

ASHFORD LOCAL PLAN 2030

EXAMINATION LIBRARY

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Ashford Borough Council

**STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT**

ADOPTED OCTOBER 2013





Statement of Community Involvement 2013



The screenshot shows the Ashford Borough Council website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links like 'Home', 'Pay', 'Apply', 'Report', 'Claim', 'Jobs', 'Maps', and 'Contact Us'. Below this, there are several menu items including 'View Applications Online', 'Making Planning Applications', 'Ashford Building Control', 'Housing', 'Planning and Building Control', 'Planning Policy', 'Local Land', 'Planning Enforcement', 'Major New', 'Street Naming and Numbering', and 'Trees and...'. The main content area features a 'Welcome to Ashford Borough Council's Application Search' section with a search bar and a list of application types: 'Applications Near Me', 'Planning Applications', 'Building Control Applications', 'Enforcements', 'Tree Preservation Orders', 'Tree Applications', 'Address History', and 'My Viewing History'. On the right side, there is a map titled 'ABC Planning Information Map Viewer' and a section for 'Applications Near Me' with a brief description.

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Executive Summary

This document provides details of how the planning department at the council will consult with members of the public and other organisations, on most planning related matters. This includes Local Plans which set out overall policies for the borough and allocate land for development, supplementary planning guidance (SPD) produced by the council and planning applications received by the council.

Local Plans and planning applications are dealt with by different teams, Planning Policy and Development Management respectively. Therefore this document is divided into two sections and provides guidance on the different consultation procedures that these teams will undertake.

The planning department is committed to ensuring that everyone is able to comment on plans that may have an impact on them. To do this we propose to:

- Seek people's views as early as possible
- Have consultations available online and in hard copy
- Involve all members of the community regardless of gender, faith, race, disability, sexuality, age, social deprivation or rural isolation
- Keep people informed of future stages of consultation
- Produce clear, concise documents and avoid jargon where possible
- Hold public exhibitions/workshops where appropriate

This document details how we intend to achieve these objectives, who we plan to consult with, and how we will do it.

The Regulations for producing an SCI

1. The planning department of the council is required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) to prepare and maintain the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). An SCI must set out how the council intends to achieve community involvement, public participation and cooperation in the preparation of their Local Plan/s, including any Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), as well as setting out how they intend to involve the public when consulting on planning applications. In short, the aim of the SCI is to ensure that all sections of the public and community, including local groups and organisations, are actively involved in the planning process and are notified of plans that may affect them.

Unless otherwise stated the 'Regulations' referred to in this SCI are: 'The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012'

The Council's Community Involvement Policy

2. Ongoing community involvement is not a new concept for Ashford Borough Council. Comprehensive, successful participation and consultation involving many hundreds of stakeholders and local people has been carried out on many other Council strategies and plans in the past. However, with the start of work on the new Local Plan and the potential for communities to help to shape their local areas, there is a need for creativity when developing consultation solutions for the future.
3. Corporately, Ashford Borough Council has a consultation policy¹ which sets out its commitment to working positively with its voluntary and community sector partners, including marginalised groups.
4. In addition, the council provides a corporate online consultation portal where all consultations across the different council service areas can be displayed and consulted on in one place. This portal is called 'Have Your Say' and has already been extensively utilised by the planning department when consulting on Local Plan documents. In accordance with the Regulations on electronic communications² the consultation portal can notify stakeholders and members of the public when a consultation is due to begin, provides the opportunity to view documents and plans online and also enables people to submit comments on a consultation electronically at any time of the day.

¹ Community Engagement and Consultation Policy, Ashford Borough Council, July 2011. Available from <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/consultations>

² The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012- Regulation 3 'Electronic Communications'

Current Local Plans and National Policy

5. The Ashford Borough Core Strategy was adopted in 2008 and since then the council has adopted a further four site allocation Local Plans: the Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP); the Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document (DPD); the Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD and the Chilmington Green AAP. In addition to this there are 7 adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's).
6. Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2008 much has changed in the planning system, specifically, key changes have been introduced by the coalition Government, which include the Localism Act, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the removal of 'top-down' government growth targets (home and job numbers). The government has made it clear that local choices should guide local plans.
7. The new Ashford Local Plan to 2030 (previously known as the Core Strategy Review) will replace the Core Strategy 2008 and will set out the jobs and homes requirement for the borough for the period up to 2030, in addition to identifying sufficient land to meet this requirement. The new Local Plan will be formed and influenced through consultation with partners, stakeholders, community groups and residents of Ashford (See Tables 1 and 2 for details).

Who will we consult?

8. As well as the general public, the Regulations set out a list of 'specific' consultees that must be consulted and potential 'general' consultation bodies that could be consulted on all of our plans. This may vary at different stages of plan preparation (both Local Plan and SPD). Currently, the Council holds a database of 'specific' consultation bodies and a database of 'general' consultation bodies relevant to the Ashford borough. Both of these databases are updated where appropriate and in all instances comply with the most up-to-date regulations. A list of these consultees can be seen at Appendix 1.
9. We recognise that within any area, communities are made up of many different interest groups, and effective involvement cannot happen without a good understanding of the make-up, needs and interests of these different groups and their capacity to engage in community involvement. For example, it is important to identify the key target groups to be involved in plan preparation so that consultation arrangements can be tailored accordingly, for example, ensuring people are consulted on topics where they may have a particular interest and locating events in accessible locations. The needs of "hard to reach" groups such as the young, disabled and ethnic minorities will be considered thoroughly, so that they have the best opportunity to have their voice heard, a list of these can be seen at Appendix 1. We also plan to continue our extensive consultation work with the large rural community, through the Parish Councils.

Part 1 – Local Plan and SPD Consultations

How we will consult

How we will consult

10. Table 1 details all the consultation techniques that will be used at formal stages of Local Plan preparation and review. Table 2 lists techniques that could be used at informal stages of Local Plan preparation and review and what these techniques involve. This list is not exhaustive and techniques could be used in combination. Additional consultation techniques can be utilised where it is felt to be necessary or could improve public engagement. Table 3 details the formal techniques for the preparation or review of SPD's.
11. In accordance with the current regulations, when the Submission version of a Local Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for an Independent Examination, a consultation statement setting out what consultation techniques have been undertaken will be prepared and made public.
12. Finally, wherever possible, to avoid 'consultation overload', consultations will be undertaken in tandem with other council initiatives and strategies to allow the best use of resources. We will also work with existing community groups, for example, parish councils, urban forums and local interest and stakeholder groups to combine resources.

Table 1 - Formal Consultation Techniques for Local Plans

Consultation Technique	Description and further details
Formal consultation documents Local Plans at various stages of production, including initial publication and submission versions.	Formal consultation procedures set out in the current regulations will be adhered to when consulting at the formal stages of plan preparation. This currently includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making consultation documents available for inspection at designated deposit points (see Appendix 2). Copies of documents will also be available to download via the council's website. http://www.ashford.gov.uk/local-plan-documents• Sending notification letters and CDs of consultation documents to 'specific' consultees. (see Appendix 1) Parish councils will, in addition, receive a hardcopy of the document where the proposals or policies might affect their area.• Sending notification letters to 'general' and 'other' consultees as appropriate (see Appendix 1).• Providing hard copies of consultation documents to residents of the borough on request (These will be made available for sale at a discounted price) http://www.ashford.gov.uk/policy-documents-price-list

Part 1 – Local Plan and SPD Consultations

How we will consult

Table 1 - Formal Consultation Techniques for Local Plans

Consultation Technique	Description and further details
Consultation Notice (News release/advert)	The Council will produce a consultation notice setting out the locations and times when people can view and comment on documents. It is likely that this notice will be advertised in the local press or in accordance with the regulations in place at the time.
Electronic Communication and Consultation Portal on website	<p>The Council will undertake electronic communication in accordance with the Regulations in place at the time. This currently includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending notifications and notices regarding consultation events via email to anyone registered on the Consultation Portal, or who has previously commented at a formal consultation stage via email. • Providing the ability to download documents online. • Providing the capability to submit Representations online. <p>The council will achieve the above by utilising the corporate consultation portal. www.ashford.gov.uk/consult</p> <p>The council's website will also be updated to inform consultees about different stages of plan preparation. http://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-policy</p>

Part 1 – Local Plan and SPD Consultations

How we will consult

Table 2 - Potential Informal Consultation Techniques for Local Plans

Consultation Technique	Description and further details
<p>Informal consultation documents</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p>	<p>A variety of different consultation documents can be utilised to help engage and encourage feedback from the general public and stakeholders. Documentation could include: leaflets, questionnaires, issues and options papers, scoping documents, newsletters and posters.</p> <p>Jobs/Homes Growth to 2030 Questionnaire: A questionnaire relating to Jobs and Homes Growth was produced and went out for a 3 month public consultation, on our website and to specific and general consultees between August and October 2012.</p> <p>Plan-It Ashford: For the initial stage of the Local Plan 2030 preparation, the council created an informal consultation based around different ‘characters’ called Plan-It Ashford. www.ashford.gov.uk/planitashford</p> <p>These ‘characters’ represent a cross section of a local community – all with different situations and issues that need to be addressed. The idea is that people can use these characters to communicate their own aspirations but also think about issues that might affect others in their community. Packs were sent to all Parish Councils and a large number of schools, religious organisations, community and social groups. It has also been advertised in local press and on the council’s website.</p>
<p>Informal workshops/ meetings</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p>	<p>Meetings and workshops can be undertaken with interested stakeholders to discuss issues and generate structured discussions at the early stages of plan preparation. This will help establish consensus and flag up areas of contention.</p> <p>A number of workshops and meetings have been held and are planned throughout 2013 with Parish Councils and community groups in relation to Plan-it Ashford (see above)</p>
<p>Staffed and unstaffed exhibitions</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p>	<p>Exhibitions can be used to address a passing audience and encourage interest and debate on issues relating to the consultation topic involved.</p> <p>This technique was used in County Square shopping centre on 22 and 23rd October 2012 in relation to the questionnaire on jobs/ homes growth for the borough to 2030 (see above)</p>

Part 1 – Local Plan and SPD Consultations

How we will consult

Table 2 - Potential Informal Consultation Techniques for Local Plans

Consultation Technique	Description and further details
<p>Radio Advertising</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p>	<p>Radio adverts publicising consultation events can be used to alert a wide audience of the availability of opportunities to get involved.</p> <p><i>This technique was used for 2 weeks in October 2012 to advertise the jobs/homes growth to 2030 questionnaire</i></p>
<p>Informal adverts / newspaper articles</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p>	<p>The council can provide press releases to local newspapers to publicise consultation opportunities or lodge an advert in the paper.</p> <p><i>In relation to the Local Plan to 2030, there have been a large number of press releases and articles in the local newspaper relating to both the Jobs/Homes Questionnaire and Plan-it Ashford.</i></p>
<p>Social media</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p>	<p>Twitter, Facebook and You Tube have all been utilised successfully by the council in the past to engage the public in consultation events, and to encourage topical debate and submission of comments in an informal environment. Social Media can be seen as an approach to reach ‘hard-to-reach’ groups or encourage comments and ideas from people who would be unlikely to submit formal comments or partake in face-to-face events.</p> <p><i>Facebook and Twitter pages have been set up for the Local Plan to 2030 consultations:</i> <i><u>facebook.com/Ashfordlocalplan</u></i> <i>Twitter: @ashfordcouncil</i> <i>or via the following hashtag #ashfordlocalplan</i></p>
<p>Development Update</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p>	<p>The council produces an informative six-monthly newsletter highlighting the progress in the production of Local Plan documents and outlining any future consultation events. It also sets out the progress of major planning applications in the pipeline and recent decisions.</p> <p><i>The development update is also used to advertise any public consultations relating to the Local Plan to 2030, and the February and August 2013 editions included details of Plan-it Ashford.</i></p> <p><u>www.ashford.gov.uk/development-update</u></p>

Part 1 – Local Plan and SPD Consultations

How will we consult

Table 3 - Consultation on Supplementary Planning Documents

Consultation Technique	Description and further details
<p>Publication of draft SPD for 4-6 weeks</p>	<p>Make copies of the SPD documents and a statement of SPD matters available for inspection during normal office hours at principal council offices.</p> <p>Publish the draft SPD documents on the Council's consultation Portal. www.ashford.gov.uk/consult</p> <p>Send a copy of the draft SPD document, the sustainability appraisal report (where applicable), a consultation statement, and relevant supporting documents to each of the 'specific' consultation bodies in the Regulations to the extent that the Council thinks that the SPD affects the body. (See Appendix 1)</p> <p>Send a copy of the draft SPD to any 'general' and 'other' consultation bodies, as the Council considers appropriate (see Appendix 1).</p>
<p>Consultation notice (News release/advert)</p>	<p>The Council will produce a consultation notice setting out the locations and times when people can view and comment on documents. It is likely that this notice will be advertised in the local press or in accordance with the regulations in place at the time.</p>

Part 1 – Local Plan and SPD Consultations

User friendly consultations and Feedback

User-friendly Consultations

13. It is crucial that the consultations undertaken are accessible to all. For example, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to comment during a formal consultation period, we accept representations in the following formats: online via the Consultation Portal, by representation form³, letter, email and fax.
14. In addition, we offer large print documents, a document reading service, braille versions and a translation service for all key material we produce on request⁴ and will work with local groups on other steps needed to make sure that all members of the community can access material. We will ensure the documents are as jargon free as possible, and include a glossary to explain references. Events and exhibitions will be planned at venues that are fully accessible for everyone regardless of their mobility.
15. A significant proportion of the borough's residents live in rural areas, and therefore they may have limited access to public transport and other services. The council will endeavour to fully engage rural communities in consultation on the proposals that affect them as well as those communities that live in or near the town centre, or urban areas. For example, an exhibition in a town centre shopping centre on a weekend if the subject matter is regarding the Town Centre, a community workshop held in a rural village hall in the evening if the subject matter is regarding rural issues, or an event with a community forum on an evening or weekend for urban issues.

Feedback on Consultations

16. The council acknowledges that an important part of community involvement is to report back to those who have taken the trouble to be involved in a consultation, and to let them know how their comments and suggestions have been taken on board. Therefore, if a representation has been made at any formal consultation stage, feedback will be provided in accordance with the Regulations in place at the time. At present, the council list all the comments made and reply to them in one report, which is then submitted with the submission version of the plan for Examination. If comments and feedback have been made via an informal method of consultation, the council may provide feedback via the website www.ashford.gov.uk/public-consultation.
17. After consultation workshops with Parish Councils or other groups are held, officers will write a report of the event, and send it to the lead officer of the group/organisation. Where possible, the policy team will return to a group and give verbal feedback of the results and explain the next steps in the process.
18. A detailed list of all the consultations carried out on the Local Plan/s and SPD's, including workshops and exhibitions, are recorded annually in the Authority Monitoring Report, which is publicly available on the Councils website www.ashford.gov.uk/timetables-and-monitoring

³ Hard copy representation forms are available at deposit points and by telephoning 01233 330229

⁴ Alternative versions can be made available by calling the Planning Policy team on 01233 330229.

Part 1 – Local Plan and SPD Consultations

Duty to Co-operate on Strategic Matters

The Duty to Co-operate on Strategic Matters

In addition to public consultation on plans, Local Councils are expected to address strategic issues relevant to their areas through a new “duty to co-operate” set out in the Localism Act (2011) and described in the National Planning Policy Framework. This ‘duty to co-operate’ is not defined as consultation, but ensures that the Council works with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies to address strategic issues that affect local plans and cross local authority boundaries. The current list of Duty-to-Co-operate bodies is set out below:

Local Authorities:

Canterbury City Council
Dover District Council
Maidstone Borough Council
Rother District Council
Shepway District Council
Swale Borough Council
Thanet District Council
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

County Councils:

Kent County Council
East Sussex County Council

Other Public Bodies:

Ashford Clinical Commissioning Group
Civil Aviation Authority
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Highways Agency
Homes and Communities Agency
Local Highway Authority (Kent Highway Services)
Natural England
Office of Rail Regulation
Primary Care Trust (East Kent Hospitals University NHS Trust)
The South East Local Enterprise Partnership

19. ‘Duty to Co-operate’ events could take the form of workshops, tailored meetings, focus groups or one to one discussions.
20. In accordance with Government Regulations, the Council includes details of what actions have been undertaken in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate in the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).

Community-led Plans

21. Community led plans can take a variety of forms and can be produced solely by the community or in partnership with the council. The type of community led plan being produced will determine the level of consultation work that should be undertaken by the council.
22. Village design statements and Parish Plans are undertaken by the local community, but are supported by the council. They can help guide development in a local community area, or influence the design of new development. The local community will be expected to lead on consultation initiatives, but will be assisted by the council wherever possible, for example through the facilitation of workshops or use of the corporate consultation portal. Once completed the parts of the plans relevant to planning can be adopted by the council as Supplementary Planning Documents or informal planning guidance. To be considered for adoption, the relevant part(s) of the document must be guidance based on existing adopted local plan policy.
23. We will provide advice and support to any community wishing to prepare a community-led plan, including advice on appropriate consultation methods and techniques to ensure constructive and informative feedback.

Neighbourhood Planning

24. Neighbourhood planning is a new right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. It introduces powers which allow local communities to shape their area by coming together to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, Neighbourhood Development Order or a Community Right to Build Order (see the Glossary).
25. The onus on community engagement and consultation when producing neighbourhood plans under the Localism Act will be placed on the community or group that wishes to produce the plan. However, the council will provide support in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012), for example, it will assist with the advertisement of the area designation, organise the period of formal consultation before submission, the independent examination in public and the neighbourhood referendum at the end of the process.
26. A Neighbourhood Plan needs to be consistent with the borough council's strategic planning policies, and if adopted, would form part of the Local Plan for the borough.

www.ashford.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans

Pre-application Consultation

27. Ashford Borough Council strongly supports pre-application discussion. Details of our service are available on our website <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/pre-application-advice> and the major new development pages which includes our 'Charter' for strategic and major development proposals. This charter has the commitment of all the local agencies involved in the development process, and sets in place a structured toolkit which aims to encourage and quickly facilitate major planning applications from submission to determination.
28. The council also works hard to inform and involve the wider community in helping to create better quality developments and "place making". The council encourages potential major developers to undertake pre-application consultation with the local community on significant applications. This process can serve to inform interested parties about the nature and scale of the proposal and local people have an opportunity to comment before proposals reach an advanced stage.
29. As part of the council's response to the 'localism agenda' we look to involve local communities more in the early stages of some planning applications. We do this by inviting parish councils to take part in more pre-application discussions. This initiative builds on our track record of working with local communities to improve design quality in the built environment, for example through village design statements and the local plan workshops which enabled local people to lead the identification of future development sites through the development plan.
30. For the larger sites allocated in the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD we seek to involve the local community at an early stage and therefore look to set up design workshops with Parish Councils and local communities to help shape more detailed proposals before planning applications are submitted.
31. In addition we will also look to involve Parish Councils in pre application discussions on significant or highly sensitive schemes within the villages. Such schemes are likely to be within Conservation Areas, where the potential impact on the quality of the village scene is greatest. We can only do this where the applicant agrees and, because of the limited resources we have available, we will have to focus on the most sensitive sites. Further details of this initiative are available in the Parish Protocol on the pre-application advice webpage.
32. There are many pre-application consultation techniques currently being used by the council, not all these methods will be suitable for each pre-application consultation, it is essential to match the consultation methods with the individual planning proposal. The council uses a combination of the following:
- Public meetings and exhibitions
 - Workshops
 - Surgeries
 - Enquiry by Design
 - Development briefs

Part 2 – Planning Application Consultations On receipt of an Application

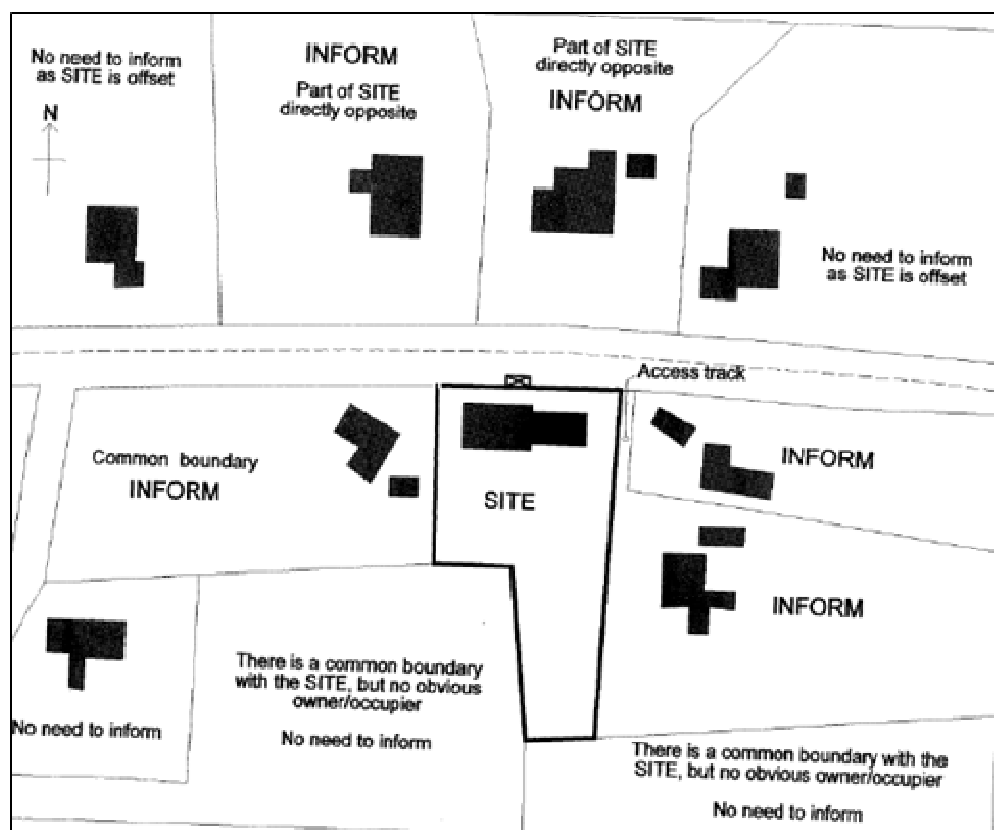
33. This section sets out how the Development Management Team makes information on planning applications available to the public and how comments can be made at different stages of the process.

Consultation at Application Receipt Stage

34. We undertake statutory publicity in accordance with current legislation. Government may change the statutory publicity requirements and our future approach will reflect any changes that are made.

Neighbour Letters

35. We also notify neighbouring residents and businesses of most planning and listed building applications but do not provide this service for some prior notification and lawful development applications, due to the timescales available to us to make a decision and because some applications are only for an assessment of whether planning permission is required. Letters are sent to the occupiers of individual premises in the immediate vicinity of the site, but not un-built land, in accordance with the principles set out in the plan below.



36. For Major proposals (10 residential units or more, 1000m² or more non-residential floorspace, residential sites over 0.5ha or all sites over 1ha in size) letters are distributed more widely, depending upon the scale of the proposal. Notification letters invite responses to be made within 24 days of the date of the letter.

Part 2 - Planning Application Consultations

On receipt of an Application

Quick Response (QR) Codes

37. In February 2013 we introduced a new feature to neighbour letters and site notices. They now include a QR code, which will allow those with enabled smart phones or tablets to scan the code and be linked directly to the specific application on the council's website.

Scan this QR code to view the plans and details of this application on our website!



Letters to Organisations, Councillors and Parish Councils

38. As well as letters to relevant neighbouring premises, explained above, notification letters or emails will also be sent to organisations (e.g. Highways Agency, Environment Agency) etc. and the organisations invited to comment on proposals in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) England 2010 (as amended).

39. Borough councillors will be notified of applications in their ward. Notification of each application will be sent to the relevant Parish Council and responses invited within 24 days of the date of the notification. Such notification and response will ideally be carried out electronically and the council will keep under review the current practice of providing paper copies. Bodies such as Natural England will be allowed a different period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.

Local Press

40. Some applications are also advertised in the local newspaper – under current legislation, if the application is for major development or affects a listed building, a conservation area, or a public right of way, or departs from the development Plan, or if the application may have a substantial impact on an area.

Part 2 – Planning Application Consultations

How to make a comment

Electronic & Paper Copies

41. The council will make electronic copies of all live applications and accompanying plans available for inspection at the Ashford and Tenterden Gateways. Paper copies of major applications will be available on request at the Civic Centre.

Website

42. All copies of applications and plans are available for inspection on the Internet, usually within 4 working days of being registered. Weekly lists of applications, decisions and appeals are available via the Council's website. Individuals may also register with the “**Applications Near Me**” service on the council website. This service provides email updates on applications, appeals and decisions for postcodes, wards or parishes as specified by the user.
<http://planning.ashford.gov.uk/>

How to make a Comment

Anybody may comment on an application even if they have not been notified by the council. All comments are considered carefully.

43. The council receives and handles comments on planning applications by conventional post, fax and email or by our online comments form on the council website. Making comments online is the best and easiest method for making comments and allows us to protect your personal data more easily. Comments must be received within the consultation deadline to be certain of being taken into account.
44. The council does not respond to each comment made, due to the large number it receives, but all are summarised in the Planning Officer's report and will become public information.
45. Subsequent correspondence received from the applicant or third party will be added to the website where this does not involve administrative matters or confidential information. This allows the public to track the progress of an application. Care should be taken when making comments to the council to ensure that no personal data is included. Further advice is available on the “Comment on Applications” page of our web site.
<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/comment-on-applications>

Part 2 - Planning Application Consultations Amendments & Decisions

Amendments to Planning Applications

46. If there are any significant amendments to the planning application during consideration, the relevant Parish Council will be notified. The period for commenting on amended plans will normally be 24 calendar days but this may be reduced to no less than 10 calendar days if circumstances such as the date of a planning committee dictate.
47. In addition to consulting the Parish Council, notification will be sent to the relevant ward member, premises in the immediate vicinity of the site (see plan on page 15) and to people who have already written in with comments. The period for commenting on amended plans will normally be 24 calendar days but this may be reduced to no less than 10 calendar days if circumstances such as the date of a planning committee dictate.
48. Where a Section 106 agreement would result in responsibilities or liabilities being placed on a Parish Council, the agreement of that council will need to be sought. This agreement will relate only to the Heads of Terms for the agreement prior to consideration by the Planning Committee. The Parish Council will also need to be a party to the agreement.

Consultation on Decisions

49. Decisions are made by the Development Control Manager and the Strategic Sites and Design Manager, as authorised under the Council's Constitution, and by the Council's Planning Committee.
50. Officer decisions are made daily whilst the Planning Committee takes place approximately every 4 weeks. It is attended by elected Members who determine major, complex or controversial planning applications. The committee agendas are available on the council's website www.ashford.gov.uk/committees and include reports on the individual planning applications being considered. Written comments on planning applications may be considered by the committee if received by 3pm on the day of the committee meeting.
51. All Parish Councils will be notified of the publication of each planning committee agenda on the council's web site. This will be an email alert, normally sent a week before the meeting, to the parish clerk.
52. The council's constitution currently provides that the Parish Council and one speaker in support and one in objection to the application are allowed to speak at the meeting for up to 3 minutes each prior to the application being debated. Requests to speak must be made in writing, which includes emails, and must be received by 2pm on the day of the committee meeting. See Access to Information Procedure Rules – Appendix 3 on the page below for more information.

www.ashford.gov.uk/part-4---rules-of-procedure

Part 2 - Planning Application Consultations Appeals & Development Update

53. Committee reports and the reports for those applications decided by officers and resulting decisions can be viewed on the council's website. At the time a decision is issued on any application the council will notify all those who have submitted written comments on the application, either by letter or email. We will say if the application has been approved or refused. Parish Councils will be notified too and provided with an electronic link to a copy of the decision notice.

Consultation on Appeals

54. If the council receives an appeal on an application, we will notify all those who commented on the original application either by letter or email. We will explain what the appeal is about, how people can be involved in the appeal process and the timescales for being involved. If the appeal is about a householder application, that is typically those for extensions or alteration to houses, then we will only let people know the appeal has been received. New comments on these types of appeal cannot be made at this stage.

Development Update

55. The council produces a development update leaflet every six months to inform members of the public, key stakeholders and planning consultees about significant planning applications and progress being made with them. The development update will be circulated to parties who have requested to receive it, as well as being published on the council's website.
www.ashford.gov.uk/development-update

Appendix 1 – List of Consultees

Specific Consultation bodies

‘Specific’ consultation bodies **must be** consulted in accordance with the regulations. ‘General’ and ‘Other’ consultation bodies should be consulted where appropriate (this relates to successor bodies where re-organisations occur).

- All Parish Councils in and adjoining the Ashford Borough

Statutory Organisations:

- The Homes and Communities Agency
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership
- Police and Crime Commissioners for Kent and East Sussex

Neighbouring District Authorities and County Councils:

- Canterbury City Council
- Dover District Council
- East Sussex County Council
- Kent County Council
- Maidstone Borough Council
- Rother District Council
- Shepway District Council
- Swale Borough Council
- Thanet District Council
- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Infrastructure/ Environment Organisations:

- Ashford Clinical Commissioning Group
- East Kent Hospitals University NHS Trust
- South East Coast Strategic Health Authority
- Scotia Gas Networks (Southern Gas Networks Plc)
- South East Water Ltd
- Southern Water
- The Coal Authority
- Natural England
- The Environment Agency
- Highways Agency
- Network Rail
- Channel Tunnel Rail link
- English Heritage South East Region

Telecommunications Operators:

- Mobile Operators Association (MOA)
- 3
- O2
- Orange
- T-mobile (UK) Limited
- Vodafone

General Consultation Bodies:

The general consultation bodies are also listed in the regulations. The regulations identify five types of bodies as general consultation bodies that relate to voluntary organisations representing certain groups within the community. The general consultation bodies are:

- i) voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the council's area
- ii) bodies which represent the interests of:
 - different ethnic or national groups in the council's area
 - different religious groups in the council's area
 - disabled people in the council's area
 - people carrying on business in the council's area.

The following list contains a selection of 'general' consultation bodies based in the borough, including 'hard to reach' groups. This list is for information only and should provide an indication of the types of participants who may be consulted in the preparation of policy documents, the list is able to be added to.

- Ashford Access
- Ashford Asian Society
- Ashford Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Ashford Committee of the Kent Association of Parish Councils
- Ashford Community Forums of Central Ashford, Willesborough, Kennington and South Ashford
- Ashford District Partnership Group (East Kent Mencap)
- Ashford and District Volunteer Centre
- Ashford Fire Brigade
- Ashford International Association
- Ashford International Chinese Association
- Ashford Landowners Group
- Ashford Museum
- Ashford Muslim Association
- Ashford Youth Forum
- Benefice of Bethersden with High Halden and Woodchurch
- Business Link Kent
- Carers Support
- Churches Together in Ashford
- Community Action South East Kent (CASE)
- County Square Shopping Centre
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
- English Partnerships
- Gaxmudian Kurdish Community
- Gurkha Peace Foundation
- High Weald AONB Unit

Appendix 1 – List of Consultees

- The Housing Corporation
- Independence & Access Matters
- K College
- Kent Association of the Disabled People (Ashford Branch)
- Kent Downs AONB unit
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
- Kent Police
- Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT)
- McArthur Glen Designer Outlet
- Mid & SE Kent Council for Voluntary Services
- Nepalese Sagarmatha Community Group
- Tenants Forum (ABC Housing department)
- The National Trust
- Royal Mail
- Sagarmatha Gurkha Community (SGCAK)
- Salvation Army Housing Association
- Secondary Schools in the borough
- Stagecoach East Kent Limited
- Surestart (Ashford)
- Weald of Kent Protection Society
- William Harvey Hospital
- Youth Centres (HOUSE, Towers School and others linked with KCC)
- Zimbabwean Youth Group (Awake Grace Ministries)

Other Consultation bodies:

The Council should carry out public participation that is appropriate for the local plan or SPD being produced. Depending on the plan being produced, it may be appropriate to consult with other agencies and organisations in addition to those identified as specific or general consultation bodies. The following list provides some suggestions, but it is not exhaustive, and we may not always consult with these bodies.

- British Geological Survey
- Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- Church Commissioners
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)
- Crown Estate Office
- Diocesan board of finance
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Gypsy Council
- Health and Safety Executive
- Home Builders Federation
- Skills Funding Agency
- Education Funding Agency
- National Playing Fields Association
- Post Office property holdings
- Sport England
- Traveller Law Reform Project

Appendix 2 – List of Document Deposit Points

Planning policy documents that are out for public consultation will be available to view throughout the consultation period at the locations listed below. The current opening times are shown below but these are subject to change.

Ashford Borough Council Offices

Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL
8.30am - 4pm (Monday to Friday)

Ashford Gateway Plus

Church Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1AS
9am - 6pm (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday)
9am - 8pm (Thursday)
9am - 5pm (Saturday)
The documents will be placed in the Reference Library on the 1st Floor

Charing Library

Market Place, Charing, Ashford, TN27 0LR
Closed (Monday and Wednesday)
9am – 12 noon (Tuesday)
9am-5pm (Thursday)
2pm -5pm (Friday)
9am-1pm (Saturday)

Tenterden Gateway

2 Manor Row, Tenterden, TN30 6HP
9am to 5.30pm (Monday to Friday)
9am to 4pm (Saturday)

Wye Library

6 Upper Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, TN25 5AF
Closed (Monday and Wednesday)
9am - 12 noon (Tuesday)
2pm - 6pm (Thursday)
9am - 5pm (Friday)
10am - 2pm (Saturday)

This section explains some of the technical documents and terms referred to in this document.

Authority Monitoring Report (AMR): The council is required to produce an AMR each year to assess the performance and effectiveness of the adopted Local Plan/s. It includes performance indicators and a textual update of the plan-making progress, as well as statistical data about the borough.

Area Action Plan (AAP): A form of local plan that focuses on a specific location or area.

Local Plan (LP): The new Local Plan to 2030 will be the principal development plan for the borough once it has been completed and will supersede the Core Strategy 2008 (see below).

The Borough Local Plan 2000 still has some policies that remain active (saved).

Community Right to Build Order (CRBO): A special type of neighbourhood development order (NDO), which can be brought forward by any local community organisation, unlike NDOs and Neighbourhood Plans which can only be delivered by a parish or town council or a neighbourhood forum. Development brought forward by a CRBO is likely to be small scale, and will not be able to take place if it would need an Environmental Impact Assessment. It is subject to a local referendum to ultimately decide whether the proposed development should go ahead.

Core Strategy: Adopted in July 2008, the Core Strategy sets out the overall vision and objectives for the borough between 2006 and 2021, and all other documents within the Local Development Framework (LDF) conform to it. The Core Strategy will be superseded by the new Local Plan 2030.

Development Plan Document (DPD): A local development document that forms part of the Local Plan. DPDs can set out the spatial planning strategy, policies and/or allocations of land in a local authority area.

Duty to Co-operate: The 'Duty to Co-operate' is set out in the Localism Act and ensures that local planning authorities work with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies to address strategic issues that affect local plans and cross administrative boundaries.

Independent Examination: The examination of the soundness of a Local Plan by an independent Planning Inspector.

Localism Act: The Localism Act came into force in November 2011. It decentralises power away from Government back into the hands of local councils, communities and individuals, enabling them to shape their own locality and address local priorities.

Local Development Document (LDD): The collective term for documents forming part of the Local Development Framework. It includes Core Strategies, Area Action Plans, Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Local Development Framework (LDF): A term used to describe the suite of LDD's. Local Development Frameworks are in the process of being superseded by Local Plans.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): The NPPF sets out the Government's key economic, social and environmental objectives and the planning policies needed to deliver them. It came into force in March 2012 and streamlined the existing suite of national planning policy documents into a single consolidated document.

Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO): An NDO enables a parish or town council, or neighbourhood forum to grant planning permission for new buildings, for example homes, offices and community facilities. Any proposals would need to be agreed by a community referendum before they could be granted.

Neighbourhood Forum: Community groups that can take forward neighbourhood planning in un-parished areas. For a community to group to be able to call themselves a neighbourhood forum they would need to meet specific standards and would need to be agreed by the local planning authority.

Neighbourhood Plan: Communities can now set a vision for the future and establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in their neighbourhood in a document known as a Neighbourhood Plan. It can be detailed or general, depending on what local people want, but it can only become adopted policy if it is voted on by a majority in a local community referendum.

Parish Plan: A community-led document, usually led by the Parish Council, setting out the priorities for a parish area. It can include a range of planning and non-planning issues. A Parish Plan is a non-statutory document, not subject to independent examination or referendum. Parts of a Parish Plan can be adopted as SPD.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): Additional guidance produced by the borough council to explain how policies should be interpreted and assessed.

Village Design Statement (VDS): A document produced by (or on behalf of) a local parish council setting out the key design issues for a particular village in their parish. A less frequent equivalent for the wider parish area is a Parish Design Statement (PDS).

Statement of Community Involvement 2013

Large print copies, audio, braille and translated versions of this document are available. Please Contact:

**Planning and Development
Planning Policy Team**

**Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre,
Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL
01233 330 229
Planningpolicy@ashford.gov.uk**