

The Local Plan and Hildenborough

What is proposed, and how to have your say by Sunday 25 October

In short

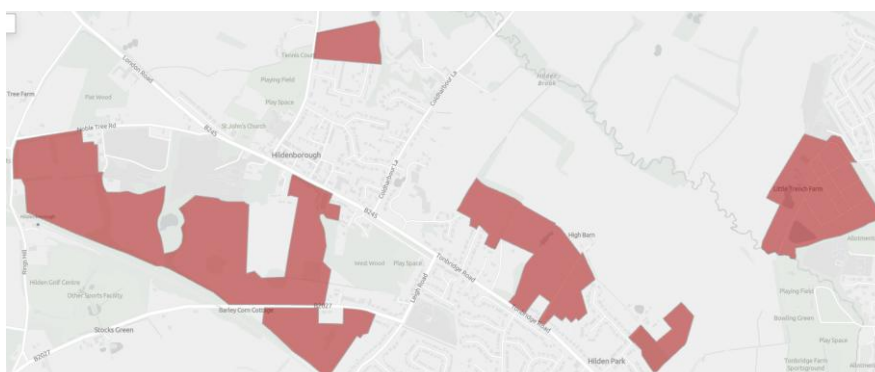
The Borough Council's final draft Local Plan proposes 1,210 new homes on five sites in Hildenborough parish, and part of a sixth site at Coblands on Trench Road — all on land that would be taken out of the Green Belt. The parish had 1,908 households at the 2021 Census, so the five sites alone would increase that by around 63%.

None of the sites is required to provide a school, a GP surgery or a community building.

The consultation closes at 11.59pm on Sunday 25 October 2026 — the last chance to comment before the plan goes to a government-appointed Planning Inspector. Our companion handout, "How to respond to Regulation 19", explains what you can comment on and how to make it count.

The six allocations

Ref	Site	Homes	Green Belt
HP1	Land off Stocks Green Road, Tonbridge Road and Noble Tree Road	602	Released
HP2	Land north-west of Hilden Park	290	Released
HP3	Land south of Stocks Green Road	156	Released
HP4	Hilden Farm Road	66	Released
HI1	Land east of Riding Lane	96	Released
TO3	Coblands Nursery and Little Trench Farm, Trench Road — part only, see note	394	Released
Total — the five sites in the parish excluding TO3		1,210	



The six proposed allocations, shown in red. The Coblands site, to the east, straddles the parish boundary. Source: Regulation 19 Local Plan.

About the Coblands site (TO3). The plan allocates 394 homes at Coblands Nursery and Little Trench Farm, Trench Road, and records all of them against Tonbridge parish. The site straddles the parish boundary: part of it lies within Hildenborough and the rest does not. Because only part of it is in this parish, its 394 homes are not added to the total above — they are shown separately. The Parish Council is asking the Borough Council to state how much of the site falls in each parish. However it is counted, the traffic it generates reaches the village along the B245.

HP2, HP4 and TO3 carry "Tonbridge" in their names, and HP1 is grouped with Tonbridge in some of the plan's tables. HP1, HP2, HP3, HP4 and HI1 lie wholly in this parish; the Coblands site straddles the boundary. The plan records 512 of the homes that are wholly in this parish — HP2, HP3 and HP4 — against Tonbridge, and the whole of Coblands as well, which is why Council summary material shows around 698 homes for this village. If you live at the Hilden Park end, or near Trench Road, this plan is about your area.

What it means in proportion

Households today	Homes proposed	Increase	Share of the borough's Green Belt release	Place in the hierarchy
1,908	1,210	About 63%	About 15%	Tier 3 Primary Village

The plan allocates 1,336 homes to Snodland and 1,638 to Kings Hill. Both are Tier 2 Service Centres, a level above Hildenborough. This parish, a Tier 3 village, is allocated nearly as many as Snodland — and far more than any other Tier 3 village. Hadlow, the next highest, takes 782.

No school, no surgery, no hall

Every allocation in the plan of 1,300 homes or more secures a new primary school on site. Nothing below that figure does.

Allocation	Homes	What the plan requires on site
Borough Green	2,000	3-form-entry primary school; healthcare facility; community hall and indoor sport; shop
Tonbridge (north-east)	1,500	2-form-entry primary school; healthcare facility; community hall and indoor sport; shop
Snodland	1,300	2-form-entry primary school; community hall and indoor sport; shop
Medway Gap	1,300	2-form-entry primary school; community hall and indoor sport; shop
Hildenborough parish — five sites combined	1,210	A convenience shop, outdoor sport and play space. No school. No surgery. No hall.
Aylesford / Eccles	938	A shop forming a local centre; no school
Hadlow	422	Play spaces, courts and trails only

Because the 1,210 homes are divided across five separate sites, none individually reaches the size at which the plan provides social infrastructure. Once any part of the Coblands site is added, the parish is at or above the 1,300 mark at which every other allocation in the plan secures a school — and it still secures none of those facilities. At the last consultation the Parish Council showed, from the Council's own evidence, a need for 5.8 additional forms of entry of primary school places in this area. The phrase "forms of entry" does not appear anywhere in the 550-page plan.

Green Belt and the gap to Tonbridge

One of the five statutory purposes of Green Belt is to stop neighbouring towns merging. The largest site, HP1, sits in the gap between Hildenborough and Hilden Park/Tonbridge. The Council's own Green Belt Assessment found that releasing this land would lead to the physical merging of the two settlements. The plan allocates it anyway, and its supporting text describes development as strengthening the physical relationship between them. Once land leaves the Green Belt it loses that protection, and the plan designates no Local Green Gap here.



HP1 — 602 homes across 34 hectares. Regulation 19 Local Plan, page 452. © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000849995.

Other things the plan records

- **Ancient woodland** on part of HP1, which the required route to the station would have to cross.
- **Flood risk** — the Council's own assessment classed HI1 and part of HP1 as "least preferable" and concluded safe access and escape was not possible. The plan requires applicants to prove otherwise at application stage.
- **Highways** — a 2004 appeal found adequate visibility could not be achieved onto Tonbridge Road here. The plan requires vehicle access there anyway.
- **Wastewater** — limited sewer capacity requiring off-site upgrades. The main site policy has no foul drainage clause.
- **Protected species** — great crested newts were confirmed locally in 2025. The words "great crested newt" appear nowhere in the plan.
- **Water supply** — capacity was debated at Full Council on 3 September 2026.

What the plan does protect

Three Local Green Space designations — the Village Green at Mount Pleasant, the Recreation Ground on Riding Lane and Westwood on London Road. Foxbush is added to the local heritage list. Hildenborough is identified as a Local Centre, protecting its shops from unjustified change of use. Because the sites are Green Belt release, a minimum of 50% affordable housing applies — in the order of 800 affordable homes, against a normal borough requirement of 40%. And the Leigh flood storage and Hildenborough embankment scheme reduces flood risk locally.

What happens next

Stage	When
Regulation 19 consultation — the stage we are in now	11 September to 25 October 2026
Plan submitted to the Secretary of State for examination	By 31 December 2026
Planning Inspector examines the plan; public hearings held	Expected 2027
Plan adopted and used to decide planning applications	After the Inspector reports

Once adopted, the plan is the starting point for every planning decision in the area. Sites allocated in it are very difficult to resist application by application.

Having your say

This is not a vote, and it is not like the last consultation.

The Planning Inspector can only consider whether the plan is legally compliant and whether it is "sound". The number of objections does not decide the outcome. That does not make responding pointless — it means responses have to be framed in a particular way. Our companion handout explains the tests in plain English, with a worked example. Ten minutes to read.

Please write in your own words. Identical copied responses are treated as one point made many times. What you know about your own street, your school run, your surgery or your commute is evidence nobody else can give.

Come and talk to us

All sessions at Hildenborough Village Hall, Riding Lane. Staffed, free, no booking — come and go as you like.

Date	Time	What
Wednesday 30 September	Starts 19.30	Presentation by Cllr Matt Boughton, Leader of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, followed by questions
Saturday 3 October	10.00 – 13.00	Drop-in session
Thursday 8 October	18.00 – 20.00	Drop-in session
Tuesday 13 October	18.00 – 20.00	Drop-in session
Saturday 17 October	10.00 – 14.00	Drop-in session
Tuesday 20 October	18.00 – 20.00	Help-to-submit clinic — laptops and paper forms

Where to find everything

- Parish Council page, both handouts, the map and links: hildenboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk/tbmc-local-plan
- The Local Plan, the evidence base and the response form: www.tbmc.gov.uk/local-plan
- Enquiries, large-print copies, paper forms and help responding: **07818 329029 /**
clerk@hildenboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk

Responses must be made to Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council by 11.59pm on Sunday 25 October 2026. The Parish Council cannot submit on your behalf, but we will help you submit your own.