Planning Newsletter

October 2026 · Issue 2

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

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Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of the Planning Newsletter. This update highlights some of the district's larger and more significant development sites and planning applications, rather than covering every application received. Where relevant, we have included planning application reference numbers so you can find more information through our online Planning Applications Portal.

This newsletter includes details about the scoping consultation for the new Local Plan which is the first stage in the process. There are updates on enforcement matters and other information for residents and stakeholders. We welcome your feedback, so please let us know whether you find the newsletter useful or would like more information about any of the topics featured by emailing **planning.policy@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk**.



Planning Policy

New Folkestone & Hythe Local Plan – Scoping Consultation

Earlier this year the government brought in far-reaching changes to the planning system, including for the process of preparing local plans.

Following these changes, we are preparing a new local plan for our district that will look forward to 2045. We published our notice of intention to commence local plan preparation, the first formal stage in the process, on 30 June 2026.

We launched our scoping consultation on 7 September, and the consultation closed on 16 October 2026. The scoping consultation is the first of three consultations – this is an early stage where we asked for views on what the new local plan should cover and how we should involve communities and stakeholders as the plan develops.

We have also prepared a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which supports the local plan. The SEA is a technical report that looks at how the local plan could affect the environment. The SEA will be developed alongside the local plan and will help us draft the next stages.

More information on the local plan can be found on our dedicated website: **Folkestone and Hythe Local Plan 2045.**

We will look at the comments we received during the scoping consultation to see how we develop the local plan for the next stage. There will be another public consultation on the local plan in September 2027, when we'll be presenting detail on the local plan vision, policies and evidence. This will be followed by another consultation in 2028, when people will have the opportunity to comment on the final version of the local plan before it goes to a public examination before independent planning Inspectors later in 2028.

If you would like to be kept informed about progress with the new Folkestone & Hythe Local Plan, please let us know by contacting **planning.policy@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

In August 2026, the government published the final version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) following consultation on a draft version in late 2025.

The new NPPF contains a number of plan-making policies to guide local authorities producing new-style local plans. These policies set out the process for preparing and examining local plans and set out what they should contain. There are also a series of national decision-making policies, grouped by topic.

National decision-making policies are intended to guide local authorities making decisions on planning applications and cover key issues such as planning for homes, the economy, town centres, infrastructure, transport, flood risk, the natural environment and heritage.

Local authorities are instructed not to repeat or amend these national decision-making policies when they produce their local plans, but to use the local plan to allocate development sites and include local issues only where they are not covered by the national policies.

The new NPPF can be viewed on the government's website here:
National_Planning_Policy_Framework.pdf

Planning Applications Update

19/0257/FH – Otterpool Park, Ashford Road, Sellindge

In April 2023, the council's Planning and Licensing Committee resolved to grant outline planning permission for a new strategic settlement at Otterpool Park, subject to planning conditions and completion of a S106 agreement to secure infrastructure requirements. The application includes provision for up to 8,500 homes and includes schools, community, retail and leisure facilities, business and commercial uses, open space, public realm, and supporting infrastructure.

Despite the resolution to grant permission, a decision has not been issued to date. To help unlock a range of outstanding issues, a collaboration agreement has been entered into between Otterpool Park LLP and Homes England. This has resulted in a review of the application, and amendments and updates to the application have now been submitted to the council.

Whilst key elements of the proposal including the application site area, description of the development, and number of homes proposed will not change, the amendments include the identification of an early homes parcel between Stone Street and the A20.



Updates to parameter plans to reflect the building of a waste facility at Otterpool Quarry, adjustments to proposed link roads onto the A20, re-definition of development parcels, and greater flexibility on movement corridors within the site are also included.

The amendments will include changes in policy, legislation and guidance that have occurred since 2023, and updated survey information where required. A number of supporting documents including the Environmental Statement, Transport Assessment, Development Specification Document, Strategic Design Principles, Green Infrastructure Strategy and Heritage Strategy have been updated.

The council has carried out further consultation on the amended application which runs to the 4th November 2026. Further details on the amended application are available using the following link to the Otterpool Park pages on the Council's website: **Otterpool Park October 2026 consultation | Folkestone & Hythe District Council**

The application will be reported back to the council's Planning and Licensing Committee following assessment of the amendments and updates and the consideration of any responses received following the consultation process.







25/2112/FH - Former Foxwood School, 59 Seabrook Road, Hythe, CT21 5QJ (URECO Homes 23 Limited)

In June 2026, the Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission, subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement, for the redevelopment of the former Foxwood School site in Hythe. The hybrid application proposes up to 150 new homes, comprising 60 dwellings submitted in detail and a further 90 dwellings in outline, together with extensive areas of public open space, landscaping, ecological enhancements and supporting infrastructure.

The site was allocated for residential development in the Places and Policies Local Plan and has remained vacant since the closure of Foxwood School in 2016. The approved scheme adopts a landscape led approach, retaining significant areas of woodland and mature trees, delivering around 1.8 hectares of open space, a children's play area, enhanced walking connections, and eight self/custom-build plots.

The Section 106 agreement will secure a range of benefits, including contributions towards secondary education and SEND provision, a viability review mechanism to capture any future uplift towards affordable housing, biodiversity net gain measures, highway improvements including a new signal controlled crossing on Seabrook Road and bus stop upgrades, as well as the long term management and maintenance of open space and play facilities.

The redevelopment will bring a long vacant brownfield site back into use, delivering new homes in a sustainable location while enhancing the site's green infrastructure and addressing longstanding issues associated with the vacant former school buildings.

Proposed site layout:



26/1191/FH/CON – Bouverie Square Park, Folkestone

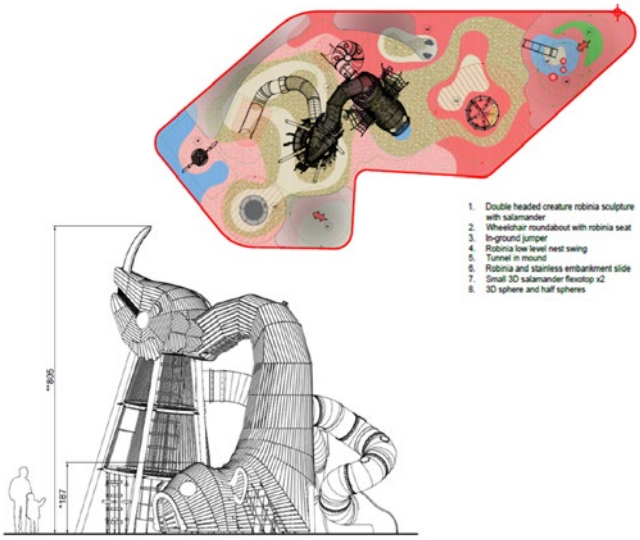
In August 2026, the Planning Committee approved details relating to the play area within the new Bouverie Square Park.

The approved proposals include a landmark play and public art installation created in collaboration with Creative Folkestone and artist Monster Chetwynd. At the heart of the scheme is a bespoke double headed salamander inspired play structure featuring climbing nets, enclosed tube slides, bridges, towers and interactive play elements.

Additional equipment includes a wheelchair accessible roundabout, nest swing, embankment slide, in-ground jumper, play tunnels and sculptural features designed to provide inclusive play opportunities for a wide range of ages and abilities.

The play area has been designed as both a recreational facility and a distinctive piece of public art, reflecting themes of creativity, regeneration and transformation that underpin the wider Bouverie Square project. A soft containment strategy, incorporating planting, seating, bollards, level changes and limited fencing, will help define the play space while maintaining the open character of the new public square.

The approved play area will form a focal point within the new park, helping to create an attractive, family friendly destination in the town centre and supporting the wider regeneration ambitions for Folkestone.



25/0449/FH – Land adjacent 25 Blackhouse Hill, Saltwood

Planning officers worked with the applicant to secure approval at Planning Committee for a contemporary development of three town houses, two flats, and enhanced ecological land on a challenging, steeply sloped, scrubland site adjacent to a disused railway embankment.

The approved homes are of a contemporary design that respects the traditional arrangement, proportions and features of the existing neighbouring properties.

Concerns in regard to ecology, parking, and land stability were all thoroughly addressed to ensure a scheme that contributes positively to the local area without detracting from existing character or introducing unacceptable harm for neighbouring residents.

The applicant is in the process of discharging the relevant planning conditions ahead of commencing work on site.



Mountfield Industrial Estate, New Romney

23/0719/FH (plot H – 6 units)

23/2082/FH (plot B – 17 units)

24/0802/FH (plot A – 3 units)

24/1901/FH (plot C – 18 units)

25/1648/FH (plots D and E – 9 units)

25/1759/FH (plot G – 1 unit)

Six planning permissions have been granted for a total of 54 general and light industrial units on the Mountfield expansion area, which represents a significant proportion of the council's allocated employment land within the adopted Local Plan.

The council has sold plots A, B, C, and H to new owners. Development has been completed on plots B and H, and those units are steadily being occupied by a variety of businesses; up to 100 jobs are expected to be created on plot B alone.

Groundwork preparations are commencing on plots C, D, and E, and planning officers are currently considering an application for amendments to plot G that would enable a company from outside the district to move in and expand its operations.



26/1017/FH & 26/1018/FH - Homebase, Park Farm Road, Folkestone, CT19 5FJ

Two planning applications have been received for this site. One is seeking to vary conditions imposed upon the original grant of permission from 2004. This is in order to allow the subdivision of the unit into two retail units, as well as amending the restriction on the range of goods that can be sold from the site.

Future occupiers are likely to be M&S Food and Home Bargains.

The second application seeks physical alterations to the building to facilitate the proposed subdivision, including removing the garden centre and other elements from the building, creating new entrances, altering the exterior cladding, and providing additional car parking.

These applications are currently under consideration.



25/2080/FH – Lower Leas Coastal Park

Planning permission was granted by the Planning and Licensing Committee in March 2026 for a replacement timber play structure as part of wider ongoing works to refurbish the Lower Leas Coastal Park.

These wider works include new play equipment and landscaping with a refurbishment budget of £750,000, funded by development levies aimed at improving local infrastructure (CIL & s106), grants and other council budgets.

The play structure includes a series of towers, slides, rope bridges, a trampoline and a climbing wall up to a maximum height of 8.6m. It is constructed from Robinia Hardwood with the design taking cues from the surrounding nature with a repeating tree motif and animals and bugs throughout. The play equipment has recently been completed and re-opened to the public.





1-5 Bouverie Place, Folkestone

Planning enforcement action, including the service of notices and prosecution before magistrates, have resulted in significant improvements to the condition and appearance of this important building. Graffiti has been removed, broken windows repaired and boarded and the dilapidated shopfront has been repaired, bringing about a significant improvement to the building and the appearance of the area,

from this:



To this:



Paternoster Farm, St Mary in the Marsh

In response to complaints that this site was being used for residential purposes, and for housing a large number of dogs, the council served an enforcement notice requiring these uses to cease.

The occupier appealed against the notice, but the appeal was dismissed. The council will monitor the site to ensure full compliance with the requirements of the notice.

Services offered by the Development Management Team

If you are considering extending your house, the council now offers "Brief Advice Meetings" – an in-person meeting at the Civic Centre in Folkestone. These meetings are for domestic proposals only and are aimed at applicants who want to understand the process and the policies the council will apply when considering an application for works to a dwelling. Details are available here: **https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/planning/brief-advice-meetings**

The council also offers a "fast-track" application process for certain types of application. If you need a swift decision, for example – if your project has time sensitive construction requirements, an additional fee will result in your application being prioritised and determined well in advance of the statutory eight week period – details are available on the council website

Upcoming changes in how the council will determine applications

At the end of October 2026, the government's new National Scheme of Delegation will come into effect. This significant change to the planning process at English councils means that certain types of application must always be determined by the officers in our Development Management team, whilst others may still be determined by councillors at our Planning and Licensing Committee, subject to the applications meeting criteria set by the government.

More detail on this will be available on the council website. This is a link to an external website offering a useful explanation of the changes:

https://www.planninggeek.co.uk/applications/national-scheme-of-delegation/