

OUR NEXT LOCAL PLAN

WINCHESTER DISTRICT 2026 - 2044

Winchester District Local Plan 2044 Project Initiation Document (PID)

Version 1.1
June 2026

	Version	Date	Author	Changes	Reviewed	Agreed
	1.1	June 2026	AF	Original		

Table of Contents

1. Purpose of this PID	3
2. Need for a new Local Plan	3
Overview of the new 30 month process	4
3. Plan Role and Scope	5
Plan Period	5
Role of the next Local Plan 2044	5
Joint Local Plan.....	6
Plan Scope.....	7
Relationship to other plans and strategies	8
Spatial Development Strategy.....	8
4. Plan Timetable and Governance	9
Key stages in Plan making:.....	9
Timescale Overview:.....	9
Governance and decision making.....	10
5. Project Management.....	14
6 Evidence Base.....	16
7. Stakeholder Engagement	18
8. Budget	19
Agreed budget	19
Revised Budget – Local Plan 2044	20
9. Risks and Mitigation – high level.....	22

1. Purpose of this PID

- 1.1 This Project Initiation Document (PID) sets out how Winchester City Council will prepare and adopt the Winchester District Local Plan 2044, including scope, governance, resources, timetable, risks, and budget.
- 1.2 The structure follows the Planning Advisory Services [template](#).

This PID will be updated periodically when changes are required to reflect timetable, governance, budget and resourcing matters.

2. Need for a new Local Plan

- 2.1 [The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 \(LURA\)](#), and the Local Plan [Regulations](#) (in force 25 March 2026) introduce a new 30-month plan-making system. Winchester is required to prepare a new-style Local Plan because:
 - The local plan that has now been adopted by the City Council was submitted for examination before 12 March 2025.
 - It met less than 80% of local housing need using the updated standard method.
 - There is no operative Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).
- 2.2 The Council is required to comply with two statutory deadlines:
 1. publish a Notice of Intention to commence plan making for the next Local Plan 2044 by **30 June 2026**
 2. publish its Gateway 1 self-assessment by **31 October 2026**.
- 2.3 Further details of the new plan making system and processes are set out below, in so far as details are known and have been published at end of May 2026.
- 2.4 The government published for consultation on 16 December 2025, a revised [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (consultation closed on 10 March 2026). It is anticipated that the final revised NPPF will be published later in 2026.

Overview of the new 30 month process

(Source: 30-month local plan process: an overview - GOV.UK)



2.5 Further details are set out below (where known), it is worth noting that some tasks are required to be undertaken in sequence.

3. Plan Role and Scope

Plan Period

3.1 The plan will cover the period 2026 – 2044.

Role of the next Local Plan 2044

3.2 Winchester City Council in its role as a statutory local planning authority (LPA) has a duty under both the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and amendments made by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 to prepare and adopt a Local Plan.

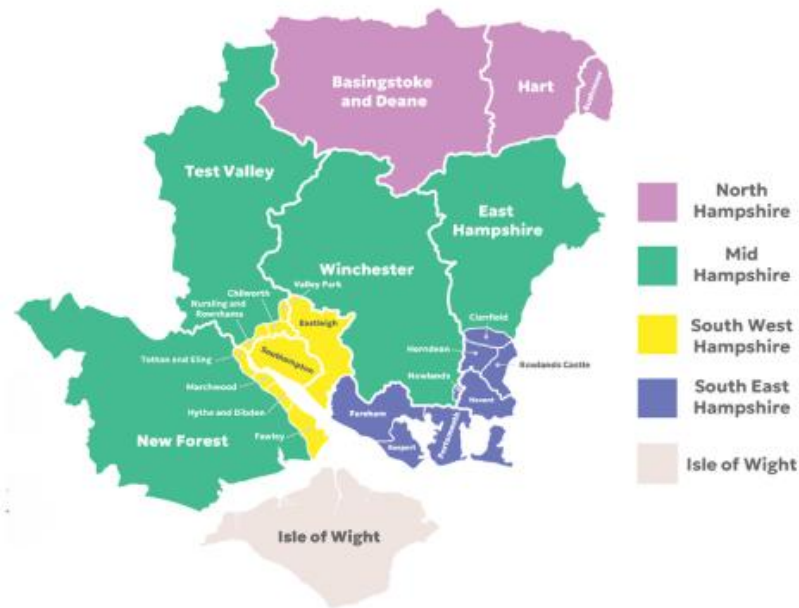
3.3 Once adopted, the plan will form part of the Development Plan and guide all planning decisions.

3.4 Local Government in England is undergoing significant change, through a period of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Hampshire currently has two tiers of Local Government:

- District Councils, which are responsible for services such as housing, planning, waste and recycling collections, car parks, and leisure facilities.
- Hampshire County Council, (together with the Unitary Councils of Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight) providing services including education, libraries, highways, children’s social care and support for adults who need help with daily living.

3.5 Under the Government’s proposals for LGR, these Councils would be replaced by new Unitary Councils. A Unitary Council delivers all Local Government services within its area, bringing together the responsibilities currently divided between District/Borough Councils and the County Council. LGR has two significant implications for the adoption of the Local Plan 2044:

3.6 Firstly, in March 2026, the revised boundaries were announced for Hampshire, with Winchester becoming part of Mid Hampshire, with the exception of the parish of Newlands which will be covered by South East Hampshire, as shown on the plan below:



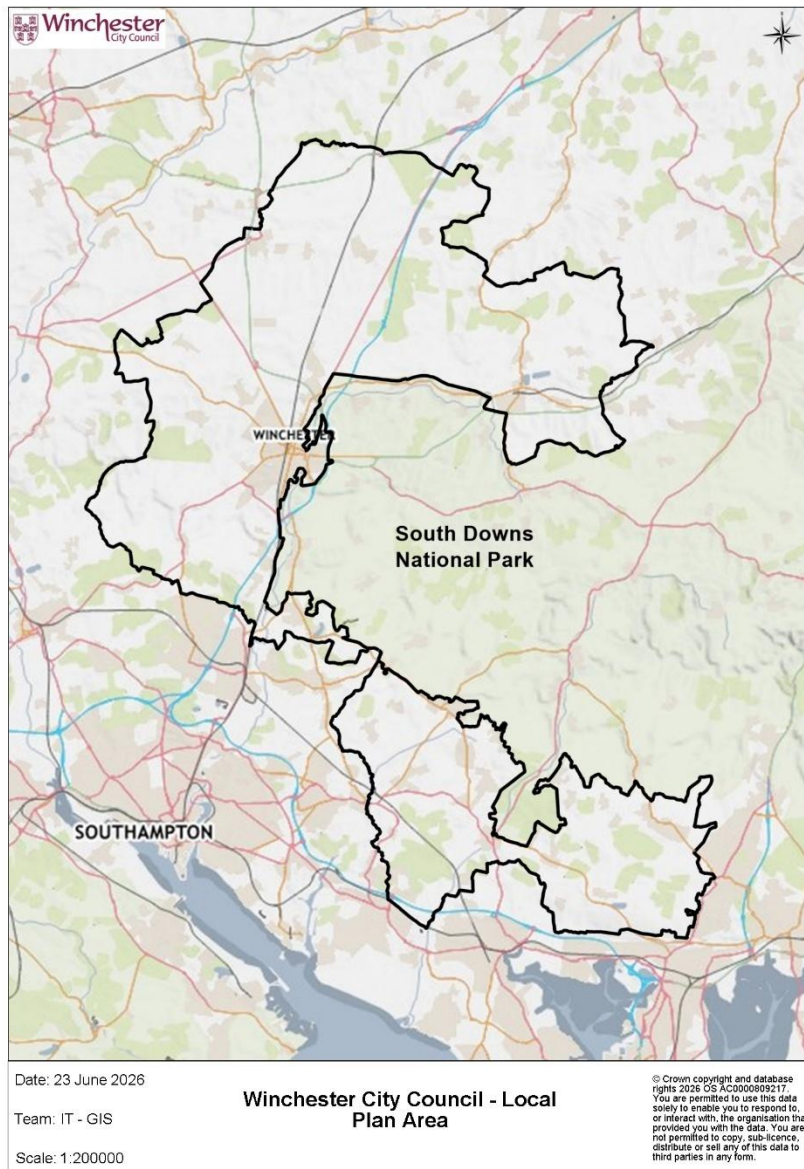
3.7 Secondary, the other important implication is that Winchester City Council has to commence the preparation of the Local Plan 2044, as the Government has made clear that work on Local Plans should not be delayed due to LGR. However, as set out in the 'Timescale Overview' (paragraph 4.1), work on the Local Plan needs to continue, and it is intended that the Local Plan 2044 will be adopted by the Mid Hampshire Authority in March 2029 (as Winchester City Council will no longer exist from April 2028).

Joint Local Plan

3.8 However, adopting a collaborative approach to plan-making across the Mid Hampshire geography would enable the Councils to commission shared evidence, use specialist resources more efficiently, and address strategic cross-boundary issues from an early stage. Consequently, on 30 June 2026, the Council's [Cabinet](#) considered and approved a report agreeing to explore opportunities for joint plan-making across the proposed Mid Hampshire area. As the outcomes of a collaborative approach to plan-making are not yet known, and there is a statutory requirement to publish a Notice of Intention to commence plan preparation, along with a timetable and a PID by 30 June 2026, this PID has been prepared on the basis of a Winchester District Local Plan. Should a collaborative approach to plan-making be pursued with neighbouring authorities, the PID will be reviewed and updated accordingly.

Plan Scope

3.9 The Local Plan 2044 will cover that part of Winchester District outside of the South Downs National Park. Once this Notice of Intention to Commence Plan Preparation is published this cannot be changed, the plan area, is shown on the following map:



3.10 The Local Plan 2044 will guide how land in the area is used and developed, setting priorities for housing, employment, infrastructure, design and environmental standards.

3.11 The government's Standard Method provides the starting point for assessing housing need, while the Plan will also address other development requirements in suitable locations, recognising the District's distinctive built and natural environment.

3.12 Subject to the final NPPF wording and any changes to legislation, the Plan will continue to promote high environmental design standards, supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation and the District's carbon neutrality ambitions.

Relationship to other plans and strategies

3.13 The Local Plan 2044 will be used to help deliver priorities expressed in the [Council Plan](#) 2025 – 2030, which relate to the development and use of land:

- Greener, Faster
- Healthy Communities
- Thriving Places
- Good Homes for All
- Efficient and Effective
- Listening and Learning

3.14 Other key local strategies where the Local Plan 2044 is a tool to assist with their delivery include the [Green Economic Strategy](#) and [Housing Strategy](#):

3.15 At the County level, Hampshire County Council have a range of published plans and strategies. The key ones for plan making include:

- [Local Transport Plan 4](#), this sets out transformational changes to a shift away from planning for vehicles, towards planning for people and places
- [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) for Hampshire 2025.

3.16 At the sub-regional level, the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH), includes an assessment of [strategic opportunity areas](#) for future growth, which includes land within Winchester District. The Council has also been working with PfSH to identify deliverable solutions for [nutrients](#), which remains a key challenge for plan making and new development in the District.

Spatial Development Strategy

3.17 Spatial Development Strategies (SDS) will form part of planning reform. These high-level plans look ahead at least 20 years, set the strategic framework for local plans, and identify broad areas for growth and infrastructure. They do not allocate specific sites, and local plans must align with them once adopted.

3.18 Winchester District will be covered by the Hampshire and Solent SDS, although there is currently no confirmed timetable for its preparation. Further details will be published here: [Housing and Strategic Planning - HSCCA Website](#)

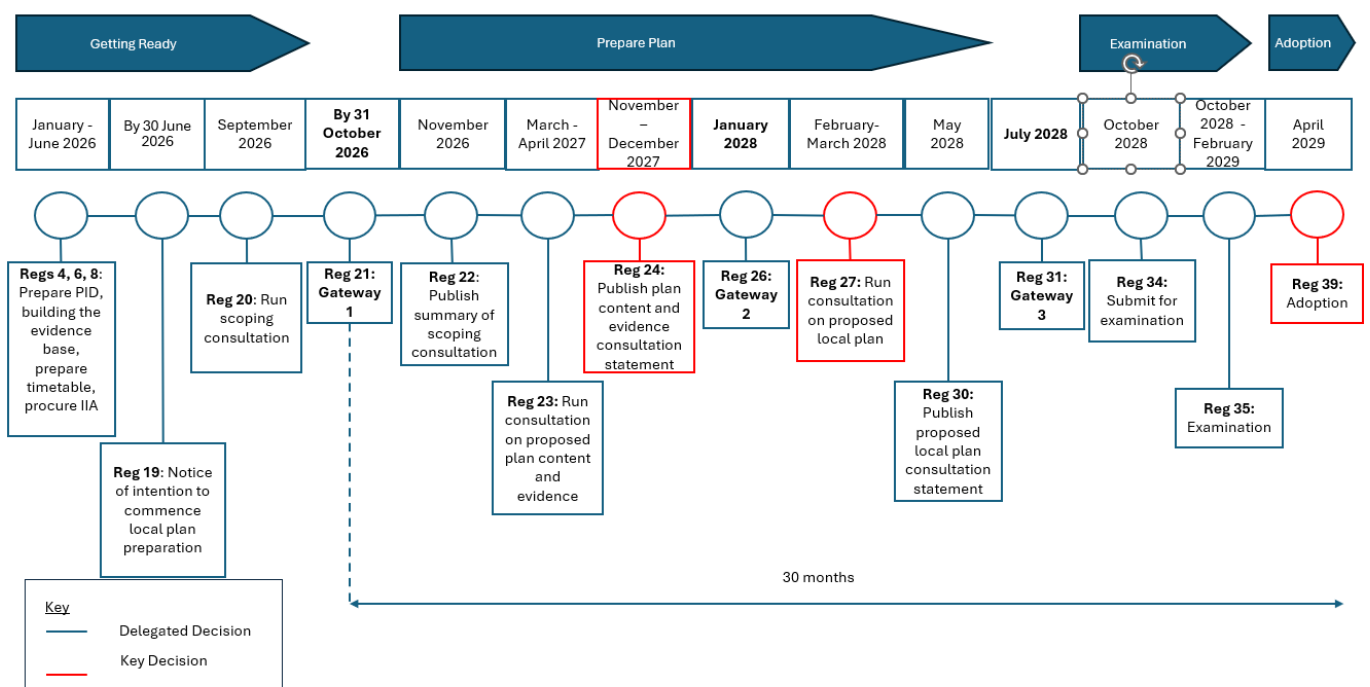
4. Plan Timetable and Governance

Key stages in Plan making:

- Get ready – early preparation
- **Notice to Commence Plan Making**
- **Gateway 1** - self assessment of readiness for proceeding with preparing the local plan – lead by LPA
- Vision and Strategy Development
- **Gateway 2** - Draft Plan Preparation – assessment of any emerging soundness issues - lead by PINS can take 4-6 weeks with the ability to ask PINS up to five matters in relation to soundness.
- **Gateway 3** - Confirm legal compliance, readiness for examination – testing if the preparation of the local plan has met all the prescribed requirements - lead by PINS, if PINS determine legal compliance fails then plan preparation will pause to allow for matters to be resolved.
- **Examination** to confirm soundness
- **Adoption**

Timescale Overview:

4.1 List of tasks where the sequence of activities is required by law for the preparation of the Winchester District Local Plan 2044¹:



¹ In light of Local Government Reorganisation in April 2028, the proposed April 2029 adoption date assumes the new combined authority will continue to progress the local plan to adoption given its advanced stage—reflecting practice elsewhere, such as Buckinghamshire, where plan-making progressed post-reorganisation.

Governance and decision making

4.2 The challenging timetable for the production of Plans under the new system requires a proportionate approach to governance. This project will follow the Councils Project Management framework for governance and decision making: [Corporate project management and methodology](#)

4.3 Project board comprises:-

Project Sponsor - Cheryl Headon - Strategic Director

Project Lead: Julie Pinnock – Corporate Head of Planning and Regulatory Services (CHPRS)

Co-Project Lead/Ambassador: Sarah Armstrong - Service Lead Built Environment (SLBE)

Project Manager– Adrian Fox - Strategic Planning Manager (SPM)

Key stages and decision making required:

4.4 Any committee requirements must align with internal Executive Leadership Board (ELB) and Cabinet briefing procedures, which typically require a lead-in time of around six weeks before the scheduled committee meeting. To note a Scrutiny Committee call in could add to the lead-in times.

4.5 The following table includes the key stages of plan making and the proposed decision-making process:

30 month process	Regulation ref	Activity	Indicative Start: Month/Year	Indicative End: Month Year	Governance and decision making process
	Reg 4, 6, 8	Getting ready activities to include but not limited to: Preparation of a PID Scoping, collating baseline data and procuring evidence Prepare local plan timetable Procure Integrated Impact Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment	January 2026	June 2026	PID to be agreed by Project Sponsor/Board Authority in CL177 to Strategic Director and Director Legal to approve and publish a revised Local Plan timetable; and commission external consultancy support, where required.

30 month process	Regulation ref	Activity	Indicative Start: Month/ Year	Indicative End: Month Year	Governance and decision making process
					Updated by CAB3566
	Reg 19	(Statutory) Notice of intention to start plan making	By 30 June 2026	30 June 2026	Authority in CL177 to Strategic Director and Director Legal Updated by CAB3566
	Reg 20	Scoping consultation on matters to be included within the local plan and how to engage	7/9/2026	28/9/2026	Project Lead
Month 1 - 23	Reg 21	Gateway 1 (Self-Assessment) Commencement of plan-making	By 31 October 2026	30 October 2026	Project Sponsor/Board
	Reg 22	Publish scoping consultation statement		November 2026	Project Manager
	Reg 23	Local plan content and evidence consultation to include draft vision and spatial strategy (6 weeks)	March 2027	April 2027	Project Sponsor/Board in consultation with ELB/Leaders Board
Local Government re-organisation – Shadow Authority elected May 2027					
	Reg 24	Publish plan content and evidence consultation statement		November - December 2027	Key decision with delegated authority to proceed to Reg 26 Scrutiny, Cabinet and Full Council decision
	Reg 26	Gateway 2 (PINS) (min 4 weeks)		January 2028	Project Sponsor/Board

30 month process	Regulation ref	Activity	Indicative Start: Month/ Year	Indicative End: Month Year	Governance and decision making process
	Reg 27	Public consultation on proposed local plan (sites, policies etc) for consultation (8 weeks)	February 2028	March 2028	Key decision with delegated authority to proceed to Reg 30 -33, Reg 34 and 35. Scrutiny, Cabinet and Full Council decision
Local Government re-organisation – 1st April 2028					
	Reg 30	Publish proposed local plan consultation statement		May 2028	Project Manager
	Reg 31 Reg 32 Reg 33	Gateway 3 (PINS) (min 4-6 weeks) Prescribed requirements that the local plan will be assessed against Repeat of Gateway 3 if prescribed requirements are not met (this will have timetable implications)		July 2028	Project Sponsor/Board
Month 24- 29	Reg 34	Submit for examination		October 2028	Project Sponsor/Board
	Reg 35	Independent Examination (Reg 36 allows for an Examination to be paused if deemed necessary – this will have timetable implications)	October 2028	March 2029	Project Manager

30 month process	Regulation ref	Activity	Indicative Start: Month/Year	Indicative End: Month Year	Governance and decision making process
Month 30	Reg 39	Plan adoption		April 2029	Key Decision Scrutiny, Cabinet and Full Council decision

5. Project Management

5.1 Lead Officers

Role	Job Title	% of time on local plan matters
Project sponsor	Strategic Director	10%
Project manager	Strategic Planning Manager	80%
Project Lead	Corporate Head of Planning and Regulatory Services	20%
Co -project lead/project ambassador	Service Lead Built Environment	40%

5.2 Strategic Planning Team

Job Title	FT/PT	Estimated % time in a 12-month period on Local Plan
Strategic Planning Manager	FT (37 hours a week)	80%
Principal Policy officer	Temporary, 4 days a week for 6 months until end of June 2026	100%
Principal planning officer	FT (37 hours a week)	90%
Principal planning officer	FT (37 hours a week)	90%
Senior Planning Officer	FT (37 hours a week)	95%
Senior Planning Officer	PT (18.48 hours a week)	95%
Strategic planning officer	FT (37 hours a week)	100%
Technical Officer	PT (18.48 hours a week)	90%

- 5.3 In addition, progressing the Local Plan will need expertise from teams across the Council, including but not limited to:
- Housing, New Homes Team;
 - Economy and Tourism;
 - Sustainability and Natural Environment;
 - Built Environment;
 - Engineering and transport, and
 - Regeneration
- 5.4 Expertise may be required with regard to:
- commissioning joint evidence;
 - assessments of potential sites for development;
 - input into the spatial strategy;
 - drafting of emerging policies;
 - provide ongoing technical advice throughout the plan making process; and
 - supporting the strategic planning team at examination.
- 5.5 There will also be a need for more dedicated IT support with the requirement for making plans more digital and on-line platforms for the submission, collation and reporting of representations.
- 5.6 Legal support will be required throughout the process to ensure all processes are followed and regulations complied with. For the existing Local Plan this included appointing a KC and it is assumed that a similar approach would be taken with the next Local Plan 2044.

6 Evidence Base

- 6.1 Existing [evidence base](#) to inform Local Plan 2040. Priority is to update essential evidence that is more than 2 years old and any new evidence as deemed necessary to support local plan preparation. The following is based on a current understanding of the new NPPF requirements, some studies have already been commissioned externally and further studies may be required as plan preparation progresses:

Key Evidence	Area Covered Local plan area or whole District	In house, externally commissioned	Estimated cost
Strategic Environmental Assessment / Environmental Outcome Report	Plan area	external	£90,000
Habitats Regulations Assessment			
Housing Needs Assessment (SHMA)	Whole District (with indication of SDNP need)	external	£30,000
Housing and Employment Land Supply Evidence (SHELAA)	Plan area	In house	
Housing Windfall assessment (update)	Plan area	In house	
Employment Needs and Land Study	Plan area	external	£16,995
Retail and Town Centre Uses Study	Plan area	external	£29,995
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (update)	Plan area	external	£30,000
Transport Assessment	Plan area	external	TBC
Settlement Hierarchy facilities and services (update)	Plan area	external	£6,700
Settlement Hierarchy	Plan area	In house	
Settlement Boundaries review	Plan area	In house	
Previously developed land / brownfield	Plan area	In house	
Spatial Strategy	Plan area	In house	
Settlement Gaps	Plan area	external	TBC
Water Cycle Study	Plan area	external	£43,400

Key Evidence	Area Covered Local plan area or whole District	In house, externally commissioned	Estimated cost
Opportunities introduced via Hampshire LNRS and links with the local plan	Plan area	In house	
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (update)	Plan area	In house	
Whole Plan Viability Report	Plan area	external	TBC
Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People Assessment and Pitch Deliverability Assessment (update)	Plan area	external	£30,000
Parking standards	Plan area	TBC	TBC
Potential of train stations to become potential development locations under new NPPF	Plan area	TBC	TBC

7. Stakeholder Engagement

- 7.1 Under the new plan-making regulations, an Engagement Strategy is required to set out how communities and stakeholders will be involved in preparing the Local Plan, replacing the Local Plan elements of the Council's [Statement of Community Involvement 2024](#).
- 7.2 The Scoping Consultation (September 2026) will seek views on how engagement should be undertaken, and the outcomes will inform the Engagement Strategy, including statutory requirements and the timing and scope of engagement on evidence, plan content, and the proposed draft plan.
- 7.3 Engagement will be led by the Strategic Planning Team, supported by the Communications Team, a [dedicated local plan website](#) has been established
- 7.4 'Objective Keyplan' consultation platform will be used to manage representations efficiently, including collating data for reporting. There is an expectation that automation will be used to process representations.
- 7.5 While the formal Duty to Co-operate has been removed by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, effective cooperation with neighbouring authorities and key organisations on strategic matters such as housing, infrastructure, and climate change remains required.

8. Budget

Agreed budget

- 8.1 Local Plan budget forecasts are produced and expenditure on the Local Plan (excluding staffing costs) is monitored regularly by the Strategic Planning Manager and Finance team.
- 8.2 The Local Plan currently receives an annual contribution of £36,700 from the Council's General Fund. In addition, £750,000 was allocated to the Local Plan Reserve in 2020/2023 to support the completion of the evidence base, meet additional staffing costs that were associated with the adoption of the Local Plan 2040, and to enable officers to begin work on the next Local Plan.
- 8.3 However, the estimated cost for developing and adopting the Local Plan 2044 was based on the previous ("legacy") Local Plan system. This pre-dated the Government's introduction of a compressed 30-month timetable for plan preparation, as well as changes arising from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- 8.4 The Council has been successful in receiving additional funds (£108,000) from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government for the work associated with work on the Local Plan 2044 which has been added to the Local Plan Reserve.
- 8.5 As the preparation and the adoption of the next Local Plan 2044 is one of the City Council's Tier 1 Projects, quarterly updates are reported to the Programme and Capital Strategy Board:

For Budget Purposes Next LP covers the period from 2026-2030

REVENUE	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Budget	69	523	242	86	108	1,028
Spend	69	0	0	0	0	69
Unspent budget	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forecast	69	522	210	215	47	1,063
Variance to budget	(0)	1	32	(129)	61	(35)

- 8.6 Due to the compressed timetable for progressing the Local Plan 2044 in 30 months, an additional growth bid of £500,000 is requested from the General Fund. This additional funding would be used to support the preparation of the Local Plan 2044 within 30 months and ensure that the Local Plan 2044 is at an advanced stage before LGR.

- 8.7 The bid will help fund at least two additional qualified Planning Officers, who will provide essential support during key stages of the process. This includes the two main consultation phases and the period following consultation on the draft Local Plan 2044, which is scheduled for completion in March 2028. The additional resources will also help manage and respond to representations received during these key stages.
- 8.8 The increased budget also provides for staff training and development in relation to the new Local Plan system, as well as a contingency allowance, acknowledging that the full requirements of the Government’s 30-month plan-making system have yet to be finalised.
- 8.9 This growth bid will be essential to enable submission of the Local Plan 2044 for examination by September 2028. Without sufficient additional resourcing, there is a heightened risk of programme delays, which could result in increased costs due to rework, missed deadlines, or potential intervention at examination. The revised budget is therefore as follows:

Revised Budget – Local Plan 2044

Activity	Description	Estimated Cost
Staffing and Project Management	Project management support, at least 2 temp roles at two key stages of the Local Plan process and the cost of staff training and development on the new Local Plan system.	540,000
Evidence Base Gathering	Commissioning studies on housing, employment, transport, viability	400,000 ²
Consultation and Engagement	Printing, exhibition materials, digital consultation software	61,000
External Expertise and Legal Fees	Planning consultants, legal support and Sustainability consultants	220,000
Examination Fees	Payment to planning inspectorate, venue hire for hearings and Programme Officer costs	160,000
Contingency (Risk Management)	A percentage (typically 10 to 15% for unexpected legal challenges or additional evidence which is particularly important given that we are preparing the Local Plan	120,000

² includes costs already incurred and estimates 80,000 further costs beyond those identified in Evidence Base table.

Activity	Description	Estimated Cost
	2044 under a new system that has not yet to be tested at a Local Plan examination.	
Total		1,500,000

8.10 In conclusion, the 1,500,000 is made of £1,000,000 that the we already have set aside for the preparation of the Local Plan 2044 and a Growth Bid of £500,000.

9. Risks and Mitigation – high level

Risk	Likelihood – high, medium, low	Risk level – high, medium and low	Mitigation
New Plan making regulations - 30 month timeframe	High	High	New regulations – seek advice (Government, Planning Advisory Service, peers). Manage the risks identified below that come from the truncated timeframe and the uncertainty of the new process and regulations.
Staff resources	Medium	High	Use temporary appointments – suitably qualified individual/consultant and use of contractor as necessary. Seek to recruitment replace permanent staff as quickly as possible.
Finance	Low	High	Revised estimated budget to reflect new plan making process. Using previous knowledge of some known costs but also to anticipate draws on the budget in the new system. Building resilience into the budget in terms of staff resources and other contingencies.
Local Government Re-organisation	Med	High	<p>Ensure that when the Shadow Authority is established in April 2027 they are aware of local plan progress to ensure continuity.</p> <p>To have completed consultation on the draft local plan prior to April 2028, so that the new authority enables the local plan to proceed to adoption.</p>
Changes to National Policies	Med	High	Timing and publication of final NPPF and any consequential changes to planning practice guidance is currently unknown. Need to progress with the local plan with flexibility to be able to amend/update evidence commissioned, to avoid having to repeat stages or commission new evidence for the new local plan.