



Scoping Consultation

SEPTEMBER 2026



Shaping our future, **together**

Contents

Introduction Scoping Consultation	4
Our current Local Plan	5
The new Local Plan	6
What we are asking you	8
Our district – key facts	8
Evidence we need	9
Key issues	9
Question 1	9
Question 2	9
Homes – building new homes to meet our needs	
Overview	10
Challenges and opportunities	10
Question 3	11
Question 4	11
Question 5	12
Question 6	12
Economy – creating opportunities and growing the economy in a sustainable way	
Overview	13
Challenges and opportunities	13
Question 7	14
Question 8	14
Question 9	15
Question 10	15
Community and infrastructure – making places work well	
Overview	16
Challenges and opportunities	16
Question 11	17
Question 12	17
Transport – helping to connect people and places	
Overview	18
Challenges and opportunities	18
Question 13	19
Question 14	19
Built environment – delivering high quality design and protecting and enhancing the district’s heritage	
Overview	20
Challenges and opportunities	20
Question 15	21
Question 16	21
Question 17	22
Nature – enhancing our environment	
Overview	23
Challenges and opportunities	23
Question 18	24
Question 19	24
Conclusion	25
Question 20	25
Community engagement	26
Question 21	27
Question 22	27
Question 23	28
Question 24	28
Question 25	29
Next steps	30



Introduction

Folkestone & Hythe District Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the district. This Scoping Consultation document is one of the first steps in preparing the new Local Plan.

In this consultation, we are asking for your views on:

- What the Local Plan should contain.
- How we should engage with residents, communities, businesses and organisations throughout the plan-making process.

This consultation does not contain details of proposed development sites. We will set out proposed sites in future consultations as we develop the Local Plan over the next two years.

The new Local Plan will set out a long-term vision for the district, identify sites for development and conservation, and include planning policies to guide future growth.

It will identify land for future:

- Housing.
- Employment.
- Community and other needs.

It will include policies that help guide future development and planning decisions. It can also help secure funding for infrastructure, such as roads, schools and community facilities, where new development creates additional demand.

Our current Local Plan

We currently have two plans that guide development in the district.

The Core Strategy Review (2022)

This plan sets out the long-term growth strategy and strategic policies that guide the scale, location and type of development in the district until 2037. The plan includes policies for the development of a new garden settlement in the North Downs area, known as Otterpool Park.

The Places and Policies Local Plan (2020)

This plan identifies small and medium-sized sites for development across the district. It also includes policies on a range of topics that help guide planning decisions.

While these plans are still used to make planning decisions, the government says that Local Plans should be reviewed every five years.

Neighbourhood plans also form part of the development plan for the area. In Folkestone & Hythe District, we have a neighbourhood plan in place for St Mary in the Marsh parish, which was finalised in 2019.



The new Local Plan

The government has introduced a new plan-making system, intended to make Local Plans simpler and quicker to prepare. The council will prepare its new Local Plan under this system, within 30 months, with adoption currently anticipated in 2029.



Government policy says that Local Plans must look forward no less than ten years from when they are completed.

To take a longer term look, we're proposing to look forward at least fifteen years to 2045. When it is finalised, the new Local Plan will replace the Core Strategy Review and Places & Policies Local Plan.

What we are asking you

In this consultation, we are asking for your views on what our new Local Plan should cover and how we should engage with communities and stakeholders as the plan progresses.

This consultation will run from 7 September to 16 October 2026.

You can find more information on the Local Plan pages on our website. You can also respond directly online at Folkestone & Hythe District Local Plan – Scoping Document.

To help us assess your comments and report the results accurately, we encourage you to respond through our consultation platform. This allows all responses to be collected and reviewed in one place. However, you can also email your comments to: planning.policy@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk.

The key issues identified in this document have been informed by:

- Existing evidence about the district, summarised in the infographic below.
- Previous engagement with residents, communities and stakeholders.
- Themes and priorities identified in the council's Corporate Plan, Our District, Our World.

Our district – key facts

68%

Agricultural land

48,338

Households

913

Listed buildings

112k

Population

37%

District covered by Kent Downs National Landscape

3

Internationally important habitats

40.3%

Increase in over 65s forecast

22.4%

Children in relative low-income families

15min

From Dover

53mins

To London via HS1

35mins

To Calais via LeShuttle

5,045

Jobs supported

Source: Office for National Statistics, Folkestone and Hythe Corporate Plan



Evidence we need

Alongside this consultation, we will continue to gather evidence about our district, including its housing, social, economic and environmental needs and priorities.

Climate change impacts all areas of planning, climate change mitigation and adaptation will be embedded into the development of the Local Plan evidence base and policies.

KEY ISSUES

So far, we have identified six key issues to guide the development of the new Local Plan. These are set out in the diagram below.

Homes

Building new homes to meet our needs

Economy

Creating job opportunities

Community & infrastructure

Making places work well

Transport

Connecting people and places

Built environment

Delivering high quality design

Nature

Enhancing our local environment

QUESTION 1

Are these the right issues for the Local Plan to focus on?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Please rank these from most (1) to least (6) important:

- ☐ Homes
- ☐ Economy
- ☐ Community & infrastructure
- ☐ Transport
- ☐ Built environment
- ☐ Nature

QUESTION 2

If not, which issues are not relevant?

Are there important issues that we have missed?

Homes – building new homes to meet our needs

OVERVIEW

The number of new homes that the council must plan for is set by central government, although this must be balanced against the constraints of the district.

The government figure is updated each year and currently stands at 820 new homes a year. This means that from now until 2045 we may need to plan for around 15,600 new homes.

Some of these homes can be developed on sites that are already identified in our existing Local Plans but have not yet been built. Every year we also give planning permission on other sites that will contribute towards the new Local Plan total.

Proposals are advancing for a new garden settlement, known as Otterpool Park, in the North Downs area of the district. This is already identified in our existing Local Plan, the Core Strategy Review, and this development will count towards the housing target we need to meet.

However, we are likely to need additional development sites, and the new Local Plan will need to set out how much development is needed up to 2045 and where that development should go. We will also need to plan for a range of housing needs, including affordable housing, homes for older and disabled people, traveller accommodation and opportunities for self-build and custom-build housing.

Challenges and opportunities

In the new Local Plan, we will need to:

- Deliver enough homes, including affordable housing, to meet local needs.
- Provide a range of homes for different ages, circumstances and needs.
- Ensure that homes are accessible and adaptable.
- Plan for the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.

QUESTION 3

Thinking about your neighbourhood, what types of housing do you think are needed most?

Please select the top 3 options:

- ☐ Affordable housing
- ☐ Family homes
- ☐ Homes for older people
- ☐ Smaller homes
- ☐ Self-build plots

QUESTION 4

Are there any other places in the district where new homes could help meet local needs?

Please explain why:

QUESTION 5

What do you think are the biggest housing challenges facing the district?

QUESTION 6

Are there any other housing issues or opportunities that the new Local Plan should address?

Economy – creating job opportunities

OVERVIEW

With an increasing population, we need to plan for new sites to support jobs and economic growth. This means planning for employment land that is well located and accessible, wherever possible helping residents to find job opportunities close to where they live and supporting a strong local economy.

Economic evidence shows that some places in the district are thriving, whereas others are losing jobs. Despite these variations, the district economy remains robust, and we have seen significant gains in productivity and jobs growth over the last five years. There are signs of rising earnings, and the economy is successfully diversifying into specialised manufacturing, green technologies and the creative industries.

However, some of the district's employment sites are outdated and would benefit from investment and refurbishment to bring them up to modern standards, including improved energy performance. The district's declining working-age population is a major constraint, which means that businesses struggle to recruit. The lack of reliable public transport can make it difficult for young people to access jobs and training opportunities. The closure of banks and the loss of shops also affect the vitality of the district's high streets.

Challenges and opportunities

The new Local Plan will need to consider how best to support existing businesses, attract investment and ensure there is enough land and infrastructure to support future economic growth.

In the new Local Plan, we will need to:

- Support investment, innovation and business growth across the district.
- Ensure there is sufficient employment land and a range of premises to meet the needs of existing and future businesses.
- Understand how the economy is changing and respond to the needs of emerging industries.
- Regenerate and improve employment areas that no longer meet modern business needs.
- Support vibrant town centres and high streets that can adapt to changing shopping, leisure and working patterns.
- Ensure that homes, jobs, training opportunities and services are well connected by walking, cycling, public transport and other sustainable forms of travel.

QUESTION 7

What types of employment uses do you think the Local Plan should prioritise?

Please select up to 3 options:

- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Green technologies
- ☐ Creative and/or digital industries
- ☐ Tourism and/or leisure
- ☐ Industrial and warehousing
- ☐ Offices
- ☐ Retail and services
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Other

If you have selected ‘other’, please specify:

QUESTION 8

What would encourage you to visit your town or village centre more often?

QUESTION 9

What are your biggest concerns about the future of our town and village centres?

QUESTION 10

Are there any other economic issues, challenges or opportunities that the new Local Plan should address?

Community and infrastructure – making places work well

OVERVIEW

Everyone, regardless of where they live, needs access to services and facilities such as nurseries, schools, healthcare, shops, green spaces, sports facilities and community buildings. These help support healthy, connected and thriving communities.

As communities grow, additional infrastructure is often needed to support them. This can include schools, healthcare facilities, transport improvements, water and sewerage infrastructure, flood defences and digital connectivity.

National planning policy places a strong emphasis on planning positively for infrastructure and working closely with infrastructure providers to understand future investment needs and constraints.

The new Local Plan will need to consider what infrastructure is required, where it is needed and how development can help support its delivery. It will also need to ensure that new development is well connected to the services and facilities people use every day.

A key challenge for the Local Plan will be ensuring that homes, jobs, services and infrastructure are planned together so that places continue to function well as they grow.

Challenges and opportunities

In the new Local Plan, we will need to:

- Ensure that shops, services and community facilities are accessible to residents and, where possible, reduce the need to travel by car.
- Provide sufficient, high-quality open spaces that are accessible, usable and meet the needs of different communities.
- Understand what infrastructure is needed to support growth, how it will be delivered and when it will be needed.
- Ensure that new development is supported by health facilities, such as doctors’ surgeries, dentists and hospital places.
- Understand how growth and development within and beyond the district may affect infrastructure needs.

QUESTION 11

What are the most important types of infrastructure improvements that are needed in your local area?

Please select up to 3 options:

- ☐ Education – early years
- ☐ Education – primary
- ☐ Education – secondary
- ☐ Colleges
- ☐ Community spaces (town or village halls)
- ☐ Sports and play areas
- ☐ Healthcare (doctors, dentists, hospitals)
- ☐ Sewerage system
- ☐ Clean water provision
- ☐ Digital connectivity (broadband and mobile)
- ☐ Energy infrastructure
- ☐ Other

If you have selected ‘other’, please specify:

QUESTION 12

Are there any other community facilities, services or infrastructure needs that the new Local Plan should consider?

Transport – helping to connect people and places

OVERVIEW

The district benefits from strong national and international transport connections. The Channel Tunnel, Port of Dover, M20 and High Speed 1 rail service help connect residents and businesses to Kent, London, mainland Europe and beyond.

The district is also served by local road, rail, bus, walking and cycling networks, helping connect people to jobs, services and facilities. However, some communities face challenges accessing services and employment, particularly where public transport options are limited.

The new Local Plan will need to consider how growth can be supported by transport infrastructure and how development can be located in places that are well connected by walking, cycling, public transport and the wider transport network.

Kent County Council is the local transport authority and is responsible for planning and maintaining much of the transport network. While the Local Plan cannot address issues such as road maintenance, it can help ensure that new development is supported by appropriate transport infrastructure and connections.

Challenges and opportunities

In the new Local Plan, we will need to:

- Locate development in places that are well connected by public transport and where there are opportunities to travel by walking and cycling.
- Coordinate development with new and improved transport infrastructure and services, so people have different ways to travel around.
- Manage the impact of additional travel generated by new development, including effects of congestion, road safety and air quality.
- Provide appropriate levels of parking that meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors, while making efficient use of land and supporting sustainable travel choices.

QUESTION 13

What are the main transport issues you experience in moving around the district?

Please select up to 3 options:

- ☐ Lack of cycle routes
- ☐ Lack of parking spaces
- ☐ Long travel times to key services
- ☐ Lack of public transport
- ☐ Lack of electric vehicle charging points
- ☐ Poor pavements and footpaths
- ☐ Other

If you have selected 'other', please specify:

QUESTION 14

Are there any other transport challenges, opportunities or priorities that the new Local Plan should address?

Built environment – delivering high quality design

OVERVIEW

The district contains a wide variety of landscapes, settlements and heritage assets, from the historic towns of Folkestone, Hythe, New Romney and Lydd to the coastline, Romney Marsh and the Kent Downs National Landscape. These places each have their own distinctive character and contribute to the district’s identity.

As the district grows and changes, it will be important to ensure that new development is well designed and responds positively to its surroundings. Good design can help create attractive, safe and accessible places, while respecting local character and making efficient use of land.

The Local Plan can help achieve this through policies that support high-quality design, protect and enhance heritage assets and guide development in sensitive locations. It can also support the use of design codes and masterplans where appropriate.

Challenges and opportunities

In the new Local Plan, we will need to:

- Deliver high-quality development that is fit for the future and meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.
- Ensure that new development responds positively to local character while reflecting modern needs and standards.
- Protect and enhance the district’s heritage, including listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and locally important heritage assets.
- Create attractive and well-connected neighbourhoods with access to gardens, open spaces, wildlife areas, walking routes and cycle links.
- Design developments that are safe, accessible and encourage social interaction and community wellbeing.

QUESTION 15

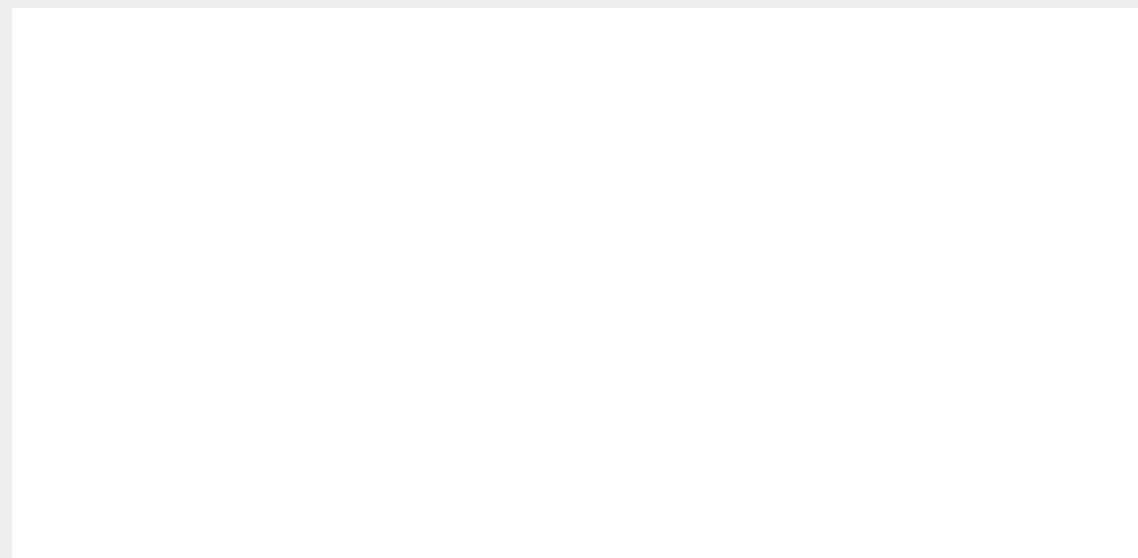
What buildings, places or spaces are most important to you in your area, and why?

QUESTION 16

What design features or qualities do you think should be prioritised in new development?

QUESTION 17

Are there any other design, heritage or local character issues that the new Local Plan should address?



Nature – enhancing our environment

OVERVIEW

The district benefits from a rich and varied natural environment, including the Kent Downs National Landscape, internationally important habitats at Dungeness, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, local nature reserves and ancient woodland.

These landscapes, habitats and species are important to the character of the district and the quality of life of those who live, work and visit here. Protecting and enhancing them will be an important part of preparing the new Local Plan.

Climate change presents additional challenges, including hotter, drier summers, wetter winters, increased flood risk and pressures on habitats and wildlife.

The new Local Plan will need to consider how development can reduce its impact on the environment, help communities adapt to a changing climate and protect and enhance the district's natural assets.

Challenges and opportunities

In the new Local Plan, we will need to:

- Locate development in sustainable locations that make efficient use of land and support walking, cycling and public transport.
- Manage the impacts of climate change by addressing water scarcity, promoting efficient use of water and reducing flood risk.
- Protect and enhance the natural environment by safeguarding important habitats and landscapes and creating opportunities for nature recovery.
- Ensure that development supports biodiversity and protects air and water quality.

QUESTION 18

What environmental issues concern you most in your local area?

Please select up to 3 options:

- ☐ Air quality
 ☐ Water scarcity
- ☐ Flooding
 ☐ Loss of landscape character
- ☐ Coastal change
 ☐ Other
- ☐ Loss of valuable habitats and species
- ☐ Climate change and extreme weather
- ☐ Water pollution
- ☐ Light pollution

If you have selected ‘other’, please specify:

QUESTION 19

Are there any other environmental issues that the new Local Plan should address?

Conclusion

As the previous sections have shown, the new Local Plan will need to balance a range of competing priorities and interests. We would like to understand which issues are most important to you.

QUESTION 20

Are there any other priorities that you think the new Local Plan should address? If so, please tell us what they are.



Community engagement

This Scoping Consultation is the first opportunity to help shape the new Local Plan, and there will be further opportunities to get involved as the plan progresses.

The feedback we receive will help us prepare a Communication and Engagement Strategy, setting out how we will work with residents, communities, businesses and stakeholders throughout the Local Plan process. This will be published alongside the next stage of consultation.

The strategy will explain how we will communicate, who we need to engage with and the different ways people can get involved.

Government planning reforms encourage the use of digital tools in engagement and consultation, and we will explore methods such as interactive maps, online consultation boards and videos.

While we expect online methods to play an important role in future stages of the Local Plan, we recognise that different people engage in different ways. We therefore want to understand how we can make participation accessible and involve as many people as possible.

Some proposed engagement methods are set out below and we would welcome your views on them, as well as any other suggestions.

PLAN-MAKING STAGE	PROPOSED ENGAGEMENT METHOD	TARGET AUDIENCE
All Stages Proposed Content and Evidence Base Consultation Draft Local Plan Consultation	Mail out (Email and post) Social Media Posters in community areas (such as community and Parish Halls, schools, libraries, museums, doctors surgeries) Paper copies: during consultation periods, paper copies of documents will be made available for inspection at the council offices and local libraries 'Your District Today' – magazine for residents Online publication of documents Local media: public notices, press releases will be sent to local media and published on the council website to promote consultations. Planning newsletter published online.	District-wide including residents, businesses, and stakeholders All Parish and Town Councils, and community forums
Later Stages Only Proposed Content and Evidence Base Consultation Draft Local Plan Consultation	Community forums In-person information sessions and workshops Exhibitions and road shows: public displays for local residents to follow progress of plans	District-wide including residents, businesses, and stakeholders

QUESTION 21

Would you like to be kept informed about future stages of the Local Plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

QUESTION 22

How would you prefer to receive information about future stages of the Local Plan?

Please select up to 3 options:

- ☐ Council website
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Posters on community noticeboards
- ☐ Information from your district councillor
- ☐ Information from your town or parish council
- ☐ Email updates and/or newsletters
- ☐ Local newspapers
- ☐ Public events or drop-in sessions
- ☐ Information in local libraries and/or the Civic Centre, Folkestone
- ☐ Presentations to local groups or organisations
- ☐ Other

If you have selected 'other', please specify:



QUESTION 23

Are there any barriers that might make it difficult for you or others to take part in future Local Plan consultations?

QUESTION 25

What would make it easier for you to get involved in future Local Plan consultations?

QUESTION 24

Are there any groups or communities that you think we should make greater efforts to engage with during preparation of the Local Plan?

Next steps

Thank you for taking the time to review this Scoping Consultation and share your views.

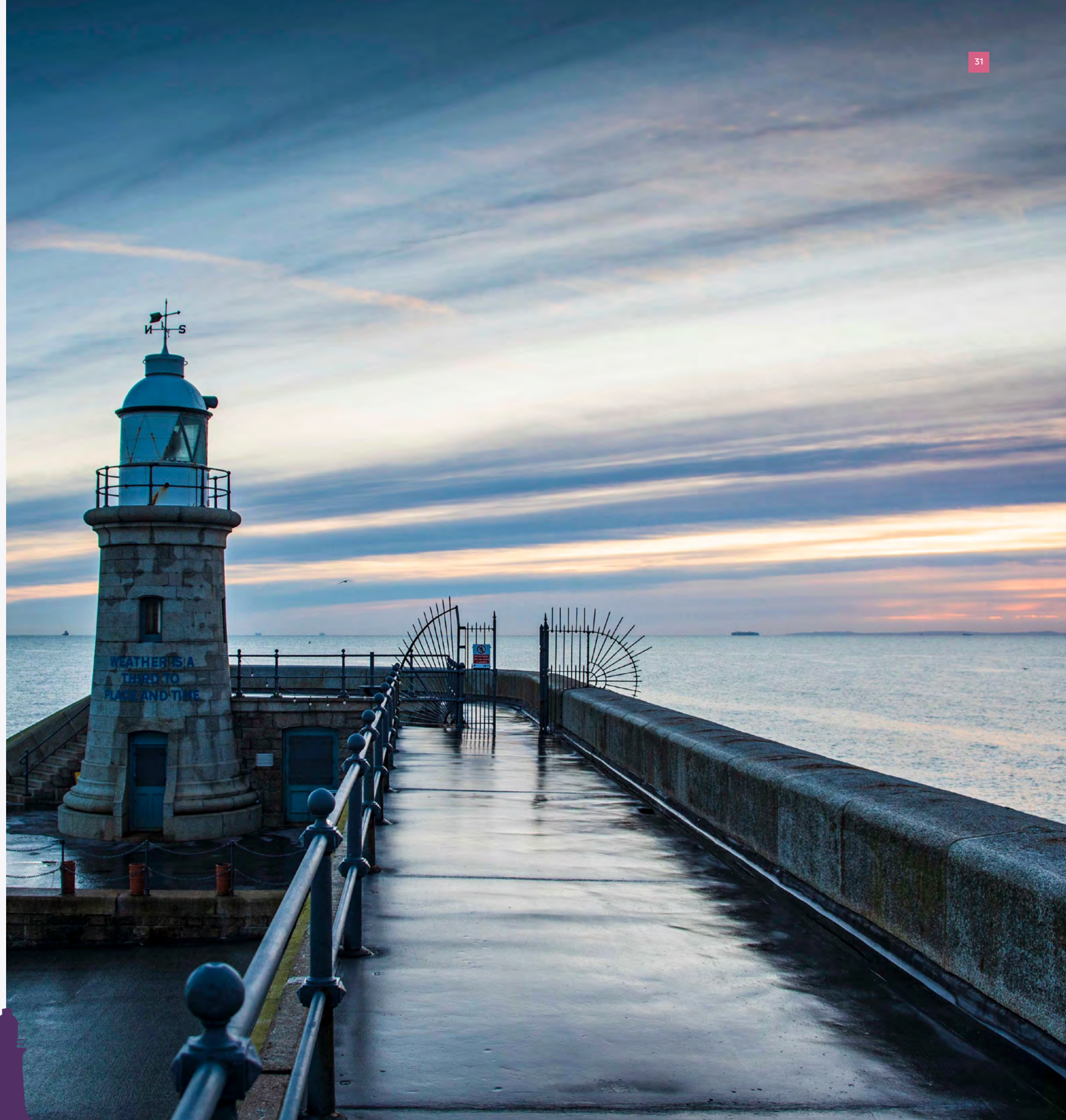
Once the consultation closes, we will read all responses we receive. Your feedback will help us understand the issues that matter most to our communities and stakeholders, identify the evidence we need to gather, and inform how we engage with people as the Local Plan progresses.

There will be further opportunities to help shape the Local Plan:

- **Autumn/Winter 2027:** consultation on the emerging vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the Local Plan, together with a summary of the evidence gathered to date and still to be gathered.
- **Spring/Summer 2028:** consultation on the full draft Local Plan before it is submitted for independent examination.

Further information about the Local Plan and future consultation stages can be found on our website: folkestoneandhythelocalplan.co.uk

If you have any questions about this consultation or the Local Plan process, please contact: planning.policy@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk





Shaping our future, **together**

