

Ashford Borough Council

Local Development Scheme

July 2022



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Introduction

What is a Local Development Scheme?

Ashford Borough Council is required to prepare, maintain and publish a Local Development Scheme (LDS) in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011).

The LDS is a 'project plan' which sets out the timetable for the production of new or revised Local Plan Documents which will form part of the Council's Local Development Plan.

The LDS provides a starting point for the community to find out:

- The current Local Plan documents which make up the statutory Development Plan for Ashford.
- The subject matter and the geographical area to which each document being prepared relates.
- Any future Local Plan documents which are to be prepared, and their associated timescales.

The LDS will be reviewed annually through the Authority Monitoring Report which can found at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/authority-monitoring-reports>

Previous LDS Documents

This LDS supersedes all previous versions. The Council produced its first LDS in March 2005, followed by subsequent schemes in July 2008, December 2010, July 2014, September 2015, May 2017, April 2018, March 2019 and March 2021. In accordance with Regulations, all formerly adopted LDS timetables can be reviewed at Appendix 3 – [Previous Local Development Scheme Timetables \(now superseded\)](#)

The Current adopted Development Plan documents:

Development Plan Documents

The current Development Plan for Ashford borough comprises the Local Plan 2030 (2019), along with the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan (2013), the Wye Neighbourhood Plan (2016), the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan (2017), the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan (2019), Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Neighbourhood Plan (2021), Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (2022) and the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2016) as well as the Kent Minerals and Waste Early Partial Review (2020). All can be viewed at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy/adopted-development-plan-documents/>

- **Ashford Local Plan to 2030 (Adopted February 2019)**
The Local Plan 2030 is the principal development plan document for the borough and sets out the overall vision and strategic objectives for the delivery of growth in Ashford until 2030, and establishes the level of new housing and employment development for Ashford borough for the life of the Plan. There is a statutory requirement to review the Local Plan within 5 years of adoption. This review has not commenced.

- **Chilmington Green Area Action Plan (AAP) (2013)**
The AAP provides a policy framework to deliver up to 5,750 new homes and 1,000 new jobs over the next 25 years at Chilmington Green. The AAP contains topic policies for community infrastructure, transport improvements, ecology and provides a framework for different character areas.

Adopted Neighbourhood Plans

Provisions in the Localism Act (2011) allow local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans for their local areas. Neighbourhood Plans will form part of the Development Plan for the areas that they cover once they are formally 'made' by the Local Planning Authority. There are currently 5 adopted Neighbourhood Plans in the borough; Wye, Pluckley, Rolvenden, Boughton Aluph and Eastwell, and Egerton.

There are other emerging Neighbourhood Plans, but as they are produced by the parishes, there is no requirement to set out the timescales within this LDS.

More information on all Neighbourhood Plans can be found at:

<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans>

Minerals and Waste Plan

As the minerals and waste planning authority for Kent, Kent County Council have to plan for waste management capacity and mineral provision. The plan, and subsequent partial review in 2020, sets out the vision and strategy for waste management and mineral provision up until the year 2030. This can be viewed at: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/planning-policies/minerals-and-waste-planning-policy#tab-1>

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) support the development plans. All matters covered in SPDs relate to policies within the Development Plan. Ashford has a number of adopted SPD's which are used as material considerations when assessing planning applications:

- Affordable Housing SPD (2009)
- Residential Parking SPD (2010)
- Sustainable Drainage SPD (2010)
- Residential Space and Layout SPD (2011)
- Landscape Character SPD (2011)
- Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD (2012)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2012)
- Stables, Arenas and other Horse Related Development SPD (2014)
- Dark Skies SPD (2014)
- Chilmington Design Code SPD (2016)
- Fibre to the Premises SPD (2020)

Similarly, the Council has a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents and guidance notes which support policies in the Borough Local Plan 2030 and provide more detailed advice on particular topics.

SPD, SPG and informal guidance notes are available to view on the Council's website at:

<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy/adopted-development-plan-documents/other-planning-guidance/>

Other relevant documents

Statement of Community Involvement

The Ashford Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in March 2020. The SCI sets out how the planning department intends to achieve community involvement, public participation and cooperation in all planning matters, including the preparation of local development documents, supplementary planning documents and arrangements for consultation on planning applications. More information can be found at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy/public-consultation/>

Authority Monitoring Report

The Council publishes up-to-date authority monitoring information on its website. Not only does this information provide updates on the status of the LDS timetable, it also sets out the progress of the Local Plan 2030, reports on public consultations and duty-to-cooperate consultations, provides an update on neighbourhood planning within the Borough and details borough-wide statistics on planning topic areas such as housing, employment, population, community, health, education, environment and transport. The Authority Monitoring Report webpage can be viewed at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/authority-monitoring-reports>

Policies Map

Finally, the Council is required to produce a Policies Map, which shows the location of proposals in all current adopted local development documents on an ordnance survey based map. The map is web based and is kept up-to-date and reflects current adopted policies within the Borough. The Adopted Policies Map is available to view on the Council's website at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/maps>

Emerging Plans

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Council consulted on a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule for an 8 week period in Summer 2016.

However, the process to introduce CIL in Ashford has been since put on hold, awaiting the government's review of CIL and developer contributions. Following the government's response to the review set out in the document 'Government response to supporting housing delivery through developer contributions' (October, 2018), the 'Planning for the Future' White Paper (August, 2020) and proposals for an Infrastructure Levy as part of the 'Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill' (May 2022) the Council is currently considering the options for taking forward CIL. The Council's developer contributions webpages will provide further updates on progress and timescales if and when they are available, but no timetable is set out in this LDS for production of CIL at this time.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Local Plan

Ashford are committed to meeting the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community within the borough, in the same way as the housing needs of the settled community are planned for in the Local Plan 2030. National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) also requires that Local Planning Authorities identify and update annually a five year supply of deliverable sites for travellers, and also identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for years 6-10 and, where possible, years 11-15.

A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is needed to fulfil the Council's obligations under the PPTS and provides a robust assessment of need and supply. The GTAA informs the preparation of the Local Plan by providing an indication of the number of pitches the site policies in the Local Plan needs to provide. In 2018 a GTAA was completed and includes a proposed number of pitches that are needed in the borough. [View the full 2018 GTAA report \[pdf\] 1240KB.](#)

The [adopted Local Plan 2030](#) proposed a dual approach to traveller site/pitch provision. It allocated three new pitches, and includes a policy to allow sites to be considered that come forward through the planning application process. However, this does not meet all of the pitch needs identified in the GTAA. In order to meet the outstanding site and pitch needs, it was proposed to prepare a separate Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Local Plan to address the shortfall.

Previous stages of plan production

An issues and options consultation was carried out in early 2018. An options consultation was carried out in early 2020. These consultations were designed to highlight the key issues around this specific topic, while suggesting options to address these issues. The format of the documents was to provide some background information and then pose a series of 'options' as questions.

Nutrient neutrality and the Stodmarsh Lakes

In July 2020 (and most recently updated in March 2022), Natural England issued Advice to the Council regarding the poor water quality at the Stodmarsh Lakes designated sites, in the neighbouring Canterbury district. The Advice sets out that there are excessive nitrogen and phosphorus levels in the water within the Stodmarsh Lakes and so the site is in an unfavourable condition with the potential to further deteriorate.

[View the latest March 2022 Natural England Advice on Nutrient Neutrality \[pdf\] 499KB](#)

In light of relevant case law, and the consequence of this Advice, any development proposing overnight accommodation within the Stour catchment, or discharging water to a wastewater treatment works in the catchment, is required to prevent further deterioration of the Stodmarsh Lakes by demonstrating that it can achieve 'nutrient neutrality'.

The ability of developments to achieve nutrient neutrality is dependent on a number of complex variables, including land size and location. Whilst it may be possible for some affected developments to achieve nutrient neutrality via on-site solutions, a significant number of developments will not be able to progress, as mitigation simply cannot be accommodated on-site.

The Council is taking proactive steps to deliver a strategic solution to the Stodmarsh issue, through a 'Stodmarsh Mitigation Strategy'. This Strategy will provide a strategic solution within the borough boundary to rectify the position as swiftly as possible. The work on the project thus far clearly shows numerous benefits of adopting a strategic approach.

In July 2020, it was agreed that the Council would progress with the creation of strategic wetlands, as a core component of the Stodmarsh Mitigation Strategy. The Council are currently progressing with acquiring land for these purposes. The most recent update on the progress of the Stodmarsh Mitigation Strategy is set out in a March 2022 Cabinet Report.

[View the March 2022 Cabinet Report on Stodmarsh \[pdf\] 1MB](#)

Impact on the preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan

The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Local Plan aims to identify a number of sites for potential residential occupation by gypsies and travellers across the borough, as well as including topic policies relating to gypsy and traveller development. As the Local Plan seeks to allocate sites which will provide overnight accommodation, the Natural England Advice on nutrient neutrality is engaged. The Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan must be able to demonstrate that the sites proposed for allocation either within the Stour catchment or discharging foul water into the catchment will be nutrient neutral, in order for the Local Plan to be in accordance with The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Without strategic mitigation strategy in place, a significant portion of the borough is constrained by the nutrient neutrality issue. The constraint fetters the Council's ability to sustainably plan for gypsy and traveller development across the entire borough; as areas within the Stour catchment, which prior to the nutrient neutrality issue were considered sustainable, may no longer be deliverable in light of this new constraint. It is therefore considered that progress on this Local Plan should be held until such time as a strategic solution is available. Delivery of the strategic solution will remove the current temporary hold on development within the Stour catchment, and release sites which are considered undeliverable based solely on the grounds of nutrient neutrality.

Proposed Timetable

When taking into account the impact of the Stodmarsh delay on the production of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan, as set out above, it is considered that it would be suitable to combine and weave the work on the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Local Plan into a future Local Plan Review of the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030.

When strategic nutrient mitigation is available and implemented, the current constraint and hold on development within the Stour catchment will effectively be removed, and work on the planning for the needs of the gypsy and traveller communities within the borough can continue. As stated above, the Local Plan Review will consider the issues arising from the work on the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan to ensure that gypsy and traveller development growth can be sustainably planned within the borough, within a singular plan rather than two separate Local Plans. When required, the Local Development Scheme will be reviewed to set out the timescales of production on the Local Plan Review.

The timetable in Appendix 2, sets out the full timescales of the previous stages of the production of Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan.

Local Plan Review

The Ashford Local Plan 2030 was adopted in 2019. Within paragraph 1.35 of the Local Plan it is set out that a decision as to whether to review the Plan will be taken no later than five years from the adoption date of the Local Plan.

The Local Development Scheme will be updated when a timetable for the Review of the Local Plan has been established and the review has commenced.

Monitoring

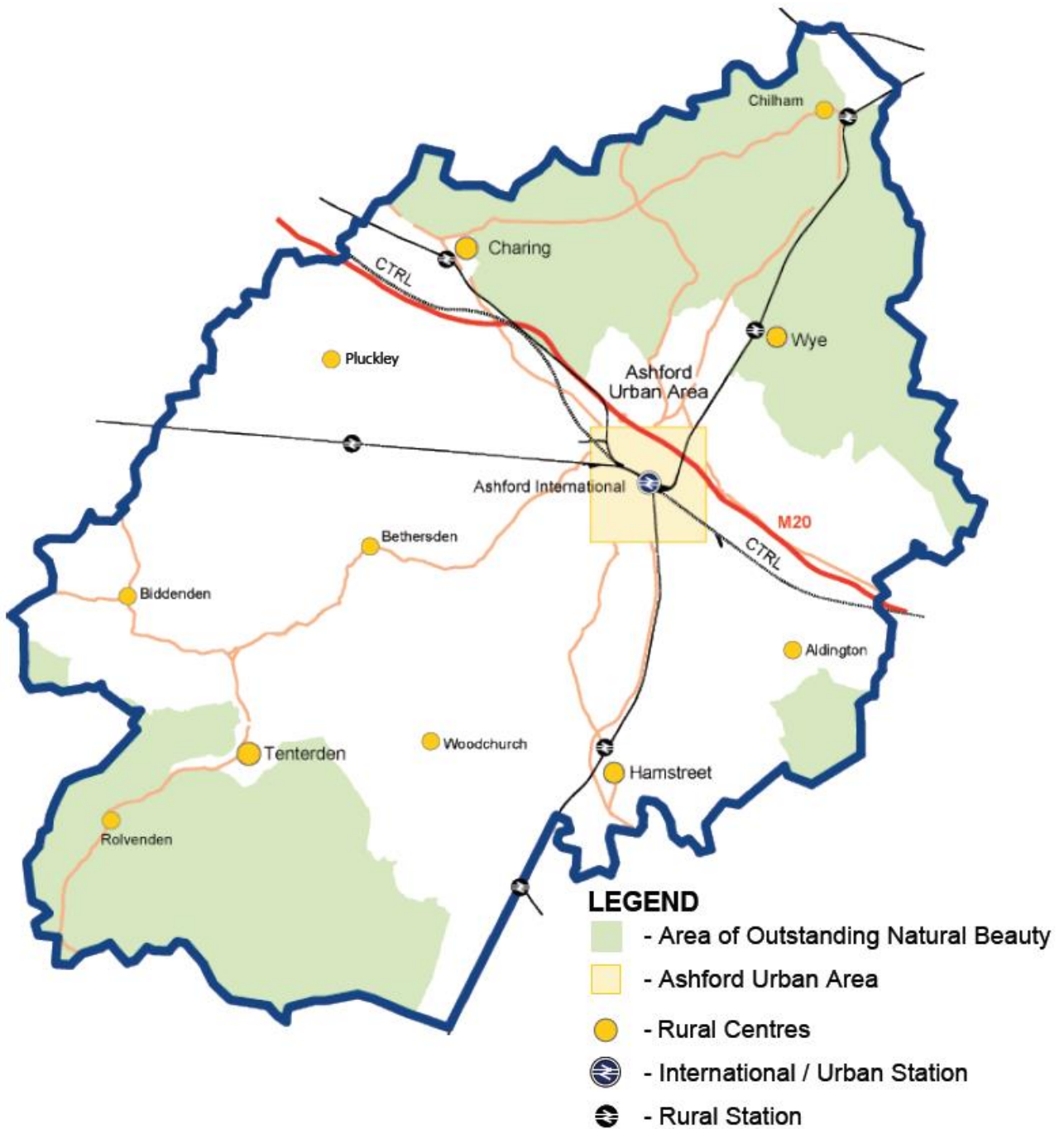
Monitoring systems will be maintained to assess the implementation of the Local Plan/Development Plan documents and to ensure that the evidence upon which the Development Plan is based is still relevant and up to date.

The Council produces an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). It will use the AMR to assess:

- Whether the Council is on track to meet the targets it has set itself in its LDS and if not the reasons why;
- What impact the Council's policies are having; and
- Whether the Council needs to review any policies in order to meet their sustainable development objectives.

The Council will keep this LDS, and the relevant planning documents, under regular review, and will amend its programme of work as necessary.

Appendix 1 – Boundary of Ashford Borough Local Plan 2030 (Borough-wide coverage)



Appendix 2 – Adopted LDS Timetable (2022)

DPD	2020				2021				2022			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Gypsy & Traveller Local Plan	Reg 18-Public Consultation				Reg 19 Preparation				To be progressed as part of future Local Plan Review			

	Regulation 18 - Initial Consultation and evidence gathering
	Regulation 19 - Publication of Draft Local Plan
	Regulation 22 - Submission of document to Secretary of State; EiP = Examination Hearing; R = Inspector's Final Report
	Adoption of Local Plan

LDS Review Timetable July 2008

Timetable for the Preparation of the Ashford Local Development Framework – 2008 – 2011

Key: C = Consultation on scope of SA, P = Publication of submission DPD for consultation or Publication of draft SPD for consultation (as appropriate), S = Submission of DPD to Secretary of State, A = Adoption, 1 = Pre Hearing Meeting, 2 = Hearing Sessions Open, 3 = Inspector Report Fact Check, 4 = Inspector Report Final.

LDF Document	2008												2009												2010												2011																						
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D											
Core Strategy							A																																																				
Ashford Town Centre AAP															P					S	1	2																																					
Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD																																																											
Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD																																																											
Chilmington Green / Discovery Park AAP																																																											
Cheesmans Green / Waterbrook AAP																																																											
Generic DC policy DPD																																																											

Supplementary Planning Documents	2008												2009												2010												2011											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Affordable Housing SPD									P																																							
Sustainable Design & Construction SPD																																																
Infrastructure Contributions SPD																																																
Residential Space & Layout SPD																																																
Green Spaces & Water Environment SPD																																																
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems																																																
Broadband & Telecommunications SPD																																																

LDS Review Timetable December 2010

Table 2 Production Programme																																																
LDF Document	2010												2011												2012												2013											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Ashford Town Centre AAP																																																
Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD																																																
Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD																																																
Chilmington Green / Discovery Park AAP																																																
Cheesmans Green / Waterbrook AAP																																																
Development Management DPD																																																
Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople DPD																																																
Core Strategy (First Review) DPD																																																

Production Programme Key	
	Plan preparation stages; 25 = Regulation 25 - Public Consultation on Issues and Options Report
	Regulation 27 - Publication/consultation on Development Plan Document
	Regulation 30 - Submission of document to Secretary of State; PH = Pre-Hearing Meeting; H = Examination Hearing; R = Inspector's Final Report
	Adoption of Development Plan Document; A = adoption

LDS Timetable May 2017

DPD	2016				2017				2018				2019				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Local Plan 2030			Reg 19 - Public Consultation				Reg 19 - Main Changes Consultation		Reg 22 - Submission		EIP	R	A				
Gypsy & Traveller DPD								Reg 18 - Public Consultation		Reg 19 - Public Consultation			Reg 22 - Submission	EIP	R	A	

KEY

	Regulation 18 - Initial Consultations and evidence gathering
	Regulation 19 - Publication of Draft DPD
	Regulation 19 - Main Changes to Draft DPD
	Regulation 22 - Submission of document to Secretary of State; EIP = Examination Hearing; R = Inspector's Final Report
A	Adoption of Development Plan Document

LDS Timetable March 2018

DPD	2016				2017				2018				2019					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Local Plan 2030			Reg 19 - Public Consultation				Reg 19 - Main Changes Consultation				Reg 22 - Submission							
Gypsy & Traveller DPD								Reg 18 - Public Consultation					Reg 19 - Public Consultation		Reg 22 - Submission	EIP	R	A

KEY

	Regulation 18 - Initial Consultation and evidence gathering
	Regulation 19 - Publication of Draft DPD
	Regulation 19 - Main Changes to Draft DPD
	Regulation 22 - Submission of document to Secretary of State; EIP = Examination Hearing; R = Inspector's Final Report
A	Adoption of Development Plan Document

LDS Timetable March 2021
Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation DPD

PLAN	2020				2021				2022				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Gypsy & Traveller Local Plan	Reg 18- Public Consultation				Reg 19 Preparation				Reg 19- Public Consultation				
										Reg 22- Submission			
											EIP		
												R	

KEY

	Regulation 18 - Initial Consultations on Issues and Options and evidence gathering
	Regulation 19 - Evidence Gathering and Preparation
	Regulation 19 - Publication of Draft Local Plan for consultation
	Regulation 22 - Submission of document to Secretary of State; EIP = Examination Hearing; R = Inspector's Final Report
	Adoption of Local Plan