Help shape our Local Plan to 2030

Ashford Borough Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan for the borough. The plan sets out the land that needs to be provided in the borough to accommodate new homes and jobs up to 2030. It also includes the policies that will be used to help decide planning applications.

This is a draft plan – we need views from all interested parties to help us make any changes needed. An eight week consultation period runs from the 15th June until 10th August and can be accessed at www.ashford.gov.uk/consult

During this period a series of exhibitions and events will be held that will enable local residents to ask questions and find out more about the draft plan.

For more information visit www.ashford.gov.uk/local-plan-to-2030
The new Local Plan will allocate sites for development as well as establishing planning policies and guidance to ensure local development is built in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

It will address housing, employment, retail, leisure, transport, community infrastructure and environmental issues such as adapting to climate change and ensuring high quality design.

The general principle of the Local Plan is to encourage growth within the economy of Ashford to provide homes, employment, retail floor space and infrastructure such as community facilities and green spaces.

Whilst growth in the economy is important, the plan also seeks to protect Ashford’s valued assets such as heritage, leisure, nature and open spaces.

**Community Infrastructure Levy**

In parallel with the new Local Plan, a draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule will also be produced.

The CIL aims to provide a more consistent approach to determining financial contributions from developers of new developments towards local infrastructure provision.

The existing process of securing contributions through legal agreements (‘s106’) will be scaled back but will remain for ‘site specific’ infrastructure provision and affordable housing.

The council will progress the CIL charging schedule alongside the development of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to support the Local Plan 2030.

For more information visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/cil](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/cil)
Local Plan 2030
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Local Plan 2030?
The draft Local Plan to 2030 has been prepared by Ashford Borough Council. It sets out the vision, policies and proposals to guide future development and the use of land within the whole of Ashford borough.

It will give a degree of certainty to developers and members of the public as to where development is likely to take place and guide decision makers on the most appropriate forms of development over the plan period to 2030.

As a place-shaping document, everyone can be affected so everyone should contribute – it is therefore important to engage with the whole community in the preparation of the Local Plan.

Why does Ashford need this additional housing when the Government’s Localism Act allows local communities to determine their own housing growth?

Government policy requires local authorities to determine their own housing needs. However, this must be based upon an assessment of housing need through a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, to ensure that general market and affordable housing needs are fully met until 2030.

A general misunderstanding of the Localism Act is that the Government allows local communities to simply say NO to development; however the choice is more about where the development needed should best be located.

Some communities in the borough are undertaking ‘neighbourhood planning’ and in some of these areas, the Neighbourhood Plan is responsible for identifying housing and other development sites.

Where are the additional jobs and infrastructure to meet all the new residents’ needs?
The delivery of additional jobs and key infrastructure over the plan period to 2030 is a critical requirement for the delivery of a successful local plan. The plan provides for approximately 80 ha of land for new economic development, supporting the growth of 11,100 new jobs in the borough.

Also, as part of the documentation that runs alongside the Local Plan, the council have prepared an ‘Infrastructure Delivery Plan’, which identifies the need for new infrastructure resulting from development. New developments are required through various policies in the draft Local Plan to provide the infrastructure needed to support it.

The schools, roads, water/ sewerage services, GP’s and William Harvey Hospital are over capacity – Are you going to improve these services before you build more houses?
The Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been prepared in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders relating to services, including KCC Highways & Education, Water companies and the Environment Agency, the Ashford Clinical Commissioning Group and the East Kent NHS Trust.

It is the responsibility of these stakeholders to identify and ensure delivery of the infrastructure that is required. The Local Plan plays a supporting role in helping to deliver the infrastructure, by allocating sites or requiring developers to make financial contributions.

These stakeholders will also be formally consulted on these draft plans during this consultation stage, and we will continue to work with them in understanding the borough’s infrastructure needs.

Why are you developing ‘greenfield’ sites when there are previously developed (brownfield) sites that could meet the housing need in Ashford?

There are insufficient brownfield sites across Ashford to meet the level of new housing that needs to be delivered in the borough, the majority of growth will therefore have to be delivered on greenfield sites on the edge of the urban area and in the rural area.

Many of the previously developed sites in the town already have redevelopment proposals underway. However, the Local Plan will encourage the re-use of previously developed sites where environmental constraints allow and sites are sustainably located.

Please note that Greenfield sites are not designated ‘Green Belt’ which is nationally protected land. There is no ‘Green Belt’ designation in the Ashford borough.

Have the site allocations within the Local Plan already been decided?
Extensive evidence gathering, community consultation and sustainability appraisal has been carried out on alternative development site options. The outcomes from these tasks has informed the council’s selection of preferred development sites to the extent required to meet needs, most significantly for housing and employment sites.

However, the Local Plan is still a draft document and the current consultation provides the opportunity for comments to be made and changes proposed. Amendments can still be made to the draft Local Plan 2030 and if changes are made it may require a further round of public consultation.
If a site is allocated in the final Local Plan 2030 is it then 'done and dusted' as far as planning considerations and decisions go?

No. The site’s allocation in an adopted plan document means that the principle of development is clearly established (and no longer up for debate – subject to some potential exceptions) and typically its form (e.g. housing), scale / other parameters and possibly some of its details.

However, planning permission will still have to be obtained and planning applications must be made and determined in the usual ways, assessed against all the policies with the plan.

What happens to the sites already identified and allocated in Ashford’s current Local Plan / development plan documents? Do these remain allocated or will the new Local Plan make them defunct?


Some allocations from those documents have been revised and replaced within the draft Local Plan 2030, others will be removed.

Is the Chilmington Green development to be reviewed as part of this Local Plan?

No. The Chilmington Green plans will not be reviewed as part of this Local Plan. The housing proposed at Chilmington Green will contribute to the borough’s housing need and is taken into account when determining how many additional sites need to be allocated in this plan.

How does the Local Plan relate to the neighbourhood plan my Parish Council or neighbourhood forum are preparing?

A Local Plan is required to provide an overall development strategy for the borough and will apply to all areas, including designated Neighbourhood Planning Areas. A neighbourhood plan will need to be in general conformity with the Local Plan 2030 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

More information on Neighbourhood plans in the borough can be found on the council’s website www.ashford.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans

How do I make comments?

To respond to the consultations please go to the Ashford Borough Council website www.ashford.gov.uk/consult, where comments regarding all the consultation documents can be made. Once in the portal, those wishing to make a representation will be required to login / register with a username and password.

The preferred method of making representations is online as it provides a clear approach to determining the precise nature of the objection / support in terms of policy, plan or paragraph. A guide has been prepared to aid this method of response.

If a person wishing to make a representation does not have access to a home computer than all libraries will be in a position to offer such facilities as well as some of the council offices. Paper copies of the representation form are available at the libraries. Alternatively, you can call or email for a paper copy representation form to be sent to you.

What happens after my comments have been made?

The council will consider all the comments received during the consultation period. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether to submit the Local Plan for an ‘Examination’ by a Government appointed Inspector, or to make changes to the plan and re-consult.

At an Examination in Public, the Inspector will look at the Local Plan 2030, CIL, the evidence supporting them and all comments received at this publication round of consultation and judge whether it is sound and whether it meets the legal requirements.