

Planning newsletter

April 2026 • Issue 1

Folkestone & Hythe District Council



Introduction

Welcome to the Folkestone & Hythe District Council Planning Newsletter — an update providing residents, partners, and stakeholders with clear and accessible information on key development activity across the district.

This newsletter highlights major planning applications, progress on strategic development sites, updates on planning policy, enforcement, Community Infrastructure Levy funding, and wider place making initiatives. While it does not cover every application we receive, it focuses on the most significant proposals and projects shaping the future of our towns, villages, and communities.

Our aim is to increase transparency, support community understanding of the planning process, and keep residents informed about how growth and investment are being delivered across the district. The newsletter includes relevant planning application references, which can be searched [via our online Planning Applications Portal](#) for further detail.

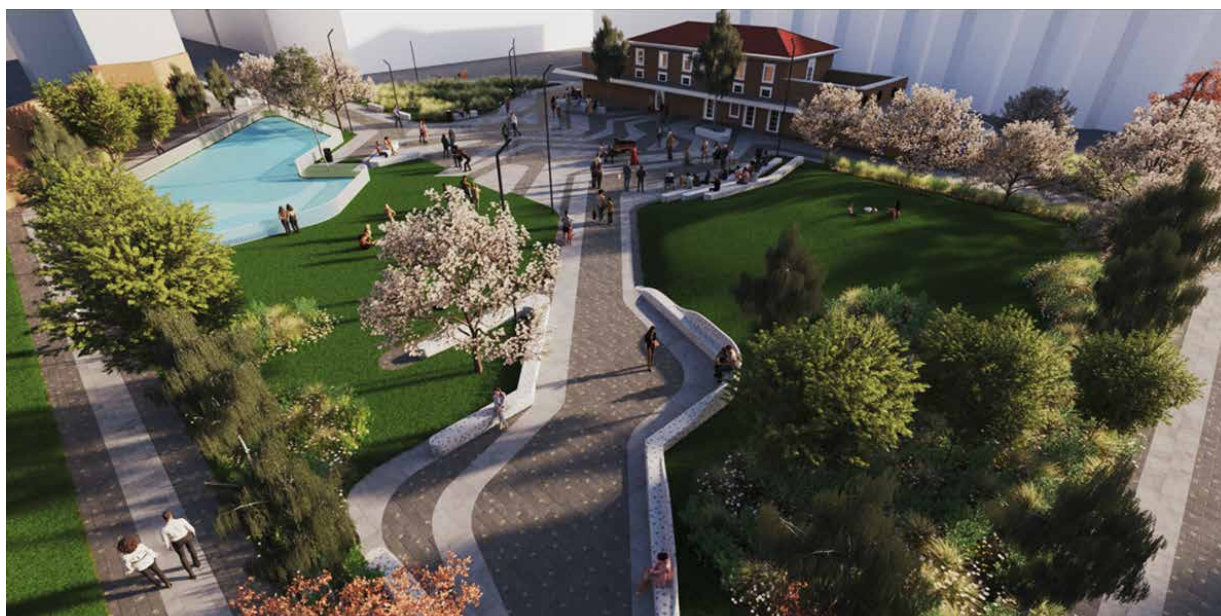
We welcome your feedback. If you have any planning related questions or would like to see additional topics included in future editions, please contact the Planning team at: planning.policy@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Folkestone – A Brighter Future

24/1650/FH – Bus station, Bouverie Square, Folkestone

In March 2025, the Council's Planning Committee

granted planning permission for a change of use of the bus station to a public park. The bus station has now closed in preparation for the development, and alternative bus stop facilities have been provided on Middelburg Square. The park forms part of wider plans to improve the town centre environment under the Folkestone Place Plan – A Brighter Future project. This includes improvements to the approach between Folkestone Central Station and the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists. These works have been enabled by a successful bid to central government for Levelling Up funding. Works have begun and the park is due to later in 2026.



Allocated Sites Updates

25/0158/FH – Folkestone Harbour, Marine Parade, Folkestone

In June 2025, the council's Planning Committee granted reserved matters approval for the remaining phases of the strategic development at Folkestone harbour and Marine Parade. The application is for 410 residential units, including 53 affordable (shared ownership) units and approximately 7,500 sq m of commercial floorspace. This includes retail and restaurant space, leisure and business unit. There will also be areas of public space around the harbour.



24/0980/FH – Phase 2C Burgoyne South, Shorncliffe Garrison, Folkestone

This was a reserved matters application resolved to be granted by the Planning and Licensing Committee in December 2024., An application for reserved matters is the next stage after an Outline planning permission has been granted. It provides more detail than was shown in the outline application for issues such as appearance, access and layout.



This application sees the effective completion of the redevelopment of the Shorncliffe Barracks, totalling 1168 units, including 213 affordable homes. This permission is for 48 dwellings with landscaping and infrastructure and included within the layout, the retained buildings – the Concrete Barrack Block and Racquet Court (both Grade II listed) and the Water Tower, a non-designated heritage asset. The layout included a public square with parking and open space providing intervisibility between the three retained buildings. The retained buildings and square form a key focal point in the development.

Nickolls Quarry, Dymchurch Road, Hythe

Following reserved matters approval in September 2024, construction is ongoing to deliver phases 3 and 4 of the development, comprising 200 dwellings in total. 22% of the units will be delivered as affordable housing.

A reserved matters application (application reference 25/2312/FH) relating to phases 5, 6 and 7 for building 400 dwellings has now been submitted to the council and is currently under consideration.



23/1324/FH - Land rear of Rhodes House, Sellindge (Quinn Homes) – Grove Park

Planning permission was granted in July 2025 for Phase 1(b) and 2 of the Grove Park development, comprising 148 one, two, three, four and five bedroom homes. 40 of these homes will be delivered as affordable dwellings and 24 will be self/custom build plots.

The planning permission secures through a S106 legal agreement financial contributions towards community facilities. These include primary and secondary education and SEND provision and contributions to healthcare and sport. Land is also secured to be transferred to Kent County Council for future expansion of Sellindge Primary School.

Phase 1b and 2 are part of the wider Grove Park development delivering a total of 182 dwellings, all of which will achieve a high level of energy efficiency. The wider development will also provide extensive areas of public open space including play areas, a wetland and allotments, as well as providing commercial uses. Phase 1a of the development is currently being built with approximately 34 units having been completed to date. The developer anticipates that phase 2 will begin later this year.



20/0604/FH – Land south of Ashford Road, Sellindge; and 23/1935/FH – Land adjoining Fencing Yard, Potten Farm, Sellindge

Planning permission has recently been granted for these two applications forming part of the Broad Allocation in the 2020 Core Strategy, [Folkestone & Hythe District Council Core Strategy Review 2022](#). 20/0604/FH was an outline application for building up to 52 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, a sustainable drainage system and vehicular access from Ashford Road.

23/1935/FH was an outline application for up to 102 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, a sustainable drainage system and a water recycling centre.

S106 contributions for both permissions secure affordable housing, self/custom build-lots, contributions towards health, education, community learning, children’s services, library and adult social care, open space and play facilities. 20/0604/FH also included off-site biodiversity net gain.

The permissions secured a masterplan which allows the two sites to be developed concurrently or in isolation and also demonstrates how the rest of the land in the Broad Allocation could be included in a masterplan layout.



Y19/0704/FH Highview School, Moat Farm Road, Folkestone – (Highview Development Company)

Planning permission was secured in 2022 for the redevelopment of the former Highview School site at Moat Farm Road. The school was closed in 2016 as part of a merger with Foxwood School, leading to the creation of The Beacon’s new state of the art facility. The former derelict school buildings were demolished in 2019, and construction works have now commenced on site. The development will deliver 30 residential dwellings providing one, two, three and four bed accommodation of which 7 will be affordable housing units.

25/1316/FH – Former gasworks, Ship Street. Folkestone

An outline planning application has been received for redevelopment of the site, comprising up to 135 dwellings and flexible retail space. 22% of the units are proposed as affordable housing.



23/1591/FH – Land west of Ashford Road, New Romney

Permission was granted on this site (allocated in the Places and Policies Local Plan) in December 2024 for building 91 dwellings, and five self/custom build units. including access from Ashford Road, open space, landscaping, parking and associated infrastructure. The development is centred around a large area of open space at the centre of the site, including a large play area and footpaths connecting to the surrounding houses. Development has started on site.



23/0410/FH - Land rear of Broad Street House, Broad Street, Lyminge (The Fairways by Pentland Homes)

Planning permission was granted in June 2024 for building 44 dwellings, including two self-build plots, 10 affordable homes and public open space. Works have now begun on site.

The development is subject to a s106 legal agreement securing financial contributions towards play space, secondary education and healthcare and the transfer of land for additional car parking next to the doctor's surgery. In addition, a new public footpath will be provided creating a walking route between Lyminge and Etchinghill away from the main roads.



STREET SCENE A-A @ 1:200



STREET SCENE B-B @ 1:200



STREET SCENE C-C @ 1:200

20/1706/FH - Etchinghill Golf Club, Canterbury Road, Etchinghill (East Brook Park by Pentland Homes)

Planning permission was granted in 2022 for a small development of six detached homes designed in the traditional Kentish style and materials, of which two are self-build plots. The site is located on the southern side of Etchinghill Golf Course within the Kent Downs National Landscape. Building on the site is nearing completion.



24/0125/FH - Land adjoining Canterbury Road, Densole, Folkestone

Planning permission has recently been granted for a residential development of 38 dwellings and six self-build plots. The application was in outline however details relating to access, appearance, layout, and scale have been considered in detail.

The application was submitted following extensive pre application advice between the council and the applicant and was subject to a full design review. As a result, the council was able to ensure that the development would deliver a high level of design quality in terms of both layout and architectural design appropriate for this sensitive location within the Kent Downs National Landscape.

The development will deliver 13 affordable homes which is in excess of planning policy requirements. Architecturally the dwellings will replicate the Kentish vernacular utilising a traditional design and materials palette.

A mix of unit types are proposed with terraced properties, semi-detached and detached dwellings approved providing one, two, three, four and five bed homes. In addition, the development will deliver a large area of public open space, including a play area, thus providing recreational facilities for existing and future residents of Densole together with allotments and highway and bus stop improvements.



Planning Applications – Housing

23/1413/FH - Land at Elmtree Farm, Main Road, Sellindge (Quinn Homes)

In September 2025, the Council's Planning Committee resolved to grant outline planning permission for building a community extension of up to 105 new homes, including 22% affordable housing and 5% self/custom-build plots.

In addition, the scheme proposed a mixed use local centre with commercial and community uses including a new doctor's surgery and the provision of land for the future expansion of Sellindge Primary School.

The development also includes significant areas of public open space including a village green, play areas and ecological mitigation. The site was not allocated for development within the adopted development plan. However, extensive negotiations took place between the applicant and the council during the course of the application to ensure that the development would encompass and illustrate key placemaking and urban design principles, an appropriate traditional materials palette and a high quality landscaping scheme appropriate for the existing landscape within which the site is located. As a result, the applicant was able to demonstrate that the amount of development would be deliverable and would be high quality and appropriate for the site.

Proposed illustrative masterplan below.



The Princess Royal, 28 South Street, Folkestone (Folkestone Harbour & Seafront Development Company)

Planning permission was granted in the summer of 2024 for the redevelopment, extension, and restoration of the derelict Princess Royal Public House located within the Leas and Bayle Conservation Area. This was to enable its original use as a licensed premise to be reinstated with rentable short-stay accommodation on the upper floors. Public Realm enhancements are also proposed.



24/1899/FH – Martins Farm, Ivychurch

Planning permission was granted for a replacement dwelling at Martins Farm, Ivychurch.

The new building has an outstanding and innovative design incorporating many exemplar sustainability features within an openly modern design. It draws inspiration from the surrounding landscape and development, and incorporates significant improvements to the soft landscaping on the site, including the enhancement of the pond. Improved connectivity to existing ditches, a wildflower meadow, an orchard, and improvements to the existing hedgerows were also included.



25/0857/FH – Boulderwall Farm, Dungeness

Enhancement work to existing bird habitats at RSPB Dungeness has been approved. The work involves the formation of new wetlands and dry mounds in grazing fields to the west of the principal reserve.

The project involves excavation of existing low-lying land to increase water retention and enhance habitat for wading birds (Lapwing in particular), with the spoil used to create raised mounds for nesting and breeding. The works will protect habitat against future impacts of climate change.

Planning officers worked with the applicant to ensure that all relevant information was submitted early in the process to avoid delays.

Work is scheduled to begin on site as soon as possible, and the RSPB anticipate the habitat to be a significant draw for bird-watchers, encouraging additional visitors to the area.



Figure 4 View south-west across the project area from Boulderwall Farm

25/0857/FH – Boulderwall Farm, Dungeness (continued)

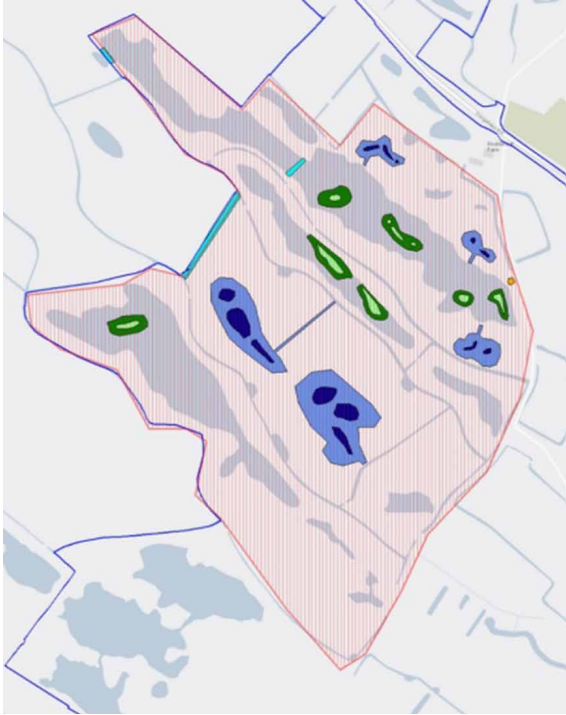


Figure 5: Looking NW across project area during extreme high water levels

Employment

22/1347/FH - Former Silver Springs site, Park Farm Road, Folkestone

Planning permission was granted in December 2024 for building a food store together with outline planning permission for two drive through restaurants and employment space. A reserved matters application (application reference 25/1605/FH) has subsequently been submitted for the restaurants and is currently under consideration.

26/0002/FH - East Station Goods Yard, Southern Way, Folkestone

A planning application has been received for a new food store and two commercial units and is currently under consideration.

Y13/0024/SH and Y17/0888/SH - Land rear of Church and Dwight, Caesars Way, Folkestone

Following the approval of reserved matters in 2018, works have begun building 49 industrial units together with two office blocks.

Enforcement Updates

The Southcliffe Hotel, 22-26 The Leas, Folkestone, CT20 2DY

Reference numbers:

24/1043/FH (Planning Permission)

24/1044/FH (Listed Building Consent)

Application for planning permission and listed building consent was refused in September 2024 for retrospective works to the building. ,

The works included the installation of fibre cement tiles and uPVC window surrounds which it was considered would harm the historic character and significance of the listed building.

Following the refusal an appeal was submitted and has since been dismissed. The inspector's decision is can be found here.

<https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?CaseID=3358574&CoID=0>

Following the dismissal, the council is considering the appropriate next steps to remedy the breaches of planning control.

Community Infrastructure updates and s106 news

When certain types of development are being built, the developer has to pay Folkestone & Hythe District Council the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Some of this is held by the council and used for strategic projects within the district. The remainder is distributed by F&HDC, including to town and parish Councils to spend on projects in their areas.

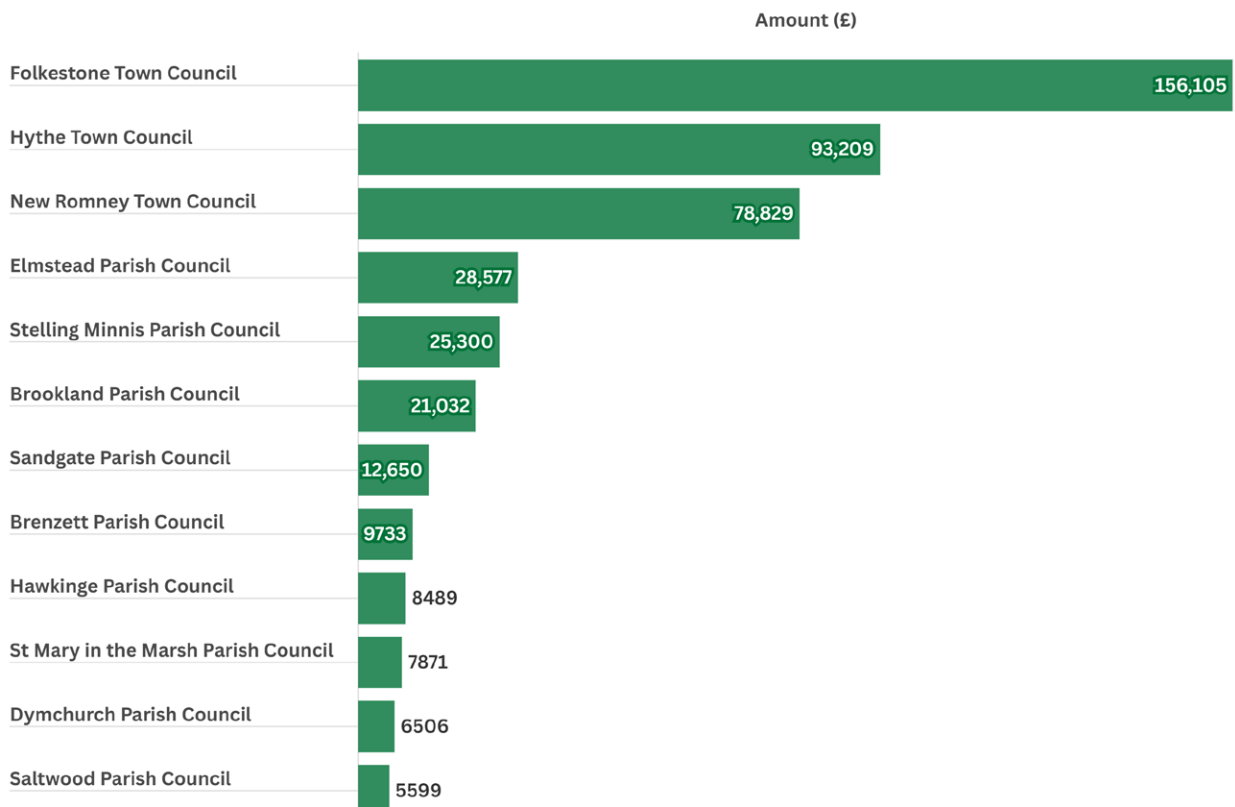


The sum of £20,000 was allocated towards the refurbishment of Radnor Park Lodge in January 2022. The allocation of these monies was approved via the S106 and CIL Working Group in accordance with the CIL Governance Framework.

In line with the CIL Governance Framework adopted by the council in June 2020, F&HDC has passed across a total of £1,828,890.15 to Kent County Council during the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2025.

A total of £838,279.64 has been passed to town and parish councils (as the Neighbourhood component) since the inception of CIL on 1st August 2016 up to 31st March 2025.

The amounts currently held by individual councils based on our records are as follows:



Whilst there are strict guidelines on what it can be spent on, there is a wide range of projects that are potentially eligible. If the CIL paid to town/parish Councils is not spent within five years, it may have to be returned to F&HDC. If you have an idea for a project in your local area, where the need for it can be linked to development which is taking place or has been recently completed, please contact your local town/parish council as they may have funds they can devote to such a project.

Development Management Performance

Over the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26 performance by the council’s Development Management team has been truly exceptional – the best in Kent, and one of the top performing Development Management teams in the country. This means the vast majority of applicants are getting quick decisions on their applications, in line with the direction of travel of the government, and the objectives of councillors.

	% in time	England rank	Kent rank
All decisions (statutory deadlines)	81	6 (top 2%)	1
Non-Major	84	7 (top 3%)	1
Minor	74	7 (top 3%)	1
Other	89	5 (top 2%)	1

Listening to our customers: delivering a faster planning service

Over the last few years, people have told us very clearly what they want from the planning service: clear decisions, made on time.

Residents, householders and local businesses have said that delays can be frustrating, stressful and costly. Whether someone is extending their home, starting a small business, or planning an improvement in their community, knowing where you stand and when a decision will be made really matters.

The latest national planning statistics show that we have listened to this feedback — and acted on it.

What the results show

Independent national data shows that Folkestone & Hythe District Council is delivering planning decisions promptly and reliably, compared with most councils across the country.

Our results show that people receive decisions on time across all main types of planning application, including:

- larger, more complex developments
- everyday household applications
- other permission types that affect residents and local businesses

This means the service works well not just for one type of customer, but for almost everyone who uses it.

How well are we doing compared to others?

When we look at the types of planning applications that most people are likely to submit — minor and other applications combined — the results are particularly strong:

- 1st in Kent and Medway
- 2nd in the South East
- 5th nationally, out of more than 300 councils

In simple terms, only a handful of councils in the whole country are delivering these types of planning decisions more quickly.

Why this matters for residents and businesses

These results mean that:

- Most people receive a planning decision promptly
- Unnecessary delays are being reduced
- Planning is more predictable and easier to plan around
- Trust in the service is improving because people know what to expect
- This reflects what people told us they wanted: a planning service that respects their time.

A service shaped by feedback

Delivering a timely planning service has not happened by accident.

It reflects changes made in response to:

- customer feedback
- complaints and comments
- performance monitoring and improvement work

The results show that these changes are now being felt by the people who use the service.

Looking ahead

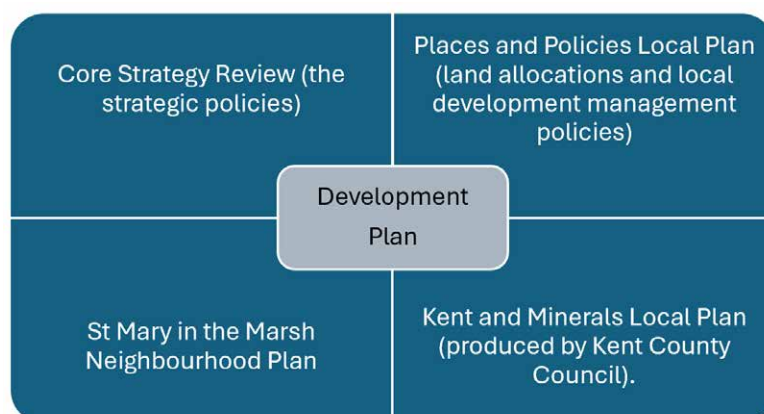
We know that expectations will continue to rise, and we are committed to maintaining and improving this level of performance.

Our focus remains on:

- making decisions on time
- being clear and transparent
- providing a service that works for residents, businesses and communities

Development Plan

The Development Plan comprises a series of policy documents (local and neighbourhood plans) which set out the long-term strategic plans for the district, as well as other non-strategic planning policies to manage development within its boundaries.



Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

New Local Plan

We have an up-to-date local plan, the Core Strategy Review, which was finalised in 2022. This sets out development plans for Folkestone & Hythe district, looking forward to 2037.

However, this year the government has brought in far-reaching changes to the planning system, including to the process of preparing local plans. Planning legislation, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act, was finalised in 2023 and the accompanying regulations to the Act came into force on 25 March 2026.

The government consulted on a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December last year, and a final version is expected this summer. To tackle the national housing crisis, the government has also increased the numbers of new homes that local councils need to plan for in their local plans.

Due to these changes, we are preparing evidence for a new local plan that will eventually replace the Core Strategy Review, which will be prepared under the new system. The new local plan will set out a strategy for future development in the district for the next 15 to 20 years. Our early work includes holding a 'call for sites' (described in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment).

The council has published an indicative '**Local Plan Timetable**' which can be viewed on the [council's webpage](#). This sets out the key dates for each stage based on the proposed process. However, given that the regulations have only recently been published by government, the council is reviewing this timetable and the new timetable is likely to be finalised in May.

We will include updates in future newsletters.

Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

The starting point for a new local plan is to ask people to suggest sites for a wide range of potential uses, to help meet the future needs of the district (a ‘call for sites’).

So far, we have carried out two six-week calls for sites, the first in October/ November 2024 and the second in March/April 2025. Altogether, 169 sites have been suggested to assess, some of these are for open spaces and community uses but predominantly they are for residential development.

Sites that are put forward to us go through a detailed, lengthy assessment to evaluate whether the site is suitable, available and deliverable, using a method set out in government guidance, called a housing and economic land availability assessment (HELAA). The HELAA will provide evidence to support the new local plan.

The information collected will help us to identify a pool of sites that have potential for a range of uses, to guide decisions on which land to take forward into the new local plan. However, just because a site has been suggested to us does not mean that it is suitable for development or that it will be needed.

For sites taken forward for further consideration in the new local plan process, there will be opportunities for people to have their say on site allocations in the future when drafts of the local plan are consulted on. The local plan is subject to an in-depth assessment by independent Inspectors appointed by government; the Inspectors must give their approval before the local plan can be finalised and adopted.

Neighbourhood Plans

The Localism Act introduced neighbourhood planning in 2011 to pass decision-making from national or local government to local communities. Parish and town councils can produce neighbourhood plans for their local areas, putting in place a strategy and policies for the future development of the area.

There are three Neighbourhood Plans currently being prepared in the district; these are the parishes of Lyminge and Sellindge as well as Folkestone Town. The district council designated Folkestone Town Council’s Neighbourhood Area in April, the first step in producing a plan.

For further information please see the parish and town councils’ websites.

[Sellindge Parish Council](#)

[Lyminge Parish Council](#)

[Folkestone Town Council](#)

Heritage Strategy



The strategy was originally written for the district council by Kent County Council's Heritage Conservation team (in a consultancy role) and was reported to Cabinet in December 2018. It subsequently formed an important element of the evidence base for both the Places and Policies Local Plan adopted in 2020 and the more recent Core Strategy Review adopted in 2022.

The strategy was updated in 2024 in light of changes to national and local planning policy and was ratified by Cabinet in January 2025. A targeted consultation event was held in late winter of 2025, focussing on those organisations that had originally been involved with the development of the strategy.

The consultation was very productive, and many useful comments were received, some prompting changes to the draft before it was published. The consultation also helped to identify key priorities for the strategy, notably a local list of heritage assets. There is also the opportunity to make some longer-term changes in the coming months.

The strategy was published in mid-September 2025.

The launch was followed by a meeting with stakeholders in early November 2025 to discuss the strategy and future actions for heritage.

Next Steps

The council is looking to move forward with the development of a local listing process and has already started work on the methodology. The council is also developing information on the website to support cultural heritage groups across the district by establishing a list of interest groups and promoting heritage activities across the district.

Large scale solar farm proposals

There are currently three large-scale solar projects being proposed in the Romney Marsh area of the district by private energy firms. These are:

- South Kent Energy Park near Old Romney, expected to deliver approximately 500 megawatts (MW) of electricity.
- Shepway Energy Park near Newchurch, expected to deliver approximately 200MW of electricity.
- South Brooks Solar Farm near Lydd, expected to deliver approximately 500MW of electricity.

Due to their scale, all three schemes qualify as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and will be decided nationally, rather than by the district council.

In the NSIP process, a promoter will submit a scheme to the Planning Inspectorate, and a panel of independent Inspectors will examine the proposals. The Inspectors will write a report which will recommend whether the scheme should be approved. The report will then be sent to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, who will make the final decision.

The district council has a role in the NSIP process, and will comment about the likely impacts of the schemes and appear at public hearing sessions and submit evidence to put these points across. Local people and interested groups can also get involved, and they are encouraged to make their views known directly to the promoters during their public consultations and to the planning Inspectors, when the examinations begin.

Currently all three schemes are in the early stages of development and so the site areas and outputs may change. The promoters are expected to undertake further public consultations on the schemes later in 2026.

For more details, see the solar farm page on the council's website: <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/planning/romney-marsh-solar-farm-planning-applications>.

You can also follow the links on these pages to the websites of the solar farm promoters.

Geopark

Folkestone and Hythe are supporting a bid for UNESCO Geopark status by the Kent Downs National Landscape with the neighbouring protected landscape in France; the Parc Naturel Regional des Caps et Marais d'Opale. It is supported by a range of organisations including Folkestone & Hythe District Council. The Geopark will include both the protected landscapes and the Channel connecting them, recognising and celebrating the geological connection between us. It will be the only cross-border UNESCO Global geopark not connected by a land boundary if successful.

It is hoped that gaining the recognition will bring sustainable tourism benefits, as well as developing local pride and interest within communities in the unique areas either side of the Dover Strait.