

# Local Plan Timetable May 2026

Folkestone & Hythe District Council



## Introduction

The Local Plan Timetable sets out the key dates in the production of the next Folkestone & Hythe District Local Plan and any supplementary plans the local authority may produce, for example, district wide design codes. The Local Plan Timetable replaces the district council's previous timetable which was adopted by the council in February 2025.

The Timetable has been produced to comply with the Government's latest legislation and guidance. The primary legislation is the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023) Part 2 Section 15B and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026. The Government's guidance '30-month local plan process: an overview' (November 2025) and 'Creating a local plan timetable' (March 2026) have also been considered.

In line with the new Regulations (Reg 6 (2)), this timetable will be revised monthly and/or when a specific stage in the plan making process occurs.

The content of this Local Plan Timetable is as follows:

- Brief overview of the development plan;
- An overview of the new plan-making process; and
- Profiles of the forthcoming Local Plan and other documents.

## 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.

The Development Plan is used by planning officers and the planning committee when considering planning applications. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise<sup>1</sup>.

The draft National Planning Policy Framework (December 2025 paragraph 3) proposes additional text which specifies that the national decision-making policies (set out in the draft NPPF) are a material consideration in making these decisions and should be read alongside the policies in the development plan.

The adopted development plan for the district currently consists of the following documents:

### **The Core Strategy Review (2022)**

A local plan which sets out the district-wide spatial vision, objectives, development strategy and a series of overarching strategic policies that will guide the scale, location and type of development in the district until 2037.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 38(6) of PCPA 2004 (development plan) as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023

## **Places and Policies Local Plan (2020)**

The Places and Policies Local Plan identifies small and medium sized sites for development across the district to meet the targets in the Core Strategy Review; as well as setting out detailed development management policies to assess planning applications.

## **St. Mary in the Marsh Neighbourhood Plan (2019)**

This was produced by St. Mary in the Marsh Parish Council and was brought into force by the district council in 2019. The plan sets out local policies for the whole area covered by the parish.

## **Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024 to 2039**

The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024 to 2039 was adopted by Kent County Council (the local authority which deals with such matters) on the 13 March 2025 and sets out the vision and strategy for waste management and mineral provision up until (and including) the year 2039.

## **The Plan-making Process**

The Government's guidance sets the key tasks and activities to prepare plans over a 30-month period. The following tasks are required by law.

There are three 'gateway assessment' in this new process. Gateway 1 is a self-assessment that the local authority must undertake to check that it is ready to progress to local plan preparation. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act requires authorities to seek observations and advice from the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State for gateways 2 and 3. The system of gateway assessments is intended to ensure a more supportive approach to plan-making and provide greater visibility to key stakeholders and the wider community about how the local plan is progressing.

**1****Before the 30-month process starts**

- Publish Local Plan Timetable
- Give notice of plan-making
- Run scoping consultation
- Gateway 1 - Self-assess that the local authority is ready to start to 30-month process

**2****Months 1 to 23: prepare the plan**

- Publish summary of scoping consultation
- Run consultation on proposed plan content and evidence and publish summary
- Gateway 2 - Check your progress with the Planning Inspectorate
- Run consultation on proposed local plan and publish summary
- Consult on conformity with spatial development strategy if applicable
- Gateway 3; Check you're ready to go to examination

**3****Months 24 to 29: submit plan for examination**

- Examination

**4****Month 30 to 31: adopt plan and publish policies map**

- Adoption

## Profiles of Forthcoming Plans and Documents

This section of the timetable sets out the proposed plans and documents the council intends to produce over the next five years.

### Folkestone & Hythe District Local Plan

The new Folkestone & Hythe District Local Plan will replace both the Core Strategy Review and the Places and Policies Local Plan.

The matters in the local plan will cover the whole of the district. It will set out the spatial vision, objectives, development strategy and the over-arching strategic policies that will guide the scale, location and type of development in the district until 2045. It will also include small and medium allocations as well as any development management policies considered necessary for specific local issues.

The stages in the local plan process are set out below. Key notification, consultation and gateway stages are highlighted in bold; other stages of drafting, revision, analysis and examination are shown in *italic*.

<b>Stage in Local Plan Process</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Before the 30-month process starts</b>	
<b>Notice of Council's intention to commence local plan preparation.</b>	<b>June 2026</b>
<b>Scoping Consultation</b>	<b>September to October 2026</b>
<b>Gateway 1: self-assessment of readiness for local plan preparation</b>	<b>Publish October 2026</b>
<b>Start of 30 Month Plan Making Timetable</b>	
<b>Months 1 to 23: prepare the plan</b>	
<b>Publish summary of scoping consultation</b>	<b>December 2026</b>
<i>Plan visioning, strategy development and evidence gathering</i>	<i>November 2026 to July 2027</i>
<b>Consult on the proposed plan content and evidence (6 weeks)</b>	<b>September to October 2027</b>
<i>Prepare draft local plan document, decide on preferred spatial strategy and sites, evidence gathering, develop local plan map</i>	<i>October 2027 to January 2028</i>
<i>Publish Summary of consultation on proposed plan content and evidence</i>	<i>January 2028</i>
<b>Gateway 2: observations and advice from an appointed person</b>	<b>February 2028</b>
<i>Revise draft local plan document in light of observations received at gateway 2</i>	<i>March 2028 to April 2028</i>
<b>Consult on the proposed local plan (8 weeks)</b>	<b>May 2028 to June 2028</b>
<i>Analyse feedback, make changes to finalise local plan submission materials</i>	<i>July 2028 to August 2028</i>
<b>Publish summary of the consultation on the proposed local plan</b>	<b>August 2028</b>
<b>Gateway 3: prescribed requirements assessment by an appointed person</b>	<b>September 2028</b>
<b>Months 24 to 29: submit plan for examination</b>	
<b>Date of submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination</b>	<b>October 2028</b>

Six-month examination process (timetable determined by the Planning Inspectorate)	October 2028 to March 2029
<b>Month 30 to 31: adopt plan and publish policies map</b>	
Adoption	April 2029
Publish policies map	April 2029

## Policies Map

The policies map must visually illustrate the geographical application of any policies within the development plan for the authority’s area. The [current Policies Map](#) covers the whole district area and sets out, geographically, the policies for the Core Strategy Review, Places and Policies Local Plan, St. Mary in the Marsh Neighbourhood Plan and Kent County Council’s Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

The Regulations require the district council, as the local planning authority, to bring their policies map up to date as soon as is reasonably practicable after an “identified event occurs”, such as the adoption of a new local plan or bringing a neighbourhood plan into force.

Regarding the production of the next local plan, the Regulations (Regulation 25) states that a local planning authority must prepare, a “map of proposed local plan policies”. This map will provide a visual illustration of the location of the policies set out in the proposed local plan and sets out how the Policies Map will be amended once the plan is adopted.

This document will be published during the proposed local plan consultation, highlighted in the table above (May 2028 to June 2028), and will be one of the supporting documents submitted alongside the proposed local plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

## Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood plans are produced by local communities through their parish or town councils (or neighbourhood forum if there are no parishes). They put in place planning policy for a designated area (called the neighbourhood area) to guide future development and form part of the overall Development Plan.

The district council has a duty to assist local communities and to formerly undertake the latter stages of the plan-making process, such as the formal consultation, the examination and referendum. If the referendum is successful, then the neighbourhood plan must be brought into force by the district council.

At the time of writing this Local Plan Timetable, [Lyminge Parish Council](#), [Folkestone Town Council](#) and [Sellindge Parish Council](#) are all producing neighbourhood plans. The timetables are determined by the town or parish council producing the plan.

## Supplementary Plans

Supplementary Plans are being introduced by the government to enable planning authorities to react and respond quickly and positively to unanticipated changes in their area without the need

to revise or update the whole local plan. They will be subject to consultation and independent examination to enable them to carry the same weight as a local plan.

Supplementary Plans may only be used on a site-specific basis (e.g. to support a new development opportunity) or to build on existing policies in the development plan (e.g. to set out a masterplan or design code for a site allocated in a local plan). District-wide policies should be contained in the Local Plan, the exception to this being district-wide design codes.

The draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contains policy PM16 on Supplementary Plans, which states that they will be “subject to a streamlined preparation, consultation and examination process.

Following the introduction of Supplementary Plan, the legal powers behind Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have now been removed. SPDs are non-statutory documents that can form part of the Local Development Framework and can cover a wide range of issues giving detailed guidance on how policies or proposals in the local plan will be implemented. [Current SPDs](#) will only remain in force until the new local plan is adopted.

There are no Supplementary Plans currently being proposed but the council will be considering whether the District-Wide Design Code (please see below), which is currently being prepared, could be adopted as a Supplementary Plan once the local plan has been adopted. The Local Plan Timetable will be kept under review and will be updated if proposals for Supplementary Plans are introduced.

## **District-wide Design Codes**

A design code is a set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements that are visual and numerical, wherever possible, to provide specific, detailed rules for the development of a site or area.

The new draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2025) includes policy DP2 on Local Design Guides, Local Design Codes and Masterplans. This states that design codes should: reflect a clear understanding of the character of the area and look for opportunities to strengthen that character; be informed by effective community engagement; include a proportionate level of detail; and be supported by monitoring and review mechanisms. Design Codes should be consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code; however, at the time of writing this timetable, it is proposed that these documents will be replaced by the new Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance (2026) which is currently in draft.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council, together with the local authorities of Ashford, Canterbury, Dover and Thanet, successfully bid for funding through the Planning Skills Delivery Fund to undertake design codes for each local area.

This work started in January 2025 and is due to be completed in October 2027. For further information about the process undertaken and the future timetable, please see Appendix 1.

# Appendix 1

## District Wide Design Code work

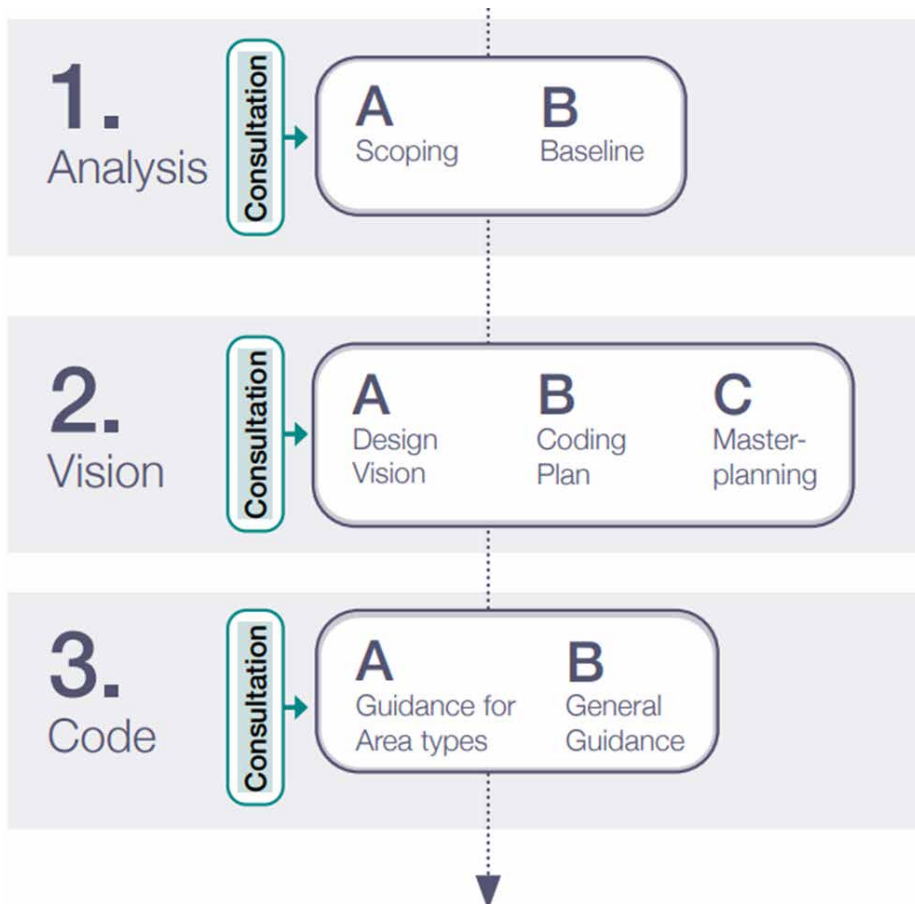
### Code Process

The process for creating design codes is set out in the National Model Design Code<sup>2</sup>. There are three steps to this process.

- Step 1 is Analysis: This includes ‘Scoping’ (agreeing on the geographical area and what policy areas that will be addressed) and ‘Baseline’ (bringing together the analysis).
- Step 2 is Vision: This includes ‘Design Vision’ (identifying ‘area types’), ‘Coding Plan’ (preparing a plan that maps out each area type and large developments) and ‘Masterplanning’ (on larger sites, working with developers to identify key parameters and area types).
- Step 3 is the Code: developing guidance for area types and the code-wide guidance.

Each step would include public consultation.

The National Model Design Code has produced the diagram below of the process:



<sup>2</sup> At the time of writing, the government is preparing the Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance document. When finalised, this will replace the National Design Guide, Design process and tools planning practice guidance, National Model Design Code part 1 and National Model Design Code part 2. The government undertook consultation on the draft Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance between 21 January and 10 March 2026.

## Design Code - Provisional Timetable

The provisional timetable for carrying out this work is set out below.

DESIGN CODE – STEPS 1 AND 2		
Step 1: Analysis, Step 2a: Design Vision and Step 2b: Coding Plan		
Process	Design Code Process: Key Outputs and Actions	Estimated dates
<b>Consultation Strategy</b>	Consultation Strategy - creation of specialist Community Panel and Stakeholder Engagement techniques for each of the key steps / stages set out in National Model Design Code	February 2025 – October/November 2025
<b>Design Code Production PARTS 1 &amp; 2 (including consultation)</b>	<b>Step 1.A Scoping</b> Including consultation	February 2025 – May 2025
	<b>Step 1.B Baseline</b> Including consultation	March 2025 – June 2025
	<b>Step 2.A. Design Vision</b> Including consultation	May 2025 – August 2025
	<b>Step 2.B. Coding Plan</b> Including consultation	July 2025 – October 2025
	Finalise <b>Area Wide Design Code Documents</b> – including consultation	September 2025 – November 2025
<b>Local Area Design Code Toolkit</b>	Produce the <b>Stakeholder Guide</b> to provide advice on process and methods for future production of Local Area Design Codes by local planning authority officers or community.	October 2025 - November 2025
<b>Design Code Amendments</b>	Final <b>Amendments</b> to documents and sign off/ approval by each local planning authority.	December 2025
DESIGN CODE – STEP 3		
Step 3a: Guidance for Area Types, and Step 3b: General Guidance		
<b>Step 3a</b>	Guidance for Area Types General Guidance	January 2026 – March 2027 (dependent on outcome of Steps 1 and 2)
<b>Step 3b</b>	Examination of Design Codes (alongside Local Plan) – if required	April 2027 – September 2027
	Finalisation and adoption of Design Codes	October 2027



## Local Plan Timetable

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

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