

**Strategic Planning,
Sustainability and
Transportation Committee**

7 February 2017

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

**Response to Regulation 18 Consultation on Medway Council
Local Plan – Urgent Update**

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Adam Reynolds, Planning Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee approves the proposed response to Medway Council's Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation (Appendix B) subject to any amendments deemed necessary by the Committee.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

This report has regard to strategic proposals by an adjoining authority that may impact on infrastructure, residential amenity and employment in Maidstone Borough

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	7 February 2017

Response to Regulation 18 Consultation on Medway Council Local Plan – Urgent Update

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Further to the informative report issued to this Committee, this report provides a proposed response to Medway Council in respect of its Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation. The Committee is asked to approve the proposed response (Appendix B), subject to any amendments deemed necessary, in order that it may be submitted by the deadline of 6th March 2017.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Medway Council is producing a new Local Plan, to replace its current saved Policies in the 2003 Local Plan and the Kent Waste and Minerals Local Plans. The new Local Plan will have a time horizon up to 2035.
- 2.2 In January 2016 Medway Council published the first stage of its new Local Plan Regulation 18 Issues and Options for public consultation. This further Regulation 18 Development Options consultation responds to the information gathered during the 2016 consultation, and represents the next formal stage in the preparation of the Medway Local Plan.
- 2.3 This Regulation 18 stage consultation sets out the issues that need to be addressed by Medway Council in its forthcoming Local Plan and four potential development strategies for the way forward, as well as associated technical assessments. It follows the Issues and Options Regulation 18 Consultation that was carried out during January and February 2016. Following this consultation, Medway's timetable proposes a consultation in winter 2017/2018 on its Regulation 19 submission version of the Local Plan. Submission of the plan is scheduled for spring 2018 with adoption in 2019.
- 2.4 The purpose of the consultation is to provide a draft vision for Medway in 2035, setting out emerging approaches to policies to address the key issues facing Medway's communities, economy and environment. In order to meet its full Objectively Assessed Need within Medway, the Plan sets out four development scenarios that could provide the basis for Medway's development up to 2035.
- 2.5 Officers have now considered Medway's proposals and identified the following key points:
- A requirement to meet a housing need of 30,000 homes between 2012-2035 – an additional 21,213 homes once completions, existing planning permissions and Medway Local Plan 2003 allocations are taken into consideration
 - A need for 90ha of employment land

- A need for 46,100m² comparison floorspace by 2031 and 70,500² by 2037 and a need for 12,300m² of convenience retail floorspace by 2031 and 13,200m² by 2037
- A need to consider the four development strategies for accommodating growth, as set out below

- 2.6 Scenario 1 'Maximising the potential of urban regeneration' seeks to establish a major transformation of the urban centre. It would continue the regeneration of waterfront sites that has been taking place in Medway over recent decades. The option for this scenario includes 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.
- 2.7 However, the risks with this approach are that much of the housing delivery would be apartments and this would not deliver the full range of housing that the market requires. Therefore with this option there would still need to be consideration of suburban and rural areas as potential housing locations for new development in order to achieve a balanced development strategy.
- 2.8 Scenario 2 'Suburban expansion' seeks to retain a core component of urban regeneration as part of a balanced development strategy. 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.
- 2.9 In this scenario, development of sustainable urban extensions on greenfield land around Rainham, Capstone and Strood to compliment the urban regeneration taking place in central Medway is proposed.
- 2.10 Scenario 3 'Hoo Peninsula Focus(Rural Focus)' again commits to 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. This scenario could result in green belt land around Strood being released for development.
- 2.11 In this scenario, the Hoo Peninsula is considered as a potential location for significant growth. A key strand of this scenario is the expansion of the large village of Hoo St Weburgh into a rural town. This would involve development in neighbourhoods around the wider area, including Chattenden, Deangate and Lodge Hill. 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.
- 2.12 Scenario 4 'Urban regeneration and a Rural Town' brings together components of urban regeneration, suburban expansion and rural development scenarios set out above. It includes elements of development at higher densities in waterfront and urban centre sites in these urban areas.
- 2.13 Suburban expansion would be supported but this would be restricted in scale to prevent the potential of urban sprawl and unsustainable travel

patterns. The green belt land around Strood would not be released for development.

- 2.14 Overall, each of the proposed development options seek to focus development within and around the existing Medway settlements which, in itself, limits the scope for significant impacts on Maidstone borough by maximising the sustainability of new developments. However, the potentially significant development around Rainham and Hempstead could have a traffic impacts on the M20 J7 and the southern end of the A249. This junction already suffers from traffic congestion at peak times and requires capacity improvements in order to accommodate planned growth in Maidstone borough. Development across Medway is likely to impact on the highway network at Bluebell Hill, M20 J6 and potentially at Boxley Road. It is important therefore that the potential impacts of Medway's proposed growth on the road network within Maidstone borough are properly assessed through the emerging Local Plan.
- 2.15 The promotion of the Capstone Valley as a green infrastructure allocation is welcomed by MBC. This allocation recognises the high quality landscape of the Capstone Valley and maintains the separation of Medway and Maidstone.
- 2.16 The findings of the Employment Land Needs Assessment indicate that although there is a potential surplus of employment land available, this existing land supply does not align well to business needs. Paragraphs 5.19-5.21 of the Local Plan suggests that the employment needs could be met through retention of existing employment sites, support for enhancing and consolidating current sites to better meet the market's requirements and by making better use of existing sites.
- 2.17 Medway has previously been successful in promoting mixed use developments, such as at Chatham Maritime and Victory Pier. In looking at the development needed over the period of the Local Plan, the four development scenarios all give consideration to the potential for mixed use sites, whether this is through expanding existing sites or creating new suburbs. However at this stage it is unclear as to the amount of residential development or employment uses and the type that will be provided at each of the mixed use locations. More detail on the mix and balance of uses will be sought from Medway as the proposals are refined in the coming months.
- 2.18 Clarification is needed on the proposed employment policy approach on page 47 that states that Medway will support actions, amongst other things, to accrue benefits for Medway's economy from strategic developments of infrastructure, housing and employment sites outside of the Medway area. The implications of this statement for development in Maidstone are unclear and officers will be seeking clarification from Medway on this point.
- 2.19 Having considered the Medway Local Plan, officers have produced a proposed response to the consultation highlighting the key issues regarding the development scenarios, employment, transport and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. This is attached to this report at Appendix B.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 There are two options available to Members. Firstly, the Council could send a formal response to the consultation (with any amendments deemed necessary by this Committee).
- 3.2 Secondly, Members could choose not to make a formal response to the Council Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation.
- 3.3 Choosing to make a response will help ensure that Maidstone Borough Council's comments and concerns are provided to Medway Council at an early stage in order that they may be considered as its Local Plan is produced. If no formal representation is made, this would result in a missed opportunity for the Council to set out its position and concerns in respect of this important stage of Local Plan production for a neighbouring local planning authority.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 As set out above, the preferred option is for the Council to submit a formal response to Medway Council consultation (with any amendments deemed necessary by this Committee) as set out in paragraph 3.1 above. This will help ensure that Maidstone Borough Council's comments and concerns are provided to Medway Council at an early stage in order that they may be considered as its draft Local Plan is prepared.

5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 5.1 If the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee agree a proposed response, this will be submitted to Medway Council by the 6th March 2017 consultation deadline.
 - 5.2 Regulation 18 is the first formal Local Plan consultation stage. Following this, the next formal consultation (Regulation 19) will be on the proposed submission version of the Local Plan, which is due to take place in winter 2017/18.
 - 5.3 Officers will use opportunities for formal and informal consultation with Medway Council, including through the ongoing "Duty to Cooperate", to ensure the Council's views are expressed. The Committee will be kept informed as Medway's proposals develop and more details emerge.
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6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	This report has regard to strategic proposals by an adjoining authority that may impact on the road network, residential amenity and employment in Maidstone Borough	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
Risk Management	The Council is complying with the duty to co-operate with Medway Council	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
Financial	The cost of inputting to Medway Council's Local Plan will be contained within existing service budgets.	Suzan Jones (Finance Officer)
Staffing	No staffing implications. This will be managed with existing staffing resources.	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
Legal	There is a statutory duty to co-operate on cross-boundary planning matters relating to adjoining authorities which might affect both (or more) authorities. By providing an accurate and informed response to the consultation, MBC are, prima facie, acting in compliance with its statutory duty in relation to this consultation stage.	Kate Jardine, Team Leader (Planning), Mid Kent Legal Services
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	The consultation proposals are not detailed enough to raise any concerns.	Anna Collier, Policy and Information Manager
Environmental/Sustainable Development	Regulatory processes in respect of this matter have been followed.	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
Community Safety	No implications.	Rob Jarman (Head of

		Planning and Development)
Human Rights Act	The consultation proposals do not raise any concerns.	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
Procurement	No implications.	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
Asset Management	No implications.	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)

7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Report A: Medway Council Local Plan (2012-2035) Development Options Regulation 18 consultation document
- Appendix B: Maidstone Borough Council response to Medway Council Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None