

# New Local Plan: FAQs

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## General

### What is a Local Plan?

A Local Plan sets the planning framework for an area. It is important because it;

- identifies the development land needed in the future
- sets out how sites will be developed and coordinated with the infrastructure needed
- helps reduce the risk of speculative planning applications
- sets out the policies used when determining planning applications.

A Local Plan must look ahead at least 15 years.

The Local Plan's policies need to be consistent with Government planning policy (as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework) but are also tailored to local circumstances.

Councils have to review their Local Plans at least every 5 years to take on board updated information, particularly about the number of new homes needed.

The [current Local Plan](#) for North West Leicestershire was finalised ('adopted') in 2017.

We are now preparing a new Local Plan which will cover the years to 2040.

## New Local Plan

### What stage is the New Local Plan at?

We are currently at the draft Local Plan stage in the plan-making process (technically called 'Regulation 18' stage).

Draft policies and sites for development have been published for public consultation.

We will consider all the comments and information submitted to us and produce a final draft of the plan. There will then be another round of consultation (called 'Regulation 19' stage) before the plan is sent to be examined by the Planning Inspectorate.

### How long will it take?

We anticipate that we will have a final draft plan (Regulation 19) ready for consultation by early 2025. We will submit the plan to the Planning Inspectorate in mid-2025.

### Who decides if the New Local Plan is acceptable?

An independent Planning Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate will lead a formal 'Examination in Public' to test if it accords with legal and procedural requirements and whether it is 'sound'.

Local Plans are 'sound' if they are:

- Positively prepared. The Local Plan must meet the district's housing and employment requirements. In addition, it should be informed by agreements with other authorities so

that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development.

- Justified. The Local Plan strategy must be appropriate and based on evidence. Reasonable alternative strategies should have been taken into account.
- Effective. The Local Plan should be deliverable. Joint working on cross-boundary matters with neighbouring authorities should be evident.
- Consistent with national policy. The Local Plan should be in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Inspector makes recommendations to the Secretary of State and the Council about whether the Local Plan should be adopted and what changes to it are needed. Any changes will be subject to public consultation.

If the plan can be adopted, it would need to be formally decided by the Council.

## What happens to planning applications submitted while the New Local Plan is being prepared?

The adopted Local Plan is the starting point for determining planning applications until the New Local Plan is finalised.

As the preparation of the New Local Plan progresses, the policies within it increase in their importance ('weight') and can start to be a consideration when planning applications are decided.

At the point the New Local Plan is adopted, it will wholly replace the current Local Plan.

## What happens if we don't prepare a Local Plan?

If the Local Plan is not updated, there is a risk that the Government could intervene and prepare a Local Plan for the council. This would likely limit local involvement and decision making.

It is also possible that existing policies will be judged 'out of date' which would increase the risk of unplanned, speculative development.

## How can I stay informed?

Email [planning.policy@nwleicestershire.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@nwleicestershire.gov.uk) if you want to be added to our consultation database or phone (01530) 454676.

If you are on our database and no longer want to be, let us know and we will remove your details.

## Housing

### How much new housing is needed?

The Government's target is for 300,000 new homes to be built each year.

To contribute to that national figure, the Government provides us with a calculation for the number of new homes needed in North West Leicestershire.

Also, Leicester City is unable to build all the homes it needs with the boundary of the City. All of the Leicestershire district and borough councils have worked together to show how this unmet need will be met elsewhere.

The outcome is that we need to provide 13,720 new homes between 2020 and 2040. This equates to 686 new homes every year.

### How much housing has been built so far?

Between 2020 and the end of March 2023 2,936 new homes have been built in North West Leicestershire. In addition, we project that another 6,763 new homes will be built on sites which a) already have planning permission or b) are identified in the adopted Local Plan.

This means that the New Local Plan needs to find land for around 5,700 new homes.

### Can I still submit a site for consideration through the Local Plan process?

Yes. More information can be found on our [website](#).

## Jobs

### How much new employment land is needed?

We also need to find around 30 hectares of general employment land (offices, industry, warehouses).

We will also need some more land for large-scale logistics/distribution warehouses. We are doing further work on this subject with the other Leicestershire authorities and further detail will be in the next draft of the New Local Plan

## Infrastructure

### What about new infrastructure to cope with all this new development?

The New Local Plan is not just about new homes and jobs. We also need infrastructure such as schools, healthcare, public transport, roads, utilities, parks and leisure facilities.

The New Local Plan will set out clearly what infrastructure is needed alongside the new homes and employment units.

New development will be carefully controlled to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is provided. Where larger numbers of homes are being built in a single location, infrastructure requirements can be planned and delivered as part of the overall development.

We are currently preparing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to identify what new infrastructure is required to support growth. These requirements will then be detailed in the next version of the New Local Plan. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is a 'living' document so will be updated when new information becomes available as the New Local Plan progresses.

### How will the new infrastructure be funded?

Large scale infrastructure, such as major roads, schools and health centres, is funded through a combination of multi-agency investment (such as the Environment Agency, Leicestershire County Council, Severn Trent Water and National Highways) and contributions from developers.

When large-scale developments are given planning permission, developers are required to a) provide the facility or b) make financial contributions to improvements to existing local infrastructure and services. The developer will sign a legal agreement to make sure this happens.

### Why isn't the infrastructure provided ahead of new development?

Put simply it is about money and matching this to the different priorities of the various agencies involved in new infrastructure.

Provision also has to be matched to when the infrastructure is required. For example, to fund a new primary school normally requires at least 700 new homes to create the necessary number of pupils to support the new school.

In addition, government policy is clear that new development should not be made unviable by the cost of new infrastructure. This is also a factor in the timing of new infrastructure.

## Environment

### What account is taken of the impact of the New Local Plan on the environment?

Local Plans must be scrutinised through environmental reports, called the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. These reports consider the Plan's impact on the environment, wildlife, people and the economy. They also set out how any negative impacts will be addressed.

The outcomes of these environmental reports has, and will continue to feed into the content of the New Local Plan.

## Evidence

### What evidence supports the plan?

A variety of [evidence](#) has already been prepared.

Further evidence, including transport modelling and a viability study is underway. New evidence will be added to the website as it is completed.

## **Neighbourhood Plans**

### **How do Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans fit together?**

[Neighbourhood Plans](#) are written by the local community. They provide planning policies for a specific local area, often that covered by a parish or town council.

When they are finalised, they have the same importance ('weight') in planning application decisions as the Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans need to be consistent the with 'strategic' policies of the adopted Local Plan. They can have more detailed planning policies for the local area they cover.

The New Local Plan will take account of the existing and emerging Neighbourhood Plans in the District, as well as providing the strategic policies for future Neighbourhood Plans.