

THE LOCAL PLAN

Frequently asked questions



Housing



What will happen if we don't plan for more houses/Why can't we just say no?

If the Council does not allocate land for houses, developers could apply for planning permission to build houses anywhere and it would be difficult for the Council to refuse these applications

Who will be living in the houses once they are built? Concern that they will be filled by problem tenants from London Boroughs

In this Local Plan, the Council is not planning to meet the housing needs of other areas. However, it is not possible to be precise about how many residents of the new market housing will be Thanet residents. In terms of affordable housing, the Council has a policy of requiring new development to provide 30% affordable housing. The Council is able to nominate people for the affordable housing from its own housing register. In 2013, the Council closed its housing register to people outside Thanet. The nominations are based on the Council's policy of prioritising people with a local connection of 3 years or more.

Why is the Council allocating areas of precious, prime agricultural land for housing development that should be used for growing food?

In developing the Local Plan we have tried to allocate as much housing on brown field or developed land as possible.

However this still leaves a shortfall in the amount of houses required, which means we have had to also look at allocating greenfield or undeveloped land for possible housing developments

It is anticipated that about 40% of the planned homes in the draft Plan would be on brownfield land.

What is the council doing to stop Thanet being turned into a large housing estate?

The Local Plan allows us to control where and how many houses are built in Thanet. Without the Local Plan it would be harder for us to prevent development in non-allocated areas.

The Local Plan aims to safeguard the individual identity and essential separation of individual towns and villages.

We bought a house recently why didn't the search pick the housing allocation up?

Because the Local Plan is still only a draft, the sites which we propose for allocation will not yet show up on your search.

The proposed sites will ruin the village and its identity as it will become a town.

The Local Plan includes further information about how we have decided on the development in rural areas. Please see paragraphs 11.11-11.15 of the draft Plan.

What are the plans to improve infrastructure for the proposed housing sites ie: Doctors, Dentists, Schools, roads etc.

The Council is working with the agencies responsible for delivering medical services, schools and transport infrastructure on an ongoing basis. It is preparing an infrastructure delivery plan to identify what supporting community facilities, utility and transport infrastructure will be needed to support the Plan.

The current draft plan reflects information provided by these agencies to date, and will inform more detailed consideration of their business plans

Unemployment is high in Thanet, we need industry not houses, how will this be addressed?

Government's National Planning Policy Framework requires us to objectively assess future housing requirements and meet them. The level of provision in the Draft Plan has been informed by a range of forecasts taking into account past trends and potential employment growth.

The Plan also contains measures to attract and accommodate employment growth.

It is also important to note that a significant part of the future housing requirement relates to the needs of the District's existing population such as young people who will come to need a home of their own.

Why can't all the empty properties be used for new housing instead of finding new sites?

The Council works vigorously to bring empty property back into use. However, empty properties that were being used for residential are already counted as part of the existing housing stock (they may be second homes/holiday homes etc) so cannot be counted as part of the 'new' housing supply.

The draft Plan assumes that some of the total housing to be provided will come from sites that cannot currently be identified ("windfall" sites) an element of which may be from re-use of empty property.

What criteria are applied in identifying/assessing potential housing sites?

A range of criteria are applied and these are identified in our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Strategy for Planned location of Housing. These include, for example, potential for flooding, archaeology, transport considerations.

Are you using the most recent population data to calculate the housing numbers?

Yes – and we update these figures on a regular basis.



Environment



Thanet is already a water stressed area – how will there be enough water for all of these new houses?

The Council has been working with Southern Water to make sure that they can provide water and sewage facilities for the predicted growth included in the draft local plan. We will continue to work with them throughout the process, and our draft local plan has informed their business plan so they can ensure our growth needs are met.

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General

Why do we need a Local Plan?

Recent changes to the national planning system mean that local authorities are now responsible for deciding the levels of development needed for their district. The plan shapes how Thanet will develop over the next 20 years and sets out how much development is needed to support the future population and economy. The Local Plan will give Thanet District Council greater control over where and what type of new developments can place.

The plan must be based on evidence from a number of studies covering a wide range of subjects and take account of national policy.

When will we know more detail on layout of the developments?

The Local Plan allocates land for potential development. The detail of what will be built will come at the planning application stage when a developer proposes a scheme. Their proposals will need to include the requirements of the relevant policy in the local plan. The Council will consult with residents and other stakeholders on the planning application before it is decided.

What communication has there been about this consultation?

The following has been/is being carried out to publicise the consultation:

- Press releases and press briefings
- Three half page adverts in the Thanet Gazette (Circulation approx. 9,000)
- Six adverts in the KM Extra (circulation approx. 30,000)
- Digital adverts on the www.kentonline.co.uk Thanet pages (approx. 165,000 monthly visitors)
- Use of Twitter and Facebook posts to promote the consultation and drop in sessions
 - Twitter 4,500 followers
 - Facebook 628 followers
- Facebook advertising – currently displayed to approx. 12,000 people
- Email sent to 12 business networks who will forward to their members and contacts
- Emails and letters sent to people registered on our consultation database
 - Approx. 1300 contacts
- Posters, questionnaires and Leaflets have been sent to:
 - Parish Councils
 - Libraries
 - Council Offices
 - Thanet Gateway
- Parish Council and other organisation/group briefing sessions
- Working with Sixth Form schools/colleges to help promote the plan to their students
- Public briefing sessions

Do we have to answer every part of the questionnaire?

No. Only you only need to answer the questions relating to subjects you are interested in. Paper questionnaires are available on request and can be handed in at the Gateway or at local libraries to save on postage.

Where can I find the Council's supporting evidence?

Our evidence base to date can be found on the Council's website at www.thanet.gov.uk/localplan by clicking the square marked 'Evidence Base' on the left hand side. As this is an informal consultation some of our evidence base is still being prepared.



Economy



Why are there 12500 houses and only 5000 jobs? There is already high unemployment here – won't this make it worse?

The level of housing proposed is 12,000 new homes over the 20 year period to 2031. This figure takes account of both the homes needed to accommodate changes in the existing population together with some in migration including homes for the additional labour force associated with the target of 5,000 additional jobs.

Where are these jobs coming from?

Experian carried out employment forecasting for the Council. The report showed that there is already strong growth in the tourism and green sectors of the economy and this is likely to continue. Thanet is also strong in retail and public administration professions.

Why are you focussing retail development at Westwood?

Thanet's town centres all perform different and complementary functions and retail development is supported at all of them.

The Local Plan does not propose to expand Westwood beyond its existing boundaries.



Transport



Where is the new link road going to go that extends from Minnis Road and the A28?

The draft Plan is not prescriptive about the specific location or alignment of a new road link.

This would be a matter to be considered when any planning application is received.

When is this likely to happen if approved?

Planning for this, with KCC, is still taking place and will be included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Roads are already at capacity. 12,000 households will add to the problem. What plans are there to deal with this?

We are working with KCC Highways. Detailed schemes will be drawn up at the planning applications stage and advice will be sought by KCC as the highways authority.

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