

Local Plan - Questions and Answers

15 September 2025

How can I have a say on the new Local Plan and the proposed sites?

We are proposing to consult on the new Local Plan for seven weeks from 23 October until 11 December 2025.

When the consultation starts, you can take part:

- Online at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/emerginglocalplan
- By completing a paper survey available from local libraries, town or parish council offices and Sevenoaks District Council's offices
- Coming to a 'Pop up' session - details will be available nearer the time at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/emerginglocalplan

If you are interested in taking part and would like to be updated on Local Plan news, sign up to our [mailing list](#).

What is the Local Plan and why do we need it?

Every local authority needs a Local Plan. In very broad terms, a Local Plan will guide what can be built and where over a minimum 15-year period.

Local Plans set out how much housing, employment land and infrastructure is needed during the lifetime of the Local Plan and where it should be provided. It should seek to include enough land to meet the Government's Housing target.

The development sites should be in the most suitable locations. Local Plans should also include proposals to protect and enhance the natural and built environment.

Once adopted, the Local Plan is used to make decisions on planning applications.

What if we don't have a Local Plan?

Development will still take place. However, we will not be able to decide where development should go, and will be less able to require developers to fund new schools, open space, road upgrades and other infrastructure that is needed to support new development.

Why can't existing built-up areas accommodate the new housing?

The Government has set us a target of 17,175 new homes over 15 years.

We know from our studies there is not enough land within our built-up areas to meet this new housing target.

As a result, we must look at land in the Green Belt to help deliver the Government's housing target.

What are Grey Belt sites?

The Grey Belt is a new concept introduced by the Government in December 2024, through the National Planning Policy Framework. This document defines what Grey Belt is and sets out the approach that we are required to follow.

In addition, the Government has published guidance on how to assess whether land in the Green Belt can be considered Grey Belt. This has been used in drawing up our Grey Belt evidence.

Sites which are considered Grey Belt must be in sustainable locations if they are to be included in the Local Plan. Work on the Grey Belt will be available as part of our evidence base once the consultation starts.

What is the breakdown of new homes?

Our Local Plan looks to address the Government's new housing target of 17,175 new homes.

We will be exploring two options through our latest consultation. Both options include sites within and on the edge of existing settlements. These include some Green Belt sites on previously developed land/brownfield or have been identified as Grey Belt. Together they will deliver approximately 11,500 homes.

Both options also include homes that already have permission (called windfall sites), which add around a further 4,000 homes.

In addition, option 2 includes Pedham Place, which could deliver approximately 2,500 homes. The total approximate figures for both options are as follows:

Option 1: 15,500

Option 2: 18,000

We are likely to need a surplus of sites (a 'buffer') just in case some of the sites do not progress to the next stage and are not submitted for planning permission. This is something the Government requires, and it is important as it will ensure we have sufficient sites available to meet our housing target.

What would happen if the Council ignored the Government's housing target?

The Government has made it clear in national planning policy that we are expected to meet the housing target in full. Any shortfall would need to be robustly justified and is likely to be subject to significant challenge. If we were to ignore it, the Planning Inspector is likely to recommend that the emerging Local Plan should be withdrawn from examination.

Who would build the new homes?

The majority of new homes would be built by developers, this can be small scale developers building single dwellings, through to the developers of larger sites. A small number will be built as self-build or custom-build housing.

How many of the new homes would be affordable?

Affordable housing refers to housing for sale or rents for those who cannot afford to buy housing on the open market.

As part of the Local Plan, we will be setting thresholds for when we expect a site to contribute to affordable housing as well as the type and quantity of affordable housing. This includes a 50% affordable housing for major proposals (10+homes) on Grey Belt sites, compared to target of 30% on brownfield sites within our settlements and 40% on greenfield sites.

We cannot say how many affordable homes will be built at this time, but we can set out how many and what type we expect a developer to build.

How many new socially rented homes (sometimes called council housing) are being proposed?

We will seek to secure socially rented homes as part of the affordable housing requirements. Given the need for affordable homes, and to maximise social rented accommodation, where a site is required to provide affordable homes, we will be seeking 80% of them to be social rented. This provides the most affordable option and is the tenure which meets the housing needs of those households on our Housing Register. For the remaining 20%, we will be seeking affordable home ownership, with a focus on shared ownership. We do not have specific figures for the quantity that will be secured at this time.

Can I apply for any of the new affordable homes?

For all types of affordable homes, there are criteria for who will be considered and in some instances, this will include a local connection requirement.

Social housing will be available through the [Housing Register](#).

Other forms of affordable housing may be provided by housing associations. They may offer shared ownership properties for sale. You will need to apply to them directly.

First Homes or Discount Market Housing are usually sold by house builders or resold by the homeowner.

What about the impact on infrastructure?

In developing the emerging Local Plan, we look at the District's current and future infrastructure requirements. This is informed by technical studies and engagement with key stakeholders e.g. Kent County Council.

This will be set out in our emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This is a live document that will continue to develop in conjunction with our Local Plan.

Can I look at the supporting or background documents?

As part of the emerging Local Plan, we have been developing an [evidence base](#).

Since our last consultation, we have undertaken or commissioned further work to update existing work or to address new areas of work. The evidence base will be updated to include the new or updated work as part of the consultation.

What has happened so far?

We have run two consultations. The first Local Plan consultation (Nov 2023 to Jan 2023) focused on optimising densities and maximising opportunities in existing settlements, including on brownfield land. However, the District is unable to meet development needs within the existing developed areas, and there is a severe shortage of housing, particularly affordable housing.

The second consultation was the Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation, which ran for seven weeks from 23 November 2023 until 11 January 2024. This took a more District-wide approach, focusing on optimising development opportunities in our existing towns and service settlements but also considering the potential contribution of Green Belt land, in exceptional circumstances.

Since our last consultation, there have been changes at a national level, including a new approach to calculating our housing target figure and revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), including the introduction of Grey Belt. This has necessitated a review of our proposed development strategy in the Local Plan and a further consultation.

What is the timeframe for producing the new Local Plan?

We are proposing to consult on the new Local Plan from 23 October until 11 December 2025. This is called the Regulation 18 Consultation.

After the consultation closes, and we have considered the comments, we will publish a revised version of the Local Plan, which will be published in summer 2026. This is called the Regulation 19 publication. By the end of 2026, we intend to submit it for examination by the Planning Inspectorate. This submission will include all the comments submitted as part of the Regulation 19 publication.

The timetable for the examination, which will include public hearings, will be set by the Planning Inspectorate but the examination is expected to take place in 2027. Find out more about [Local Plan examinations](#).

If the Planning Inspector concludes the Local Plan is sound, we will adopt it and it will be used to help determine planning applications.

Why has there been a name change?

This is our third Regulation 18 consultation and we called our previous version of the emerging Local Plan 'Plan 2040'. However, following Government changes to national planning policy, the emerging Local Plan will now cover the period 2027 to 2042 and will be known as the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

Can I submit a site for inclusion in the Local Plan?

We ran a targeted call for sites in 2025, which focused on brownfield and Grey Belt land. Sites submitted at that stage and previous call for sites submissions have been assessed for allocation in the Local Plan. We are not calling for further sites to be submitted as part of this latest consultation.

If a site was submitted to the 'call for sites', will it automatically feature in the Local Plan?

No. The Local Plan proposes to allocate the most suitable sites that are in accordance with the Local Plan Development Strategy.

When will planning applications be submitted for site proposals?

This would be a matter for the landowners and developers.