

# The TENT 1 site and the proposed masterplan



Achieving the right balance between the need for rural communities to continue to grow and prosper without damaging their own, often unique, attributes is a major challenge.

Ashford Borough Council's priority is to retain the qualities that make Tenterden special and believes a single, relatively compact expansion of the town offers the best solution.

The TENT 1 site represents a unique opportunity to meet the need for new homes on land that lies outside any designated landscape areas and is within walking distance of the heart of the town.

The challenge for all involved is to create a development of such quality that it complements the town's existing character and bolsters its vibrant economy.



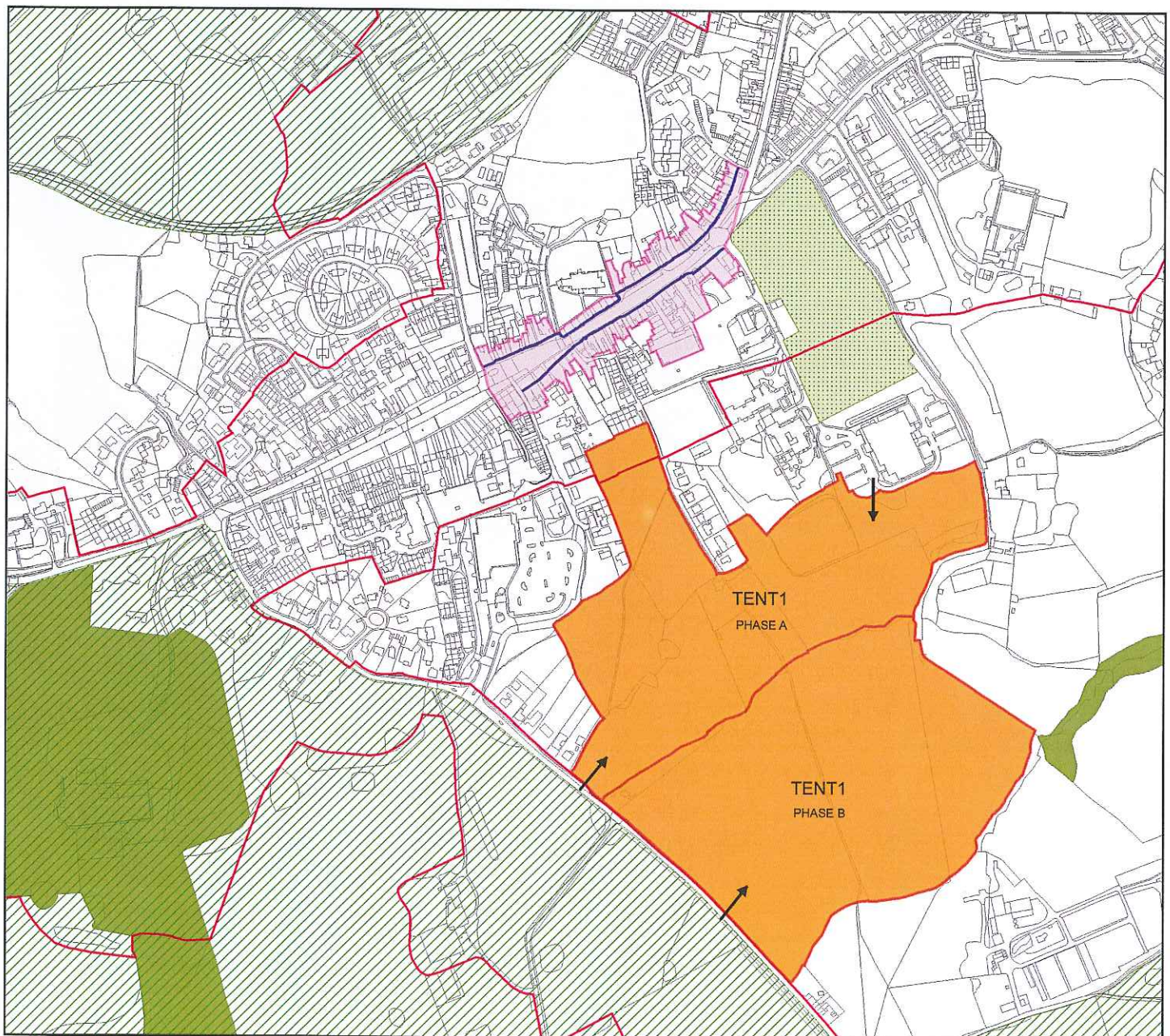
# TENT 1 explained

TENT 1 refers to the area south of Tenterden which is allocated in the borough council's Tenterden and Rural Sites Plan (adopted in October 2010).

The policy proposes up to 475 homes and a public car park (of up to 200 parking spaces) as well as affordable housing provision and a number of highway improvements to the local roads.

TENT 1 also requires that a masterplan is produced that will test, with involvement from local people and other stakeholders, how best to create a place of real quality. The masterplan will require borough council approval before planning permission can be granted on the site.

## The TENT 1 site





# How TENT 1 has evolved

In 2006, the borough council, in its capacity as the local planning authority, submitted its draft plan for the whole borough called the Core Strategy. This advocated that Tenterden should accommodate an additional 265 homes by 2021. However the government appointed independent planning inspector who examined the Core Strategy disagreed. The inspector made a binding recommendation on the council which increased this number to 500 homes.

Following the adoption of the Core Strategy (2008), the borough council began work on its Tenterden and Rural Sites Plan to identify specific development sites in the rural area, in line with the adopted Core Strategy. During this process, a number of potential residential development sites in and around Tenterden were promoted by developers and landowners (see diagram below).

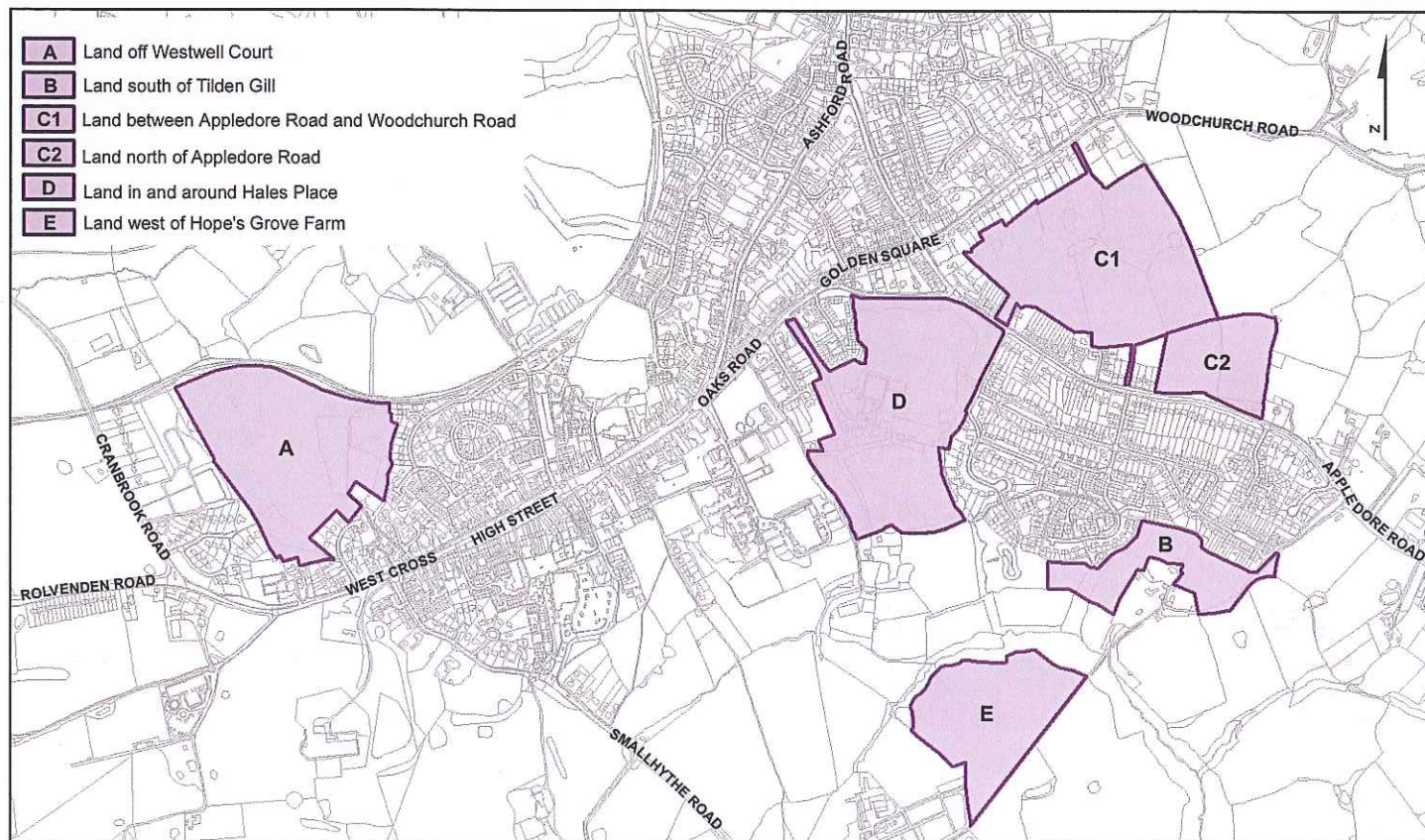
To help assess these sites two local community workshops were organised by the town council, in liaison with the borough council, which provided the opportunity for a cross section of local people to have their say on the potential

development sites put forward. The clear outcome was that the area to the south of Tenterden (what is now effectively phase A of TENT 1) was favoured. This position was endorsed by the town council and supported by evidence collated by the borough council.

The development of TENT 1 over a period of years will allow the town to grow in an area that is within easy walking distance of the range of services in the town centre. This will avoid the need for a number of less suitable or sustainable alternative sites promoted on the periphery,\* thus minimising the impact on the wider town.

The borough council proposed that the entire Core Strategy housing allocation for Tenterden should be delivered on the TENT 1 site. This position was endorsed by the planning inspector who oversaw the examination in public into the Tenterden and Rural Sites Plan. Policy TENT 1 was formally adopted as local council policy in October 2010.

## Other main potential sites



\* All areas of land promoted for residential development by developers as part of the evolution of the Tenterden and Rural Sites Plan document.



# Further Information

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## Why is the borough council pursuing development at TENT 1?

The Tenterden and Rural Sites Plan is the current adopted local plan in relation to rural housing allocations.

Current government guidance is very clear (within the recently published National Planning Policy Framework). It encourages local planning authorities to push ahead with proposals that are in adopted plans as a way of helping to deal with shortages in housing supply nationally.

This clear position would make it very difficult for the borough council to resist a planning application for development on TENT 1, as the principle of development is already established. If the borough council decided to abandon plans for TENT 1 then the developers would be very likely to submit a planning application anyway, meaning the borough council would lose control over the process, which could result in a poorer development and one which didn't have local consensus.

It is also clear that Tenterden – by far the largest and most sustainable settlement in the rural area and the borough's only town outside of Ashford – will always have pressure to accommodate some additional housing growth, to meet its own needs and some of the wider demand to live in the area. The council's view is that the area of TENT 1 is the most suitable area to accommodate this growth, when compared to other peripheral locations around the town.

## What is happening with the TENT 1 masterplan?

So far, the various land owners have come together to discuss how best to progress the masterplanning of TENT 1 together.

The borough council will be a key partner in the process and will make sure that relevant local stakeholders are involved in the process and that the masterplan is consistent with policy TENT 1. The borough council has a strong track record in working with communities around the borough to create similar masterplans.

The masterplan will concentrate on a detailed design approach for Phase A with a more general, strategic approach for Phase B. This will provide the best balance between ensuring the masterplan is consistent with policy TENT 1, yet is flexible enough to accommodate changes over time such as those which may materialise through the borough council's formal review of its Core Strategy (due to be adopted in 2014).

This will look again at the strategic growth issues affecting Tenterden, albeit within a longer timeframe (up to 2030) and may, or may not, have implications for the planning of the TENT 1 area in the longer term.

## What are the key next steps?

Work will begin shortly on the TENT 1 masterplan. This will involve the extensive collection of evidence, including ecological survey work, urban design studies, landscape assessments and traffic capacity work. The community will be closely involved throughout.

There will be a major community design workshop, allowing a cross section of the local community including residents, amenity groups and local businesses to get to grips with all the issues involved and play a direct role in shaping the masterplan.

The borough council and Tenterden Town Council will work closely together to make sure that the wider community are fully involved and also kept up to date with progress on the masterplanning.

## How can I contact Ashford Borough Council to find out more?

You can contact the Planning Policy Team:

**Phone:** 01223 330 229

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