

# Statement of Community Involvement 2026

How you can get involved  
in the future of the district



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# CHAPTER 1

## Managing the future development of the district

**The council plays a significant role in shaping the district through its planning powers. We ensure new development is sustainable, taking account of economic, social and environmental issues.**

The council's planning functions can be grouped into the following categories:

### Plan making

The government is clear that councils should make Development Plans setting out the council's vision for the district and delivery objectives. The main Development Plan document for our district is the Canterbury District Local Plan. The policies within the Local Plan are the legal tools with which the council can manage growth and change to ensure new development is sustainable.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the

Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the Local Plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

### Decision making

Development proposals in planning applications should be considered against the policies in the Local Plan. The law says:

“...determination is to be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”

When planning applications are considered, we look at whether the proposed development

is in line with the policies in the Local Plan (and any other Development Plan document that we have) and whether the proposed development would contribute to the objectives and vision for the future of the district, as set out in the Local Plan.

### Ensuring compliance

The council has discretionary powers to take action against development that has been carried out without planning permission where harm is caused to the local area and we conclude that it is expedient and in the public interest to seek to rectify the breach.

# CHAPTER 2

## What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

**This Statement of Community Involvement was adopted on 9 October 2019. It explains how we aim to involve the community in each of these planning functions.**

It is important that everyone is given the opportunity to get involved in decisions, including where we provide the homes we will need, how we create new job opportunities, how we will get around and the quality of our environment.

We will aim to make the planning process more accessible to everyone within the community including those who traditionally have not engaged or may have felt excluded from planning decisions.

We use digital technology to make it easy for you to view information and get involved.

Making comments on-line may be easier for you and it also helps us to save public money but, if you need to, you can write to us at Canterbury City Council, Policy Team, 14 Rose Lane, Canterbury CT1 2UR.

We can also provide documents in a range of other formats such as large print or audio PDFs. If you require one of these formats of the Statement of Community Involvement you can email **[policy@canterbury.gov.uk](mailto:policy@canterbury.gov.uk)**, call **01227 862 000** or write to us. You can view documents at the Council Offices at Rose Lane, Canterbury, and all the libraries within the Canterbury district, if it is easier for you.

You can check our website for updates regarding planning decisions and you can request to be added to our database for consultations regarding plan making by emailing **[policy@canterbury.gov.uk](mailto:policy@canterbury.gov.uk)**

Email notifications will be sent to statutory consultees and people registered on the database.

Your data will be processed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations. You can read our Privacy Notice at **[canterbury.gov.uk/privacy](https://canterbury.gov.uk/privacy)**

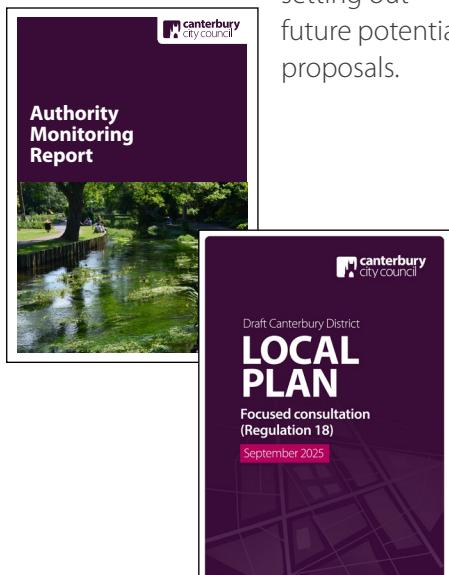
# CHAPTER 3

## Making a Local Plan

### Plan preparation

We will involve the community and stakeholders in the preparation of our Local Plan. During the plan preparation stage we will carry out engagement on our initial ideas for what the Local Plan should contain. This could be through the use of social media, online consultations, workshops, charette, drop-in sessions or exhibitions, as appropriate. We will use our website and social media to keep people informed about how to get involved.

A call for sites will usually take place to help us identify land that might be available for future development in the district. We will use our website and social media to publicise this and encourage landowners to send in information about their land. A **formal consultation** will be carried out on an initial Local Plan document setting out future potential proposals.



### Publication

Once we have written a draft Local Plan, we will publish this for **formal consultation**. We will use the council website, social media and a public notice in the local press to inform people of the process and you will be able to respond online.

### Examination and adoption

At this stage, all the comments we receive will be submitted with the draft Local Plan and supporting documents to the government. The government will appoint an inspector to carry out an examination and they will decide who needs to be involved. We will use the website, social media and local press to keep people informed during the examination.

If we need to make any major changes to the draft Local Plan at this stage, we will publish these for **formal consultation** with the same arrangements as at publication stage.

Once the examination is finished and the Local Plan is adopted we will use the council's website, social media and local press to keep people informed.

### Delivery and review

It is important our Local Plan is effective. We regularly check how our planning policies are working by carrying out research and studies, some of which will be informed

by stakeholders. We update on progress through our **Authority Monitoring Report**.

If we identify significant changes, we may need to prepare a new Local Plan. Before we do this, we will publish a **Local Development Scheme** setting out our proposed timetable for this work. Documents will be published on the council's website once finalised.

### Supplementary planning documents

Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) may be produced to provide more detailed guidance on a specific policy or topic in the Local Plan. They carry less legal weight in planning decisions than a Local Plan.

### Preparation

We will involve relevant stakeholders in the preparation of any SPD that we produce. During the preparation stage we will carry out a **formal consultation** on a draft document. We will use the council's website, social media and local press to inform people of the process for this and you will be able to respond online.

### Adoption

Your comments will be considered before we finalise the SPD. Once it is adopted we will use the website and social media to keep people informed.

# CHAPTER 4

## Neighbourhood Planning

### What is neighbourhood planning and how can you get involved?

Neighbourhood planning gives communities another way to shape development in their local area. Neighbourhood Plans set out planning policies prepared by parish councils, or neighbourhood or business forums.

We will support communities undertaking neighbourhood planning. This will include sharing information, providing guidance and making arrangements for any examination and referendum.



Communities can also prepare other documents such as town or village design statements, which can show how they see their area responding to change and provide design guidance. These can form part of a Neighbourhood Plan and carry statutory status or they can be prepared as supplementary planning documents (see above).

## **Neighbourhood area/forum designation**

Local communities will be involved in the designation of a neighbourhood area, where the boundary is different to that of the local parish council. This also applies in the unparished areas of Canterbury district where a forum will need to be set up. In these cases we will use the website to inform people of the process for this and to encourage people to respond online.

## **Preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan**

The parish council or forum will lead in putting together the Neighbourhood Plan and they will need to think about how best to involve the community. They will need to carry out a formal consultation on their draft plan before they can submit it to us.

## **Submission and Examination**

Once this formal consultation has finished, the parish council or forum will finalise the draft plan and send it to us for checking. When we have completed these checks we will carry out our own formal consultation. We will use the website and social media to inform the local community and key stakeholders of the consultation and you will be able to respond online.

All the comments we receive at this stage will be submitted with the draft Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents to an independent inspector. The inspector will decide who needs to be involved in the examination. We will use the website to keep people informed during the examination.

## **Referendum**

If we decide the Neighbourhood Plan should be put to a referendum we will notify you if you are eligible to vote. You will then get the opportunity to vote on whether or not the plan should be accepted. We will use the council's website to keep people informed of the outcome.

# CHAPTER 5

## Deciding planning applications

### How can you get involved?

You can get involved in planning applications for new housing or commercial developments, residential extensions or changes of use of a building or land. Effective community involvement is a key part of the decision-making process.

Our decisions on planning applications can have long-term impacts such as for the supply of housing and jobs in the district, the natural and built environment and the quality of life enjoyed by those who live or work here.

### Applicant's role in consultation

The council encourages applicants to engage with local residents, parish councils, amenity groups etc at the early stage, before submitting a planning application and particularly for larger developments, to allow these groups to have their say early on and shape more detailed proposals.

### Community involvement in planning applications

Planning applications vary in scale from small house extensions to large-scale strategic sites and the publicity that we carry out will depend upon the particular nature of the application. In all cases we write to adjacent neighbours and in some cases such as for larger applications or applications affecting the setting of a conservation area or Listed Building we publish a notice in the press and at the site.



Canterbury City Council has always valued community involvement in shaping the future of the area through the planning application process and we encourage residents to engage and have their say on proposed developments in the district.

## Having your say about planning applications

Once a planning application is submitted, we will notify the immediate neighbours whose property adjoins the application site. We will include information about where to view the application documents and how you can have your say.

For larger developments, planning applications that affect listed buildings and conservation areas and applications that are not in line with the council's development plan (usually the Local Plan), we also put up a site notice near the application site, advertise the planning application in the local press or publicise the planning application on the council's website.

You can also register on the council's website to receive email alerts about development in any part of the district. Once registered, you will receive an alert when a planning application has been made.

You can comment on any planning application via the council's website. You will have 21 days within which to comment and further time is given where when public/bank holidays occur during this period. The council cannot determine planning applications before the consultation period has expired.



Amenity groups such as residents associations can also get involved by registering on the council's website to receive notifications about planning applications which are of interest to them.

We send letters to immediately-neighbouring properties, inform the relevant parish council (or neighbourhood forum) and in some cases a site notice is displayed. All planning applications including plans and other documents are also published on our website at [canterbury.gov.uk/planning](https://canterbury.gov.uk/planning)

You can comment on a planning application and register to track the progress of an application on our website at [canterbury.gov.uk/planningsearch](https://canterbury.gov.uk/planningsearch)

Once a decision has been made, you will be able to view the decision notice on the council's website. You can also register on the council's website to receive email alerts when a planning application has been decided. You can register on the website to receive an alert so that you know when the council has decided a planning application. All decision notices are added to the public website at the time the decision is made

## How parish councils can get involved with planning applications

Parish councils are informed of all planning applications made in their area and we encourage parish councils to get involved in the planning process.

Amenity groups can also get involved by registering on the website to receive notifications about planning applications which are of interest to them.

## How representations are considered by the council

After the consultation period has ended, the case officer should have all of the information they need to assess the planning application.

The law requires us to consider the application against the adopted Development Plan.

We will also take into account all material planning considerations in arriving at a decision, including matters raised through representations from the local community.

Ultimately, the council is legally responsible for making the final decision on a planning application and for deciding how much weight representations should be given in each case.

## Public involvement at Planning Committee

In some cases, planning applications will be determined by the Planning Committee.

Everyone who commented on an application will be notified of the meeting date and invited to register for one of the available speaking slots, where they can directly address members of the Planning Committee

to speak either for or against the application. You can also attend and watch any Planning Committee meeting.

Further details are available on our website at [canterbury.gov.uk/speakatameeting](https://canterbury.gov.uk/speakatameeting)

## Other types of application

We do not carry out public consultation on applications such as applications for prior approvals, certificates of lawfulness and non material amendments, where the question is whether planning permission is required. However, such applications made are available to view on the council's website.

## The appeal process

If an application is refused the applicant can appeal against the decision. If you have commented on an application which is appealed, we will notify you of the appeal. You can make comments on the appeal at the Planning Inspectorate's website at [gov.uk/appeal-planning-decision](https://gov.uk/appeal-planning-decision)

The inspector will decide if a hearing is required where there may be more opportunities for you to put across your views.



# CHAPTER 6

## Making us aware of unauthorised development in your area

Members of the public can, and often do, report unauthorised development to the council.

In such cases we will investigate and consider the development against our Planning Enforcement Plan and Development Plan and these are available to view on the council's website.

Where development is carried out without planning permission, the council has discretionary powers to

take action in situations where harm is caused to the local area and when we conclude that it is expedient and in the public interest to seek to rectify the breach.

You can notify the council via the online form on the planning website at [canterbury.gov.uk/planningbreach](https://canterbury.gov.uk/planningbreach). You will then receive an acknowledgement and will be advised of the outcome of our investigations.

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