

An aerial photograph of a river flowing through a residential area, with a green overlay. A large green circle with the number '01' is positioned over the top right of the image. A white outline of a house is visible in the middle left of the image.

01



BACKGROUND TO THE REGULATION 19 LOCAL PLAN (PUBLICATION VERSION)

Introduction	2
.....	
Impact of the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	6
.....	
Structure of this Document	8
.....	
Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation	12
.....	

01

BACKGROUND TO THE REGULATION 19 LOCAL PLAN (PUBLICATION VERSION)

Introduction



1.1 This document sets out the Publication (Regulation 19) version of the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan.

1.2 The Local Plan will look ahead to 2042 and will provide a long-term vision and growth strategy for the borough. This will provide certainty for our communities, stakeholders, and the development industry in relation to future housing and employment development, as well as the infrastructure required to support both existing and new communities.

1.3 Once adopted, the Local Plan will form the statutory development plan for the borough and will be used for determining planning applications. It will provide a range of policies to help guide development, ensuring that the borough's needs and priorities are met whilst also protecting the natural and built environment, alongside delivering on our climate change objectives, including our net zero ambition.







Previous consultation

1.4 An 'early stage' Regulation 18 public consultation was held between 22 September and 3 November 2022.

1.5 This consultation presented issues and options relating to the Local Plan vision and objectives, growth distribution and strategic matters and priorities for the borough. It provided the first opportunity for our local community including residents and businesses, stakeholders and partners to tell us what is important to help us progress the Local Plan further.

1.6 A subsequent Regulation 18 (Stage 2) consultation was also undertaken to seek views on the draft policies, site allocations and growth strategy.

1.7 You can view the previous consultations as well as the responses made on our Local Plan [webpage](#).

1.8 Representations received at earlier consultation stages have informed the preparation of this Publication version of the Plan.

Purpose of this stage – Regulation 19

1.9 This is the Regulation 19 Publication stage of plan preparation. It is a formal Local Plan stage required by The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

1.10 At this stage, the council considers the Local Plan to be ready for submission for independent examination and invites representations on its legal compliance and soundness.

1.11 Following the publication period, the Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for independent examination.

Key changes since our previous consultation

1.12 Since the earlier stages of plan preparation, there have been significant changes to the national planning context which have been taken into account in preparing this Publication version of the Local Plan. This includes the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023 and two updates to the National Planning Policy Framework. The first was in December 2023 and the second more recently in December 2024 following the general election in June 2024. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has also been updated.

1.13 In addition, the current Government published the Planning and Infrastructure Bill in March 2025 setting out how they will deliver their aim of building 1.5 million homes and deliver sustained economic growth. This includes measures such as bringing forward a more strategic approach to nature recovery, mechanisms to unlock and accelerate growth, and introducing strategic planning at a sub-regional level through the production of Spatial Development Strategies

1.14 The preparation of this Local Plan has had regard to these changes in national policy and legislation to ensure that it is consistent with the current policy framework in place at the time of publication.

1.15 The Government has also undertaken consultation on National Development Management Policies (NDMPs), which are intended to form part of the statutory development plan in future, and signalled further changes to national policy, including the preparation of a revised National Planning Policy Framework.

1.16 This Local Plan has been prepared and is being progressed under the existing 'legacy' plan-making system and national policy framework currently in force. It is submitted on this basis, in line with Government expectations that local planning authorities should continue to progress Local Plans during the transition to a reformed planning system.

Impact of the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)



1.17 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) sets out the Government's planning policies and guidance for England and a framework for how these policies and guidance should be applied.

1.18 This Local Plan has been prepared having regard to the most recent updates to national policy, including the revised NPPF published in December 2024.

1.19 The updated NPPF has introduced important changes relating to housing need, Green Belt policy and plan-making requirements. In particular, the application of the Government's standard method has resulted in an increase in the borough's housing requirement from 839 to 1,117 dwellings per annum. This represents a 33% increase.

1.20 The spatial strategy and site allocations identified in this Plan have been informed by this requirement and will deliver sufficient development to meet the borough's housing needs over the plan period.

1.21 The Plan also reflects changes to national Green Belt policy, balancing the need to meet development requirements with the protection of key environmental and landscape assets, amongst other changes.

1.22 Overall, the Local Plan has been prepared to ensure consistency with national policy and is considered to be positively prepared, justified and effective. The Council is committed to submitting the Local Plan by 31st December 2026 and therefore the Local Plan will be examined under the December 2024 NPPF.

Local Government reorganisation

1.23 Once adopted, this Local Plan will form part of the statutory development plan and will continue to be used for decision-making until such time as it is reviewed or replaced, which may occur before the end of the plan period in 2042. However, national policy requires Local Plans to provide for a minimum period of 15 years from adoption, and this Plan has been prepared to meet that requirement. In addition, the Plan will be subject to review within five years of adoption, in accordance with national policy, and may be updated where necessary. This provides flexibility to respond to changes in the planning system and wider governance arrangements over time.

1.24 Against this backdrop, in July 2026, the Government announced its plans for Local Government reorganisation in Kent. The future of strategic planning in Kent is therefore currently uncertain. However, the preparation and submission of this Local Plan ensures that a clear, up-to-date and robust planning framework is in place to guide development and inform decision-making during a period of governance change. This will assist in ensuring continuity in plan-led decision-making and the effective delivery of development and supporting infrastructure over both the short and longer term. Having an up-to-date Local Plan will ensure that local priorities are delivered effectively, and that the borough is well-positioned to respond to any future changes in governance.

1.25 National policy is clear that local planning authorities should continue to progress Local Plans to adoption, including during periods of structural reform, in order to maintain an up-to-date development plan. This Local Plan has therefore been progressed to submission in accordance with these requirements.

1.26 In the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan, and without a demonstrable five-year housing land supply, the Council's ability to manage development effectively would be significantly constrained. The adoption of this Plan will provide a robust basis for decision-making and reduce the risk of unplanned or speculative development.

1.27 The council therefore considers it very important to progress a Local Plan and considers its adoption to be essential to ensure that we can deliver policies and a growth strategy that meets our vision, objectives and priorities and in a way where we can meet the needs of both existing and future communities. The Plan provides a coordinated framework for growth and infrastructure delivery, ensuring that development is planned in a sustainable and comprehensive manner.

Structure of this Document



1.28 The Local Plan is structured around key themes and presents both strategic and non-strategic policies.

1.29 The strategic policies set out the overarching approach and deal with major subject matters that are fundamental to decision making or provide the strategic approach that applications for development should take. A list of the Local Plan strategic policies is presented in Figure 1.1. A list of non-strategic policies is included at Figure 1.2. Non-strategic policies generally add an additional layer of detail in relation to how development should be managed and delivered, to help inform decision-making.

1.30 Throughout the Plan we provide the context and justification for each policy as well as an explanation as to how the policy is intended to operate. Many policies refer to specific locations or areas, and as required we have defined these on the Local Plan Policies Map, which is also provided as part of this consultation.

Figure 1.1: Local Plan Strategic Policies

No.	Policy name	Page
SP1	Spatial Strategy	42
SP2	Delivering Homes for Our Communities	47
SP3	Settlement Hierarchy and General Development Principles	55
SP4	Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Accommodation Needs	57
SP5	Future Employment Growth	62
SP6	Town Centre Needs	65
SP7	Green Belt	70
SP8	Managing Development in the Green Belt	72
SP9	Local Green Gap	75
SP10	Healthy Communities and Health Impact Assessment	79
CC1	Addressing Climate Change	91
CC4	Energy & Heating	105
CC5	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Heat Projects	108
CC6	Groundwater and Source Protection Zones	113
CC7	Water Efficiency	117
CC8	Managing Development Within Flood Risk Areas	124
CC9	Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	130
NE1	Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment	143
NE2	National Landscapes	149
NE4	Designated Sites, Irreplaceable Habitat and Priority Habitats and Species	160
NE5	Biodiversity Net Gain	165
NE6	Green and Blue Infrastructure	169
HE1	The Historic Environment	203
D1	Achieving High Quality Design	227
D3	Housing Densities	235

No.	Policy name	Page
H1	Housing to Address Needs	241
H2	Affordable Housing	246
H4	Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople – Safeguarding Sites	257
H5	Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople – Site Criteria	262
H6	Specialist Housing to Meet the Needs of Older and Vulnerable People	266
H7	Accessible and Adaptable Homes	269
H8	Self and Custom Build Housing	274
E1	Supporting a Prosperous, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Future	290
E2	Strategic Employment Areas	296
E5	Supporting the Vitality of Town, Service and Local Centres	312
E8	Sequential and Local Impact Tests	323
R1	Rural Exception Sites	327
R6	Employment Development Outside Existing Settlement Boundaries	347
R7	Agriculture, Forestry and Horticulture	352
R8	Farm and Land-Based Rural Diversification	355
R9	Sustainable Tourism and Visitor Accommodation	359
INF1	Provision of Infrastructure and Services	371
INF2	Sustainable Transport and Active Travel	380
INF4	Community Facilities	392
INF5	Outdoor and Indoor Sports, Leisure, Recreation and Open Space Provision	398

No.	Policy name	Page
A1	Housing and Employment Allocations	407
A2	Place-making, Masterplan and Delivery Principles for Development Allocations	412
SN1	Land North of Holborough Lakes, Snodland	420
BG1	Land North of Borough Green	426
TO1	Land Northeast of Tonbridge	434
TO2	Land at Southwest Tonbridge	441
KH1	Land at Broadwater Farm, Kings Hill	446
AY1	Land at Aylesford Lakes	452
HP1	Land off Stocks Green Road, Hildenborough	458
HA1	Land North of Court Lane and South of Cemetery Lane, Hadlow	464
MG1	Land East of Kiln Barn Road and West of Hermitage Lane, Aylesford	469
MG2	Land at Bunyards, Beaver Road, Allington, Maidstone	474

Figure 1.2: Local Plan Non-Strategic Policies

No.	Policy name	Page
CC2	Circular Economy	96
CC3	Sustainable Design and Construction	100
NE3	Landscape Character	155
NE7	Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows	174
NE8	Local Green Spaces	178
NE9	Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land	182
NE10	Noise, Vibration and Odour	185
NE11	Air Quality	190
NE12	Ground Contamination	195
NE13	Light Pollution	197
HE2	Listed Buildings	206
HE3	Conservation Areas	209
HE4	Historic Parks and Gardens (Designated and Non-Designated)	213
HE5	Archaeology	215
HE6	Enabling Development for Heritage Assets	219
D2	Design Codes and Masterplans	232
H3	Build-to-Rent	253
H9	Houses in Multiple Occupation	277
H10	Residential Extensions, Alterations, Annexes and Ancillary Accommodation	280

No.	Policy name	Page
E3	Other Employment Sites, Premises and Floorspace	302
E4	Employment and Skills	307
E6	Primary Shopping Areas	317
E7	Above Ground Floorspace	321
R2	Housing For Rural Workers	331
R3	Replacement Dwellings Outside Settlement Confines	335
R4	Conversion of an Existing Building to Residential Use Outside Settlement Confines	339
R5	Residential Parks	343
R10	Equestrian Facilities in the Countryside	363
INF3	Parking	387





Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation

1.31 This document represents the Publication (Regulation 19) version of the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan. Representations are invited on the legal compliance and soundness of the Plan during the publication period, which runs from Thursday 10th September to 11.59pm on Sunday 25th October 2026.

1.32 The Local Plan sets out the Council's vision and objectives, spatial strategy for growth, and both strategic and development management policies on a range of planning matters including climate change, the natural environment, the historic environment, housing, the economy, design and infrastructure. It also identifies site allocations to meet the borough's development needs over the plan period.

1.33 Details of how to make representations, including guidance notes and supporting documentation, are available on the [council's website](#).

1.34 At this stage, representations should focus on whether the Local Plan is legally compliant and meets the tests of soundness as set out in paragraph 36 NPPF, which are summarised below, namely whether it is:

- Positively prepared - providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and

- Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

1.35 For legal compliance, we must show that it has been prepared in accordance with our [Local Development Scheme](#) and satisfies other legal requirements relating to Sustainability Appraisal, Community Involvement, Habitats Regulations Assessment as well as other relevant legislation such as the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

1.36 Following the publication period, we will review all comments and then these will be submitted alongside the Plan and all supporting documentation to the Secretary of State for independent examination.