

Thanet District Council

**Thanet Local Plan
Scoping Consultation
(Regulation 20, The Town and
Country Planning (Local
Planning) (England)
Regulations 2026)**

24 August - 9 October 2026

New Thanet Local Plan - Scoping Consultation Document

New Thanet Local Plan - Scoping Consultation - 24 August - 9 October 2026

The Council is beginning work on a new Local Plan for Thanet under the government's new planning system, and it is keen to hear from people about:

- what they think should be included in the new Plan, including what the aims and objectives of the Plan should be; and the outcomes the council should be seeking through the Plan; and
- how they would like to be consulted and involved in its preparation.

The Council would also like to hear about:

- Any sites that might be available to help meet the development needs (such as housing or employment) of the district; and
- Any heritage assets that people think should be considered for inclusion in a "local heritage assets" list.

Specific information will be required to support such submissions.

If you are not already registered on our consultation portal please register at <https://thanetcouncilplan.inconsult.uk/system/register> in order to comment on any of the issues you are interested in.

This document sets out information about Thanet's new local plan and what it should include, and how you would like to be consulted and involved in its preparation. If you are unable to submit comments on-line (https://thanetcouncilplan.inconsult.uk/TLP_SCOP/consultationHome) or by email (local.plans@thanet.gov.uk), comments forms are available to answer the questions relating to these sections. Please post these to the Strategic Planning Team, Thanet District Council, Cecil Street, Margate CT9 1XZ.

Submitting sites either for potential development or as a potential Heritage Asset can only be done online to due the more complex nature of the information required. If you wish to submit a site to us but are unable to do so online, please contact a member of the Strategic Planning Team on 01843 577591.

Please make sure we receive your comments when the consultation closes at 5pm on 9 October 2026.

What is a Local Plan and what should be in it?

A local plan is a plan for the future development of a local area. It is prepared by a local planning authority in consultation with the local community and other interested groups, and is subject to public examination by an independent planning inspector.

A local plan contains planning policies for an area covering a range of topics - social, economic and environmental. The Local Plan process presents an opportunity to try to balance the various needs of the district, and to set a future strategy for the area.

Government guidance says that local plans should set out a positive vision for their local area, which supports the delivery of the spatial development strategy for their area, and should set out specific proposals for accommodating development needs and improving the environment at a local level.

Local Plans should do this by:

- Setting out a vision for the plan area that:
 - articulates how the area should change over the plan period;
 - sets aspirational aims and objectives underpinned by a realistic appreciation of what the plan's policies can genuinely shape and deliver;
 - reflects longer term expectations extending beyond the plan period where appropriate, including for large scale development proposals; and
 - has particular regard to meeting the identified development needs of the area in a sustainable manner.
- Setting out a spatial strategy, policies for the minimum amount of development to be provided, land allocations and broad locations for growth, and designations in accordance for a period of no less than 15 years from the point of adoption of the plan;
- Identifying the contributions expected from development towards meeting affordable housing requirements and on-and off-site infrastructure necessary to support delivery of the plan; and
- Setting out other policies, with explanatory text as necessary, only where these support the delivery of specific allocated sites (to set clear expectations of what is required in terms of layout, infrastructure and design); or where these address particular local issues.

It also allocates land for new development and designates areas for protection. A local plan is also used to help determine planning applications,

The Government provides Planning practice guidance on the kinds of matters that need to be addressed in local plans, and has also published a new draft National Planning Policy Framework, which provides guidance on some of the key issues:

- Achieving sustainable development
- Meeting the challenge of climate change
- Meeting housing needs
- Supporting economic growth
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Securing clean energy and water
- Managing flood risk and coastal change
- Achieving well-designed places
- Promoting sustainable transport
- Promoting healthy communities
- Pollution, public protection and security
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

In relation to housing, the Council needs to consider, as a starting point, the Government's "standard method". This calculation (as of May 2026), results in a minimum Local Housing Need (LHN) of 1,106 dwellings per year for Thanet.

This figure is lower than the currently adopted housing requirement policy (SP13). This is a "stepped" trajectory, which sets out a requirement of 1,317 dwellings between 2026 and 2031.

The LHN figures are higher than recent average rates of delivery (average of 504 since 2015/16), including the higher figures over the last two years (just over 800 units per year).

It should be noted that government guidance also says that local planning authorities should then make an assessment of the amount of new homes that can be provided in their area. This should be justified by evidence on land availability, constraints on development and any other relevant matters.

The current Thanet Local Plan 2020 addressed the issues listed above in various ways; for example:

- Seeking to ensure that new development occurred in the most sustainable manner and locations possible
- Meeting housing needs as determined by the Government's "standard method" at that time, a target of 17,140 residential units
- Ensuring that there was sufficient employment land, and housing, to support the local economy
- Seeking to protect town centres and make appropriate provision for new retail needs
- Protecting the countryside from inappropriate development, including the identified Green Wedges
- Seeking to protect the important wildlife sites in the district, and introducing a new mitigation programme, working with Canterbury City Council (now known as Bird Wise East Kent)
- Putting in place protections for Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings in the district
- Working with KCC to develop the Inner Circuit route, to reduce traffic pressures on the urban road network

We have produced a series of Annual Monitoring Reports, which set out progress against these objectives over the last few years. These can be found on the Council's planning policy web-pages. In order to consider and address these issues afresh in the new Local Plan, the Council has begun to gather evidence to help support the preparation of the draft Plan. This includes:

- Housing Needs Study
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Bird surveys to help identify important areas not covered by statutory designations (Functionally-Linked Land related to the coastal Special Protection Area)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report

A paper copy of each of these documents is available at the Thanet Gateway and can also be read online.

The Council may also commission other studies to inform Local Plan preparation.

Other background work that may be of interest includes the Thanet Archaeological Landscape Mapping Project, which can be found on the KCC web-site.

A key part of the Local Plan process will be to use evidence to develop a vision for the district and identify important objectives for the Plan. Emerging evidence indicates that new housing and employment opportunities remain key objectives, as does provision for health, education and other local facilities, along with new environmental matters that need to be addressed. We are asking for people's views on this as well.

Spatial development strategies

As mentioned above, the Government has also introduced a new level of strategic planning, known as spatial development strategies. The purpose of these is to deal with some key issues that are better addressed on a wider scale. For Thanet this would mean a new strategic plan for the whole of Kent, prepared by Kent County Council and Medway Council, in conjunction with local planning authorities and others across Kent.

Government guidance says that spatial development strategies should set a positive vision for future growth and change at a sub-regional scale and provide a clear spatial framework for investment and growth, including for new housing. Their content should be genuinely strategic in nature and allow for more detailed issues to be considered and addressed through other parts of the development plan.

The strategy must set out a sustainable, 20-year growth plan, including apportioning objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses. It needs to identify broad locations for strategic development, such as new settlements, major urban extensions, and key areas for homes and jobs, extending beyond existing large site allocations.

It should support economic growth by providing a spatial framework for strategic investments, Local Growth Plans, and the National Industrial Strategy, and should identify broad locations for nature conservation and habitat enhancement.

Finally, it must detail the type, extent, and broad location of strategic infrastructure needed for development and existing communities, including transport, social, waste, utilities, flood risk management, minerals (if appropriate), and provision committed to in the 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy and other strategic plans.

The relationship between the Local Plan and the SDS is important. Local Plans must be “in general conformity” with an “operative” SDS, but the process also provides an opportunity for Local Plan evidence and consultation to influence the development of an emerging SDS.

What about local government re-organisation?

The new Council structure for Kent has recently been announced. This means that Thanet will be combined with Canterbury and Dover Councils, and elements of Kent County Council to form a new East Kent Unitary Authority.

People may ask why the Council is preparing a new Local Plan when local government re-organisation is progressing. There are several reasons for this:

- Firstly, the Government has made it clear that it wants local plan preparation to continue for provide coverage across the country;
- Equally importantly, the Council wants to set out the planning priorities for Thanet within the future local government structure - what is important for the local area, within the wider context;
- It also helps the Council to influence the emerging Kent Spatial Development Strategy as it affects Thanet; and
- Lastly, other Councils in the East Kent area are at different stages of plan-making, and it will be important to have plan-making as advanced as possible when local government reorganisation takes effect. It will be for the new Council to review and consolidate the Plans of the constituent councils after the new Councils are established.

What do you think is important for the future of Thanet?

The Council is interested in the kinds of issues that other people believe are important for the future of the local area, which could be addressed by the new Local Plan.

The Cliftonville Development Plan Document (DPD) is an example of how the Council has sought to address issues in a specific area of the district. In 2010 the Council adopted a set of planning policies for Cliftonville West and part of Margate Central, seeking to address some long-standing local housing and regeneration problems in the area (working in conjunction with other Council services).

The policies have been successful and it is intended that they will be incorporated into the new Local Plan. The need for action in this area was identified by local residents and councillors. This is an example of how local issues were identified and planning policies have assisted in resolving those issues - you may be aware of other local issues where the Local Plan could potentially assist.

Please note that Local Plans can only address issues closely related to the use of land. They should not seek to duplicate the provisions of other legislation, but can include policies that are supportive of other key services or programmes, where they relate to the use or development of land.

Please let us know your views by answering the comments forms.

How the Council will engage with people about the new Local Plan

The Council currently uses its online consultation portal to contact people about issues relating to the local plan, neighbourhood plans or other planning policy issues. To keep you informed about the progress of the new local plan we will contact you about the stages in the government's new Local Plan Process listed below. The dates for these stages are set out in the Local Plan timetable. If you are not currently registered on our consultation portal and would like to be kept informed, please register on the Council's web-site. Please read our Privacy Notice to see how we will use your details.

- Mandatory consultations - There are two of these. The first will include the proposed local plan content and evidence, including a draft vision. The second will be on the proposed local plan and its supporting documents
- The publication of gateway observations and advice. Gateways are where the council will receive observations and advice from the Planning Inspectorate
- The submission of the local plan for independent examination. This is when the local plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate to be examined in public. The examination will be held locally, over a number of weeks. Anyone can come and listen, those who commented on the draft local plan can ask to participate in the examination and present their concerns to the Examiner.
- The publication of the recommendations and reasons of the examiner. This will set out the Examiner's conclusions of the examination, along with any modifications that need to be made to the local plan.
- The adoption of the local plan. This is when the new local plan is formally adopted by the Council.

The Council currently uses the following methods to engage with people on local plan issues:

- We currently contact those who have registered on our consultation portal either by email or by post, depending on the method selected.
- We will update the Council's Local Plan website page, and we will also publish updates in the Council Newsletter - 'The Wave'.
- We use the Council's social media platforms
- We send press releases to the Isle of Thanet News
- Paper copies of documents are made available at the Council offices and libraries
- For some stages of the local plan process, we will hold 'drop in sessions' at various places in the district and at different times of day, so that people can talk to us and get the information they need to help them participate in the local plan process

Please note that the Council may use AI (Gemini) to create a summary of submitted comments, but each representation will be read and considered separately.

Please let us know your views by answering the comments forms.

Call for Sites

The Council has carried out two 'Calls for Sites' as part of the process to review the existing Local Plan which was adopted in July 2020. We have also carried out a Brownfield Site Search - including a public consultation - to help us identify any brownfield sites that could be suitable to allocate for development in the new local plan. Some potential sites were identified and these are subject to further detailed investigation. However, the development yield from these sites is expected to be quite limited, so the Council is particularly keen to hear from people who can identify further suitable brownfield land to meet our development needs.

We are now preparing a new Local Plan under the new planning system, so will be carrying out a further call for sites.

If you have already submitted a site to us in one of the previous calls for sites, we will need to ask you to submit it again as the new government guidance includes more details that were not previously required, and so that the sites can all be assessed under the same criteria under the new planning system. You can search our previous submissions online by name or using the map to identify any sites you may have submitted previously. Any sites previously submitted that are not resubmitted under the new system will not be able to be carried forward for assessment and consideration.

Any submission should be made using the on-line form. This sets out the information we need in line with new government guidance to help us consider the sites for potential allocation. If you are not already registered on the consultation web-site, you will need to register before submitting your site(s). A separate submission should be made for each site. Please note that only sites of more than 0.15 hectares or capable of accommodating more than 5 units should be submitted.

Local Heritage Assets List

The Council is preparing a local list of heritage assets that identifies buildings, structures or sites of significant local interest, and is inviting nominations for consideration from parish and town councils, community and local interest groups, land and property owners and individuals. Nominations for inclusion on a local list of heritage assets need to be for non-designated heritage assets and can include buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or parks, gardens, important non-designated archaeological sites and other important historical landscapes. Designated assets do not need to be included on the local list as they are already protected and include listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, and registered battlefields. If you are unsure if an asset is already listed you can check via the Historic England website map search. Further information is also available from the Kent Historic Environment Record which includes both nationally listed and non-listed assets.

Local heritage lists are a crucial way of identifying those buildings which are of value to the local and future community. A local heritage list is different from listing through the National Heritage List for England (the NHLE). Each local heritage list is unique to the area, and whilst there is not a separate system for getting consent to make changes, the significance of the heritage asset will be considered in any planning applications.

It is an opportunity for the local community to celebrate the local heritage, and the local heritage list provides a tool through which the community can help guide sustainable growth through the reuse of assets.

To be included on the local heritage list, an asset must meet the following conditions to be considered as a candidate for the Local Heritage Asset List:

- The heritage asset must be situated within the boundaries of Thanet District Council area. A map showing the boundaries is available here: [\[link\]](#);
- The precise location of the heritage asset must be provided;
- The heritage asset cannot be designated. For example: it cannot be a listed building, a scheduled monument, a registered park and garden, or a registered battlefield. You can check this on the National Heritage List for England – using the map search is the easiest way to see if something is already included;
- The heritage asset must be permanent (not a temporary structure);
- The heritage asset must be one of the following: a building, structure, monument, item of street furniture, artwork, area, archaeological site or designed landscape.

Further guidance on identifying local heritage assets is set out in the Historic England (HE) publication Local Heritage listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage HE Advice Note 7 and HE have also produced a Local Heritage Listing toolkit. Additional information is also available from the Kent Historic Environment Record which includes both nationally listed and non-listed assets.

Once received, each of the assets proposed will be assessed, either by the council or its representative, in accordance with the proposed methodology and criteria in the HE Advice Note, giving reasons for inclusion or exclusion of the asset from a local list. Where an asset has been assessed as worthy of inclusion on a Local Heritage Asset List, the Council will make all reasonable attempts to contact and discuss this with the landowner.

The Local List will be supported by a policy in the new Local Plan.

If you would like to nominate an asset which could include a building, monument, site, place, area, park, garden or landscape for inclusion in the local list, please complete our online form or contact a member of the Strategic Planning team on 01843 577591 if you are unable to use the online form.

Background studies published (for comment)

(A paper copy of each document is available at the Thanet Gateway)

- Housing Needs Study (Part 1)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report
- SPA Bird Survey
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) May 2026