

Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation
Medway Council
Gun Wharf, Dock Road
Chatham
Kent, ME4 4TR

E: futuremedway@medway.gov.uk

Sent via email

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Medway Council Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation

I refer to the above consultation and wish to make the following representations on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council (MBC).

As you will be aware, MBC is in the process of reviewing its adopted Local Plan (25 October 2017). The Maidstone Local Plan Review was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination on 31 March 2022. The examination is currently in process, with the six-week public consultation on the proposed Main Modifications to the plan having commenced on 29th September 2023. MBC has and will continue to work closely and constructively with Medway Council through the duty to cooperate on strategic matters pertinent to the authorities' respective local plans.

Whilst it is acknowledged that Medway Council have a requirement to meet identified needs, including for housing and economic development, the new Local Plan could have a significant impact on Maidstone Borough residents and businesses as well as the environment and infrastructure. It is therefore imperative that the potential effects of the plan on Medway authority and neighbouring authority areas, including Maidstone, are robustly considered. MBC welcomes the opportunity to continue working with Medway Council to help ensure that any potential adverse impacts resulting from the emerging Local Plan are identified at an early stage so that these can be avoided and/or appropriately mitigated.

The Regulation 18 document identifies four broad categories of locations where development could take place, along with indicative housing capacities for the different areas, based on Medway's Land Availability Assessment (LAA). Of the four broad categories, the 'suburban growth' location and the associated potential expansion sites identified on Map 2 of the consultation document have the greatest potential to impact upon Maidstone borough, through the possible expansion of Lidsing Garden Community.

It is not evident from the consultation document, which of the sites identified on the maps are potential new sites for development and which are sites with existing planning permission and we would welcome clarification on this in future discussions. We also welcome future discussions on the housing capacity of the site that straddles the Medway/Maidstone administrative boundary and would note that part of the site is included within Maidstone's Local Plan Review as a site for motorway junction improvements and environmental mitigation as part of the Lidsing Garden Community development. MBC would welcome future discussions on the general growth aspirations for this area of Medway.

Maidstone Borough Council

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6th October 2023

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Paragraph 6.1 of the Regulation 18 document highlights that infrastructure is a major concern and that there is specific work on transport and infrastructure planning to feed into the draft Plan. MBC is keen to work constructively and cooperatively with Medway on these strategic, cross-boundary issues to ensure are joined up approach to planning across the two authorities' administrative boundary.

MBC notes that the Regulation 18 document does not specifically set out the needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities, nor is there reference as to how any identified needs are planned to be met, through land allocations or otherwise. As a potential strategic cross-boundary issue, MBC would welcome the identification of this matter and for subsequent engagement to occur through statutory consultation and the duty to cooperate process in order to appropriately address the needs of these groups through the plan making process. Of note is that MBC is preparing a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document to address the significant need that exists within its borough. We will continue to engage with Medway Council and other local authorities through the duty to cooperate to ensure housing needs for this group are appropriately addressed through the plan process, in accordance with national planning policy.

Finally, as a neighbouring authority, and with potential development areas identified across and adjacent to the administrative boundary, MBC welcomes further opportunities to engage with the authority through the duty to cooperate.

We look forward to providing further comments when preferred approaches and details of the Local Plan proposals become known.

Sincerely,

Cllr Paul Cooper – Deputy Leader