

Our Local Plan Explained

Community Engagement Events FAQ's



1. What are the Local Plan community engagement events about?

Ashford Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the borough so we are holding a series of events where you can;

- find out what the plan is and how you can be involved
- discover how the process works and how long it will take
- ask questions and give us your feedback

2. What is a Local Plan?

A Local Plan sets out a vision and framework for the future growth of our borough. It guides and manages change so that building is in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

A Local Plan provides the opportunity to shape the places in which we live, work and socialise. It addresses the needs for housing and employment. It provides a series of planning policies covering many other topics such as community facilities and infrastructure, the natural and historic environment, and adapting to climate change. All with the aim of achieving well designed places. Although the general principle of the plan is to encourage growth within the economy of Ashford, it also seeks to protect our valued assets such as heritage, leisure, nature and open spaces.

Everyone can be affected by development, across the borough, so it's important to get involved in the preparation of the Local Plan.

Once adopted, the policies within a Local Plan are used as the starting point to decide planning applications for future development.

By working together with you, our residents and stakeholders, we can ensure that the development that comes is right for our borough and the affordable homes and related infrastructure local people need is carefully considered.



3. What will the community events cover?

The events are intended to provide you with the opportunity to find out more about the new Local Plan and the process so that you can tell us what you think, ask questions and leave feedback.

The events will explain what a Local Plan is, what stage we are at, and when we go out to formal public consultation following these informal events.

Whilst explaining the process, we would also like to hear about your likes and dislikes about where you live and your aspirations for the borough over the next 15 years on matters such as the environment, future needs for local housing, jobs, green spaces, and existing and new infrastructure etc. This is about planning for the future and addressing the issues of the present.

4. What about the recent 'Call for Sites' exercise? Will all the sites submitted come forward?

In Autumn 2023, we asked landowners, developers, residents and other interested parties to suggest sites that they would like to be considered as part of the preparation of the new Local Plan. It is unlikely that all sites put forward will be included in the Local Plan.

A full list and map of the sites submitted are available to view on our website.

View further details of the sites submitted

Please Note: At this stage the sites listed are for information purposes only. We are sharing the information submitted to us without any assessment as to their suitability or likelihood of being proposed by the council at a later date for the Local Plan.

5. How will sites be assessed for suitability?

We will use several methods to decide if a site is suitable for development. These include:

- **Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA):** This checks if the land is available and suitable for housing and economic development.
- **Sustainability Appraisal:** This looks at how developing the site will affect the environment, economy, and community.
- **Strategic Environmental Assessment:** This ensures that the site development will not harm the environment.

We will consider various factors and limitations during these assessments and will seek feedback from the public at different stages.

6. Can I give my feedback on the sites submitted in the Call for Sites?

Yes. These events provide an opportunity for you to view all the sites submitted through the recent 'Call for Sites' exercise, to ask questions, and express likes and dislikes.

If you wish to give any feedback on the sites submitted, please make sure that you include the site reference/address and give the reasons for your views. Feedback at present is informal. There will be further opportunity when we reach the formal consultation stages when the draft Local Plan is presented.



7. Where are the events taking place?

The council is holding a total of eight 'in person' community events across the borough throughout July and August. These events will be followed by two virtual events in late August/early September.

The events are intended to be 'drop in' sessions open to all members of the community. You may attend any of the events in any of the locations.

The events are taking place at the following locations and times:

Venue	Date	Time
Ashford Cinema, Elwick Road, Ashford, TN23 1AE	Tuesday 16 July	2 - 8pm
Shadoxhurst Village Hall, Hornash Lane, Shadoxhurst, Ashford TN26 1HT	Wednesday 17 July	2 - 8pm
Hamstreet Victory Hall, Ruckinge Road B2067, Ashford, TN26 2NJ	Wednesday 24 July	2 - 8pm
Wye Village Hall, Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, TN25 5EA	Wednesday 31 July	2 - 8pm
Chilham Village Hall, Chilham Castle Estate, Chilham, CT4 8DB	Thursday 1 August	2 - 8pm
Tenterden Leisure Centre, Recreation Ground Road, Tenterden, TN30 6RA	Tuesday 6 August	2 - 8pm
Charing Church Barn, Market Place, Charing, Ashford, TN27 0LP	Thursday 8 August	2 - 8pm
Sandyacres Sports & Social Club, Sandyhurst Lane, Ashford, TN25 4PE	Monday 12 August	2 - 8pm
Virtual via Microsoft Teams	Wednesday 28 August	6 - 8pm
Virtual via Microsoft Teams	Thursday 5 September	6 - 8pm

Members of the Plan-Making & Infrastructure Team at Ashford Borough Council will be available at all the events to answer your questions and talk about the new Local Plan.

8. Do I need to register to attend?

No. Simply 'drop in' on the day.

9. Do I have to attend in person? What happens if I can't make the event?

You do not have to attend 'in person'. If you are unable to attend any of our 'in person' events, you can attend one of our virtual events instead.

Alternatively, you can access all the leaflets and feedback forms from our community events and copies of the recording of the virtual events on our Local Plan Hub at:

haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk/lp-explained-events

(Please note that the recording of our virtual events will not be available until after all the virtual events have taken place).



10. How do I provide feedback?

We will have feedback forms available at all our in-person events.

Alternatively, you can provide feedback online using the link:

haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk/lp-explained-events

Copies of our feedback forms are also available on request, simply email planning.policy@ashford.gov.uk to request a copy and return your completed form to the same address with the subject heading 'Our Local Plan Explained'.

If you wish to return a feedback form by post, please send to Plan Making & Infrastructure, Spatial Planning, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, TN23 1PL

All feedback must be provided by **5pm on Monday 16 September**.

11. How will we use your feedback?

The council will review and collate all the feedback received during the community events. The feedback will be used to gain a better understanding of key local issues and, where appropriate, will inform the content of the draft version of the new Local Plan.

12. Will there be future opportunities to comment on the Local Plan?

Prior to the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Examination, the Local Plan will be subject to further formal public consultation in accordance with Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The timetable for the preparation of the new Local Plan is set out in the council's Local Development Scheme (LDS). [View the latest Local Plan timetable](#).

13. How can I be notified about future progress on the Local Plan?

We want local people and communities, businesses and other interested parties to be involved and have their say on the Local Plan.

To get involved and be kept informed on the progress of the emerging Local Plan [please sign up to join the Have Your Say Consultation Portal](#).

