

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Local Development Scheme

November 2025



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1.0 Introduction and Overview

- 1.1 This document is Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS). It sets out details of the planning policy documents that the Council has adopted, is presently preparing and those that it intends to prepare, including those which form the Development Plan.
- 1.2 The LDS is intended to provide information to local residents and other interested parties to help them participate in the plan-making process. It gives details about:
 - the documents the Council will be preparing;
 - the subject matter and geographical area to which these documents relate; and
 - the timetable for their preparation and adoption.
- 1.3 This LDS, which comes into effect in November 2025 provides updated timetables for the production of planning policy documents, including the new Local Plan and the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan. As an update to the March 2025 LDS, it provides an indication of the adoption date for the new Local Plan the examination for which has recently finished following receipt of the Inspector's Final Report on 14th October 2025. As with the March 2025 LDS, it gives a high level start date for a Local Plan review, which will commence within six months of adoption of the emerging Local Plan currently at examination. The production of the Local Plan review will follow the new plan-making regime being introduced by national Government. Further guidance on the new plan-making regime is awaited, upon receipt of which a further update to the LDS will be necessary. The timetables included in this updated LDS supersede those timetables included in the March 2025 LDS.
- 1.4 Future Government announcements about the changes to the planning system, and the timetables for these, will be kept under review and the LDS updated, as necessary. This includes proposed changes through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023 to plan-making such as the replacement of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) with Supplementary Plans (SPs).
- 1.5 Overall, the Borough Council's focus is to work towards adoption of the new Local Plan to replace the now dated Local Plans currently in place. There is also focus on work associated with the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre (RTW TC) Plan and SPDs. The new Local Plan is at an advanced stage, with there having been five statutory public consultations undertaken to date. These have included an 'Issues and Options' consultation, followed by a Regulation 18 'Draft Local Plan' consultation and then a consultation on the Regulation 19 'Pre-Submission version Local Plan' which took place for ten weeks between 26th March and 4th June 2021. The new Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination on 1st November 2021. Examination hearings were undertaken in three stages and took place in the spring and summer of 2022, and most recently in June and July and then in November 2024. Stage 1 addressed matters of legal compliance including the Duty to Cooperate, the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations, and Stages 2 and 3 have considered issues relating to soundness.

- 1.6 Following the Stage 2 hearing sessions in 2022, the examination Inspector issued his [initial findings](#) in November 2022. The initial findings found there are some principal issues that bear upon the Local Plan's overall development strategy, relating to whether the assessment of sites in the Green Belt had been undertaken on a consistent basis, the need for further consideration to be given to a range of issues in relation to the proposal for a new settlement at Tudeley Village and also the need to give further consideration to an option for strategic growth at Paddock Wood and land in east Capel that does not involve building on land within higher flood zones.
- 1.7 The Council consulted on its response to the Inspector's initial findings between 15th January and 12th April 2024 and this was followed by the Stage 3 examination hearing sessions in June, July and November 2024. A non-statutory consultation took place between 11th September and 23rd October 2024 on additional evidence base documents the Council has produced, including a new, updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) and highway related documents.
- 1.8 Full details of the consultation and the documents consulted upon are available on the [Council's website](#).
- 1.9 Most recently the Council consulted on a schedule of proposed Main Modifications, which took place between 17th March and 30th April 2025. The Council has received the Inspector's Final Report, marking the end of the Local Plan examination.
- 1.10 This updated LDS therefore sets out the updated timescales for the adoption of the new Local Plan, as well as of other Development Plan documents that the Council expects to prepare over the next three years. For completeness, this LDS also includes the timescales for the production of SPDs, which are set out in **Appendix 1**.

2.0 The Development Plan and related documents

Context

- 2.1 National planning guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) explains at paragraph 15 that: "the planning system should be genuinely planned".
- 2.2 The glossary to the NPPF defines a Local Plan as:
"a plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community, under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two."
- 2.3 Paragraph 15 of the NPPF also sets out that *"succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings"*.
- 2.4 Paragraph 34 of the NPPF details that "policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated, as necessary. Reviews should be completed no later than five years from the adoption date of a plan and should take into account changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy."
- 2.5 Local Planning Authorities can also prepare SPDs which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. The glossary to the NPPF is clear that SPDs "are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan." As set out in paragraph 1.4 above, under the provisions of the LURA SPDs will be replaced with new Supplementary Plans. These plans are intended to react and respond to unforeseen changes in areas separate from the local plan preparation process, with the aim of providing more clarity and simplifying the development plan framework. They will also carry greater weight and be subject to examination. National guidance is still awaited on this matter.
- 2.6 The Council will be preparing SPDs (or SPs) over the period covered by this LDS. However, as these do not form part of the Development Plan, they are not included within the main body of this LDS. Instead, they are included within **Appendix 1**. The main purpose of the LDS is to provide a project plan that sets out the timescales for the production of new or revised development plan documents. Importantly, this includes an indicative, high-level timetable for the commencement of work on the

Local Plan review, which will be prepared under the new plan-making system, guidance for which is awaited.

- 2.7 A number of parish and town councils in the borough are preparing, or have prepared, neighbourhood plans (described in law as a neighbourhood development plan). Further information on neighbourhood plans is provided in paragraphs 2.27 - 2.34 below.
- 2.8 In addition, the Council also prepares the following documents:
- Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out the programme for preparing development plan documents (this document) and in addition for completeness, SPDs;
 - Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which sets out how the Council will involve the local community in planning decisions;
 - Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), which is updated regularly and provides details of recent developments within the borough, covering housing, employment, retail, and other uses.

Development Plan Documents

- 2.9 The development plan for Tunbridge Wells borough currently comprises the following documents:
- the [Core Strategy Development Plan Document](#), adopted June 2010;
 - the [Site Allocations Local Plan](#), adopted July 2016;
 - saved policies in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan, adopted March 2006. These 'saved' policies have had their life extended and will continue to be used for deciding planning applications until replaced by policies in the new Local Plan. Remaining 2006 Local Plan saved policies are listed in Appendix 1 of the Site Allocations Local Plan document ([view the Site Allocations Local Plan](#));
 - [Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30](#) as amended by Early Partial Review (2020), produced by Kent County Council as the minerals and waste Local Planning Authority;
 - the [Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan](#) (2018, updated in 2020);
 - the [Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Plan](#) (2021);
 - the [Benenden Neighbourhood Plan](#) (2022);
 - the [Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan](#) (2022);
 - the [Brenchley & Matfield Neighbourhood Plan](#) (2022);
 - the [Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan](#) (2023);
 - the [Paddock Wood Neighbourhood Plan](#) (2023);

- the [Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Neighbourhood Plan](#) (2023);
- the [Pembury Neighbourhood Plan](#) (2023);
- the [Capel Neighbourhood Plan](#) (2024).

2.10 In addition, and as set out above, the examination of the Council's new Borough Local Plan has recently ended and once adopted this will replace the saved policies of the 2006 Local Plan, the Core Strategy, and the Site Allocations Local Plan.

2.11 More information on these documents is set out below.

Core Strategy

2.12 The Council adopted the Core Strategy in June 2010. This sets out the broad strategy for future planning and decision making and defines the general locations and levels of development in the borough to 2026 but does not identify individual sites.

Site Allocations Local Plan

2.13 The Council adopted the Site Allocations Local Plan in July 2016. The Plan identifies sites to provide for the level of development set out in the Core Strategy. The Site Allocations Local Plan sets out detailed site-specific policies and looks to 2026, the same period as the Core Strategy.

Saved Local Plan policies

2.14 The Council adopted the borough-wide Local Plan in 2006. It originally provided a comprehensive suite of policies which allocate sites and provides the planning policy against which planning applications are assessed. However, since its adoption, some changes have been made to the Local Plan as a result of the 'saving' of policies in March 2009, the adoption of the Core Strategy in June 2010 and the adoption of the Site Allocations Local Plan in July 2016.

2.15 Consequently, some policies have been removed from the Local Plan as they are no longer valid. These changes are reflected in the Local Plan chapters which are published online. Policies which are no longer valid have been struck through. Double strike through indicates the 2009 and 2010 changes and single strike through indicates the more recent 2016 changes. As set out at paragraph 2.9 above, remaining 2006 Local Plan saved policies are listed in Appendix 1 of the Site Allocations Local Plan document.

New Local Plan

- 2.16 The Council has been preparing the new Borough Local Plan which will replace the 'saved' policies in the 2006 Local Plan, the Core Strategy, and the Site Allocations Local Plan. The new Local Plan covers the period 2020 – 2038, setting out a new growth strategy for the borough by allocating sites for development, and provides general 'development management' policies to guide development.
- 2.17 As set out at Paragraph 1.5 above, the new Local Plan has been subject to five statutory public consultations. The first was on an 'Issues and Options' document in 2017, the second on a full Draft Regulation 18 Local Plan (from 20th September 2019 to 15th November 2019), and the third was on a Pre-Submission Local Plan (from 26th March to 4th June 2021). The fourth related to the Council's response to the Inspector's initial findings. The most recent statutory consultation has been the Main Modifications consultation, on changes needed to ensure the Local Plan is 'sound,' which took place between March and April this year. In addition, a non-statutory consultation took place between 11th September and 23rd October 2024, full details of which are available on the [Council's website](#).
- 2.18 These documents and supporting evidence base material for all stages of the Local Plan are published on the Council's website ([see New Borough Local Plan](#)).
- 2.19 The examination of the new Local Plan has recently finished following receipt of the Inspector's Final Report dated 14th October 2025.

Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan

- 2.20 Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre is the primary retail, leisure, cultural and employment destination in the borough, and is a vibrant and viable town centre providing a range of services, facilities, and events to serve the surrounding areas. However, the retail economy has changed significantly over recent years (including since the adoption of the Site Allocations Local Plan in 2016) and the trends which were emerging have accelerated exponentially as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic including home/hybrid working patterns and the need and use of office space (including shared and flexible accommodation) and parking demand.
- 2.21 The Site Allocations Local Plan (2016) has requirements for the provision of an Urban Design Framework (UDF) SPD, (Policy AL/RTW1), and masterplans for the: Civic Complex/Crescent Road Area of Change (Policy AL/RTW2A) and the Former Cinema Site Area of Change (AL/RTW2B). The UDF seeks to promote local distinctiveness and incorporates guidance on matters such as accessibility, connections and linkages and improved quality of the public realm and townscape. It was prepared but never fully adopted as an SPD. Masterplans have not been produced for the two areas of change, however planning permission has been granted for a number of key sites within these areas some of which have been implemented or are currently under construction, including the Former Cinema Site.

- 2.22 It is therefore intended that a Town Centre Plan for the defined Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre will be prepared which will incorporate inclusive public and stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering in order to determine a vision, strategy, and masterplan for the town to ensure its long-term prosperity and success. Evidence started to be gathered through work undertaken to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan, and there has been the commissioning of masterplanner consultants, and a series of early engagement events held between October and November 2022. These included a walking tour, themed workshops, a pop-up consultation event within the town centre and an online consultation. Since then, a number of evidence base documents have been produced, including a Town Centre Study, Transport and Carbon Baseline Report, Retail Study and Health Check, Stakeholder and Community Engagement Report and a Baseline Evidence Report. A 'Call for Sites' took place between 6th June and 18th August 2023, which was an open request for information about land, sites, and buildings in the town centre study area, which may have development potential or potential to be changed to another use which could assist in revitalising the town centre.
- 2.23 A range of early evidence has been collected in the form of a 'Town Centre Study', including a Baseline Evidence Report, a Retail Study and Health Check, Stakeholder and Community Engagement Report and a Transport and Carbon Baseline Report. A number of engagement events were carried out as part of this early work, as well as a 'Call for Sites' to determine the availability of land and sites within the town centre with development potential or the potential to be changed to another use during the town centre plan period.
- 2.24 Following on from this evidence gathering, an initial Regulation 18 stage consultation took place between 23rd February and 15th April 2024 on a 'Draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040', representations to which are being used to help inform the next iteration of the Plan which is currently being prepared. Further evidence gathering work is currently underway, including Masterplanning; a Town Centre Office Market Review; Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal. This work will further inform the next Regulation 18, Draft Town Centre Plan ready for further public consultation.
- 2.25 It is the intention that the Town Centre Plan will set out a 'Vision and Objectives' and a strategy to build on the current successes of the town centre as well as setting out a flexible and adaptable approach to future uses and sites and ensuring the comprehensive and sustained development of the centre. It will include allocations and a strategy to provide a mix of town centre uses to provide commercial, employment, cultural and leisure as well as residential development. This will help to sustain the town's future vitality and viability, together with the creation and enhancement of new public realm and improved connectivity and legibility between the core areas of the town centre and the wider town alongside parking and active travel infrastructure. As part of this, it will set out detailed allocations for a number of town centre sites.
- 2.26 The Town Centre Plan will be a land use planning document – a Local Plan specific for that area – and will be aligned with other strategies of the Council, including those related to sustainability, economic development, transport, parking, and culture and leisure and the Planning Policy Team are working alongside other officers to ensure

this approach. The Council will bring forward the Town Centre Plan as part of a wider framework for the town centre, and the timetable for its production will need to align with the production of the Local Plan review and the other corporate strategies as referred to above.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 2.27 Neighbourhood plans can be prepared by town and parish councils and, where parish councils do not exist, organisations designated as neighbourhood forums.
- 2.28 Following the successful conclusion of a statutory preparation process (including public consultation, examination, and local referendum), the Borough Council must adopt a neighbourhood plan alongside its own Local Plans as part of the statutory development plan for the borough.
- 2.29 As explained at paragraphs 30 and 31 of the NPPF, neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area, but neighbourhood plans must not promote less development than set out in strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.
- 2.30 The NPPF also clarifies that once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.
- 2.31 At present, there are ten ‘made’ (approved following referendum) neighbourhood plans; these are the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan, adopted March 2018, which was subject to a minor, non-material modification, approved in April 2020, the Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Plan, adopted October 2021, the Benenden Neighbourhood Plan, adopted February 2022, the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan, adopted in February 2022, the Brenchley & Matfield Neighbourhood Plan, adopted December 2022, and the Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan, adopted June 2023. These were followed by the Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst, and Pembury Neighbourhood Plans, which were all adopted in October 2023, and most recently by the Capel Neighbourhood Plan adopted in October 2024.
- 2.32 At the time of writing, two other parishes (Sandhurst and Southborough) have prepared neighbourhood plans, both of which are currently subject to an independent examination. Hawkhurst Parish have also begun preparing a new neighbourhood plan to replace the existing made Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.33 For an up-to-date picture of the progress of neighbourhood plans see the [neighbourhood plans page](#) on the Council's website.
- 2.34 The Council has been liaising closely with and providing appropriate assistance where possible to the groups preparing neighbourhood plans and will continue to do so throughout their preparation.

Supplementary Planning Documents and Conservation Area Appraisals

- 2.35 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) do not form part of the development plan, and as such they do not need to be included in the LDS. However, for completeness, these are included at **Appendix 1** of this LDS. Should these be replaced by Supplementary Plans (SPs) in due course, SPs will have the same status as a Local Plan and the LDS will be updated accordingly.
- 2.36 As work has progressed on the new Local Plan, it has been identified that a number of SPDs are required to supplement emerging policies in the new Local Plan. At Paddock Wood, to ensure the growth of the town centre is planned and delivered holistically, a Town Centre Framework Masterplan SPD will be prepared with input from key town centre stakeholders, local communities, infrastructure, and service providers. The SPD will identify key sites for redevelopment, to deliver a framework for the future of the town centre to ensure its revitalisation. The strategy will set out the range and mix of uses that will sustain the town centre in terms of the planned expansion of Paddock Wood, alongside additional residential development in the town to ensure its viability.
- 2.37 The Council commissioned Phil Jones Associates (PJA) to undertake a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan. It identifies cycling and walking improvements required at the local level, including inter-settlement routes. A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure SPD may be necessary following adoption of the Local Plan and appropriate provision will be made. As with other planning policy documents, there would be public consultation on the production of the SPD in accordance with the Council's published Statement of Community Involvement. The Council will begin this by undertaking a review / update of the current Phase 1 and Phase 2 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.
- 2.38 A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) SPD will also be produced. Policy EN9 Biodiversity Net Gain in the new Local Plan relates to the objective for all development to contribute towards delivering net gains for nature so that biodiversity across the borough as a whole is improved by the end of the plan period, and the existing network of sites and habitats is protected and strengthened with the retention and creation of robust, well managed green infrastructure. The SPD will provide further guidance on this policy, including in terms of validation requirements, conservation priorities, long term management and monitoring and funding arrangements for on and off site biodiversity and details of any local or strategic offsetting schemes, available to developments within the Borough.
- 2.39 An Historic Environment Review has been produced as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan. This examines the historic environment of the borough to form the basis for heritage local planning, providing an accessible summary of the historic landscape character and heritage assets in the borough. As set out in the supporting text to Policy EN4: Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets in the new Local Plan, an Historic Environment SPD based on the Review will be produced.

- 2.40 An Open Space SPD will also be produced, providing a review of the already adopted Recreation Open Space SPD and providing further detail to support the implementation of policy, including the technical detail on how quantity and accessibility standards will be applied. It will also include the methodology for calculating the amount of open space required on each development, where on-site open space should be provided on larger sites, and the amount of developer contributions that will be required in lieu of on-site provision. It will also outline the priorities for provision, or improvement to existing provision, taking in to account the qualitative assessment.
- 2.41 It should be noted that the majority of SPDs listed above will build on work already undertaken as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan, or work prepared by external consultants.
- 2.42 Conservation Area Appraisals (CAAs) are a special type of SPD. They set out the key characteristics of defined Conservation Areas and provide design guidance for development proposals within them ([view Conservation Area Appraisals on the Council's website](#)).
- 2.43 The most recently adopted SPD is a Madeira Park and Warwick Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.
- 2.44 The Council will also seek to review a number of CAAs. Work on Conservation Area Management Plans and Local Heritage Assets will also be progressed, working with town and parish councils and other voluntary groups, and interested parties.

Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

- 2.45 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allows local authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects according to the gross internal floor area of the development. Detail of the specific rates of the Levy are set out locally in a document called the CIL Charging Schedule. The money raised from CIL can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure, including road schemes, flood defences, schools, health, social care and leisure facilities, and park and green space improvements.
- 2.46 While a CIL Charging Schedule does not have the status of the development plan, it does need to be examined by an independent Inspector. Previous LDS's have included reference to the potential for a future CIL for Tunbridge Wells to be considered and this remains an ambition. The adoption of a borough wide, locally set Community Infrastructure Levy will be considered at the Local Plan Review stage and regard will be had to any national improvements that might be made to the existing system in the intervening period. In the meantime, infrastructure will continue to be funded through Section 106 Agreements.
- 2.47 Infrastructure requirements in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which forms part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan, are also regularly updated so that the infrastructure needs, and current funding can be established to inform any CIL charge or level of development contributions required.

Statement of Community Involvement

- 2.48 The Council also maintains a SCI which, although not a local development document, is important in that it sets out how community engagement will be carried out in both plan-making and in the exercise of the Development Management function for the determination of planning applications.
- 2.49 To view the current Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), [see the Statement of Community Involvement on the Council's website](#). It is the duty of the Local Planning Authority to review and update its SCI every five years, and as such the Council is in the process of reviewing and updating its SCI, which will be published in due course.

Evidence Base

- 2.50 National policy requires that the preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and taking into account relevant market signals (NPPF, paragraph 32).
- 2.51 The Council's planning policy work is underpinned by a significant amount of evidence. A list of key evidence documents for the new Local Plan can be viewed on the Supporting Documents page of the Local Plan website (see [Core Document List](#)).
- 2.52 Two key evidence documents, which are subject to certain consultations in their own right are the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessments, as outlined below.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.53 Sustainability is at the heart of the planning process. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) it is a requirement that Local Plans are subject to a process of sustainability appraisal that also meets the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. Sustainability appraisals look at how development affects social, economic, and environmental considerations. Sustainability appraisal needs to identify how mitigation measures may be used to remove or reduce any adverse impacts that may result from new development.
- 2.54 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) scoping report was prepared to inform preparation of the new Local Plan. An Initial Sustainability Appraisal was prepared and consulted upon alongside the Issues and Options consultation, while a further Sustainability Appraisal of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan was also prepared and consulted upon alongside the Draft Local Plan. Comments made on the latter Sustainability Appraisal were used to inform a further SA for the Pre-Submission version of the Local Plan. A final Submission SA was prepared for submission alongside the Submission Local Plan to assist the Inspector in their consideration of the local plan (note: the Sustainability Appraisal of the Submission Local Plan was reissued in March 2022 to correct two minor errors in Table 12). There has more recently been a Sustainability

Appraisal prepared to inform the Council's response to the Inspector's initial findings, which formed part of the public consultation on that response. A further Sustainability Appraisal relating to the proposed Main Modifications to the Local Plan, was consulted upon alongside the Main Modifications consultation (undertaken between March and April 2025). Finally, a Sustainability Appraisal Addendum Part 3 has been prepared for the final Schedule of Main Modifications attached to the Inspector's Final Report.

Appropriate Assessment and Habitats Regulations

- 2.55 Under European legislation, there is a requirement to consider whether development proposals would be likely to have an adverse impact on any internationally designated sites (either individually or in combination with any other plans or projects) and, where necessary, to devise appropriate mitigation.
- 2.56 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) including an Appropriate Assessment to consider the potential impact of proposals on the Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) has been undertaken to inform each stage of plan making. The HRA has been published and subject to public consultation alongside the Local Plan.
- 2.57 An HRA was originally produced for the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) in 2019 and then updated in 2020 to accompany the Submission Local Plan. An Addendum to the HRA was published in March 2025, focussing on whether the proposed Main Modifications to the Local Plan would introduce new likely significant effects on any Habitat sites that were not thoroughly investigated for the HRA of the Submission Local Plan. The March 2025 HRA was consulted on as part of the Main Modifications consultation, and a final HRA has been produced to support the adoption version of the Local Plan.

3.0 Document Profiles

- 3.1 This section provides details about the preparation and content of the Council's new Local Plan and other Development Plan documents. Supplementary Planning Documents, and potential Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 3.2 As set out in the previous section, the Council has a number of adopted Development Plan documents and the new Local Plan will supersede these once adopted. Development Plan documents that will be superseded include the saved policies of the 2006 Local Plan, the Core Strategy, and the Site Allocations Local Plan.
- 3.3 A number of SPDs have also been adopted in the past, and additional ones will be produced, as set out in this LDS. The tables below set out details of these planning documents, their purpose, coverage, and an indicative timetable for their preparation.
- 3.4 The indicative timetables reflect the current programme and priorities, which will be kept under review. These are shown in the programme in **Appendix 2**.

Development Plan Documents

Core Strategy	
Adoption status	Adopted June 2010
Purpose	Provides the vision, strategic objectives, and overarching planning strategy to deliver development in the borough to 2026, including broadly how much development will happen and where it will take place.
Geographical coverage	Whole borough

Site Allocations Local Plan	
Adoption status	Adopted July 2016
Purpose	<p>Purposes of the Site Allocations Local Plan include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocate specific sites for a range of uses across the borough to accommodate the amount of development set out in the Core Strategy. Existing site allocations have been reviewed as part of this process; • define a boundary for the town centres of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, and Cranbrook; and for the centre in the settlement of Hawkhurst identify regeneration opportunities for Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre (identified in the document as Areas of Change); allocate sites and provide other appropriate town centre policies in the smaller town centres of Southborough, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook and the centre of Hawkhurst village; • provide site-specific policies against which planning applications can be assessed for sites where appropriate.
Geographical coverage	Whole borough

Local Plan 2006	
Adoption status	Adopted March 2006
Purpose	A comprehensive suite of policies: many have been replaced by policies in the Core Strategy or Site Allocations Local Plan: those which are saved as set out in the Local Plan.
Geographical coverage	Whole borough

New Local Plan	
Adoption status	<p>An Issues and Options consultation (Regulation 18) was completed in summer 2017, while a Draft Local Plan document was published and consulted upon, under Regulation 18, in Autumn 2019. The Pre-Submission Local Plan was then subject to a consultation, under Regulation 19, which took place between 26th March and 4th June 2021. After consultation and review, the Local Plan was submitted for Examination in November 2021 and examination hearings were undertaken in spring and summer 2022. Following the hearings, the Inspector issued initial findings in November 2022. The initial findings are summarised at paragraph 1.6 of</p>

New Local Plan	
	<p>this LDS. The Council consulted on its response to the initial findings between 15th January and 12th April 2024.</p> <p>Since then, there has been two further rounds of public consultation, the most recent being the Main Modifications consultation, on changes needed to ensure the Local Plan is 'sound', which took place between 17th of March and 30th of April 2025. A non-statutory consultation took place between the 11th of September and 23rd October 2024, on new evidence base documents.</p>
Purpose	<p>Purposes of the new Local Plan include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify appropriate levels of growth across the borough and sustainable locations for development; • work in cooperation with neighbouring authorities regarding strategic planning issues; • allocate specific sites for a range of uses to accommodate the amount of development set out in the evidence base/national policy for growth. Existing site allocations that have not commenced or received planning permission will be reviewed as part of this process; • consider the needs for, and provision of, sites to accommodate the gypsy and traveller community; • conduct a Green Belt study to test the purpose and function of designated land against the criteria of NPPF policy, and the remaining reserve of safeguarded land (Rural Fringe) at Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, to assess whether additional safeguarded land will be required in the future; • reconsider existing definitions and update the Limits to Built Development for settlements as necessary; • define boundaries for town centres, primary shopping areas and frontages, areas protected from development, and other areas within which specific policies will prevail; • provide detailed policies for development management purposes against which planning applications can be assessed.
Geographical coverage	Whole borough

New Local Plan	
Evidence requirements	The evidence required is set out in the Submission Local Plan and Core Documents page of the Local Plan website (see Core Document List).
Production	<u>Lead officer</u> Planning Policy Manager
Internal resource	Planning Policy Team
External resource	Consultancy used to provide key support in the production of the Local Plan and for parts of evidence base with consultation and input from other services and Kent County Council and other stakeholders, as necessary.
Indicative timetable	<u>Evidence gathering</u> 2016-2023 <u>Issues and Options consultation</u> May-June 2017 <u>Draft Local Plan consultation</u> September-November 2019 <u>Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation</u> 26 March-4 June 2021 <u>Submission to Secretary of State</u> November 2021 <u>Examination</u> Commenced November 2021 and finished October 2025 <u>Inspector's Report</u> Received 14th October 2025 (receipt of report marks the end of the Local Plan Examination) <u>Adoption</u> December 2025 - February 2026

New Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan	
Adoption status	The timetable for the production of the RTW Town Centre Plan is set out below. This takes account of both the timetable for the new Local Plan, and the anticipated timescales for greater certainty regarding changes to the economic, retail, leisure, office, cultural and commuting environment, and context. The timetable will be kept under review, pending Government publication of guidance on the new plan-making system.
Purpose	<p>Purposes of the new RTW Town Centre Plan include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set a vision and strategy for the TC for the period 2022 – 2038; • provide a masterplan for the TC to include a mix of town centre uses to provide commercial, employment, cultural and residential development, together with the creation and enhancement of new public realm and improved connectivity and legibility between the core areas of the Town Centre and the wider town alongside parking and active travel infrastructure; • detailed allocations for key sites, including the Royal Victoria Place shopping centre, Mount Pleasant Avenue Car Park and the Great Hall Car park and surrounds and Torrington and Vale Avenue; • Focused development management policies to guide development within the town centre area, which will also incorporate (including relevant updates) elements of the Urban Design Framework.
Geographical coverage	Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre boundary, which is defined within Policy STR/RTW2 of the new Local Plan.
Evidence requirements	<p>The following evidence is likely to be required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail, Commercial Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study (2021) (RLTCU 2021), and possible future update; • Evidence to facilitate masterplanning, to include engagement strategy and results, detailed design and options and scenario appraisals, viability and deliverability testing and transport modelling; • Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Office Market Review to be undertaken; • Sustainability Appraisal; • Potentially Habitats Regulation Assessment.

New Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan	
	It is noted that as work progresses on the Town Centre Plan other evidence may be required.
Production	<u>Lead officer</u> Planning Policy Team Leader
Internal resource	Planning Policy department, with strong input from the Economic Development team, together with other services.
External resource	Consultancy used to undertake evidence gathering and masterplanning, with input from external stakeholders, other Council services and Kent County Council, as necessary. Additional consultancy input may be required as the Town Centre Plan progresses, e.g. relating to detailed design, viability considerations, transport matters or flood risk.
Indicative timetable *these stages of plan-making to be kept under review pending response to Reg 18 Town Centre Plan consultation and Government guidance on the new plan-making system, as well as progress on the Local Plan Review	<u>First meetings of the Town Centre Working Group</u> November 2021 <u>Commissioning of masterplanning consultants</u> June 2022 <u>Evidence gathering</u> October 2022 – December 2024 <u>Issues and Detailed Options consultation</u> March – April 2024 <u>Further evidence gathering</u> 2024 – Spring 2026 <u>Draft Local Plan consultation</u> Spring 2026 (April – May) <u>Pre-Submission consultation*</u> Autumn 2026 <u>Submission to Secretary of State*</u> December 2026 <u>Examination*</u> December 2026 – Summer 2027 <u>Inspector's Report*</u>

New Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan	
	<p>Autumn 2027</p> <p><u>Adoption*</u></p> <p>Autumn 2027 – March 2028</p>

Local Plan Review 2025	
Adoption status	<p>The timetable for the production of the Local Plan Review is set out below. At this stage, it provides a high-level indication on when work on the Local Plan Review will start.</p> <p>The timetables/this LDS will be reviewed and further detail about the timeline for production of this document, which will be a new style Local Plan, will be published once Government guidance on the new plan-making system is available.</p>
Purpose	<p>Purposes of the Local Plan Review include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify an appropriate and sustainable, development strategy that seeks to identify and deliver appropriate sites to meet the borough’s growth needs, including housing growth and associated infrastructure needs; • work in cooperation with neighbouring authorities regarding strategic planning issues; • allocate specific sites for a range of uses to accommodate the amount of development set out in the evidence base/national policy for growth. Existing site allocations that have not commenced or received planning permission will be reviewed as part of this process; • consider the needs for, and provision of, sites to accommodate the gypsy and traveller community; • conduct a Green Belt Review study to identify Grey Belt land and test the purpose and function of designated land against the criteria of NPPF policy; • review existing definitions and update the Limits to Built Development for settlements as necessary; • define boundaries for town centres, primary shopping areas and frontages, areas protected from development, and other areas within which specific policies will prevail;

Local Plan Review 2025	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> if necessary, provide detailed policies for development management purposes against which planning applications can be assessed (noting that Government will soon be consulting on a proposed set of national Development Management policies).
Geographical coverage	Whole borough
Evidence requirements	A list of relevant evidence base documents will be made available throughout the plan-making process.
Production	<u>Lead officer</u> Planning Policy Manager
Internal resource	Planning Policy Team
External resource	Consultancy used to provide key support in the production of the Local Plan and for parts of evidence base with consultation and input from other services and Kent County Council and other stakeholders, as necessary.
Indicative timetable	<p>Through the current Local Plan examination the Council is committed to starting the Local Plan Review within six months of adoption of the emerging Local Plan.</p> <p>Whilst Government guidance is awaited on the precise detail of the new plan-making system, it is anticipated the new system will take effect in late 2025.</p> <p>The Council will begin the Local Plan review within six months of adoption of the new Local Plan, which is expected to be December 2025 – February 2026.</p> <p>The Local Plan will be prepared in accordance with the new plan making regime (currently set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023) and, subject to guidance, will be submitted for examination at the end of 2027.</p> <p>This LDS will be updated as necessary, upon receipt of the Government guidance.</p>

4.0 Supporting Statement: Resources and Risks

4.1 It is important that current work is completed in accordance with the programme set out in this LDS to deliver the development needed in the borough in a managed way and to facilitate public engagement in the process. In preparing this LDS, the Council has taken account of the resources available and has assessed the main risks. A summary is provided at **Appendix 3**.

Resources

4.2 The preparation of the documents set out in the LDS is the primary, full time responsibility of the Planning Policy Team in Planning Services, which is presently resourced as follows:

- Planning Policy Manager: 1.0;
- Planning Policy Team Leader: 0.8 full time equivalent (fte);
- Principal Planning Officers: 1.6 fte;
- Senior Planning Officers: 1.0;
- Planning Officers: 1.0;
- Planning Graduate (2 years fixed term): 1.0
- Planning Project Information Officer: 1.0;

4.3 Furthermore, work on policy documents is also undertaken by the Strategic Sites and Delivery (SS&D) Team. The SS&D Team is composed of the Team Leader (1.0 – this post has responsibilities which cut across both the Development Management and Planning Policy teams and functions, as well as work undertaken specifically by the Strategic Sites and Delivery team), 1.6 fte Principal Planning Officers and scope for a 1.0 Senior Planning Officer. It is noted that the make-up of the SS&D Team is dependent upon progression of the new Local Plan and its Development Strategy and more generally, the requirements of the wider Planning Service.

4.4 This is the minimum staffing needed to deliver the timescales set.

4.5 In addition, the Head of Planning Services, Principal Landscape and Biodiversity Officer, Tree Officer, and Conservation Officers provide a substantial input to planning policy documents. Other Council services are also expected to provide support where necessary – including those in the Economic Development team – and, in some cases, external consultants are commissioned to provide specialist evidence and advice. The Council has recently employed a Senior Sustainable Transport Officer, which is an additional resource and as well as working on corporate matters, the role will work on transport and active travel matters relating to the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan and the Local Plan Review.

4.6 In terms of financial resources, a long-term budget and reserve has been agreed. The budget will need to be regularly reviewed.

Review

4.7 Progress will be monitored against timescales and, where necessary, the LDS will be updated to reflect any changes. This 2025 LDS is based on the current level of resources and existing priorities and any changes to these will require review of the timescales.

Risks

4.8 **Appendix 3** uses the principles set out in the Council's Risk Management Guidance to identify the main risks to achieving the programme set out in the LDS. It takes account of risks associated with staffing, finance, and other matters.

5.0 Further Information

- 5.1 This LDS can be downloaded from the Council's website ([view the Local Development Scheme](#)).

Register on our consultation database

- 5.2 The Council is committed to promoting the use of digital technology for consultation purposes. The best way to stay informed about progress with preparing planning policy documents is to be registered on the consultation database. This way, you will receive direct email notification of all upcoming consultation events.
- 5.3 You may already be registered (for example, as a result of an individual response to a previous planning policy consultation). If you are not sure whether you are already registered, you can check by telephoning 01892 554056 or by emailing planning.policy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
- 5.4 If you are not already registered, you can do this by going to the Council's consultation portal at <https://consult.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/kse/> and clicking on the 'Login/Register' button at the top right of the screen. Alternatively, if you do not have access to the internet, or you have any difficulty in registering, you can contact us using the details above.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Supplementary Planning Documents, Conservation Area Appraisals and CIL

Supplementary Planning Documents

Kent Design Guide	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, April 2006
Purpose	The Kent Design provides approaches to the design of places that reinforce Kent's distinctive character.
Alterations and Extensions	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, July 2006
Purpose	Provides advice about how to address issues of amenity, design and sustainability when making alterations to residential properties and promotes good standards of development. Supplements Local Plan saved Policy EN1.
Recreation Open Space	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, July 2006
Purpose	Provides guidance on the expected amount and cost of providing children's play space and youth/adult recreation open space in new housing developments. Supplements 2006 Local Plan saved Policies R2 to R4.
Renewable Energy	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, April 2007
Purpose	Provides guidance on the renewable energy technologies available and how developers and householders can integrate them into new developments and conversions. Supplements Core Policy 5 of the adopted Core Strategy.
Affordable Housing	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, September 2007

Purpose	Provides guidance on the requirements for affordable housing provision on general market housing sites across the borough and on proposals for rural exceptions schemes in the rural areas. Supplements 2006 Local Plan saved Policies H3 and H8; and is relevant to Core Policy 6 of the adopted Core Strategy.
Borough Landscape Character Area Assessment	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, December 2017
Purpose	Describes the character of the landscape types to be found across the borough. The aim is that, by reference to this document, the character of the valued landscape of the borough will be retained and enhanced. Supplements Core Policy 4 of the adopted Core Strategy.
Local Heritage Assets	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, June 2012
Purpose	Sets out a process for identifying heritage assets that are not statutorily listed, but are of great value to a local area, for possible inclusion on a 'local list.' Supplements Core Policy 4 of the adopted Core Strategy.
Green Infrastructure Plan	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, May 2014
Purpose	Sets out a clear vision and framework for existing and future green infrastructure: setting out the current provision of green infrastructure assets; identifying areas where there are gaps in provision or linkages; and identifying potential opportunities for enhancing and filling these gaps.
Noise and Vibration	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, October 2014
Purpose	Provides detailed guidance on the implementation of national and local policy relating to the potential impact of noise and vibration arising from, or affecting, new development.
Farmsteads Assessment Guidance for Tunbridge Wells Borough	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, February 2016

Purpose	Provides guidance to help conserve farmstead character through assessing the character of the farmstead, its significance, and its sensitivity to change.
Contaminated Land	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, September 2016
Purpose	Provides guidance to developers on assessing and mitigating the potential effects of contamination where this may exist and sets out the way the Borough Council considers contaminated land issues as part of development management proposals.
Civic Development Planning Framework	
Adoption status	Adopted as SPD, February 2018
Purpose	Supplements the policy and guidance provided by current development plan documents with regard to specific areas and sites within the Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, namely Crescent Road/Church Road, Mount Pleasant Car Park, and Great Hall Car Park.

Conservation Area Appraisals with Supplementary Planning Document status

Wilsley Green	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPD status, October 2012
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Wilsley Green Conservation Area. Supplements 2006 Local Plan saved Policy EN5 and Core Policy 4 of the adopted Core Strategy.
Sissinghurst	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPD status, October 2012
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Sissinghurst Conservation Area. Supplements 2006 Local Plan saved Policy EN5 and Core Policy 4 of the adopted Core Strategy.
Cranbrook	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPD status, June 2010
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Cranbrook Conservation Area. Supplements 2006 Local Plan saved Policy EN5 and Core Policy 4 of the adopted Core Strategy.
Goudhurst and Kilndown	

Adoption status	Adopted with SPD status, June 2006
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Goudhurst and Kilndown Conservation Areas. Supplements 2006 Local Plan saved Policy EN5 and Core Policy 4 of the adopted Core Strategy.
Groombridge	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPD status, June 2006
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Groombridge Conservation Area. Supplements 2006 Local Plan saved Policy EN5 and Core Policy 4 of the adopted Core Strategy.
Langton Green	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPD status, June 2006
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Langton Green Conservation Area. Supplements 2006 Local Plan saved Policy EN5 and Core Policy 4 of the adopted Core Strategy.
Speldhurst	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPD status, June 2006
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Speldhurst Conservation Area. Supplements 2006 Local Plan saved Policy EN5 and Core Policy 4 of the adopted Core Strategy.
Madeira Park and Warwick Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPD status, June 2019
Purpose	Set out the key historic and architectural characteristics of, and the distinct boundary of the Madeira Park and Warwick Park area. This has also amended part of the boundary of the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Conservation Area.

Conservation Area Appraisals with Supplementary Planning Guidance status

These CAAs were not prepared according to the statutory process now required for adoption as SPD. As such, their status remains as saved Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Benenden and Iden Green	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPG status, April 2005
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Benenden and Iden Green Conservation Areas.
Southborough	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPG status, August 2003
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Southborough Conservation Area.
Lamberhurst and The Down	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPG status, July 2002
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Lamberhurst and The Down Conservation Areas.
Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPG status, November 2000
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Conservation Areas.
Hawkhurst: The Moor, Highgate & All Saints Church, Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green)	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPG status, September 1999
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Hawkhurst Conservation Areas.
Pembury	
Adoption status	Adopted with SPG status, April 1998
Purpose	Sets out the key characteristics of the Pembury Conservation Area.

Supplementary Planning Documents in preparation

Paddock Wood Town Centre Framework Masterplan SPD	
Adoption status	The timetable for the production of the Structure Plan is set out below. This takes account of the timetable for the new Local Plan.
Purpose	<p>To provide guidance on the strategic development of Paddock Wood town centre. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A framework masterplan that will identify key sites for redevelopment, to deliver a framework for the future of the town centre to ensure its revitalisation; • A strategy setting out the range and mix of uses to sustain the centre in terms of the planned expansion of Paddock Wood, alongside additional residential development in the town centre to ensure its viability.
Geographical coverage	Land indicated as Paddock Wood Town Centre by Policy STR/SS 2 (The Strategy for Paddock Wood Town Centre) in the new Local Plan.
Production	<p><u>Lead officer</u></p> <p>Strategic Sites and Delivery Team Leader</p> <p><u>External resource</u></p> <p>David Lock Associates and sub-consultant team.</p>
Indicative timetable	<p><u>Draft prepared</u></p> <p>March – May 2026</p> <p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>June – August 2026</p> <p><u>Adoption</u></p> <p>July – September 2026</p>

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure SPD	
Adoption status	The timetable for the production of the Local Cycling and Walking SPD is set out below.
Purpose	To provide guidance on infrastructure for cycling and walking within the Main Urban Area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and adjacent settlements and Paddock Wood, and the provision of inter-settlement cycle routes between Tonbridge, Southborough/Royal Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood.
Geographical coverage	Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Rusthall, Langton Green, Bidborough and Paddock Wood
Production	<p><u>Lead Officer</u></p> <p>Senior Sustainable Transport Officer with the Planning Policy Manager</p> <p><u>External resource</u></p> <p>PJA (Phil Jones Associates)</p>
Indicative timetable dependent on whether there is a clear and obvious need for an additional supplementary planning document to support policy implementation.	<p><u>Review of current Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Phases 1 and 2, and Early engagement with Key Stakeholders</u></p> <p>Summer 2026</p> <p><u>Draft Prepared</u></p> <p>Summer –</p> <p>Autumn 2026</p> <p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>Autumn 2026 – Winter</p> <p>2027</p> <p><u>Adoption</u></p> <p>Winter 2027 – Spring 2028</p>

Biodiversity Net Gain SPD / Guidance	
Adoption status	The timetable for the production of the Biodiversity Net Gain SPD is set out below. This takes account of the timetable for the new Local Plan.
Purpose	<p>To provide Borough specific guidance for Biodiversity Net Gain as required by the Environment Act 2021. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on conservation priorities and application of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy • Local validation requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain • The Council’s approach to “Significant” on-site biodiversity and the Council’s approach in terms of biodiversity for development that is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain • the provision for long term management and monitoring • details of any assessment or monitoring fees • funding arrangements and costs for any local or strategic offsetting schemes.
Geographical coverage	Whole Borough
Production	<p><u>Lead Officer</u></p> <p>Landscape and Biodiversity Officer</p> <p><u>External resource</u></p> <p>The SPD/Guidance will require input and collaboration with Kent County Council Ecology.</p>
Indicative timetable	The Timetable will depend upon the availability of resources following adoption of the Local Plan and the publication of any further guidance from DEFRA and Natural England on BNG. A more detailed timetable will be published following the adoption of the Local Plan.

Historic Environment SPD	
Adoption status	The timetable for the production of the Historic Environment SPD is set out below. This takes account of the timetable for the new Local Plan.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide guidance based on the Historic Environment Review 2018 on the prevalent themes of the historic environment of the Borough and identify vulnerabilities of and opportunities with heritage assets of various typologies within the Borough. This will assist with development management and forward planning.
Geographical coverage	Whole Borough
Production	<u>Lead Officer</u> Principal Conservation and Urban Design Officer <u>External resource</u> The SPD may require input and collaboration with Kent County Council Heritage Team.
Indicative timetable	<u>Draft prepared</u> Spring 2026 <u>Early engagement with Key Stakeholders incl. KCC, Historic England and others</u> October – November 2026 <u>Final draft prepared</u> February 2027 <u>Consultation</u> Spring/Summer 2027 <u>Adoption</u> Autumn 2027

Open Space SPD	
Adoption status	The timetable for the production of the Open Space SPD is set out below. This takes account of the timetable for the new Local Plan.
Purpose	To review the existing, adopted Recreation Open Space SPD and to include the technical detail on how the standards will be applied, taking account of existing provision within the relevant area. The SPD will include the methodology for calculating the amount of open space required on each development, when on-site open space should be provided on larger sites, and the amount of developer contributions that will be required in lieu of on-site provision; and will outline the priorities for provision, or improvements to existing provision, in qualitative terms, taking into account the qualitative assessment.
Geographical coverage	Whole Borough
Production	<u>Lead Officer</u> Planning Policy Officer <u>External resource</u> The SPD may require input and collaboration with Kent County Council and possibly Sport England.
Indicative timetable	<u>Early engagement with Key Stakeholders</u> Summer 2026 <u>Draft prepared</u> December 2026 – February 2027 <u>Consultation</u> March – May 2027 <u>Adoption</u> April – June 2027

Community Infrastructure Levy

Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule	
Adoption status	Not adopted - The Council will review the CIL legislation and look to progress a review of the local market conditions in order to adopt a locally set Community Infrastructure Levy at the same time as implementing the Local Plan Review.
Purpose	<p>If a decision is made to adopt, it would be to set a standard, up-front and non-negotiable charge to be paid by developers, levied on the basis of the additional area of development proposed.</p> <p>CIL would not replace S106 contributions entirely, but these would need to be related to the specific circumstances of the development site. The Council would be responsible for setting the charge, collecting the levy, and distributing a proportion to other organisations that provide community infrastructure, such as Kent County Council and town and parish councils or other appropriate bodies.</p> <p>If a decision is made not to adopt, and in the intervening period, funding for infrastructure will continue to be secured through the use of Section 106 Agreements.</p>
Geographical coverage	Whole borough. Consideration would be given to whether it is appropriate to apply a standard charge across the whole borough or set different rates for different areas.
Evidence requirements	<p>Infrastructure Delivery Plan to demonstrate that new development can be supported by necessary infrastructure; and to identify priority projects to benefit from CIL funding.</p> <p>CIL viability assessment to estimate what would be a robust CIL charge in this area.</p>
Production	<p><u>Lead officer</u></p> <p>Planning Policy Manager</p>

Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule	
	<p><u>Internal resource</u></p> <p>Planning Policy Team</p> <p><u>External resource</u></p> <p>Specialist consultants, Kent County Council and other external infrastructure and service providers.</p>

Appendix 3: Risk Assessment

Risk: type and description	To what?	Likelihood of occurrence	Impact of occurrence	Management
<p>Resource risk: Reduction in staff resources; for example, if staff leave and are not replaced for budgetary reasons or due to lack of skilled applicants</p>	<p>Local Plan, Town Centre Plan, Local Plan review and SPDs</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Critical</p>	<p>Ensure that Councillors and Senior Officers are aware of the resource requirements to achieve the policy preparation programme set out in this LDS.</p> <p>Ensure any changes in staffing or workload are monitored and promptly addressed.</p>
<p>Resource risk: Agreed budget is insufficient to complete work identified</p>	<p>Local Plan, Town Centre Plan, Local Plan review and SPDs</p>	<p>Low/Medium</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p>Regular budget profiling and review. Raise any potential issues as early as possible.</p>
<p>Political risk: Public and political interest in the documents is very high, leading to a significantly greater number of representations than expected. A good response rate to consultation is undeniably positive but it takes time to assess representations.</p>	<p>Local Plan, Town Centre Plan, Local Plan review, SPDs and potential CIL Charging Schedule (if progressed)</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p>The Council can predict the likely level of interest in these documents reasonably clearly on the basis of past experience. Explaining the issues affecting people living in different areas of the borough early in the consultation process has been helpful in focusing their responses. On-going public engagement for the new plan-making documents, building on the success of previous engagement exercises.</p>

Risk: type and description	To what?	Likelihood of occurrence	Impact of occurrence	Management
<p>Political risk: Political concerns and/or matters raised in representations about particular issues are disproportionately difficult to address, delaying progress with other aspects of the Plan</p>	<p>Local Plan, Town Centre Plan, Local Plan review and SPDs</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p>Critical</p>	<p>Ensure that Councillors understand what the difficult decisions associated with preparing these documents are likely to be and maintain regular dialogue throughout the process, including by reporting to the Cabinet Advisory Boards. Ensure that Councillors are committed, in principle, to making these decisions within the timescales set out in this LDS.</p>
<p>Political risk: Council procedures and corporate commitment</p>	<p>Local Plan, Town Centre Plan, Local Plan review and SPDs</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p>Need to ensure Planning Policy Working Group maintains a clear steer over the process of Local Plan and SPD production process. Continuing dialogue over any slippage due to unforeseen circumstances such as further legislative changes or legal challenges.</p>
<p>Technical/resource risk: Important evidence required to support policies and proposals is incomplete</p>	<p>Local Plan, Town Centre Plan, Local Plan review and SPDs</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p>The Council has a reasonable degree of control over the preparation and commissioning of the evidence required and has been active in undertaking joint work with other authorities. However, there could also be some staff capacity problems in preparing evidence to support the documents where some significant pieces of work will need to be redone and updated, affected by</p>

Risk: type and description	To what?	Likelihood of occurrence	Impact of occurrence	Management
				other demands on staff (e.g., Principal Landscape and Biodiversity Officer and Planning Policy Officers).
Political risk: Changes to evidence base requirements as a result of legislative changes	Local Plan, Town Centre Plan and Local Plan review	Significant	Critical	Ensure that Councillors are fully briefed of any (anticipated) changes in legislation, the implications of this and the potential impact on timescales.
Political risk: Duty to cooperate with other authorities	Local Plan, Town Centre Plan and Local Plan review	High	Critical	Early identification of the need to work in conjunction with other authorities and stakeholders. Ensure that Councillors understand that joint working will result in difficult decisions needing to be made and maintain regular dialogue throughout the process.
Resource risk: Other work, such as that associated with neighbourhood planning or planning appeals, requires a significant resource commitment in the short term	Local Plan, Town Centre Plan, Local Plan review and SPDs	Medium	Significant	Consideration at the corporate level should be given to how to manage all the aspects of neighbourhood planning if there is significant interest from communities. Some aspects, such as the organisation of referendums, are not directly planning related. Preparing the Local Plan Review and the Town Centre Plan to the programme will reduce the risk of 'planning by appeal' and the resource commitment associated

Risk: type and description	To what?	Likelihood of occurrence	Impact of occurrence	Management
				with it.
<p>Political risk: Legislation, regulations or guidance related to policy making change, requiring a new or refined approach</p>	<p>Local Plan, Town Centre Plan, Local Plan review and SPDs</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p>Legislative changes are continuing, and national guidance on the new plan-making system is awaited. Recent changes to national planning system (including the NPPF) and related statutory processes mean that it is important to keep abreast of proposed changes and implications. Regular briefings to Members.</p>
<p>Operational risk: Impact arising from unforeseen circumstances, such as a pandemic</p>	<p>Local Plan, Town Centre Plan, Local Plan review and SPDs</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p>Such events could impact on the work programmes in terms of the ability to visit sites and meet stakeholders. This would be continually monitored and, where necessary and appropriate, alternative arrangements developed in line with national or other Guidance.</p>

Appendix 4: Glossary

For the purpose of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Adopted	There are a number of stages in the preparation of planning policy documents such as the Local Plan and Site Allocations Development Plan Document. 'Adoption' represents the final confirmation of the document's status by the local planning authority.
Appropriate Assessment	An assessment of the potential effect of development plans and proposals on sites within the Natura 2000 network of sites that are protected under the European Birds and Habitats Directives. Also known as 'Habitats Regulations Assessment'.
Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)	Local planning authorities are required to produce regular reports, assessing the effectiveness of planning policy documents such as the Local Plan. The AMR sets out where development has been granted planning permission, is under construction or has been completed over the monitoring period.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	An approach to development, and/or land management, which aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) CIL Charging Schedule	CIL is a levy on new development that can be set by local planning authorities to pay for new infrastructure such as schools and roads. CIL money will be collected to pay for infrastructure in a local authority area if there is an adopted CIL Charging Schedule setting out the level of required payments. CIL is currently optional and has not yet been introduced within the borough.
Conservation Area	An area designated by the local planning authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as being of special architectural or historic interest, the character and interest of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. Conservation Areas are a type of heritage asset.

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Core Strategy	The Core Strategy is a long-term document, which sets the overarching strategy for planning and decision making in the borough by defining how much development of each main type will take place and broadly where it will go. The Council's Core Strategy was adopted in 2010, covering the period between 2006 and 2026.
Development Management	This is the process by which the planning authority manages the development and use of land by determining whether individual planning applications should be granted or refused.
Development Plan Document (DPD)	A policy-setting document that forms part of the statutory development plan. Development Plan Documents for the borough include the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD).
Examination	A process of formal consideration of draft Local Plans and Development Plan Documents, chaired by an independent inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.
Green Belt	Green Belt is open, largely undeveloped land that has been specifically designated for long-term protection. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. National planning policy for the Green Belt is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
Grey Belt	For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). 'Grey Belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (of the NPPF) (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.
Green infrastructure	A network of multi-functional green spaces, in urban and rural areas, which is capable of delivering a wide range of benefits for the environment and quality of life for local communities. The Borough Council adopted a Green Infrastructure Plan Supplementary Planning Document in

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	2014.
Heritage asset	A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. Includes nationally designated assets, as well as local assets identified by the local community and confirmed by the local planning authority. See also 'Conservation Area'.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	Outlines the need for, delivery and implementation of, infrastructure necessary to support the growth strategy in the Local Plan or Core Strategy and of specific locations within the plan period. This document is constantly reviewed as needs over time change.
Limits to Built Development (LBD)	A line around settlements defining the area which is considered to be within the limits of the built area and that which is outside to restrict the encroachment of built form into the surrounding countryside.
Local Plan	The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community, under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Current Core Strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF must be considered in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in decisions on planning applications. Further guidance on particular topics, entitled Planning Practice Guidance, is provided on the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) website. This is intended to supplement the NPPF and be updated, as necessary.

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Planning Areas	<p>The Localism Act 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Plans. Communities are able to prepare neighbourhood planning documents, outlining how they envisage their area developing in the future.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Planning Area is the geographic area for undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan which has been approved by the local planning authority.</p>
Primary Shopping Area	Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage).
Primary and secondary frontages	Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing, and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas, and businesses.
'Saved' policies	Certain planning policy documents or individual policies may be 'saved' pending their replacement by future documents or policies. A saved policy or document can still be used in making decisions on planning applications.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	These are strictly protected sites under the European Commission Habitats Directive and forms part of the European network of important high-quality conservation sites.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	These are strictly protected sites in accordance with Article 4 of the European Commission Birds Directive which came into force in 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the local planning authority will engage local communities in decision making on planning proposals, including who they will engage and how.
Strategic Environmental Assessment	A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

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Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Documents which add further detail to planning policies. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents can be a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.
Sustainability Appraisal	An appraisal of the economic, environmental, and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process, to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.
Sustainable development	<p>International and national bodies have set out broad principles of sustainable development. Resolution 24/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>The UK Sustainable Development Strategy 'Securing the Future' sets out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living within the planet's environmental limits • Ensuring a strong, healthy, and just society • Achieving a sustainable economy • Living within the planet's environmental limits • Ensuring a strong, healthy, and just society • Achieving a sustainable economy • Promoting good governance • Using sound science responsibly • The NPPF describes the purpose of the planning system as to contribute to sustainable development.
Town centre	<p>An area defined on the Proposals Map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area.</p> <p>References to town centres exclude small parades of neighbourhood shops.</p>

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Viability assessment (high level)

A test of site viability at a level based on generic assumptions rather than site specific matters. Assumptions are based on a mixture of market norms, local knowledge, and previous research. Where site-specific issues such as individual infrastructure requirements are known, assumptions are adjusted. The high-level viability testing is intended to draw out any clearly unviable scenarios and is not intended for valuation or for comparison purposes.

**If you require this document in another format,
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