

The Assistant Director
Development Plans and Research Manager
Medway Council
Compass Centre, Chatham Maritime
Chatham
Kent ME4 4YH

9 October 2006

Dear Sir,

RE: MEDWAY CORE STRATEGY SUBMISSION DRAFT

Under the provisions of Section 24 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Act) the South East England Regional Assembly has assessed the general conformity of the Medway Core Strategy submission document against the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 and Alterations) and also the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (the Draft South East Plan).

An issue of non-general conformity has been identified by the Assembly, which means that the Core Strategy fails to satisfy PPS12 'Test of Soundness' Test iv.

The Core Strategy is well written and in most aspects comprehensive. However, the lack of reference in Core Strategy policy to regionally set figures and targets for the unitary authority mean that in its current form the Assembly is unable to issue an opinion of general conformity, as it is considered that there may, as a result, be implications for the implementation and delivery of the adopted and emerging Regional Spatial Strategy.

In order to overcome this opinion that the Core Strategy is not in general conformity with RSS, the following recommendations are made:

- That policy CS09 makes reference to providing the specific housing figures for Medway, and that part of Medway within the Kent Thames Gateway sub-region, as set out in policies H1 and KTG1 of the draft South East Plan
- That policy CS09 includes reference to the affordable housing percentages and thresholds being sought by the Council, in line with policies H4 and KTG2 of the draft South East Plan

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- That policy CS24 includes reference to providing waste management capacity to meet the specific additional capacity identified for Medway, derived from the additional capacity requirement for Kent and Medway in Table I, policy W7 of RPG9 (as altered) and policy W7 of the draft South East Plan.
- That policy CS25 includes reference to maintaining a seven year landbank of primary aggregates, and delivering the specific aggregate apportionment identified for Medway, derived from the sub-regional apportionment for Kent/Medway in policy M3 of RPG9 (as altered) and policy M3 of the draft South East Plan.

We consider that it may be possible to overcome these concerns prior to the independent examination into the Core Strategy, and would therefore like to suggest a meeting between Medway Council, the Regional Assembly and the Government Office for the South East in order to discuss and where possible resolve these issues.

If agreement can be reached over amendments to the Core Strategy so that it reflects the aims of the policies quoted above, the Assembly will withdraw its opinion that the Core Strategy is not in general conformity with the regional spatial strategy. As a result, the Core Strategy would (assuming no other significant policy changes were made by the authority) be considered by the Assembly to be in general conformity with the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 as altered) and the draft South East Plan.

In addition to this issue, the Assembly also has a number of additional representations, which have been submitted on the electronic representation forms, and a summary of which are set out on the attached sheets.

If you have any comments or questions relating to this letter please do not hesitate to contact Cath Rose, Regional Planner, on 01483 555200 or at catherinerose@southeast-ra.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Catriona Riddell
Planning Strategy Director

South East England Regional Assembly – Summary of Representations

Representation 1: References to the South East Plan

References to the South East Plan should be amended throughout to reflect the publication of the draft South East Plan in March 2006, and references to Part I (July 2005) should be deleted.

Representation 2: Infrastructure provision

We welcome the inclusion of policy CS05 'Provision of Infrastructure and Services' and the Developer Contributions Strategy that has been produced. We also support the commitment to produce a Major Infrastructure Plan. However, policy CS05 and the supporting text should make clear that it applies to a wide range of infrastructure, and should include reference to the definition included in Table 1 of the draft Implementation Plan (March 2006).

Representation 3: Role of Chatham as a Regional Hub

The Core Strategy sets out, in the SSOs, a focus on Chatham (see above representation), and also makes reference to Chatham as the focus for investment in policy CS17 on Town Centres. Building on this, and to ensure consistency with the regional spatial strategy, reference should be made in the Core Strategy to Chatham as a regional hub, to the need to support and promote it as such (the role of the hub being defined in policies CC8a and CC8b of the draft South East Plan, and T4 of the Regional Transport Strategy ('RTS')). Similarly, the Core Strategy should promote the role of Chatham in a manner consistent with sub-regional policies KTG6, KTG7 and KTG8, which identify it as a key location for employment and housing, and town centre development. It is suggested that this could be achieved through the inclusion of a policy specific to Chatham.

Representation 4: International gateways and ports

Whilst some reference is made in the supporting text and LTP to the role of Thamesport (eg paras 5.12, 8.14, 8.70) reference should be made in policy to improving access to, and supporting, maintaining and enhancing the function of the ports and international gateways identified in the RTS and draft South East Plan, in line with policies T1, T5, T7 and T8 of the RTS and policies T1, T3 and T10 of the draft Plan.

Representation 5: Wharves, depots, freight and riverside uses

Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy focuses on Transport and Movement. It should identify if there is a need to safeguard wharves and depots or other sites important for the development or maintenance of freight movement by rail or water, in line with policy T15 of the RTS, policies W16 and M5 of RPG9 (as altered) and policies T11, W16, M5 and KTG3 of the draft South East Plan. Policy CS10, or the site-specific policies CS28 and CS30 should seek to secure the continued presence of riverside employment uses, reflecting clause (vi) of policy KTG4 of the draft Plan.

Representation 6: Provision of employment land

Policy CS15 sets out the economic strategy for Medway, and this is broadly supported. However, it is considered that more detail should be included with regard to the need to maintain an up-to-date employment land review to identify need. The policy should also give a commitment to provide for any new need

identified in future employment land reviews (see policy RE2 of the draft South East Plan).

In order to secure alignment with regional and sub-regional employment policies RE2 and RE5, and KTG5, Core Strategy policies CS15 and / or CS19 should promote the intensification of existing employment sites where appropriate, identify whether upgrading or improvement of existing sites is required, and identify where there may be a need to safeguard sustainably located existing sites from non-employment development.

Representation 7: Housing

Policy CS09 makes a commitment to providing the number of new homes required in accordance with the South East Plan until 2021. Reference should be made within this policy to providing the specific housing numbers as set out in the draft South East Plan (distinguishing between those within the sub-region and those outside it), and the policy should exhibit sufficient flexibility to allow for changes to these figures in the adopted South East Plan or anticipated sites not coming forward.

We welcome reference in the HMU DPD to the use of Housing Delivery Action Plans in line with policy H2 of the draft South East Plan, but would like to also see reference to these in the 'Implementation' section of Policy CS09.

Representation 8: Affordable housing

CS09 makes reference to securing 'a range of house...tenures reflecting local needs'. However, it does not make explicit reference to affordable housing, neither does it include affordable housing targets or thresholds (which are instead included in policy HMU05 in the HMU DPD). Policy CS09 should make reference to the need to provide affordable housing (as defined in the draft South East Plan), and should set out affordable housing targets and threshold, having consideration of the sub-regional target included in KTG2. Affordable housing should be provided on-site where possible, in line with H4 of the draft Plan, and it should be made clear in policy that this be provided in perpetuity.

Policies HMU11 and HMU12 include detail about residential development in rural settlements and rural housing exception sites. We feel that it is important that appropriate 'hooks' are included in the Core Strategy for these policies, and request that reference be made in policy CS09 to the provision of housing to meet local need in rural areas, including where appropriate rural exception sites, in line with policies H3 and H4 of the draft South East Plan.

Representation 9: Housing Density

No reference is made to housing density in Core Strategy policies, although it is identified as a monitoring target in relation to CS09 and reference is made to housing density in the HMU DPD. However the lack of reference in the Core Strategy is considered to be an omission. We would expect to see a commitment within the Core Strategy to contribute to the regional density target of 40% (in line with policy H5 of the draft South East Plan and reflecting policy Q3 of RPG9) and to the overarching principles currently included in HMU04 (reflecting policy KTG3 of the draft Plan).

Representation 10: Gypsies and Travellers

A policy relating to gypsies and travellers is included in the HMU DPD (HMU13). It is important that a policy 'hook' for this is provided within the Core Strategy, and would therefore suggest that specific reference be made to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments alongside the references to Housing Need Assessment and Housing Market Assessment in policy CS09.

Representation 11: Parking Standards

No reference is made within the Core Strategy to parking standards, however policy on residential standards is included in the HMU DPD. It would be useful if a statement were included in the Core Strategy to the need to provide appropriate levels of parking – including for non-residential developments - in line with policy T12 of the RTS and policy T7 of the draft Plan, and cross-reference made to where in the Medway LDF this information will be provided.

Representation 12: Travel planning

The Core Strategy states, within policy CS10, that 'major developments will be subject to satisfactory Accessibility and Transport Assessments'. This paragraph should also refer to the need to secure Travel Plans for major developments where appropriate (in line with policy T13 of the RTS and policy T8 of the draft Plan) and state where in the LDF the detailed criteria for these will be provided.

Representation 13: Energy efficiency

Policy CS03 requires that significant developments incorporate renewable energy development. This reference is supported and reflects policy EN1 of the draft South East Plan. However, more certainty could be provided in the policy by inclusion of the thresholds set out in part (i) of this policy.

Representation 14: Flood risk

Core Strategy policy CS27 includes detail about how flood risk will be managed. However it is considered that there is an omission from this policy, and that it should make reference to the need to guard against inappropriate development in the floodplain, reflecting the policy approaches set out in policy INF1 of RPG9 and policies NRM3 and KTG9 of the draft South East Plan. Similarly, the policy should make reference, where appropriate to any need to safeguard land for specific flood risk/land management options.

Representation 15: Waste

It is recognised that the detail of Medway's waste policy will be subsequently provided through other DPDs, and that the Core Strategy policy on waste effectively just provides the 'hook' from which to hang these more detailed policies. However, there are a few areas where it is felt policy CS24 of the Core Strategy should include further detail to enable an appropriate level of policy detail to be included in subsequent DPDs. These include:

Waste management capacity – Whilst policy commits to following the waste hierarchy and to self-sufficiency within Medway, the Core Strategy should clearly set out the need to provide an appropriate mix of facilities to deal with the benchmark figure for waste arisings in Medway, derived from the figure for Kent and Medway in policy W7 of RPG9 (as altered) and W7 of the draft South East Plan.

Landfill capacity – Whilst the thrust of policy CS24 is to minimise demand for new landfill capacity and provide for local need – in line with policy W13 of RPG9 (as altered), the policy should make reference to the need to husband existing landfill capacity. It should also include the flexibility to deal with imported waste, as set out in policy W4 of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan, and especially, the Core Strategy should recognise the need to provide landfill capacity for a declining amount of waste from London as set out in policy W3 of RPG9 (as altered).

The Waste Hierarchy – The first bullet point of policy CS24, which promotes the ‘waste hierarchy’ is welcomed. However, it could usefully include reference to the need to contribute to regionally set targets for (a) the diversion of waste from landfill (policy W5 of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan), and (b) recycling and composting (policy W6 of RPG9 and the draft Plan). The policy should also promote waste separation, reflecting policies W8, W10, W11 and W12.

Representation 16: Minerals

It is recognised that the detail of Medway’s minerals policy will be subsequently provided through other DPDs, and that the Core Strategy policy on minerals effectively just provides the ‘hook’ from which to hang these more detailed policies. However, there are a few areas where it is felt policy CS25 of the Core Strategy should include further detail to enable an appropriate level of policy detail to be included in subsequent DPDs. These include:

Recycled and secondary aggregates – Reference should be made in policy CS25 to achieving production of 0.2mtpa of secondary and recycled aggregates by 2016, in line with policy M2 of the draft South East Plan. Additionally, whilst sustainable construction is promoted through the spatial vision, and reference is made in policy CS25 to the use of recovered waste materials, the policy could promote sustainable construction methods the increased use of secondary and recycled aggregates in new developments in line with policies M1 and W2 of RPG9 (as altered) and policies M1 and W2 of the draft South East Plan. Reference should also be made in the Core Strategy to the need to safeguard sites, even though the detail may be provided in subsequent DPDs.

Primary aggregates – Policy CS25 should include a commitment to provide the Medway portion of Kent/Medway’s primary aggregate apportionment as set out in policy M3 of RPG9 (as altered) and M3 of the draft Plan. We would also expect to see a commitment to maintaining a landbank of at least 7 years of planning permissions in line with these policies, although again we accept that the site specific detail may be provided elsewhere in the LDF.

Other minerals – Policy CS25 does not specifically refer only to aggregates. However, the policy should specifically identify other minerals as appropriate, and make a commitment to identify reserves of these in line with policy M4 of RPG9 (as altered) and policy M4 of the draft South East Plan.