Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Pre-submission Draft Local Plan (Reg 19) September 2026

Executive Summary

Local Plan 2025-2043

Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. What is a Local Plan? 3
3. Why prepare a Local Plan? 3
4. What is the Regulation 19 pre-submission stage? 4
5. What is the purpose of the Draft Local Plan? 4
6. What are the goals of the Draft Local Plan? 5
7. What development is being proposed and where? 6
8. Place-based development and issues 7
9. Infrastructure-led growth 9
10. Development Management Policies 10
11. How the Plan will be delivered and monitored 11
12. How to make a representation 12

1. Introduction

1.1 This executive summary provides an overview of Bath and North East Somerset Council's Pre-submission Draft Local Plan. The Plan sets out the Council's proposed spatial strategy, site allocations and planning policies for the period 2025–2043. It has been shaped by evidence, a sustainability appraisal, engagement with communities and stakeholders, and responses to Regulation 18 Options consultations held in 2024 and 2025.

1.2 The Draft Local Plan is now being published for formal consultation under Regulation 19. At this stage, comments should focus on whether the Plan is legally compliant and sound. Following consultation, the Council intends to submit the Plan, its supporting evidence and all representations received to the Secretary of State for independent examination by Planning Inspectors.

2. What is a Local Plan?

2.1 A Local Plan establishes a long-term planning framework for managing growth and change across Bath and North East Somerset for the period 2025-2043. It identifies the scale and distribution of new homes, employment space and supporting infrastructure, allocates sites for development and contains policies used to determine planning applications.

2.2 Once adopted, the Local Plan will form part of the Statutory Development Plan for Bath and North East Somerset. It will guide where and how development takes place and help ensure that growth is sustainable, high quality and supported by coordinated infrastructure, while protecting the District's distinctive environmental, landscape and heritage assets.

3. Why prepare a Local Plan?

3.1 A Local Plan enables the Council to better facilitate planned high-quality development and infrastructure provision and protect what makes B&NES special, including its renowned built and natural environments, whilst guiding future growth in a sustainable way. It provides greater certainty about where

development should take place, the type and quality of development expected and the infrastructure that must accompany it. Without an up-to-date plan, there is a greater risk that development will occur in a less coordinated way, with fewer opportunities to secure the homes, jobs, services, transport improvements and green infrastructure communities need.

3.2 The Plan is also a key mechanism for delivering the Council's purpose of improving people's lives. It plays a key role in addressing the climate emergency and facilitating nature recovery whilst helping deliver the Council's aim to be carbon neutral and nature positive by 2030. It also helps deliver other council strategies and plans, including the Council's Economic Strategy, Housing Plan, and Transport Strategies/Plans.

4. What is the Regulation 19 pre-submission stage?

4.1 The Regulation 19 consultation is the final consultation that takes place during the publication stage of the Local Plan process. Regulation 19 is the formal stage where the Council publishes the Plan it intends to submit to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. Unlike earlier Regulation 18 consultations, which considered options and reasonable alternatives, this consultation is focused on whether the Plan meets the legal requirements and whether it is 'sound' in planning terms.

4.2 Responses should explain whether the Plan meets the requirements of legal compliance and soundness. A sound plan should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Responses will be submitted to the independent Planning Inspector who will examine the Plan.

5. What is the purpose of the Draft Local Plan?

5.1 The Draft Local Plan provides for sustainable, infrastructure-led growth across Bath and North East Somerset. It seeks to meet local housing and economic needs as far as is sustainably possible, while recognising the District's major constraints, including the double-inscribed City of Bath World Heritage Site,

the Cotswolds and Mendip Hills National Landscapes, extensive Green Belt and areas of high ecological, landscape and heritage sensitivity.

5.2 The Plan identifies a requirement for around 22,000 homes between 2025 and 2043, together with around 120,600 sqm of office floorspace and around 114,500 sqm of industrial, warehousing and logistics floorspace. The housing requirement is just over 80% of the Government's standard method figure of 27,324 homes. The Council considers this to be a justified and proportionate response because the adverse impacts of planning for the full figure would demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

5.3 Delivery will come from existing commitments, new strategic and non-strategic allocations, and small windfall sites. A stepped housing requirement reflects the time needed to secure permissions, provide enabling infrastructure and bring strategic sites into full delivery.

6. What are the goals of the Draft Local Plan?

6.1 The Local Plan positively plans for development in response to local needs to create attractive, healthy and sustainable places in line with the Council's Corporate Strategy.

- Create a fairer, more prosperous and sustainable economy.
- Maximise the delivery of housing that is affordable.
- Enable Bath and North East Somerset to become zero carbon by 2030 and deliver a climate-resilient District.
- Protect and enhance nature by facilitating nature recovery.
- Improve health and wellbeing outcomes through inclusive, health-promoting places and cultural enrichment.
- Reduce the need to travel unsustainably and improve connectivity through walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport.
- Respect, conserve and enhance heritage assets and landscape settings, particularly the World Heritage Sites and National Landscapes.
- Align development with the timely provision of transport, health, education, social, cultural, drainage, flood protection and green infrastructure.

7. What development is being proposed and where?

7.1 The spatial strategy focuses growth in the most sustainable locations with the best access, or potential access, to jobs, services and facilities by active travel and public transport. It prioritises previously developed land where possible, but the scale of need means that releases from the Green Belt are required. Exceptional circumstances are identified for strategic releases at Keynsham, Saltford, Whitchurch Village, Hicks Gate and Peasedown St John, alongside smaller releases at Bathford, Chew Stoke, Corston and Farmborough.

Table 1: Bath and North East Somerset's spatial strategy for the distribution of housing and employment space during the period 2025-2043

Sub-area	Homes	Office space (sqm)	Industrial / warehousing (sqm)
Bath	around 5,900	70,800	30,900
Bristol to Bath Corridor	around 8,900	11,000	23,700
Somer Valley	around 4,600	35,400	56,000
Rural Areas	around 2,600	3,400	3,900

8. Place-based development and issues

Bath

8.1 Bath is a regional economic centre, a compact and highly constrained city, and a rare dual-inscribed World Heritage Site. The strategy prioritises general and affordable housing, employment space and the efficient use of limited land, while protecting Outstanding Universal Value, landscape setting and ecological networks. It supports the city centre, the Bath Riverside Innovation District, the Production Quarter, local neighbourhoods and green and blue infrastructure.

8.2 The Plan refreshes major regeneration allocations and identifies new opportunities including Julian Road, Kingswood School Playing Fields, Bath Equestrian Centre, land north of Napier Road, the car park adjoining Combe Park, land east of Station Road and employment land south-west of Odd Down Park and Ride. The Production Quarter is protected and intensified for industrial, advanced engineering, research, clean technology, health and life sciences and creative uses.

8.3 Additional locations are identified for their longer-term development potential which can be explored through the West of England Combined Authority's (WECA) Spatial Development Strategy and a future new-style Local Plan for Bath and North East Somerset.

Bristol to Bath Corridor

8.4 The corridor is the principal focus for strategic growth, reflecting its location between Bristol and Bath and its potential to strengthen economic and sustainable transport connections. Growth is proposed at Keynsham, Saltford Village, Hicks Gate and Whitchurch Village, supported by new Local Centres, primary and secondary education, healthcare, strategic green infrastructure and major transport improvements.

8.5 Key infrastructure proposals include the North Keynsham Strategic Access Link Road, improved bus and active travel links along the A4 and A37, a major multi-modal transport interchange at Hicks Gate, new travel hubs, a new secondary school at North Whitchurch Village and strategic parkland and nature recovery projects linked to the Future Parklands vision. Site allocations seek to maintain the separate identities of Keynsham and Saltford, and Bristol and Whitchurch Village.

Somer Valley

8.6 The Somer Valley strategy focuses on boosting the economic role of the area, providing affordable housing, addressing out-commuting and improving sustainable transport connectivity. It builds on the area's engineering, manufacturing and mining heritage while supporting green and creative sectors and delivery of the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone.

8.7 Strategic and smaller allocations are proposed at Peasedown St John, Radstock, Writhlington, Haydon, Westfield, Midsomer Norton, Paulton and Farrington Gurney. Key infrastructure includes improved bus corridors, travel hubs, active travel routes, school expansion and new primary provision, healthcare investment and landscape-led green infrastructure. Land north of Midsomer Norton is identified for possible longer-term growth through WECA's Spatial Development Strategy and the next Local Plan.

Rural Areas

8.8 The rural strategy supports thriving, resilient and sustainable communities while protecting landscape, heritage, biodiversity and environmental quality. Growth is directed to comparatively sustainable villages where it can support local services, affordable housing and infrastructure. This Local Plan-led growth is complemented by locally-led growth through Neighbourhood Plans, community land trusts, rural exception sites and other community initiatives.

8.9 The rural chapter groups allocations across the Bath Environs, Central Core and Chew Valley. Locations include Bathford, Corston, Farmborough, Timsbury, Hallatrow, Clutton, Temple Cloud, Chew Magna, Chew Stoke and Bishop Sutton. Site policies require development to respond to village character and landscape setting and to provide appropriate transport, education, healthcare, open space, green infrastructure and nature recovery measures.

9. Infrastructure-led growth

9.1 Infrastructure provision is central to the Plan. Development must be phased and coordinated with the transport, education, health, utility, digital, drainage, flood protection, community, sport, open space and green infrastructure needed to make it acceptable and sustainable. Strategic allocations include site-specific infrastructure requirements, while the Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies costs, funding sources, delivery partners, phasing and risks.

9.2 The Council will work with WECA, infrastructure providers, neighbouring authorities, statutory consultees, communities, landowners and developers to achieve the required infrastructure to support growth. Development is expected to meet the full cost of infrastructure needed to mitigate its impacts, subject to national policy and the statutory tests for planning obligations.

10. Development Management Policies

10.1 Development Management policies set out local standards and criteria against which planning applications for the development and use of land and buildings are assessed. The Council updated its Development Management policies through the adoption of the Local Plan Partial Update. A number of these policies are therefore considered up to date and are not proposed to be amended in this Local Plan. The preparation of the Draft Local Plan has considered the national decision-making policies (NDMPs) set out in the NPPF (2026), which makes it clear that Local Plan policies which are "materially inconsistent" with the NDMPs should be given very limited weight in determining applications. The Draft Local Plan introduces or revises policies in the following areas:

Responding to climate change

- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- Climate Adaptation and Resilience
- New Build Non-Residential Development
- Embodied Carbon
- Retrofit First
- District Heating
- Low Impact Farming and Regenerative Land-based Development

Design, Landscape, Nature Conservation, and Green Infrastructure

- Lighting
- Conserving and Enhancing the Landscape and Landscape Character
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Trees and Woodland Conservation
- Green Infrastructure
- Open Space
- Green Belt

Meeting Housing Needs and Meeting Community and Recreational Needs

- Affordable Housing
- Build to Rent
- Co-living
- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Affordable Housing in Purpose-Built Student Accommodation
- Housing Accessibility Standards
- Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding
- New and Replacement Sports and Recreational Facilities
- Safeguarding Land for Cemeteries

Economic Development, Centres and Retailing and Promoting Sustainable Transport

- Office Development and Protection of Office Floorspace
- Strategic and Locally Significant Industrial Sites
- Undesignated Industrial and Warehousing Sites
- Employment and Skills Plans
- Centres Hierarchy and Main Town Centre Uses
- Development within Centres and Primary Shopping Areas
- Active Travel Routes
- Transport Infrastructure

Minerals and Waste and Infrastructure

- Residual Waste Treatment and Recovery Facilities
- Safeguarding Waste Management Sites
- Infrastructure and Delivery

11. How the Plan will be delivered and monitored

11.1 The Local Plan includes a monitoring framework to assess implementation of the spatial priorities and key policies. Housing delivery will be assessed against the stepped requirement, and the Council will monitor whether allocated sites and supporting infrastructure are progressing as anticipated. The Plan will also be subject to an early review through preparation of a new-

style Local Plan, which will need to be in general conformity with the future WECA Spatial Development Strategy.

12. How to make a representation

12.1 The Draft Local Plan consultation is supported by the Draft Local Plan, Policies Map, Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and other supporting evidence documents. The consultation portal is available through our website at https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/emerging-local-plan, where representations can be submitted and supporting documents viewed. Further information about the Local Plan, including inspection locations and accessible formats, can be found on the Council's website.

12.2 Representations should be submitted through the online consultation portal wherever possible. Alternatively, completed Regulation 19 Representation Forms may be returned by email or post. Representations should clearly identify the relevant part of the Plan, explain why it is considered unsound or not legally compliant, and set out any modifications proposed to address the issue.

12.3 The Draft Local Plan consultation will run for six weeks from week commencing 14 September to 26 October 2026. All representations must be received before the consultation closes in order to be considered.