

**Medway
Local Development Scheme
2019 - 2022**

August 2019

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Local Development Scheme provides an updated programme for the production of a new local plan that will provide the basis for development policy in Medway. The scheme covers the period from 2019 to 2022, and updates the Medway Local Development Scheme published in December 2018. The council has produced a revised Local Development Scheme to reflect the current position in the plan making process. It is intended that this updated scheme is approved by the council's Cabinet on 6 August 2019, and that it takes effect from 14 August 2019.
- 1.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires local planning authorities to prepare, maintain and publish a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The first Medway Local Development Scheme was published in April 2005, and the council has periodically reviewed the scheme to ensure its accuracy and that it aligns to the current legislative and local context. The LDS provides public information on the process and timetable for the preparation and review of local development documents, and is used by the council to help plan resources and workstreams. It allows the community and stakeholders to find out about the council's intentions for the planning of Medway, and when they can participate in the plan making process.
- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in July 2018 with further updates in February 2019, and has reiterated the role of development plans to manage growth. Local planning authorities have a statutory duty to prepare and update local plans for their area. The government has provided further details on its expectations for plan-making in Planning Practice Guidance. The Secretary of State has extended powers to intervene in plan making where progress is unsatisfactory, and has taken up this power where he considered that planning authorities had not made sufficient progress.
- 1.4 The current development plan for Medway is made up of the saved policies from the Medway Local Plan adopted in 2003, together with some earlier saved policies specific to waste and minerals. Details of the saved policies that form the development plan are set out on the council's website at:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/146/current_planning_policies/2
- 1.5 Medway Council is aware of its ageing Local Plan and is working towards the publication of its draft plan to provide an updated

development strategy and policy framework to manage Medway's sustainable growth. The council has been engaging with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the Planning Advisory Service, to provide updates on the preparation of the Medway Local Plan, and demonstrate that the council is committed to positively planning for the development needs of the area.

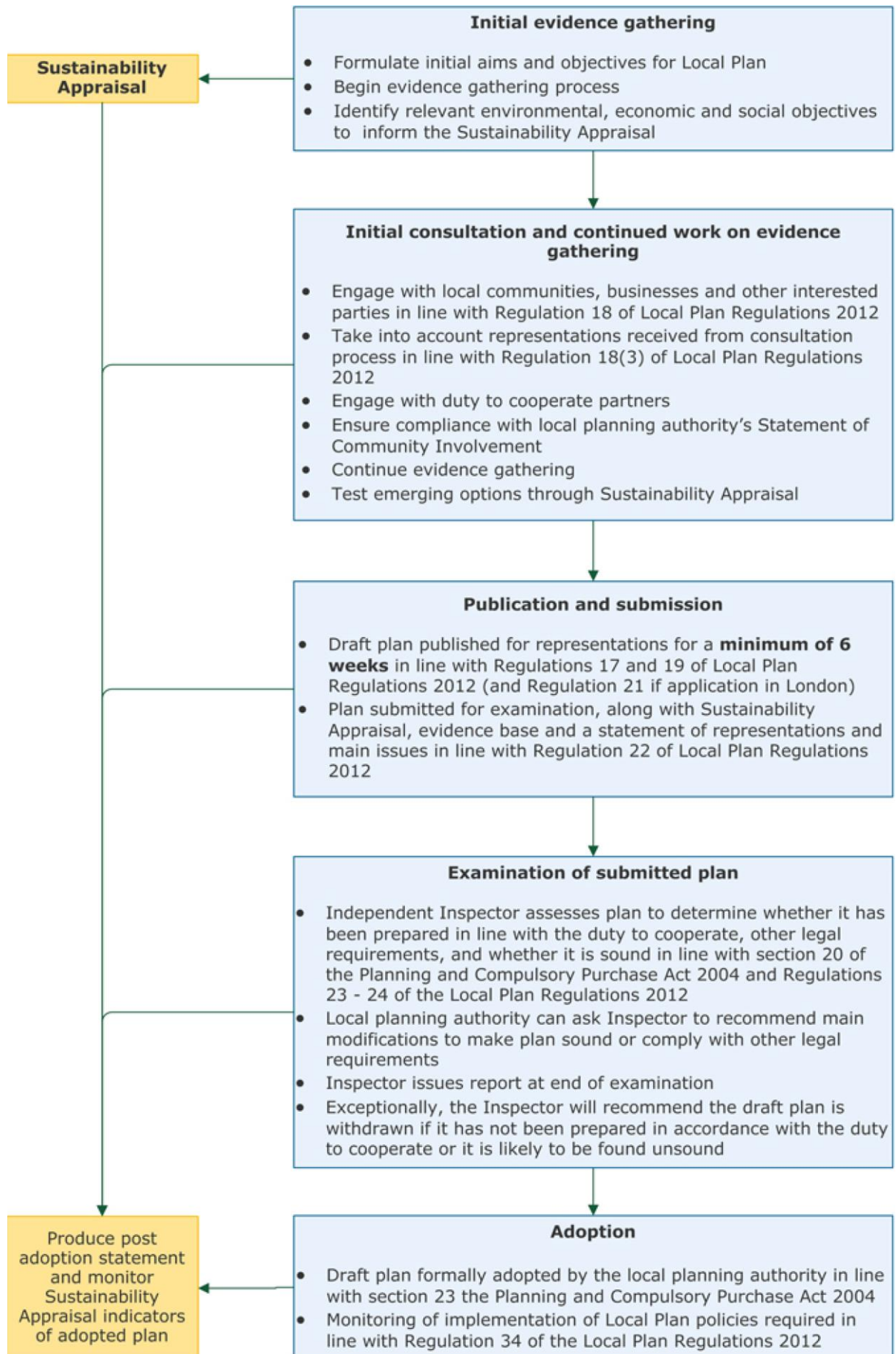
1.6 The council has carried out three rounds of formal consultation at 'Regulation 18' stage. The council undertook an initial Regulation 18 'Issues and Options' consultation in early 2016. A further consultation stage on 'Development Options' was held in 2017. Representations made at the Development Options consultation stage requested that the council explicitly consider a development option that did not include reference to development on land at Lodge Hill, Chattenden. This would provide greater clarity in assessing the potential impact of development on a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. Therefore the council provided a further opportunity to make representations, through a Regulation 18 consultation on a Development Strategy document in 2018.

1.7 The preparation of the new local plan has involved collating an evidence base including identification of development needs, infrastructure capacity and needs, transport and sustainability assessments and land availability. The council has also carried out assessments of the Green Belt within the borough, and drafted a strategy for the management of Medway's heritage. In line with updated planning policy and guidance, the council is using the Standard Method for calculating Local Housing Need, and is following guidance for defining housing needs for specific groups. Details of the evidence base produced for the new local plan are published on the council's website at:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/519/future_medway_local_plan/2

1.8 The Council will meet the requirements of sustainability appraisal throughout the plan preparation process, carrying out iterative appraisals of the sustainability of the options, proposals and draft policies in the emerging Local Plan and prepare reports setting out the findings. This will be carried out at the key stages of plan preparation. The Council will consult on the Sustainability Appraisals in line with its Statement of Community Involvement. The recommendations from the Sustainability Appraisals will be addressed in the emerging Local Plan.

1.9 The process for the preparation of local plans is set out in the diagram below, provided in Planning Practice Guidance.



2. Update to Local Development Scheme

- 2.1 The Council's work on the new Medway Local Plan is the focus of this Local Development Scheme. The new local plan will cover the period 2019-2037. The Local Plan will cover the whole of Medway, and will be prepared in conformity with national planning legislation, specifically the National Planning Policy Framework, 2019. On adoption it will replace the saved policies from the Medway Local Plan 2003. The Local Plan is a Development Plan Document (DPD).
- 2.2 The new local plan will include strategic policies, including for waste and minerals, and a number of local policies to manage development. It will also have a policies map and provide for land allocations to meet development needs for housing and employment.
- 2.3 Work on the local plan has identified that lack of infrastructure capacity presents major constraints to growth, particularly the scale of development needs projected for Medway. The council is seeking opportunities to secure investment to upgrade infrastructure locally, and through these measures, to boost the capacity for growth. Medway Council submitted a bid in March 2019 to the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund for up to £170m of investment into strategic infrastructure that could support the growth needs to be met in the new local plan. As the funding relates to the delivery of strategic scale infrastructure, it has particular significance to the assessment of options to deliver development in the new local plan.
- 2.4 The council had been advised that a decision on the HIF bid would be made in late Spring 2019. The local plan programme set out in the Local Development Scheme of December 2018 was informed by this timetable. The decision on the HIF bid has not yet been published and the council anticipates that it will be notified in coming months. The outcome is significant to decision making on development options in the plan. It is appropriate to await the decision on the HIF bid before publishing the draft Medway local plan. The delay to the outcome of the HIF bid has required the council to review the timetable for the production of the local plan, and therefore to publish a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS). This is to ensure that the LDS meets the requirements to keep communities accurately informed of plan making activity.
- 2.5 This document represents the updated programme for the production of the new local plan. The council has revised the LDS to reflect updated timing for the anticipated outcome of the HIF bid. The revisions to the Local Development Scheme relate to the published

dates for the key stages of plan preparation as set out in Table 1 below. The review has also considered the plan period to take account of the need for strategic policies to look ahead over a minimum fifteen year period from adoption of the plan. The council has updated the plan period for the new local plan to cover 2019 to 2037.

- 2.6 A timetable for the preparation of the replacement Local Plan is set out in the table below.

Table 1: Key milestones for Medway Local Plan

Stage	Date
Regulation 18 – Issues and Options consultation	Jan-Feb 2016
Regulation 18 – Development Options consultation	Jan-May 2017
Regulation 18 – Development Strategy consultation	March-June 2018
Regulation 19 – Publication of draft plan	By December 2019
Submission of plan for Examination	Autumn 2020
Adoption (determined on outcome of Examination)	2021

3. Neighbourhood Plans and other policy documents

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Plans were introduced in the Localism Act in 2011. They are not compulsory, but when duly prepared they are a statutory document that forms part of the development plan. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted local plan, and have regard to any emerging local plans or relevant development plan documents. Communities in Medway have shown increased interest in preparing neighbourhood plans for their local areas. Once the plans are ‘made’, or adopted, they will form part of the development plan for Medway. Currently there are three Neighbourhood Areas designated in Medway, for the purpose of producing a neighbourhood plan:

- Cliffe and Cliffe Woods – designated June 2015
- High Halstow – designated June 2018
- Hoo St Werburgh – designated December 2018

- 3.2 An application is currently being considered for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum in Arches (Chatham). A decision is expected in August 2019.

- 3.3 Cliffe and Cliffe Woods is preparing to consult on its draft neighbourhood plan this year, before submitting it to Medway Council to progress to examination. The detailed programmes for the neighbourhood plans in High Halstow, Hoo St Werburgh and Arches (Chatham) have not yet been agreed by the neighbourhood planning groups. The council anticipates receiving the draft neighbourhood plans from these areas in 2020, or early 2021. Further details of neighbourhood plans in Medway and support available from the council are available on the council's website at:

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

- 3.4 In preparation for the new local plan, the Council has reviewed its Statement of Community Involvement. This provides the basis for effective and meaningful engagement in the preparation of the new Local Plan. The Planning Service consulted on a draft in Spring 2019, and is updating the document in response to comments received. The Statement of Community Involvement is published at:

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

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

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

- 3.6 The council is preparing a Local Development Order, jointly with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to support the development of a key employment site at Innovation Park Medway. This covers a defined area on the border of Medway near Rochester Airport, that has been identified by both councils as a key location for a new business park. The councils have consulted on the proposals, with adoption of the LDO anticipated later in 2019.

- 3.7 The emerging Local Plan is informed by work on infrastructure planning and delivery. The council has not progressed a Community Infrastructure Levy, and continues to use Section 106 agreements as its preferred mechanism to collect developer contributions. We will plan further work on infrastructure funding in line with the viability studies and delivery strategies being produced for the draft plan.

4. Resources and project management

- 4.1 Medway Council has strong corporate commitment to the adoption of a replacement Local Plan, and the importance of this work is recognised and supported across the authority. The Medway Local Plan will be produced by the Council's Planning Service, with the work being led by the Planning Policy team. The service is supported by the specialist technical skills and knowledge of other teams, including Environmental Protection, Regeneration Delivery and Public Health.
- 4.2 The Council will seek to use its processes of community involvement and engagement and its Duty to Cooperate activities and organisations to help inform and develop the plan, making effective use of intelligence and resources. This will include the preparation of Statements of Common Ground in relation to strategic cross border planning matters. The plan will be supported by a comprehensive evidence base, including housing, employment, retail, transport, heritage, infrastructure, and the natural environment.
- 4.3 The Council has established management and reporting structures to support the delivery of the local plan, including the use of briefings and reporting to senior managers and members throughout the plan preparation process. Risk management is integral to reporting and monitoring. The Planning Service regularly reviews work streams on the local plan, to take account of new legislation and significant changes in the local context. There is a dedicated cross party member advisory group supporting the production of the local plan.

Reporting progress

- 4.4 The Council will publish this updated Local Development Scheme on its website and make it available for inspection at the Council's offices at Gun Wharf. There is a dedicated page on the council's website for the LDS:

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

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

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

5. **Contact information**

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

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

You can contact the Planning Policy team at:

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