



## Local Plan Committee

2 October 2023

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Bethany Jones</b>	01206 282541
<b>Title</b>	<b>Principal Planning Policy Officer</b> Consultation on implementation of Plan Making Reforms	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Levelling Up and Regeneration White Paper was published in February last year and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB) was introduced to Parliament in May 2022. It will put the foundations in place for delivering the Government's agenda and deliver against some of the ambitions and planning reforms set out in the Levelling Up White Paper.
- 1.2 On 25 July 2023 the Government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, launched a consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms.
- 1.3 This report summarises the content of the consultation document and is intended to stimulate discussion and help inform the Council's response to the consultation.
- 1.4 The scope of the consultation is defined as:

*Our vision is for local plans (and minerals and waste plans) to be simpler to understand and use, and positively shaped by the views of communities about how their area should evolve. We want them to clearly show what is planned in a local area – so that communities and other users of the plan can engage with them more easily, especially while they are being drawn up. We want them to be prepared more quickly and updated more frequently to ensure more authorities have up-to-date plans that reflect local needs. And we want them to make the best use of new digital technology, so that people can get involved without having to go through hundreds of pages of documents at council offices and to drive improved productivity and efficiency in the plan-making process.*

## **2. Recommended Decision**

- 2.1 To provide comments on the consultation proposals which will feed into a response from the Council by the deadline of 18 October 2023.

## **3. Reason for Recommended Decision**

- 3.1 The consultation provides an opportunity to make representations on the new Local Plan Process and its implementation.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 Not to comment on the consultation which would miss the opportunity to influence national policy.

## **5. Background Information**

- 5.1 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill was first introduced to Parliament in May 2022. There have been a number of consultations related to the proposals within the Bill particularly related to planning.
- 5.2 Members may recall the recent consultation on revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2022. This provided details of immediate changes to the NPPF some initial thoughts on changes to the plan making system. The Government have confirmed their intention to publish the outcomes of that consultation this Autumn, including an updated NPPF.
- 5.3 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill sets out changes to the legislation that governs how Local Plans are produced. This latest consultation seeks views on certain proposals to implement these changes, proposed to make plans simpler, faster to prepare and more accessible.
- 5.4 A Portfolio Holder response to the consultation is being prepared, and suggestions from the Committee debate will be factored into the draft response.
- 5.5 The consultation is divided into 15 Chapters covering:
- Plan Content
  - The new 30 month plan timeframe
  - Digital Plans
  - The Local Plan timetable
  - Evidence and the tests of soundness
  - Gateway Assessments during plan-making
  - Plan Examination
  - Community engagement and consultation

- Requirements to assist with certain plan-making
- Monitoring of plans
- Supplementary Plans
- Minerals and Waste Plans
- Community Land Auctions
- Approach to roll out and transition
- Saving existing plans and planning documents

5.6 Planning Resource has summarised 14 key proposed changes to the plan making system as:

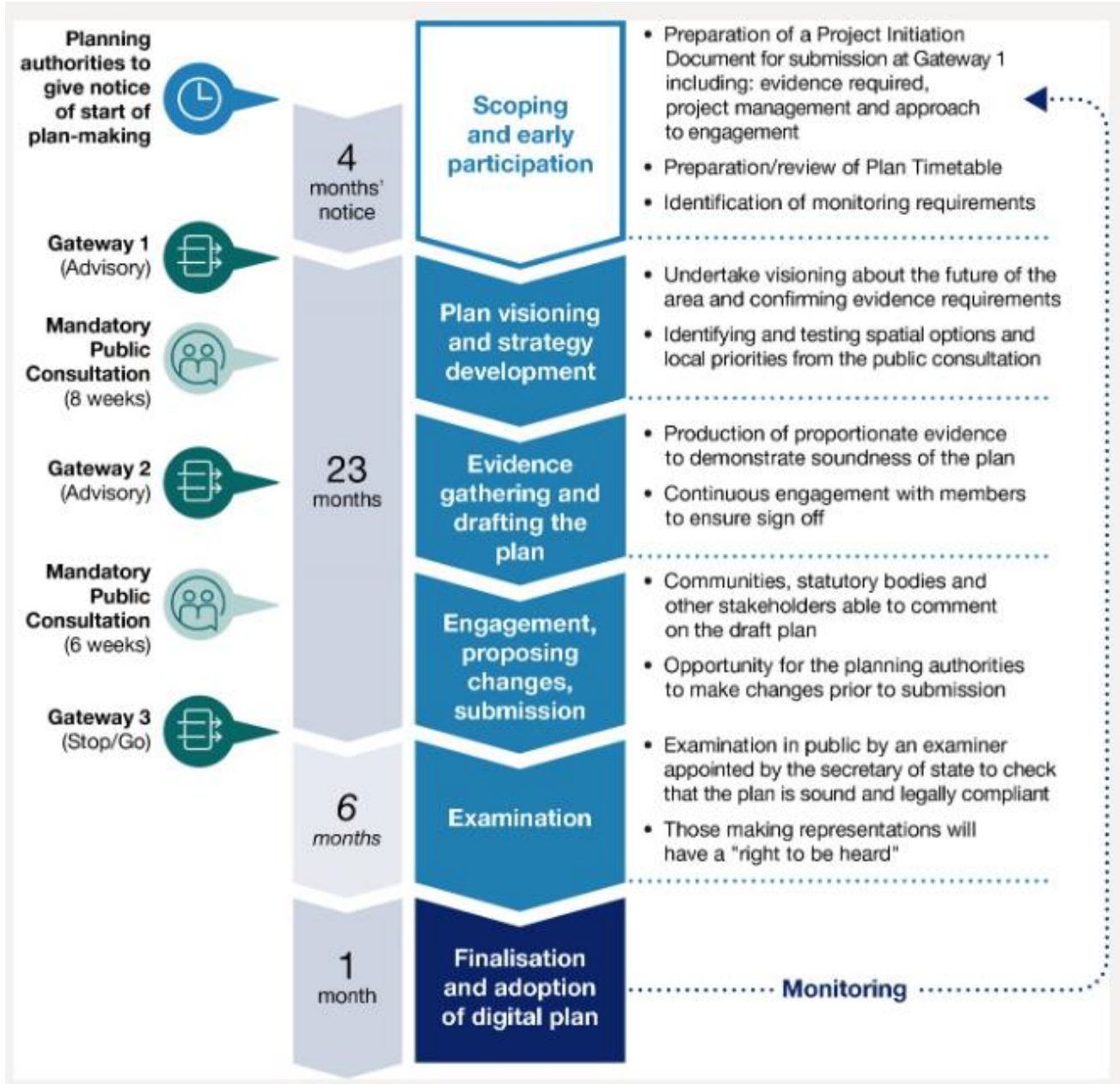
**1. The document sets out six stages for local plan preparation that must be completed within the 30-month timescale.**

The consultation document reveals the government's proposals for how local plans will be prepared in just 30 months in a process that is "more standardised and front-loaded". As part of this, the government says, examinations will become "more efficient" and should take no longer than six months.

The six preparation stages are:

- Scoping and early participation;
- Plan visioning and strategy development;
- Evidence gathering and drafting the plan;
- Engagement, proposing changes, submission;
- Examination;
- Finalisation and adoption of the plan.

The image below summarises the timetable.



*Initial Officer Comments: The consultation also outlines that an additional 3 months will be added to the examination stage if a Modifications consultation is required. To produce a local plan within 30 months is considered very ambitious.*

*Officers have attended workshop sessions on the consultation and DLUC have confirmed that it will be a policy expectation and not a legislative requirement for the key stages of the plan making process to be undertaken within the 30-month timescale.*




## 2. Draft plans will have to pass three mandatory gateway checks involving inspectors.

According to the consultation document, the purpose of the first gateway check, which will take place following the first scoping stage, is to ensure the plan “sets off in the right direction”. The second gateway check will involve “ensuring compliance with legal and procedural requirements and (wherever possible) supporting early resolution of potential soundness issues” and take place between the two mandatory consultation windows.

Meanwhile, the third gateway will take place at the point just before submission and is designed to “to monitor and track progress”. The first gateway “may involve” planning inspectors, the document states, while inspectors will be required for the latter two.

According to the consultation document, the government proposes to set out in guidance that new “project initiation documents” should be used at the first gateway check to “set out the context, trends and possibilities of the planning authority’s area”.

The Gateway Assessments are summarised in the image below:

	 <b>Gateway 1</b> (Advisory)	 <b>Gateway 2</b> (Advisory)	 <b>Gateway 3</b> (Stop/Go)
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring the plan sets off in the right direction</li> <li>Supporting early diagnosis of potential issues – legal and procedural requirements and soundness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting early resolution of potential soundness issues, where possible</li> <li>Ensuring legal and procedural compliance</li> <li>Monitoring and tracking progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checking the plan is ready to proceed to examination</li> <li>Ensuring legal and procedural compliance</li> <li>Monitoring and tracking progress</li> </ul>
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advising, observing and supporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advising, observing and supporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Validating that key requirements have been met (a “stop/go” check)</li> </ul>
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 weeks (up to 6 by exception)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 weeks (up to 6 by exception)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 weeks (up to 6 by exception)</li> </ul>
Assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent, specialist hands-on support</li> <li>May involve Planning Inspectors (as required)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Inspectors</li> <li>Optionally supported by technical specialists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Inspectors</li> </ul>

*Initial Officer Comments – in principle the proposal to introduce checks during the plan making process is to be welcomed. It will help identify any problems and issues at an early stage so they can be addressed prior to submission.*

**3. The two mandatory consultation periods will be longer and “more clearly defined”.**

According to the consultation document, two mandatory consultation windows (currently the regulation 18 and regulation 19 stages) will be retained but will be “more clearly defined and strengthened through regulations to increase their impact”. These will take place following the conclusion of the first and before the third gateway assessments, will last for a minimum of eight and six weeks respectively and will be set out in regulations, it states. It adds that this is “longer than the current statutory minimum and is in addition to early participation that would be required during the scoping phase”.

*Initial Officer Comments – it will be interesting to see how this proposal to ‘clearly define and regulate the consultation stages’ fits with the proposal below at no. 5 which is concerned with the need to replace existing engagement practices which are perceived to be ‘too technical and difficult to engage with’.*

**4. Plan examinations should take “no longer than six months”, with examining inspectors appointed earlier to avoid delays.**

The consultation document proposes that plan examinations should take “no longer than six months”. In order to achieve this, it proposes a number of changes to the existing process, including appointing examining inspectors when the authority commences the third gateway assessment, using panels of two or more inspectors “by default” to increase efficiency and “revising the way the Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) stage of the process works, so that only the relevant planning authority is invited to submit responses”.

It adds that while the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill would allow inspectors to pause examinations for a limited period of time, “we propose to set out in regulations that the pause period may not be longer than 6 months”. If the “relevant matters” responsible for the pause cannot be “dealt with to the necessary degree before the end of the pause period” the inspector will be required to recommend that the authority withdraw the plan.

*Initial Officer Comments – the Council welcomes the principle of a focussed and time limited examination process.*

## **5. New approaches to engagement will replace existing “narrow and ineffective” practices.**

According to the consultation document, “existing practices of engagement and consultation in plan-making are widely perceived to be narrow and ineffective” as loosely defined regulations “create confusion” and result in consultations which often feel “too technical and difficult to engage with”.

Among the government’s proposed changes to the way authorities are required to engage with communities when preparing their local plans, is replacing the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - where authorities document how the public, statutory bodies and other interested parties will be involved in the plan’s preparation - with two new “key levers to drive improvements to the quality of engagement”.

New “project initiation documents” will be required to set out what engagement is planned and what resources and skills will be required to deliver this.

The government is also proposing introducing a new requirement, in regulations, for planning authorities to “notify” stakeholders and “invite” early participation on matters that might shape the direction of the plan. This requirement will “sit within the scoping stage, prior to commencement of the 30 month process and before the first mandatory consultation window”, the document states and will place a “stronger emphasis on early participation during the initial stages of plan-making”.

*Initial Officer Comments: The early participation is essentially the Issues and Options stage of the current plan making process. Although the consultation suggests this part of the process will last 4 months prior to commencement of the 30 month timescale, there is no given time frame for how long the engagement element of this stage must last, unlike the two mandatory consultation periods. The approach is largely aligned to the iterative and ongoing engagement approach that is being pursued for the Local Plan Review.*

## **6. The new plan-making system will be introduced in autumn 2024 but will be done so via a “phased roll-out” focusing initially on ten ‘front runner’ authorities.**

The consultation reiterates the deadline of all Local Plans being prepared under the current planning system must be submitted by 30 June 2025. Any plans submitted after this date must follow the new plan making system.

According to the consultation document, the government wants to “ensure a smooth transition to the new system for planning authorities, but they have heard concerns about the impact on the sector of a large group of authorities commencing plan-making at exactly the same point”. A previous government consultation paper published just before Christmas proposed that the transitional arrangements for the



new local plan system would begin in November 2024. “We have therefore proposed options for phasing the roll-out of the new local plan-making system from autumn 2024,” the new document states.

“We propose to provide expert plan-making support to a first, small cohort of around ten ‘front runner’ authorities to prepare new-style local plans”, it states, adding that this will ensure “a strong foundation of learning and best practice for other authorities to draw upon”. This cohort could start plan-making in 2024 and should have completed all three gateway assessments by June the following year, it adds.

All remaining authorities would be ranked chronologically by the date that they adopted their local plan, before groups of 25 authorities at a time are allocated a “six month plan-making commencement window”.

The consultation also states that Authorities will be able to begin plan making earlier if they wish. The consultation is also seeking views on other approaches to the transitional arrangements.

*Initial Officer Comment: As set out in the Local Development Scheme, the Colchester Local Plan Review is scheduled for submission in ‘Summer 2025’.*

*DLUC have been clear that Local Authorities must continue with plan making. However, there has been no clarity on what would happen in the event a Local Authority does not submit a Local Plan by the 30 June 2025 deadline. This will be raised in the Council’s consultation response. It is assumed that in that instance, Local Authorities would need to revert to the new planning system, however this wouldn’t be at the beginning of the process as the engagement and evidence base produced to date would remain relevant.*

*Officers consider an alternative to the current grouping of local authorities could be geographical as opposed to the adoption date of their local plan to enable evidence base documents to be produced jointly and to address cross boundary issues. Whichever option is adopted the Council would not want to be delayed because of another local authority with different timing. Using a geographical basis could mean the review of the Colchester plan is pushed back.*

## **7. The government will publish a new series of “core principles” setting out what plans should contain.**

The consultation document states that in order to “support the approach outlined in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, we propose to set out, through policy and supported by guidance, a series of additional core principles around what plans should contain, to ensure plans are focused on the right things and users are able to understand clearly the ‘story’ of how the planning authority’s area will develop”.



According to the document, the government is proposing that this will be achieved by requiring plans to “contain a locally distinct vision which will anchor the plan, provide strategic direction for the underpinning policies and set out measurable outcomes for the plan period”.

*Initial Officer Comment: the idea of a set of core principles to help structure and simplify plan making is fine in principle but is not really that different to how most plans are structured now. The most contentious part of plan making is around allocations and having a set of ‘principles’ will not make this any easier or less contentious.*

#### **8. New regulations will require that a plan’s “vision” should serve as a “golden thread” through the strategy.**

The consultation document states that the required “vision” should “serve as a ‘golden thread’ through the entire local plan, with policies and allocations linking directly to delivering the outcomes set out in the vision”.

The government said it wanted to “strengthen the role of the vision in new-style local plans, ensuring they are more focused and specific than those prepared for plans in the current system”. It proposes achieving this by introducing regulations that require it to be the “golden thread” through the entire strategy, with policies and allocations linking directly to delivering “measurable outcomes” set out by the strategy.

The document also proposes “to encourage planning authorities to make links more explicitly between the vision and other relevant corporate or thematic strategies produced by other authorities, public bodies and partnerships, to help secure more buy-in for local plans as vehicles of change”.

*Initial Officer Comment: This proposal is a good idea in principle.*

#### **9. Authorities will be required to produce Annual Monitoring Reports outlining how their plans have met a series of new “nationally prescribed metrics” and a “fuller analysis” four years after adoption.**

To support a “clearer, more focused approach to monitoring”, the government is proposing a new system of monitoring that would have “two distinct elements”. Firstly, authorities would have to produce “light touch annual return[s]” which will “report on a small number of nationally prescribed metrics... to assess the implementation of key policies against the output of the plan”.

According to the document, the government is also proposing that, within four years of the plan’s adoption, authorities should prepare a “fuller analysis of how planning policies and designations are being implemented, and the extent to which the plan is meeting the overall vision for their area”. Described as a “detailed return to inform

updates to the plan”, the scope and content of this report will be “left to individual planning authorities but should be designed to inform the forthcoming update of the plan, which will need to commence five years after adoption, at the latest”, it adds.

However, the document also states that in “certain circumstances”, the government intends to require planning authorities to commence these updates earlier.

*Initial Officer Comment: A template for light touch annual returns is welcomed and will enable a more consistent approach to monitoring. However further guidance is required on what would be contained within the more detailed return to inform updates to the Local Plan.*

#### **10. New “digital templates” should be used to help authorities prepare their new-style plans.**

The consultation document states that “through engagement with the sector” the government has “consistently heard that nationally-defined digital templates would support planning authorities in drafting their plans and doing so within the proposed 30 month timeframe, setting out standardised approaches to specific parts of the plan”. According to the document, new policy will set out the government’s “expectation that authorities use the new “user-tested digital template[s]” to draft and present their plan.

*Initial Officer Comment: Digital templates are supported in principle, however there needs to remain an ability for Local Plans to address specific local issues, outside of the templates.*

#### **11. Old-style PDF plans should be replaced with digital versions that are shorter and “more visual”.**

The consultation document states that “plans will wherever possible make the best use of modern technology and be produced digitally, rather than as “analogue” (PDF or paper)”. It adds that the documents will be “shorter, more visual and map-based, enabling communities to engage more easily with their content”.

*Initial Officer Comment: This proposal is a good idea in principle.*

#### **12. Local development schemes would be scrapped and replaced by new “timetable” documents.**

The consultation document states that the proposals would see “Local Development Schemes” - the formal local plan timetable - and similar development schemes for minerals and waste plans “replaced by a new, simpler requirement to prepare and maintain a local plan timetable or minerals and waste plan timetable”.

*Initial Officer Comment: This proposal is to be welcomed.*

### **13. Digital support for plans will be provided via a new “pick and mix toolkit”.**

According to the consultation document, this will include a “set of tools that can be used by different types of planning authorities, at different stages of the plan cycle, to make the process more efficient, more cost effective and more accessible” and would “evolve over time as more best practice emerges”. It says the toolkit might include search tools, dashboards, digital checklists and step-by-step guides.

*Initial Officer Comment: This proposal is supported in principle.*

### **14. Councils who sell community land auction options to developers will still be able to ask them for section 106 planning gain contributions.**

Part 5 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill provides for time-limited pilots of Community Land Auctions (CLAs). CLAs are an idea for capturing uplift in land value, akin to competitive tendering, and are a process of price discovery. They provide an alternative approach for identifying land for allocation for development which seeks to improve land value capture for the benefit of local communities.

Areas that use the proposed new system for capturing more of the land value increase generated by allocation for development in a local plan would still ask for other forms of developer contributions to secure infrastructure and affordable housing. Where other forms of development contributions are in place, this is to be reflected in the auction price that the developers pay in order to secure the land.

*Initial Officer Comment: Further information from the piloting authorities will be crucial in deciding whether to explore this further in Colchester.*

- 5.7 In addition to the above key points identified by Planning Resource, the consultation covers a number of other topic areas/themes including:

#### **Evidence Base and Tests of Soundness**

A number of changes are proposed to reduce the amount of evidence required to develop a plan and defend it at examination, but still ensure high quality plans are delivered. The proposed approach to evidence is summarised in the image below.



A previous consultation around reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), proposed amending the tests of soundness against which plans are examined, removing the ‘justified’ test. This is intended to allow a proportionate approach to examinations in light of the other evidential requirements. There are various views in the planning sector about the ‘effective’ element of the tests of soundness, particularly the extent to which deliverability over the plan period must be demonstrated through evidence. The government intend to explore whether a change to this test of soundness would be beneficial.

*Initial Officer Comment: In principle, providing a clearer expectation of the evidence base requirements to support a Local Plan are welcomed, particularly a clear definition of ‘proportionate’ and what constitutes ‘up to date’. However, further details are required to determine if standardisation of key evidence and data could be supported. Freezing of evidence at the point of publication of the plan and submission to the Inspector is supported in principle. The Council will need to respond to any further consultations surrounding the tests of soundness.*

**Requirement to assist with certain plan-making**

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill sets out a “Requirement to Assist with Certain Plan Making”. This will give Local Planning Authorities the power to legally require that “prescribed public bodies” provide assistance to develop or review the Local Plan, Supplementary Plan, Policies Map or Infrastructure Delivery Strategy. The requirement to assist would be reserved for cases where the planning authority is not getting engagement and/or information that it needs.

*Initial Officer Comment: This approach is welcomed to ensure that any issues can be resolved earlier in the plan making process and not through the examination.*

### **Saving Existing Plans/Documents**

Plan Makers (including Local Planning Authorities and Parish Councils/ Neighbourhood Plan Forums) have until 30 June 2025 to submit the Local or Neighbourhood Plan for examination under the existing legal framework. All examinations must be concluded with plans adopted by 31 December 2026.

Existing Development Plan Documents and Saved Policies will remain in force until the Local Planning Authority adopts a new style Local Plan. When the new style Local Plan is adopted, in line with the current arrangements, those existing Development Plan Documents and Saved Policies will automatically be superseded.

*Initial Officer Comment: This proposal seems logical and is consistent with the current system.*

### **Supplementary Plans**

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill provides for the creation of new Supplementary Plans. These plans are intended to be produced at pace to enable Local Planning Authorities to react and respond positively to unanticipated changes in their area separate from the Local Plan process.

Priority should be given to including all policies within the Local Plan and leaving Supplementary Plans only for exceptional or unforeseen circumstances that need resolving between plans. As such, Supplementary Plans could be prepared prior to the adoption of a new style Local Plan. There would be an expectation that the content would be merged into the next iteration of the Local Plan, where those policies remain relevant.

Supplementary Plans will be used to discharge the requirement to produce an authority wide design code. In some circumstances, they can also build on existing policies in the Local Plan including a design code or masterplan for a site allocation.

Supplementary Plans will have the same weight as a Local Plan and will be subject to a single formal stage of consultation and independent examination. The examination would take the form of written representations. The examiner

could require a hearing in order to receive oral representations if considered necessary to ensure adequate examination of an issue or that a person has fair chance to put a case. The examination would be undertaken either by a person appointed by the Secretary of State or an examiner of the authorities choosing who is independent, impartial, and suitably qualified.

*Initial Officer Comment: This proposal is welcome in principle; however it is unclear how this will result in the production of a Local Plan being faster as the existing process of preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to add further detail to existing policies will now need to be included within the Local Plan directly.*

*The approach to consultation and examination seems appropriate given that weight to be given to Supplementary Plans would be the same as a Local Plan. The examination would follow a similar format to Neighbourhood Plans which on the whole, works well.*

- 5.8 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is currently undergoing Parliamentary scrutiny and the proposals within this consultation are subject to the Bill receiving Royal Assent. It is intended that the new plan making system will be introduced in Autumn 2024.
- 5.9 A number of other significant proposed changes are referred to where future consultation remains to be undertaken which include;
- An initial first draft of National Development Management Policies
  - A new/revised NPPF which is refocused on plan-making policies (for the new planning system)
  - Details of the “alignment policy” that will replace the duty to co-operate
  - Draft Community Land Auctions regulations

### **Consultation Questions**

- 5.10 The full list of questions posed in the consultation are listed in the Appendix.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 6.1 The consultation includes a question in respect of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 All themes in the Strategic Plan are relevant, in particular: delivering homes for people who need them; creating safe, healthy and active communities and tackling the climate challenge.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 The Government is carrying out this consultation and the deadline for responses is 18 October 2023.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 The consultation has already generated significant national publicity and it is expected that this will continue. Local Stakeholders will have an interest in the consultation including the Council's response.

## **10. Financial implications**

N/A

## **11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

N/A

## **12. Risk Management Implications**

N/A

## **13. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 13.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.

## **Appendix 1:**

Questions to the Consultation

### **Background Papers**

Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms - [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-consultation-on-implementation-of-plan-making-reforms)

This sets out the full extent of the consultation.



## **Appendix 1: Questions to the Consultation**

<b>Chapter 1: Plan Content</b>
<i>Q1. Do you agree with the core principles for plan content? Do you think there are other principles that could be included?</i>
<i>Q2. Do you agree that plans should contain a vision, and with our proposed principles for preparing the vision? Do you think there are other principles that could be included?</i>
<i>Q3. Do you agree with the proposed framework for local development management policies? Please explain</i>
<i>Q4. Would templates make it easier for local planning authorities to prepare local plans? Which parts of the local plan would benefit from consistency?</i>
<i>Q5. Do you think templates for new style minerals and waste plans would need to differ from local plans? If so, how? Please explain</i>
<b>Chapter 2: The new 30 month plan timeframe</b>
<i>Q6. Do you agree with the proposal to set out in policy that planning authorities should adopt their plan, at the latest, 30 months after the plan preparation process begins? Please explain</i>
<i>Q7. Do you agree that a Project Initiation Document will help define the scope of the plan and be a useful tool throughout the plan making process? Please explain</i>
<b>Chapter 3: Digital plans</b>
<i>Q8. What information produced during plan-making do you think would most benefit from data standardisation, and/or being openly published? Please explain</i>
<i>Q9. Do you recognise and agree that these are some of the challenges faced as part of plan preparation which could benefit from digitalisation? Are there any others you would like to add and tell us about?</i>
<i>Q10. Do you agree with the opportunities identified? Can you tell us about other examples of digital innovation or best practice that should also be considered?</i>
<i>Q11. What innovations or changes would you like to see prioritised to deliver efficiencies in how plans are prepared and used, both now and in the future? Please explain</i>
<b>Chapter 4: The local plan timetable</b>
<i>Q12. Do you agree with our proposals on the milestones to be reported on in the local plan timetable and minerals and waste timetable, and our proposals surrounding when timetables must be updated? Please explain</i>
<i>Q13. Are there any key milestones that you think should automatically trigger a review of the local plan timetable and/or minerals and waste plan timetable? Please explain</i>
<b>Chapter 5: Evidence and the tests of soundness</b>
<i>Q14. Do you think this direction of travel for national policy and guidance set out in this chapter would provide more clarity on what evidence is expected? Are there other changes you would like to see?</i>
<i>Q15. Do you support the standardisation of evidence requirements for certain topics? What evidence topics do you think would be particularly important or</i>

*beneficial to standardise and/or have more readily available baseline data? What evidence topics do you think would be particularly important to standardise?*

*Q16. Do you support the freezing of data or evidence at certain points of the process? If so which approach(es) do you favour?*

*Q17. Do you support this proposal to require planning authorities to submit only supporting documents that are related to the soundness of the plan? Please explain*

#### **Chapter 6: Gateway assessments during plan-making**

*Q18. Do you agree that these should be the overarching purposes of gateway assessments? Are there other purposes we should consider alongside those set out above? Are there any additional purposes we should consider?*

*Q19. Do you agree with these proposals around the frequency and timing of gateways and who is responsible? Please explain*

*Q20. Do you agree with our proposals for the gateway assessment process, and the scope of the key topics? Are there any other topics we should consider?*

*Q21. Do you agree with our proposal to charge planning authorities for gateway assessments? Please explain*

#### **Chapter 7: Plan examination**

*Q22. Do you agree with our proposals to speed up plan examinations? Are there additional changes that we should be considering to enable faster examinations? Are there any further changes we should consider?*

*Q23. Do you agree that six months is an adequate time for the pause period, and with the government's expectations around how this would operate? Please explain*

#### **Chapter 8: Community engagement and consultation**

*Q24. Do you agree with our proposal that planning authorities should set out their overall approach to engagement as part of their Project Initiation Document? What should this contain?*

*Q25. Do you support our proposal to require planning authorities to notify relevant persons and/or bodies and invite participation, prior to commencement of the 30 month process? Please explain*

*Q26. Should early participation inform the Project Initiation Document? What sorts of approaches might help to facilitate positive early participation in plan-preparation?*

*Q27. Do you agree with our proposal to define more clearly what the role and purpose of the two mandatory consultation windows should be? Please explain*

*Q28. Do you agree with our proposal to use templates to guide the form in which representations are submitted? Please explain*

#### **Chapter 9: Requirement to assist with certain plan-making**

*Q29. Do you have any comments on the proposed list of prescribed public bodies?*

*Q30. Do you agree with the proposed approach? If not, please comment on whether the alternative approach or another approach is preferable and why. Please explain*

#### **Chapter 10: Monitoring of Plans**

*Q31. Do you agree with the proposed requirements for monitoring? Please explain*

*Q32. Do you agree with the proposed metrics? Do you think there are any other metrics which planning authorities should be required to report on?*

#### **Chapter 11: Supplementary plans**

Q33. Do you agree with the suggested factors which could be taken into consideration when assessing whether two or more sites are 'nearby' to each other? Are there any other factors that would indicate whether two or more sites are 'nearby' to each other? Are there any other factors that should be considered?

Q34. What preparation procedures would be helpful, or unhelpful, to prescribe for supplementary plans? e.g. Design: design review and engagement event; large sites: masterplan engagement, etc.

Q35. Do you agree that a single formal stage of consultation is considered sufficient for a supplementary plan? If not, in what circumstances would more formal consultation stages be required? Please explain

Q36. Should government set thresholds to guide the decision that authorities make about the choice of supplementary plan examination routes? If so, what thresholds would be most helpful? For example, minimum size of development planned for, which could be quantitative both in terms of land use and spatial coverage; level of interaction of proposal with sensitive designations, such as environmental or heritage. Please explain

Q37. Do you agree that the approach set out above provides a proportionate basis for the independent examination of supplementary plans? If not, what policy or regulatory measures would ensure this? Please explain

#### **Chapter 12: Minerals and waste plans**

Q38. Are there any unique challenges facing the preparation of minerals and waste plans which we should consider in developing the approach to implement the new plan-making system?

#### **Chapter 13: Community Land Auctions**

Q39. Do you have any views on how we envisage the Community Land Auctions process would operate?

Q40. To what extent should financial considerations be taken into account by local planning authorities in Community Land Auction pilots, when deciding to allocate sites in the local plan, and how should this be balanced against other factors?

#### **Chapter 14: Approach to roll out and transition**

Q41. Which of these options should be implemented, and why? Are there any alternative options that we should be considering?

#### **Chapter 15: Saving existing plans and planning documents**

Q42. Do you agree with our proposals for saving existing plans and planning documents? If not, why? Please explain

#### **Equalities impacts**

Q43. Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?. Please provide a free text response to explain your answer where necessary. Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impacts identified? Please explain