have the potential to provide much needed homes, jobs, community and cultural facilities, and turn around negative perceptions of the area. A riverside path or boardwalk linking the towns and out to the villages in the Medway Valley and the Hoo Peninsula would be a conduit for community and commercial



activities, and establish new infrastructure that inspires place-making and how people move around the area. A defined riverside route would be a draw for residents and visitors, linking key heritage sites, stations with town centres, the Universities and work places, supporting healthier lifestyles and cultural activities. It would be a focus for the public realm in shaping the modern waterfront city, associated with vibrant urban life within easy reach of the countryside. This would raise the profile of Medway's links with its countryside and open spaces, and complement the wide network of protected and community green spaces.

- 2.38 Development will deliver investment and open up opportunities for Medway's residents for better homes, jobs and services, and to lead healthier lives.

## **Strategic Objectives**

- 2.39 The role of the Medway Local Plan is to plan positively for the development and infrastructure that the area needs, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. The objectives for the plan are:

### *A place that works well*

- To boost the performance of the local economy by supporting local businesses to grow and attracting inward investment through the provision of good quality employment land that meets the needs of businesses, and to secure and extend higher value employment opportunities;
- To significantly improve the skills of the local workforce;
- To ensure Medway's recognition as a University city and realise economic and place-making opportunities associated with the learning cluster of higher and further education providers in Medway;
- To deliver the infrastructure needed for business growth, to provide accessible employment locations, and excellent high speed broadband services;
- To strengthen the transport network providing safe and effective choices for travel, including management of the highways network, enhanced public transport systems, and improved opportunities for walking and cycling.

### *A riverside city connected to its natural surroundings*

- To secure a strong green infrastructure network that protects the assets of the natural and historic environments in urban and rural Medway, and informs the design and sustainability of new development.
- To address the challenges of climate change, seeking opportunities to promote carbon reduction and mitigation measures, and reduce the risk of flooding;
- To ensure the effective management of natural resources, including the sustainable supply of minerals and appropriate management of waste.

### *Medway recognised for its quality of life*

- To reduce inequalities in health by promoting opportunities for increasing physical activity, through walking, cycling, parks and other recreation facilities, and improving





access to healthy food choices; and to reduce social isolation by supporting retention and development of local services and dementia friendly environments;

- To provide for the housing needs of Medway's communities, that meets the range of size, type and affordability the area needs;
- To strengthen the role of Medway's town, neighbourhood and village centres, securing a range of accessible services and facilities for local communities, and opportunities for homes and jobs.

*Ambitious in attracting investment and successful in place-making*

- To deliver sustainable development, meeting the needs of Medway's communities, respecting the natural and historic environment, and directing growth to the most suitable locations that can enhance Medway's economic, social and environmental characteristics;
- To secure the ongoing benefits of Medway's regeneration, making the best use of brownfield land, and bringing forward the transformation of the waterfront and town centre sites for quality mixed use development, a focus for cultural activities;
- To establish quality design in all new development, respecting the character of the local environment and seeking opportunities to boost quality and improve the accessibility and design of the public realm;
- To ensure that development is supported by the timely provision of good quality effective infrastructure, so that the needs of Medway's growing and changing communities are well served.





**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

# **Section 3**

# **Delivering Sustainable Development - Options**



## SECTION 3

### Delivering Sustainable Development – Options

- 3.1 Government policy requires Local Plans to plan positively for the development and infrastructure needed in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of the NPPF. This includes making land available for housing, jobs, shops and infrastructure. The council jointly commissioned a North Kent Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, with Gravesham Borough Council, to provide an evidence base for housing, employment and retail needs in Medway over the plan period. This research showed a need over the plan period for:
- 29,463 homes
  - 49,943 m<sup>2</sup> of B1 office space; 155,748 m<sup>2</sup> of B2 industrial land; and 164,263 m<sup>2</sup> of B8 warehousing land.
  - 34,900 m<sup>2</sup> of comparison retail space and 10,500 m<sup>2</sup> of convenience (groceries etc.) retail space up to 2031.
- 3.2 The council is undertaking ongoing work in identifying infrastructure needs.
- 3.3 This scale of growth is challenging. It calls for careful consideration of how Medway's environment and infrastructure can accommodate development that is sustainable, and what forms of development will be most successful in meeting communities' needs and strengthening the local economy. Meeting this challenge and achieving successful growth in Medway is the central purpose of the Local Plan.
- 3.4 This consultation stage seeks to provide comprehensive options for how Medway could accommodate this scale of growth in the Local Plan. The council welcomes views on what are the most sustainable choices for meeting Medway's development needs. Further work will be carried out to assess the ability to deliver growth, taking account of detailed infrastructure planning, viability testing and environmental and economic considerations. This will be informed by the representations made in the consultation on this document and development options.

#### Approach to sustainable development

- 3.5 The starting point for the development strategy in the Medway Local Plan is making the most effective use of land that can deliver the strategic objectives set out for Medway's growth.
- 3.6 Regeneration is at the core of the development strategy. The council is following Government policy to promote the use of brownfield land, in preference to releasing greenfield sites. Medway has been successful in transforming many former industrial sites to attractive mixed use developments, such as seen at Chatham Maritime and Victory Pier. This regeneration programme continues and much of the land in the 'development pipeline' planned for Medway is in the urban centres and waterfront areas.



## Residential Development Pipeline

- 3.7 The table below summarises development monitoring information collated by the council to provide an overview of the current supply of development land, and the need to identify further sites to meet Medway's growth needs over the plan period. More detailed information is set out in the Authority Monitoring Report, Volume 2, which is available on the council's website at: <http://www.medway.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningpolicy/authoritymonitoringreport.aspx>

Status	Number of dwellings
Completions 2012-2016	2180
Sites with planning permission	6251
Medway Local Plan 2003 Allocations	356
SLAA* Pipeline sites	8813
Windfalls (Years 3-5 only)	606
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,206</b>

(\*Strategic Land Availability Assessment)

- 3.8 The pilot Brownfield Land Register that Medway published in 2016, shows 35 of the 42 sites on the list already have the benefit of planning permission, or the support of a development brief. This well-established regeneration programme means there is limited capacity to realise additional development from these areas without more radical approaches.
- 3.9 It is unlikely that the full range of development needs could be met solely in the identified regeneration areas on brownfield land. Therefore greenfield sites in suburban and rural areas may have to form a part of Medway's development strategy for the new Local Plan. The council's approach seeks to make use of greenfield land that is free from environmental constraints, of lesser value for landscape and agricultural purposes, and well related to services and infrastructure.
- 3.10 Medway's residents value local parks and green spaces as important resources for community life and wellbeing, which add to the character of the towns. The council recognises the importance of these open spaces for residents, and considers that developing on the current range of parks would damage the quality of urban areas, and impact on corporate objectives for a green and healthier Medway. No such land has been identified as surplus to the needs of the area. Therefore development on urban parks and open spaces is not considered an appropriate part of the approach to planning for Medway's growth over the plan period.
- 3.11 A particular characteristic of Medway is the high proportion of land covered by environmental designations where development should be restricted. This includes wide swathes of the Hoo Peninsula, covered by Ramsar, Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest designations. Land in the Medway Valley and to the south of the urban area is in the Kent Downs Area of Natural Beauty where any development must be in accordance with the need to conserve and enhance the intrinsic qualities of this landscape. Part of the eastern most reach of the London metropolitan Green Belt in Kent is in Medway, covering land in the Medway Valley and to the west of Strood. This designation aims to prevent urban sprawl by keeping



land permanently open, which has significance in preventing the coalescence of development between Strood and Gravesend.

- 3.12 In addition to these protected areas, much land on the Hoo Peninsula, and bordering the urban areas of Strood and Rainham is of the highest grades of best and most versatile agricultural land. Government policy is that local planning authorities should take account of the economic and other benefits of this land. National planning policy does not preclude development on such areas of farmland, but directs that local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.
- 3.13 Undeveloped land in Medway of lesser agricultural value tends to correspond to areas of higher landscape and ecological value, such as the North Kent marshes, the woodland and chalk grassland of the Kent Downs and its outliers in the valleys and ridges that form Medway's distinct character.
- 3.14 Some sites are also subject to the most severe risks of flooding, where inappropriate development should be avoided.
- 3.15 The scale of growth projected for Medway also indicates that the council needs to look more widely than just considering incremental growth around the edges of towns and villages in appropriate locations. Thought must be given to larger planned settlements that can deliver a mixed development of homes, services, infrastructure, green spaces, shops and jobs. As Medway's population grows and ages, it is important that development meets the needs of different groups in society, providing safe and accessible homes for older people and people with disabilities, good quality housing for families, couples, single people and students.
- 3.16 The choices for meeting Medway's development needs are therefore complex and need careful consideration in order to secure sustainable growth that respects the different aspects of the area's environment, and offers access to the services and facilities that underpin a good quality of life.
- 3.17 This complex geography demands that any development that comes forward in greenfield areas must be of high quality and sensitive to the natural environment, as well as addressing needs for services and infrastructure. In planning for Medway's future development, the council wants to safeguard and establish strategic green spaces and corridors, to protect wildlife features and provide healthy and attractive places for people to live and work.
- 3.18 Given the scale of development needed in Medway, the council has had to look widely at a broad range of locations and sites that may be able to deliver sustainable development. An important part of the process in preparing a Local Plan involves identifying land that may be available for development, and assessing its suitability and viability. This work forms a Strategic Land Availability Assessment, that is updated by the council to provide a basis for plan making. The map set out at Appendix 1A shows the land that has been identified as having potential for development. These sites include land allocated in the 2003 Medway Local Plan, those included in development briefs and masterplans, and areas put forward by land owners and developers through 'Call for Sites' to include in the Medway Strategic



Land Availability Assessment. The map should not be interpreted as site allocations for the new Local Plan. Not all sites would deliver sustainable development, due to constraints and conflicts with designations. Also the entirety of the sites shown would represent substantial over-development, and not provide sustainable growth. This is rather a starting point for the consideration of the development strategy and allocations for the new Local Plan, providing a basis for a considered assessment of which sites and broad locations would represent the most sustainable areas for growth, and achieve the ambitions set in the Local Plan. This also informs the consultation process, allowing residents and wider stakeholders to make effective representations on the options for Medway's growth.

- 3.19 A range of alternative scenarios have been considered for potential development patterns that could present a development strategy for Medway's planned growth. The regeneration of Medway's waterfront and town centre sites from Strood to Gillingham is central to all scenarios. This commitment to making the best use of previously developed land is consistent with national planning policy and was supported by a wide range of residents and interests in the Issues and Options consultation. Vacant or underused brownfield sites that are suitable for sustainable development should be considered preferable to building on greenfield sites. However consideration has also to be given to how the wider area could contribute to the development needed, without undermining the regeneration strategy that is central to Medway's success.
- 3.20 The scenarios are presented for consultation and assessment of which approach could deliver the most sustainable development pattern for Medway, meeting the aspirations set out in the vision and the strategic objectives in the Local Plan. This consultation seeks additional information on the potential contributions that locations could offer for Medway's successful growth, as well as constraints and negative impacts that need consideration and may restrict development.

### ***Scenario 1: 'Maximising the potential of urban regeneration'***

**See strategic diagram set out at Appendix 1B.**

- 3.21 This seeks to establish a major transformation in the urban centre. It would continue the regeneration of waterfront sites that has been taking place in Medway over recent decades, but also bring in new areas and contemporary approaches to development, akin to a city environment. The council has considered the potential to increase the rate of development in these urban areas. The options include building at higher densities in appropriate locations, seeking opportunities for land consolidation to bring forward bigger development sites, and bringing mixed development into retail and employment areas.
- 3.22 This option could extend regeneration to peripheral town centre areas, particularly where opportunities exist in Chatham and Strood. It would use land more intensively, building at high densities, concentrating the retail hubs in town centres, allied to investment in quality, with redevelopment on the edge of centres bringing forward





land for housing and a wider range of jobs. The high density development would define a new character for some of our town centres, but care needs to be taken with the potential impact on Medway's important historic features and their setting. More housing in urban centres and accessible waterfront areas would boost the local population using services, leisure and cultural facilities in the town centres, helping to address the challenges many face in competition from other areas and online shopping.

- 3.23 In this scenario, consideration is given to the redevelopment of Medway City Estate, and further land at Chatham Docks. This would bring forward mixed development and realise the potential for landmark development creating new urban quarters, defined by the river and creating new links across the river to the historic town centres on the opposite bank. The regeneration vision prepared for the council by Farrells in 2010 is set out in Appendix 1F. A modern employment park would be developed around an extended Kingsnorth on the Hoo Peninsula to provide accessible, quality land for businesses that would need to relocate.
- 3.24 The regeneration area would extend beyond Gillingham to include a modern football stadium for Gillingham Football Club at Mill Hill, supported by a mixed development of apartments, shops and wider leisure facilities. An iconic building would establish the new character of this area and mark the extent of the regeneration zone.
- 3.25 Such an approach would deliver much of the housing in apartments, and may not meet the needs of all the different sectors of the population looking for homes in Medway. Therefore there would still need to be consideration of suburban and rural areas as potential locations for new development, in order to achieve a balanced development strategy.
- 3.26 The council acknowledges that there are a number of risks in such an approach, including the ability to deliver within the plan period, potential loss of overall employment land supply, securing infrastructure and services to support growth at this scale, viability of building at high heights, and difficulties in providing the full range of housing that the market requires.

## ***Scenario 2: Suburban expansion***

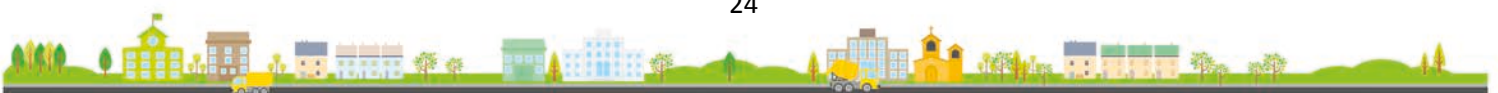
**See strategic diagram set out at Appendix 1C.**

- 3.27 This scenario retains a core component of urban regeneration as part of a balanced development strategy. The council recognises that the success of Medway depends on a revitalised and strengthened urban core, providing the community, cultural and commercial energy and focus to raise the performance and perceptions of Medway. However in this scenario, greater consideration is given to the potential of the suburban areas to meet the shortfall between development needs and the identified pipeline of sites.
- 3.28 Much of the land bordering Medway's urban area and a number of the villages has been identified by landowners as potentially available for development through the



Call for Sites that informed the Strategic Land Availability Assessment. Many of these sites are subject to environmental constraints or lack the infrastructure and access to services that would be required for sustainable development. However in looking at the development needed over the period of the Local Plan, consideration has been given to the potential for expanding and creating new suburbs at a scale to deliver mixed use development, with housing supported by new services, shops, infrastructure and jobs, and green spaces and linkages. Planned growth could deliver a balanced development, setting quality standards for sustainable suburban living that promote healthy lifestyles and offer real alternatives to car based travel with excellent links to services and greenspaces.

- 3.29 In this scenario, consideration would be given to the development of sustainable urban extensions around Rainham, Capstone and Strood to complement the urban regeneration taking place in central Medway. Development could be located in areas that are already attractive to residents, and on greenfield sites that may be quicker to develop than large brownfield sites. However consideration of infrastructure planning and the natural environment is needed to determine the capacity of these areas to accommodate growth. Initial assessment has highlighted stress in the highways network at a number of key junctions and routes that would need to be addressed in order to accommodate growth. Further testing of the capacity of the transport network is being carried out, with an assessment of the potential to invest in transport improvements. The potential scale of pressure on the highway network may require new transport schemes that cannot be supported on environmental or viability grounds, and this may constrain the scale of development capacity in these areas. The council also recognises the challenge to be addressed in ensuring that this development pattern does not escalate unsustainable travel.
- 3.30 This scenario considers potential development in the Green Belt to the west of Strood. This has been included to allow debate and due consideration of the issues associated with the Green Belt, to determine if such a significant policy change is required to meet the development needs over the plan period, and to determine if exceptional circumstances exist that would require the Green Belt boundary to be reviewed. This consideration and information collected from the consultation will be accompanied by a technical assessment of the function of the Green Belt designation.
- 3.31 Given the proximity of Medway's borough boundaries and important landscape features, there is limited capacity for suburban expansion, and it is likely that a proportion of development would also need to be accommodated in the rural areas of the Hoo Peninsula. This includes incremental growth in a number of villages and expansion around the large village of Hoo St Werburgh. Development close to the borough boundaries could have implications for neighbouring towns and villages and countryside, and the council will need to have regard to discussions with adjacent authorities in Kent, Gravesham, Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Swale.





### **Scenario 3: Hoo Peninsula focus**

**See strategic diagram set out at Appendix 1D.**

- 3.32 This scenario again commits to the continuation of the urban regeneration of waterfront and town centre sites as a core component of the spatial strategy, and then looks at how the balance of development needs can be made up across the wider area.
- 3.33 In this scenario, the Hoo Peninsula is considered as a potential location for growth. A key strand of this scenario is the expansion of the large village of Hoo St Werburgh into a small rural town. This would involve development in neighbourhoods around the wider area, including Chattenden, Deangate and Lodge Hill. As a large village in a rural area, both Hoo St Werburgh and the wider Hoo Peninsula have limited services in comparison with the Medway towns. The focus is on developing a sustainable rural town, and concentrating development around larger villages to avoid sprawl into the wider countryside. A level of development would also take place in suburban areas to support the delivery of a range of housing types.
- 3.34 A key component of this scenario is the provision of new services and infrastructure to support a small rural town and the wider rural hinterland. This could provide investment in education, health and leisure facilities, as well as delivering homes, jobs and shops to meet community needs. Planned growth, integrated with the provision of infrastructure and services could deliver benefits for local residents on the peninsula and support the wider network of villages. Growth at this scale would inevitably change the character of Hoo and its surroundings. The greatest care would be needed to deliver balanced development, with a defined employment offer and a small town centre offer to help serve the wider rural area.
- 3.35 Such scale of growth would inevitably have an impact on the environment and the countryside character that borders the villages on the peninsula. Particular attention needs to be given to the planning of development so that it respects the key landscape features, retains separation between urban and rural Medway, and establishes a character of new development that is distinctive and in keeping with the rural location. The effective planning of green infrastructure is critical to this scenario, providing links for people and wildlife, and green spaces and country parks to retain openness and provide a quality development that respects and enhances the rural setting.
- 3.36 This scenario also considers the expansion of a number of villages that are considered to have a range of services and facilities that could support an increased population. Planned development in villages would be expected to demonstrate sensitivity to the rural location and provide enhanced services and infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing population.
- 3.37 A fundamental consideration in this scenario is the capacity of infrastructure to support potential levels of growth, and in particular the road network. There is a limited highways network on the Hoo Peninsula and the majority of traffic passes through the Four Elms Roundabout. This has already been identified as a



congestion hot spot and work is progressing to increase capacity in this area. However it is likely that the current scheme would not provide sufficient capacity to meet the needs of a larger development on the Hoo Peninsula, and that further infrastructure investments would be required before development could rise above a specific level. Attention also needs to be given to providing an excellent public transport offer that gives a realistic alternative to car based travel and opens up opportunities for rural residents. Further assessments of the strategic transport networks and potential for upgrades are being tested.

- 3.38 There are opportunities to consider the use of land for self-build and custom housebuilding to meet needs and add positively to the character and life of villages.
- 3.39 The council supports the development of Lodge Hill as a planned new settlement, delivering a balance of homes, infrastructure, jobs, services and open spaces on a redundant military site on the Hoo Peninsula. However the planning status of land at Lodge Hill is uncertain, and dependent upon the outcome of a Public Inquiry scheduled for Spring 2018. In preparing this stage of the Local Plan, the council is considering the inclusion of Lodge Hill as an option that could contribute to the development needed over the plan period. However to address risk, development is phased in the second half of the plan period, after 2025, to allow consideration of the outcome of the Public Inquiry and to plan for alternative sources of land supply if required in the Local Plan. It is considered in context of coordination with a wider development around Hoo St Werburgh.
- 3.40 This scenario would involve significant change for the Hoo Peninsula, and requires careful consideration of the capacity of the area's environment and infrastructure to accommodate development. Attention must be given to retaining and securing a distinct rural character that distinguishes development in this area from the urban areas of Medway.

#### ***Scenario 4: Urban Regeneration and a Rural Town***

**See strategic diagram set out at Appendix 1E.**

- 3.41 This brings together components of the urban regeneration, suburban expansion and rural development scenarios set out above. It includes elements of developing at higher densities in waterfront and urban centre sites in Chatham and Strood, and seeking opportunities to consolidate development sites in these urban areas. There is caution in identifying land at Medway City Estate and Chatham Docks for comprehensive renewal that could deliver significant residential areas in the plan period, due to the complexity of these sites.
- 3.42 Suburban expansion is supported to a level that could deliver sustainable and healthy urban extensions, but restricted in scale to prevent the potential of urban sprawl and unsustainable travel patterns. The Green Belt land to the west of Strood is not released, with preference given to using land in other locations.



- 3.43 Aspects of the rural focus scenario are supported, for their potential to deliver planned development that could enhance the provision of services and jobs on the Hoo Peninsula, and strengthen the role of Hoo St Werburgh. There are opportunities to enhance the setting of Hoo with planned green infrastructure and increased public open space, together with improved services and a mix of high quality housing to address the growing needs of residents and improve their health and wellbeing.





**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

# **Section 4**

# **Housing**



### HOUSING

- 4.1 A core task of the new Local Plan is to provide for the housing needs of Medway's communities over the plan period. As demand for housing has increased across the country, costs have risen and many people from different sectors of society have difficulties in finding a suitable place to live. Although house prices in Medway are lower than neighbouring boroughs, they have been rising in recent years, placing many properties beyond the reach of local people. The private rented sector doubled in Medway between 2001 and 2011, partly linked to the growing student population, but also reflecting demand from people unable to access home ownership. As Medway's population grows and ages, there is a need to ensure the right mix of housing is available for local people.
- 4.2 The Government has put increasing the supply of housing at the centre of its ambitions for the country. The NPPF places a strong direction on local planning authorities to significantly boost the supply of housing. Recent Government initiatives and further measures anticipated in the forthcoming Housing White Paper will provide additional investment to stimulate housebuilding across the country.

#### Housing Need

- 4.3 In preparing the new Local Plan for Medway, the council commissioned a Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment to provide evidence on the housing needed in Medway over the plan period. This was carried out in line with Government requirements to identify the objectively assessed need for housing as a core component of the Local Plan process. Using Government guidance, the assessment analysed demographic, economic and market signal information to determine the quantity and types of housing needs. The technical assessment concluded that the Local Plan needs to provide for 29,463 new homes over the plan period.
- 4.4 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment also considered the range, type and mix housing needed in Medway. This included the need for 'affordable housing', the size and mix of homes, and those with particular needs, such as older people, people with disabilities, younger person households, minority ethnic groups, and rural households. The assessment identified a high level of demand for affordable housing at 17,112 over the plan period. The council has identified potential options for development locations to meet the housing needs identified for Medway over the plan period. The scale of projected housing need requires consideration of locations that could accommodate development on a large scale. Planned growth in such locations offers the opportunity to deliver a range and mix of housing types, to provide homes suitable for different groups in society. Infrastructure, services, green spaces, shops and employment areas would also be planned as part of new residential areas to provide balanced growth.



- 4.5 Further work through the consultation on Development Options and supporting technical studies will help determine the capacity of areas to accommodate development and the most sustainable locations for growth. Specific sites will be allocated in the draft Local Plan when it is published for further consultation.

### **Policy Approach: Housing Delivery**

The council will seek to provide a supply of land to meet the needs for market and affordable housing for 29,463 homes over the plan period, meeting the principles of sustainable development.

Allocations for sites and broad locations for development will be established in the Local Plan, phased to ensure a supply over the plan period.

Housing delivery will be required to contribute to the development of sustainable communities, with the coordination of infrastructure and service provision. Masterplans will be produced for major residential schemes in broad locations identified in the Local Plan.

### **Housing Mix**

- 4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to make provision for a wide choice of high quality homes in mixed, sustainable communities. A key element of this is matching supply of accommodation to need, striking the right balance for a changing population with changing needs over time. Medway's communities require a variety of housing, including in terms of tenure, to provide appropriate housing options for different households including families with children, couples, single person households and older people. Information has also been assessed for people with disabilities, students, and gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople.
- 4.7 Findings of the Housing Need Survey under the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment 2015 revealed that:
- Respondents' properties being too small was the most common reason for those describing their accommodation as not meeting their needs.
  - Two thirds of those who wanted to move stated that a two bedroom property was their preferred choice
  - Over half of emerging households stated that a two bed property would suit their needs.
- 4.8 A variety of housing types and sizes, including plots for self-build, will be required to assist in achieving balanced and sustainable communities. However the council recognises that not all sites will be able to accommodate the full range of types needed. The Council will therefore take into account the nature and location of the scheme and, in particular, whether there are any genuine reasons why a mix of types cannot be delivered in practice, or would be harmful to the setting of a heritage asset for example.



### *Household type and size*

- 4.9 Analysis of the 2014-based household projections indicates that Medway is predicted to see a notable increase in single person and small family households. Single, older male households increase by one quarter, and households with one child will increase by one fifth by 2035. Overall Medway has an above average household size at 2.44 persons compared to 2.36 nationally, however this is predicted to fall to 2.33 in 2035 (2.22 nationally). Changes in household sizes have been taken into account in calculating the scale of housing needed over the plan period. It is noted that Welfare Reform could increase the number of people under 35 years looking to rent a room rather than a self-contained home, due to changes in eligibility for support of housing costs.

#### **Policy Approach: Housing Mix**

The council seeks to ensure that a sufficient range of sustainable housing options are provided to adequately meet the needs of the wide ranging needs of a growing and changing population.

Residential development will be permitted to encourage a sustainable mix of market housing to include an appropriate range of house types and size to address local requirements.

The mix must be appropriate to the size, location and characteristics of the site as well as to the established character and density of the neighbourhood.

Accommodation requirement as detailed in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015 (or any future updates) will be used to help inform which house sizes and mix should be delivered in urban and rural areas to meet the objectively assessed needs of the area.

In relation to affordable housing, the council will expect the submission of details of how this information has been used to justify the proposed mix.

Where affordable housing is to be provided, developers should also take into consideration the needs of households on the council's housing register and discuss affordable housing requirements with the council's Housing Strategy team at the pre-submission stage of the planning process.

Large development schemes must demonstrate that sufficient consideration has been given to custom and self-build plots as part of housing mix.

The council will work with partners to facilitate the provision of suitable specialist and supported housing for elderly, disabled and vulnerable people.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation requirements will form part of the borough's need for housing





## **Affordable Housing**

- 4.10 The costs of housing have been rising steadily in recent years, and are now unaffordable for many people. Income levels in Medway are lower than the average in neighbouring areas, and this adds to the difficulties experienced by many residents in accessing housing, either for rent or purchase. In planning for housing to meet the full needs of the local area, the council needs to make appropriate provision in its housing policies.
- 4.11 As noted above, the Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment identified a need for 17,112 affordable dwellings over the plan period. However the Local Plan needs to be deliverable, and must demonstrate that the policies are viable. Initial analysis indicates a percentage of 25% affordable housing could be achieved on developments over 15 units. Some areas could support a higher proportion of affordable housing. Further work is required to test the viability of the Local Plan and policies, informed by upcoming advice on Starter Homes, and an understanding of the locations, scale and mix of development that will be identified as housing allocations in the new plan.
- 4.12 In preparing the Local Plan, and determining the location and scale of housing allocations, the council will consider and test the delivery of affordable housing, and make appropriate provision in the housing policies to deliver affordable housing that meets the locational requirements (particularly in rural areas), size, type and tenure required by local people, as identified in the SHENA, or subsequent updates to the evidence base.

## **Starter Homes**

- 4.13 The Government has identified that many people struggle to get access to home ownership and is promoting 'Starter Homes', provided at a 20% discount from market prices, to support access to the housing market for people under 40 years.
- 4.14 Further advice on the requirements of Starter Homes legislation is anticipated shortly in conjunction with the Housing White Paper. The council will consider the updated policy position and make provision as appropriate in its housing policies and allocations in the Local Plan. It will give careful consideration to the potential impact of the deliverability of affordable housing to meet the needs of Medway's residents.
- 4.15 There are potential concerns on the impact on viability and the ability to secure sustainable development supported by the infrastructure and services needed by residents. Further work on viability testing for the preparation of the Local Plan will take account of the potential impact of the Starter Home regulations.





### **Policy Approach: Affordable Housing and Starter Homes**

The council will make provision in the Local Plan for affordable housing, in line with the evidenced needs of the area and viability tests. The policy will establish a development size threshold for provision of affordable housing, and criteria for assessing the requirement for on-site provision.

The council will have regard to updated Government policy for Starter Homes and develop an appropriate policy response in the Local Plan.

### **Older People**

- 4.16 While Medway's population is predicted to increase by a fifth over the next twenty years, growth in the older cohorts of the population is most significant. Growth in the over 65's account for just over half of the overall population growth in Medway with an extra 31,000 older residents by 2035.
- 4.17 The 2014-based household projections show a significant increase in single person households in the older age groups, representing more than half the overall increase in single households in Medway. Males aged 65-74 show the most significant increase over the next twenty years.
- 4.18 Medway's vision for Adult Social Care is to support the people of Medway to live full, active lives and to live independently for as long as possible. This includes elderly people and disabled people, and planning for people living with dementia.
- 4.19 One of the strategic aims of the Medway housing strategy is to 'improve flexibility of accommodation'. The council is working with partners towards solutions to allow the elderly and residents with physical disabilities to live independently in their own homes with adaptations to suit their individual needs.
- 4.20 Official statistics show that there is a significant need for adapted social rent accommodation with around 44% of tenants reporting a need for disability related housing design adaptations. This is higher than the Local Authority average across England at around 35% of tenants (DCLG (CORE) Social Housing letting statistics, 2014/15).
- 4.21 The Government's Lifetime Neighbourhoods Initiative identified the following findings of official research into older person's preferences for accommodation choices:
- 'The majority of people would prefer to remain in their own homes as they grow older, and where possible can make changes and adaptations to their properties should their needs change. Also those people who chose to move to housing schemes especially for older people that offer care and support in their own homes express high levels of satisfaction with their homes'.
- 4.22 Evidence from the Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI) website illustrates that an ageing population is likely to lead to an increase in demand for both housing and schemes that offer an element of care. Over the next fifteen years the



number of over 65's unable to manage at least one self care activity or at least one domestic task on their own is likely to increase by just over 50%.

- 4.23 Traditionally, specialist accommodation for older people has consisted of sheltered accommodation, residential homes and nursing homes. 'Extra Care Housing' provides for a more flexible form of care for older people, which allows for a greater degree of independence and a lower likelihood of need for more intensive forms of support.
- 4.24 The Medway Extra Care Housing Needs Analysis 2011 concluded that 'there is clear scope to widen the range of housing and support options available to older people across tenures with the need for specialist housing services to enable the growing number of older people to live independently'. It identified that 'there is currently no extra care housing for rent, and no extra care housing for sale or shared ownership, although there are a number of schemes in the pipeline'.
- 4.25 The Medway Strategic Housing Needs assessment indicated 'a need for good quality, smaller units to encourage downsizing', while the housing needs survey underpinning this suggests that few residents stated a specific 'need of supported or extra care housing, although this may be a more hidden need' (Integrated Growth Needs Assessment report, SHENA, 2015).
- 4.26 Remaining within one's home with adaptations was the most popular option for older people when asked about care needs over the next five years. This was in preference to sheltered accommodation, extra care housing and residential care homes (Housing Needs Survey, SHENA, 2015). However many live in potentially unsuitable accommodation. The findings of the Housing Need Survey under the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment 2015, revealed that the vast majority of households in the sample that contained an older resident had not had any special adaptations (88%) – indicating a possible unmet housing need.

### **People with disabilities**

- 4.27 The 2011 Census identified 43,400 people in Medway who considered that their day to day activities were limited a little or a lot by a disability or limiting long term illness.
- 4.28 Official Labour Market statistics (NOMIS, as at May 2016) record 13,200 Disability Living Allowance claimants.
- 4.29 The Projecting Adult Need and Service Information website (PANSI) estimates that in Medway in 2015 there are around 16,800 people aged 18-64 with a moderate or severe physical disability. This number is projected to rise to 18,200 (+10%) by 2030.
- 4.30 The total population aged 18-64 predicted to have a serious physical disability in Medway in 2015 is 3,800, projected to rise to 4,200 (+11%) in 2030.
- 4.31 PANSI data estimates that there are 4,200 adults (aged 18-64) with learning disabilities in 2015 in Medway, projection data estimates that this number will rise to 4,400 (+8%) in 2030.



(PANSI projections as at November 2016).

### **Evidence of specialist housing need**

4.32 Findings of the Housing Need Survey under the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment 2015 revealed that:

- Around 20% of respondents were in a household where a family member had a limiting physical disability, of which ninety-three percent had no special adaptations made to their property, indicating a potential unmet need.
- Varying level of care requirement were reported, however the need for help with physical tasks was the most reported issue.
- In summary the proportion of households containing one or more members affected by disability suggests implications for housing needs, particularly in relation to adaptations and improvements / facilitating in-home care.

### **Policy Approach: Supported Housing, Nursing Homes and Older Persons Accommodation**

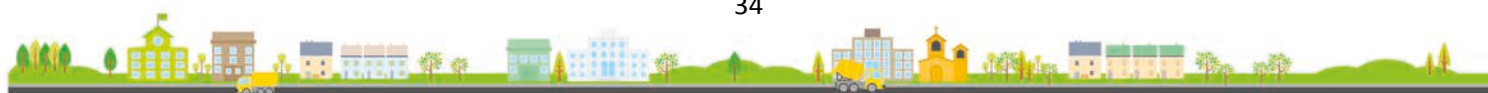
The development of specialist residential accommodation for older people, including care homes, nursing homes and other specialist and supported forms of housing for those with particular needs will be supported where it:

- Meets a proven need for that particular type of accommodation.
- Is well designed to meet the particular requirements of residents with social, physical, mental and or health care needs.
- Is easily accessible to public transport, shops, local services, community facilities and social networks for residents, carers and visitors. Local services are particularly essential in those developments where residents have fewer on site services and greater independence.
- Will not lead to an excessive concentration of non-mainstream residential uses to the detriment of the character of the particular area.

### **Student accommodation**

4.33 Medway's student population has continued to grow across the further and higher education sectors, largely clustered in the Learning Quarter at Chatham Maritime. The council needs to take account of the needs of students as a sector of Medway's communities. Positive planning for students can contribute to Medway's regeneration objectives and boost the vibrancy and vitality of town centres, and secure benefits for the growth of the local economy. However it is important to ensure that the expansion of the sector does not adversely affect established neighbourhoods by an over concentration of students and that existing privately rented accommodation is not 'lost' to tenants with otherwise limited housing options.

4.34 In 2014 there were estimated to be around 1,200 bed spaces in institutional accommodation in Medway between University of Greenwich, Canterbury Christchurch, University of Kent and the University of Creative Arts. Since then a



further 530 student rooms have been provided at Liberty Quays (2013/14), with plans for further student accommodation provision in the pipeline.

- 4.35 The highest concentration of students are seen in Gillingham North and River wards, at approximately fifteen percent of the resident population, as these areas are within close proximity to the learning institutions.
- 4.36 Unlike some traditional student cities, evidence points to a 'not insignificant' section of students remaining living at home while studying in Medway, some commuting in from London, for example, as well as students at the Canterbury campuses being bused in from Medway, due to accommodation shortages there.
- 4.37 Students represent approximately six percent of the Medway population, however student households represent less than one percent of private housing stock, which equates to less than three percent of the private rented stock in Medway\*, suggesting that purpose built student accommodation may be sufficiently serving the current local student demand. Growth in student numbers does not easily translate into a direct accommodation need for the reasons mentioned above. Evidence shows that private rental sector accommodation in Medway does not meet the housing requirements of students\*, however the newly created, purpose built student developments should address these shortcomings.

*\*Understanding the Housing Requirements of Students in Medway, ORS, 2014.*

#### **Policy Approach: Student Accommodation**

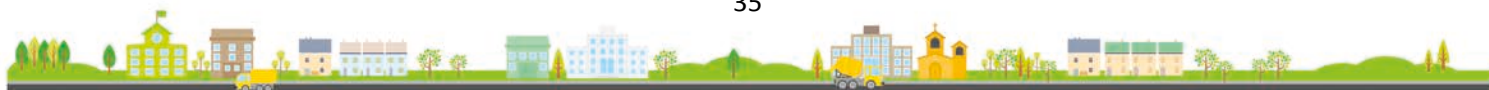
This council aims to ensure that student housing is provided in the most appropriate and accessible locations and has due consideration to surrounding land uses.

Provision for students will be predominantly located close to the higher and further education establishments in Medway where there is deemed to be an identified local need. The council will favourably consider opportunities for student accommodation in town centres where the development can be shown to make a positive contribution to the vitality and sustainability of the centres, and does not have a negative impact on the core functions of the town centres.

These locations must be well served by public transport and accessible to a wide range of town centre, leisure and community uses.

Student accommodation will be permitted where it does not involve the loss of permanent, self-contained homes, or the loss of designated employment land or leisure or community space.

Student housing will be required to provide a high quality living environment and include a range of unit sizes and layouts with and without shared facilities to meet requirements of the educational institutions they serve.



## Mobile homes and residential caravan parks

- 4.38 Mobile homes make up just under one percent (2011 Census) of the overall housing stock in Medway, which is in line with the Kent level but is around double the national rate.
- 4.39 The majority of occupied caravan/mobile homes in Medway are in the two main residential caravan parks in the Hoo Marina Park and the Kingsmead mobile home park at Allhallows.
- 4.40 Mobile homes are an affordable and attractive housing option for a number of households in Medway. For that reason the council supports the retention of mobile homes in these parks to assist in the supply of affordable accommodation. Park home sites and mixed sites of both residential park homes and holiday homes are subject to an updated site licensing regime that came into force on 1st April 2014.

### Policy Approach: Mobile Home Parks

The council seeks to protect existing parks from competing uses, but restrict their expansion outside designated areas. It will restrict intensification beyond density guidelines and seek opportunities to enhance the design and visual impact on the surrounding area particularly those near areas of sensitive environmental interests.

Any development that may result in the permanent loss of mobile homes at the Hoo Marina Park or the Kingsmead Mobile Home park, or a reduction in the area available for their use will not be permitted.

The council will set out criteria by which it will consider the development of new mobile homes or caravans outside of existing sites.

Intensification within the footprint of existing sites must adhere to latest Model Standards for Caravans in England.

Any proposals for updates or intensification must have careful consideration for the colour, massing and materials used, incorporate appropriate landscaping and have no adverse impact on the character of the locality or amenity of nearby residents.

## Houseboats

- 4.41 There are approximately 250 houseboats in Medway and around 400 moorings, many of which are located at sites near Hoo Marina and south of Rochester. Regeneration plans for waterfront development could impact on some sites. However redevelopment plans could lead to improvements to the local environment around the areas where houseboats are located, leading to better access to key services in conjunction with better clustering of houseboats on the River Medway.
- 4.42 Many of the houseboats in Medway have limited facilities, including for waste disposal and can have negative environmental impacts. Opportunities to upgrade facilities and amenities will be supported where there will be no adverse environmental impacts.



### **Policy Approach: Houseboats**

The council will seek to manage provision for houseboats in order to secure environmental benefits and address needs for this specialist type of accommodation. It will aim:

- To protect the current mooring locations of houseboats and specify where any further growth may be allowed to take place.
- To specify criteria under which any further growth of houseboats will be allowed in order to minimise impact.

### **Houses of multiple occupation**

- 4.43 Official statistics estimate that there are approximately 350 Houses of multiple occupation (HMO's) in Medway\*, but this is considered to potentially under-record this form of accommodation.
- 4.44 Evidence shows that areas with particularly high concentrations of HMO's can potentially lower the standards of amenity experienced by local residents, due to disturbance and poor usage of waste storage facilities. A combination of issues can lead to an area attracting a high proportion of young, single people which may be linked to short-term tenancies and a relatively high turnover of residents. This can conflict with the amenity of more settled residents within the same neighbourhood. Standards of facilities in HMOs can vary and where of poor quality can present unhealthy living conditions.

*Source - \*DCLG – Housing Strategy Statistical return (HSSA), 2011.*

### **Policy Approach: Houses of multiple occupation**

The council seeks to avoid detrimental over concentrations of HMOs. Where planning applications for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are not already covered by permitted development rights, they will be favourably considered where they:

- Do not adversely affect the character and amenity of the area.
- Do not contribute to the over concentration of HMOs in a particular area.
- Do not contribute to the generation of excessive parking demands or traffic in an area.
- Make appropriate provision for the storage of waste





## **Self Build and Custom Housebuilding**

- 4.45 The Government recognises that there is demand from people wanting to build their home, and wishes to support this sector, to broaden the range of housing types available and contribute towards the supply of housing. It has provided policy to support greater provision being made for people wishing to build or commission their own home.
- 4.46 The Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act, 2015 placed a duty on certain public authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations who wish to acquire serviced plots of land. The Local Planning Authority must have regard to this register when preparing a Local Plan, and making decisions on planning applications. Further legislation and guidance has been provided by Government in 2016 through the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding (Register) Regulations and the Housing and Planning Act. Medway Council set up its register on 1 April 2016. In the first 6 months of operation, the council received 15 applications to be included on the register, indicating an interest for up to 19 serviced plots. There was interest in sites across Medway.
- 4.47 The council's Strategic Land Availability Assessment, in identifying where land may be available and suitable for development over the plan period, includes 3 sites submitted by landowners and developers specifically promoted for self build. One of these sites is already being built out, another has received outline planning permission for residential use, and the third is currently being assessed by the SLAA for suitability. The council is considering the potential to assess other sites that may be suitable for self build housing, including sites that were below the minimum capacity criteria for the SLAA.
- 4.48 The council will assess the need for custom and self build housing in providing for the supply of housing through the Local Plan.





### **Policy Approach: Self Build and Custom Housebuilding**

The council will assess the need for self build and custom housebuilding, and provide an appropriate policy basis in the Local Plan. It will:

- Identify land as part of the wider strategic area for the new Medway Local Plan which could include self build provision.
- On large site applications, consider a policy which ensures that the developer has given due consideration to allocating a portion of the site to self build/custom build plots.
- Seek opportunities for serviced plots self build/custom build where there is identified demand, when developers with an existing permission approach the council seeking to expand/intensify the development
- Support the consideration of self build and custom housebuilding in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.
- Consider opportunities for self build housing in disposal of council land and in promoting regeneration schemes.

### **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation**

- 4.49 In 2012 Medway Council commissioned a gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).<sup>2</sup> It concluded that within Medway there were approximately 510 gypsies, travellers and showpeople based on data from the 2011 census, the majority of whom lived in 'bricks and mortar' accommodation.
- 4.50 The study recorded 13 sites used by gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople across the authority. The sites were categorised as follows:
- 1 socially rented site
  - 6 authorised permanent private sites
  - 1 authorised temporary site
  - 4 unauthorised sites; and;
  - 1 yard for travelling showpeople
- 4.51 The study assessed the needs of the gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople population from 2013 to 2028. It identified the need for 22 extra pitches for gypsies and travellers, but no need for additional pitches for travelling showpeople. The assessment divided the need into 5 year blocks from 2013. In the short-term to 2018 there is a need of 4 additional pitches, which can be met by the present level of planning permissions.
- 4.52 In the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, published in 2015, Government introduced a revised definition of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople and set out its

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<sup>2</sup> Medway Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2013



approach to decision making and plan making in relation to traveller sites. The overarching aim of the national policy is to 'ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.'

4.53 National policy defines gypsies and travellers as :

*'Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.'*<sup>3</sup>

4.54 The definition of travelling showpeople is:

*'Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers ....'*<sup>4</sup>

4.55 The Medway GTAA published in 2013 identified that a number of gypsy and traveller households never or rarely travelled, and could therefore fall outside of the scope of the revised definition. In response to the national policy changes the council has reassessed the evidence in the GTAA. Initial assessment indicates that the requirement for additional pitches up to 2028 could be significantly reduced.

4.56 The council is seeking to refresh the evidence base for the assessment of the need for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation, in line with the Government policy issued since the 2013 GTAA report, and anticipating further guidance in this area. Consideration will be given to potential changes in travelling patterns amongst these communities. The assessment will also be projected to the end of the plan period. During the Issues and Options consultation the Council consulted on the level and type of provision needed for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople and how this could be achieved. The responses varied, however concerns were raised as to the location of new sites and there were preferences for dispersed sites. The level of need was suggested to be modest. The majority of responses were received from local residents, rather than wider stakeholders.

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<sup>3</sup> Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, August 2015

<sup>4</sup> Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, August 2015



## Policy Approach: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation

### Safeguarding Existing Sites

Existing sites shall be safeguarded from loss either permanently or, if a temporary permission had been granted, until the expiry of that permission when any new application will have to be reassessed based on its merits.

### New Sites

- **Meeting needs** – the council will make provision for the identified need for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation needs within the plan period, to be established by a refreshed GTAA.
- **Location** – Sites should be sustainably located with access to local facilities for educational, medical care and convenience retailing. Sites should not be isolated, but should respect the existing communities to avoid disturbance and maintain amenity.

Sites should not be located in the Green Belt, flood risk zones 2 & 3, areas covered by environmental designations (i.e. AONBs, SSSI's, SPAs, SAC & Ramsar), protected open spaces, or significant heritage designations (listed buildings & scheduled ancient monuments).

- **Scale** – Sites should respect their location and surrounding environment and should be embedded within it, not intruding onto the landscape.
- **Access** – Sites should enable safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicle access to the road network, with adequate space for vehicle parking, turning and servicing.
- **Need** – The existing need of communities should be considered in decision making and the availability of alternative accommodation will also be a consideration.
- **Type of site** – New sites should be transit sites to correspond to the new definition of gypsies and travellers as outlined in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites





**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

## **Section 5**

# **Employment**



### EMPLOYMENT

- 5.1 The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future.
- 5.2 A core ambition of the Local Plan is to strengthen the performance of Medway's economy, securing quality jobs in the local area, capitalising on the further and higher education offer, and realising the area's potential as the largest city in Kent, enjoying a strategic location in the Thames Gateway. Although Medway is a major economic hub in the south east region, it does not perform to its potential. It is significantly lagging in its productivity, as measured by Gross Value Added (GVA), residents have lower skills levels than neighbouring areas, and there are high levels of out-commuting.
- 5.3 In 2011, Medway had a working population of 126,689 people and 82,800 jobs in the local economy. The area's employment profile shares characteristics of neighbouring areas, but the economy has some specialisms in manufacturing and advance engineering. Finance and IT businesses are under-represented, compared to regional levels. Medway's largest industrial sector is production, accounting for just under 20% of GVA, then public Administration, education and health. Medway's production sector is significantly larger than that across the Kent Thames Gateway area (13%) and the United Kingdom (14%). In contrast 'business services' at 7% of the Medway economy is significantly smaller than those areas. Manufacturing within the broader production sector has showed growth over the last four years following a slump in 2011. Manufacturing represents around 11% of the overall economy in Medway, slightly higher than the national level. Ports, wharves and energy infrastructure have built up around the river and estuary. Some of these installations are of strategic importance. Agriculture is a key industry in the rural area.
- 5.4 70% of people who work in Medway live within Medway. However, only 51% of Medway's economically active residents work in the area, reflecting high levels of out commuting. Many travel to work in Maidstone, Swale and Tonbridge and Malling, and further afield to London.
- 5.5 Although the situation is improving, Medway's unemployment rate is higher than the Kent and regional averages. There are a relatively low number of the largest employers, low rates of business start-up and survival rates, and a lack of higher value jobs. Medway's GVA at £17,038 in 2014, is the lowest in the south east region and 69.2% of the national level.
- 5.6 A skilled workforce is critical to a successful economy, and Medway compares poorly with neighbouring areas. 19% of Medway's workers have achieved the highest level of qualifications, compared to a Kent average of 25%, 26% in Maidstone and 27% in



Tonbridge and Malling. Just under a quarter of residents have no qualifications, and this is significantly higher in some of Medway's poorer neighbourhoods.

- 5.7 The council recognises that Medway has the potential to significantly boost its economic performance. This will be supported by the Local Plan and the emerging Medway Regeneration Strategy.
- 5.8 Medway's location within the Thames Gateway offers excellent opportunities to capitalise on regeneration and other investment, and to stimulate business growth, benefitting from connectivity to the wider economy through the motorway and rail networks. It is well placed to accommodate businesses seeking to relocate from London. The area's strengths include its established distribution routes; defined logistics and manufacturing locations; and proximity to the large markets in London and the South East. Work on the new London Plan identifies potential for relocation of employment activities outside of London, aligned to new investment. The breadth of Medway's employment land portfolio provides options for diverse companies. The large strategic employment sites on the Hoo Peninsula offer particular potential for businesses that could make use of the access to rail and water based freight transport.
- 5.9 There has been a major expansion of higher and further education in Medway. A learning quarter has been established in Chatham Maritime, with the Universities at Medway, Mid Kent College and the University Technical College all located here. This unique offer presents great opportunities to raise skills levels and enable further economic development based on a knowledge economy, providing for higher value employment that could drive the success of the area. Encouraging Medway students to consider local universities could help increase student retention. The University of Greenwich is introducing a Level 4 Apprenticeship which will help to boost technical skills levels.
- 5.10 The council supports opportunities to strengthen the local economy through encouraging development of businesses in successful growth sectors, and diversifying the employment base. Medway's promotion of culture and heritage provide opportunities for extending businesses in the creative, leisure and tourism sectors. Working with the strengths of the local economy, such as advanced manufacturing and technology are central to the economic strategy.
- 5.11 The economic strategy is closely linked to Medway's regeneration plans, delivering investment in urban and waterfront sites, including the provision of new employment space. New developments in the urban core can provide attractive and accessible locations that meet the needs of modern businesses. The council will seek to identify land in its own portfolio that can contribute to new employment sites. It is leading on the development of new employment units at Watermill Wharf in Strood. Work in attracting inward investment and bringing forward quality employment, and supporting local businesses, is complemented by a strategy to improve the skills levels of Medway's residents, helping to boost a competitive labour force.



- 5.12 Responses to the Issues and Options consultation supported the use of brownfield sites with good access for employment, and opportunities in town centre locations arising from regeneration initiatives and linked to the Universities in Medway. Infrastructure and attractive, accessible locations were considered as key to successful business growth. There was some confidence that rates of out-commuting could drop if Medway was able to offer a greater range of quality jobs locally.

### **Employment land needs**

- 5.13 Medway has a shortfall of quality employment land in locations and formats that businesses seek. Changes to planning legislation allow for commercial buildings to convert to other uses, such as residential, through a prior approval route. This is increasing competition on employment land and contributing to potential deficits in land supply for businesses.

#### *Employment Land Needs Assessment*

- 5.14 In support of the Local Plan, Medway Authority commissioned an Employment Land Needs Assessment in 2015. The study focussed on:
- identifying the future growth needs across the authority
  - setting out a strategic level spatial strategy to guide future site allocations and
  - ensure the appropriate capacity is available in the most appropriate locations
- 5.15 The Assessment identified that existing economic assets of Medway were likely to drive future economic opportunity. The clusters of creative, digital and advanced manufacturing businesses in particular will be key components of the future economy as these sectors are driven by wider economic trends and increasing agglomeration opportunities. Growth in these high added value sectors will also link to key physical assets and opportunities including the Universities at Medway Engineering School and plans for Rochester Airfield. The creative and digital sector is a high value sector that has increased in importance, supported by the presence of the University for Creative Arts (UCA), and the proximity to markets in London, more accessible since investments in the rail network. In seeking the retention of graduates from UCA, there will be a requirement for studio style premises in urban areas, such as the lower High Street and potentially at Chatham Waters.
- 5.16 Economic growth could also be driven by new opportunities created by major investment in new infrastructure. The delivery of a new Thames Crossing alongside existing strategic road connections and accessibility to key markets in London and the South East could enable Medway to play a much enhanced role in the strategic distribution market which has, traditionally, been focussed in other parts of North Kent. A range of sectors could also be boosted by the delivery of London Paramount, largely through increased demand from supply chain activities.
- 5.17 The Assessment projects a growth of c.17,000 jobs in Medway over the plan period and considers the land needed to support this level of growth. The findings indicate that although there is a potential surplus of employment land available in Medway, due to the large strategic sites on the Hoo Peninsula, the land supply does not align





well to business needs. The report identified a need for 90ha of employment floorspace for the plan period.

### *Employment Land Needs*

<b>Employment</b> (sqm land requirement) 2012-2035	Office	49,943
	Industrial	155,748
	Warehousing	164,263

5.18 This need could be met through consolidation and intensification of existing employment sites to provide the right offer. Opportunities to provide employment floorspace on the edge of centres should also be explored. Mixed use schemes in these locations can deliver well serviced, flexible office spaces close to town centres and with good quality ICT connections. This would align well with the council's regeneration ambitions, and would be critical to securing greater 'knowledge economy' activity. The council recognises particular opportunities around Chatham and Strood. There will also be a need to ensure high quality 'hybrid' industrial space can come forward to support advanced manufacturing activity, which may need to extend beyond the space planned for the Enterprise Zone at Rochester Airfield. In considering broad locations as development options for Medway's growth over the plan period, the council will seek to include employment land as a key component of sustainable development.

### *Developing a diverse and flexible portfolio of employment land*

5.19 The Local Plan needs to provide a range of sites to meet the employment needs identified in the Employment Land Needs Assessment. This will involve the retention of existing employment sites; support for enhancing and consolidating current sites to better meet the market's requirements and make better use of land; and identifying additional locations that can provide attractive accessible sites for business growth. A key ambition is to raise the productivity of Medway's economy, therefore particular attention will be given to the development of higher value employment.

5.20 A review of existing employment areas shows that certain locations demonstrate the characteristics supportive of a mix of employment formats including:

- Chatham Maritime,
- Gillingham Business Park,
- Medway Innovation Centre and Compass Centre,
- Rochester Airfield site

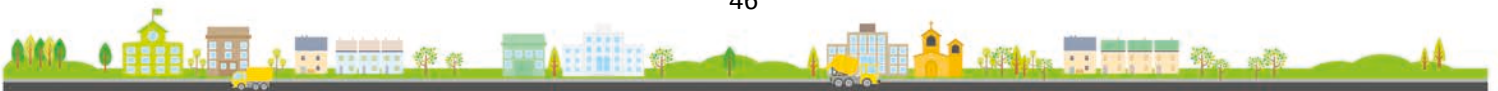
5.21 Other employment areas tend to be better focused on more land intensive light and heavy industrial activities. These include Medway City Estate and Kingsnorth sites respectively. Whilst Medway City Estate has an element of office provision, the site suffers from poor public realm in parts resulting from its fragmented land ownership. The council will consider opportunities to realise greater value in this area. This could be part of a strategy to drive up quality improvements in Medway City Estate, or as part of a wider mixed use regeneration option that could involve the potential relocation of businesses. Strood has significant potential to contribute to the mix of



employment land needed in Medway. Reconfiguration and investment in sites could deliver locations for higher value employment uses close to the town centre and motorway links. Additional opportunities to provide employment land, and extend the successful model of the Medway Innovation Centre, will be sought in conjunction with development options.

### *Rochester Airport*

- 5.22 Rochester Airport is leased to Rochester Airport Limited on a 25 year lease from Medway Council and has a vital role to play in Medway's economic future. The Council is promoting the airport and adjoining land as a flagship economic hub that can generate significant investment and employment opportunities. A master plan for the redevelopment of Rochester Airport was approved in January 2014. Redevelopment of the airport's operational infrastructure will allow land to be released for employment development. The ambition is to develop a very high quality commercial environment for predominantly B1 and B2 uses, including workspace for advance manufacturing, engineering, R&D and prototyping. High value businesses offering skilled employment opportunities will wish to buy into the technology park because of the exceptional environment that will be developed. Rochester Airport Technology Park has been awarded Enterprise Zone Status and £4.4m of Local Growth funding has been secured through the South East LEP for its development.



## **Policy Approach – Economic Development**

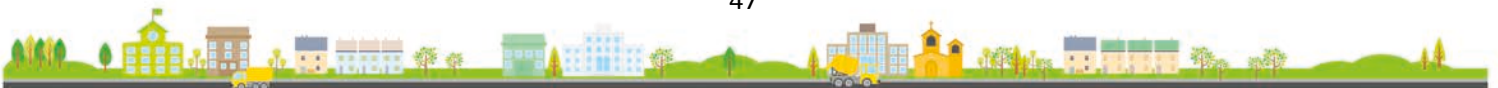
The council will seek to boost Medway's economic performance, securing a range of jobs for its workforce. The council will work positively with the local business community and major public sector employers, the Universities at Medway and further education providers, inward investors, strategic partnerships and neighbouring authorities to support sustainable economic growth and job creation.

The council will make provision for the scale, range, quality and locational requirements of employment land identified in the Employment Land Needs Assessment, 2015 in Medway. This will involve the safeguarding of sites, identification of redevelopment and investment opportunities, and allocations for new sites.

The plan will seek to increase the productivity of Medway's economy, as measured through GVA, through support for higher value employment. This will include the designation of specific employment sites as suitable for higher value employment. All planning applications for employment uses will be assessed for their GVA contributions and whether the proposed use is best aligned to the site characteristics and locational offer. The council and its partners will promote growth of employment sectors that have the best potential for higher value jobs.

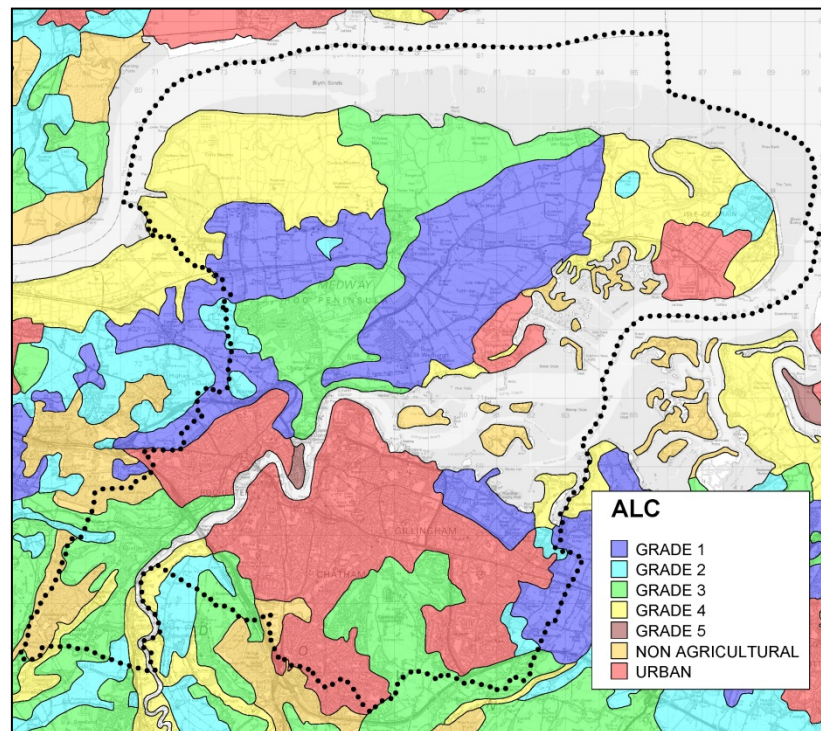
The council will support actions to:

- Consolidate economic benefits from the regeneration programme in Medway, specifically seeking to strengthen the role of the town centres in providing wider job opportunities;
- Raise skills levels and provide apprenticeship and local labour opportunities;
- Realise opportunities for raising higher value employment through supporting the development of the Universities at Medway and the wider learning quarter, and linking to growth in the wider economy;
- Seek to accrue benefits for Medway's economy from strategic developments of infrastructure, housing and employment sites outside of the borough;
- Explore the extension of the successful Medway Innovation Centre model to provide additional serviced employment space for businesses;
- Seek the installation and upgrade of high speed broadband services in employment sites;
- Promote the diversification of Medway's economic base;
- Secure sustainable employment uses for the strategic sites at Grain and Kingsnorth, achieving value from the specific location offer and the access to water and rail for freight movements.

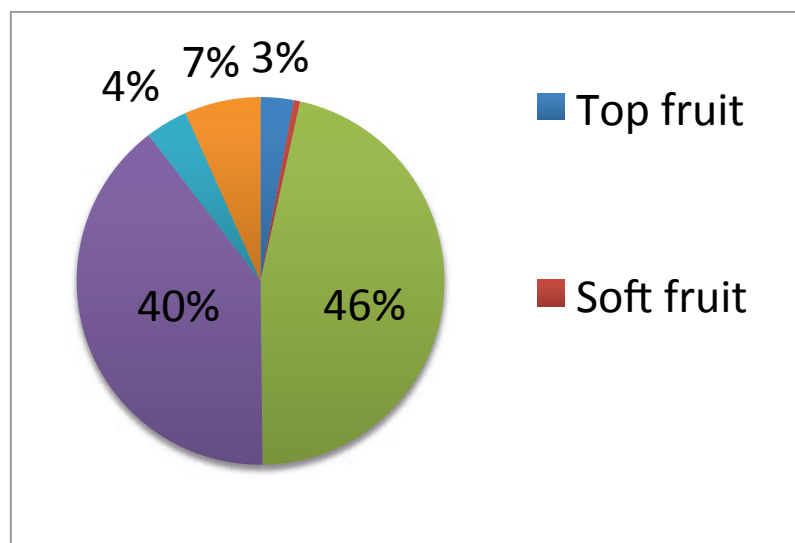


## Rural Economy

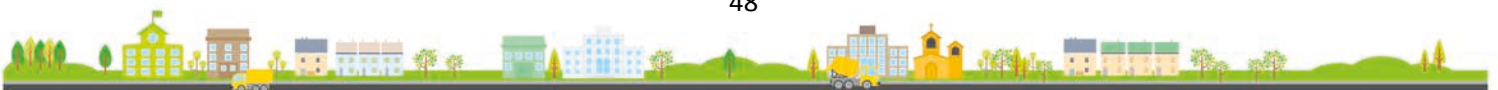
- 5.23 Farming and forestry are important land uses in the rural area, and Medway's countryside contains some of the best and most versatile agricultural land. This is defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a, which is the most flexible, productive and efficient, and which can best deliver food and non-food crops for future generations. Local planning authorities are expected to take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, councils should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.



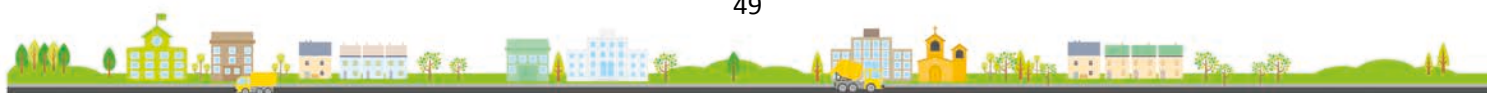
Medway's countryside supports a range of forestry and farming activities.



*Farming and Forestry Land Use in Medway – (information provided by NFU)*



- 5.24 Although only accounting for a small proportion of the total land use, the horticultural sector has particular importance in Medway. Across the South East, horticultural production accounts for 1.6% of the total farmed area, but delivers around a third of the entire agricultural output value in the region. It represents the most valuable agricultural sector in the region, where the Thames Estuary area is a key structural component. Top fruit and soft fruit production in the Thames Estuary is potentially equivalent to over 11% of the national resource. Medway contributes circa 6% of fruit and vegetable production to the SE total.
- 5.25 The land based sector is facing a number of changes and potential challenges. The decision to leave the European Union has implications and opportunities for the support for agricultural production and investments in wider rural environment and communities. The horticultural sector has a need for seasonal skilled labour, and there may be restrictions on the movements of agricultural workers from eastern Europe, which form an important component of the labour force in local horticultural businesses.
- 5.26 Climate change and technological developments may provide both threats and opportunities for agricultural businesses. There is scope to grow new crops and make more efficient use of land and water resources. There is continued interest in the wider use of land, such as for growing energy crops, or as a location for renewable energy facilities. Diversification and consolidation of farming activities is an important consideration in securing the rural sector.
- 5.27 In diversifying and growing businesses in forestry and farming, there is often a need for supporting infrastructure, such as processing and packing facilities. These can sometimes present significant change in the rural landscape, and need careful consideration to balance the needs of rural businesses with safeguarding the character of the countryside.
- 5.28 The council recognises that the rural economy extends beyond farming and forestry. There are a range of businesses based in the rural area. Rural businesses experience particular issues with accessibility and quality of broadband services that are often of a lower standard than provided in urban areas. Medway's rural area offers opportunities to develop further employment based in the tourism and leisure sectors, responding to the special characteristics of the countryside. Medway's villages provide a range of services and facilities for residents, such as shops and pubs. These small businesses are critical to the sustainability of rural community life.





### Policy Approach: Rural Economy

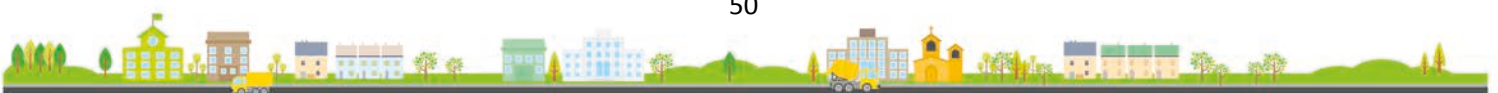
The council will support the land based sector in Medway, through seeking to direct development to land of lesser agricultural land, where feasible, and promoting the sustainable development and diversification of farming and other land based rural businesses, where the proposals can demonstrate positive benefits.

The council will support the growth of rural businesses in well-designed development in appropriate locations that respect the character of the countryside. Sustainable rural tourism and leisure activities that are in keeping with their rural setting will be supported.

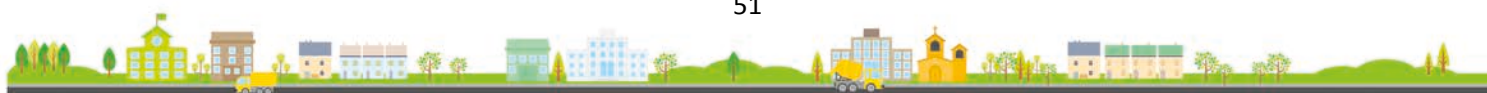
The council will seek the retention of key rural services and facilities to promote sustainable villages, providing for the needs of rural residents.

### Tourism

- 5.29 Tourism is central to the council's ambitions for the area, promoting a positive image for Medway, supporting jobs and a vibrant cultural life. Much of the activity is focused around the area's rich heritage, notably Rochester and the Historic Dockyard at Chatham, and an extensive offer of festivals, events and concerts. The castles, forts and defences around Medway are distinctive landmarks of its military heritage. There are strong cultural associations with Charles Dickens, extending from historic Rochester to the atmospheric marshes of the Hoo Peninsula.
- 5.30 However as a growing modern city with a large student population, and close connections to London, Medway's offer to visitors is broadening, as demonstrated in the opening of new art galleries, venues and cafes. The Historic Dockyard is increasingly known as the backdrop for many films and primetime TV dramas. Medway continues to invest in its visitor offer, with the £9m Command of the Oceans gallery recently opened at the Historic Dockyard, and major events planned for 2017 to mark the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dutch Raid on the Medway and in 2020 with regard the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dickens' death.
- 5.31 The rural areas of Medway offer great opportunities for walking, cycling, birdwatching, fishing and water sports. The RSPB has major reserves on the Hoo Peninsula at High Halstow and Cliffe, offering spectacular views of birdlife over the marshes. Ranscombe Farm Reserve in Cuxton occupies 560 acres on the slopes of the Kent Downs, offering opportunities for quiet walks with links to the wider countryside.
- 5.32 Tourism research commissioned by the council has confirmed that tourism makes a significant contribution to Medway's economy. With just over 4 million day visitor trips and around 528,000 visitor stays per annum, the tourism sector in Medway directly accounts for approximately 4,500 jobs (FTE) and has an estimated value of around £313 million per annum. (*The Economic Impact of Tourism - Medway 2015, Destination Research Ltd, 2015*). Much of the activity is concentrated on a day trip market, but river based tourism is also an important strand of the market in Medway, estimated to be worth approximately £2m.



- 5.33 Medway seeks to strengthen its tourism sector through consolidating the well-established heritage offer, improving its venues and facilities for arts and culture, supporting the growth of areas such as rural and marine based tourism and promoting opportunities to extend visits beyond the day trip market, capturing more overnight stays and the associated higher spend of visitors.
- 5.34 There are 14 hotels in Medway, with a total of 894 letting bedrooms. The Medway hotel supply is predominantly a mix of 3 star and budget hotels, together with one 4 star hotel, two small 2 star hotels and two small non-inspected hotels. Limited service (budget) hotels account for just over one half of Medway's hotel supply. There has been a significant growth in hotel accommodation in Medway over the past 5 years. Studies of the hotel market in Medway show high levels of demand for visitor accommodation, much of which is in the budget market. There is scope for continued growth. Medway is well placed to benefit from strategic developments, such as the proposed London Paramount entertainment park on the Swanscombe Peninsula, both from potential visitors to the attraction and workers during the construction period. In addition to growing demand from corporate and contractor markets, the development of creative industries in Medway could create a demand for a high quality, boutique hotel offer.
- 5.35 Other forms of visitor accommodation are available in bed and breakfast, guest houses, hostels, a youth hostel, self-catering properties, camping and caravan sites. The latter are largely located in the rural areas of the Hoo Peninsula. Bourne Leisure operates a major leisure park at Allhallows, providing visitor accommodation in static caravans. An estimated 28,000 tourist trips to Medway are made through static caravan, touring vans and camping holidays. These represent an estimated 151,000 night stays bringing in approximately £3.9m for Medway's economy per annum. This mainly relates to static caravan sites as there are currently very few touring camping and caravanning sites.
- 5.36 Responses to the Issues & Options consultation supported:
- Developing Medway's tourism sector based on the natural environment offer, with eco-tourism/sustainable/green tourism being highlighted as an opportunity based around Medway's country parks and the wider countryside.
  - Ideas for bigger festivals with a longer duration with music and related themes
  - Using Medway's unique historic environment and related attractions
  - Maximising the benefit of our waterfront and supporting public access to the river front
  - The need for more visitor accommodation
  - The need for more budget accommodation for visitors including B&Bs, caravan parks and at the other end of the market for more high quality hotels in appropriate locations
- 5.37 In progressing the regeneration ambitions for Medway, the council recognises the importance of planning for a good quality public realm and providing a mix of leisure, food and drink offers in the town centres and waterfront areas. These can help





provide a positive experience for visitors, support the development of an evening and cultural offer, as well as boosting the local economy.

- 5.38 The potential to achieve greater value from the use of Medway's river frontage is a key aspect of the council's regeneration plans and tourism aims, and enjoys much public support. In the central urban areas, the waterfront provides an opportunity to link the area's most notable heritage assets, and provide a focus for cultural activities. In the rural areas, the river and estuary can provide a place to relax. The England Coastal Path will run along Medway's river fronts and estuaries and around the Hoo Peninsula linking Riverside Country Park with the RSPB's reserve at Cliffe Pools. Given the wildlife importance of the natural environment in the estuaries and marshes, it is essential that access is carefully managed to avoid damage to the area's special features.

### **Policy Approach: Tourism**

The council will positively promote sustainable tourism development that can make a positive contribution to Medway's economy and cultural life. Appropriate proposals for the development of tourism facilities and visitor accommodation will be supported where they meet the principles of sustainable development.

Tourism developments that can contribute positively to the regeneration of Medway, consistent with the council's vision, and extend the cultural offer will be considered favourably. Opportunities for development to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of town centres will be welcomed.

The enhancement of cultural assets and visitor facilities will be supported, where they respect the integrity of the surrounding area, particularly those assets associated with the local historic environment.

Opportunities to support the development of rural and marine based tourism will be welcomed, where they can demonstrate that negative impacts on the environment can be avoided.

Proposals for tourism facilities will be assessed against the principles below:

- Identified need for creation, expansion or improvement of tourism facilities;
- The proposal is appropriate in scale and nature for its location, sensitively designed, respects the local amenity, the characteristics of the built, historic and natural environment
- Maximises opportunities for sustainable travel

### **Visitor accommodation**

- 5.39 Evidence supports the expansion of the supply of visitor accommodation in Medway, across a range of markets, including budget and high quality hotel rooms, self-catering, camping and caravanning, and berths and marinas. In making provision for additional visitor accommodation, the council will have regard to its aims for regeneration, developing the cultural and heritage sectors, and opportunities for



enhancing the supply in marine and rural tourism markets. The development of the tourism sector will be in line with the strategy promoted in the new Local Plan, respect the character of the surrounding areas, and respond to the specific opportunities of Medway's diverse offer. This could include the provision of camping and self-catering accommodation in rural areas, sensitive to the countryside setting.

- 5.40 As Medway grows over the plan period, there are opportunities to consider the provision of new visitor accommodation in conjunction with wider mixed developments. Such proposals could have the benefit of providing leisure facilities which are available to local communities.
- 5.41 Medway's high quality countryside is an important tourist asset, and is growing in interest as a place to visit for leisure. Capitalising on the countryside as a visitor destination could nurture a growing rural economy. There is a demand for quality rural self-catering accommodation. However developments need to be sensitive to the special characteristics of the countryside and Medway's rural environments, particularly the extensive areas designated of wildlife and landscape importance.

#### **Policy Approach: Visitor accommodation**

The retention and provision of visitor accommodation is encouraged in accordance with the principles set out below:

- Where it meets a proven need, particularly those sectors of the market where evidence indicates unmet demand, such as a high quality boutique hotel in Rochester, and quality rural self-catering accommodation;
- Development enhances the quality and offer of existing visitor accommodation and its setting;
- Where the proposal contributes to the vibrancy, vitality and viability of town centres and the sustainability of wider settlements;
- Where the proposal avoids negative impacts on the environment, is appropriate in scale and nature for its location, sensitively designed, respects the local amenity, the characteristics of the built, historic and natural environment, avoids siting in areas of high flood risk and intrusion into the landscapes of open countryside;
- Maximises opportunities for sustainable travel in accessible locations and minimises traffic generation.





**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

# **Section 6**

# **Retail and**

# **Town Centres**



### RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRES

6.1 Town centres play an essential role in community life and are intrinsic to perceptions of places. Centres bring people together to shop, do business, and enjoy leisure time, and can also be a place to live. Changes in how people shop have brought about changes on the High Street, with the closure of many retailers. Changes to permitted development rights have extended the ability to change the use of buildings in town centres, such as from shops to restaurants and homes. Medway has a complex geography with five towns, and many neighbourhood, local and village centres at a smaller scale. There is also a district centre at Hempstead Valley, which has a good presence of major retailers. Medway Council commissioned a North Kent Retail Study in collaboration with Gravesham Council. The findings for Medway reveal the following:

- A need for 46,100m<sup>2</sup> comparison floorspace by 2031 and 70,500m<sup>2</sup> by 2037
- A need for 12,300m<sup>2</sup> of convenience retail floorspace by 2031 and 13,200m<sup>2</sup> by 2037
- There is anticipated to be a growing spend in leisure (£237million), predominantly commercial leisure (restaurants and cafes) over the plan period. Medway's centres should focus on developing their evening economy to capture some of this spend.

6.2 In addition to the work commissioned in the Medway Retail Needs Assessment, the council has surveyed town, neighbourhood, local and village centres across Medway to inform policies and allocations in the new Local Plan.

6.3 In terms of specific advice for each of the centres, the North Kent Study advised that Chatham remains at the top of the hierarchy and should be the main location for additional comparison retail growth. No further comparison retail was recommended for any of the other centres. In order to improve Chatham it is recommended that:

- public realm works be undertaken to improve its appearance,
- sites are actively brought forward,
- further opportunities for convenience retail are explored,
- improve and plan for a stronger evening economy through commercial leisure provision
- resist out-of-centre proposals

6.4 More specifically, the following recommendations were made for the remaining centres on the back of retaining the hierarchy of centres with Chatham at the top:

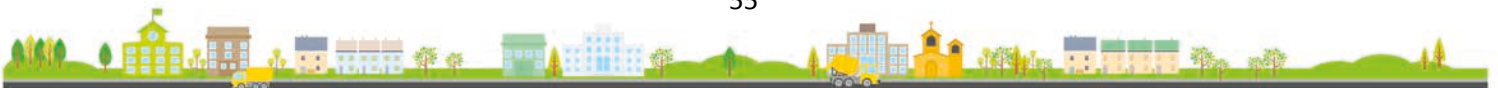
- Hempstead Valley: modernise and support day-to-day uses
- Rochester: consolidate rather than expand. Protect the primary shopping area (PSA) and provide a small foodstore if a site becomes available. Consider a cap on the provision of restaurants and cafes in order to protect the retail core.



- Strood: improve integration between the retail park and District Centre, and improve the public realm. No further expansion is recommended.
  - Gillingham: Consider redevelopment of the Budgens store.
  - Rainham: Focus on refurbishing and/or redevelopment. Consider an additional foodstore if a site should become available.
- 6.5 Responses to the Issues and Options consultation were split, with some support for investment in Chatham to consolidate its position at the top of the hierarchy. There were few responses in support of increasing the market share in Chatham, implying that a standard market share approach is desirable. Respondents supported a good mix of uses including residential as a main component followed by food and drink and employment. The consideration of out of centre retail received a mixture of responses, the majority of which were either in support of assessing out of centre provision on a case by case basis, or of discouraging it.

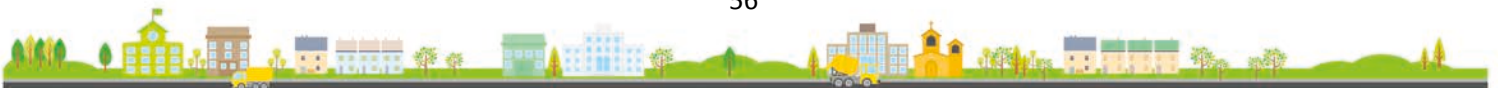
### **Town Centre Boundaries and Designations**

- 6.6 Town centres provide important cultural destinations and supportive environments for business to prosper. Town centres are therefore recognised as the heart of local communities and local planning authorities are required to plan positively through a ‘town centre first’ approach and pursue policies in support of their vitality and viability.
- 6.7 Government planning guidance highlights the importance of a “town centre first” approach but recognises that it may not be possible to accommodate all forecasted needs within town centres due to physical or other constraints. In these circumstances, planning authorities should plan positively to identify the most appropriate alternative strategy having regard to the sequential and impact tests.
- 6.8 Part of the methodology in following a ‘town centre first’ policy involves defining the boundaries for town centres, those parts of the town centre which form the primary shopping area, and primary and secondary shopping frontages. Policies to protect our centres will be based on these designations. They will also provide the basis to manage appropriate uses in the retail core, which is fundamental to supporting the health, vitality and vibrancy of our centres.
- 6.9 The council will consider the need to review the town centre boundaries set in the 2003 Medway Local Plan and present proposals for consultation as part of the process of preparing the new Local Plan. The council will also seek views on the definitions of primary and secondary frontage areas, and primary shopping areas.
- 6.10 Medway’s 2003 Local Plan does not have primary or secondary frontages. It has a retail core designation which could be interpreted as performing a primary shopping area function. The North Kent study undertook an audit of uses (GOAD categories) in each of Medway’s centres and made recommendations for primary and secondary frontages.



## Town Centre Character

- 6.11 As major changes have taken place in retail trends since the Medway Local Plan was adopted in 2003, the council needs to consider reviewing its policy approach to take account of market trends, viability and new opportunities for town centres.
- 6.12 Out of centre locations tend to be a more viable format for retailers, resulting in a threat to the viability and health of our centres. The relocation of main anchors coupled with online shopping have left our high streets in a vulnerable position forcing a refocus of the role and function of our centres. It is likely that further out of centre permissions will exacerbate the vulnerability of Medway's centres and could have a lasting detrimental impact. In revisiting the role of our centres to ensure sustainability in the longer term, key assets and characteristics will be identified and supported.
- 6.13 However, the North Kent Retail Study reveals that current trends focus on leisure provision in support of the evening economy. Commercial leisure (restaurants and cafes) tend to be a complimentary offer to tourist attractions, which increase dwell time and thereby support local spend and the health of our centres. Some centres have heritage assets, which form the basis for tourism. The council's tourism opportunities in centres will link to the heritage assets and providing the suitable uses in support. Links to the regeneration programme for waterfront and urban sites should provide opportunities to strengthen the role of our town centres, boosting spend, vitality and vibrancy.
- 6.14 The North Kent Retail Study presented some initial findings on the health of Medway's centres. Having undertaken a health check the study concluded Chatham is underperforming and Rainham, Strood and Gillingham have some vulnerabilities. Hempstead Valley and Rochester, by contrast, are performing well at present. This can be attributed to these centres being destinations based on a unique offer. Hempstead Valley is the preferred location within Medway of national retailers, which is of benefit to its continued investment and health. It provides an attractive tree covered area of free parking and recent years have seen expansion of its leisure offer including cafes and restaurants, responding directly to the changing market's interests in shopping as a leisure activity. Rochester's unique offer reflects its historic setting. The offer in the centre has evolved to support the historic attractions through the provision of commercial leisure (restaurants and cafes), reinforcing its attractiveness for day and evening activities.
- 6.15 There is potential for the role of centres to evolve reflecting the character as set out here:
- Chatham: location for community uses and services and tourism based uses in support of local heritage assets
  - Rochester: continue as the location as a leisure destination focussed around the heritage assets
  - Rainham: continue to support its local function





- Strood: remains a convenience retail destination and local function. It could potentially be supported by small scale employment for SME businesses and start-up units, and a strengthened employment area on the edge of the centre.
- Gillingham: has potential to become a student district centre with a focus on some small scale employment provision, working in collaboration with the higher and further education providers in Medway
- Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre: continue to perform a local function and high value shopping and leisure destination

## **Local Centres and Shopping**

- 6.16 Local centres are valued by communities for retail, services such as hairdressers and cash machines, and community facilities including community halls, churches and libraries. Government planning policy requires local planning authorities to plan positively for local shops to enhance the sustainability of communities and guard against unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services. Local centres support the social dimension of sustainable development by ensuring local services are accessible and reflect the community's needs. These centres play an important role in meeting aspirations for a high quality built environment and strong, vibrant and healthy communities. Smaller centres have a strong community function in addition to providing convenience shopping, and are of particular importance in rural areas, where villagers can be dependent on local services.
- 6.17 Survey work on local, neighbourhood and village centres carried out by the council has confirmed a number of changes since the 2003 Medway Local Plan. This research will inform the content of updated policy in the new Local Plan, differentiating between the characteristics and needs of urban and rural communities, and development of specialist retail, such as farm shops.

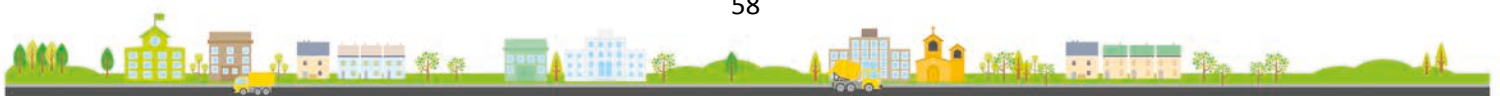
## **Retail Warehousing and Retail Parks**

- 6.18 Retail warehouse areas have predominantly been in out of centre locations but where located in edge of centre locations can support the vitality, vibrancy and viability of the town centre. Specifically, they can provide for those retail uses that are not commonly provided, or able to be provided, in town centres and local centres. In particular, such uses include those with a specific range of goods (often larger/bulky goods) which require a unique format in terms of their display and sale and attract car borne customers who require dedicated and immediate access to parking.
- 6.19 The type of goods predominantly sold in retail warehouse areas (i.e. bulky goods) tend to draw trade from a wider area due to limited availability of such outlets compared to the type of uses catered for in town centre locations. Retail warehouse areas in edge of centre locations can therefore be beneficial for town centres by drawing in trade from further afield, facilitating linked trips by bringing in visitors who may otherwise not come to town. Retail warehouse areas in out of centre locations will tend to function more independently and thereby have reduced opportunities for linked trips.
- 6.20 The findings of the Retail Needs Assessment for Medway revealed that:





- Retail locations outside of Gillingham District Centre are performing much better than the District Centre itself. This includes retail provision in Gillingham Business Park and the nearby Tesco store.
  - Strood Retail Park is functioning separately from the District Centre, despite being located immediately across the road. The study recommended that linkage between the two areas be improved to encourage linked trips. Again, the retail park appears to be performing better than the District Centre.
  - The third major retail park in Medway is at Horsted, is accessed off a main road, and has retained more specialised uses, with a larger catchment area.
- 6.21 Recent years have seen many more out of centre retailers seeking permission and securing approval compared to in-centre locations. This underlines the relevance of providing updated policy on retail warehousing and retail parks in the new Local Plan. This could include consideration of the role of edge of centre sites where there is evidence that the vitality and viability of centres could be boosted through linked trips, and appropriate provision is made for a good quality public realm, access and parking.



### **Policy Approach: Retail and Town Centres**

The council will seek to strengthen and enhance its network of town, neighbourhood, local and village centres to provide a focus for retail, leisure, cultural and community activities.

The Local Plan will make provision for the allocation of retail floorspace for comparison and convenience shopping in line with the needs of Medway's growing communities.

The Local Plan will establish a retail hierarchy, set out defined town centre boundaries and establish primary shopping areas, primary and secondary frontages to inform a town centre first policy approach to secure the vitality and performance of centres, and its sequential approach.

The Local Plan will provide policy to inform a retail impact assessment threshold approach.

The council will seek to retain the retail core and strengthen the character and unique offer of each town and district centre through management of uses, assessed through satisfaction of an A1 retail percentage threshold, or defined appropriate uses.

The council will consider the introduction of policy on temporary uses to address vacancies to boost the vibrancy and vitality of the centre.

The council will set out policy on the uses considered to be appropriate in local centres and smaller shopping parades, including: retail, community facilities and services, and convenience shopping.

The council expects that new residential development will be accessible to local centres, providing for the community and social needs of residents and workers. It will seek the use of accessibility thresholds in promoting sustainability.

There will be a presumption against the loss of facilities and services where this could damage the function of a local centre.

The council will have regard to the uses, format and scale, location, access and parking offered by retail warehouses/parks to define policy, with the aim of securing the role, vitality and vibrancy of town centres.





**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

# **Section 7**

# **Natural**

# **Environment**

# **and Green Belt**



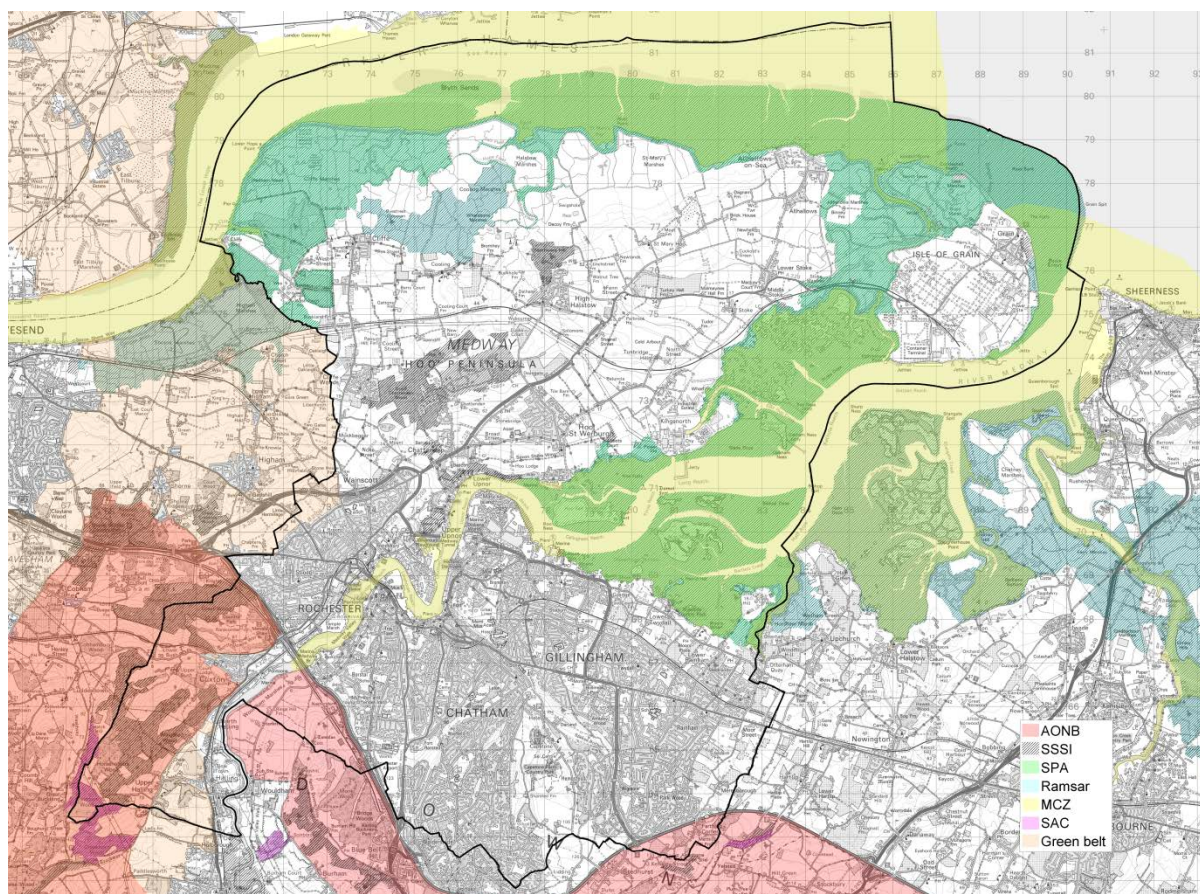
## SECTION 7

### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN BELT

- 7.1 Although known by many as an urban conurbation, Medway has a distinctive and diverse rural area, including expansive estuarine and marshland landscapes, the wooded slopes of the Kent Downs, and productive farmland.
- 7.2 The area's environmental quality is recognised as being nationally and internationally important with 28% designated as a Special Protection Area and a third of the land area is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. It also includes land in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The RSPB has its oldest heronry/nature reserve at Northward Hill, and Plantlife has its largest reserve at Ranscombe Farm. The natural features of the river and the Downs are reflected in the city's character and form. These include the Capstone and Horsted Valleys and Darland Banks. The council's approach to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment will embed green infrastructure planning in both rural and urban areas and promote improved connectivity and functionality. Understanding and embracing Green Infrastructure functionality will assist Medway in delivering improvements in urban air quality, sustainable drainage, biodiversity, rich open spaces and safer access routes, and in securing sustainable developments both within its spatial options and urban areas. The new Local Plan will seek to strengthen the condition of the local environment, and respect the need to live within the earth's environmental limits.
- 7.3 In the responses received to the consultation on the 'Issues and Options' stage earlier this year, there was much support for the protection of green spaces (both urban and rural) and the important features of the area's natural and historic environment. Extension of links for people to enjoy walking, cycling and riding around Medway, together with strengthening green corridors for wildlife were promoted. Medway was seen to have some great assets with the potential to improve the attractiveness of the area for businesses, universities and visitors and provide a good quality of life for residents. Enhanced access to the river was a key opportunity for the future. There were varying views on the approaches to reconciling development needs with protecting the environment, but recognition that well designed, sustainable development, located sensitively, could provide opportunities to invest in enhancements in the environment and improve connectivity for people and wildlife.
- 7.4 A key feature of Medway is the extent of areas that are designated of international or national importance for their biodiversity and landscape value. These indicate areas where development should be restricted in order to protect their special characteristics as outlined above.



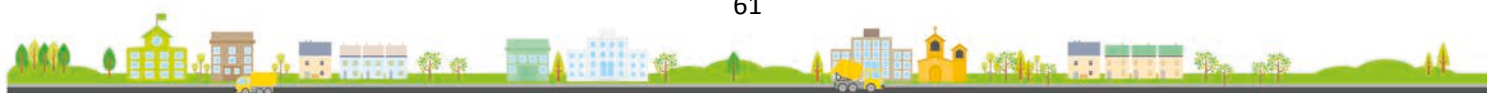




### *Environmental and Green Belt Designations in Medway*

#### **Rivers and Estuaries**

- 7.5 The lower reaches of the river Medway flow alongside the villages and towns of the borough, opening up into the estuary separating the Hoo Peninsula from the largely urban area to the south. The Thames forms Medway's northern boundary. The rivers and estuaries and associated habitats are intrinsic to Medway's character, and have influenced the area's history and development. The use of the water for trade continues with wharves, docks and associated infrastructure supporting the supply of minerals and wider goods. The urban waterfront is a focus for Medway's regeneration ambitions, from south of Strood to the north of Gillingham.
- 7.6 The routes around the Medway and Thames form part of Natural England's English coastal path that will be in place by 2020. The Saxon Shore Way long distance path enables walkers to explore the area's Saxon shoreline. There are wider opportunities to open up access through the urban area, through a waterside path or boardwalk, which will be explored through detailed plans for Medway's regeneration and development. This will be an iconic project that could transform the area's urban waterfront and connections. Similarly ambitions to provide a riverside link for walking and cycling between Medway and Maidstone will be supported. The new river crossing south of Halling will open up opportunities for walking and cycling routes embracing both sides of the Medway valley. The Medway Local Access Forum will play a key role in determining such opportunities.



- 7.7 Much of the Thames and Medway estuaries and bordering mudflats and marshes are designated as Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites for their international importance for wintering birds, and also have status as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The forward thinking Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) scheme has been developed by environmental groups and local planning authorities to ensure residential developments can come forward without increasing further the disturbance of over wintering wetland bird populations. The Medway Estuary from Rochester to the Isle of Grain was designated as a Marine Conservation Zone in the first round of designations in 2013. This protects a nationally scarce species of tentacled lagoon-worm and a number of habitats and their associated wildlife. The health of the MCZ will largely be achieved through the licensing regimes that manage activities taking place on the river or seabed, but the council as local planning authority must consider the potential impact of developments proposed along the coast.
- 7.8 The council recognises tensions between opening up access to the coast and the needs of wildlife. Research<sup>5</sup> has shown that the internationally important birdlife of the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites can be damaged by the impact of people visiting the estuary. Dogs exercising off the lead, cycling and watersports are among the activities shown to cause disturbance to birds, and so a potential contributing factor to the decline of birds in the estuary. Medway Council is working at a landscape level, participating in a North Kent SAMMS Project Board, to coordinate the delivery of a strategic package of measures to address the potential of damage to the special features of the designated habitats. The strategic approach is funded through a contribution from new developments which would increase the population within 6km of the protected areas, which the research found to be the distance within which most visits to the estuarine coast originated.
- 7.9 Medway Council adopted an interim Policy Statement in November 2015 to provide a basis for its implementation of the Strategic Access Management and Mitigation programme<sup>6</sup>. It is the council's intention that the new Local Plan will include a policy on this matter to seek to avoid damage to the protected characteristics of the Thames, Medway and Swale SPA and Ramsar sites.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/Final%20North%20Kent%20Bird%20Report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/localplansandpolicies/developmentplanpolicies/developmentbriefguidance/birddisturbanceinnorthkent.aspx>



### **Policy Approach: Strategic Access Management and Monitoring**

The council will work in collaboration with local planning authorities in north Kent to contribute to the delivery of a strategic access mitigation scheme to address potential damage from population increases on the designated habitats of the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries and Marshes. Development within 6km of these areas designated as the Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites that has the potential to generate additional visits to these coastal areas will be required to make a defined tariff contribution to a strategic package of measures agreed by the North Kent Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) Project Board.

### **Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

7.10 The Kent Downs to the south of Medway are part of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designation that runs across the county from Downe to Dover, and celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> year of designation in 2017. This is an exceptional landscape and the area is afforded the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Medway Council is a member of the Kent Downs Joint Advisory Committee that coordinates actions to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. The council has adopted the Kent Downs AONB management plan in line with statutory requirements, with the purpose of securing and strengthening the distinctive qualities and features of the AONB, within the context of development and wider changes across Kent and Medway. Medway's only Special Area of Conservation falls within the Kent Downs near Upper Halling, as a small part of the North Downs Woodland SAC.

### **Medway's green infrastructure network**

7.11 The large urban conurbation made up of the distinct Medway towns is surrounded and interspersed by countryside and water. The parks, paths and open spaces across urban Medway are important to residents for relaxation, health, socialising, and contribute to the quality of towns and suburbs. These can be the most direct way for people to engage with their local environment and can contribute to tackling social isolation, inactivity and wider health issues. In contrast to the city landscapes, the rural parts of Medway are noted for expansive marshes, woodland, chalk downland, orchards and shelterbelts, and a range of other farming activities. Capstone and Horsted Valleys bring an accessible rural landscape into the heart of Gillingham and Chatham. The continuous orchards running along the northern bank of the estuary provides an attractive and productive belt connecting Rainham to Gillingham. Together these urban and rural assets make up Medway's green infrastructure network that provides a number of landscape services, and multiple benefits for nature and people. These include:

- Habitats for wildlife;
- Food production;
- Water storage and filtration;
- Air quality
- Setting for heritage

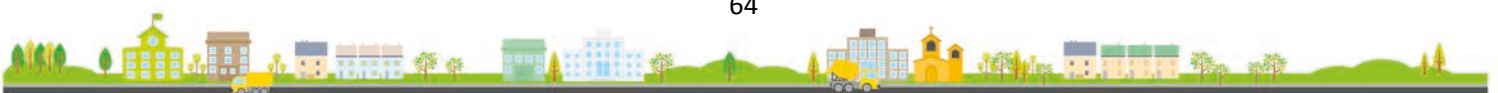




- Woodland for timber, fuel and as a carbon sink;
  - Access to open space to relax, exercise and learn;
  - Defining a local sense of place; and
  - A focus for community activities.
- 7.12 Green spaces and countryside help in regulating the resilience of the environment at a local and global scale. The council will work at a landscape scale to conserve biodiversity and secure the wider benefits of a coordinated approach to planning for the protection and enhancement of Medway's natural and local environment. Green infrastructure planning will inform the development strategy and principles promoted in the new Local Plan.
- 7.13 The principles underpinning green infrastructure planning in Medway are:
- Positively reinforcing a sense of place
  - Separating places but joining communities
  - Delivering clear benefits for the environment through development to ensure all communities benefit from change
  - Providing richer experiences
  - Creating more accessible urban and rural places
  - Getting closer to nature
  - Ability to move through productive landscapes
  - Embedding sustainable thinking from the global to the local scale
- 7.14 Working at a landscape scale, a green infrastructure network of parks and paths, watercourses, and farmed, forested and natural environments will seek to embed connectivity for people and wildlife. These will form a Green Grid for Medway, which will be detailed in a Green Infrastructure Framework to be published in 2017 to support further work on the Local Plan, as the council establishes its preferred options for development. Key components of green infrastructure planning will include strategic green infrastructure zones in areas facing development to provide for sustainable development and provide robust landscape features to enhance planned growth. Planning at this strategic scale provides an opportunity to deliver these multi-functional green infrastructure zones.

### **Protection and enhancement of the natural environment**

- 7.15 The environment is central to the ambitions for Medway's sustainable growth. The council recognises the challenges of accommodating the needs of the area's growing population alongside safeguarding the special characteristics of the local environment. The Local Plan will set out the council's commitment to protecting biodiversity, valued landscapes and geological conservation interests.



### **Policy Approach: Securing strong Green Infrastructure**

The council will protect the network of green infrastructure across rural and urban Medway. The highest protection will be given to securing the ecological and landscape interests of sites designated of international importance as a Special Protection Area, Ramsar site and/or Special Area of Conservation. A high level of protection from damaging impacts of development will be given to Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Ancient Woodland.

The council will consider the need to protect the special features of Regionally Important Geological Sites, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves. Development proposed in the Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will have regard to the need for the conservation and enhancement of the components of natural beauty.

Wider components of the green infrastructure network will be protected in line with the analysis and strategy set out in the emerging Green Infrastructure Framework. This will include open space assets, landscape buffers and green infrastructure zones.

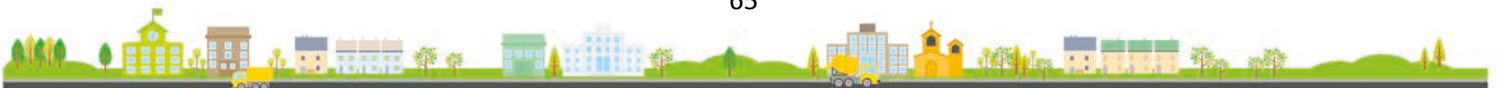
New development should provide for green infrastructure that supports the successful integration of development into the landscape, and contributes to improved connectivity and public access, biodiversity, landscape conservation, design, management of heritage features, recreation and seeks opportunities to strengthen the resilience of the natural environment.

The council will promote the extension of the green infrastructure network through setting criteria for the establishment and maintenance of Local Green Spaces.

Opportunities will be sought to promote and enhance the public rights of way network, including footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes, in particular to address existing gaps in connectivity and extend appropriate access along the riverside.

### **Landscape**

- 7.16 Medway benefits from a diverse range of landscapes. Areas such as the Kent Downs and North Kent marshes are protected by environmental designations. However the council recognises the importance of wider landscapes in providing local character, retaining links to the historic environment and defining distinct settlements. The council is updating the Medway Landscape Character Assessment produced in 2011, to provide a robust basis for landscape planning in rural and peri-urban locations. This will provide guidance to inform the preferred development strategy for the new Local Plan. It will also inform requirements for areas to be designated for their strategic landscape importance, including preventing coalescence and securing the quality and functions of the local landscape. Further guidance will be established in the Green Infrastructure Framework.



### **Policy Approach: Landscape**

The highest protection will be given to the Kent Downs AONB to conserve and enhance its natural beauty, including the consideration of potential impact on its setting. The local character, qualities and distinctiveness of the Kent Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in the design, scale, setting and materials of new development.

The council will expect development to respect the character and qualities of the surrounding landscape. An updated Medway Landscape Character Assessment and Green Infrastructure Framework will provide a basis for determining the acceptability of development proposals and areas and features that need to be protected and enhanced.

### **Green Belt**

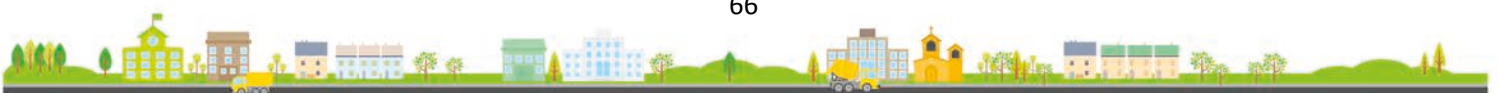
- 7.17 Green Belt is not a formal environmental designation, as its primary purpose is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The council attaches great importance to the function provided by the Metropolitan Green Belt that covers areas to the west of Medway. The designation has retained a strategic gap between Strood and Gravesend and prevented the coalescence of Strood and Higham. As part of the preparation of the Local Plan the council will review the Green Belt to assess if land is meeting the purposes established in national policy. Given the scale of growth projected in Medway's population, the council is giving broad consideration to all realistic options at this stage of the plan preparation. This includes testing if the exceptional circumstances exist that would justify a revision to the Green Belt boundary in Medway.
- 7.18 Should the council determine that there are no such exceptional circumstances to support the release of Green Belt land, it will adhere to its policy that development will be restricted in this location, in line with national policy to ensure that the land remains permanently open.

### **Flood Risk**

- 7.19 'Flood risk' is defined in the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as "a combination of the probability and the potential consequences of flooding from all sources – including from rivers and the sea, directly from rainfall on the ground surface and rising groundwater, overwhelmed sewers and drainage systems, and from reservoirs, canals and lakes and other artificial sources."<sup>7</sup>
- 7.20 The Environment Agency's 'Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea)'<sup>8</sup> shows areas at risk of river and sea flooding, principally within Flood Zones 2 (medium probability) and 3 (high probability), while areas within Flood Zone 1 (low probability) may have critical drainage problems. Much of the land along the shoreline of the Isle of Grain, the south side of the River Medway and lower lying land towards Cuxton and Halling

<sup>7</sup> NPPG, Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 7-002-20140306

<sup>8</sup> [http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?x=357683&y=355134&scale=1&layerGroups=default&ep=map&textonl y=off&lang=\\_e&topic=floodmap](http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?x=357683&y=355134&scale=1&layerGroups=default&ep=map&textonl y=off&lang=_e&topic=floodmap)



is within Flood Zone 3. Large areas of Strood and Medway City Estate lie within either Flood Zones 2 or 3.

- 7.21 Environment Agency mapping also indicates areas throughout Medway at flood risk from surface water.<sup>9</sup> However, the maps do not take account of the possible impacts of climate change and therefore reference should also be made to the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Addendum).<sup>10</sup>

### **Policy Approach: Flood Risk**

A Local Plan policy to manage flood risk from all sources will be developed in partnership with the Environment Agency and other flood risk management bodies. In line with the NPPF and PPG, the policy will apply a sequential, risk-based approach and prioritise the use of sustainable drainage systems.

The policy will draw on the Environment Agency's Thames Estuary 2100 Plan, South East Coastal Group's Shoreline Management Plans and the forthcoming Medway and Swale Estuary Strategy. It will also be supported by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and associated policies in progress.

### **Air Quality**

- 7.22 As well as a detrimental impact upon the natural environment, air pollution if unchecked will have an increasing impact on human health and quality of life. The new Local Plan will recognise that air quality is an important consideration when making decisions with regards to future developments, transport and pollution control issues.
- 7.23 Where an air quality objective is deemed to be breached, the local planning authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area and put in place an action plan in order to bring pollutant levels below the objective.
- 7.24 Medway has three AQMAs: (i) Central Medway, (ii) Pier Road Gillingham and (iii) High Street, Rainham. The pollutant of significance is nitrogen dioxide, and is almost entirely due to traffic and traffic congestion. The Council has a statutory duty to have an Air Quality Action Plan, which aims to improve air quality within these designated areas, as well as the borough in general.
- 7.25 The Medway Council Air Quality Action Plan 2015 (AQAP) was formally adopted in December 2015. The guidance has been prepared to set out the measures which will be taken to help reduce vehicle emissions which occur as a result of development proposals. The guidance will apply across the whole Borough in order to improve air quality and avoid other areas having to be designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

<sup>9</sup> <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map?map=Reservoirs>

<sup>10</sup>

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/checkifyouneedpermission/managingfloodrisk/localfloodriskstrategy.aspx>



- 7.26 Large, potentially polluting developments include those that generate a significant amount of vehicle movements (such as large out of town industrial, leisure, retail or office developments), industrial processing plants, power stations and incinerators. The impact of any proposals on ambient air quality will also be important where the development could in itself result in the designation of Air Quality Management Areas or conflict any Air Quality Action Plans declared by the Council. In appropriate circumstances, air quality impact studies through air dispersions modelling and appropriate modelling will be made legally binding through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations (s.106 agreements).
- 7.27 The use of renewable and alternative energy sources; and integrated transport strategies, will all help to improve air quality and also contributing to reducing CO2 emissions.

### **Policy Approach: Air Quality**

The council seeks to reduce exposure to areas of poor air quality, maintain areas of good air quality, and where possible improve air quality through restricting development or requiring acceptable and effective mitigation measures.

All proposals should take account of the Medway Council Air Quality Planning Guidance that sets out a screening checklist for major size development and proposed development within, or close to an AQMA. Depending on the scale of development, the Local Planning Authority may require the submission of an Air Quality Assessment and/or an Emissions Mitigation Assessment. The guidance also advocates mitigation measures for all development. Where mitigation is not integrated into a scheme, the Local Planning Authority will require this through a planning condition(s). If on site mitigation is not possible, then the Local Planning Authority may seek contribution to wider air quality mitigation measures through a planning obligation.





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## **Section 8**

# **Built Environment**



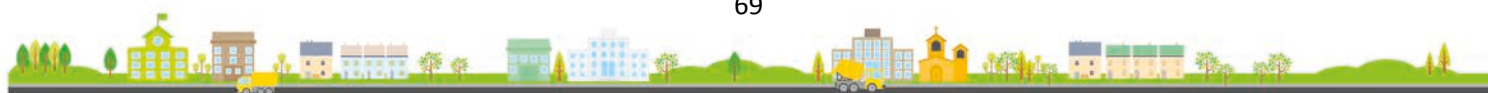
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### BUILT ENVIRONMENT

#### Design

- 8.1 New development should provide high quality homes, employment and other activities in support of sustainable development for the long term. High quality design and attractive environments can encourage investment and economic development in an area, support social inclusion and help to create civic pride and community cohesion, providing and protecting an enduring built environment which people are proud of. Good design is therefore a key element in achieving sustainable development, and in achieving the objectives of this Plan.
- 8.2 The council's vision is for Medway to be a location of quality development and correspondingly high quality environments. This is key to fostering happier, healthier residents that are proud of their homes, towns and communities where they live. The Council will also seek to create a destination of choice to support businesses and employment creation. The attractiveness of the Medway area (public realm, appearance and offer) is fundamental in supporting and nurturing a stronger local economy. The council will seek to achieve its aims for Medway as a Dementia Friendly Community through consideration of accessible design principles in the public realm and new developments. Whilst the style of building and its adaptability are important considerations in attracting a range of business, its setting is just as important. Good design that supports a high quality environment and offer will be promoted, and is a key aim of this Local Plan.
- 8.3 Comments received through the Issues & Options consultation confirmed that the emphasis of the design policy should be focused on:
- Preserving and enhancing heritage assets;
  - Support for the creation and preservation of open space, habitats, biodiversity and general enhancement of the natural environment;
  - In new developments, on appropriate massing, scale, appearance, morphology and connectivity; generally good design that is safe, inclusive, not car/parking dominated, and supports place identity.
  - Developments embedded within existing built fabrics (whether urban or suburban) should be well connected for pedestrians, cycles, and public transport. They should be appropriately connected for the car, yet not parking dominated.
- 8.4 The objective of this policy therefore is to achieve good people centred layouts and design for all new development that relates appropriately to its carefully considered context, and this should be the aim of all involved in the development process. The council is keen to encourage development solutions that will embrace sustainable planning objectives in order to deliver positive outcomes for the environment.



## Policy approach: Design

Development in Medway will be expected to be of high quality design that makes a positive contribution appropriate to the character and appearance of its surroundings. Fundamental considerations of development proposals will include:

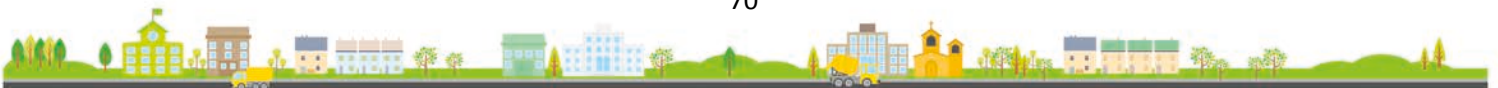
- The scale and form of development is appropriate to its surrounding context and is characteristic of Medway
- How the proposal relates to and/or reinforces the local distinctiveness and character through the use of high quality materials, landscaping and building detailing
- Responds appropriately to the character of the area, interprets respectfully the prevailing pattern of plot size, plot layout and building siting, roofscapes, mass, bulk and height, and views into and out of the site
- Makes efficient use of land and ensures appropriate streetscapes
- Good connectivity and clear user hierarchy for pedestrians, cycles, public transport and cars
- Ensuring that streets and spaces within new residential developments are not overly car dominated.
- Demonstration of provision and/or access to essential services and facilities
- Respects the amenity of neighbouring uses through consideration of light levels, overshadowing, overlooking, loss of privacy, visual intrusion, appropriately designed car parking and ensuring minimal impact through noise, vibration, fumes or light pollution, and other relevant considerations.
- Creates a safe environment
- Buildings that are appropriately flexible/adaptable and in appropriate circumstances transformable in the interests of sustainable life-long places.
- Provides for discreet waste and recycling bin storage and collection.
- High quality landscaping making use of or retaining features considered relevant/important by the Council and demonstrating linkages/contribution toward green infrastructure assets and networks.
- Achieves a transition from urban to rural where appropriate
- Includes measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change

## Housing Design

8.5 Through the introduction of the Nationally Described Space Standard which lays down minimum internal floor areas for dwellings, the Government has established that residential amenity and adequate space within homes is a planning concern.

8.6 Planning Practice Guidance issued by the Government alongside the National Standard nevertheless requires local planning authorities to provide justification for requiring internal space standards by:

- the identification of a need for such policies;
- the effect of the policy on viability, particularly land supply; and



- the establishment of transitional arrangements to enable developers to factor in the cost of space standards.
- 8.7 Achieving adequate residential standards remains a key planning objective for the Council, especially given the scale of growth envisaged for Medway. It is important that new development is designed to ensure long-term social and economic sustainability, continuing the quest for lifetime homes and to reduce future obsolescence in the face of changing economic, demographic and social trends.
- 8.8 The Impact Statement carried out with regard to introduction of the Medway Housing Design Standards (MHDS) in 2011 provided evidence of the need for space standards. It also established that meeting the standards would not have an undue effect on viability. This has proved to be the case since their introduction as the vast majority of new dwellings constructed since the introduction of the Medway local standards have been compliant.
- 8.9 The Council will not be in a position to adopt the National Standard<sup>11</sup> until it has produced and adopted its new Local Plan. However, given that the criteria of need and viability have been covered by the present MHDS, the Council will continue to expect that the internal floor areas of dwellings submitted for planning permission are adequate, and will use the National Standard as guidance on this matter, supporting existing policy relating to amenity.
- 8.10 Schemes that comply with the internal floor areas laid down in the National Standard will be deemed to have adequate internal space by the Council.
- 8.11 In addition to the internal space standards that are the subject of the National Standard, the MHDS has specific standards on the following topics, which developers should continue to adhere to:
- Shared outdoor amenity space
  - Shared access and circulation
  - Cycle storage, refuse and recycling
  - Management
  - Visual Privacy and Private Outdoor space
  - Environmental comfort
- 8.12 Housing choice, flexibility and attractiveness are key considerations for people wishing to live in the area. The creation of functional spaces and the adaptability of a home will provide a better opportunity to secure long term occupation, i.e. lifelong homes. In a changing environment with greater emphasis on climate change and supporting people to be able to carry out their day-to-day activities, the adaptability of a dwelling is also important.

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<sup>11</sup> However, it carried out extensive consultation with regard to the Medway Housing Design Standards (MHDS), which lays down very similar space requirements to the National Standards. This work included an extensive 'impact assessment' that demonstrated that MHDS was not unduly onerous and that it would not have an undue impact on the quantum of development that would be achieved within Medway.



### Policy Approach: Housing design

New housing developments should provide good living conditions for future occupants with high quality, robust, adaptable housing and functional spaces that respond to changing resident needs throughout their lives and support the undertaking of necessary day to day activities. All new accommodation must, in addition to the general design policy above:

- As a minimum meet the relevant **nationally described internal space standard** for each individual unit
- As a minimum meet the Medway Housing Design Standard (MHDS) for external spaces including shared outdoor amenity space, shared access and circulation, cycle storage, refuse and recycling, management, visual privacy and private outdoor space, environmental comfort
- Be arranged to ensure primary habitable rooms have an acceptable outlook and where possible receive direct sunlight
- Be designed to minimise the disturbance to occupants from other land uses nearby and/or other sources of noise, vibration and pollution
- Provide a convenient and efficient layout, including sufficient circulation space and avoiding awkwardly or impractically shaped rooms, unless there is justification for doing so on the basis of a significant design quality gain.
- Incorporate sufficient space for storage and clothes drying
- Meet energy efficiency targets and the higher national water efficiency standard of 110 litres/person/day.
- Encourage the extensive use of trees as a positive contribution to air/environmental quality within housing developments.
- Be designed with a clear and particular attitude to place making and distinctiveness within their context.

### Housing Density

- 8.13 There is a great variation in housing densities across urban and rural Medway. The higher density Victorian terraces in central urban areas contrast to lower density post war suburban development. More recently higher density apartment blocks have emerged along the frontage to the River Medway around Gillingham and Chatham.
- 8.14 National policy, as outlined in the NPPF, encourages locally set density requirements<sup>12</sup>. This is in order to help authorities boost the supply of housing within their areas and make the most efficient use of land, where this does not compromise the quality of development.
- 8.15 In considering options for Medway's development over the plan period, the council will explore opportunities to achieve higher densities in appropriate locations with the benefit of excellent public transport links. Such an approach has the potential to make a positive contribution to place-making. However development must respect the character and amenity of the surrounding area. Given the significance of

<sup>12</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Part 6, para 47



Medway's heritage assets, this will be an important matter in determining the acceptability of development proposals.

- 8.16 In line with meeting the differing needs for types of housing in Medway, the council recognises the need to plan for a range of densities in new developments to achieve sustainable development and deliver successful and attractive places with a distinctive sense of place.

### **Housing Density Approach**

The council will seek the efficient use of land and secure positive contributions to place-making through supporting developments at higher densities in appropriate locations, where it can be demonstrated that it does not create an unacceptable impact on the surrounding amenity and environment, and has the potential to boost the vibrancy and vitality of town centres.

Density should be reflective of the particularity in its surroundings and make the most effective and efficient use of land.

The council will consider varying attitudes to density on a case by case basis in developing masterplans and development briefs for regeneration sites.

Densities surrounding transport interchanges (railway stations and bus stations) will be expected to be higher to reflect the nature of these areas as transport hubs providing sustainable travel choices.

A range of house types should be considered regarding housing mix.

### **Heritage**

- 8.17 The historic environment in Medway is an irreplaceable asset that lies at the heart of the local character and sense of place. It has an interrelationship with many areas of planning, assisting in the delivery of sustainable development through tourism, environmental improvements and social inclusion.
- 8.18 Medway benefits from some of the region's most recognisable historic assets, including the castle and cathedral in Rochester, Chatham Historic Dockyard and Upnor Castle. Historic assets such as these help to create an attractive place to live and work; drawing in investment and providing unique opportunities for heritage led regeneration. However it is the entirety of wider heritage assets and the historic environment reflecting the area's rural, industrial and military past that collectively inform Medway's character.
- 8.19 Many of the heritage assets in Medway are protected under statute, in the form of over 600 Listed Buildings, 70 Scheduled Monuments, 2 historic parks and gardens, and 24 Conservation Areas. However, the historic environment is much broader than this and includes undesignated assets such as historic landscapes, historic development patterns, important views and vistas, and areas of archaeology.



- 8.20 A number of historic assets in Medway are considered to be 'at risk' through neglect, decay or other threat. Assets considered 'at risk' will be monitored by the council, who will seek to bring them back into use and/or into a good state of repair.
- 8.21 In support of the Local Plan, the council will undertake a review of the area's historic assets and set out a strategy for their conservation and enjoyment.
- 8.22 In meeting the needs for new development over the plan period, the council will ensure that the important heritage features of the area are given appropriate recognition.

### **Policy Approach: Heritage**

The council will support the conservation and appropriate enhancement of the historic environment by:

- Restricting development that could have an unacceptable impact on a designated heritage asset and its setting;
- Ensuring that new development in Conservation Areas enhances their significance and special qualities, whilst respecting the historical and architectural character;
- Ensuring that all new development contributes to local distinctiveness and identity;
- Encouraging development that makes sensitive use of historic assets, particularly where they are under-used or redundant;
- Promoting the preservation of historic buildings considered to be 'at risk'.
- Resisting demolition or destruction of heritage assets without substantial justification that clearly demonstrates that public benefit outweighs the harm or loss resulting from the demolition or destruction.







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## **Section 9**

# **Health and Communities**



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# HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

## Addressing health inequalities

- 9.1 Medway Council is committed to reducing health inequalities, increasing life expectancy and improving the quality of life of those who live and work here. People's lifestyles and environment affect their health and wellbeing and each of these lifestyle risk factors is unequally distributed across Medway. Medway performs poorly against key public health outcomes in life expectancy and causes of death as a result of inequalities. Average male life expectancy is below the national average, and there are pockets of marked health issues in some neighbourhoods, with reduced life expectancy and health impairments. Lifestyle issues including smoking, obesity and alcohol are key contributors to high mortality rates, particularly circulatory disease, cancer and respiratory disease. With an ageing population, the number of people living with dementia is projected to increase.
- 9.2 Planning has a role in supporting healthier lifestyles, particularly in:
- Promoting healthy weight by providing a green, vibrant infrastructure that will encourage people from all sectors of the community to increase their everyday activity through walking and cycling and other physical activity and participation of all sectors of the community in active lifestyles;
  - Improving access to health care settings and services;
  - Supporting access to healthy and affordable food, including opportunities for food growing.
- 9.3 One of the council's biggest aspirations is to enable all of Medway's people, both residents and people who work here, to enjoy an outstanding quality of life, including happy, healthy, safe and fulfilled lives. Quality of life is essential to health and wellbeing and relates to every facet of life. Challenges to this may include the lack of skills needed to secure productive employment; an unfit and poorly insulated home; poor access to public open space; not having access to affordable healthy food; reduced opportunities to be physically active as part of everyday life; having limited opportunities for food growing; lack of access to health care; fear of crime; or a lack of social interaction and sense of community.
- 9.4 Alongside creating and sustaining economic growth, we wish to place residents, workplaces and communities in a position to take advantage of the opportunities growth brings. Some areas of Medway have experienced consistently higher rates of economic inactivity and unemployment, including youth and long term unemployment, and low incomes.
- 9.5 Healthy food environments can help address obesity. Areas where there are opportunities for people to buy affordable healthy food, rather than areas that have a proliferation of hot food takeaways can help support healthier lifestyle choices. There are also positive benefits in people having space where they can grow their own



food. Obesity levels in Medway are above average and the council supports an integrated programme to address the problem through healthy eating and physical activity.

- 9.6 In 2014 the Council published a Hot Food Takeaway Guidance Note to restrict the number of these facilities within close proximity to a school and avoid over concentrations of takeaways in one location. This document has been used in planning application decisions and is seen as a successful tool to help facilitate a change in the health of Medway's residents.
- 9.7 Medway is projected to see an increase of 31,000 residents aged over 65 by 2035. With this population change, planning for the needs of older people is a key consideration for the Local Plan. Medway seeks to establish the area as 'Dementia Friendly', embedding awareness of the needs of people with dementia and their carers in service design and delivery. This will include how public places and buildings are designed to make it easier for people with dementia to find their way around and be safe. This will also help to deliver on the council's ambitions that Medway's growth should benefit all, and will take consideration of the needs of different groups in the community with physical and learning disabilities. In planning for Medway's future, the council will seek to retain and develop sustainable and accessible neighbourhoods, where people can easily reach a range of services and facilities, and reduce the risk of social isolation through enabling interactions in the wider community.
- 9.8 The council seeks to embed ambitions for a healthier Medway in all its work, and will encourage new development to promote opportunities to improve health. It supports the use of Health Impact Assessments to identify how development might have positive or negative effects on health. A health impact assessment (HIA) helps ensure that health and wellbeing are being properly considered in planning policies and proposals. HIAs are best done at the earliest stage possible to look at the positive and negative impacts of a development as well as assessing the indirect implications for the wider community. The aim is to identify the main impacts and prompt discussion about the best ways of dealing with them to maximise the benefits and avoid any potential adverse impacts.

### **Healthcare facilities**

- 9.9 Since the Health and Social Care Act was implemented in 2012, provision has undergone major change, and will continue to do so. Responsibility for public health was passed to Local Government, meaning the council now has this responsibility within its area. In 2013 Clinical Commissioning Groups replaced Primary Care Trusts in the commissioning of healthcare at a local level. Healthcare services are provided by a range of providers; including the NHS and Medway Council Public Health Service. However these services are strained. Initial infrastructure review work has identified several issues. There are high numbers of GP's practices where the number of patients per GP is above the national average.<sup>13</sup> There is a challenge in succession planning as many GPs approach retirement. Medway Maritime Hospital

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<sup>13</sup> Infrastructure Delivery Schedule 2016



is also under increasing pressure financially and socially and has seen its services rated as inadequate by the Care Quality Commission.

- 9.10 The NHS, Medway Council and Kent County Council as the major healthcare, social care and public health providers in the area have drafted a Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) (October 2016).<sup>14</sup> This highlights the need to evolve the model of care provision to develop larger multi-modal practices that provide a range of services. These could be based on the present healthy living centre model within Medway. The outcomes of this review process will inform the policy provision for healthcare facilities in the new Local Plan.
- 9.11 Comments were received in the Issues and Options consultation on the need for more local healthcare facilities and the need to give further consideration to the location of the Medway Maritime Hospital. There was also support for planning for green spaces, walking and cycling to promote opportunities for better health and wellbeing.

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<sup>14</sup> Kent & Medway Sustainability and Transformation Plan, 2016



## **Policy Approaches: Health**

### **Reduce Health Inequalities**

The council is committed to reducing health inequalities, increasing life expectancy and improving quality of life. It will support work to improve economic and social opportunities to tackle disadvantage across Medway.

The local plan shall seek to reduce health inequalities through a range of measures relating to the siting of healthcare facilities to provide better access, and assessing developments for their health impact. Potential approaches include:

- Require significant new developments to undertake health impact assessments.
- The council will seek new developments to be located within a sustainable distance of local health practices, and where this is not possible seek contributions towards improving existing healthcare facilities.

### **Healthy Food Environment**

The council will seek to enhance the food environment in Medway by requiring new residential developments to either have new green infrastructure within them or be accessible to existing green infrastructure, including local food growing space.

The council will seek to protect the food environment around existing community assets (schools, community centres, play areas and leisure centres) through measures to manage the locations and opening times of hot food takeaways, and improvements in the public realm. This will aim to build on the work of the 2014 Hot Food Takeaway Guidance.

### **Medway Maritime Hospital and Healthcare Provision**

The council will work closely with Medway NHS CGG to plan for the future of acute care within Medway and investigate the options for redevelopment of the Medway Maritime hospital site or relocation to a new site within Medway.

The council will work with the commissioners of health services to identify need and deliver a rationalised and resilient approach to healthcare provision that meets the needs of Medway's population over the plan period.

This will include consideration of the development of community health centres that provide a range of services, including GPs surgeries and community care. Opportunities for the integration of health and wider social care will be encouraged to meet the needs of local communities.

## **Neighbourhood Plans**

9.12 The Government encourages local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to help shape the future of their areas. Once formally 'made', the Neighbourhood Plan



forms part of the Development Plan and therefore provides a policy basis for planning decisions.

- 9.13 The community of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for its parish. Medway Council is supporting work on the Neighbourhood Plan to share information and coordinate work with the emerging Local Plan.
- 9.14 The council will similarly engage with other Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums that may come forward in Medway to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.







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# **Section 10**

# **Infrastructure**



[www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway](http://www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway)

# INFRASTRUCTURE

- 10.1 Infrastructure is a vital component of the Local Plan as it is essential for a place to function well. Infrastructure planning is a key requirement of Government planning policy. To ensure that existing and new residents/businesses benefit from the growth that will be delivered in Medway over the plan period it is important that infrastructure is delivered in support of new developments in a timely fashion and in appropriate locations.
- 10.2 Infrastructure investment is fundamental to Medway's development over the plan period. The council understands that the significant projected increases in the number of people who will live, work, and study in Medway and visit the area have major implications for services and infrastructure. Steps need to be taken to ensure these needs are built into planning development.
- 10.3 This section considers the level of provision that may be required in association with Medway's projected growth. More information will be provided when the draft Local Plan is published for consultation with details on proposed development locations.
- 10.4 Medway Council has undertaken research to determine the existing condition of infrastructure, and to assess its quality and capacity and its ability to meet forecast demands. Further details of this work are set out within the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule that accompanies this consultation document and highlights the existing needs within Medway.
- 10.5 Infrastructure provision and projects often cover large geographical areas. In preparing the new Local Plan, the council is taking account of the need for strategic infrastructure including nationally significant infrastructure within the area. Medway has strategic importance for the supply of energy for the wider region. There are emerging strategic projects within the wider south east region that may have serious implications for Medway's infrastructure provision, for example the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and Ebbsfleet Garden City. National policy & legislation recognises the importance of coordinating planning for such strategic projects, including through the Duty to Cooperate.



## **Policy Approach: Infrastructure**

### **General Infrastructure**

Development must be supported by the provision of on and off site infrastructure, services and facilities that are identified to meet the needs arising from new development.

Planning permission will be granted for developments where the infrastructure and services (including that set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)), required to meet the needs of the new development and/or mitigate the impact of the new development is either already in place or will be provided to an agreed timescale. Infrastructure and services required as a consequence of development and provision for their maintenance, will be sought from developers and secured through developer contributions, by conditions attached to a planning permission, and/or other agreement, levy or undertaking, all to be agreed before planning permission is granted.

### **Strategic Infrastructure**

The Council shall engage constructively in strategic planning matters that have the potential to impact on Medway, in order to meet the Duty to Cooperate with the aim of achieving effective coordination of planning. The Council will engage with the bodies prescribed in national policy and legislation and those perceived as 'relevant' dependent on the strategic matter under consideration.

## **Education**

- 10.6 As a unitary authority, Medway Council is a Local Education Authority. Within Medway there are 35 day nurseries, 60 pre-schools, 78 primary schools and 20 secondary schools as well as further education and university provision. Boosting educational attainment and qualifications and skills levels in Medway from their position below the Kent and regional averages is a core priority, as this underpins the area's economic performance and opens up greater job and social opportunities for residents. The Local Plan can help in these ambitions, by supporting the provision of nurseries and schools and the development of the higher and further education sector.
- 10.7 A learning quarter of further and higher education has been established in the Chatham Maritime area, with the Universities at Medway, Mid Kent College and the University Technical College. These have a major social and economic impact on the area and are set to expand further over the plan period.
- 10.8 In recent years education provision has become more decentralised with the introduction of academies and free schools. This has been supported by flexibility within the planning system through new permitted development rights for buildings to more easily change use for education purposes.<sup>15</sup> National policy in the NPPF

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<sup>15</sup> The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015



encourages educational development that is sustainably located and accessible to communities.

- 10.9 The council's education planning team has identified that there is currently limited capacity for additional school places and new facilities are needed across all ages within the authority area. Therefore any additional residential development would be expected to contribute to an expansion of existing educational facilities or the development of new facilities, to address the increase in demand. In planning for new schools and nurseries, there are opportunities to consider the co-location of wider community services and shared use of facilities such as sports fields.
- 10.10 Responses received from the Issues and Options consultation in early 2016 indicated that education provision should be provided in new developments and that if new developments do not provide a facility physically then they should contribute financially.

### **Policy Approach: Education**

#### **Early Years and School Provision**

Medway Council supports the expansion or provision of new/existing educational facilities within the authority area to deliver sustainable development, and to meet identified need.

New residential development proposals of a significant scale should seek to provide educational facilities within their development where suitable. This will support the development of balanced communities and inform quality place-making.

Smaller developments that cannot support onsite provision of educational facilities should contribute towards offsite education provision through developer contributions to make a development acceptable in planning terms.

The Council supports consideration of opportunities for co-location of community services and shared use facilities on school sites that offer a range of facilities wider than the educational function. Educational facilities shall be encouraged to diversify to provide a wider range of services to benefit the whole community, such as sports facilities or community centres open to the public.

#### **Further & Higher Education**

The council supports the retention and development of the further and higher education provision in Medway, and consolidation of the 'learning quarter' at Chatham Maritime. It welcomes opportunities to secure higher value jobs in Medway's economy through links with education and training providers.

In planning for the area's housing needs, the council will recognise the need for student accommodation and services.



## Community Facilities

- 10.11 Community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, such as village halls and community centres, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship form part of social infrastructure. They bring people together, build cohesive and healthy communities, and help to create attractive places to live. They provide a focus for community life, and are integral to sustainable development.
- 10.12 The council recognises the importance of community facilities in towns, neighbourhoods and villages. These facilities, especially halls, were identified in the Issues and Options consultation as vitally important to local communities.
- 10.13 As Medway's population grows and changes, it is essential there is a strong network of community facilities to support social activities and interactions. For many residents, including older people and young families, having local facilities that are easy to reach is particularly important to retain a good quality of life, and health and wellbeing. New and growing communities within Medway, such as students and people from minority and ethnic backgrounds may have specific interests that need to be addressed in planning the provision of community facilities, including places of worship.
- 10.14 Some of the existing facilities, such as halls, are ageing and community groups can struggle to maintain and improve quality standards.. Communities have an option to request designation of a key local facility as an Asset of Community Value to provide additional protection against its loss.
- 10.15 Around 12% of Medway's population lives in the rural area. The council recognises that rural communities are particularly vulnerable to the loss of community facilities. Trends in recent years have seen the closure of rural pubs, post offices and shops. Villages without a shop or a place for people to meet can become unsustainable. The council has undertaken a village infrastructure audit in conjunction with parish councils to identify the range and condition of services, such as village shops, halls, and parks in Medway's rural area, and how these met the needs of local communities. Hoo St Werburgh as the largest village in Medway has a wide range of facilities, and provides a service centre role for the wider peninsula. Overall the condition of most rural services was average to good. The council will continue to work with parish councils in identifying and planning for the needs of rural areas, and together with the information in the village infrastructure audit this will inform the approach to planning for rural services and facilities in the new Local Plan.
- 10.16 The council has also gathered evidence on how well urban communities are served by local facilities. Many of these facilities are located in the town centres, but there is a wider network of social infrastructure in neighbourhoods across the urban and suburban areas, often located in district and local centres. In planning for town and local centres across Medway, the Local Plan will consider the need to secure a range of community facilities.
- 10.17 Much of the growth planned for Medway over the plan period is likely to be located in large developments that extend or establish neighbourhoods, towns or villages. The council will expect the provision of community facilities to be integral to the planning



of large developments, so that residents can easily access a range of services, supporting community life. Large scale housing development without adequate provision of community facilities will not be acceptable.

### **Policy Approach: Community Facilities**

The council recognises the importance of community facilities as a key component of sustainable development. There is a presumption against the loss of community facilities in rural and urban areas.

Proposals that involve the loss of a community facility will be required to evidence why its retention is no longer needed or viable.

The council will support appropriate development that seeks to enhance community facilities, that does not have a negative impact on the surrounding amenity, historic and natural environment and transport networks.

The council will require provision to be made for community facilities in planning for new development. Large scale residential developments will be required to provide community facilities to meet the needs of new residents and seek opportunities to support integration with existing communities.

If the development is smaller scale and community facilities cannot be accommodated on site, a contribution will be sought to upgrade appropriate facilities off site, where it can be demonstrated that they are accessible to residents of the new development and that there is capacity for the increased population.

### **Communications Technology**

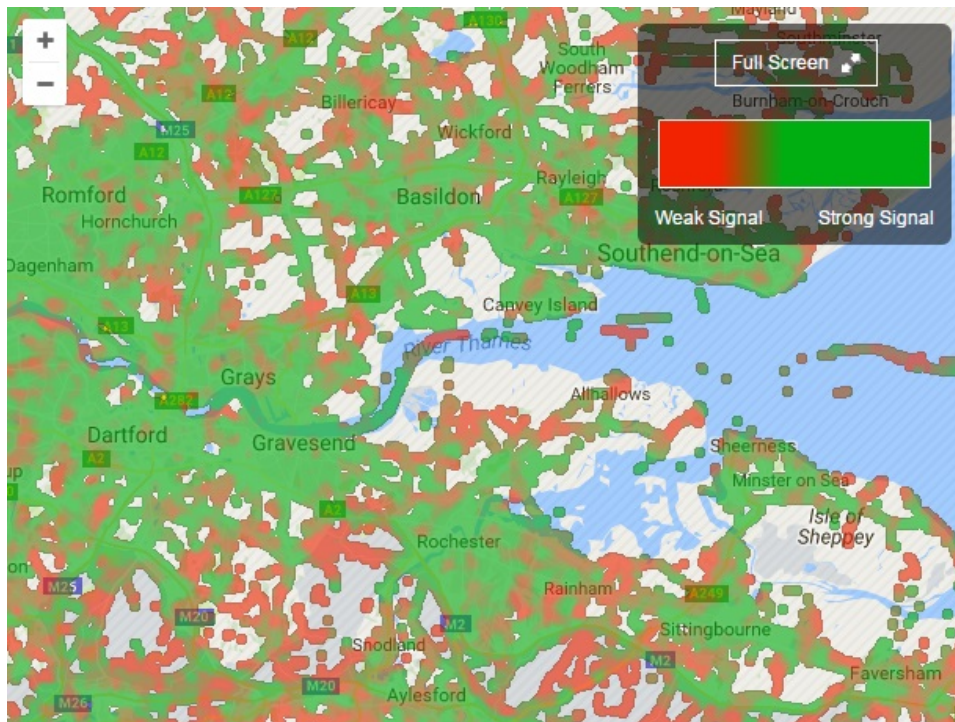
10.18 Telecommunications are intrinsic to how we now live and work. Access to good broadband and telephone services are essential for business, learning and communities, and provision of high speed broadband services is a key component of a successful economy. The council seeks to establish Medway as a well-connected digital city that offers a competitive base for businesses and excellent telecommunications services for residents.

10.19 As part of this ambition, the council is working with Kent County Council in the Broadband Development UK (BDUK) programme, supported by Government, to boost the quality of broadband services in areas of market failure. As technology evolves and demands and expectations of business and community users rise, it is important to continue to invest in improvements in broadband and mobile phone infrastructure. The provision of highspeed broadband services is an expectation of new developments, but sometimes fails to be planned adequately into the delivery of schemes.

10.20 The Ofcom mobile coverage maps show that there is generally good mobile phone coverage for voice calls and mobile internet across Medway. However the picture is more varied in relation to 3G and 4G service. Mobile internet services are limited outdoors in rural areas, especially 4G, and indoor coverage will be worse.







*Combined mobile phone coverage (2G, 3G & 4G), Which.co.uk*

## **Policy Approach: Communications Infrastructure**

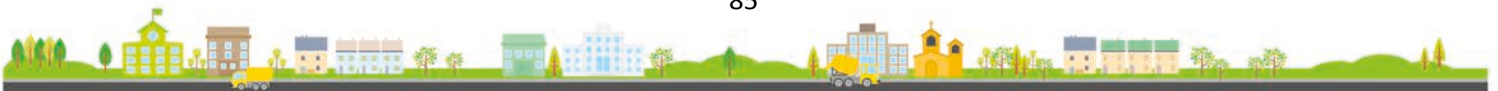
### **Managing Existing & New Broadband Infrastructure**

In order for Medway to achieve its economic and social potential and maintain its status as a well-connected place to live and work, the Council will seek to develop and enhance the provision of broadband infrastructure coverage across Medway.

New developments (both residential and commercial) across Medway shall be required to have access to superfast broadband upfront rather than retrospectively. If it is demonstrated that new broadband infrastructure cannot be built into a new developments, a contribution shall be required to upgrade the existing broadband network.

## **Open Space & Sport**

10.21 Green spaces & sports facilities are intrinsic to healthy and attractive places, and national planning policy seeks to protect against the loss of these assets. As the population grows, and ages, it is imperative that people can enjoy green spaces that are within easy reach. This goes to the heart of the council's wider ambitions for Medway. Green spaces and links are important for children's play and development, support healthy lifestyles that can redress the inequalities seen in the population's life expectancy and quality of life, provide breathing spaces and stepping stones for nature, and help form the character of the local area.



- 10.22 Open space offers many benefits for health, tourism, wildlife and place-making. Medway has a significant amount of open space within a diverse estate of 1,900ha. This includes country parks, allotments, play areas, formal parks and gardens and outdoor sports pitches. However there are shortfalls in the provision of allotments, outdoor sport and play areas as recorded in the Open Space PPG17 Study 2012.
- 10.23 Responses to Issues and Options consultation supported the retention of current open space and sports facilities and supported additional provision through new developments. It was felt there is potential to make better use of these assets as multi-functional spaces with more active community involvement.
- 10.24 Sport can contribute to positive place-making and supporting healthy lifestyles. There is a strong presence of sporting venues and hubs in Medway, and there has been a large investment in sports centres over recent years. The area has also hosted a number of major sporting events. The council's strategies for sports development promote greater participation rates, including special events, investments in facilities, improved cycle infrastructure, and development of a park sports programme.
- 10.25 Gillingham Football Club was established in 1893 and is based at Priestfield Stadium, Gillingham with a capacity of around 11,000. The stadium is within 0.5 miles of Gillingham Railway Station and is located in a predominantly residential area. The club has aspirations to upgrade its stadium and has actively been contemplating moving from its Priestfield site, developing this site for housing. The club has made representations to the council as part of the Local Plan process, promoting its interest to develop a new site at Mill Hill, Gillingham, that would involve a major new stadium supported by wider leisure, retail and residential development.
- 10.26 In Medway participation in sport is generally lower than the Kent and England averages. However it has broadly followed trends illustrated in the wider areas.



## Active People Interactive – your analysis



### Your selection:

Dataset

Age 16+

### Wave

2005/06 (APS1)

2007/08 (APS2)

2008/09 (APS3)

2009/10 (APS4)

2010/11 (APS5)

2011/12 (APS6)

2012/13 (APS7)

2013/14 (APS8)

2014/15 (APS9)

2015/16 (APS10Q2)

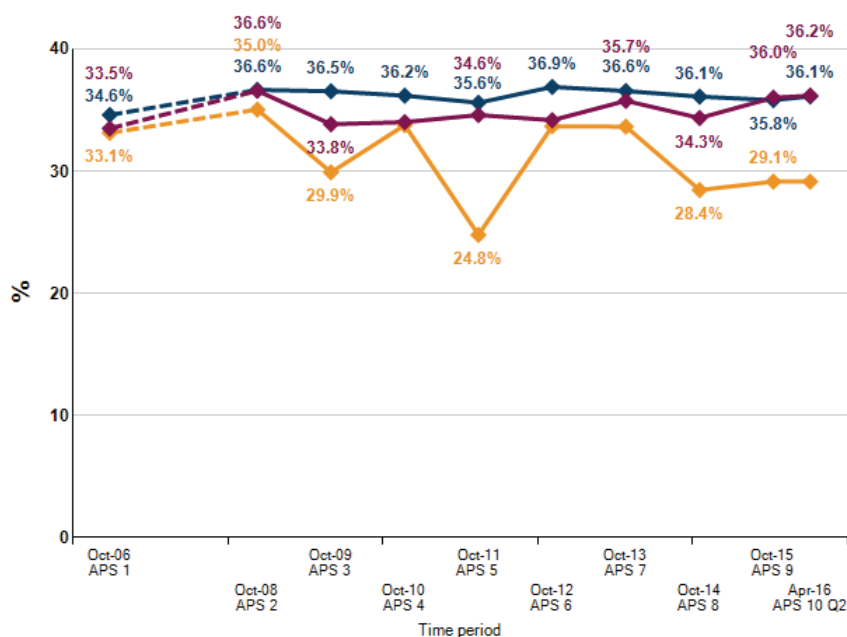
### Geography

England

Kent

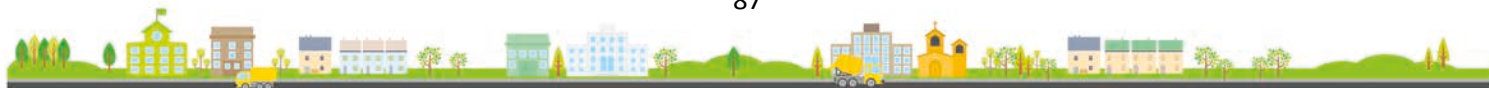
Medway

England  
Medway  
Kent



10.27 In 2015 Sport England undertook a survey 'Active Places Power. Measure: Number of sports facilities by facility type' this shows that Medway provides 426 different sports facilities within the authority. The survey also illustrated the significant role, regionally, that Medway provides in the provision of less mainstream sports, such as ice skating and skiing.

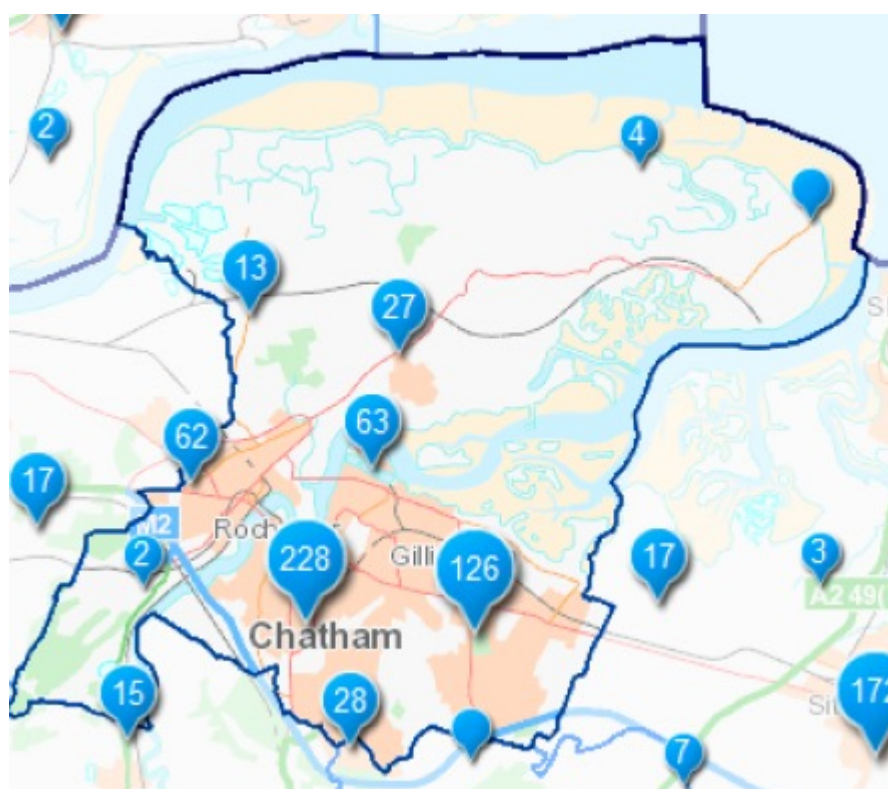
Facilities	Medway	South East	% Region
Athletics Tracks	2	57	3.5 %
Golf	6	688	0.9 %
Grass Pitches	225	12,995	1.7 %
Health and Fitness Suite	27	1,162	2.3 %
Ice Rinks	1	8	12.5 %
Indoor Bowls	2	66	3.0 %
Indoor Tennis Centre	0	74	0.0 %
Ski Slopes	2	36	5.6 %
Sports Hall	53	1,964	2.7 %
Squash Courts	17	951	1.8 %
Studio	22	1,024	2.1 %
Swimming Pool	24	1,130	2.1 %



Facilities	Medway	South East	% Region
Artificial Grass Pitch	25	808	3.1 %
Tennis Courts	20	2,612	0.8 %
Total	426	23,575	1.8 %

*Source: Active Places Power. Measure: Number of sports facilities by facility type. Time period(s): 2015*

10.28 Within Medway the geographical spread of facilities is focused towards the main urban areas (Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham and Rainham), with the exception of golf courses. The majority of other sports provision is concentrated in Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham.



*Map of Distribution of Sports Facilities Across Medway (Sport England, 2016)*

10.29 There was consensus in the responses to the Issues and Options consultation that new sports provision is needed and that Gillingham FC should be supported to find a location for a new stadium.



## **Policy Approach : Open Space & Sports Facilities**

### **Existing Open Space**

Existing open spaces shall be protected from loss, unless an improved provision can be made by new development to the benefit of the local population.

The network of green spaces will be protected and expanded where there are identified deficits, and poor quality open space enhanced. Opportunities to make open space multifunctional should be explored. This allows people to access a full range of open spaces, including opportunities to grow food, to help maintain and improve health and well-being.

### **New Open Spaces**

New developments shall be required to include on-site open space provision or to contribute towards off site provision based on the size of the development. Provision shall be multifunctional based on the requirements for the area in which the open space is proposed.

The council will seek the development of management models for new open spaces that increase stakeholder development in the ongoing operation of local green spaces.

The council will seek to work with local communities to designate Local Green Spaces.

### **Sports Provision**

The council will seek to secure and promote access to sports facilities. New development will be required to assess the ability for provision of new sports facilities on site or, if agreed as appropriate by the council, an offsite contribution made towards sport facilities.

The council will seek to address geographical shortfalls in access to sporting facilities across the authority. Where appropriate, opportunities to locate new facilities within or adjacent to centres (district or local) will be encouraged.

Existing sports uses shall be protected from loss. A change shall only be permitted where:

- It is a redevelopment that will replicate or improve the existing level of provision;
- It is evidenced that existing provision is unviable;
- It is identified that there is an existing overprovision of the specific offer and lack of need in the local community.

### **Gillingham Football Club**

The Council will work alongside Gillingham FC to develop an appropriate strategy to secure the club's future development in Medway.





## Utilities

- 10.30 Utilities such as water, energy and sewage are vital to enable development to be sustainable and function effectively.
- 10.31 Planning policy must assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure in considering the needs and impacts of development. The council's work on an infrastructure delivery schedule has reviewed strategic planning documents of utility providers and this has not yet identified any capacity issues relating to the electricity and gas networks.
- 10.32 However, Medway is within an area of water stress, and some capacity issues have been identified.<sup>16</sup> Southern Water is the provider of water and waste water services within Medway and has identified that supply is balanced in the early part of the plan period but there is a need towards the later period.<sup>17</sup>
- 10.33 With the level of growth projected in Medway, the capacity in these networks will likely change over time. Capacity will need to either be built in to the system through expansion of facilities or efficiencies made in the system to allow for spare capacity to be developed.
- 10.34 The council will continue to work with utilities providers to share information on planned levels and locations of growth to assess the capacity of systems to meet increased needs, and to identify any upgrades required, or where limits on development need to be considered.

### Policy Approach : Utilities

Any new development is to be supported by the requisite utilities infrastructure. Significant new development proposals shall be assessed as to the impact on the existing network (water, electricity and gas). Any developers that would create a level of pressure that could not be accommodated within the existing capacity will be expected to contribute towards new infrastructure through the developer contributions mechanism.

## Implementation & Delivery

- 10.35 The Local Plan needs to be deliverable in order to successfully achieve the vision and strategic objectives set for Medway's growth. In developing the strategy and producing policies for the new Local Plan, the council must have regard to viability, the impact of policy direction, level of developer contributions, planning conditions and monitoring and review.
- 10.36 The responses to the Issues and Options consultation indicated that there should be a geographical spread in relation to affordable housing and developer contributions,

<sup>16</sup> Environment Agency, Water Stressed Areas (2013)

<sup>17</sup> Southern Water, Water Resources Management Plan 2015-40





and that infrastructure should be delivered alongside development and in conjunction with communities.

- 10.37 The council has undertaken an initial viability study to assess an appropriate proportion for affordable housing contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy charging levels. Further work will be carried out to determine an appropriate approach in the draft Local Plan, based on an assessment of the viability of the preferred development strategy, which will identify the locations, scale and mix of development across Medway. The council will also respond to any updated Government guidance on developer contributions, planning conditions, and approaches to viability testing. The council aims to achieve quality development that fairly contributes to meeting the needs of residents and avoids or mitigates any negative impacts, but does not place unacceptable demands on developers that cannot be delivered.



## **Policy Approach: Implementation and Delivery**

### **Developer Contributions**

To make development acceptable and enable the granting of planning permission, inadequacies in infrastructure arising from proposed development should be mitigated through Developer Contributions. This can be achieved by several methods including S.106 Agreements, Unilateral Undertakings or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

S.106 Planning Obligations via a legal agreement will be sought where they meet the statutory tests:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The council will consider pursuing the development of a Community Infrastructure Levy charge, informed by further Government policy on this matter.

### **Ensuring the Viability of Development**

New significant development shall be required to demonstrate the viability of their proposals and this needs to be market tested to ascertain that it can withstand a reasonable level of market change.

### **Imposition of Conditions**

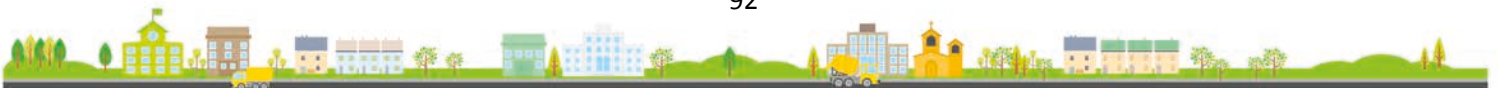
Planning conditions shall be attached to planning permissions in order to make a development acceptable.

### **Infrastructure Delivery Plan**

The council will prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, monitor and report on progress in the Authority Monitoring Report, and identify the need for review where appropriate.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Infrastructure is essential to the effective functioning of development. The council will engage positively with developers where unpredicted issues affect viability of consented schemes, in order to consider acceptable strategies for meeting infrastructure needs.





**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

# **Section 11**

# **Sustainable**

# **Transport**



## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

- 11.1 Sustainable transport is defined as any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment.
- 11.2 The proposed transport-related policies have been prepared with particular attention to paragraphs 17 and 30 of the NPPF, which respectively set out 'core planning principles' and patterns of development which would facilitate sustainable transport. However, it is important to recognise that some areas, particularly in peripheral or rural locations, may not present practical opportunities to maximise sustainable transport. Such areas are relatively remote, where households may be dependent on vehicle use. It should also be noted that households located in urban areas, with reasonable access to amenities and public transport, may still require access to a vehicle to meet some of their transport needs.
- 11.3 As a Highway Authority, the council is responsible for the adopted highway, Public Rights of Way and transport related infrastructure. The council has no responsibility for the rail network, rail services or commercial bus services; however the council continues to work in partnership with Network Rail, Southeastern and commercial bus operators.
- 11.4 Medway's third Local Transport Plan (LTP) provides the transport strategy for the period 2011 to 2026. The LTP contains five priorities, with key actions for the council and partners under each priority:
1. Regeneration, economic competitiveness and growth
  2. The natural environment
  3. Connectivity
  4. Equality of opportunity
  5. Safety, security and public health
- 11.5 The LTP will be delivered through three-year Implementation Plans, which are based on available funding, financial settlements from Government and other funding, such as Section 106 contributions. It is supported by strategies in relation to cycling, Public Rights of Way, active travel (schools), road safety and air quality.
- 11.6 The South East Local Enterprise Partnership's (SELEP) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), published in March 2014, sets out an investment strategy for the area. The SEP aims to deliver a transport programme to support growth corridors/areas, including the A2/M2: Thames Gateway Kent' growth corridor/area. The Mayor of London's recently published report to inform the review of the London Plan refers to 'joint infrastructure investment corridors' to enable housing and other development beyond London. The Council will continue to engage with the SELEP and the Mayor of London on strategic issues, including any further extension to Crossrail.

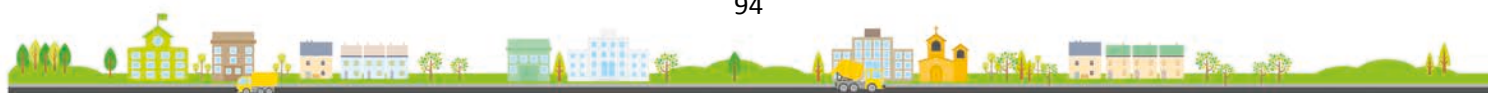


- 11.7 Although there are good links to the strategic road network, there are some congestion issues on the motorways, and problems on the M2 and M20 often create knock on effects for the local road network. Medway has a number of heavily trafficked roads and some general concern about congestion on the road network, which also results in air quality issues. Some sections of the A2 are operating well beyond their notional capacity, resulting in recurrent congestion especially during peak times. Further evidence of how growth patterns could influence traffic movements are required to determine how Medway's transport network will need to adapt over the plan period.
- 11.8 The Council has commissioned a new strategic transport model as a key part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan. The model will be used to assess the cumulative impacts of development and associated mitigation strategies for the plan period. The model will be finalised during Spring 2017, although provisional assessments of broad locations will be carried out earlier. In addition, the impact of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing will need to be assessed by incorporating information from modelling by Highways England.

### **Policy Approach: Transport**

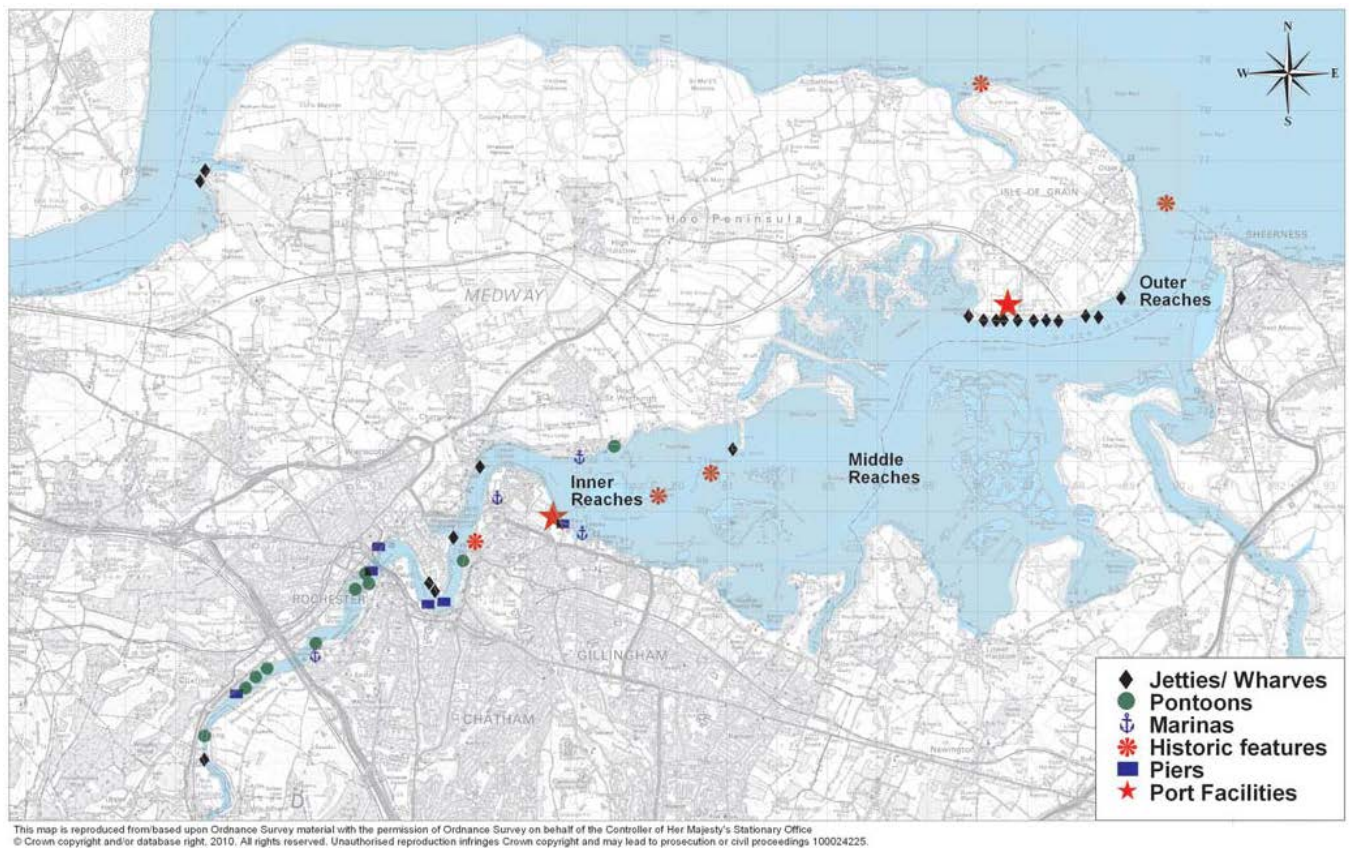
The council will work with the relevant authorities and transport providers to:

- support the Medway Local Transport Plan (2011-26) and subsequent iterations during the plan period, along with the associated three-year Implementation Plans and strategies
- ensure development is located and designed to enable sustainable transport
- mitigate the impacts of new development according to Transport Assessments and Transport Statements, or refuse development where its residual cumulative impacts are severe
- require a Travel Plan for development which will generate significant amounts of movement
- plan for strategic road network and rail improvements
- improve public transport provision and the walking and cycling network
- improve 'park and ride' services
- engage with the relevant authorities to address the impacts of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing
- undertake any necessary revisions to the adopted Parking Standards
- improve air quality as a result of vehicular emissions



## Transport and the River Medway

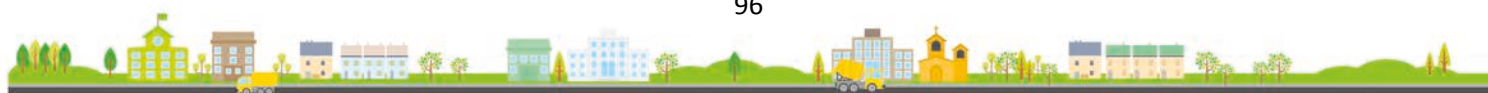
- 11.9 The River Medway is a key asset, providing a strong sense of place for the area. It is highly visible from some areas, particularly from public areas of the waterfront and areas of higher ground. However, in some areas it is less accessible due to historic military and industrial uses. Historically the river has played a functional role in the transportation of goods to wharves, reflecting the area's manufacturing and industrial heritage. Some of this activity continues today, such as on the Medway City Industrial Estate. The waterfront areas are characterised by the infrastructure associated with a range of economic activities, from aggregates importation to marine engineering and boat repair businesses, along with marine leisure activities. The river represents an important transport corridor for commercial and leisure traffic.
- 11.10 Many waterfront areas have over time seen the reduction in manufacturing use resulting in unoccupied land along the waterways, which can be a valuable asset. The waterways can provide opportunities for recreational, tourism, leisure and commercial activities to the benefit of the local economy and residents. This could be to the benefit of centres like Chatham, where a direct linkage in support of the high street can be encouraged. There are also opportunities to enhance the river frontages and improve access.
- 11.11 There are important considerations regarding the potential environmental impact including on marine life and flood risk, and the protection of the flood plain. Medway is also rich in its military heritage, much of which has a strong relationship with the river.





## *River infrastructure*

- 11.12 London Thamesport, located on the Isle of Grain, is a container port with potential for further growth. The redevelopment of Chatham Docks is well underway, however the remaining capacity, which caters for smaller vessels, may continue to complement larger ports and handle vessels too large for other local facilities. This includes wharves at Cliffe (important for the importation of aggregates), and Medway City Estate. The capacity of such infrastructure should continue to be safeguarded over the longer term in order that the area can continue to contribute to national, regional and local needs. However in identifying the most sustainable development strategy for Medway, the council is considering opportunities to achieve greater urban regeneration gains. This may impact on port and wharves facilities. In reaching a decision, the council will give careful consideration to the need to safeguard the capacity of port and wharves in Medway.
- 11.13 A network of piers, jetties, slipways, steps and stairs are interspersed along the urban stretches of the river, although some facilities are in a poor state of repair. The council supports the potential for new services on the river to complement the regeneration and tourist attractions along the waterfront, therefore the retention of and access to wharves and public piers will be promoted. The introduction of a new river crossing could facilitate sustainable transport and address the restrictions that apply to pedestrians and cyclists who are unable to use the Medway Tunnel.
- 11.14 The extensive intertidal habitats (i.e. saltmarsh) bordering the estuary are of international importance for wildlife and designated as both Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites, and the estuary is designated as a Marine Conservation Zone. The intertidal habitats are under pressure from industrial activity and the barriers formed by flood defence structures, which prevent the landward retreat of saltmarsh from rising sea levels. It will be important to address the loss of saltmarsh by identifying new opportunities for habitat formation.



### **Policy Approach: Transport and the River Medway**

The highest quality place-making standards will be realised along the urban waterfront, with public spaces as focal points, and increased access to the riverside and the river itself.

The council will determine the need to safeguard port and wharf facilities and their associated capacity, particularly those facilities associated with aggregates and waste.

The existing network of piers, jetties, slipways, steps and stairs will be safeguarded to support the potential for visitor and river taxi services and to accommodate visiting vessels, while any new facilities will be encouraged.

Marine leisure activities will be encouraged, however proposals will require careful consideration with regard to the Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the Marine Conservation Zone. Developments will need to adhere to the council's policy for the North Kent Strategic Access Management and Monitoring scheme.

In consultation with partner agencies, the Council will seek opportunities for replacement intertidal habitat where required.

Measures to protect and enhance the river as a valuable resource for wildlife and biodiversity, including wildlife corridors and habitat enhancement, will be supported.

### **Policy Approach: Waterfronts and river access**

The Authority will support planning applications seeking to improve the waterfront. Proposals should:

- Ensure that it is publically accessible
- Include a mixture of uses that make the most of the location and enable the public to enjoy the riverside. Uses should facilitate leisure, tourism, and/or recreational activity appropriate to the location.
- Respect, enhance and protect existing historic or heritage assets inclusive of landscape features and locally distinctive features, which provides context and character
- Respect, enhance and protect the marine environment and other environmental designations
- Retain and enhance existing access points to the waterways where they are in relatively good condition, will be of benefit to the proposal, and facilitate public access to the waterfront
- Support centres and the high street offer without drawing too much trade away, where the waterfront area is in close proximity

### **Marinas and moorings**

11.15 Marine leisure activities primarily consist of yachting and motor boating facilities along the middle and upper reaches of the river, largely away from conflict with the



commercial activities elsewhere. A marina is a dock or basin with moorings and supplies for yachts and small boats. It can include activities such as boat sales, repair facilities, chandlery, boat storage, club house and parking. It is effectively a small port that is used for pleasure rather than trade, often with hotels, restaurants and bars ancillary to the main function. Marinas therefore have a very urban appearance and will generate a significant amount of vehicular movement, which could lead to traffic congestion. Rural areas are therefore not preferred locations for marinas. Within or adjoining an existing built-up area, however, a marina can, if well designed, be a positive asset. Where existing or historical facilities are located in smaller settlements or rural areas it may be appropriate to support the development of larger or more permanent marina facilities in the context of this policy.

- 11.16 Existing marinas operate at or close to full capacity. Facilities for visiting vessels are currently limited, but there is significant potential for growth. It is recognised that better co-ordination between marina operators would improve Medway's leisure boating offer. Evidence at the South East regional level indicates that there is a shortfall of marina provision along the North Kent coast between Ramsgate harbour and facilities around the Medway Estuary.
- 11.17 Therefore, proposals for upgraded or new high quality marina facilities and amenities will be supported where there will be no adverse environmental impacts. In particular, river access to shore facilities and attractions requires improvement.
- 11.18 Moorings can have a negative impact on the landscape of the waterway. Urban locations, marinas and sites used historically for the function would be appropriate for permanent moorings. In other areas recreational boat users require short stay or overnight moorings necessitating only mooring posts and public footpath access in order to limit the impact on the waterways and natural and marine environment. The development of moorings, other than overnight stays, will be judged on their merits, having regard to their impact on the landscape, access, parking and cumulative provision.
- 11.19 Residential houseboat moorings occupy areas that could be utilised for additional marina berthing. Many of the houseboats have limited facilities and can create negative environmental impacts. This is considered in the Housing section.



### **Policy Approach: Marinas and moorings**

Proposals for marinas and permanent moorings will be permitted where:

- It will meet a proven need
- In an urban location, it is supported by the provision of other commercial leisure uses at an appropriate scale without undermining the role of centres and their vitality and vibrancy
- Required for the proper functioning of an existing facility or to enhance and improve access to the waterway
- Will not have a significant adverse impact on transport network
- Will not result in increased flood risk further downstream or elsewhere
- Will not conflict with neighbouring uses, have a significant adverse impact or result in unacceptable environment consequences. A detailed HRA may be required.
- Provision of access, servicing and car parking is made in a form that will not adversely impact on amenity particularly with regard to the waterways
- The site has adequate land-based utility infrastructure and support facilities including sewage, waste, water, secure storage and washing

## **Aviation**

11.20 There are two aviation facilities in Medway, at Rochester and Stoke.

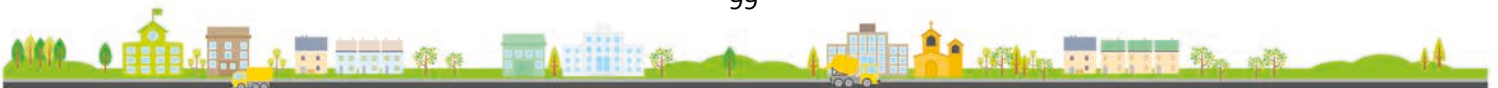
11.21 Rochester Airport is a general aviation facility catering for leisure, business, training, heritage and emergency service uses. It requires investment to secure its medium to long-term future. The council approved the Rochester Airport Masterplan in January 2014<sup>18</sup> to provide a strategic gateway and an economic hub. The masterplan proposes to remove one of the two grass runways and construct of a new hard-surfaced runway with improved facilities, while the adjoining land will capitalise on opportunities to create skilled employment opportunities as part of a Rochester Airport Technology Park Enterprise Zone.

11.22 The council supports the retention of Rochester Airport, providing an enhanced aviation facility supporting business, public service, training, heritage and leisure uses. There are no plans to transform the facility into a commercial airport, with regular scheduled and/or chartered passenger flights.

11.23 The Stoke facility, which primarily caters for microlights, is limited in scale and constrained by high voltage power lines and other features. It is not proposed to safeguard this facility.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.medway.gov.uk/businessandinvestment/medwayregeneration/rochesterairport.aspx>



### **Policy Approach: Aviation**

Rochester Airport will be safeguarded to provide an enhanced aviation facility for business, public service, training, heritage and leisure uses, and support the development of a strategic gateway and an economic hub.

Proposals will need to demonstrate how any impacts will be mitigated.

### **Vehicle parking**

11.24 The Council's current Parking Standards (second edition, adopted 2004)<sup>19</sup> sets out the non-residential parking requirements according to the proposed floorspace of new development. Revised residential car parking standards were issued in 2010. The minimum number of spaces required increases in relation to the number of bedrooms per dwelling. Reductions in the number of parking spaces are considered in urban areas with access to public transport.

11.25 National policy (NPPF paragraph 39) requires local planning authorities to consider a number of factors, such as access to public transport, if setting local parking standards. However, this has been qualified by a written statement to Parliament, dated March 2015, which referred to the Government's revised, market-led approach to determine if additional parking spaces should be provided, having abolished maximum parking standards in 2011. The following text supplements paragraph 39 of the NPPF:

"Local planning authorities should only impose local parking standards for residential and non-residential development where there is clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage their local road network."

11.26 The council's new strategic transport model and wider evidence base will demonstrate where it is necessary to manage the local road network.

11.27 It is recognised that a reduction in the number of parking spaces may present an appropriate measure for some schemes as part of a wider strategy and to promote sustainable transport. The council is exploring the alternative approaches to car parking provision in some circumstances, such as high density development in close proximity to train stations. The final approach would provide a robust basis for any revisions to the current Parking Standards.

11.28 Along with the overall quantity, it is important to consider where car parking is accommodated in relation to the home and the street. It is generally accepted that the most desirable streets are dominated by lined trees with cars parked in the street, either parallel to the pavement or at an angle, providing a buffer for pedestrians. In contrast, cars often dominate the street scene of cul-de-sacs developed since the 1960s.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.medway.gov.uk/parkingandtransport/parkingservicestandards.aspx>



- 11.29 More recently, car parking is often placed to the rear of houses in parking courts. Parking courts intend to reduce the visual impact of cars, maintain the overall required number of parking spaces and enable the free movement of vehicles. The streets in such developments are often relatively narrow to reduce construction costs, however this can lead to instances of vehicles parking with two wheels on the pavement.
- 11.30 There are further disadvantages to parking courts, including the inefficient use of land to accommodate parking, smaller rear gardens, lack of surveillance and residents preferring to use their rear door, resulting in a loss of street activity. 'Home zones' have been advocated to encourage more street activity through the integration of play, socialising and car parking. Such designs often incorporate traffic calming measures, signage, public seating, planting and street surfacing to promote uses in addition to vehicle movement.
- 11.31 Research indicates that the allocation of parking spaces can be inefficient.<sup>20</sup> Car ownership depends on dwelling type and tenure, therefore the allocation of most parking spaces will inevitably lead to households with too few or too many spaces. Visitors are more likely to require parking during the evening and at the weekend, which tends to coincide with residents leaving allocated parking spaces vacant.
- 11.32 Furthermore, in addition to a private car, some households may also need to park a commercial van. National statistics indicate a significant increase in van traffic in recent years, most likely due to the growth in internet shopping and home deliveries, along with changes to more attractive taxation rules for vans.<sup>21</sup> This is particularly relevant in Medway due to the socio-economic profile of the area, with working-age residents being more likely to use a van for work. Anecdotal reports suggest this has exacerbated vehicle parking demand, with employees often parking vans at home rather than their workplace. Some parking spaces may not be designed to accommodate larger vehicles and this can also lead to dangerous parking practices.
- 11.33 Car club membership is seen as a measure to significantly reduce car parking provision. Residents have access to discounted car hire, which can be secured through planning condition. This can be practical where residents rely on public transport for commuting, but require a car for occasional and affordable use.
- 11.34 It is recognised that there is no single solution to vehicle parking provision; developments are likely to use a combination of measures, depending on residential density, proximity to public transport and market conditions.

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted in English Partnerships, 'Car Parking: What Works Where' (2006)

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/514912/road-use-statistics.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/514912/road-use-statistics.pdf)





## **Policy Approach: Vehicle Parking**

Planning applications for residential and non-residential development will be determined in accordance with the adopted Parking Standards.

For predominantly residential development, Design and Access Statements must demonstrate how vehicle parking adheres to the following design principles:

- formal parking bays as part of the carriageway, indicated by clear road markings or surfacing
- access to vehicles should be from the front of the property
- avoid parking within the front curtilage of the property where appropriate
- well surveyed
- planting to soften the impact of vehicles
- establish 'home zones' where appropriate
- accommodate parking for larger, commercial vehicles
- accommodate parking for Blue Badge holders in suitable locations
- accommodate dedicated spaces for car club membership where appropriate
- accommodate electric and other ultra-low emission vehicle parking

In line with national policy and guidance, the council will seek opportunities to improve the quality and, where appropriate, the quantity of parking in town centres. In addition, the strategic management of public car parking, as set out in the LTP, will support the vitality of town centres.

## **Cycle parking**

11.35 Cycling is a sustainable means of transport. The cycle network and associated infrastructure, including cycle parking, are essential to encourage cycling as a viable means of transport.

11.36 The Council operates 19 automatic cycle counters on the local cycle network, which indicate a 17 per cent increase in cycle trips between 2009 and 2014. Medway will realise the multiple benefits - from the impact on local congestion and air quality to tackling obesity and other health issues - if this trend continues during the plan period.

11.37 Less than one per cent of employed residents in Medway cycle for the longest part of their usual journey to work compared to three per cent in the wider South East and England as a whole.<sup>22</sup> However, by definition, this is unlikely to capture cycling journeys to train stations, for example. 40 per cent of Medway's working-age residents work outside of Medway, with the most significant flows towards London<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2012 (QS701EW - Method of Travel to Work)

<sup>23</sup>

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dvc193/#sty=true&flow=flow1&period=0&fix=E06000035&view=200,-40,630,635&tr=-5049.496377602836,-3878.03962917882&sc=8.693878900208458>



Commuting to central London is likely to be by train or coach service. Indeed, 9 per cent of employed residents in Medway commute by train for the longest part of their usual journey to work.

- 11.38 The monitoring of cycle parking at rail stations has revealed a 60 per cent increase between 2004 and 2014. Cycle parking at rail stations appears to have peaked in the last four years due to the lack of capacity at some sites. However, the new rail station at Rochester provides more cycle parking, while facilities will be improved at Chatham and Strood stations as part of Medway's Cycling Action Plan 2016-18.
- 11.39 Medway's Cycling Action Plan 2016-18 supports the LTP. The SELEP has allocated Local Growth Fund finance to deliver a package of schemes set out in the Action Plan, which will be developed as a longer term strategy alongside the new Local Plan.
- 11.40 The Council's current Parking Standards (second edition, adopted 2004) sets out non-residential cycle parking provision according to the proposed floorspace of new development or on individual merit. Revised residential cycle parking standards were issued in 2010, requiring a minimum of one cycle parking space per dwelling, unless this can be accommodated within a garage or secured area within the curtilage of the property.
- 11.41 Along with the overall quantity, it is important to consider other key features of cycle parking provision. The proposed cycle parking policy below draws on key principles set out in published 'best practice' guides<sup>24</sup> by the Government, sustainable transport organisations and charities.

### **Policy Approach: Cycle Parking**

Planning applications will be determined in accordance with the adopted Parking Standards.

In addition, cycle parking required as part of development proposals will be expected to pay attention to the following key principles:

- have sufficient capacity for existing use and for an increase in demand;
- located in a prominent, accessible and convenient position;
- parking stands should allow the bicycle frame and at least one wheel to be locked to cater different sizes and shapes of bikes;
- well surveyed;
- secure as appropriate to the surroundings and length of stay;
- longer stay parking should be covered, well-lit and have CCTV where practical/feasible;
- low-level parking should be provided in the first instance;
- free of charge;
- clean and well maintained.

<sup>24</sup> Including Sustrans, 'Cycling Parking – Draft' (2014)



## Connectivity and Permeability

- 11.42 Individual and household travel choices are complex; however certain forms of street layout are associated with sustainable travel. Good design can create better places for people to live, and meet the needs of many sectors of the community, such as older people and children. This is a consideration in the council's ambitions for Medway as a Dementia Friendly Community and giving children the best start in life.
- 11.43 There are many examples of fragmented development in Medway due to the way in which urban areas have expanded over time, typically by patterns of land ownership and the prevailing principles for street layout. This has resulted in enclaves which are characterised by low levels of external connectivity (i.e. the number of access points) and internal permeability (i.e. various convenient routes through an area). The diagrams below compare forms of development which are more conducive to driving (A) and walking and cycling (B).



*Car dependent (A) versus walkable street layouts (B)*

*Source: CLG and DfT, Manual for Streets (2007)*

- 11.44 Development of allocated sites will be phased during the plan period. It is therefore crucial that adjacent parcels of land within allocated sites incorporate appropriate connections to enable integrated development. 'Filtered permeability', or the separation of vehicle traffic from other favourable routes for public transport, walking and cycling, may offer an appropriate solution in some circumstances.
- 11.45 Moreover, networks of multi-functional green spaces and landscape features, along with increased riverside access and river crossings, and the conversion of disused infrastructure, such as rail sidings, to sustainable transport routes will have a crucial role in making locations sustainable and facilitating sustainable transport.



### **Policy Approach: Connectivity**

Masterplans and/or Design and Access Statements must demonstrate how the proposed street layout will promote ease of movement along safe routes and integrate with adjacent built-up areas. The external connectivity and internal permeability of new development proposals will require careful consideration. Development will be expected to be integrated with the public realm and public transport, in particular ensuring that local facilities and services are easily accessible by foot or bicycle.

The council will seek to expand the network of safe pedestrian and cycle routes to ensure that areas dedicated to vehicular circulation are designed with pedestrian safety and needs of vulnerable groups in mind.

The council will seek to ensure that new developments incorporate measures designed to minimise traffic flows and speeds that result in child-friendly streets in residential areas.





**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

# **Section 12**

# **Minerals, Waste and Energy**



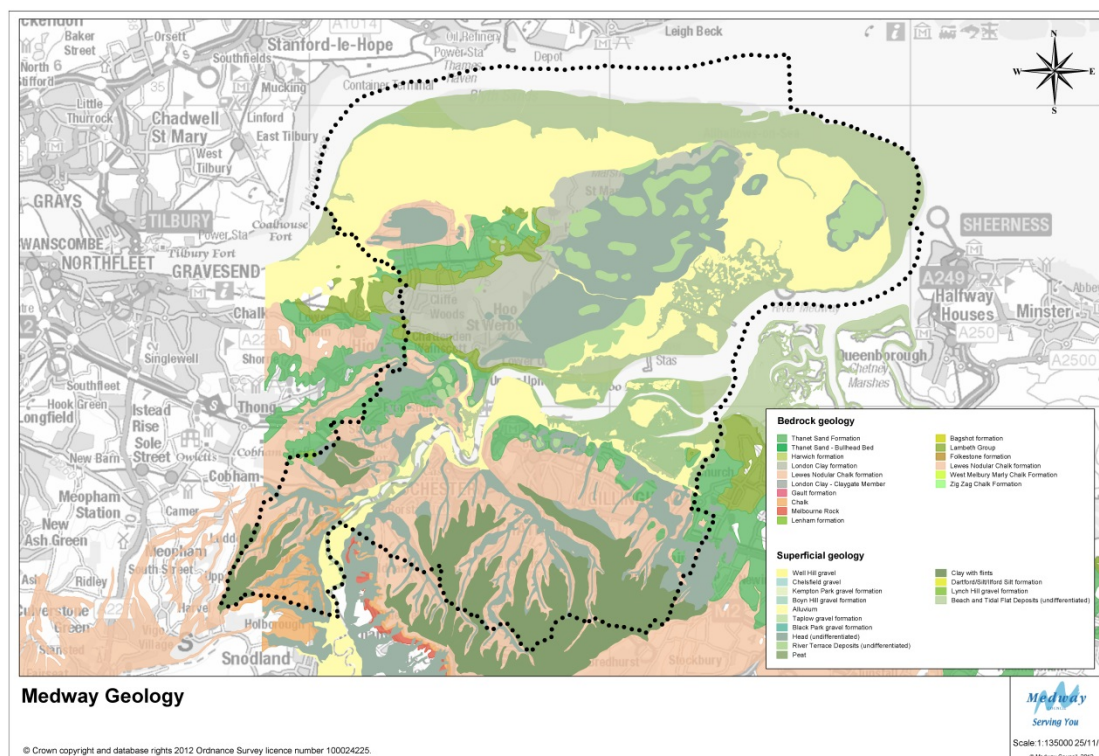
[www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway](http://www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway)



## MINERALS, WASTE AND ENERGY

### Minerals

- 12.1 Medway Council is a Minerals Planning Authority. As part of this role Medway must ensure a steady and adequate supply of minerals to meet local needs and contribute to regional requirements.



- 12.2 The geology in Medway includes deposits of chalk, clay and sand and gravel, much of which is located on the Hoo Peninsula. Currently there are 2 quarries in Medway, both for the extraction of sand and gravel, and with a total permitted reserve of 1.3 million tonnes. Planning permission has also been granted for a chalk quarry with permitted reserves for at least 25 years supply at Holborough in the neighbouring Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, on the border with Medway. Preliminary site works have been undertaken, however there are likely to be significant changes needed to the approved design and layout to reflect modern requirements that would require a fresh planning application be approved prior to development of the site.
- 12.3 Alongside land-won aggregate extraction, Medway also has 3 active wharves for the importation of aggregates, including marine-dredged. Much of the aggregates imported remain in Kent and Medway (around 80%), with approximately 11% sent to London. Associated with two of the wharves are railheads for the wider distribution of aggregates, one of which falls within the neighbouring Gravesham Borough Council.





- 12.4 Medway also has several sites that supply secondary and recycled aggregates to the market. Whilst the sales of these aggregates are relatively low compared to those imported through wharves in Medway, these facilities have continued importance in maintaining a continued supply of aggregates to the region.
- 12.5 The council monitors the supply of minerals and publishes annual data in a Local Aggregate Assessment, which is considered and agreed by a regional Aggregates Working Group.
- 12.6 Considerations of design and development management requirements in relation to minerals development will be set out in the draft Local Plan.

### **Policy approach: Minerals**

The council will plan for the steady and adequate supply of minerals to meet local needs and contribute to regional requirements. It will seek to:

- Sustainably deliver a steady and adequate supply of land-won sand and gravel.
- Maintain a 7-year landbank of permitted sand and gravel reserves.
- Support regional consideration and planning of aggregates through its membership of the South East England Aggregates Working Group
- Promote the transportation of minerals by water and rail for longer distance distribution.
- Safeguard identified areas of proven and unproven unconstrained reserves of river terrace sand and gravel reserves from development that may prevent their future extraction.
- Safeguard all existing mineral wharves, railheads, storage, handling and processing facilities from development that may prejudice their continued use for the importation of crushed rock, sand and gravel and other associated materials.
- Ensure that any new permitted quarry is returned to a suitable condition for reuse after operations have ceased.
- Promote the use of secondary aggregates, requiring the reclamation and reuse of materials on redevelopment sites.
- Allocate sites for the processing, sorting and distribution of secondary aggregates displaced through planned redevelopment schemes.

### **Waste and Recycling**

- 12.7 Medway Council has the responsibility for the collection, treatment and disposal of municipal waste in Medway. This is currently handled by an external operator under a contract set to expire in 2035. Alongside municipal waste, Medway Council must also sustainably plan for the capacity necessary to process other waste streams in the area, including commercial and industrial waste (C & I), construction, demolition and excavation waste (C, D & E) and hazardous waste. As municipal waste is handled under a contract spanning the plan period, no provision for this type of waste is required; however provision will need to be made for the other waste streams.



- 12.8 The EU Waste Framework Directive 2008 and the Waste Management Plan for England (2013) aim for zero waste. This is reflected in the Waste Hierarchy which states that waste prevention from the outset is the most favoured option, through to waste disposal as the least preferable outcome. EU Waste Framework Directive 2008 also favours a move to self-sufficiency; whereby waste is treated in its area of origin, limiting the environmental impact of transportation and instilling a more responsible approach towards waste management. Any disposal or recovery of waste should be as close as possible to the place of origin.
- 12.9 In 2014, Medway produced approximately 430,000 tonnes of waste and managed approximately 550,000 tonnes. Whilst Medway manages far more waste than it produces across most waste streams, more hazardous waste is currently exported out of Medway than is managed.
- 12.10 Medway plays an important role in waste management across the south-east region. The projected growth in the area will bring added pressures to waste management facilities in Medway, making achieving net self-sufficiency more challenging. Development pressures in London and the potential for the re-location of waste management industries out of the capital may attract businesses to Medway. Further to this, a number of waste operators are located in the Knight Road area of Strood which will be impacted by the redevelopment of Temple Marsh, therefore requiring alternative sites to continue operating.
- 12.11 The council will assess the need for replacement and additional waste management facilities in Medway over the plan period and set out its approach in the draft Local Plan.

#### **Policy Approach: Waste**

- Strive to maintain net self-sufficiency across all waste streams.
- Support waste management proposals that help ascend the Waste Hierarchy.
- Allocate additional sites for waste management facilities in-line with growth in Medway.
- Promote sustainable waste management within all new developments, ensuring that there is an appropriate provision for the separation, storage and collection of waste.
- Only permit new landfill sites where it can be demonstrated that the waste stream cannot be managed by another means, results in environmental or other benefits, and the site is restored to a high quality standard.

#### **Energy**

- 12.12 Medway is nationally significant in terms of power generation, electricity distribution and liquefied natural gas (LNG) storage.

#### **Conventional Energy**



- 12.13 Medway continues to make a significant contribution to energy supply and security, with a combined installed capacity of 3.2GW<sup>25</sup> from power stations on the Hoo Peninsula. This represents more than half of the installed capacity for the South East region and around 10% nationally<sup>26</sup>. These include the replacement of the Grain Power Station, with an efficient Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) station, including a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) circuit that takes waste heat for use in the neighbouring Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Terminal, and two gas powered plants that have been added at Damhead Creek and adjacent to Thamesport. Damhead Creek also has planning permission for a significant expansion in generating capacity for Phase 2.
- 12.14 In addition to these large scale power generation facilities, the LNG importation terminal at Grain is the largest such facility in Europe and has the capacity to supply around 20% of the UK's forecast gas demand. A number of pipelines and cables forming part of the national energy supply network also cross the Medway area.
- 12.15 A two-way electrical inter-connector (BritNed) also links Grain and the Netherlands and aviation fuel is also imported, stored and distributed from Grain.

### **Policy Approach: Energy**

Proposals for additional new power generation and energy storage capacity on the Hoo Peninsula and the Isle of Grain will be supported, where the following criteria is met:

- Their impact on the natural environment, transport networks and local settlements being acceptable
- Assessment of the feasibility and viability of potential re-use of waste heat.
- Specific efforts being applied to the recruitment and use of local labour, including collaboration with local universities and colleges

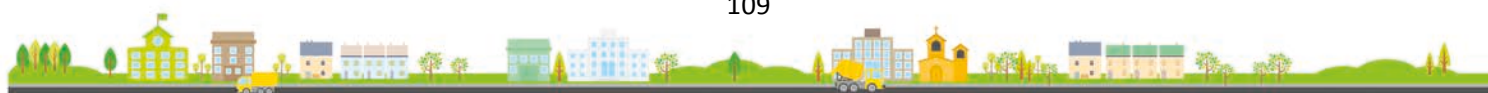
The council will positively promote the development of local supply chains and a support and maintenance cluster. It will also seek to develop further value added and R&D activities in conjunction with the plant operators.

### **Renewable & Low Carbon Technology**

- 12.16 Climate change is a key priority for all and over the coming years the move to zero carbon will influence the future policy background. Changes, especially with the improvement in green technology, can have a major and long lasting impact. The council is committed to reducing the carbon footprint of the area and encourages changes that lead to such improvements.

<sup>25</sup> Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy  
Power Stations in the United Kingdom (operational at the end of May 2016)

<sup>26</sup> *Figures derived by analysing data for conventional forms of energy for the South East and England (i.e. oil, natural gas and nuclear power generation)*



- 12.17 The NPPF requires local plans to plan positively to deliver renewable and low carbon technology developments. This is to help tackle climate change and address the environmental role of planning as set out in the NPPF. This helps to meet the UK's legally binding target to reduce carbon emissions by 80% on 1990 levels by 2050.<sup>27</sup>
- 12.18 A Ministerial Statement of the 28 June 2015 states that proposals for wind energy development should only be granted planning permission if the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan; and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing. The council will consider if there are appropriate sites for wind energy development and put forward information for consultation.
- 12.19 Within Medway, there are opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy development using a range of technologies including:
- Wind;
  - solar photovoltaic (PV);
  - solar thermal;
  - heat pumps (Ground Source, Air Source, Water Source);
  - hydro;
  - biomass combustion;
  - biomass anaerobic digestion; and
  - District Heat Networks
- 12.20 Some of these technologies can be installed through existing permitted development rights. Where planning permission is required, the council will support schemes that adequately consider, identify and where necessary mitigate any negative impacts. These may include landscape character and design impacts. The local plan's evidence base relating to landscape along with national guidance can help to inform the impact assessment of specific renewable and low carbon technologies.
- 12.21 Renewable and low carbon technologies can be incorporated effectively into building design and this is encouraged in local plan design policy. Building Regulations require new developments to incorporate carbon saving through design and construction methods.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/2010-to-2015-Government-policy-greenhouse-gas-emissions/2010-to-2015-Government-policy-greenhouse-gas-emissions>



### **Policy Approach: Renewable and Low Carbon Technologies**

Renewable and low carbon energy proposals will be supported and planning permission granted where the following criteria are met:

- The proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on landscape character and visual appearance of the local area, including the urban environment;
- The statutory protection of any area would not be compromised by the development;
- Any noise, odour, traffic or other impact of development is mitigated so as not to cause unacceptable detriment to local amenity;
- Any significant adverse effects of the proposal are mitigated by wider environmental, social and economic benefits.

Large scale renewable energy technologies can be contentious as they are often land hungry and visually imposing. Where the above criteria are met, the council encourages dialogue with early consultation with the local community, and pre-application discussions will be necessary to ensure that large-scale renewable energy installations are appropriately designed and located.

The council will consider the suitability of designating a defined area for wind energy development, informed by work on landscape character assessment.





**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

# Appendices

Appendix 1A - Map - Medway Local Plan 2012- 2035  
Working towards a development strategy

Appendix 1B - Diagram - Maximising the potential of  
urban regeneration

Appendix 1C - Diagram - Suburban expansion

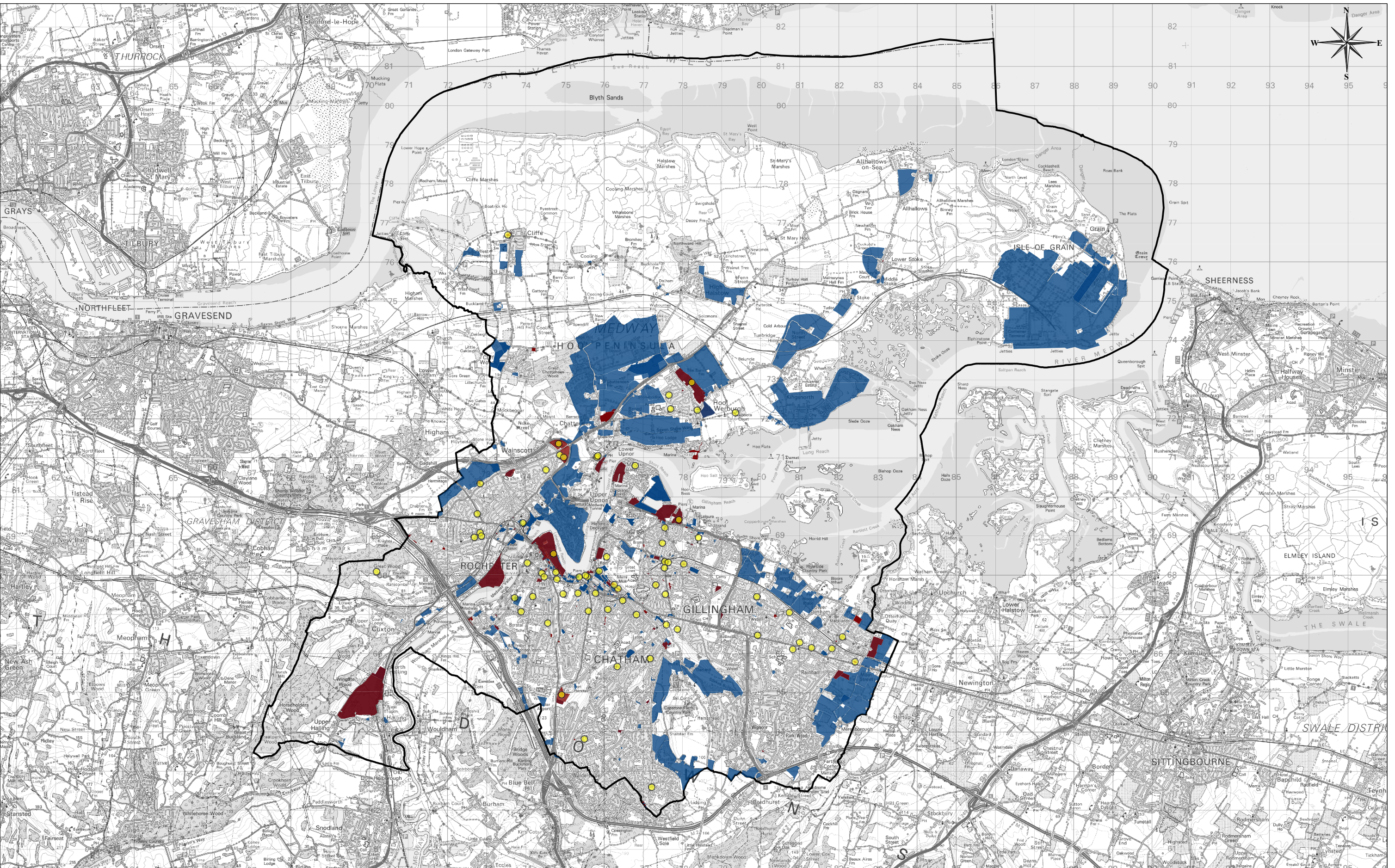
Appendix 1D - Diagram - A rural focus

Appendix 1E - Diagram - Urban regeneration and rural town

Appendix 1F - Diagram - Medway City Estate vision







**Title:** Medway Local Plan 2012-35: Working towards a Development Strategy

Potential areas for consideration  
for development - residential,  
employment, retail and  
community services



Completions (2013-16)    Planning permission granted