



Gravesham Local Development Scheme (2025-2026)

Published March 2025



Delivering a Gravesham to be proud of

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires the Council to prepare, maintain and publish a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The first Gravesham LDS was published in 2005 and has subsequently been updated a number of times, most recently in 2019. This LDS supersedes the previously adopted LDS.
- 1.2 The LDS sets out the development plan documents the Council is preparing or intends to prepare, a programme for their production and an indication of the opportunities the local community and stakeholders have to participate in their preparation. This LDS focusses on a partial review of the Local Plan Core Strategy, the preparation of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document and an updated Policies Map. The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document will be the second document in the Gravesham Local Plan.
- 1.3 This LDS recognises that there are a number of external factors which could influence the assumptions underpinning the evidence base for the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document, and consequently the timetable for its preparation. These include changes in national planning policy and significant external developments such as the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation and Lower Thames Crossing proposals. An assessment of risks and contingencies is therefore included.
- 1.4 Following legislative changes, there is no longer a requirement to specify the timetables for producing other planning policy documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

2 Changes to the Local Development Scheme.

- 2.1 The previous LDS has been reviewed to take account of a number of factors that have impacted on the proposed timetable for producing the emerging Local Plan Review and the Site Allocations Document, not least delays with the Lower Thames Crossing, changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and wider economic circumstances.

3 Gravesham's current Planning Policy Framework

Gravesham Development Plan

- 3.1 Following the adoption of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, the Development Plan for Gravesham is comprised of:
 - Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Local Plan Policies Map (2014)
 - Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) – saved Policies
 - Kent County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (2020)
- 3.2 The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Local Plan First Review saved policies are available on the Council's website via the following links:
 - [Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy](#) (11 MB)
 - [Gravesham Local Plan First Review - Saved and Deleted Policies Version \(September 2014\)](#)
- 3.3 The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2013-2030) is available on Kent County Council's website along with further information about supplementary documents:

- [Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan](#)

3.4 Although not part of the development plan, we also take account of the South East Marine Plan policies when determining planning applications that fall within the marine plan area:

- [South East Marine Plan](#)

Evidence Base

3.6 Evidence gathered since the adoption of the Local Plan Core Strategy is available on the Council's Local Plan Consultation portal, via the following link:

- [Gravesham Local Plan Consultation Portal](#)

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment

3.7 Achieving sustainable development is at the heart of the planning system. In preparing all local plan documents, attention will be given to the expected economic, social and environmental impacts of proposed policies and plans.

3.8 All local plan documents are subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which has to meet the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. The SA/SEA process assesses how policies and proposals within local plan documents contribute to sustainable development, based on economic, social and environmental objectives. It is a continuous evaluation process which is used to inform decision making and the SA/SEA forms part of the evidence base. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are not subject to SA/SEA as they provide additional information on planning policies already contained in a local plan document.

3.9 Where plans may have a significant effect on sites of international importance for wildlife, they are also subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). As Gravesham has areas that fall within a Ramsar site, a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within its boundaries, HRA has and continues to form a fundamental part of the plan-making process.

Policies Map

3.10 The purpose of the Policies Map is to illustrate geographically the land use designations, policies and site allocations contained in the Gravesham Local Plan. The adopted Policies Map (September 2014) updates the Proposals Map that accompanied the Gravesham Local Plan First Review following the adoption of the Local Plan Core Strategy. It is available on the Council's website via the following link:

- [Gravesham Local Plan Policies Map](#)

3.11 It should be noted that there have been changes to the Policies Map as a result of the Kent County Council's adoption of the [Kent Minerals and Waste Plan](#), and Gravesham Borough Council's review of Conservation Area boundaries in the rural area. Details of the amended rural conservation areas can be found at:

- [Conservation Area Boundaries](#)

Neighbourhood Plans

- 3.12 The provisions in the Localism Act for neighbourhood planning came into force in April 2012. They allow local parish or town councils or, where one does not exist, a community group to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for their area. A Neighbourhood Plan has to be in general conformity with national policies and the strategic policies in the Local Plan. Timetables for the production of Neighbourhood Plans are produced specifically for each individual Neighbourhood Plan, and are determined by the body producing the Plan rather than Gravesham Borough Council. A Neighbourhood Plan is subject to independent examination and a referendum. Once adopted it forms part of the Development Plan and its policies are taken into account in development management decisions within the relevant area.
- 3.13 There are currently no adopted Neighbourhood Plans and no Neighbourhood Plans are currently under preparation in Gravesham.
- 3.14 The Council will work with designated neighbourhood planning groups during the production of the Local Plan Core Strategy Partial Review, the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document and any future Local Plan Documents, and will take into consideration any relevant evidence and any emerging and adopted Neighbourhood Plans.

Planning Guidance

- 3.15 The Council has prepared a range of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) / Documents (SPD). While they are not part of the statutory development plan, they are considered as material considerations in the determination of planning applications and provide additional detail to policies set out in the Local Plan or national policy.
- 3.16 Additional documents have been prepared by Kent County Council and are adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents.
- 3.17 A list of the current SPGs and SPDs is available on the Council's website via the following link:
- [Supplementary planning guidance](#)
- 3.18 Within Gravesham, the eastern part of the Borough from Shorne southwards to Vigo village, lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape. The Kent Downs National Landscape Partnership, of which Gravesham is a member, has prepared a Management Plan for the National Landscape, previously known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Council has adopted this document to fulfil its statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. It is available on the Kent Downs National Landscape's Unit's website via the following link:
- [Kent Downs AONB Management Plan](#)

Procedural Documents

- 3.19 The preparation and monitoring of local plan documents is supported by a number of procedural documents, as follows:

Statement of Community Involvement

- 3.20 Public participation is a key element in the preparation of the Local Plan and the Council are required to set out its policy for involving the local community and stakeholders in the

preparation of the Local Plan and in the development management process. The Council's policy is currently set out in the Gravesham Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This was adopted in October 2019 and can be viewed via the following link:

- [Statement of Community Involvement](#)

3.21 The Council is currently reviewing the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and a new Statement of Community Involvement will be published in 2025.

Authority Monitoring Report and Housing Land Supply

3.22 The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) is produced annually and published in December. It monitors the following:

- Progress on plan preparation,
- Duty to Co-operate activities in plan preparation
- The implementation of the Local Plan Core Strategy policies
- Progress on the delivery of development targets in the Local Plan Core Strategy
- 5 year land supply monitoring report

3.23 It will identify whether any management actions and/or contingency measures are required to address any changing circumstances that arise.

4. Proposed Local Plan Documents

4.1 The Council's priority is to deliver an up-to-date Local Plan for the Borough. The Local Plan will be comprised of a single document, the Local Plan, which will include Site Allocations. Following the adoption of the Local Plan Core Strategy in September 2014, this LDS provides a revised programme for preparing a new Local Plan with Site allocations, and updating the Policies Map.

Emerging Local Plan

4.2 As set out within the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy, and informed by subsequent evidence gathering, the Borough's development requirements cannot be met solely from the Opportunity Areas and Key Sites identified within the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy. This has been reconfirmed by recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, and the revised standard method for calculating housing need. Therefore, a new Local Plan with Site Allocations is needed to identify any consequential amendments to existing Core Strategy policies, including policy CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development), as well as to allocate additional sites to meet the Borough's objectively assessed development requirements.

The document will be prepared in line with revised strategic priorities and policies, which will be an evolution of those set out within the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy, the requirements of the NPPF and planning practice guidance. It will also take account of the Planning Inspector's recommendations in his report on the Local Plan Core Strategy and will be informed by the evidence base (see paragraph 4.6 below).

- 4.4 Once adopted, the Local Plan will supersede the Local Plan Core Strategy and remaining saved policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review.

Evidence Base

- 4.6 The evidence base is being updated and extended to inform work on the emerging Local Plan and Site Allocations. The key pieces of technical work will comprise:
- Housing Needs Assessment
 - Employment Land Needs Assessment
 - Retail and Commercial Leisure Assessment
 - Viability Report
 - Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA)
 - Green Belt Assessment(s)
 - Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study
 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study – this is made up of:
 - Indoor Sport Assessment and Strategy
 - Playing Pitch Assessment, Strategy and Action Plan
 - Open Space Assessment and Standards
 - Transport Study
- 4.7 A Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment will also be produced to inform the production of the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.8 In parallel with additional technical work being undertaken, the Borough Council has and will continue to carry out Duty to Co-operate discussions with Planning Authorities within its Housing Market Area on major strategic issues, including housing land supply.
- 4.9 The Borough Council will need to demonstrate at Examination that it has fully explored a range of options for meeting its development requirements. Failure to do so is likely to make the Plan fail the Duty to Co-operate test and be found unsound.

Policies Map

- 4.10 The Policies Map will be updated following the adoption of the emerging Local Plan. This will include site allocations and additional policy designations. If amendments to the Green Belt boundary are required, such changes will also be shown.

5. Schedule of Proposed Local Plan Documents

Document Title	Local Plan Core Strategy Partial Review	Policies Map
Role and Content	The Local Plan Core Strategy sets out the vision, objectives, strategy and core policies for the spatial planning of the Borough	Depicts the strategic and non-strategic site allocations and areas of land to which policies apply
Geographical coverage	Borough-wide	Borough-wide
Plan period		
Chain of Conformity	National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and Ministerial Statements	This will be prepared and updated to accompany the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document. Once adopted, it will reflect the site allocations, policies and land use designations in the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document
Evidence Gathering Key technical documents	Completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (SHENA) • Affordable Housing and CIL Viability Testing Report • Green Belt Assessments • Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study • Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study • Initial Transport Study • Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment • Initial Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) 	

Document Title	Local Plan Core Strategy Partial Review	Policies Map
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green and Blue Infrastructure Study <p>On-going:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole Plan Viability Assessment • Demographic Needs Assessment • Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (update) Economic needs Assessment • Transport Study • Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment • Habitats Regulations Assessment 	
<p>Consultation on draft Document (including revised policy CS02), draft Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment (at stage 2) (Regulation 18)*</p>	<p>This is a 2 stage public consultation:</p> <p>Completed: 25 Apr 2018 to 11 Jul 2018 <u>Stage 1 – Issues and Options</u> Outputs from the SHENA; implications for Core Strategy policies including policy CS02, broad options for accommodating growth</p> <p>Completed October- December 2020 <u>Stage 2 – Preferred Approach</u> Following the Regulation 18 (Stage 1) Consultation in 2018, the Council considered the representations received and gathered additional information to inform the amount of housing, employment and retail development needed in the Borough to 2036. Views were sought on these issues and the options for determining where future development could take place to meet identified needs.</p>	
<p>Publication of the Pre-submission Document, final Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats</p>	<p>July 2025</p>	

Document Title	Local Plan Core Strategy Partial Review	Policies Map
Regulations Assessment (Regulation 19 and 20)*		
Submission of the Document and Sustainability Assessment (Regulation 22 and 23)*	December 2025	
Pre-examination meeting	May 2026	
Hearing Sessions open	July 2026	
Inspector's Report-Fact Check	October 2026	
Inspector Report-Final (Regulation 25)*	November 2026	
Anticipated Adoption of SA and DMP Document (Regulation 26)*	December 2026	December 2026

* Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended

6 Timetable

APPENDIX 2 Revised Local Plan Timetable

	2018												2020												2025												2026													
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
New Local Plan with Site Allocations		C																																																
Policies Map																																																		

Evidence gathering, analysis and plan development	
Cabinet for review and decision	C
Public Consultation Stage 1 - Issues and Options (regulation 18)	
Public Consultation Stage 2 - Preferred Option (regulation 18)	
Public Consultation Regulation 19 (min. statutory 6 weeks)	
Submission for independent examination (regulation 22)	
examination and reporting timetable is set by the Inspectorate *	
Examination	E
Receipt of Inspector's Report	R
Full Council followed by adoption and publication	A

*Dates shown are estimates and subject to PINs capacity and timeframe for inspection period.

7 Schedule of other Planning Policy Documents

- 7.1 More information about the preparation / revision of the planning policy documents listed below will be published on the relevant pages of the Council's website as it becomes available.

Statement of Community Involvement

- 7.2 The current Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in October 2019. Regulations have since changed the scope of SCIs and the processes they go through. A new SCI is currently being prepared; this document will reflect changing regulations and circumstances and will be consulted upon in 2025.

Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule

- 7.3 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allows local authorities to collect financial contributions from developers towards infrastructure that is needed as a result of new development in the Borough. CIL is not intended to pay for all infrastructure needs. It is intended to fill the funding gap that remains once other sources of funding have been explored. It is not a means of addressing infrastructure deficiencies or a means to pay for the specific infrastructure requirements of an individual development. This will be done through Section 106 Agreements.
- 7.5 The Council remains committed to ensuring that developers contribute as much as possible towards the infrastructure that is needed. The Council is reviewing the evidence that has been gathered thus far and changes being made by Government to Planning Obligations before determining whether or not to proceed with CIL.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 7.6 The Council refers to the need to produce a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) in the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy and the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document. As the Council's priority is to deliver the Gravesham Local Plan, it is not proposed to progress these at the current time. Any change in this position will be reported through the Authority Monitoring Report.

Other Documents

- 7.7 The Council has also to prepare and manage registers for Self and Custom Build, and Brownfield in accordance with appropriate regulations.

8 Risk Assessment and Management

8.1 The process of preparing the documents within the Local Plan involves managing various work streams alongside internal and external factors that may provide challenges to the work programme. It is therefore important to identify these risks that could affect the work programme and consider how they may be minimised and mitigated.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Possible consequences and mitigation
National policy changes	High	Medium	<p>The revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in December 2024, with further changes to National Planning Policy anticipated during 2025. Consideration will need to be given to the impact of the changes that are actually made (as opposed to those consulted upon) when they occur. This comes about through primary legislation as well as new or amended regulations. Court judgements and Planning Inspectors reports also impact planning via their interpretation of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), Ministerial Statements and the Development Plan.</p> <p>Emerging legislation/policy will be monitored, and officers will work closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), and others as required. Local Plan documents will be based on the best information available at the time of preparation.</p>
Impact of major development projects	High	Medium	<p>Major development projects and their associated transport infrastructure are a major cause of the external uncertainty over which the Council will have an input, but little influence on precise timetables.</p> <p>Depending on decisions made by others there may significant implications for the preparation of the Local Plan which will need to be managed as and when circumstances dictate. Major projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Thames Crossing • Ebbsfleet Garden City

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Possible consequences and mitigation
Changes in local political control/leadership	Low	Low	<p>Ultimately Council policy is set by elected Members. This, quite properly, makes the Local Plan programme susceptible to change arising through political intervention, however, no local Borough elections are planned for 2025.</p> <p>Officers will work closely with the Leader and Portfolio Holder, and other members through existing groups, to understand and manage any policy changes required.</p>
Staffing and resources	Medium	High	<p>The Council has robust plans in place to ensure that statutory services are maintained but the need to make additional budget savings within the Council are an on-going risk.</p> <p>Any significant change due to prolonged absence over and above normal levels arising from natural turnover will have an impact on the programme.</p> <p>The Council is taking a pragmatic approach to technical work to ensure it is resource efficient and effective, with external consultants used as appropriate.</p>
Resourcing of external agencies	High	Medium	<p>The Government's Spending Review has the potential to impact upon Government agencies/bodies, including PINS and statutory consultees. If these organisations have insufficient resources, delays to document production timetables may result.</p> <p>Officers will work closely with external agencies to understand possible risks as early as possible and maintain positive working relationships. Officers will keep PINS informed about any timetable alterations</p>
Legal challenge	Low	High	<p>External parties may seek to legally challenge all or part of Local Plan documents.</p> <p>Officers will seek to ensure that all local plan documents are legally compliant and sound, and will work closely with the Legal section and PINs to ensure that requirements are met. External legal advice may also be sought.</p>

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Possible consequences and mitigation
High levels of public interest / high volume of consultation responses	High	Medium	<p>These risks place pressures on staff and other resources due to the need to respond to enquiries and process and consider representations.</p> <p>Officers will work closely with the Council's Communications Team when issues that are likely to generate a high level of interest are consulted upon.</p> <p>While an online consultation system is in place, experience has shown to date that the majority of local people prefer to respond by email or letter. Depending on the sensitivity of the issues raised through consultations, additional time may need to be programmed in should the number of representations received be above expected levels.</p>
Evidence base becomes dated	Low	Medium	<p>External factors may lead to the Council's evidence base becoming out of date.</p> <p>Additional delays to document preparation timetables as a result of other risk factors may also result in evidence documents becoming out of date.</p> <p>Officers will monitor changes and prepare or commission updated evidence studies where necessary.</p>
Joint working with neighbouring authorities	Low	Medium	<p>Joint working with neighbouring authorities is a statutory requirement of the Localism Act 2011 (the Duty to Cooperate). This covers preparation of evidence base as well as policy considerations and covers topic areas that have wider implications than the Local Planning Authority area. Agreement on strategic matters, such as housing provision, across a number of Authorities is being encouraged, as well as consideration of joint Plans where appropriate.</p> <p>Officers regularly engage with neighbouring authorities in relation to strategic matters, via Duty to Cooperate discussions and other forums.</p>

9 Monitoring and Review

- 9.1 The Council monitors the progress of the emerging Local Plan to identify whether milestones are Being met. If they have not been met, it will set out the reasons for this and any proposed action as a result of these delays. It will also highlight whether there have been any changes in circumstances that may warrant amending the LDS.

10. Glossary

Word or Term		Explanation
AMR	Authority Monitoring Report	An annual report that assesses progress of Local Plan preparation against the published Local Development Scheme (LDS), as well demonstrating that the Duty to Co-operate is being met in the preparation of the local plan documents and progress on the implementation of policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy.
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.
DCO	Development Consent Order	Application to Planning Inspectorate, for ultimate decision by the Secretary of State, for permission to carry out a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.
EDC	Ebbsfleet Development Corporation	Responsible for development control decisions and taking projects forward in the Ebbsfleet and part of Northfleet Embankment
GBC	Gravesham Borough Council	The local planning authority responsible for producing Gravesham's Local Plan
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment	An assessment of the impacts of policies and proposals on sites of international importance for wildlife, i.e. Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation.
	Local Plan Documents	Local Plan Documents are the main elements of the Local Plan comprising the Core Strategy, Site Specific Development Allocations, and the Policies Map. These documents are subject to strict preparation and consultation rules, a sustainability appraisal and independent examination.
LDD	Local Development Document	Comprises any document prepared as part of a Local Plan. It includes Development Plan Documents and other documents which do not have Development Plan status, such as Supplementary Planning Documents, the Statement of Community Involvement, and Community Infrastructure Levy.
LDS	Local Development Scheme	A public statement identifying which local development documents will be produced, in what order and when.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	Government advice on how the Planning System should operate
NSIP	National Strategic Infrastructure Project	Major projects that meet the criteria set out in sections 15-30 of the 2008 Planning Act (as amended)

Word or Term		Explanation
	Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	The legislative basis for the current Development Plan system and introduced sustainable development as a core objective of the planning system.
PINS	Planning Inspector	Responsible for conducting the independent examinations on Development Plan Documents. The Inspector's report is binding on local planning authorities.
	Ramsar	An internationally important wildlife site under the "Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat"
SA & DM	Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD	This will contain non-strategic site allocations and detailed policies for guiding and managing development in the Borough.
SAC	Special Area of Conservation	An internationally important wildlife site. These are areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitat Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations, 2010
	Saved Policies	Policies from the Gravesham Local Plan First Review which are "saved" for the transition period until they are replaced by new Local Plan policies.
SPA	Special Protection Area	An internationally important wildlife site. These are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within the European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	This sets out how the local planning authority will engage with all stakeholders in the preparation and production of the Local Plan.
SPD	Supplementary Planning Documents	Documents which add further detail to the policies of the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. They are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance	Documents which are similar to SPD's and were prepared under the previous planning system. They elaborate on saved policies in the Local Plan. They have been subject to public consultation, and are a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Word or Term		Explanation
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	Assessment of the Environmental, economic and social impact of policies, to ensure that all policies and proposals reflect sustainable development principles.
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment	A procedure set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004, which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment

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