

Call for help to plan North Somerset's future growth

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Residents are being urged to help create a plan that will shape how North Somerset grows and develops in the coming decades.

The Local Plan, which will guide housing, business investment, transport and infrastructure until 2038, will take around three years to produce and formally starts its process this week.

North Somerset Council wants communities, individuals and organisations to influence the future of the area by getting involved in plan making.

North Somerset Council's Executive Member for Transport and Planning, Councillor James Tonkin said: "The idea of growth can be very worrying, especially with the number of homes the Government is dictating should be built in each council area.

"But this is an opportunity to plan for new homes at prices people can afford – to rent, to buy, for shared ownership, for young people, for growing families, for older people, and for those with care needs.

"It's a chance to think about how people work best and in what settings, to support productivity in an economy being transformed by technology, to consider the future of our high streets and town centres to support them to become places that people choose to visit.

"We can also shape communities to make the most of walking and cycling, with improved access to public transport to help reduce the need to travel by car and support a low carbon future.

"It's very early days, but our planners are starting to put together options and then there will be lots of opportunity for communities, individuals and organisations to get involved in shaping the details.

"We are particularly keen to hear the views of younger people, our residents who might not yet be old enough to buy a home, or have a job, or have children of their own, but who will over the next ten to twenty years."

The publication of the Local Development Scheme, which explains what will be included in the Local Plan and what documents will be produced and when, and the Pre-Commencement Document that outlines the plan's scope, marks the formal start of the process.

The plan will:

- Address the challenges of climate change and the need to work towards a low carbon future
- Set out how the council will make sure it provides for the right type and number of homes, in the right places, to meet the needs of the people who live here now and in the future
- Allocate space for business and set out what other infrastructure is needed to support economic growth and the new homes

- Allocate sites for other land uses where these are known, including retail, community facilities and transport
- Update or create planning policies to make sure all new buildings are high quality and of sustainable design, and to protect North Somerset's natural and built environments
- Address flooding and drainage issues.

The number of homes which the council must plan for in North Somerset is determined by the Government.

Planning policy officers will reveal a first look at the potential challenges and opportunities in a document that is likely to be released in May. A formal consultation is expected to run in May and June around the ideas, which will be presented to spark discussion.

To see the Local Development Scheme or Pre-Commencement Document, or to sign up to be kept up-to-date about opportunities to influence the development of the Local Plan, including future formal consultations, visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/newlocalplan