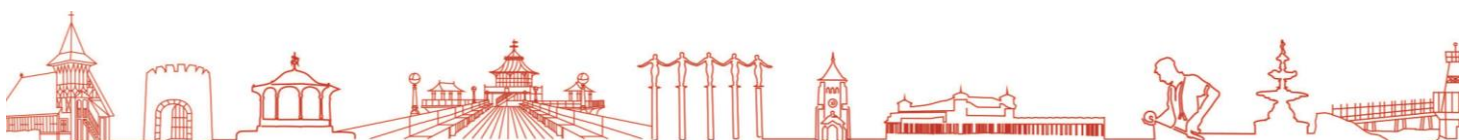




North Somerset Local Plan 2039

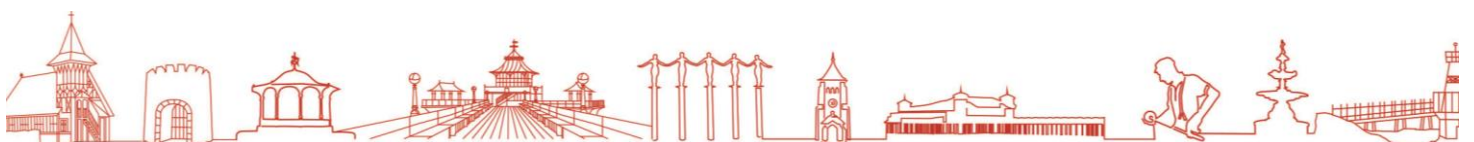
How to respond to the Local Plan 2039 Pre-submission Consultation

November 2023



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Introduction

We have been working on a new Local Plan since 2020 and have now finalised the plan which we are ready to submit for independent examination. Before doing this we are publishing this final draft to invite your comments.

An inspector is appointed to consider all representations made at this stage and to decide whether the plan can be adopted. Provided the plan has met the legal requirements and the authority has demonstrated that it has co-operated on cross boundary issues, the plan is then assessed against three tests of soundness. This consultation is focussed on whether or not an Inspector should find the plan sound.

This version of the Local Plan is known as the pre-submission version as it's the version we intend to submit for examination (also the Regulation 19 version because this consultation falls under Regulation 19 of the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#))

Where can I view the Local Plan?

You can view the Local Plan, supporting documents and make comments online at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan2039.

The Local Plan is also available at [North Somerset Libraries](#).

What can I comment on?

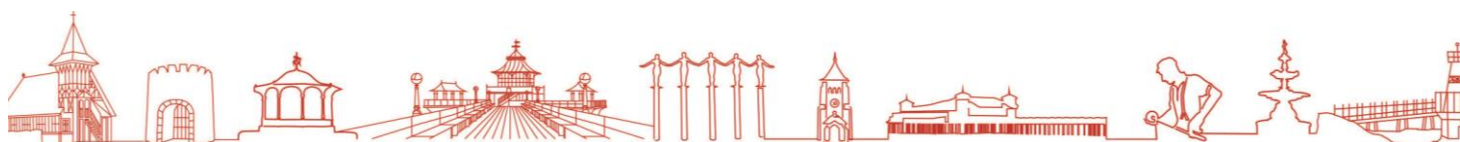
This consultation is a bit different to the previous three Local Plan consultation stages. Although you can still comment on any policy or proposal in the Local Plan, the Inspector will need to know whether you consider that the Local Plan policies/policy you are commenting on to be:-

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 make comments based on whether the policies and proposals in the plan meet these tests. When you make a comment you will be asked to say which of the tests it relates to.



More details on what these three tests mean are set out below.

i) Legal compliance.

Does the way the plan has been prepared and its content comply with the relevant legislation and regulations? Things to consider include the following before making a representation in relation to legal compliance:

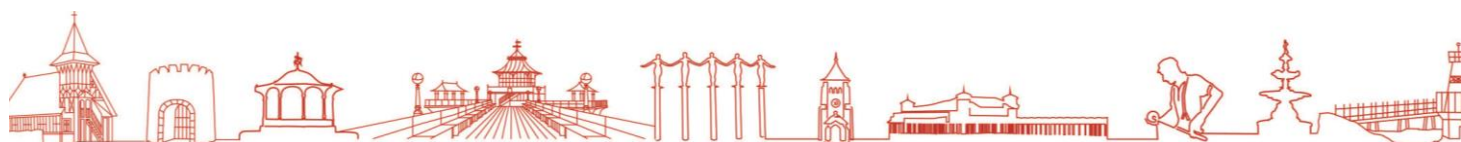
- The Plan should comply with all relevant requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended.
- The plan should be included in the Council's current [Local Development Scheme](#) (LDS) and the key stages set out in the LDS should have been followed. (The LDS is effectively a programme of work prepared by the Council, setting out the plans it proposes to produce and the key stages of production).
- The process of community involvement for the plan in question should be in general accordance with the [North Somerset Council's Statement of Community Involvement](#) (SCI). The SCI sets out the Council's strategy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of plans and the consideration of planning applications.
- The Council is also required to provide a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report when it publishes a plan. This identifies the process by which the SA has been carried out and the baseline information used to inform the process and the outcomes of that process. SA is a tool for assessing the extent to which the plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.
- The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) needs to be carried out for the Plan, in order to protect the integrity of internationally important nature conservation sites.

To access these documents, alongside other supporting documents, please go to our [website](#).

ii) Soundness.

The tests of soundness are set out in [paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework](#). Plans are sound if they are:

- a) Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs, and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from



- neighbouring authorities is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- b) Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
 - c) Effective - deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
 - d) Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF and other statements of national policy where relevant.

If you think the content of the plan is not sound you should go through the following steps before making representations:

- Is the issue with which you are concerned already covered specifically by national planning policy?
- Is the issue with which you are concerned already covered by another policy in the plan?
- If the issue is not covered elsewhere, in what way is the plan, or policy unsound?
- If the plan/policy wording is unsound, what should the policy say to correct this?

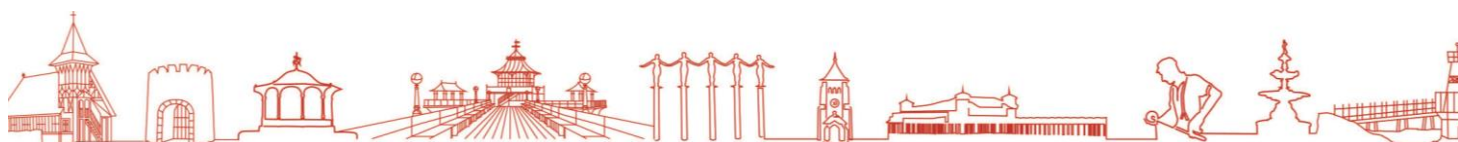
iii) Complies with the Duty to Co-operate

Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires the Council to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with neighbouring authorities and certain other bodies over strategic matters during the preparation of the plan. The Council will be expected to provide evidence of how it has complied with the duty.

How do I make my comments?

Go to the [consultation page](#) to read the Local Plan and all of the consultation documents (you can also link to this page from www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan2039). When you are ready to make your comments click on the top button saying “Click here to respond to the consultation”. Then use the contents page on the left hand side to go to the policy/policies you’re interested in and use the “add a comment button” to make your comment for that policy.

If you haven’t made a comment before you will be asked to register first but this is quick to do.



If you prefer you can email or post comments using a standard form. You will need to fill out a form for each comment you wish to make. All the necessary information can be found at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan2039

Email: planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk

Post to:-

Planning Policy Team
North Somerset Council
Walliscote Grove Road
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1UJ

To make your comment you also need to say which of the Government's criteria your comment relates to.

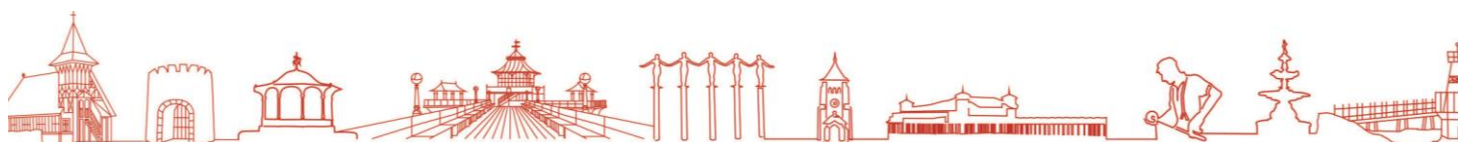
It will be helpful if you also say precisely how you think the plan should be modified. Your representation should be supported succinctly by all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification. You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions as these may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues they identify.

Please note: all submitted representations will be published online and made available to view. The Council cannot accept anonymous comments. To ensure an effective and fair examination, it is important that the Inspector and all other participants in the examination process are able to know who has made representations on the plan. The name and comment will therefore be made public following the consultation. No contact details will be published however. All personal data will be handled in line with the Council's planning policy [privacy policy](#)

You will also be asked to tell us whether you would like to appear at a hearing if invited to do so by the Inspector. The Inspector will consider all representations on the plan that are made within the consultation period.

What happens to my comment?

After the consultation closes the Council will summarise the main issues raised and submit the Local Plan 2039, accompanying evidence and all representations received (in full) to the Secretary of State, who will appoint an Inspector to undertake an independent examination. The Inspector will assess whether the plan meets the relevant legal requirements, complies with the Duty to Cooperate, and is sound.



We expect to submit the plan in April 2024 with the examination and hearings anticipated to take place later that year. Not every policy or issue in the plan will be dealt with at a public hearing. You will be contacted by the Examination Programme Officer if there is a hearing session about a policy you have commented on and if you've said you'd like to appear at a hearing.

When can I comment?

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

For any queries regarding the consultation please contact

planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk

