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OUR VISION FOR THE BOROUGH



Our Vision

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Our Vision



4.1 Providing a vision for the Local Plan and setting objectives for delivering the vision is a fundamental part of plan-making as it sets the framework upon which the policies and proposals detailed within the Plan are established.

4.2 Our draft vision for the Local Plan is provided overleaf and our objectives are provided in Figure 4.1.





Our Vision - A borough that works for everyone

4.3 By 2042, Tonbridge and Malling will be a resilient, inclusive and well-connected borough, where growth has been planned and delivered through a clear, place based spatial strategy, informed by a defined settlement hierarchy that reflects the distinct roles of its towns, villages and countryside. Development will have been focused in the most sustainable locations, led by Tonbridge as the borough's principal centre, supported by a network of key settlements, as set out in the settlement hierarchy, while maintaining the character and vitality of smaller communities.

4.4 Growth will be infrastructure-led, with new development aligned to the timely provision of transport, education, health, utilities and digital infrastructure. Strategic investment will have been prioritised in areas of growth, ensuring that development is not only accommodated, but contributes positively to quality of life, environmental stewardship, accessibility and the creation of cohesive, well-served communities.



Climate Change and Environmental Resilience

4.5 The borough will be on a clear pathway to net zero and will have adapted to the impacts of climate change, with development designed to minimise carbon emissions and enhance resilience. Flood risk will be actively managed, particularly in Tonbridge and communities along the River Medway and its tributaries, with nature-based solutions and sustainable drainage embedded throughout new development.

4.6 A connected network of green and blue infrastructure will link towns, villages and the wider countryside, enhancing biodiversity, improving health and wellbeing, and reinforcing the borough's distinctive landscapes. New development will contribute to this network, helping to create attractive, healthy and resilient places.



Local Character and Place

4.7 The borough's rich historic environment, distinctive settlements and varied landscapes will have been protected and enhanced, reinforcing the borough's distinctive character and landscape identity. Development will have responded positively to local character, reinforcing the identity of different places and ensuring that growth is integrated into its surroundings. The intrinsic value of the countryside will continue to be safeguarded, with development respecting its role in defining the borough's setting and separation of settlements.



Homes and Communities

4.8 New development will have delivered mixed, inclusive and well-designed communities that meet the needs of all residents. Growth will have been focused within Tonbridge and other key settlements, making effective use of previously developed land where possible, while recognising that some greenfield release will be necessary to meet needs in a sustainable way.

4.9 Communities will be supported by accessible services, social infrastructure and high-quality public spaces, reducing inequalities and enabling healthier lifestyles. Smaller villages will have experienced proportionate carefully managed growth that supports local services, enhances community vitality and addresses local housing needs, including affordability for local people, whilst improving accessibility to services and facilities through enhanced walking, cycling and public transport opportunities where feasible, and recognising that there may be a need for the continued role of the private car in rural areas.

Our Economy

4.10 The borough will support a diverse, resilient and low carbon economy. Tonbridge town centre will be revitalised as a key and vibrant destination for residents and visitors, with regeneration delivering a mix of retail, leisure, employment and residential uses, including key opportunity areas such as the Angel Centre and land east of the High Street.

4.11 Other centres will function as accessible service hubs, supporting local communities and reducing the need to travel. Employment growth will be supported in sustainable locations across the borough, including established employment areas, logistics, the rural economy and emerging sectors, while protecting important agricultural land and land-based industries. This will be complemented by the borough's heritage, green spaces and access to the wider countryside, attracting visitors and supporting local prosperity.

Tonbridge and other key settlements

4.12 Tonbridge will be a primary focus for growth and transformation, evolving as a vibrant, well-connected and high quality centre for living, working and leisure. Development will be coordinated to deliver significant regeneration and expansion, including enhancement of the town centre, improved public realm, and better connectivity across the town, particularly between the station, High Street and surrounding neighbourhoods. New neighbourhoods will be comprehensively planned and infrastructure-led, creating integrated and accessible communities. The role of Tonbridge as the borough's principal centre will be enhanced.

4.13 Our service centres and primary villages will support sustainable growth across the borough, each playing a distinct role:

- Kings Hill will continue to develop as a strategic mixed-use community, accommodating homes, employment and services in a planned and integrated way.
- Snodland and the Medway Gap settlements (including Aylesford) will evolve as sustainable riverside communities, balancing growth with environmental constraints and improving connectivity, particularly for public transport and active travel.
- Borough Green will accommodate growth including a new road to serve the development and other community infrastructure, reflecting accessibility and its role as a service centre, supporting housing delivery and local employment opportunities.

4.14 Development in these locations will make the best use of previously developed land wherever possible and will be supported by the infrastructure necessary to sustain growth. Growth in these locations will reinforce their role, support local facilities and public transport and deliver well-designed, mixed communities.

4.15 Smaller villages will continue to play an important role, with proportionate and carefully managed growth that supports local services, community vitality and meets local housing needs, including affordable housing for local people.

4.16 The borough's rural areas will retain their distinctive character and landscapes, with development carefully managed to protect their setting and function. Villages will continue to support sustainable rural living, with small-scale growth meeting local needs and supporting community facilities, while maintaining their separate identity and relationship with the countryside.

Movement and Infrastructure

4.17 A step change in sustainable transport and infrastructure provision will underpin the Plan, particularly in Tonbridge and along key growth corridors, improving connectivity between communities and reducing reliance on the private car, including improved accessibility to public transport from smaller villages and rural areas where viable. Walking, cycling and public transport opportunities would have been improved contributing to the borough's movement network, supported by measures to reduce the need to travel and manage congestion.

4.18 Growth will be infrastructure led, with development phased alongside the timely delivery of essential physical, social and green and blue infrastructure. This includes healthcare provision, education, water supply and wastewater capacity, utilities, digital connectivity, community facilities and indoor and outdoor sports provision.

4.19 Infrastructure will be delivered in coordination with development to ensure communities are supported from the outset and that growth does not place unacceptable pressure on existing services.

4.20 Strategic investment in transport networks, healthcare facilities, water infrastructure and community and sports facilities will improve accessibility, support inclusive growth, promote health and wellbeing, and ensure that communities across the borough are connected, resilient and well served.

Delivering the Vision

4.21 The Local Plan will ensure this vision is realised through a coordinated and deliverable approach to growth. Development will be aligned with a clear infrastructure strategy, with the phasing of sites linked to the provision of essential services and facilities.

4.22 To ensure the vision is realistic and achievable, the Local Plan will:

- direct growth to the most sustainable locations in accordance with the spatial strategy;
- require comprehensive planning of strategic sites and key growth areas;
- secure developer contributions and partnerships to deliver infrastructure; and
- monitor outcomes to ensure that development remains sustainable, responsive and aligned with the vision over time.

Figure 4.1: Local Plan Objectives to deliver the Local Plan Vision.

