Thanet District Council

Thanet Local Plan Gateway 1 Self-Assessment Summary

(Regulation 21, The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026)

30 October 2026

THANET LOCAL PLAN
GATEWAY 1 SELF-ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

How we got ready to prepare a new local plan

We started preparing a new local plan for the district of Thanet on 30 October 2026.

Government policy says we should adopt the new plan within 30 months of this date. This is to ensure we have an up-to-date local plan that responds to the needs of the area and our communities.

This document explains what we did to get ready to meet this timeframe. It also has links to further information and outlines where you can get updates.

We published our Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation on 12 June 2026.

We published a timetable for preparing the plan

We published our Local Plan Timetable on 12 June 2026:

The timetable shows when we expect to carry out the different stages and activities for preparing a plan. It helps us check if and how we can adopt the plan within the 30-month timeframe. We'll keep this updated as we make more progress.

The 30-month Local Plan timetable is designed to be realistic and achievable, unless there are unexpected delays. It should, where possible, work around budget cycles; elections and pre-election periods; and major school holidays.

We established project management and governance arrangements

Preparing a local plan is a complex process. It involves many people across the council and from other organisations. Thinking early about how the work is planned, managed and signed off helps us monitor our progress and keep the work on track. It also helps us anticipate and manage any risks to adopting the plan within 30 months.

We have considered the different aspects of plan preparation - the Council's decision-making process; our procurement processes; the management of Local Plan-related contracts; consultation and engagement arrangements - in seeking to move the draft Plan forward in a timely way.

Measures include:

- Delegated authority (approvals) for different stages of the local plan process

- Cross political party Local Plan Cabinet Advisory Group, to establish general understanding of, and support for, Local Plan work, and contribute to recommendations to the Council's Cabinet
- Regular progress reports/briefings to the Council's Corporate Management Team
- Briefings for all District Councillors at key stages of the Local Plan process
- Undertaking project management analysis/control with the Council's Project Portfolio Manager
- Early engagement across the Council's other key services, both operationally and in terms of policy development
- Using project initiation tools provided by the Planning Advisory Service (part of the Local Government Association)

We are also exploring the use of various technological tools to assist in programme management for the Plan-making process.

We planned how we'll consult on the plan

Public consultation is essential for the local plan to represent the needs of our communities. It must be easy for people to have their say in a way that works for them, so they can influence the way the area develops. By planning this early, we can ensure people are aware in advance and can get involved from the start.

We have undertaken a scoping consultation to get people's views on what the plan could contain and how we propose to consult on the plan at key stages. We completed our Scoping Consultation on Friday 9 October 2026.

The Council advocates a digital-first approach to engagement in line with recent government initiatives, but will also carry out a variety of more traditional engagement and consultation methods, including in-person activities, to meet the needs of different stakeholders.

We previously adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in 2021, which set out the broad principles for engagement and specific examples of the different ways in which we would engage with, and consult local people and groups about the Local Plan. We have produced an initial Consultation and Engagement Strategy for plan-making based on some parts of the previous SCI, and taking into account the early comments received during the Scoping Consultation. We will continue to develop the Strategy as all the comments are considered.

We began scoping the content of the plan

Scoping includes considering how well the existing Local Plan is working and gathering baseline information about the area. This helps to identify our future needs and ambitions.

Starting this early means we can begin preparing the new Plan with a clear vision, making it quicker and easier to consult on the Plan and make decisions about it.

We have begun to assess the scope of the new Plan, taking into account:

- Government guidance (including the National Planning Policy Framework)
- Issues raised during our Scoping Consultation
- Issues emerging from our own published evidence and studies
- Reviewing the latest information from our development and other monitoring work (Annual Monitoring Reports) to see how the current adopted Local Plan is working
- Considering how the Local Plan can support other corporate priorities with a planning element, such as housing; economic development; tourism and cultural economy; air and noise pollution
- Sites submitted under the Call for Sites and Heritage Assets invitations

In our Scoping Consultation, we outlined some of the key areas that the Local Plan needs to address.

In particular, it will be important for the Local Plan to address the development needs of the area, considered within the context of existing communities and the national and international significance of the local built and natural environment.

We began a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

A Strategic Environmental Assessment is legally required to identify, describe and evaluate likely significant effects on the environment of:

- implementing the Local Plan
- reasonable alternatives, taking into account the plan's objectives and scope

This process will consider how community, national and international environmental protection objectives and any other environmental challenges are taken into account in the plan. It will help us to predict significant environmental effects and develop ways of preventing, reducing and offsetting these.

It is important we start this work early and are transparent about how we're doing the assessment when engaging stakeholders and communities.

We commissioned consultants to produce an SEA Scoping Report for the new Local Plan. We published this for consultation with the statutory authorities between 17 July and 21 August 2026, and for other stakeholders and local residents between 24 August and 9 October 2026 (Thanet District Council Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report 2026). Responses have been received from all of the Statutory consultees and the SEA scoping report is being amended accordingly.

We will use the Scoping Report to help us assess draft policies for the Local Plan.

We began work on developing a vision for the Local Plan

It is important that the Local Plan, and its policies, are driven by a clear vision for the future of the local area. This should take into account the various factors and key issues for the area.

As part of our Scoping Consultation, we asked people for their views on the objectives or outcomes the Local Plan should be aiming to achieve. We also asked what the overall vision and aims should be for the next 15 years.

We are also using our own research, and information we have gathered from monitoring previous development in the local area, environmental measures and other local plan matters, to inform the development of the Local Plan vision. We will review the vision set out in the adopted Local Plan (2020), to assess whether it is still relevant. The vision should be informed by an understanding of the district's strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats that may affect it.

As the vision develops, and the Plan policies, we will also create a monitoring framework for the Local Plan. This is to ensure that the plan and its policies work towards achieving the vision.

How to stay up to date

- Check our latest updates on the Local Plan 2026
- Register to take part in consultations on the draft Local Plan