

Emerging Local Plan will keep our District special

Protecting the rural nature and the character of the District, providing new homes and facilities for the wellbeing of residents and supporting the economy will be at the heart of our emerging Local Plan.

The Government has told councils to produce new Local Plans with proposals for new housing and infrastructure to meet future local needs.

In 2019, our draft Local Plan was submitted to a Government Inspector. However, it was rejected on a technicality as the Inspector believed that we had not fully met the 'duty to co-operate', in other words asking neighbouring councils to take some of our housing need.

We have since had positive discussions with the Government. They have told us the work carried out so far is a good starting point for our emerging Local Plan and that they are also looking to scrap the 'duty to co-operate'. We also have the opportunity to address the changes in living and working patterns that have come about from COVID-19.



Work on the emerging Local Plan began in October with the 'Call for sites', initially in built up areas, giving landowners until 20 January to come forward with sites that could be considered for development.

During October we also asked residents to contribute to a character study by sharing their experiences of the District and thoughts on local landscapes, streets and buildings that make the area special. This work will be really important in informing our emerging policies and proposals.

The emerging Local Plan is due to be finalised in 2023.

Cllr Julia Thornton, our Cabinet member for Development and Conservation, says: "As we look again at the Local Plan, I want to reassure residents that protecting the rural nature and character of the District is front and centre of our proposals.

"We are proposing to prioritise brownfield land for new homes and new community facilities, while protecting space for jobs, retail and leisure – all essential for the future wellbeing of our residents and the prosperity of our District.

"In the coming months, everyone will have further opportunities to have a say on our revised proposals."

What's the emerging Local Plan?

The Local Plan is a collection of policies that say what can be built and where over the next 20 years.

Once agreed, planning applications will be assessed against the Plan to ensure they meet its objectives, which are:

- Protecting the rural nature and character of the District
- Providing new homes that meet residents' needs
- Ensuring new buildings are energy efficient and have the least impact on the environment
- Safeguarding the local economy by protecting existing employment sites
- Making sure house builders contribute towards new infrastructure, such as schools, transport improvements and health facilities
- Ensuring new buildings meet the highest design standards and are sympathetic to their surroundings.

To find out more about the emerging Local Plan, please visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/emerginglocalplan