

Ashford local plan



Main Modifications – September 2018

Summary of proposed changes

This consultation proposes changes to the Ashford Local Plan 2030 Submission Version. The changes are proposed to address the Inspectors' comments raised in their post-hearings advice note, changes agreed during the hearing sessions themselves, and those proposed in the Council's Hearing Statements and Statements of Common Ground. All of these documents are available on the Council's website at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-to-2030/examination-documents/>

This document provides a summary of the proposed main modifications. All modifications can be viewed in full on the Council's consultation portal at: https://haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk/consult.ti/MainMods_LocalPlan/consultationHome



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

ASHFORD

Planning our future **together**

Ashford local plan



Housing Requirement and Supply

Policy SP2 – The Strategic Approach to Housing Delivery (MM3)

The following changes are being proposed to address the Inspectors comments in their Post-Hearing Advice Note:

- Increase in objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing from 15,675 to 16,872 dwellings (2011-2030); 888 per year.
- Housing requirement from 2018 is 13,118.
- As a result of deletion of 'London Future Proofing' and increase of market signals adjustment from 5% to 15% for the whole plan period (not just from 2017).
- Changes to land supply have been made with the shortfall in delivery (from 2011) to be provided over a seven year period to 2025, adding 352 per year to the baseline OAN for those years.
- Annual housing target of 1,240 dwellings (+ relevant buffer) to 2025
- After 2025, target of 888 per year (+ relevant buffer)
- Proposed dwellings on site allocations reduced from 6,749 to 5,889.
- Urban site allocations for 4,872 units and rural/village site allocations for 1,017 units.
- Increased 'windfall' assumption (non-allocated sites)
- Reduced contingency buffer from 1600 to 400.

Housing site allocations

Housing site deletions

The Inspectors considered that the following sites are poorly related to existing settlements of any size and have relatively poor access to services and facilities capable of meeting everyday needs. They are therefore proposed to be deleted:

- S47 – A20, Land east of Hothfield Mill (MM45)
- S48 – A20, Land rear of Holiday Inn Hotel (MM46)
- S49 – A20, Land north of Tutt Hill (MM47)
- S58 – High Halden A28, Stevenson Brothers (MM55)

The following sites are also proposed to be deleted:

- S34 – Hothfield, Coach Drive – due to its location being visibly separate from the village and the loss of trees (MM35)
- S53 – Brook, Nats Lane – due to impact on local character and residential amenity (MM50)
- S61 – Wittersham – due to uncertainty regarding the proposed access to the site and its potential impact on biodiversity (MM58)

No new sites are proposed.

Site policy dwelling number reductions

Inspector recommendations included a re-assessment of the capacity of some sites. This resulted in dwelling number reductions on the following sites:

- S51 – Aldington, Land North of church View (reduced from 10 to 6) (MM48)
- S52 – Aldington, Land South of Goldwell Court (reduced from 20 to 12) (MM49)
- S59 – Mersham, Land at Rectory Close (reduced from 15 to 8) (MM56)

Policies to reflect permissions

The following policies have been updated to reflect the recent grant of planning permission on the site; S37, Smarden, Land at Charter Hall permitted for 50 dwellings (MM38); S36, Shadoxhurst permitted for 19 dwellings (MM37); and S27 Biddenden which reflects the permission for local office space (MM28).

'Indicative capacity'

One of the Inspectors' recommendations is that all site policy capacities should be worded as 'an indicative capacity of ... dwellings'. This reflects the national position of flexibility with the aim of ensuring a good design, in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan, is achieved on all sites, rather than determining a set number prior to a scheme being designed.

Consistency of policy wording

A number of site policies have been updated to ensure they are consistent in the wording that has been used, in relation to impacts on heritage assets and their setting to reflect the statutory wording of 'preserve or enhance', addressing biodiversity and landscape to reflect the statutory wording of 'conserve and enhance'; and requirements for community infrastructure provision.

Other specific site policy changes

- S15 - Change of employment development requirement from 8,500 sqm to around 0.7ha land and deletion of live/work unit requirement (MM18)
- S31 – Amendments to ensure design and layout of development takes into account location of development and specific requirement for the green buffer to be at least 30m along the boundary with Ancient Woodland (MM32)

Windfall Housing Policies

'Windfall' is housing which comes forward outside of sites allocated within this plan. A certain amount of windfall housing delivery is predicted to come forward over the plan period and is considered suitable within or adjoining existing settlements. There are two separate policies which deal with these types of housing application; HOU3a for proposals within the confines of Ashford and a list of named settlements, and HOU5 which deals with schemes which come forward adjoining or close to a named settlement and in the countryside, which has more restrictive criteria to be met. A review of the settlements listed in these policies has been carried out and is available via the consultation portal (link above), resulting in the following changes (MM60 and MM61):

- The removal of 5 settlements from both policies HOU3a and HOU5. These are not considered suitable settlements for windfall growth and will be considered as 'countryside' for the purposes of decision making:
- Bilsington
- Crundale
- Molash
- Sevington
- Shottenden
- It was considered that not all HOU3a settlements would be suitable for edge of settlement growth and therefore HOU5 listed settlements are now listed separately from those in HOU3a.
- These settlements are no longer included in HOU5: Appledore Heath, Boughton Lees/ Eastwell, Brook, Charing Heath, Egerton Forstal, Godmersham, Hastingleigh, Kenardington, Little Chart, Newenden, Old Wives Lees, Pluckley Thorne & Station, Rolvenden Layne, Ruckinge, Stone in Oxney, Warehorne, Westwell.
- HOU5 policy criteria has also been made clearer with regards to the ability of settlements to 'absorb' additional growth, the assessment of settlement size and the type and quality of services available, and the proximity to primary settlements such as Ashford.

Gypsy and Traveller policy changes

- S44 Westwell Lane has been reduced in capacity from 5 to 1 due to its location with the Kent Downs AONB (MM43)
- Amendments to make HOU17 (Safeguarding existing Traveller sites)

Other significant policy changes

- SP4 (Delivery of Retail and Leisure Needs) amended to incorporate the need for retail development in terms of floorspace into the policy (MM5)
- HOU9 (Standalone Annexes) amended to remove the requirement to provide evidence of family need. (MM65)
- HOU14 (Accessibility Standards) amended to apply to a minimum of 20% of homes rather than 100%, which is reflective of the evidence base. (MM67)
- HOU15 (Private External Open Space) redrafted policy to be less restrictive and ensure it is applied to applications involving the loss of garden land (MM68)
- EMP2 (Loss or redevelopment of employment sites) redrafted to ensure application to relevant employment generating uses within or adjoining specific settlements (MM73)
- EMP6 (Promotion of Fibre to the Premise – FTTP) redrafted to provide clarity about how it should be implemented. It now requires applicants to produce a FTTP statement to support any planning application which will establish how and when FTTP will be secured through new development, working with the relevant telecom provider. It also now provides a clear steer as to the type and scale of development that would trigger these policy requirements. (MM74)
- EMP7 & EMP8 (Shopping frontages in Ashford and Tenterden) redrafted to include consideration of the impact upon a proposal on the vitality and viability of the town centres. Primary Shopping Area in Ashford extended to include the Elwick Road leisure development currently under construction (MM75 and MM76)
- COM2 (Recreation, Sport, Play and Open Spaces) redrafted to include appropriate references to the evidence base and assessment tools to which an applicant will be expected to refer, as a means of determining the scale and nature of community/sports provision that should be provided on an application-by-application basis. It also now provides greater clarity on how the varying types should be provided in order to be consistent with the Council's preferred model of distribution across the borough. (MM96)
- IMP3 – Planning Enforcement – this policy has been deleted, but supporting text remains. (MM99)

Other changes

A number of other less significant changes have been made to policies and supporting text in the Plan to ensure the following:

- Consistency of terminology
- Consistency between supporting text and policies
- Appropriate cross-referencing of policies
- Additions to policy to incorporate aspects of Supplementary Planning Documents (e.g. Policies ENV4 – MM86, Policy ENV9 – MM90)

Interactive Map Viewer

Changes that are proposed to the policies map are included within the consultation document online and in hard copy and can also be viewed on the Council's interactive map at the following link. This map contains layers showing changes made at different stages of the plan evolution and now includes a Main Modifications layer. <http://newmaps.ashford.gov.uk/EXTLocalPlan2030/default.aspx>

Sustainability Appraisal

The Modifications to the submission Local Plan are supported by an addendum to the 'Sustainability Appraisal' which explains how the policies have evolved throughout the plan preparation and the rationale for them. The Sustainability Appraisal Addendum is also subject to consultation and comments upon it should be directed towards this separate consultation.

