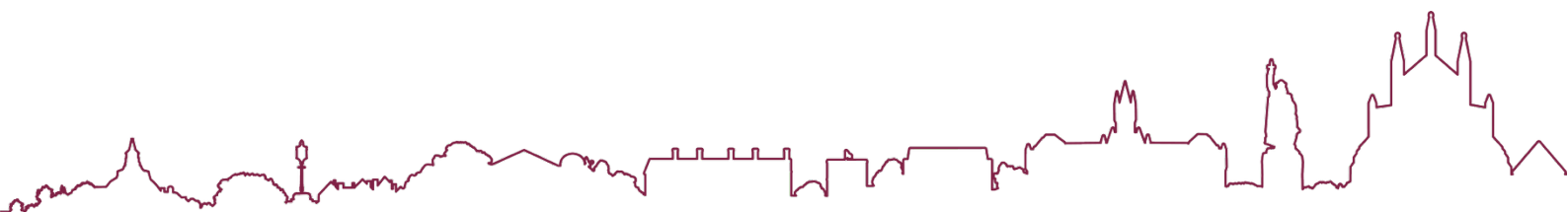


OUR NEXT LOCAL PLAN

WINCHESTER DISTRICT 2026 - 2044

Gateway 1 Self Assessment

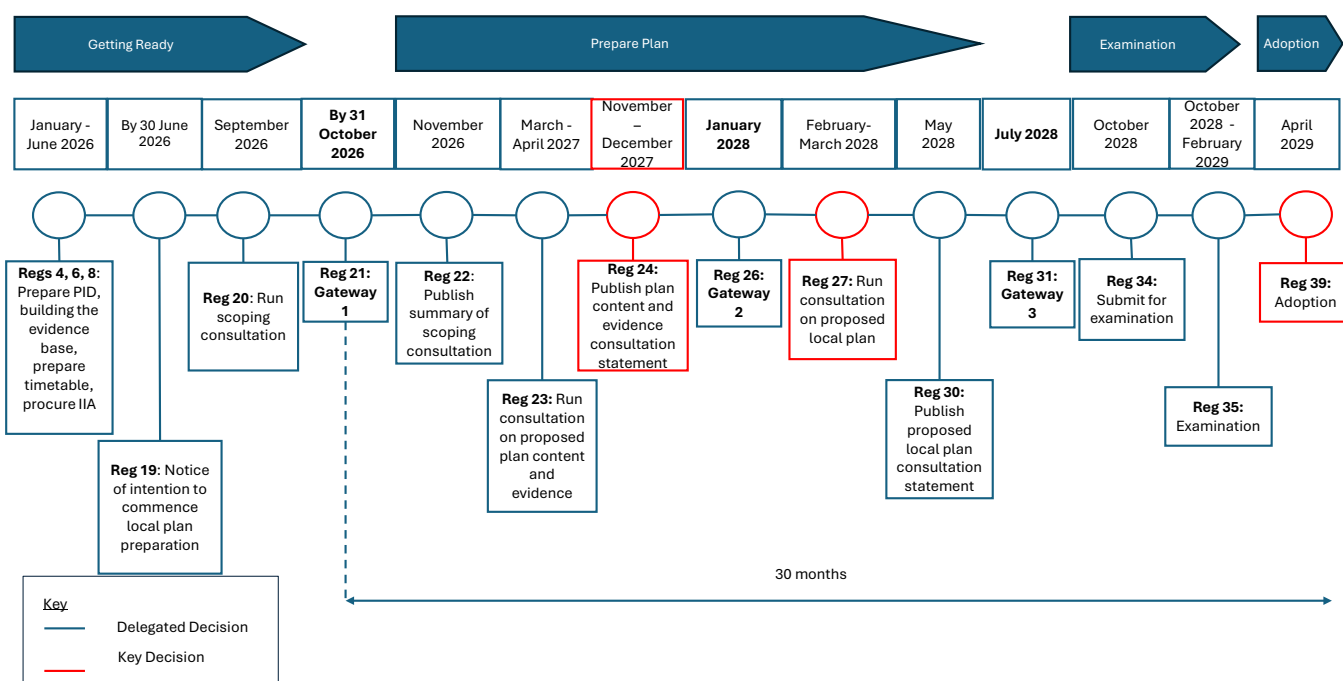
October 2026



1 How we got ready to prepare a new local plan

- 1.1 We have started preparing a new Local Plan for Winchester District which will cover the period up to 2044.
- 1.2 Government policy now requires us to prepare a new plan within 30 months of passing through the Gateway 1 self-assessment. This is to help ensure we have an up-to-date local plan that responds to the needs of the area and our communities.

Local Plan Timetable



- 1.3 This page explains what we did to get ready to meet the 30-month timeframe. It also has links to further information and where you can get updates.
- 1.4 Previous spatial development options (how development will be distributed across the district) undertaken as part of the preparation of the adopted Local Plan (2020 - 2040) provides an important starting point for the new plan. This work identified and assessed a range of potential approaches to accommodating growth, taking account of the district's environmental, infrastructure and policy constraints. However, the spatial strategy for the new Local Plan has not yet been developed. Spatial development options will be developed and consulted on at the next stage of plan preparation, informed by updated evidence, engagement with communities and stakeholders, and ongoing discussions under the duty to cooperate.

1.5 We have started to consider high-level and conceptual spatial options to deliver the identified development need. This includes undertaking a Call for Sites in 2025 and commissioning the following evidence base studies:

- Preparing a Water Cycle study;
- Preparing an Employment and Town Centre study;
- Preparing a Strategic Housing Market Assessment;
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
- Gypsy and Traveller Assessment; and
- Local Plan Viability work

Useful Local Plan links:

[Home - Winchester District Local Plan](#)

[Scoping Consultation - Winchester District Local Plan](#)

[Local Plan Timetable - Winchester District Local Plan](#)

[Notice of Intention to Commence - Winchester District Local Plan](#)

2 We published a timetable for preparing the plan

- 2.1** The timetable shows when we expect to carry out the different stages and activities for preparing a plan. It helps us check if and how we can adopt the plan within the 30-month timeframe. We will keep this updated as we move through the Local Plan-making progress.
- 2.2** We have published a timetable for preparing Winchester District Local Plan 2026 - 2044. The timetable sets out the main stages of plan-making and shows how we intend to work towards adopting the new Local Plan within the Government's 30-month timeframe. It gives residents, businesses, landowners, infrastructure providers and other stakeholders a clear overview of what will happen next and when they will be able to get involved.
- 2.3** The timetable includes the key stages where communities and stakeholders will be invited to comment, including consultation on the proposed local plan content and evidence (Regulation 23) and consultation on the proposed draft local plan (Regulation 27). These stages will allow people to comment on emerging ideas, supporting evidence, policy directions, site allocations and the overall approach to growth and development across the Winchester District.
- 2.4** Publishing the timetable helps us manage the preparation of the plan, coordinate technical evidence, plan consultation activity and identify where decisions will need to be made. It also gives earlier notice of consultation opportunities and helping everyone understand how their feedback will fit into the wider plan-making process.
- 2.5** We know that some parts of the programme may need to respond to new evidence, national policy changes, engagement feedback and the progress of wider infrastructure or environmental assessment work. We will therefore keep the timetable under review and update the Winchester Local Plan webpages as the plan progresses, so that communities and stakeholders can see the latest position.
- 2.6** You can view the published timetable here: [Local Plan Timetable - Winchester District Local Plan](#)

3 We established project management and governance arrangements

- 3.1** In June 2026 the Council published the [Winchester-District-Local-Plan-2044---Project-Initiation-Document.pdf](#) (PID). The PID sets out how the Council will prepare and adopt the Winchester District Local Plan 2044, including scope, governance, resources, timetable, risks, and budget. The PID will be updated periodically when changes are required to reflect timetable, governance, budget and resourcing matters.
- 3.2** Preparing a local plan is a complex process. It involves many people across the council and from other organisations. We have thought about the different stages of the Plan-making process and how it is managed and signed off which helps us monitor our progress and keep the work on track. It also helps us anticipate and manage any risks to us adopting the plan within 30 months. Establishing clear project management and governance arrangements at an early stage helps us to:
- monitor progress and keep the preparation of the Plan on track;
 - ensure that decisions are taken at the appropriate level and at the right time;
 - identify and manage risks that could affect the timetable; and
 - coordinate the resources and expertise needed to prepare the Plan.
- 3.3** The Local Plan is being managed in accordance with the council's corporate project management framework. A Project Board has been established, with clear roles for the Project Sponsor, Project Lead, Co-Project Lead and Project Manager. The Board will oversee progress and help ensure that issues and decisions are addressed at the appropriate stage. A record of decision and the matters that are covered in a Board meeting will be published on the local plan website.
- 3.4** We have identified the decision-making route for each key stage of plan preparation. Depending on the nature of the decision, this may involve approval by officers or the Project Board (please see the PID and website for further information about the Project Board), consultation with senior council decision makers, and later on in the Plan-making process, formal consideration by Scrutiny, Cabinet and Full Council. The project timetable also takes account of the lead-in times required for the council's internal briefing and committee processes.
- 3.5** The Project Initiation Document identifies the main risks to delivery and the measures we will take to manage them. These include:
- The compressed 30-month timetable;
 - Changes to national planning policy;
 - Local Government Reorganisation; and
 - The uncertainties associated with the new plan-making system.

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- Progress, expenditure and risks will be monitored throughout preparation of the Plan.
 - Staff and financial resources,

4 We planned how we'll consult on the plan

- 4.1** Public consultation is essential to ensure that the Local Plan reflects the needs and priorities of our communities. Planning our approach early will help people understand when and how they can get involved and influence how the area develops.
- 4.2** We have undertaken an initial scoping consultation (Regulation 20) which sought views on what the Local Plan should cover and how people would like to be involved as it is prepared. We are using this feedback to help shape our approach to consultation and engagement at future stages.
- 4.3** The feedback will also help us prepare a Local Plan Engagement Strategy. This will explain how we will involve communities and stakeholders throughout the preparation of the Plan, including engagement on:
- the evidence base that will inform the Plan;
 - the vision and 10 measures outcomes;
 - spatial development strategy; and
 - content of the proposed draft Local Plan.
- 4.4** More detailed information about consultation activities and opportunities to get involved will be provided before each stage.
- 4.5** Engagement will be led by the Strategic Planning Team, supported by the Council's Communications Team. Information and consultation materials will be made available through our dedicated Local Plan website: [Home - Winchester District Local Plan](#).
- 4.6** We will also use the Objective Keyplan consultation platform to manage representations and help us collate, analyse and report responses efficiently. Where appropriate, digital technology will be used to support the timely processing of consultation responses.
- 4.7** We will continue to work with our neighbouring authorities and key organisations on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries, including housing, infrastructure and climate change. The notes of any meetings are available on the Local Plan website [Engagement with other organisations - Winchester District Local Plan](#)
- 4.8** Once we taken on board the feedback from the recent scoping consultation we will publish a local plan engagement strategy on the Local Plan website.

5 We began scoping the content of the plan

- 5.1 Scoping includes considering how well the existing plan is working and gathering baseline information about the area. This helps to identify our future needs and ambitions. Starting this early means we can begin preparing the new plan with a clear vision, making it quicker and easier to consult on the plan and make decisions about it.
- 5.2 We have begun scoping the content of Winchester District Local Plan 2026 - 2044 by drawing together early evidence, consultation feedback and wider information about the changes likely to affect the district up to 2044. This work has helped us identify the main issues the new plan will need to address, including housing and communities, jobs and economic opportunity, transport and digital connectivity, infrastructure, water management, flood risk, nature recovery, heritage and the future role of Winchester District's towns and villages.
- 5.3 We undertook a Scoping Consultation between 18th September and 12th October 2026.

What we have done:

- 5.4 We have begun scoping the content of the new Local Plan through the commissioning of a range of evidence base studies and undertaking an initial high-level review of the responses received through the Scoping Consultation. This work will help us to identify the key issues the Plan will need to address, including housing and communities, economic growth and employment, transport and infrastructure, water resources and flood risk, nature recovery, heritage, and the distribution of future growth across the district.

Local Plan Gateway 1 Readiness Checker

- 5.5 We have used the Government's Local Plan Gateway 1 Readiness Checker at Appendix 1 to assess whether we are ready to move to Gateway 1. It is important to note that the Readiness Checker is a standard template used by all Local Planning Authorities and is intended to help identify areas where further evidence, assessment or plan-making work may be required. It does not mean that the Council cannot proceed to Gateway 1, nor does it represent a formal assessment by Government; rather, it is a self-assessment tool to support effective project planning and identify any outstanding work that should be progressed as the Local Plan continues to develop.

What we heard:

- 5.6 The initial Scoping Consultation has formed an important part of this process. Ahead of preparing the Local Plan Engagement Strategy, it has provided valuable insight into how residents, businesses and stakeholders would like to be involved in the plan-making process. Respondents expressed a clear preference for receiving updates through email, social media and the Council's website, while around half also supported the use of drop-in events. There was also strong support for being kept informed throughout all stages of the Local Plan process. Once we have developed the Local Plan Engagement Strategy this will move us from the amber to the green category in the Readiness Checker.

- 5.7** Given the recent adoption of the current Local Plan in March 2026, the initial scoping consultation provided an opportunity to listen to communities and stakeholders about what they believe the new Local Plan should address, rather than presenting a pre-determined vision. The consultation sought views on whether elements of the existing Vision remain relevant and identified a number of themes that will inform the preparation of a new Vision and a set of ten measurable outcomes. A draft Vision and proposed 10 measurable outcomes will be subject to consultation at the next stage of plan preparation and will move us in the Readiness Checker from red to green.
- 5.8** An initial review of the feedback has indicated mixed views on whether the spatial development strategy and Vision in the adopted Local Plan remain appropriate or should be amended. Many respondents highlighted the need for the new Local Plan to accommodate higher levels of housing based on the Government's standard method and supported directing development towards sustainable locations, particularly those with good public transport accessibility and proximity to railway stations. Over the coming months, we will continue developing the spatial strategy, exploring a range of high-level growth options and assessing the opportunities and constraints associated with each approach. We have also calculated the district's housing requirement using the Government's standard method and we are progressing work to understand the need for different sizes, types and tenures of homes, including affordable housing. This will move us from amber to the green category in the Readiness Checker.
- 5.9** Alongside the evidence base studies, we are reviewing monitoring information from the adopted Local Plan and wider baseline data to understand current trends and the key issues that the new Local Plan will need to address. We will also start reviewing all policies in the adopted Local Plan against the National Planning Policy Framework to identify whether they can be included in the Local Plan 2044. This will move us from the amber to the green category in the Readiness Checker.
- 5.10** The consultation highlighted a range of views on the role of settlement boundaries and how they should be applied in the future, which will be considered further as the Local Plan develops. There was also significant interest in how the Plan should respond to climate change, reflecting the importance of ensuring that future growth is planned in a sustainable way and contributes to wider environmental objectives.
- 5.11** As part of the Sustainability Appraisal process, we are gathering environmental baseline information, reviewing relevant plans and programmes, and identifying environmental objectives that will help assess the sustainability of future options and policies. We have also commenced a five-week consultation with statutory agencies on the scope and content of the Sustainability Appraisal. This will move us from the amber category to the green category.

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- 5.12** More detail on the feedback will be provided in the Scoping Consultation Summary Report, which we are aiming to publish by the end of November 2026. The Readiness Checker in Appendix 1 will continue to be reviewed and updated as the Local Plan progresses through subsequent stages of preparation.

6 We began a Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 6.1** We're legally required to identify, describe and evaluate likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the local plan
- 6.2** This process will consider how community, national and international environmental protection objectives and any other environmental challenges are taken into account in the plan. It will help us to predict significant environmental effects and develop ways of preventing, reducing and offsetting these.
- 6.3** It is important we start this work early and are transparent about how we're doing the assessment when engaging stakeholders and communities.
- 6.4** We have appointed a specialised consultants (AECOM), to undertake the Strategic Environment Assessment. We have commenced a 5 week consultation on the scope and content of the Sustainability Appraisal with the statutory agencies. Once this has been agreed with the statutory agencies, this will be published on the website.

7 How to stay up to date

- 7.1 There will be lots of opportunities to help shape the Winchester District Local Plan as the plan progresses. We encourage anyone with an interest in the future of Winchester to sign up for updates and take part in future consultations.
- 7.2 To comply with data protection requirements, anyone wishing to receive updates will need to opt in to the new database, even if they were registered on a previous Local Plan consultation database. If you haven't done so already, please use the link below to stay up to date. Statutory consultees will be included automatically where required by legislation.
- 7.3 Sign up here to [Keep up to date: Winchester District Local Plan 2026-2044](#)
- 7.4 You can also follow progress, consultation opportunities and key updates on the Winchester District Local Plan webpage: [Home - Winchester District Local Plan](#)

8 Appendix 1 - Readiness Checker

LPA name:	Winchester City Council
Version number:	1
Date:	1st October 2026
Lead officer	Adrian Fox

Area	Activity	We have made the recommended progress		We have started but have a bit more work to do to make the recommended progress		We may not have started or have significant work to do to make the recommended progress		Notes
Legal requirements you must have met before proceeding	Preparing and publishing a timetable in line with the data standard, publishing a notice of intention to commence and undertaking the scoping consultation	✓	We have complied with these legal requirements.				We have not met some or all of these legal requirements.	
Preparing and publishing a local plan timetable	Considering the expected time it will take to adopt the plan		The timetable shows how we will prepare and adopt a plan within 30 months.	✓	The timetable shows how we will prepare and adopt a plan within 30 months but there are significant risks to this.		The timetable shows that preparing and adopting a plan will take	We are currently awaiting an announcement on Local Government Reorganisation

						substantially longer than 30 months.	which will help us understand if there are any implications for the Local Plan timetable.
Establishing project management and governance arrangements	Establishing appropriate project management, governance and resourcing to support the timetable	✓	We have a robust approach to manage, govern, resource and finance the preparation of the plan that supports the delivery of the local plan timetable.		We have considered our approach to manage, govern, resource and finance the preparation of the plan, but there are some gaps or an approach is not yet signed off.	We have key unresolved questions for how we will manage, govern, resource or finance the preparation of the plan.	
	Testing and agreeing project management and governance internally	✓	All relevant teams and decision makers have been involved in designing, and signing-off the approach.		Relevant teams and decisions makers have been involved in designing and testing our approach, but it is not yet signed off.	We still need to involve other relevant teams and decision makers.	
	Establishing risk monitoring, management and mitigation	✓	We have identified potential risks and have effective processes in place to monitor, manage and mitigate them.		We have identified potential risks and are working to establish processes to monitor, manage and mitigate them.	We're still identifying risks or are yet to consider how we will monitor, manage and mitigate them.	
Consulting and engaging on the plan	Preparing an engagement strategy		We have a positive strategy for engaging the community and other key stakeholders in the preparation of the plan, which has been prepared	✓	We have made some progress in preparing an engagement strategy.	We need to start preparing an engagement strategy.	The Scoping Consultation asked people how they would like to be engaged with the Local Plan making

			with regard to government guidance.					process and we will be developing a Local Plan Engagement Strategy.
	Establishing processes for consultation and engagement		We have clear processes in place to maximise diversity in participation, utilising both digital-first and traditional methods.	✓	We have scoped out digital-first and traditional methods for engaging with different audiences, but our processes are not yet fully formed.		We haven't explored what engagement methods we could use.	As above
	Agreeing the engagement strategy internally		We have sought feedback on and agreed the engagement strategy with key decision makers.		We have sought feedback on the engagement strategy with key decision makers, but it's not yet signed off.		We still need to seek feedback on our engagement approach with key decision makers.	
Scoping the anticipated content of the plan	Defining the scope of the plan		We understand the proposed scope of the local plan. We know the main areas or locally specific subject matters it will address. This is based on data from the existing local plan, as well as information gathering, baselining and early engagement to date. Scoping work aligns with the work we have carried out on our SEA (if SEA is required).	✓	Scoping work is underway. We have reviewed monitoring information for the previous local plan, but still have work to do on information gathering, baselining and early engagement. The scoping work aligns or partially aligns with the work we have carried out on our SEA (if SEA is required).		We're only in the early stages of scoping and haven't considered how this relates to the SEA.	The 5 week Sustainability Scoping has just commenced with the statutory agencies.

	Drafting a vision for the plan		We have used early baselining and engagement activities to begin drafting a vision.		Using our baselining work and analysis of feedback from the scoping consultation we have started to develop some ideas about what the vision might focus on.	✓	We need to start drafting a vision.	We used the Scoping Consultation to ask for feedback on the Vision which will be consulted on at the next stage of the process.
	Considering how we will monitor progress towards the vision		We have started to identify measurable outcomes to monitor our progress towards the vision.	✓	We have considered how we might monitor progress towards our vision, but haven't identified specific measurable outcomes yet.		We haven't considered how we will monitor progress towards our vision.	A draft Vision and a set of 10 measurable outcomes will be consulted on at the next stage of the process.
	Gathering evidence to inform the new plan	✓	We have mostly identified and scoped our evidence needs and have a plan for how we will deliver this.		We have identified some of our evidence needs but still have work to do to scope the work and identify how we will deliver this.		We need to start identifying our evidence needs and how we will deliver this.	
	Calculating a housing requirement		We have calculated a housing requirement for the plan area using the Government's recommended standard method and started to identify the needs for homes of different sizes, types and tenures, including affordable homes.	✓	We have calculated a housing requirement for the plan area using the Government's standard method. We haven't started to identify the need for homes of different sizes, types and tenures and affordable homes yet.		We haven't calculated a housing requirement using the Government's standard method.	We have calculated the housing requirement and we have commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment which will be used to understand the

								need for homes of different size and tenure. This information will be available at the next stage of the process.
	Exploring our high-level options and policies		We have started to consider high-level and conceptual spatial options to deliver the identified development need, and begun to identify the potential scope of locally specific policies.	✓	We have identified the high-level capacity and constraints for development but have not started to develop spatial options to deliver the development need or scoped out locally specific policies		We haven't done any work on high-level spatial options or locally specific policies.	The Scoping Consultation asked for feedback on the spatial development strategy and we will be starting work on locally specific policies taking into account the National Planning Policy Framework.
Progressing the Strategic Environmental Assessment	Identifying other plans/programmes that have a relationship with the local plan		We have identified other relevant plans and programmes and their relationship to the local plan to establish how the plan or programme is affected by those plans or programmes.	✓	We have identified other relevant plans and programmes but have not yet analysed how the local plan is affected by those plans or programmes.		We have not yet identified other relevant plans or programmes that affect the local plan.	This workstream is currently underway and has not yet concluded.
	Collecting baseline information for the SEA		We have identified baseline information showing the existing environmental characteristics of the area	✓	We have identified baseline information on the existing environmental characteristics of the		We are in the early stages of (or haven't yet started) assembling	This workstream is currently underway - we have started the 5 week consultation with

			and their likely evolution without implementation of a new plan, as well as data on historic and likely future trends. It provides the basis against which we can assess the likely effects of our different options.		area. We have not used this information to establish trends or used it to test the environmental effects of our options.	baseline information to inform our strategic environmental assessment.	the statutory agencies on the Sustainability Appraisal. The Sustainability Appraisal will be used to assess the alternative spatial development options and this information will be made available as part of the next Local Plan consultation.
	Identify environmental protection objectives to inform plan preparation		We have identified the relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international, community or national level, and environmental considerations that will be taken into account during the preparation of the plan and recorded in the environmental report.	✓	We are in the process of identifying relevant environmental protection objectives that will be taken into account when preparing the plan.	We have not identified any environmental protection objectives.	This workstream is currently underway - we have started the 5 week consultation with the statutory agencies on the Sustainability Appraisal.
	Developing the scope of the SEA	✓	We have begun to identify the scope and level of detail of the information we intend to include in the environmental report. We have started to set out this		We're still working out what the scope and/or level of detail to include in the environmental report. We're making progress on setting out	We have not decided on the scope of the SEA or the level of detail we should include in the	

			information in a suitable document, such as a draft, emerging environmental report or scoping document. We are on track to consult on the scope of the SEA at the consultation on proposed plan content and evidence.		this information in an appropriate document, but we're not ready to consult on the scope of the SEA.		environmental report.	
	Developing SEA objectives	✓	We have started to develop SEA objectives which will help assess the environmental performance of the local plan.		We have begun to identify the key themes likely to be important when developing SEA objectives to use to assess the environmental performance of the local plan.		We have not yet begun on developing SEA objectives to assess the environmental performance of the plan against.	