

**Medway
Local Development Scheme
2022 - 2025**

October 2022

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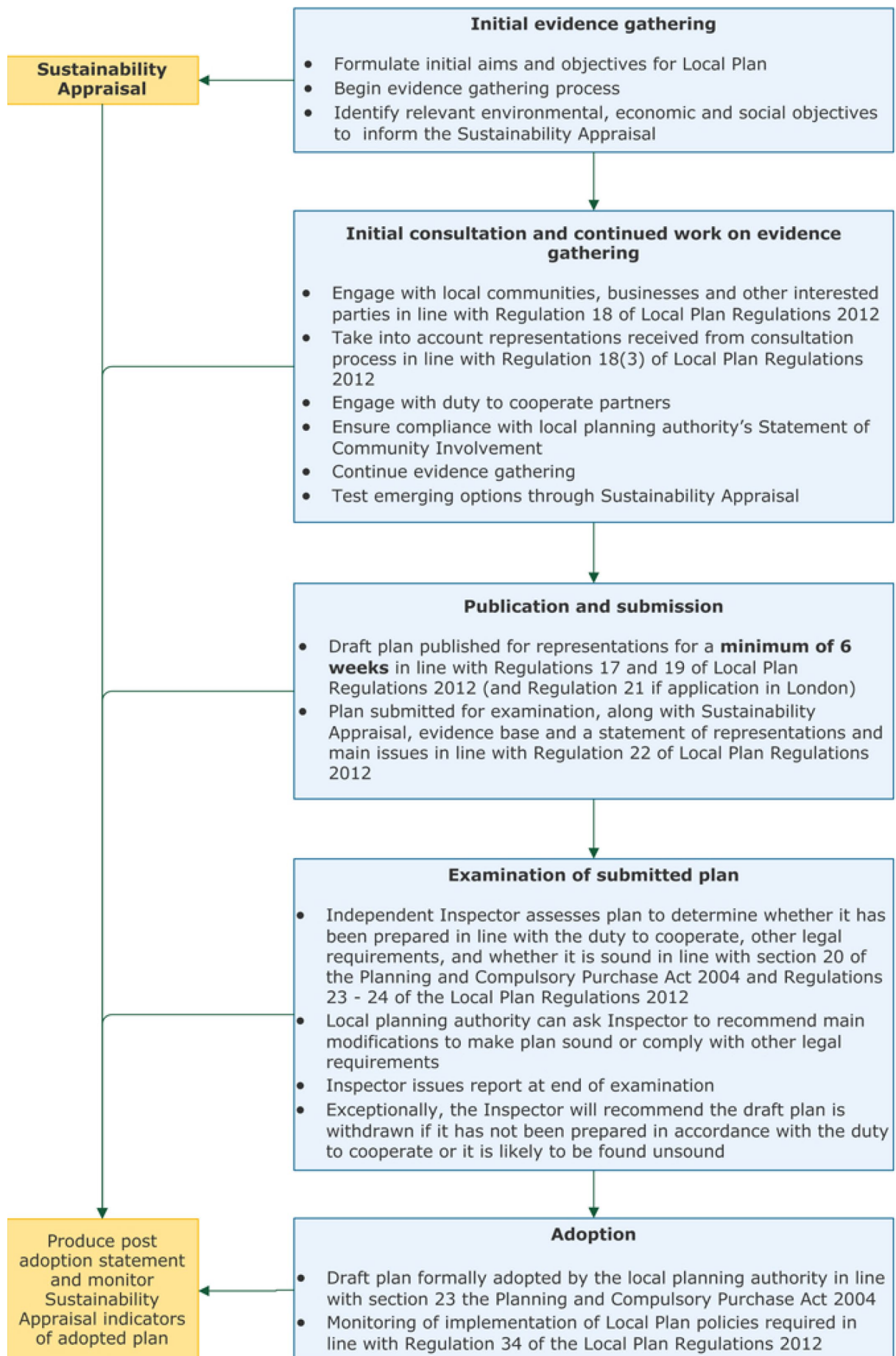
1. Introduction

- 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 2022 to 2025 and updates the current Medway Local Development Scheme. The council has produced a revised Local Development Scheme to reflect the current position in the plan making process. This updated Scheme is to be presented to the Council's Cabinet meeting on 18 October 2022.
- 1.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004¹, as amended, requires local planning authorities to prepare, maintain and publish a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The first Medway Local Development Scheme was published in April 2005, and the Council has periodically reviewed the scheme to ensure its accuracy and that it aligns to the current legislative and local context. Local planning authorities must revise their local development scheme at such time as they consider appropriate, to ensure that it is up to date. The LDS provides public information on the process and timetable for the preparation and review of local development documents and is used by the Council to help plan resources and workstreams. It allows the community and stakeholders to find out about the Council's intentions for the planning policy of Medway, and when they can participate in the plan making process.
- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework, as revised in 2018, 2019 and 2021, 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 from Kent plans. 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 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/15>

- 1.5 The Council has clear ambitions for Medway's successful growth, continuing the regeneration of urban waterfront and centres, and wider development supported by infrastructure investments. Our regeneration strategy sets out aspirations for a Waterfront Learning City, connecting innovation, people and place. The Council is committed to driving growth that delivers benefits for all. This is being followed through in our plans for sustainable growth, addressing the climate emergency and structural changes in the economy.
- 1.6 The Medway Local Plan is a key means of setting the vision for Medway's growth and mapping out the strategy and policies to achieve our aims. The Council is aware of its ageing Local Plan and is committed to the adoption of a new Local Plan guiding Medway's development up to 2040. This has been a complex and lengthy process, and substantial work has been carried out to support the preparation of the plan, and there have been many challenges to address.
- 1.7 The Council is planning positively for the area's significant development needs, considering the sensitivities of the built and natural environment, and addressing challenges of infrastructure capacity. We have engaged with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the Planning Advisory Service, to provide updates on the preparation of the Medway Local Plan.
- 1.8 The Council has carried out three rounds of formal consultation at 'Regulation 18' stage of the plan preparation process. The Council undertook an initial Regulation 18 'Issues and Options' consultation in early 2016. A further consultation stage on 'Development Options' was held in 2017. Representations made at the Development Options consultation stage requested that the Council explicitly consider a development option that did not include reference to development on land at Lodge Hill, Chattenden. This would provide greater clarity in assessing the potential impact of development on a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. Therefore, the Council provided a further opportunity to make representations, through a Regulation 18 consultation on a Development Strategy document in 2018. The process for the preparation of local plans is set out in the diagram below.



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 2022-2040. 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, 2021. On adoption it will replace the saved policies from the Medway Local Plan 2003 and those from the various Kent Waste and Minerals plans. 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 have a policies map and provide for land allocations to meet development needs for housing and employment.
- 2.3 The Council has collated a comprehensive evidence base to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan. It has published the information as it is prepared and made it available on the Council's dedicated Local Plan webpages:
https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/519/future_medway_local_plan/2
- 2.4 The Council will meet the requirements of sustainability appraisal throughout the plan preparation process, carrying out iterative appraisals of the sustainability of the options, proposals and draft policies in the emerging Local Plan and prepare reports setting out the findings. This will be carried out at the key stages of plan preparation. The Council will consult on the Sustainability Appraisals in line with its Statement of Community Involvement.
- 2.5 There are significant challenges to meeting high levels of development needs in Medway, with its sensitive environment and complex infrastructure context. The Council has sought to secure investments and mitigations to provide for sustainable growth. This has had implications for the evidence base work required and work programme for the Local Plan.
- 2.6 This document represents the updated programme for the production of the new Local Plan. The Council is proposing an additional Regulation 18 consultation stage. This reflects the need to provide for higher levels of housing growth with increased levels of need and an extended plan period. It also provides a further opportunity to consider the impacts and opportunities with alternative development options. The revisions to the

Local Development Scheme relate to the published dates for the key stages of plan preparation as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Key milestones for Medway Local Plan

Stage	Date
Regulation 18 – Issues and Options consultation	Jan-Feb 2016
Regulation 18 – Development Options consultation	Jan-May 2017
Regulation 18 – Development Strategy consultation	March-June 2018
Regulation 18 – Development Alternatives consultation	Summer – Autumn 2023
Regulation 19 – Publication of draft plan	Early 2024
Submission of plan for Examination	Summer 2024
Adoption (determined on outcome of Examination)	Autumn 2025

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 five 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 and Chattenden – designated December 2018
- Arches (Chatham) – designated August 2019
- Frindsbury Extra – designated 2022

3.2 The Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Neighbourhood Plan is at Examination stage and is anticipated to progress to referendum in 2023.

3.4 The Neighbourhood Planning groups for Arches (Chatham) and High Halstow anticipate submitting their plans to Medway Council in late 2022 for Regulation 16 consultation. The Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Neighbourhood Planning group intends to carry out its consultation at Regulation 14 in late 2022 and submit to the Council in early 2023.

3.5 Further details of neighbourhood plans in Medway and support available from the Council are available on the Council's website at:

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

3.3 In preparation for the new Local Plan, the Council has reviewed its Statement of Community Involvement, for presenting to Cabinet in October 2022. The Statement of Community Involvement is published at:

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

3.4 The Council makes use of supplementary planning documents to provide guidance and certainty on bringing forward development. It

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

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

- 3.5 The Council has prepared 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.
- 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.

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. A number of technical documents, including the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, Viability Assessment and Strategic Transport Assessment have been commissioned from specialist consultants.
- 4.2 The Council will seek to use its processes of community involvement and engagement and its Duty to Cooperate activities and organisations to help inform and develop the plan, making effective use of intelligence and resources. This will include the preparation of Statements of Common Ground in relation to strategic cross border planning matters. Officers have held early discussions with neighbouring local planning authorities and other statutory organisations regarding the preparation of Statements of Common Ground. The Council has managed the delivery of the Strategic Transport Assessment through a Statement of Common Ground with Highways England that commits both parties to sharing of information and collaborative working. The new plan will be supported by a comprehensive evidence base, including housing, employment, retail, transport, heritage, infrastructure, viability and the natural environment.
- 4.3 The Council has established management and reporting structures to support the delivery of the Local Plan, including the use of briefings and reporting to senior managers and members throughout the plan preparation process. Risk management is integral to reporting and monitoring. The Planning Service regularly reviews work streams on the Local Plan, to take account of new legislation and significant changes in the local context. There is a dedicated cross party member advisory group supporting the production of the Local Plan.

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, at an appropriate time. There is a dedicated page on the council's website for the LDS:

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

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

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

5. Contact information

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

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

You can contact the Planning Policy team at:

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Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR

Email: planning.policy@medway.gov.uk

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