

Authority monitoring report 2023 – 2024

Folkestone & Hythe District Council



Table of contents

Executive summary	1
1. Introduction	2
2. Local plan progress	3
Local development scheme	3
Duty to cooperate	4
Neighbourhood Planning.....	5
Assets of community value	5
3. Plan performance and policy monitoring	6
Planning applications.....	6
Housing and communities.....	7
4. Employment	16
Retail & town centres	16
Shopping surveys	16
5. Transport	24
Pedestrians and cyclists.....	24
Public transport.....	24
Private vehicles	25
6. Natural environment	27
Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy.....	27
Natural Environment Planning Applications	27
Climate Change	28
Air quality	28
7. Infrastructure	29

List of tables

Table 1	Local Development Scheme 2020-2023	3
Table 2	Planning policies cited the most for planning application refusals.	6
Table 3	Residential net completions since 2006.....	7
Table 4	Housing delivery test measures.....	9
Table 5	Five Year Housing Land Supply 2024/25 – 2028/29 (Stepped requirement)	10
Table 6	Self-build register monitoring information.....	12
Table 7	Vacancy levels for shopping centres by % of frontage length	20
Table 8	Train station usage data	25

List of figures

Figure 1	Folkestone Primary shopping area - % of total number of shop units by use class	17
Figure 2	Folkestone Primary shopping area - % of frontage length (metres) by use class	17
Figure 3	Hythe shopping area - % of total number of shop units by use class.....	18
Figure 4	Hythe shopping area - % of frontage length (metres) by use class.....	18
Figure 5	New Romney shopping area - % of total number of shop units by use class	18
Figure 6	New Romney shopping area - % of frontage length (metres) by use class	19
Figure 7	Cheriton shopping area - % of total number of shop units by use class.....	19
Figure 8	Cheriton shopping area - % of frontage length (metres) by use class.....	19
Figure 9	Sandgate shopping area - % of total number of shop units by use class.....	20
Figure 10	Sandgate shopping area - % of frontage length (metres) by use class.....	20
Figure 11	Census 2021 data - Folkestone and Hythe method used to travel to workplace, out of all usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment.....	25
Figure 12	Census 2021 Car or van availability, Folkestone & Hythe District	26

Executive summary

£1,478,260.64

secured through CIL

365 new homes
built

952 homes granted
planning permission
(783 outline & 169 full)

9 self-build homes
granted
(Oct 22 – Oct 23)

745 homes under
construction

£4,342,383.02

secured through S106 agreements

73 affordable homes
were granted
planning permission

41 new affordable
homes built

239 new homes
completed on
allocated sites

1. Introduction

1.1. This is the authority monitoring report (AMR) for the district of Folkestone & Hythe. Its purpose is to report on planning policy performance over the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 to:

- Enable the success of existing policies and planning decisions to be evaluated; and
- Assist in the review and maintenance of up-to-date local planning policies.

1.2. The requirements of the AMR as set out in the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 are summarised below:

- Regulation 34(1): progress on producing local plan documents
- Regulation 34(2): local plan policies that are not being implemented
- Regulation 34(3) and 34(7): housing supply and monitoring (respectively)
- Regulation 34(4) and 34(8): Progress of neighbourhood development plans
- Regulation 34(5): Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Regulation 34(6): Details on the Duty to Cooperate

1.3. Considering this, the structure of the report is as follows:

Chapter 2: Local plan progress - summarising the work undertaken to plan for the future of the district, as well as progress against the Local Development Scheme (LDS), Duty to Cooperate and Neighbourhood Planning.

Chapter 3: Plan performance and policy monitoring - reviewing the effectiveness of adopted planning policies, and monitoring housing developments (including self-build and brownfield registers), employment and retail provision, transport and the natural environment.

Chapter 4: Infrastructure - reviewing the council's position relating to funding mechanisms such as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and developer contributions.

2. Local plan progress

2.1. This section sets out the local development scheme (LDS) which is a timetable for reviewing and updating local plan documents, together with details regarding duty to cooperate and neighbourhood planning.

Local development scheme

2.2. A revised LDS was adopted by Cabinet on 27 May 2020.

2.3. Table 1 sets out the timetable for the preparation of the documents in the most recent LDS (2020-23) and notes the council's progress against meeting key milestones. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act was passed in 2023. However, many of the changes proposed required secondary legislation (e.g. local plan production) which was not in place at the time of the reporting period of this AMR. The LDS has not therefore been updated. A new Local Plan timetable is being developed and will be available for the next AMR.

Table 1 Local Development Scheme 2020-2023

Planning Document	Status	Timetable	Progress
Places and Policies Local Plan (PPLP)	Gathering of evidence	Ongoing	The PPLP was adopted in September 2020
	Consultation of Preferred Options	October / November 2016	
	Consultation on draft local plan	February / March 2018	
	Submission to Planning Inspectorate (PINS)	August 2018	
	Examination in public (EiP) (inc. public hearings)	September 2018 to May 2020	
	Adoption	July 2020	
Policies map	Consultation on draft local plan	February / March 2018	The Policies map was adopted alongside the PPLP
	Submission to PINS	August 2018	
	EiP (inc. public hearings)	September 2018 to May 2020	
	Adoption	July 2020	

Planning Document	Status	Timetable	Progress
Core Strategy Review (CSR)	Gathering of evidence	Ongoing	Further hearing sessions took place in July 2021, leading to the adoption of the CSR on 31st March 2022.
	Consultation on preferred options	March to May 2018	
	Consultation on draft CSR and revised housing requirement	January to March 2019 and December 2019 to January 2020	
	Submission to PINS	March 2020	
	EiP (inc. public hearings)	March 2020 to October 2020	
	Adoption	November 2020	
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	Gathering of evidence	Up to and including May 2020	The CIL charging schedule was revised to bring it in line with the adopted policies and allocations of the Core Strategy Review and was adopted in March 2023.
	Consultation on draft CIL charging schedule	June to July 2020	
	Submission to external examiner	September 2020	
	Examination in public (EiP)	December 2020	
	Adoption	February 2021	

Duty to cooperate

2.4. To ensure that the duty to cooperate (as set out in the 2011 Localism Act) has been met, the council has had ongoing discussions with neighbouring authorities, agencies and providers. There have been periodic meetings between Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Dover District Council, Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council to discuss national and cross-border issues affecting East Kent and local plan production. Meetings with individual councils have taken place:

- Kent County Council – meetings to discuss the Local Transport Plan and the Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- Canterbury City Council – to review Statement of Common Ground with Canterbury City Council for Canterbury's local plan.
- Hastings Borough Council - on planning policy approach to land stability

2.5. Significant collaborative work in the sub-region has been undertaken by the East Kent authorities on a joint bid to government for Planning Skills Delivery Fund for East Kent Design Codes, leading to the submission of the bid on 11 September 2023. The bid was successful and discussions started in January to prepare tender briefs.

2.6. General information sharing on strategic planning is well established in the county and East Kent through several existing professional groups such as the Kent Planning Officers Group (KPOG), the Kent Planning Policy Forum (KPPF) and the East Kent Authorities duty to cooperate meetings.

2.7. The duty also includes cooperation with other prescribed public bodies, such as Historic England, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Marine Management Organisation, and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Local authorities must also cooperate with the Local Enterprise Partnership and local nature partnerships. District council officers took part in consultation exercises, in the form of a workshop and formulating responses to the South Marine Plan. Officers also regularly attend the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership and Local Nature Partnership meetings.

2.8. An example of continued joint working is that of the Sustainable Access and Recreation Management Strategy (or SARMS). Folkestone & Hythe and Rother District Councils are working in partnership to implement the strategy, with partners including Natural England, since it was adopted by the district council in 2019.

2.9. Meetings and collaborative work that officers have undertaken include the following:

- Kent County Council:
- Kent Infrastructure Mapping
- Local plan water efficiency standards
- Attending workshops for the producing of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Making Space for Nature.
- Liaison meetings to discuss planning issues
- Kent Downs National Landscape
- Kent County Council Minerals and Waste Plan
- Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy

Neighbourhood Planning

2.10. In November 2021, officers presented to several parish councils in the north of the district to introduce neighbourhood plans. Subsequently, on 22 September 2022, Lyminge has been designated a neighbourhood area.

2.11. Four other neighbourhood areas were designated between October 2012 and June 2014 (Hythe, New Romney, Sellindge and Lympne), however no subsequent neighbourhood development plans or orders have been produced for those areas.

Assets of community value

2.12. There have been 3 new additions to the asset of community value list during the 2023/24 monitoring period, Folkestone Library, Timber Batts Inn and Stelling Minnis Windmill and Museum.

2.13. Further information and a full list of assets of community value is provided on the [Assets of community value](#) page of the council's website.

3. Plan performance and policy monitoring

3.1. This section sets out the plan and policy performance, monitoring the effectiveness of adopted planning policies.

Planning applications

3.2. The council monitors the performance of planning policies in adopted local plan documents to ensure they remain effective in planning decisions.

3.3. It is important to review planning applications and decisions as these can provide an insight into the effectiveness of local plan policies.

Planning refusals

3.4. Planning applications for the 2023/24 monitoring period were considered against the National Planning Policy Framework, adopted local plan documents, which include the Core Strategy Review (CSR) adopted March 2022, and the Places and Policies Local Plan 2020 (PPLP). Planning applications that fail to accord with these policies are refused.

3.5. Table 2 identifies which local plan policies have been cited the most frequently in the reasons for refusing planning applications this monitoring year.

Table 2 Planning policies cited the most for planning application refusals.

Rank	Policy number	Policy title	Development plan document	Percentage
1	HB1	Quality places through design	PPLP	90%
2	HB8	Alterations and extensions to buildings	PPLP	48%
3	HB3	Internal and external space standards	PPLP	18%
4	NE2	Biodiversity	PPLP	13%
5	NE3	Protecting the district's landscape and countryside	PPLP	12%
6	SS3	Place-shaping and sustainable settlements strategy	CSR	11%
7	SS1	District spatial strategy	CSR	8%
7	CSD3	Rural and tourism development	CSR	8%
9	T2	Parking Standards	PPLP	6%
10	HE1	Heritage assets	PPLP	5%
10	T1	Street Hierarchy and Site Layout	PPLP	5%

3.6. From the table above it is clear that the two policies cited the most, and therefore the most effective at preventing unsuitable development, are policies HB1 and HB8 from the PPLP; both of which are linked to design and the built environment.

3.7. The policies in the CSR and PPLP will be kept under review. It is considered that the more a policy is used, the more effective it is at assessing unsuitable applications. However, some of the policies are specific either to a site, use or piece of infrastructure and may not be used as frequently.

Planning appeals

3.8. There have been **31 planning appeals determined** in this monitoring year. Of these appeals, **8 have been allowed**, whilst **23 have been dismissed**. Overall, this shows that the policies have mostly been effective in preventing appeals being allowed. (It should be noted that some appeals were a result of decisions made against officer advice.)

Prior approval applications

3.9. Permitted development rights (PDR) are a national grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. However, some are subject to conditions and limitations to control impact and to protect local amenity, and in some cases a prior approval application may be required.

3.10. The council has been monitoring the number of prior notification applications that have been completed in the Housing Information Audit (HIA). This monitoring year there have been **2 prior approval applications**, resulting in **4 new residential units/dwellings**.

Housing and communities

3.11. This year, the council has granted full planning permission for **169 new homes**. These are net figures and include reserved matters and prior approval permissions. In addition, **783 residential homes** were granted outline planning permission.

3.12. The council has recorded **365 new homes** as being completed in the district.

3.13. In total, there have been **2,208 new homes** completed since the start of the current plan period in 2019. These are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Residential net completions since 2006

Monitoring period	Residential net completions
2006/07	146
2007/08	402
2008/09	562
2009/10	180
2010/11	132
2011/12	207

Monitoring period	Residential net completions
2012/13	206
2013/14	165
2014/15	348
2015/16	293
2016/17	567
2017/18	411
2018/19	446
Total 2006/07-2018/19	4,065

2019/20	446
2020/21	489
2021/22	454
2022/23	454
2023/24	365
Total in current plan period (from 2019/20)	2,208

3.14. This AMR reports on the first five years of the new plan period (from 2019/20) and the second full monitoring year since the Core Strategy Review was adopted in March 2022. Due to economic uncertainty and impacts on construction activity, housing delivery has fallen below the levels anticipated in the Core Strategy Review housing trajectory. The Core Strategy Review requirement is 622 dwellings per annum for the first five years which would be a total of 3,110 dwellings to March 2024. DLUHC discounted the housing requirements for years 2019/20 and 2020/21 by 31 days (the equivalent of 53 homes) and 122 days (the equivalent of 207 homes) respectively due to the impact of Covid-19. This gives a revised requirement of 2,850 dwellings over five-year period (2019-20-2023/24). 2,208 new homes have been completed during this five-year period. This situation will continue to be monitored and may trigger action through the council's housing delivery action plan (see further below).

Housing allocations

3.15. Throughout the monitoring year we have seen the completion of **239 new homes** on housing sites allocated in the CSR and PPLP (the total now completed on allocated sites is 1,844).

3.16. In addition, a total of **60 new homes** have been granted full planning permission (including reserved matters) on these housing allocations over the same period (the total number of dwellings allocated with full planning permission, including reserved matters, is 3,173).

Housing supply and delivery

3.17. The CSR includes a ‘stepped’ housing requirement to be delivered in four phases as follows:

- 2019/20 – 2023/24 = 622 dwellings a year
- 2024/25 – 2028/29 = 885 dwellings a year
- 2029/30 – 2033/34 = 730 dwellings a year
- 2034/35 – 2036/37 = 700 dwellings a year

3.18. The long-term requirement in the plan is to deliver an average of 738 new dwellings a year over the plan period - the ‘stepped’ housing requirement balances a reduced level of delivery in the early plan period with over-delivery in the later years in order to allow time for key strategic allocations to come forward for delivery.

Housing delivery test

3.19. The Housing delivery test (HDT) is an annual measurement of housing delivery and is a percentage measurement of the number of net homes delivered against the number of homes required over a rolling three-year period.

3.20. If the HDT is not met, consequences of varying severity will be triggered according to the level of under-delivery, as set out in the table below.

Table 4 Housing delivery test measures

Level of delivery	Measure(s)
At or above 95%	No action triggered.
85% to 95%	Authority to publish a housing action plan.
75% to 85%	Authority to publish a housing action plan; additional 20% buffer placed on local authority’s five-year housing land supply requirement.
Below 75%	Authority to publish a housing action plan; additional 20% buffer placed on local authority’s five-year housing land supply requirement; ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ set out in the National Planning Policy Framework applies.

3.21. The council was required to publish its first housing delivery action plan (July 2021) following the release of the HDT measurement 2020 (covering years 2017/18 – 2019/20) and resulting in a score of 91%.

3.22. For the monitoring period 2018/19 – 2020/21, the council achieved a revised score of 97% against the HDT, following the adoption of the CSR. This result is ‘a pass’ and there was ‘no consequence’ to the council.

3.23. For the monitoring period 2019/20 – 2021/22, the council received a score of 87%.

3.24. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published the HDT score for the monitoring period 2020/21 – 2022/23 in December 2024. The council received a score of 83%. This score requires the council to produce a Housing action plan and an additional 20% buffer is placed on local authority’s five-year housing land supply requirement. The Housing action plan must provide an analysis of the reasons the rates of housebuilding have not met the levels of identified housing need, and set out actions to address these issues, with the aim of boosting the delivery of housing in the future. The Housing action plan must be produced and published on the council’s website within six months of the HDT results being released.

Five-year housing land supply (YHLS)

3.25. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024), Paragraph 78, requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement. The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or 20% where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years.

3.26. The 5YHLS calculation is a comparison between the anticipated supply of new homes against the number of new homes that are required to be built within the district in the next five years.

3.27. A formal assessment is conducted on the 5YHLS annually, with a year running from 1st April to 31st March the following year. The relevant five-year period is currently 1st April 2024 to the 31st March 2029.

3.28. The CSR has a ‘stepped’ rather than an annualised approach to meeting its housing need requirement over the plan period to 2036/37. Therefore, the 5YHLS calculation set a minimum housing figure of 885 dwellings per year for years 2024/25 – 2028/29.

3.29. Table 5 below shows that as of the 1st April 2024, the council could demonstrate a 3.1 YHLS based upon its ‘stepped’ requirement. This includes a 20% buffer as required by the NPPF following the HDT measurement of 83%.

Table 5 Five Year Housing Land Supply 2024/25 – 2028/29 (Stepped requirement)

Five year housing land supply 2024/25 – 2028/29 (stepped requirement)			
Row			5-YHLS
1	Annualised figure across five year period	Calculated using the standard methodology	885 885 885 885 885
2	Five year requirement	Calculated as the sum of row 1	4,425

Five year housing land supply 2024/25 – 2028/29 (stepped requirement)			
3	Current shortfall	<p>*19/20 = 569 – 462 = -107 *20/21 = 415 – 489 = +74 21/22 = 622 – 454 = -168 22/23 = 622 – 454 = -168 23/24 = 622 – 365 = -257</p> <p>*DLUHC discounted the housing requirements for years 19/20 and 20/21 by 31 days and 122 days respectively due to the impact of Covid-19.</p>	626
4	Five-year requirement plus shortfall	Row 2 plus row 3	5,051
5	Annualised figure with shortfall	Row 4 divided by 5	1,010
6	20% buffer	Add 20% buffer as required by paragraph 78 of the NPPF. Calculated as 20% of Row 4.	1,010
7	Total five Year Land Supply Figure	Row 4 plus Row 6	6,061
8	Total five Year Land Supply Figure (Annualised)	Row 7 divided by 5	1,212
9	Capacity of identified sites	Capacity used is that expected to be delivered within five years by CSR / PPLP housing allocations without planning permission.	892
10	Extant planning permissions	Capacity used is that expected to be delivered within five years from extant permissions; including CSR and PPLP housing allocations with planning permission.	2,701
11	Windfalls (years 4 & 5)	This figure is calculated at 95 units per year base on work carried out by the Strategy and Policy Team as part of the preparation for the new local plan	190
12	Total identified supply	Total of rows 9, 10 and 11	3,783
13	Supply position (years)	The number of years supply ((row 12 minus row 7) divided by (row 8)) plus 5	3.1

Affordable housing

3.30. CSR Policy CSD1 seeks provision of 22% affordable housing on qualifying sites. For this monitoring period **73 affordable dwellings** were granted permission across the district (27 for shared ownership and 46 for rent).

3.31. There have been **55 additional affordable homes** provided in the district during the 2023/24 monitoring period. Of these, **41** were new units delivered by housing associations in the district for rent and shared ownership, **14** were acquisitions of existing homes by the council for use as affordable housing and **0** council new builds for rent.

Houses in multiple occupation

3.32. There are now **63 houses in multiple occupation (HMO)** licensed in total in the Folkestone & Hythe District. During the 2023/24 monitoring period, there were **16 licenses** issued, but only **one** of these was a new licence.

Gypsies and Travellers

3.33. The Gypsy and Traveller site allocation at Old Romney (Policy RM15) was realised in 2020/21, delivering **five pitches**. The development means that the Council has met in full (and exceeded) the needs identified by the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2018) for permanent pitches in the district to 2036/37.

3.34. In the 2023/24 monitoring period, **0** Gypsy and Traveller pitches were granted planning permission.

Self-build register

3.35. From 1st April 2016, the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 required all local authorities to keep a register of individuals or associations / groups who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the district on which to build their own homes.

3.36. The council has set up a register to determine the demand for sites from those interested in undertaking self-build and custom housebuilding projects. The number of entrants onto the self-build register during each base period from 1st April 2016 is shown in Table 6 below:

Table 6 Self-build register monitoring information

Self-build Register Monitoring Information	
Number of new entrants onto the register 31 October 2022 – 30 October 2023 (Base period 8)	
Individuals	9
Associations / Groups	0
Total	9
Number of new entrants onto the register 31 October 2021 – 30 October 2022 (Base period 7)	

Individuals	22
Associations / Groups	1
Total	23
Number of new entrants onto the register 31 October 2020 – 30 October 2021 (Base period 6)	
Individuals	47
Associations / Groups	0
Total	47
Number of new entrants onto the register 31 October 2019 – 30 October 2020 (Base period 5)	
Individuals	38
Associations / Groups	0
Total	38
Number of new entrants onto the register 31 October 2018 – 30 October 2019 (Base period 4)	
Individuals	62
Associations / Groups	0
Total	62
Number of new entrants onto the register 31 October 2017 – 30 October 2018 (Base period 3)	
Individuals	50
Associations / Groups	0
Total	50
Number of new entrants onto the register 31 October 2016 – 30 October 2017 (Base period 2)	
Individuals	52
Associations / Groups	0
Total	52

Number of new entrants onto the register 1 April 2016 – 30 October 2016 (Base period 1)	
Individuals	32
Associations / Groups	0
Total	32

TOTAL	313
-------	-----

3.37. The council has three years following the end of each base period to permission equivalent plots of land for self-build development. Base periods run from October – October, so the applicable period for the 2023/24 authority monitoring report is Base Period 5, with the cumulative three years ending in October 2023. For the most up to date self-build figures, please refer to the Custom Self Build Monitoring Report for the Folkestone & Hythe District.

3.38. **Nine dwellings** were granted planning permission between October 2022 and October 2023. There have been **117 plots** granted planning permission for self-build development up to 31st October 2023.

3.39. The council has several ways to meet the self-build demand in the district. There is a standalone policy, policy HB4 in the PPLP, which supports self-build and custom housebuilding development by requiring sites over 40 dwellings in the Urban area, and 20 dwellings in the North Downs and Romney Marsh areas, to supply no less than 5 per cent of dwelling plots for sale to self-build or custom housebuilders on the council's register.

3.40. The PPLP also allocates sites for housing in the district. Several larger sites have a proportion allocated for Custom Self Build (CSB) plots to help meet the demand on the register. It was estimated that the allocated sites in the local plan would provide at least 36 self-build and custom housing plots by 2031, with more plots coming from 'windfall' sites above the size thresholds in policy HB4.

3.41. In addition, part (2) of policy SS6, New Garden Settlement - Development Requirements in the CSR states that a proportion of the proposed dwellings shall be self-build and custom-build homes in the new garden settlement. In conjunction with Policy HB4 in the PPLP, and with a minimum housing requirement of 5,593 to be delivered through the proposed garden settlement in the North Downs, approximately 279 self-build and custom-build homes are expected to be delivered during the CSR plan period.

3.42. Following the introduction of the Local Connection test in October 2021, the number of people who wished to remain on the register reduced significantly. As a result, there are currently 85 individuals or groups in total registered on our self-build register; with 76 on part one and 9 on part two (data correct in October 2023).

3.43. As such, it is considered that the council can provide enough suitable serviced plots of land through local plan allocations and policies, plus any windfall sites that may come forward through the planning process, to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the district.

3.44. More details about the self-build and custom housebuilding register, and how to apply, can be found on the self-build page of the council's website.

Brownfield land register

3.45. The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 make it a statutory duty for the council to prepare, maintain and publish a register of brownfield land that meets all the criteria specified in the regulations.

3.46. The Folkestone & Hythe District Brownfield Land Register will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis (each November). More information can be found on the council's website on the brownfield register page.

3.47. As of March 2023 (the AMR monitoring period), there were **104 sites** listed on the brownfield land register; of which **42** were recorded as **completed**, and **24 under construction**. The most recent update in November 2024 the total number of sites had risen to **107**, with **53 completed** and **25 under construction**.

4. Employment

3.48. The CSR sets a target of approximately 8.1 ha of strategic employment allocation providing 36,760 sqm of employment floorspace at the Otterpool Park development. Additionally, the PPLP allocations provide up to 140,878 sqm of new employment space.

3.49. Employment space is monitored through the Commercial Infrastructure Audit (CIA). The CIA will be reviewed and updated in 2025.

Retail & town centres

3.50. In September 2020, amendments to the use classes order came into force. The town centre use classes included in this section are:

- B2 - General industrial
- B8 - Storage or distribution
- C2 - Residential institutions (residential care homes and nursing homes)
- C3 - Dwellinghouses
- E - Commercial, business and service (including shops, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes and business)
- F1 - Learning and non-residential institutions (including schools, colleges, galleries, museums, public libraries, exhibition halls and churches)
- F2 - Local community uses (including community halls, outdoor sport or recreation locations.)
- Sui Generis – (including cinemas, launderettes, fuel stations, betting shops, drinking establishments and hot food takeaways)

Shopping surveys

3.51. The Core Strategy identified a hierarchy of centres, which forms the basis of PPLP policy RL1 Retail Hierarchy. Policy RL1 states that

“Within the designated centres in the retail hierarchy, planning permission will be granted for the development of a range of town centre uses that add to the vitality and viability of the centres, except where the proposed development is in conflict with other policies or environmental objectives. The Council will seek to enhance the established character and diversity of town centre uses and avoid over-concentration of particular uses that would be detrimental to the character or function of an area. Residential development will also be permitted within the designated centres on upper floors where it would enhance the vitality and viability of the centre and not lead to the loss of town centre uses or active frontages at street level.”

3.52. This is further supported by Policy SS4 of the CSR (2022), which requires that all development in town and district centres should contribute to a mix of active ground floor uses with predominantly retail goods frontage shopping retained at the core of the centres. Elsewhere in town centres, an appropriate mix of offices, cultural, community and voluntary facilities, and other shop uses will be permitted; with a limited increase in the proportion of restaurants where they add to the vitality, tourist appeal and evening economy of town centres.

3.53. The health of the town and district centres is measured through an annual survey of town centre vacancy rates in Folkestone Primary, Hythe, New Romney, Cheriton and Sandgate shopping areas. The vacancy rates are reported on shop frontage length and number of units. The target is that vacancy rates by frontage should not exceed 10 per cent.

3.54. The shop frontage survey was carried out in late autumn 2023. Shown in the charts below is the percentage of each use class by the total number of shop units and the total length of the frontage (in metres) for the retail centres of Folkestone (Primary), Hythe, New Romney, Cheriton and Sandgate.

Figure 1 Folkestone Primary shopping area - % of total number of shop units by use class

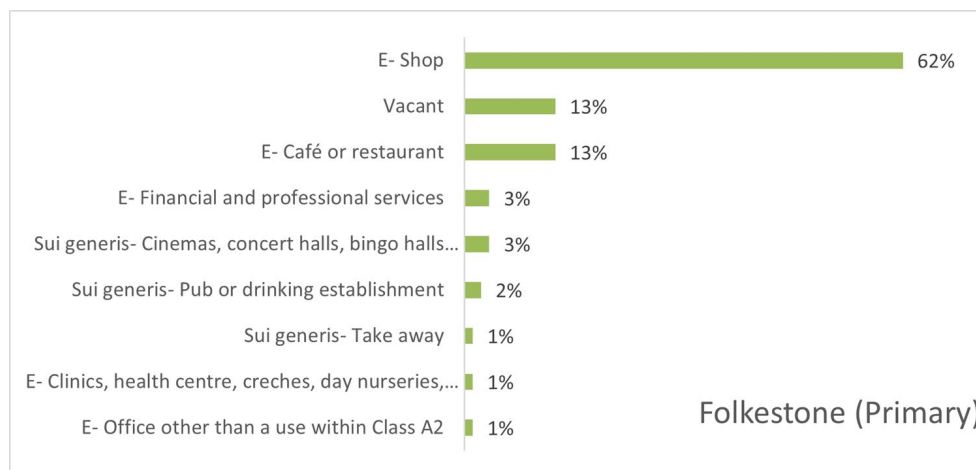


Figure 2 Folkestone Primary shopping area - % of frontage length (metres) by use class

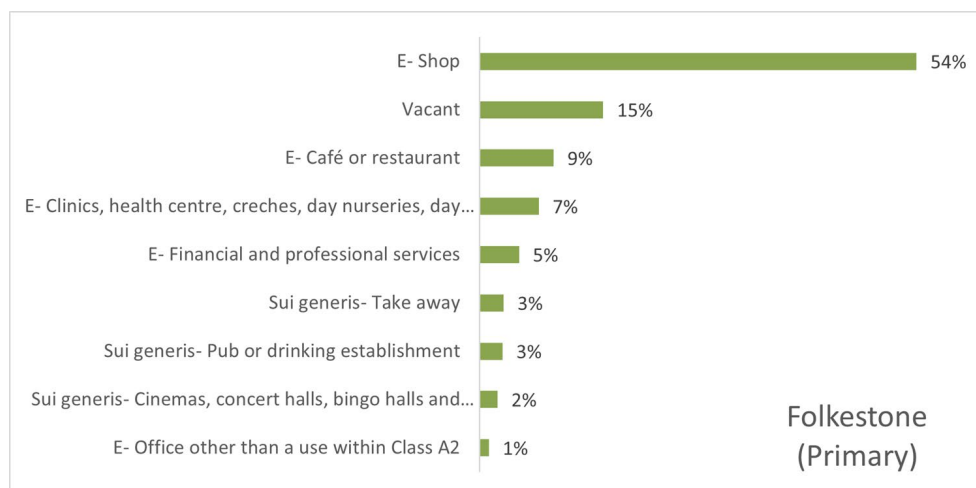


Figure 3 Hythe shopping area - % of total number of shop units by use class

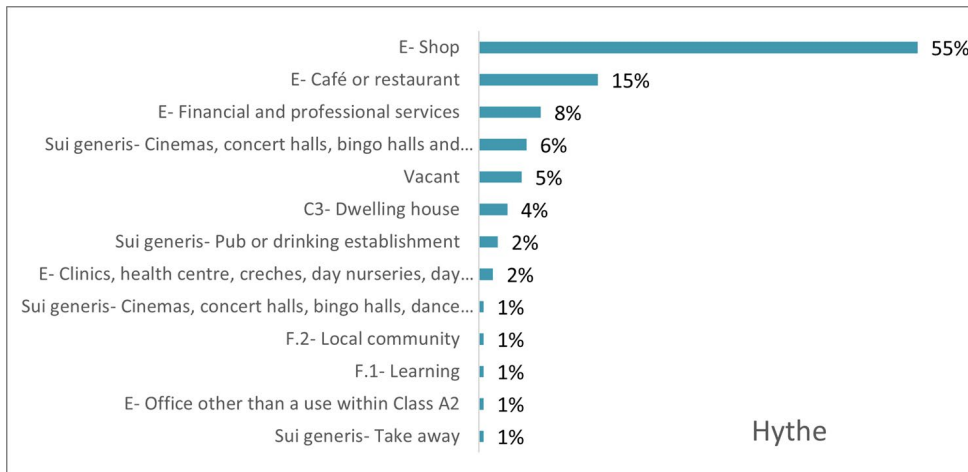


Figure 4 Hythe shopping area - % of frontage length (metres) by use class

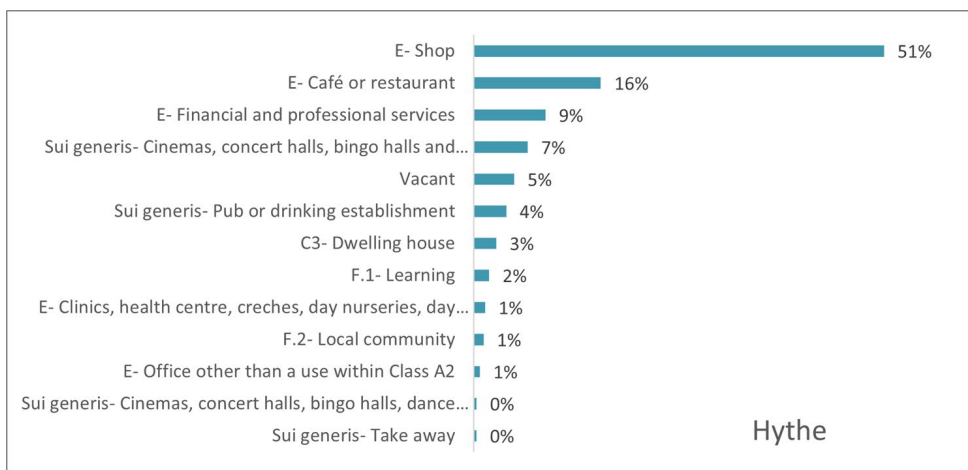


Figure 5 New Romney shopping area - % of total number of shop units by use class

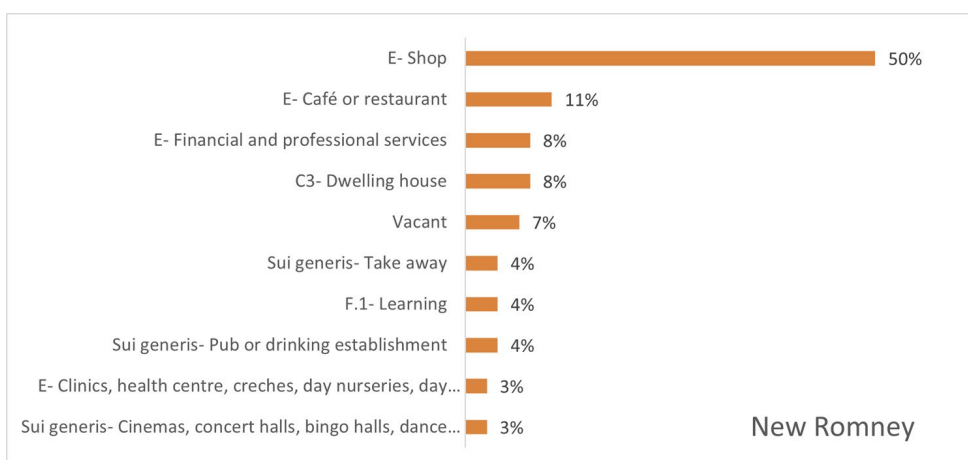


Figure 6 New Romney shopping area - % of frontage length (metres) by use class

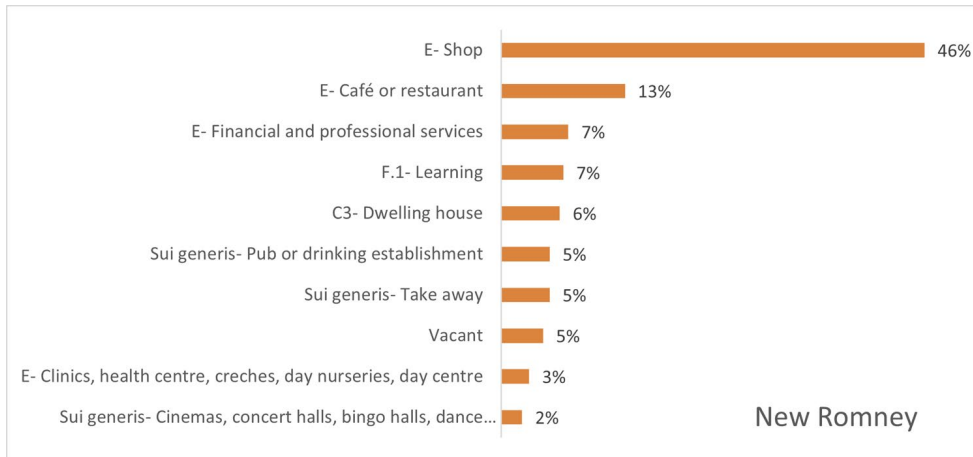


Figure 7 Cheriton shopping area - % of total number of shop units by use class

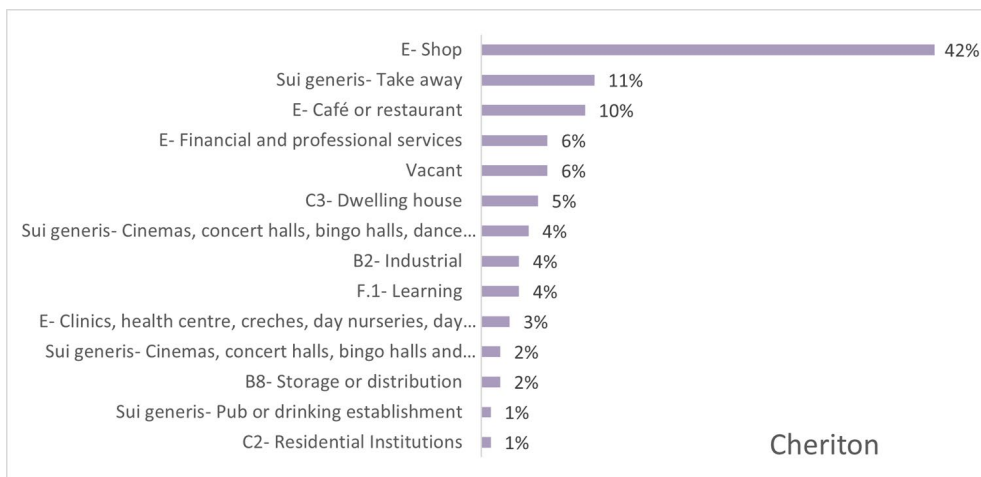


Figure 8 Cheriton shopping area - % of frontage length (metres) by use class

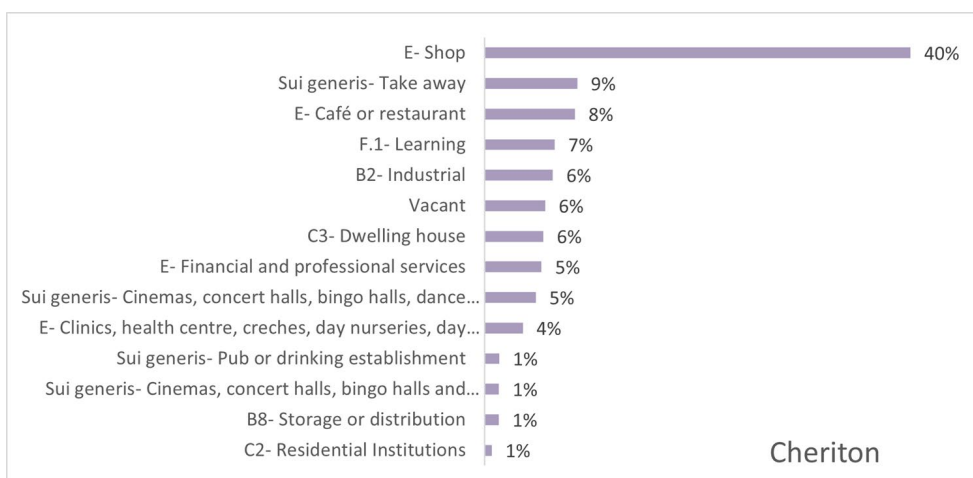


Figure 9 Sandgate shopping area - % of total number of shop units by use class

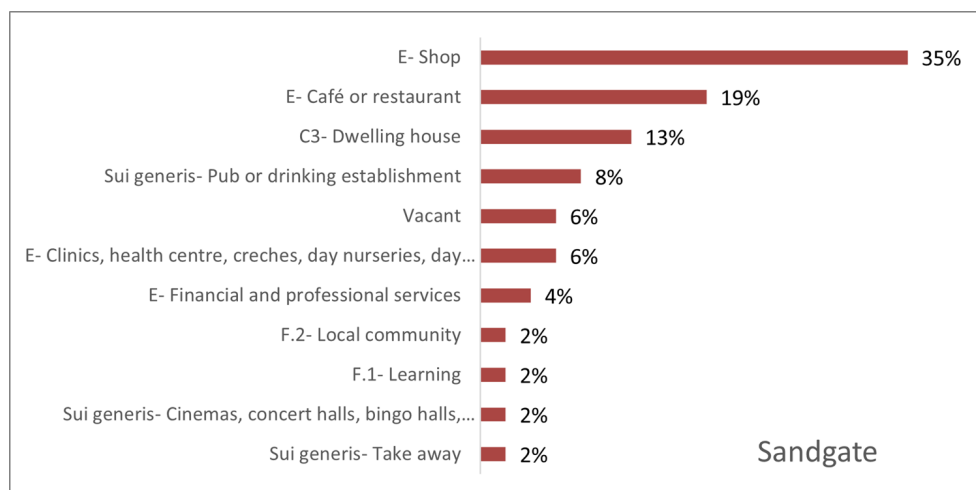
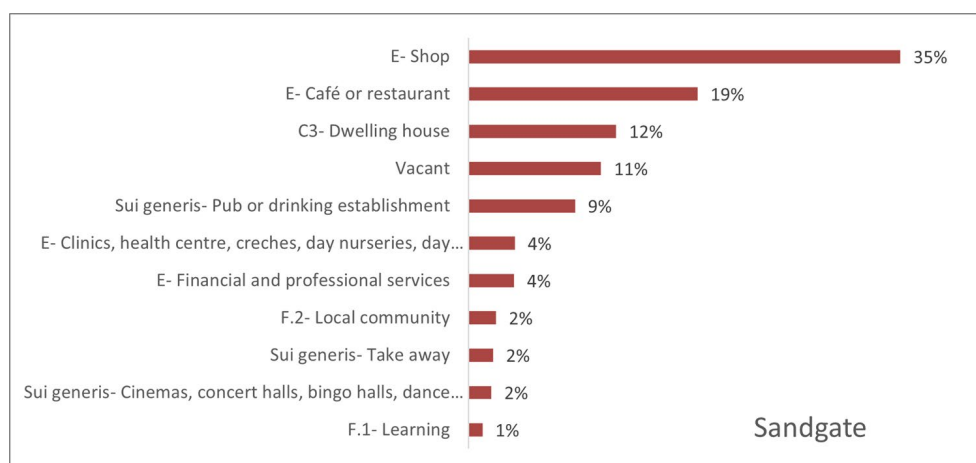


Figure 10 Sandgate shopping area - % of frontage length (metres) by use class



3.55. The vacancy levels by frontage length for the shopping centres of Folkestone (primary), Hythe, New Romney, Cheriton and Sandgate are shown in descending order in Table 7 below. Unfortunately, the shop frontage surveys were not carried out in 2020 because of the covid pandemic.

Table 7 Vacancy levels for shopping centres by % of frontage length

Retail centre	2023 Vacancy level (%)	2022 Vacancy level (%)	2021 vacancy level (%)	2019 vacancy level (%)	2018 vacancy level (%)
Folkestone Primary	15%	6.8%	6.8%	4.9%	7.2%
Hythe	5%	4.8%	5.9%	6.9%	5.1%
New Romney	5%	3.5%	2.2%	1%	2.7%
Cheriton	6%	8.6%	8.5%	9.8%	10.6%
Sandgate	11%	4.8%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%

3.56. Retail and hospitality businesses have undoubtedly been through a very tough few years and Table 7 shows these changes in vacancy levels in the Folkestone & Hythe district. Using shop frontage length rather than the number of vacant units can give a distorted picture of the high street if one large unit becomes vacant. For example, in Sandgate, the vacancy level appears to have increased dramatically, but the frontage lengths figure shows there are only three vacant units, and one of these is a garage site with a large frontage. Going forward, we will monitor both the frontage lengths and the number of vacant units to ensure we have a comprehensive view of the district's town centres.

Mixed-use development

3.57. Progress has continued on a number of 'major' residential developments which could see many new community facilities, public services, and new build employment premises. The following updates are provided at December 2024.

- **Folkestone Harbour and seafront** – Outline planning consent (Y12/0897/SH) was granted in 2015 for a mixed-use development comprising up to 1,000 dwellings (C3); and 1,000 sqm of commercial floorspace (A1, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1, & D2).

The first residential phase of the project at the western end of the site is now complete providing 84 dwellings (plot B).

Three further reserved matters applications have been approved and will provide 219 residential dwellings and two commercial units (plots A, C1 and D1); these reserved matters permissions have been implemented.

Two further reserved matters applications are currently under consideration. Plot E1, towards the eastern end of the site, proposes 112 residential dwellings, this submission (22/2168) includes landscaping and highway works to Marine Parade.

Plots F, G and H form the eastern end of the site incorporating an area of shingle and areas of hardstanding. This part of the development would provide 410 residential dwellings, commercial space, and public realm and landscaping (24/0505).

- **Hawkinge mixed-use land** – Outline planning consent (Y10/0738/SH) was granted in 2011 for a mixed-use development comprised of business units (class B1/B8) and a retirement village (class C2). The commercial units were completed in 2018.

Reserved matters (14/0336) for the retirement village consisting of 61 cottages and 50 apartments were approved in 2014. An amendment to the hub building (18/1267) increased the total number of apartments to 52. The cottages and first apartment building are now complete. The hub building providing the final 34 apartments and communal facilities is outstanding. A full planning application is currently under consideration to amend the scheme to provide 31 1- and 2-storey dwellings in place of the hub apartment building (24/1226).

Several of the business units were subject to a change of use application (20/0657) in 2020. Conversion of office blocks A, B and C to 23 residential units was completed early 2022. Planning permission (21/2178) was granted in December 2022 for the conversion of four ground floor commercial units at 6 and 8 Defiant Close to provide six residential apartments; work on the

conversion has commenced. A further change of use application (23/1001) was approved in February 2024 to provide 8 residential apartments in Block E, Hurricane Way.

- **Nickolls Quarry, Hythe** – Outline planning permission (Y06/1079/SH) was granted in 2010 (varied by Y15/0094/SH) for a residential led development providing 1,050 dwellings and include a major community facility on the former Nickolls Quarry site. Reserved matters (13/0736) were granted for the first 192 dwellings as part of the first phase of the development, which was completed in 2020/21.

A further 208 dwellings were approved as part of a reserved matters application (18/1306) for Phase 2 in 2019; this site is currently under construction with 92 dwellings recorded as complete. The remaining 650 dwellings were subject to a new outline application (19/1492) due to an expired time condition on the former outline permission, this was approved in October 2023.

Reserved matters were approved (24/0300) in September 2024 under the new outline permission to provide 108 dwellings in phase 3 and 92 dwellings in phase 4 of the development. Reserved matters have also been approved for an area of public open space including play equipment and a substation to the northeast of the phase 3 site (24/0764). Reserved matters for the north-south spine road and linear park running between phases 4 and 5 of the development are currently under consideration (23/1788).

- **New Romney broad location** – Phase 1 of the development was completed in 2020/21, delivering a total of 173 dwellings. Outline planning permission (18/1404) for phase 2 was approved in 2019, with reserved matters (21/0007) for 104 dwellings and areas of open space granted in 2021. Full planning permission (19/1275) for 25 dwellings was granted on the adjacent former garden centre site in June 2021. Construction of phase 2 is now complete.
- **Shorncliffe Garrison, Folkestone** – A hybrid application (Y14/0300/SH) was approved in 2016 including detailed consent for the first 294 dwellings; and outline permission for a remaining of 906 as well as a new primary school, leisure facilities including a pavilion for the football pitches. The first 294 dwellings were completed in 2019/20. Construction on the Burgoyne Barracks North site was completed during the current monitoring period providing 173 dwellings. At the end of the current monitoring period 702 dwellings were recorded as complete across the site. Construction is currently progressing on the Risborough Barracks site which will provide 230 dwellings (21/1618). A reserved matters scheme (24/0980) for the Burgoyne Barracks South site was approved in December 2024 which will provide 48 residential dwellings. All reserved matters are now approved.
- **Sellindge broad location** – A hybrid application (Y14/0873/SH) for phase 1 was granted planning permission in 2016. This included full planning permission for 50 dwellings and outline permission for a further 200 dwellings, a village green and play equipment. In 2019, a reserved matters application (18/0402) was approved for 190 dwellings together with a mixed-use local centre containing parish offices, associated storage and commercial floor space. This phase of the development is now complete.

In 2019, outline permission (Y16/1122/FH) was approved for phase 2 (site B) for up to 162 houses including affordable, self-build and retirement housing, up to 929 square metres class B1 business floor space, allotments, a recreational ground and multi-use games area and a nature reserve. A reserved matters application (21/0279) for 34 dwellings and 20 self-build plots together with drainage features, wetlands and open space was approved in 2022, the 34 dwellings are now complete.

A reserved matters application (22/0053) for the remainder of site B was submitted in early 2022 and is awaiting determination. A further full planning application (23/1324) for 148 dwellings on the site has also been submitted, this would form an increase of 20 dwellings on the site. Two outline planning applications (20/0604 and 23/1935) have been submitted to provide up to 160 dwellings and public open space on phase 2 site A to the south of Ashford Road.

- **Princes Parade, Hythe** – Planning permission (Y17/1042/SH) was approved at planning committee in 2018 to provide a swimming pool and leisure centre, public open space, up to 150 homes (including up to 45 affordable units), a widened public promenade for walking and cycling, and commercial units including a café, restaurant and boutique hotel. In December 2022 cabinet agreed to pause the project due to the changed and difficult economic climate and agreed to do the necessary works to implement the planning permission.

Following the local elections in May 2023, the new administration resolved not to pursue the scheme and agreed to explore options for the expansion of green open accessible space and allow engagement with the community, and their representatives, on the future use of the site before any further formal decisions are made. To enable this a non-material amendment application was submitted (23/0990) to extend the implementation date of the planning permission by 3 years. Outside the monitoring period of this AMR, a public engagement exercise was undertaken to seek views on the future use of the site. The survey opened on 9 December 2024 and closed on 16 February 2025.

5. Transport

3.58. It is important to understand the modes of transport being used by the public against the PPLP transport policies. The street hierarchy set out in Policy T1 within the PPLP is:

- Pedestrians
- Cyclists
- Public transport
- Private vehicles

Pedestrians and cyclists

3.59. Walking is not currently recorded by any measure other than a question in the census relating to travel to work.

3.60. The council has prepared a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan (LCWIP) dated November 2019 for the district to identify where future investment in improved walking and cycling routes might be targeted. The LCWIP document places the district council in a positive position in the context of the Government's push for investment in "active travel" measures and interventions.

Cheriton to Folkestone Central Station: Proposed walking, wheeling and cycling improvements

3.61. Following on from the consultation undertaken in 2021, Kent County Council (KCC) has further developed the design to create a safer and direct route for cycling from Cheriton to Folkestone. The proposed scheme runs along the B2064 Cheriton Road starting near B2063 Risborough Lane and ending at Radnor Park. The scheme is programmed to be implemented in summer 2024.

Folkestone - A Brighter Future

3.62. A successful bid has been made to the government's Levelling Up Fund for just under £20 million to transform Folkestone Town Centre. Following on from the Folkestone Place Plan that was developed with extensive engagement in 2020, our project seeks to bring forward some of the priority projects identified to realise our future vision for the town.

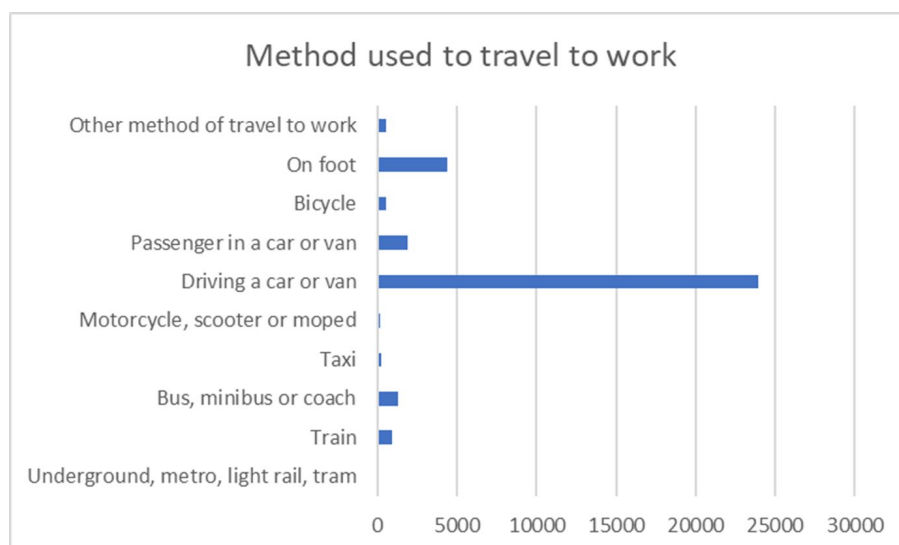
3.63. Folkestone - A Brighter Future has a number of components. It includes significant improvements to the road system around Folkestone Central rail station and better signage and improved links to the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists.

Public transport

3.64. At the time of the 2021 Census, UK government guidance and lockdown restrictions resulted in unprecedented changes to travel behaviour and patterns. It is likely that restrictions contributed to changes in the way people travelled to work, including fewer people using public transport, which must be considered when viewing the results below.

3.65. Figure 11 uses data from the 2021 census to show the methods used to travel to work for residents aged 16 years and over in employment, living in the district. The "work mainly at or from home" category has been excluded from this chart to make it easier to clearly see the methods used to travel to work.

Figure 11 Census 2021 data - Folkestone and Hythe method used to travel to workplace, out of all usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment.



3.66. Train station usage data, gathered by the Office of Rail and Road, for the estimated total number of entries and exits made at stations reveals the dramatic effect the Coronavirus (CoVid-19) pandemic has had on all rail travel in the district, as shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Train station usage data

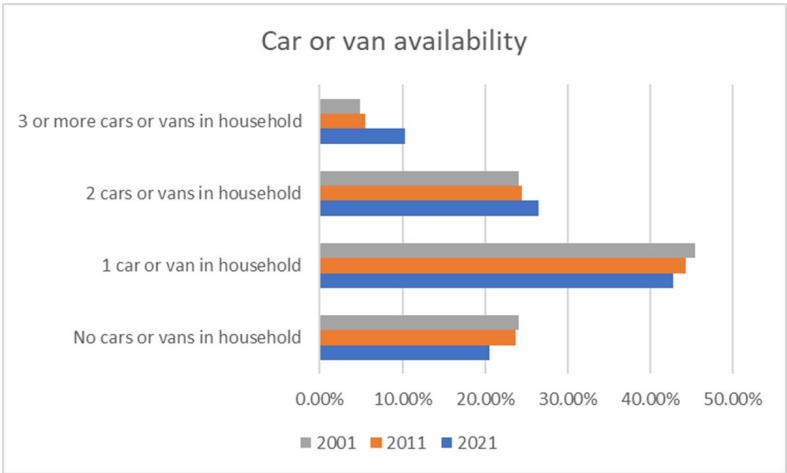
Station name	Entries and exits (2022-23)	Entries and exits (2021-22)	Entries and exits (2020-21)	Entries and exits (2019-20)
Folkestone Central	811,686	682,674	267,698	1,031,302
Folkestone West	610,330	513,322	201,292	775,466
Sandling	70,978	53,828	20,000	96,612
Westenhanger	54,372	45,092	18,902	80,168

3.67. Folkestone Central and Folkestone West, which have the high-speed service to London, remain the most used stations within the district.

Private vehicles

3.68. Figure 12 compares census estimates from 2021, 2011 and 2001 on the number of cars or vans available to members of households in the district. During the 20 year period it can be seen that the number of households with no car or van has decreased and households with 3 or more cars or vans has increased.

Figure 12 Census 2021 Car or van availability, Folkestone & Hythe District



6. Natural environment

Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy

3.69. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy sets out the district's strategic network of green and blue infrastructure and provides an assessment of the needs and opportunities, strategic priorities and future actions. It provides evidence to support spatial planning in the district. The summary is backed up by a more detailed Main Report.

3.70. The key findings of the Strategy were:

- Due to the variety and extent of important habitats the district supports many specialised and rare species, such as Turtle Doves and Chalk Grassland Orchids;
- Green infrastructure is important in supporting a landscape-scale or 'nature network' approach, through securing biodiversity value in a planned way. Green infrastructure also helps to bring nature into urban centres, which also connects people with wildlife;
- Overall, Folkestone and Hythe's tree canopy is around 8% of its area, less than half of the Kent average of 17%. There is a distinct north-south divide in the district. Romney Marsh ward was reported as having the lowest level of canopy, at 1.1%. However, given the history and character of the area this is to be expected;
- Climate Change vulnerability mapping by Natural England indicates that the fragmented, wetland and low-lying habitats around Romney Marsh are highly vulnerable;
- Development has been identified as the greatest pressure on Kent habitats, through loss of land and increased population. This pressure can be mitigated through obligations on developers to deliver biodiversity net gain;
- The location of new development, especially larger developments, will increase recreational use in new areas of the district;
- The transport corridor of the M20/A20, rail line and Channel Tunnel Rail Link is a significant barrier to access for Folkestone and other settlements to the south;
- Safety is an important consideration for users. Overgrown areas, poor sight lines, vandalism and litter can increase perceptions of lack of safety;
- Evidence shows that spending time in nature is also good for mental wellbeing.

3.71. Priorities and opportunities are then identified for each of the strategic priorities. These are set out after each of the subject sections in a table. As these are wide ranging, there are a number that are not within the control of the district council and will need to be delivered in partnership or by other organisations.

Natural Environment Planning Applications

3.72. There were **139 planning applications** on which Natural England were consulted and **86** were **approved**. The Kent Downs AONB unit were consulted on **53 planning applications** of which **41 were approved**. There were **1,400 planning applications** affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest and **995 were approved**.

Climate Change

3.73. Since declaring a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019, progress has been made towards achieving our ambitious net zero targets for 2030 such as:

- A proposal for developing a district-wide carbon plan was presented to the cabinet in March 2022
- Formation of a Carbon Innovation Lab (CI-Lab) - an informal voluntary forum consisting of local businesses, community groups, and special interest groups to develop and deliver actions to reduce emissions across the district.
- All planning applications for new residential development are conditioned to achieve a maximum use of 110 litres of water per person per day.
- As a council, we are taking actions across a wide range of services to tackle our own carbon emissions and we are also working with others to look at emissions across the district. Further information on some of the projects we are delivering, such as insulating homes, providing electric vehicle charging points, installing solar panels, helping businesses to become more energy efficient and improving biodiversity can be found on the council's website: <https://folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/climatechange>

Air quality

3.74. The council monitors air quality across the district. The main source of air pollution in the district is road traffic emissions from major roads, notably the M20, A20, A259, A260 and A2034. Other pollution sources, including commercial, industrial and domestic sources, also make a contribution to background pollutant concentrations.

3.75. Folkestone & Hythe District experiences relatively good air quality, with no reported exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ AQS objective since monitoring began in the district. As a result of this, there have never been any declared air quality management areas (AQMA's) within the district.

3.76. The council continues to review its monitoring network, deploying new monitoring sites in areas where there has either never been any monitoring conducted, or where there is a possibility of there being elevated NO₂ concentrations. Two new monitoring locations were deployed in 2020; DT17 and DT18, respectively located on St Andrews Road and Littlestone Road in Littlestone-on-Sea. This allows the council to continue to ensure that its residents can experience relatively good and compliant air quality conditions.

3.77. The monitoring results from 2021 show that annual mean NO₂ concentrations within the Folkestone & Hythe District continue to be well below the relevant AQS objectives at all monitoring locations. Further information on Air Quality can be found in the Air Quality Annual Status Reports available to view on the council's website: <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/environmental-protection/pollution/air-quality>

7. Infrastructure

4.1. CSR Policy SS5 District Infrastructure Planning sets out the council's approach to overseeing the delivery of significant infrastructure.

4.2. The community infrastructure levy (CIL) is a charge on new floorspace that local authorities can choose to introduce on new development to raise money for a range of infrastructure needs. These include transport, education, community uses, open spaces and leisure facilities. The council formally adopted its revised Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule on 29 March 2023, and it came into effect on 1 April 2023.

4.3. The council began operating CIL on 1 August 2016, it has started to collect receipts and the expectation is that there will be a relatively consistent flow of payments in the future. Further information is provided on the CIL pages of the council's website: <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/planning/community-infrastructure-levy>

4.4. With the introduction of the infrastructure funding statement (IFS), the monitoring of CIL, together with the section 106 contributions, can now be found in the IFS and the infrastructure schedule rather than in the AMR. Further information on headline figures can be found in the IFS pages on the council's website: <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/planning/infrastructure-funding-statement>



Authority monitoring report

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue,
Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY

🔍 [folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

✉ planning.policy@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk