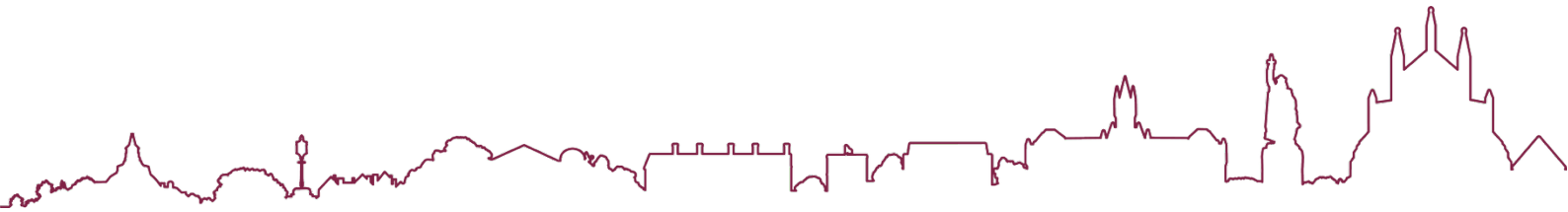
OUR NEXT LOCAL PLAN

WINCHESTER DISTRICT 2026 - 2044

Engagement Strategy

November 2026



Winchester City Council

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This engagement strategy sets out how the public, businesses and interest groups can get involved in the creation of local planning policy, through the preparation of the local plan. This strategy supersedes the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (2024).

1.2 The purpose of this strategy is to set out when consultation will take place and how this will be undertaken, to ensure that all those with an interest in plan making matters have an opportunity to get involved.

1.3 There are new legislative procedures that must be followed in the preparation of the local plan and statutory timescales to be adhered to, which are explained in more detail below. There is also an expectation that digital engagement tools will be used but this will be alongside more traditional methods of engagement depending on the stage and the content of the consultation.

1.4 Early consultation on the local plan, which was undertaken as part of the **Scoping Consultation** , asked for views on how stakeholders wish to engage with the plan making process. The outputs of this exercise have informed this engagement strategy.

2 WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2044

2.1 The purpose of the local plan is to set out a strategic vision for future development within the area up to 2044. Policies will provide guidance as to where development should take place, and the type and scale of that development, whilst protecting both the built and natural environment and maintaining and enhancing the local economy, and community facilities. There will be specific policies that allocate land for particular types of development, such as areas for new housing.

2.2 Preparation will be required to follow legislative processes and timeframes, a key requirement is for the complete plan making process to be undertaken in 30 months, as summarised in the image below:



2.3 Source: [30-month local plan process: an overview - GOV.UK]

Key stages include:

Get ready – early preparation

Notice to Commence Plan Making

***Month 1* - Gateway 1** - self assessment of readiness for proceeding with preparing the local plan – lead by LPA. Month 1 starts at this stage.

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.

***Month 24 - 29* - Examination** to confirm soundness

***Month 30* - Adoption**

2.4 The local plan timetable can be viewed on the **Local Plan website**.

3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT/ENGAGEMENT

3.1 Revised Government **guidance** and **regulations** set out the bodies to be invited to make representations at each consultation stage.

3.2 There are three opportunities to engage in making the local plan under the revised plan making regime:

1. Scoping Consultation;
2. Proposed local plan content and evidence consultation
3. Proposed local plan consultation

4 LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION STAGES

Scoping Consultation (Regulation 20)

4.1 This is the first formal consultation stage on the overall scope of the local plan, the range of issues and matters to be included. This consultation did not include details of the emerging vision or set of objectives, draft policies or site allocations, these will be consulted on further along in the process. The purpose was to gather views and thoughts as to the key matters affecting the plan area and what the local plan should include reference to. In addition, to seeking views on how to approach future local plan engagement, the outputs of which have informed this Engagement Strategy.

What the local plan regulations (and guidance) require us to do
Invite representations from the: • general consultation bodies (as set out in Appendix 1) you consider appropriate • specific consultation bodies (as set out in Appendix 2) you consider may have an interest in the preparation of the local plan You do not have to invite anyone else, but anyone can make representations at this stage.
Publish a Notice of Scoping Consultation
• publish documents on the Councils website; • make documents available for inspection at their principal office; and • make documents available for inspection at such other places in the area as appropriate
Consultation to last for at least 21 days

4.2 The Scoping Consultation carried out in September met these requirements. The consultation ran from Friday 18th September to 23:59 on Monday 12th October 2026.

4.3 In accordance with the Local Planning Regulations and associated guidance, the Council undertook a range of measures to publicise the Local Plan Scoping Consultation and encourage participation.

4.4 Notification of the consultation was sent directly to general and specific consultation bodies, together with individuals and organisations registered on the Council's Local Plan consultation database. Meetings also took place between Officers from the Strategic Planning team and the statutory agencies during the Scoping Consultation period. Copies of these meeting notes are available on the **Local Plan website**.

4.5 The consultation and notice were published on both the Council's Local Plan website and the Winchester City Council website, and a press release was issued to raise awareness of the consultation.

4.6 Copies of the consultation documents, including the Notice of the Scoping Consultation and a guide explaining how to respond, were made available at local libraries and at the City Council office reception. This is all documented in Appendix 1 to the Scoping Consultation Summary Report which is available on the Local Plan website.

Proposed local plan content and evidence consultation (Regulation 23)

4.7 This stage of plan making will be informed by the outputs of the scoping consultation together with technical assessments and reports prepared as part of the evidence base, to include the following:

- a proposed vision with measurable outcomes;
- proposed aims and objectives;
- options for a draft spatial strategy; and
- proposed approach to preparing local plan policies, including any additional evidence considered necessary.

4.8 The consultation will also seek views on the evidence base in progress, any studies yet to be commissioned, and to establish whether there are any gaps in the evidence base.

What the local plan regulations (and guidance) require us to do
Invite representations from the: • general consultation bodies (as set out in Appendix 1) you consider appropriate • specific consultation bodies (as set out in Appendix 2) you consider may have an interest in the preparation of the local plan • residents or people carrying out business in the area that you consider appropriate • anyone who requested to be notified of this consultation
Publish a Notice of Plan Content and Evidence Consultation
• publish documents on the Councils website; • make available for inspection at their principal office; • make available for inspection at such other places in the area as appropriate
Consult for minimum 6 weeks

4.9 We will comply with the requirements set out above and we will use other appropriate methods to engage the public and other stakeholders, such as those set out in this document.

Proposed local plan consultation (Regulation 27)

4.10 This stage involves publishing the proposed local plan for consultation including all policies and site allocations. In addition to the local plan itself a policies map of all the proposed allocations will be available as well as the evidence that has been gathered to support the policy approach.

4.11 There is also a requirement to publish a summary of the issues raised at previous consultations and how these have been addressed.

What the local plan regulations (and guidance) require us to do
Invite representations from the: • general consultation bodies (as set out in Appendix 1) you consider appropriate • specific consultation bodies (as set out in Appendix 2) you consider may have an interest in the preparation of the local plan • residents or people carrying out business in the area that you consider appropriate • anyone who requested to be notified of this consultation
Publish a Notice of Proposed Local Plan Consultation
• publish documents on the Council's website; • make available for inspection at their principal office; • make available for inspection at such other places in the area as appropriate
Consult for minimum 8 weeks

4.12 We will comply with the requirements set out above and we will use other appropriate methods to engage the public and other stakeholders, such as those set out in this document.

5 GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGEMENT FOR THE LOCAL PLAN

5.1 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.

5.2 The Council will use a variety of methods to encourage participation in the preparation of the local plan as appropriate. These will vary and a proportionate approach will need to be applied, taking into consideration resources and time available, specifically within the context of a 30-month plan-making process.

5.3 After the conclusion of each consultation, the Council is now required to prepare and publish a consultation statement which sets out who was invited to make representations, how they were invited, a summary of matters raised and how these have been taken into consideration.

5.4 We will ensure that we write in plain English so that our information is clear and easy to understand as we fully appreciate that planning has a large amount of jargon, technical terms and acronyms. Many of these are necessary as they refer to legislation or are abbreviations for otherwise long titles and descriptions. Documents will, as necessary, contain a glossary that will explain the terms used.

5.5 Technical reports and background information can be accessed online which ensures a wide reach of circulation. We will make sure that the Local Plan library on the website is easy to navigate and search for documents. In addition, paper copies of some documents such as the Local Plan will be available for inspection at the Council offices and libraries within the District during the consultation periods.

5.6 Other documents can usually be made available in a paper form on request, although there will be a fee associated with this. Officers or the Customer Services team should be contacted if documents are required in an alternative format, such as large print or another language.

6 METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

6.1 A combination of methods can often obtain the most comprehensive results, however consideration needs to be given to the availability of resources and the benefits that will be achieved. Statutory time constraints for preparing a Local Plan in 30 months are now more prescriptive and any engagement that we undertake will need to take this into account. Methods of engagement need to be chosen in proportion to the scale of the issue(s) and the resources (including time and money) available. In some instances there are statutory timescales for consultations or notifications and prescribed procedures that need to be followed, which may not allow for comprehensive engagement.

6.2 In line with the findings from the Scoping consultation, engagement will make full use of digital techniques but with a complimentary series of non-digital measures to ensure all have an opportunity to take part.

6.3 Below are the proposed engagement tools the Council may use.

Digital Methods	
Notification emails with consultation links	Used to notify consultees of consultations and other updates.
Social media engagement	Targeted use of Social Media, such as Facebook and LinkedIn to promote Local Plan activity, share accessible updates, signpost consultations, and encourage participation from younger residents and other hard-to-reach groups who are less likely to engage through traditional consultation methods.
Local Plan webpages	A single digital home for the Local Plan, containing information, consultation documents, interactive maps, FAQs, clear instructions on how to respond to a consultation and where we are in the Plan-making process.
Online explainer videos	Short, accessible videos summarising evidence, issues and draft policies and how to respond to a consultation using our online software.
Online briefings	Online lunchtime/evening sessions with Q&A, recorded for later viewing.

Other methods

Printed information and local media engagement	Use of posters and press releases to raise awareness of the Local Plan and consultation stages, helping to reach residents who are less likely to engage online and encouraging wider participation.
In-person events/drop-ins	Face-to-face conversation, including targeted engagement activities located in appropriate locations to maximise awareness and participation.
Paper copies and accessible versions	Available in libraries, Council offices, and by request for residents without digital access.
Area-based exhibitions, presentations or meetings.	To be used selectively where needed to explain local site options or changes. These methods are flexible and will be deployed as appropriate during each stage of the plan.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 The Council recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. It will seek to widen participation in preparation of the local plan by actively engaging under-represented groups where this is feasible to do so in compliance with the revised Regulations and local plan timetable.

7.2 The Council has commissioned an Integrated Impact Assessment of the local plan and this will incorporate an Equality Impact Assessment.

8 DATA PROTECTION

8.1 A database of contacts is retained to keep people informed of new policy initiatives.

8.2 Individuals or groups with an interest in the local plan can sign up for updates on the local plan via the Council's website **here** . The planning policy database will be maintained and used only in accordance with GDPR procedures. The Council has an updated privacy policy which can be viewed on the **website** .

9 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Local Plan General Consultees in accordance with Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026

General consultation body category	Local Organisations
Voluntary bodies, some or all of whose activities benefit all or part of the planning authority's area	Winchester Wellbeing Centre - Solent Mind Winchester GOLD (Empowering people with Learning Disabilities) Dementia Friendly Hampshire Winchester Youth Counselling The Winchester District Youth Collective Anna Freud Centre for children and families Action for Children Friends of the Family Winchester Age Concern Hampshire Home-Start Winchester and District Winchester Young Carers Youth Options Community First Winchester Street Reach The Carroll Centre Winchester Churches Night Shelter Salvation Army - Winchester Emmaus Hampshire Hampshire Cultural Trust Winchester parkrun Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust RSPB Bird & Wildlife Conservation Charity Woodland Trust National Trust Upper Itchen Valley Society City of Winchester Trust Watercress Way Winchester Friends of the Earth YMCA

Bodies which represent the interests of persons in the planning authority's area who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010	Winchester Youth Counselling The Winchester District Youth Collective Winchester District Older Person's Partnership Anna Freud Centre for children and families Action for Children Friends of the Family Winchester Age Concern Hampshire Home-Start Winchester and District Winchester Young Carers Youth Options Alresford Youth Association Friends, Families and Travellers (for Gypsy and Traveller)
Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the planning authority's area	Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Winchester Business Improvement District (Winchester BID) Whiteley Shopping Centre National Housing Federation Institute of Directors (IoD) (Hampshire & IoW branch) Hampshire Chamber of Commerce Winchester & District Chamber of Commerce Alresford Chamber of Commerce Chamber of Trade Bishops Waltham Wickham Chamber of Trade Denmead Business Forum Whiteley Business Forum

Appendix 2 : Local Plan Specific Consultees in accordance with Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026

Specific consultation body	**Local Organisation**
Active Travel England	Active Travel England
any person – to whom the electronic communications code applies as a result of a direction given under **section 106 (3) (a)** of the **Communications Act 2003**, and who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in the planning authority's area;	BT Openreach Three EE Virgin Media Vodafone and O2 c/o EMF Enquires

Canal & River Trust	Canal and River Trust
Civil Aviation Authority	Civil Aviation Authority
The Coal Authority	The Coal Authority
The English Sports Council	Sport England
Environment Agency	Environment Agency
Forestry Commission	Forestry Commission
A highway authority within the meaning in section 1 of the Highways Act 1980, any part of whose area is in or adjoins the planning authority's area (including the Secretary of State, where the Secretary of State is the highways authority)	National Highways Portsmouth City Council Hampshire County Council
The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England	Historic England
Homes and Communities Agency	Homes England
An integrated care board established under Chapter A3 of Part 2 of the National Health Service Act 2006	NHS Hampshire & IOW Integrated Care Board (ICB)
A person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989(35) (licences authorising supply, etc.)	National Grid E.ON Energy EDF Energy Networks N Power Centrica Plc Gridserve (renewable energy)
A person to whom a licence has been granted under section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986 (licensing of public gas transporters)	Southern Gas Networks Cadent Gas
A sewerage undertaker appointed under section 6(1) of the Water Industry Act 1991	Thames Water South East Water Southern Water (Primary Provider)
A water undertaker appointed under section 6(1) of the Water Industry Act 1991	Portsmouth Water South East Water Thames Water Albion Water
An Integrated Transport Authority for an integrated transport area within the meaning in section 77(1) of the Local Transport Act	Hampshire County Council

2008(38), which is in or adjoins the planning authority's area;	
The Marine Management Organisation_	Marine Management Organisation
Natural England	Natural England
A neighbourhood forum any part of whose area is in or adjoins the planning authority's area;	none
Network Rail Infrastructure Limited	Network Rail
The Office for Nuclear Regulation	Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)
The Office of Rail and Road	Office of Rail and Road (ORR)
Where the planning authority are a London borough council or any part of their area adjoins Greater London , Transport for London	n/a to Winchester
A relevant consultation body any part of whose area is in or adjoins the planning authority's area	*see separate list below*
where the planning authority are a London borough council, the Mayor of London	n/a to Winchester
where the planning authority are not responsible for discharging education functions for their area, the local authority with that responsibility	Hampshire County Council
where the planning authority are not the lead local flood authority for their area, that lead local flood authority	Hampshire County Council
the responsibility authority for a local nature recovery strategy that relates to all or part of the planning authority's area appointed under section 105(2) of the Environment Act 2021(46), where that authority is not the planning authority	Hampshire County Council

Relevant consultation body	**Local Organisation**

a local planning authority	South Downs National Park Authority Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council Eastleigh Borough Council East Hampshire District Council Havant Borough Council Fareham Borough Council Portsmouth City Council Test Valley Borough Council Hampshire County Council
a minerals and waste planning authority	Hampshire County Council South Downs National Park Authority

a parish council (within Winchester District)	Badger Farm Parish Council Beauworth (Parish Meeting) Bighton Parish Council Bishop's Waltham Parish Council Bishops Sutton Parish Council Boarhunt Parish Council Bramdean & Hinton Ampner Parish Council Cheriton Parish Council Chilcomb (Parish Meeting) Colden Common Parish Council Compton & Shawford Parish Council Corhampton & Meonstoke Parish Council Crawley Parish Council Curdridge Parish Council Denmead Parish Council Droxford Parish Council Durley Parish Council Exton (Parish Meeting) Hambledon Parish Council Headbourne Worthy Parish Council Hursley Parish Council Itchen Stoke & Ovington Parish Council Itchen Valley Parish Council Kilmeston Parish Council Kings Worthy Parish Council Littleton & Harestock Parish Council Micheldever Parish Council New Alresford Town Council Newlands Parish Council Northington Parish Council Old Alresford Parish Council Oliver's Battery Parish Council Otterbourne Parish Council Owslebury Parish Council Shedfield Parish Council Soberton Parish Council South Wonston Parish Council Southwick & Widley Parish Council Sparsholt Parish Council Swanmore Parish Council Tichborne Parish Council

	Twyford Parish Council Upham Parish Council Warnford (Parish Meeting) West Meon Parish Council Whiteley Town Council Wickham and Knowle Parish Council Wonston Parish Council Any other Parish Councils that are created in the District
a parish council (adjacent to Winchester District)	Ampfield Parish Council Barton Stacey Parish Council Bishopstoke Parish Council Botley Parish Council Braishfield Parish Council Bullington Parish Council Hurstbourne Priors Parish Council Candovers Parish Council Chilbolton Parish Council Clanfield Parish Council East Meon Parish Council Fair Oak and Horton Heath Parish Council Froxfield Parish Council Horndean Parish Council Kings Somborne Parish Council Laverstoke Parish Council Leckford and Longstock Parish Council Little Somborne Parish Council Medstead Parish Council Overton Parish Council Popham Parish Council Ropley Parish Council Steventon Parish Council Vice Droxford Parish Council West Tisted (Parish Meeting) Whitchurch Town Council Wield Parish Council
a local policing body	Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner
a combined authority	Hampshire and Solent Combined County Authority (HSCCA)