

Local Plan Review Readiness Checker (Accessible Version)

Legal requirements you must have met before proceeding

Activity

Preparing and publishing a timetable in line with the data standard, publishing a notice of intention to commence and undertaking the scoping consultation.

We have made the recommended progress

We have complied with these legal requirements.

Notes

Notice of Intention and timetable published 26/06/26 (note: Timetable updated as part of Gateway 1 work). Scoping Consultation started 14/07/2026 and finished 11/08/26.

Preparing and publishing a local plan timetable

Activity

Considering the expected time it will take to adopt the plan.

We have made the recommended progress

The timetable shows how we will prepare and adopt a plan within 30 months.

Notes

Timetable published 26/06/26 sets out dates against key milestones. Note: Timetable reviewed on a monthly basis and updated as part of Gateway 1 work.

Establishing project management and governance arrangements

Activity

Establishing appropriate project management, governance and resourcing to support the timetable.

We have made the recommended progress

We have a robust approach to manage, govern, resource and finance the preparation of the plan that supports the delivery of the local plan timetable.

Notes

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Cabinet Report 25/06/26 includes arrangements for delegation and sign-off. Microsoft Planner in place to assist with project management. Staffing and resourcing will be continually reviewed through the plan making process.

Activity

Testing and agreeing project management and governance internally

We have made the recommended progress

All relevant teams and decision makers have been involved in designing, and signing-off the approach.

Notes

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Cabinet Report 25/06/26 includes arrangements for delegation and sign-off. The Scoping Consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the delegation arrangements approved by Cabinet at the 25 June meeting. Microsoft Planner is in place to assist with project management.

Activity

Establishing risk monitoring, management and mitigation

We have made the recommended progress

We have identified potential risks and have effective processes in place to monitor, manage and mitigate them.

Notes

These are set out in the Project Initiation Document.

Consulting and engaging on the plan

Activity

Preparing an engagement strategy

We have made the recommended progress

We have a positive strategy for engaging the community and other key stakeholders in the preparation of the plan, which has been prepared with regard to government guidance.

Notes

As part of the Scoping Consultation we asked about engagement as per the Regulation 20 requirements; the Scoping Consultation cross-referenced to the now updated Statement of Community Involvement which was approved by the Council's Cabinet on the 22/10/26. Officers have considered the Scoping Consultation representations and have prepared the Engagement Strategy having regard to the responses received. The Engagement Strategy has been presented/discussed at the Tunbridge Wells Planning Policy Working Group on the 13/10/26, and agreed with the Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) for Planning. All elected Members have had the opportunity to comment on the Engagement Strategy.

Activity

Establishing processes for consultation and engagement

We have made the recommended progress

We have clear processes in place to maximise diversity in participation, utilising both digital-first and traditional methods.

Notes

The Engagement Strategy sets out the range of methods that will be used to ensure we seek to maximise engagement in the plan making process, including with traditionally harder to reach people. This includes digital methods and social media as well as more traditional forms of engagement. We have procured a new consultation software provider (CitizenSpace) to help with consultation/engagement and improve the experience for those engaging with the process.

Activity

Agreeing the engagement strategy internally

We have made the recommended progress

We have sought feedback on and agreed the engagement strategy with key decision makers

Notes

The Engagement Strategy has been presented/discussed at the Tunbridge Wells Planning Policy Working Group on 13/10/26 and has been agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Planning. All elected Members have had the opportunity to provide comments on the Engagement Strategy.

Scoping the anticipated content of the plan

Activity

Defining the scope of the plan

We have made the recommended progress

We understand the proposed scope of the local plan. We know the main areas or locally specific subject matters it will address. This is based on data from the existing local plan, as well as information gathering, baselining and early engagement to date. Scoping work aligns with the work we have carried out on our SEA (if SEA is required)

Notes

Having adopted the current Local Plan in December 2025, we already have a good understanding of many issues relevant to the Local Plan Review. An SEA Scoping Report has been prepared and was consulted upon alongside the Scoping Consultation Document, and also as per the SEA Regulations. The Scoping Consultation Document has a SWOT Analysis and priorities etc, which will inform what the LP should contain. We have also had a session with Development Management to review Adopted Local Plan and National Development Management policies to scope what Development Management policies need a review and what locally specific policies may be needed in the new Local Plan.

Activity

Drafting a vision for the plan

We have made the recommended progress

We have used early baselining and engagement activities to begin drafting a vision.

Notes

The Scoping Consultation document asked questions about the recently adopted Local Plan Vision (in December 2025) - responses have informed changes/update to the Vision, having regard to SWOT analysis etc/rest of the Scoping Document. Officers have reviewed the Scoping Consultation responses to the surveys about priorities, and have prepared a Draft Vision for the Local Plan Review along with 10 Draft measurable outcomes. These have been discussed with the Tunbridge Wells Planning Policy Working Group on the 13/10/26, and with the Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) for Planning. All elected Members have been given the opportunity to comment on the Draft Vision and measurable outcomes. They will be consulted on as part of the Regulation 23 consultation on Plan Content and Evidence.

Activity

Considering how we will monitor progress towards the vision

We have made the recommended progress

We have started to identify measurable outcomes to monitor our progress towards the vision.

Notes

The Scoping Consultation document asked questions about the recently adopted Local Plan Vision (in December 2025) - responses have informed changes/update to the Vision, having regard to SWOT analysis etc/rest of the Scoping Document. Officers have reviewed the Scoping Consultation responses to the surveys about priorities, and have prepared a Draft Vision for the Local Plan Review along with 10 Draft measurable outcomes. These have been discussed with the Tunbridge Wells Planning Policy Working Group on the 13/10/26, and with the Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) for Planning. All elected Members have been given the opportunity to comment on the Draft Vision and measurable outcomes. They will be consulted on as part of the Regulation 23 consultation on Plan Content and Evidence.

Activity

Gathering evidence to inform the new plan

We have made the recommended progress

We have mostly identified and scoped our evidence needs and have a plan for how we will deliver this.

Notes

The Council has set up a Procurement Closed Framework to streamline procurement and make it quicker to procure evidence as we prepare the new Local Plan. A list of evidence base has been prepared and lead officers have been scoping work and preparing briefs. Some evidence is already underway and some internal evidence is being worked on. The list of evidence base is kept under review.

Activity

Calculating a housing requirement

We have made the recommended progress

We have calculated a housing requirement for the plan area using the Government's recommended standard method and started to identify the needs for homes of different sizes, types and tenures, including affordable homes.

Notes

The Council has a draft calculation of its housing growth needs over the new plan period, based on the Standard Method and including the appropriate buffer. This draft calculation has been discussed with the Tunbridge Wells Planning Policy Working Group on the 13/10/26, and will be kept under review and updated as necessary as the plan making process continues. The Standard Method housing need figure has informed the Draft High-Level spatial options.

Activity

Exploring our high-level options and policies

We have made the recommended progress

We have started to consider high-level and conceptual spatial options to deliver the identified development need, and begun to identify the potential scope of locally specific policies.

Notes

Officers have conducted a review of the high level options set out in the previous Local Plan Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation document to determine whether these remain applicable, and have considered these in the context of the new Standard Method housing needs figure and the new 2026 National Planning Policy Framework. Additional Draft High-level options have been identified. These will be further reviewed against the Scoping Consultation representations before being finalised, which will then be consulted upon as part of the Regulation 23 consultation on Plan Content and Evidence. The Council has a good understanding of constraints, and has extended its Call for Sites for a second time, and is being pro-active in identifying other land for potential assessment. An update to the previous Development Constraints Study underway, along with an update of the previous Settlement Role and Function Study.

Progressing the Strategic Environmental Assessment

Activity

Identifying other plans/programmes that have a relationship with the local plan

We have made the recommended progress

We have identified other relevant plans and programmes and their relationship to the local plan to establish how the plan or programme is affected by those plans or programmes

Notes

We have identified existing plans and programmes prepared at the international, national, regional and local levels which are considered relevant to the Local Plan Review and with regard to Schedule 1 of the SEA Regs. These are listed in Section 4 of the SEA Scoping Report. Local and regional examples include the TWBC Climate Change Strategy and the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The strategies and plans will be kept under review and updated as necessary as plan-making progresses. This will include the Kent and Medway Spatial Development Strategy once work on that begins.

Activity

Collecting baseline information for the SEA

We have made the recommended progress

We have identified baseline information showing the existing environmental characteristics of the area and their likely evolution without implementation of a new plan, as well as data on historic and likely future trends. It provides the basis against which we can assess the likely effects of our different options.

Notes

An SEA Scoping Report has been prepared and was consulted on as part of the Scoping Consultation and also separately with Statutory Bodies as per the SEA Regs. This includes baseline information on the environmental characteristics of Tunbridge Wells Borough, as set out in Section 5 of the SEA Scoping Report. Officers are in the process of reviewing the responses received and will then discuss these with the SEA consultant (JBA) to inform the next iteration of the SEA process/document(s). National guidance on how SEA fits with the new plan-making system is awaited and once received, SEA work will be reviewed to ensure that it accords with the national guidance.

Activity

Identify environmental protection objectives to inform plan preparation

We have made the recommended progress

We have identified the relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international, community or national level, and environmental considerations that will be taken into account during the preparation of the plan and recorded in the environmental report.

Notes

Relevant environmental protection objectives have been identified in section 4 of the SEA Scoping Report alongside the identification of relevant plans and programmes. Section 5 of the SEA Scoping Report discusses these objectives and their relevance to the Local Plan Review alongside the baseline environmental characteristic of Tunbridge Wells Borough. This discussion is split into many different environmental topics including, for example, biodiversity, flora and fauna, and the water environment.

Activity

Developing the scope of the SEA

We have made the recommended progress

We have begun to identify the scope and level of detail of the information we intend to include in the environmental report. We have started to set out this information in a suitable document, such as a draft, emerging environmental report or scoping document. We are on track to consult on the scope of the SEA at the consultation on proposed plan content and evidence

Notes

An SEA Scoping Report has been prepared and was consulted on as part of the Scoping Consultation and also separately with Statutory Bodies as per the SEA Regs. This includes the proposed scope of assessment, and the SEA Framework and Methodology, as set out in sections 6 and 7 of the SEA Scoping Report. Officers are in the process of reviewing the responses received and will then discuss these with the SEA consultant (JBA) to inform the next iteration of the SEA process/document(s). National guidance on how SEA fits with the new plan-making system is awaited and once received, SEA work will be reviewed to ensure that it accords with the national guidance.

Activity

Developing SEA objectives

We have made the recommended progress

We have started to develop SEA objectives which will help assess the environmental performance of the local plan.

Notes

An SEA Scoping Report has been prepared and was consulted on as part of the Scoping Consultation and also separately with Statutory Bodies as per the SEA Regs. This includes objectives and sub-objectives which form part of the proposed SEA Framework set out in Section 7 of the SEA Scoping Report. Officers are in the process of reviewing the responses received and will then discuss these with the SEA consultant (JBA) to inform the next iteration of the SEA process/document(s). National guidance on how SEA fits with the new plan-making system is awaited and once received, SEA work will be reviewed to ensure that it accords with the national guidance.