

# Frequently asked questions

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## Questions about the Local Plan

### **1. What is a Local Plan?**

The Local Plan is the long term planning strategy for the borough. It will identify how much development we need in the next twenty years and where it should go. It will also include policies to protect the environment, respond to climate change, and ensure high-quality design to create places that meet community needs.

## **2. Why does the borough need a local plan, and what does it mean for existing residents and local businesses?**

Every local planning authority is required to prepare a Local Plan. These plans are the key document where an authority can set out a vision and framework for the future development of their area, engaging with their communities in doing so.

New homes are needed to accommodate current and future populations and to support growing businesses – and councils must plan for growth in all types of housing in their local areas, and take account of wider needs. As well as new homes, we need to plan for other requirements, such as land for offices, industry and jobs; community facilities, such as schools and healthcare; open space for recreation and nature conservation, and support for our town and district centres. The preparation of the Local Plan helps to ensure that new developments are sustainable and supported by the necessary infrastructure – including public transport, roads, water treatment works and community facilities.

The Borough like other parts of the south Hampshire area is a popular area for those looking to take advantage of the high quality environment, access to jobs and opportunities to study, an international airport and excellent connectivity to London and beyond.

Despite the importance of the two cities as centres for employment, business, retail, leisure, culture and learning, each of the towns making up urban South Hampshire has its own distinct character and identity. The Local Plan has a role in maintaining and enhancing the Borough's environment by helping to manage development and growth. It is easier to resist development proposals in areas that are not suitable for development when the Council has an up-to-date Local Plan, and a sufficient supply of housing land.

## **3. Why is the Council updating the Local Plan so soon and what happens to the current Local Plan?**

The current Eastleigh Borough Local Plan was adopted in 2022. The policies in the adopted plan meet housing needs to 2031. The Local Plan Review provides the opportunity to plan for the longer term and the additional development required in the borough to 2044. Since the Local Plan was adopted, the

Government has updated national planning policy and legislation and the Local Plan Review will also reflect these changes.

The current Local Plan will remain and be used to decide planning applications until the new Local Plan reaches the end of the process and is adopted.

#### **4. What is an Issues and Options consultation?**

The Issues and Options is the first stage of full public consultation on the Local Plan Review. It includes an initial assessment of the key issues and options for the scale and location of development and for policy approaches, to inform the debate. The consultation seeks your views about whether you agree or disagree with the issues we have identified or if we missed any.

The consultation asks for views about options for development, based on proposals from developers and landowners. We also want to hear if there are other sites we should consider. At this early stage the Council has no view as to which sites should be selected for development, and which should continue to be protected.

#### **5. I've already responded to a consultation on Eastleigh Town Centre, is this part of the Local Plan review?**

The Council has been working closely with partners on a town centre project 'Together We Make Eastleigh'. The programme will engage with the local community, existing and potential visitors to improve our understanding of the town with the aim of boosting footfall, supporting businesses and trialling new approaches in the centre. This is separate to the Local Plan review, although the outcomes of the work will feed into it.

The Issues and Options Consultation Document asks your views on an overall approach to Eastleigh Town Centre. This includes retaining a strong primary shopping area, improving links into the centre, protecting the Leigh Road recreation ground and supporting the transformation of the Southampton Road corridor close to the town centre core. We would appreciate your comments on the proposed approach.

## **6. What is the general approach to development?**

To ensure infrastructure and utilities can be planned comprehensively alongside growth in housing and employment areas, the Local Plan needs to guide where development is likely to happen over the next 20 or so years. This 'plan-led' approach also helps to avoid piecemeal development, and to plan new communities in a more joined-up way.

Government planning policy requires local plans to prioritise the development of previously developed or 'brownfield' sites before considering the development of areas of countryside. The Council is committed to focussing development in urban areas wherever possible and making best use of land by planning for well-designed, higher-density development, appropriate to its location.

The Interim Brownfield Potential background paper has specifically considered the number of new homes that will come forward in urban areas. We expect that around 2,000 homes could be built in urban areas in the next twenty years. The Council needs to consider whether it can identify sites for an additional 6,590-11,730 new homes on greenfield sites to meet the borough's housing needs. When considering appropriate sites, the Council needs to consider various factors including the impact on settlement gaps, to retain sufficient gaps between villages and towns to keep their separate identities, on landscape and ecology.

We have started to assess the options and have published interim assessments alongside the consultation document and summary. These include an overview of the sites in the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and a more detailed assessment in the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment. In these assessments, the Council has started to review all the main constraints on development in the Borough including flood risk, internationally important habitat and wildlife areas, visual gaps between individual settlements, and so on. As the Local Plan Review progresses, the Council will update the evidence base and complete technical studies to consider which are the preferred site options.

## **7. How does the Local Plan review address environmental issues?**

The adopted Local Plan includes policies to protect green spaces, biodiversity and water resources, as well as strategies for reducing carbon emissions. It includes requirements for sustainable design and construction to support climate goals, for example by reducing energy and water use and delivering zero or low carbon energy infrastructure. The Local Plan also promotes walking, wheeling and cycling, reducing the need to use the car for many journeys.

## **8. Why is the Council planning for so much housing?**

The Council has to demonstrate in the Local Plan that it can provide sufficient land to meet housing needs. The Government has a standard method to calculate housing needs for each local authority. This is the starting point for the Local Plan housing target. It has recently consulted on a new method which would significantly increase the number of homes we need to consider. The Issues and Options sets out these numbers, the issues we need to consider to understand how much development we can accommodate, which sites might be suitable for development, and asks for your views.

The Council is working with its South Hampshire neighbours who are working together in a group called the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) to plan for new homes across the subregion. The first priority is to deliver development in cities and towns, close to jobs, shops and public transport. While significant growth can be accommodated in our cities and towns, there is also a need for new development on green field sites to ensure that the need for new homes is met.

As a Council, we are committed to ensuring that housing needs for local people are met, and to delivering homes that have a range of tenures to ensure that local people can access new homes.

## **9. How were the sites shown on the maps identified?**

The site options in the Issues and Options document are not the Council's proposals as the planning authority, they are proposals from developers and/or landowners that the Council is required to consider. Most sites in the Issues and Options documents have been put forward by landowners and developers following a 'Call for Sites' exercise when the Council invited anyone to suggest

sites with the potential for development or to use for environmental mitigation. A small number of sites were put forward by the Council in its role as a landowner, or have been identified by planning staff conducting a site search process considering if other sites could have potential.

#### **10. What are Strategic Development Options (SDO) and Small and Medium Site options (SMS)?**

The Council has combined the sites put forward by developers and landowners into Small and Medium Site options and Strategic Development Options. The Small and Medium Site options are individual sites or small groups of adjacent sites across the borough. The Strategic Development Options are larger areas with the potential to create new communities providing new homes, and potentially jobs, infrastructure and facilities such as schools, open space and transport links.

At this early stage the Council has no view as to which options and combinations of options should be selected for development, and which should continue to be protected.

#### **11. Won't this development lead to even more congestion?**

Building new housing does not by itself, cause congestion. People driving cars and other vehicles cause congestion. If the population of an area is forecast to rise, and if vehicle ownership and use continue to increase, then congestion will worsen regardless of whether new housing is built or not. Similarly, not building housing will not reduce congestion as, if there is insufficient housing it simply results in more people having to drive further to access jobs, facilities and services.

There is no single, easy solution to reducing congestion. The solution lies partly in new infrastructure (such as roads, junction improvements, rail and bus improvements and better provision for pedestrians and cyclists) so reducing the need for cars, but part of the solution is also changing journey behaviours.

The Council is working closely with Hampshire County Council, as Highways Authority, to assess the impact of various development options on our roads, rail network, cycle ways and paths and consider the best measures to address

those impacts. Detailed 'Traffic Modelling' will be undertaken to understand the impact on traffic and how we can best ensure that traffic can flow.

The Council has also made a commitment that where possible key infrastructure, such as roads, will be delivered in advance of housing developments to ensure traffic impact is minimised.

## **12. How will infrastructure cope with this new development?**

The Local Plan review is not just about delivering new homes and jobs and the proposed vision includes the delivery of high-quality infrastructure in the right locations such as new schools, health and community facilities.

The Council will work closely with infrastructure providers such as Hampshire County Council, utilities companies and healthcare providers on the requirements for specific sites and the plan will set out clearly what infrastructure provision is needed to support the new development proposed. New development will contribute to the provision of infrastructure, either through a financial contribution or by directly delivering infrastructure. Where possible, key infrastructure, such as roads, will be delivered in advance of housing developments.

### Questions about the consultation

## **13. How long does the consultation period run for?**

The formal consultation on the Local Plan Issues and Options will run for 8 weeks from Wednesday 4th December 2024 until 5pm Wednesday 29th January 2025.

This is the first stage in the process. There will be a formal consultation on the Council's Local Plan in 2027 and ongoing dialogue with interested parties in the meantime.

## **14. Why does my view matter?**

The Local Plan Issues and Options consultation is the first stage of public consultation on the Local Plan Review. Producing the Local Plan should be a shared endeavour – led by the Council as the local planning authority but in

collaboration with local communities, developers, landowners and other interested parties.

Since we prepared the last Local Plan there has been significant changes including the Covid-19 pandemic which impacted how we work and what we want from our green spaces and town centres. We are seeking to engage with as many individuals, businesses, organisations and communities as possible at the start of the process to understand the key issues and consider the most appropriate options.

We haven't made any decisions about where growth should be delivered. The sites included in this consultation have been put forward by landowners and developers. The council has no view on them at this stage and we want to hear your thoughts. It is important we understand your views so they can shape the future of Eastleigh Borough. Consultation responses and engagement with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses, will assist in the balanced judgment made about the preferred planning strategy for the borough.

### **15. How can I make my views known?**

You can get involved in this public consultation through several ways including the following:

- Viewing documents online at [www.eastleigh.gov.uk/localplanreview](http://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/localplanreview) where you can also submit your comments electronically
- Attending one of the drop in sessions. Please visit our website for further information.
- Email [localplan@eastleigh.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@eastleigh.gov.uk)
- Writing to the Local Plan team, Eastleigh Borough Council, Eastleigh House, Upper Market Street, Eastleigh, SO50 9YN

The consultation runs for at 8 weeks from Wednesday 4th December 2024 until 5pm Wednesday 29th January 2025.

### **16. Are the consultation materials available in any alternative formats?**

If you require the consultation document in an alternative format, please contact us on the details above. Printed versions of the consultation document can be made available on request.



## 17. How will any personal data provided as part of a consultation be used?

All data will be stored and used in line with UK General Data Protection Regulations. We cannot accept anonymous responses as formal representations. All consultation representations can be made public, but for individuals, the published information will be limited to the individual's name and comment.

## 18. What happens next?

The comments on the Issues and Options consultation will be inputted and summarised as necessary. These will be reported in a Consultation Statement at the next stage in preparing the Local Plan. We will consider all the comments made and these will help inform the preferred options for development and the draft plan.

Following the consultation, we will produce further technical reports for the evidence base, including an analysis of the comments made on the 'Issues and Options' and we will undertake a comparative assessment of site options. Once the preferred options have been approved, we will test their deliverability before a draft plan is finalised (also known as a pre-submission plan).

We will carry out another period of consultation to get feedback from you on the draft Local Plan to be submitted to Government (also known as the 'proposed submission plan') and examined by an Independent Planning Inspector before it can be adopted.



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and have your say, or visit  
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Let's shape our  
future together

