

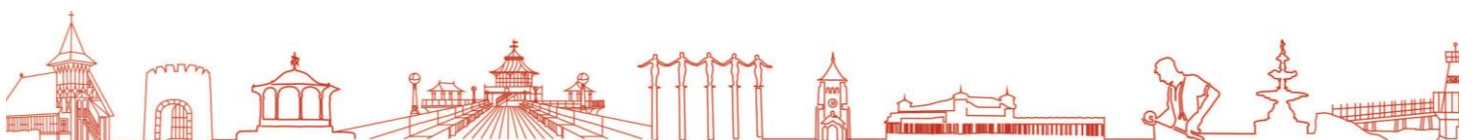


North Somerset Local Plan 2039

Short Guide Pre-submission Stage of the Local Plan

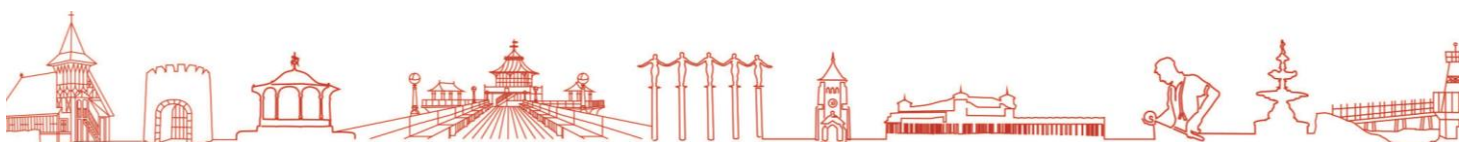
**A plain English summary of the proposed
local plan, its contents and what happens
next.**

November 2023



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1. Getting involved

The story so far....

The Local Plan will shortly be submitted to the Government to be scrutinised by an independent examiner to decide if it complies with the necessary requirements for it to be adopted and used in decision making. Before this there is this final chance to make your comments.

This Plan is known as the Pre-submission Plan (sometimes referred to as the Reg 19 or Publication Plan). It has been informed by three previous consultations which took place between 2020 and 2022.

Over 3,400 comments were made to Challenges for the Future consultation in June 2020. You told us what issues needed to be addressed and helped to form the Vision and Strategic Priorities for planning in North Somerset.

In the Choices for the Future consultation in November 2020 you shared your views on which of the four broad alternative approaches to locating the future housing, jobs and other uses we need would be best for North Somerset and why.

The third consultation was in March 2022 on our Preferred Options Local Plan which was a complete draft plan with policies and maps showing areas and places for protection, as well as locations proposed for homes, businesses and other uses. 741 individuals, groups or organisations made 4235 comments on the draft policies and proposals and helped to inform this next pre-submission version of the Local Plan.

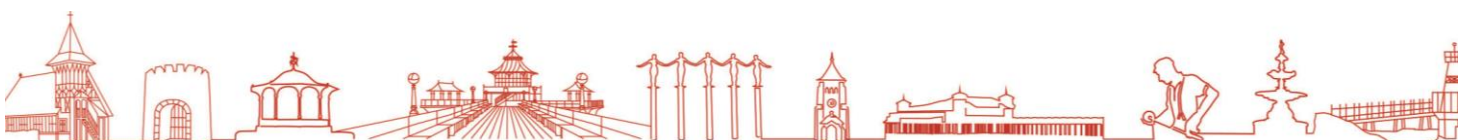
As well as your comments we've also taken account of National Planning advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); Climate and Nature Emergencies and evidence across a wide range of issues.

How do I respond?

Go online at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan2039 to read the Local Plan, view the policies map and make comments. You can find out how in the "[How to respond the Local Plan 2039 consultation](#)" guide on the website.

When can I comment?

From **Monday 27 November 2023 until 5pm on Monday 22 January 2024.**



What is the Pre-submission (Regulation 19) Consultation and what can I comment on?

Regulation 19 is part of the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#). It says that, before submitting a draft Local Plan to the Government's Planning Inspectorate for independent examination, the council must publish a draft of the Local Plan and formally invite representations on it. This consultation is a bit different to the previous three consultation stages in that the Government asks you to consider ([Planning and Country Planning Act 2004 s20 as amended](#)) whether the Local Plan policies are:

Legally Compliant - does the plan meet the legal requirements made under various statutes?

Sound - has the plan been positively prepared, is it justified, effective, and consistent with national policy?

Meet the Duty to Cooperate - has the council engaged and worked effectively with neighbouring authorities and statutory bodies?

This means that specifically, we are asking people to consider whether the policies and proposals in the Plan meet any of these tests when making a comment. More details are in the "[How to respond to the Local Plan consultation](#)" guide on the website.

2. What is a local plan?

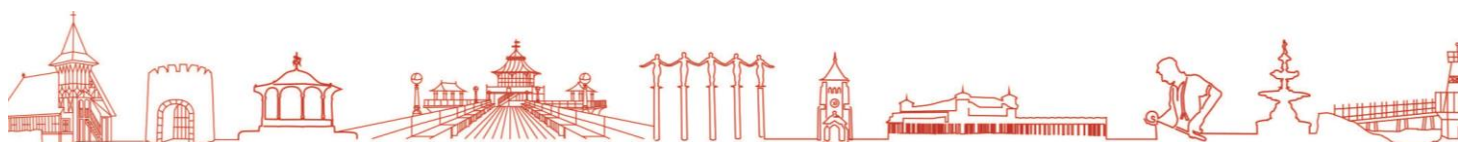
Local Plans are important because they guide and shape decisions as to whether or not planning permission will be granted for many types of development. They set out what sort of development will be allowed and where. This ranges from extensions to buildings and changes of use of buildings, to new neighbourhoods and large-scale housing or employment allocations. Having a Local Plan helps to ensure that these decisions are rational and consistent and provides certainty for communities and investors.

Local Plans must be kept up to date and correctly reflect government guidance. Our current plans cover the period to 2026. It is now time to review and update them. The new Local Plan will look ahead 15 years to 2039.

There is a large evidence base supporting the Local Plan. Links at the end of each section below will take you to the [evidence base](#) webpage where you can view the individual documents.

3. How is the Local Plan 2039 laid out?

The Local Plan is divided into three sections and has an accompanying map.



- The **Strategic Policies** set the overall strategy.
- The **Locational Policies** allocate areas for a specific use, set out where a specific policy will apply or designate an area for protection.
- The **Detailed Policies** set out detailed policies for assessing proposals.
- The **Policies Map** shows the sites which are allocated for particular uses, and the areas within which particular policies apply, which are referred to in the policies. You can zoom in and out of the map and turn on and off the different policies and allocations by ticking the key on the side.

4. What have been the big issues?

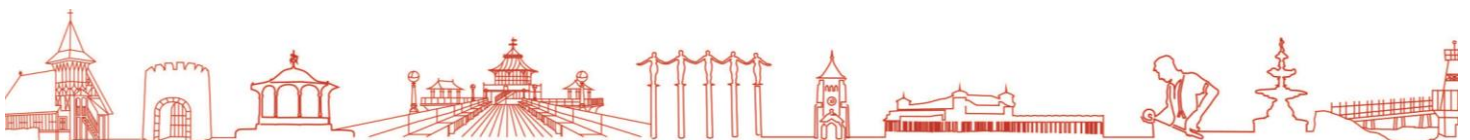
Through previous consultation you helped us to set the priorities for how we should manage development in North Somerset. Tackling the climate and nature emergencies and maximising the sustainability of new development are the key priorities. To help meet our zero-carbon target by 2030 we need to plan in a way which:

- Provides new homes close to jobs, services and facilities.
- Uses as much brownfield land as possible to reduce the need for green field sites.
- Provides opportunities for moving around sustainably through walking, cycling and public transport.
- Supports green networks and outdoor space to enhance the natural environment and for our wellbeing.
- Ensures new buildings are sustainable both in materials used and energy use.
- Minimises building in areas which are at risk of flooding outside the towns.
- Avoids damage to valued landscape and wildlife habitats and act in a way which will enhance biodiversity.

Section 2 of the Plan the [Vision, Strategic Priorities and Sustainability Objectives](#) provides more detail.

How do we decide how much development is needed in North Somerset?

The previous Preferred Option version of the Plan was based on the government's target at that time for North Somerset of 20,085 dwellings over the plan period. However, the Preferred Options was only able to identify enough sites to deliver 18,046 houses.



Following the Preferred Options consultation a revised Local Plan was developed which fully recognised the many environmental constraints in North Somerset. This current version of the Local Plan offers greater protection to Green Belt and other sensitive sites. In December 2022, Government consulted on proposed national planning reforms which included changes to the guidance on how our housing requirement should be worked out and the approach to using Green Belt and sites with other significant constraints.

In line with the Government's proposed changes, North Somerset Council, working jointly with the West of England authorities, commissioned a review of local housing need. This recommended that a robust approach would be to work on the basis of a local housing need for North Somerset of 993 dwellings per year or 14,902 dwellings over the plan period 2024-2039. This is a significant reduction on the government target of 20,085 dwellings. Schedule 1 lists all of the housing sites we are proposing to allocate in the Local Plan 2039. The location of the sites can be seen on the [Policies Map](#) by clicking the box in the key.

Evidence

- Evidence to inform the housing need figure
- Spatial strategy and capacity paper

Relevant Policies

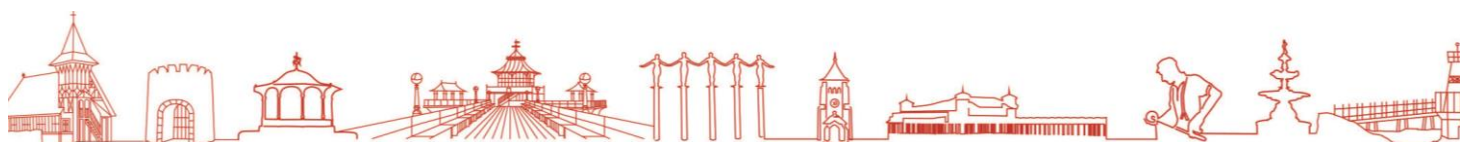
- SP1: Sustainable Development
- SP3: Spatial Strategy
- SP8: Housing

How do we decide where new homes, businesses and other facilities should be located?

Following the close of this consultation, the local plan will be tested at examination by an independent inspector. At that point we will need to demonstrate that, taking account of the issues facing North Somerset, we have applied a rational and consistent approach to assessing which locations will be most suitable for new development.

The Spatial Strategy and Capacity Topic Paper sets out the steps we have taken to identify how the scale and location of proposed growth will reflect North Somerset's priorities.

- Our strategy is focused on directing housing and other development to areas with the best access to jobs and services. This means targeting brownfield sites within Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead first, then new development close to towns, then the larger more sustainable villages.



- Avoid development in the Green Belt, areas at risk from flooding, Mendips AONB and other environmentally sensitive locations, which in total make up a large portion of North Somerset.

Using this process we have identified potential capacity for 14,902 homes and 81.25 ha of land for employment. These sites can be viewed on the [Policies Map](#). You can see the sites by clicking the “proposed residential sites” or “proposed employment sites” box in the key.

Evidence:

- Site Selection methodology paper
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Spatial Strategy and Capacity topic paper

Relevant Policies:

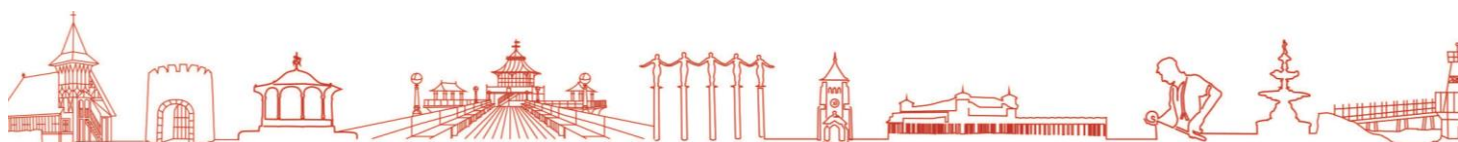
- SP1: Sustainable Development
- SP3: Spatial Strategy
- SP8: Housing
- LP1: Strategic Location: Wolvershill (north of Banwell)
- LP2: Housing, employment and mixed use allocations

How does the Local Plan respond to climate change and the nature emergency and North Somerset Council's pledge to be carbon neutral by 2030?

- The council has set a target of net zero by 2030.
- Policies seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Our approach will be to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport – and thereby minimise car use.
- Policies seek sustainable construction – high standards of insulation and net zero energy use.
- Encouragement of renewable energy – domestic, community and commercial – including solar PV and wind turbines.
- Support for biodiversity and protection of high-quality land.
- Development avoids flood risk areas and takes account of sea level rise.
- Use of sustainable drainage solutions.
- Minimise waste.
- Encourage reuse of buildings.

Evidence:

- Renewable Energy Resource Assessment Study (Nov 2021)
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment: Solar and wind energy development (September 2021)



- Net Zero New Buildings: Evidence and guidance to inform planning policy (Dec 2021)
- Net Zero Buildings Policy: Operational carbon for non-domestic buildings (July 2021)
- Carbon Offsetting Report plus Appendix A and Appendix B
Climate Change Evidence summary note (Updated)

Relevant Policies:

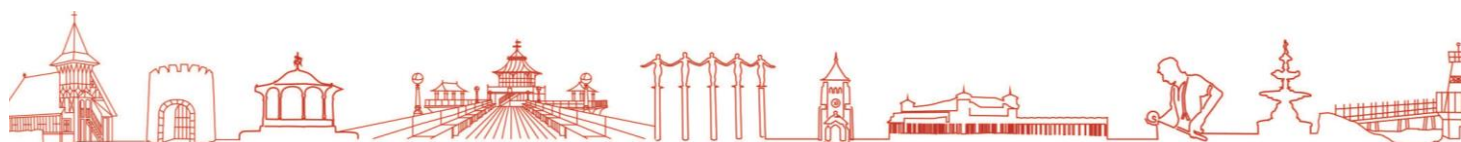
- SP1: Sustainable Development
- SP2: Climate Change
- LP:18 Coastal Change Management Areas
- DP5: Climate change adaptation and resilience
- DP6: Net zero construction
- DP7: Large Scale renewable and low carbon renewable energy
- DP:9 Flood risk
- DP10: Sustainable drainage
- DP34 Green Infrastructure
- DP35: Nature Conservation
- DP36: Biodiversity Net Gain
- DP37: Trees, Woodlands and Hedges
- DP38: Landscape
- DP39: Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- DP40: Built Heritage
- DP41: Archaeology
- DP42 Historic Parks and Gardens
- DP53 Best and most versatile agricultural land

What will the Local Plan do to provide jobs?

The local plan seeks to encourage economic development and job creation by providing opportunities for businesses at sustainable locations.

81.25ha of employment land is identified to provide a range and choice of opportunities for businesses. This includes:

- The delivery of employment commitments at J21 Enterprise Area as part of the ongoing build-out of the Weston Villages development.
- Provision at the strategic location at Wolverhill (north of Banwell).
- Additional provision at M5 Junction 20 at Clevedon to address the need for sites in the north of the district requiring good access to the motorway network.
- Town centre regeneration at the four towns for mixed uses, including commercial and business uses.
- Safeguarding of existing employment sites
- Encourage development of visitor attractions and accommodation.
- Need to reference port, airport and supporting major employers; supporting existing businesses to grow and develop.



Evidence:

- Spatial Strategy and Capacity topic paper
- Employment topic paper

Relevant Policies:

- SP9: Employment
- LP1: Strategic Location Wolverhill
- LP:2 Housing, employment and mixed-use allocations
- DP:21 Safeguarding employment sites
- DP22: Visitor attractions
- DP60: employment of green field land in the countryside
- DP61: Existing businesses in the countryside

Promoting accessibility and transport?

- Encourage walking and cycling by identifying active travel routes.
- Support high quality public transport.
- Aim to create liveable neighbourhoods in terms of access to local facilities.
- Deliver Banwell Bypass and benefits for Banwell village
- Deliver local transport infrastructure
- Encourage higher density development near transport hubs.
- Support switch to electric vehicles.

Evidence:

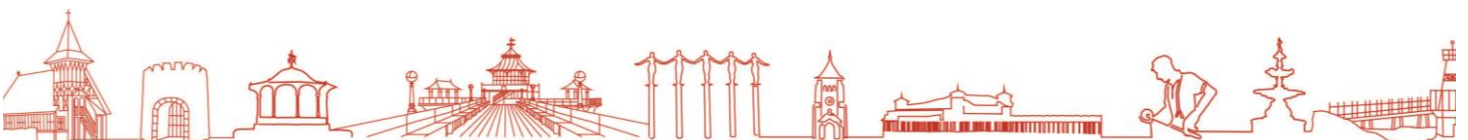
- Transport Assessment

Relevant Policies:

- SP10: Transport
- LP8: Transport infrastructure, allocations and safeguarding
- DP:14 Highway safety, traffic and provision of infrastructure associated with development
- DP15: Active and Sustainable Transport
- DP16: Active Travel Routes
- DP17: Public transport accessibility
- DP18: Travel Plans
- DP19: Parking
- DP20: Airport related car parking.

How will the Local Plan protect our historic buildings and places and protect and provide green spaces and biodiversity?

The Local Plan contains policies to:



- Secure/ensure protection of our conservation areas, listed buildings and locally cherished buildings.

The Local Plan responds to nature emergency by:

- Encouraging a green infrastructure network –protecting and enhancing local character and contributing to healthy lifestyles.
- Supporting biodiversity net gain.
- Supporting protected habitats and species.
- Promoting North Somerset Nature Parks – to protect and enhance habitats, mitigate development impacts and encourage public access.
- Encouraging tree planting.
- Protect valued landscapes such as Mendip Hills AONB.
- Protect best and most versatile land.
- Encourage public access to countryside and green spaces.
- Include sustainable drainage solutions.
- Proposed extension to the Green Belt between Backwell and Nailsea.
- Protect Local Green Spaces of value to the local community.
- Retain strategic gaps important to protecting separate identity of settlements and propose new designation between Banwell and Wolverhill strategic location and Sandford and Churchill.

Evidence:

- Heritage Topic Paper
- Green Infrastructure Strategy (Sept 2021)
- Local Green Space Topic Paper

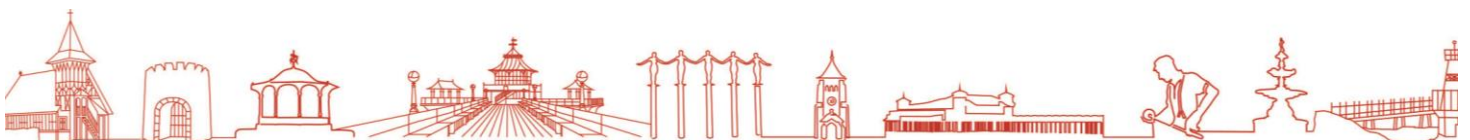
Relevant Policies:

- SP7: Green Belt
- SP11: Historic and Natural Environment
- LP6: Extent of the Green Belt
- LP12: Local Green Space
- DP40: Built heritage
- DP41: Archaeology
- DP42: Historic parks and gardens

Supporting documents

We have published lots of supporting documents and evidence in addition to those listed above. You can view them on our [evidence base](#) webpage.

There is also a link from our main www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan2039



Remember the consultation period closes at 5pm on Monday 22 January 2024.

For any queries regarding the consultation please contact Planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk

