



Rochford District
Council

REPORT OF THE PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

1 LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2024-26

1.1 This item of business was referred by the Planning Policy Committee on 16 January 2024 to Council recommending that the Local Development Scheme 2024-26, as attached, be adopted and published on the Council's website. An extract of the key elements of the report is attached as Appendix A. The Local Development Scheme 2024-26 is attached as Appendix B.

1.2 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

That the Local Plan Development Scheme 2024-26, as attached at Appendix B, be adopted and published on the Council's website.



**Rochford District
Council**

REPORT OF THE PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE – 16 JANUARY 2024

REPORT TITLE:	Local Development Scheme 2024-26
REPORT OF:	Director of Place

REPORT SUMMARY

The Local Development Scheme is a formal document that sets out a forward timetable for the preparation of development plan documents and other core planning documents. This report consists of an update to the Council’s Local Development Scheme, covering the period 2024 to 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. That the Planning Policy Committee notes the proposed programme plan, set out at Appendix B
- R2. That the Planning Policy Committee recommends to Full Council that the Local Development Scheme 2024-26, attached at Appendix A, be adopted and published on the Council's website

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to publish and maintain a Local Development Scheme which, inter alia, identifies the development plan documents that it intends to produce and sets out a timetable for their production.
- 1.4 Adoption of an up-to-date Local Development Scheme to replace the existing out-of-date Local Development Scheme would meet this requirement and provide greater clarity to stakeholders over the intended programme timetable for the production of key planning documents, including the New Local Plan.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Failing to adopt an up-to-date Local Development Scheme would be contrary to the Planning and compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and not considered a realistic alternative.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 As set out above, all local planning authorities are required by law to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS) for their area.
- 3.2 The LDS must identify:
- the local development documents which are to be development plan documents;
 - the subject matter and geographical area to which each development plan document is to relate;
 - which development plan documents (if any) are to be prepared jointly with one or more other local planning authorities;
 - any matter or area in respect of which the authority have agreed to the constitution of a joint committee under section 29;
 - the timetable for the preparation and revision of the development plan documents;
 - such other matters as are prescribed.
- 3.3 The key role of the LDS is to identify the development plan documents that the Council intends to prepare and set out a timetable for these development plan documents. At this stage, the sole development plan document being prepared by the Council is the New Local Plan. The Council could look to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in the future.
- 3.4 The Council's existing LDS was adopted in September 2023. Despite the significant amount of progress that has been made on the Council's New Local Plan over this period, it is now recognised that technical delays have made the existing timetable unachievable. As a consequence, this report has now been brought forward to propose a new timetable that is considered to be realistic and achievable.
- 3.5 As stated in the previous LDS report, and elsewhere, the progression of the Council's New Local Plan to the Preferred Options consultation stage relies upon the Council having exercised judgement over a preferred spatial strategy for that plan. This spatial strategy, consisting of a long-term plan for housing, jobs, infrastructure and the environment, itself requires a selection process which provides an opportunity to compare reasonable alternatives and which is informed by up-to-date and robust evidence. Two key pieces of evidence to inform this process are the Local Plan Transport Assessment and Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Whilst both pieces of evidence are well underway, the Council has been unable to progress these at the previously indicated pace and as such the key deliverables are unlikely to arrive until at least February 2024, with further time necessary to allow for sufficient scrutiny from both Officers and Members, and the application of any outcomes into a consultation document for the committee's consideration. In order to allow for this scrutiny and application, a new timetable for the New Local Plan is proposed as set out below.

Stage	Target Date
<i>Issues and Options Document public consultation</i>	<i>December 2017 to March 2018</i>
<i>Spatial Options Document public consultation (Regulation 18)</i>	<i>July to September 2021</i>
Preferred Options Document public consultation (Regulation 18)	Q3 2024
Proposed Pre-Submission Document public consultation (Regulation 19)	Q1 2025
Submission to Secretary of State for independent examination (Regulation 22)	Q3 2025
Examination hearings	Q4 2025
Main Modifications consultation	Q1 2026
Inspector's Report expected	Q2 2026
Adoption by Full Council	Q2 2026

- 3.6 The Government has indicated that it intends to introduce a deadline for the submission of Local Plans produced under the current system of Summer 2025. Whilst it is probable that this deadline may be extended in light of ongoing uncertainty over the introduction of a new plan-making system, the Council's timetable for preparing a New Local Plan, as proposed in both the short- and medium-terms, is aimed at meeting this stated deadline. The Strategic Planning team will advise the Committee around the implications of national reform, including any residual risks and mitigation necessary, on an ongoing basis.
- 3.7 At Appendix B, a high-level programme plan is included which sets out a summary of the key tasks and stages required to support the preparation of the New Local Plan in the short-term. This programme plan is a "live" document that will be continually updated to monitor actual progress against objectives and the real time identification of timetable pressures.
- 3.8 As is practice, key evidence documents will continue to be reported into future meetings of the Planning Policy Committee.
- 3.9 It is recognised that the delivery of a Preferred Options consultation relies upon having clarity over a future "preferred" strategy and policy matters. The new timetable allows for the key meetings and decisions required to set parameters and thereafter help define the preferred strategy.
- 3.10 The Local Development Scheme also includes a range of high-level programme risks and potential mitigations aimed at ensuring the timetable remains realistic and achievable. This will be complemented by more detailed risk analysis undertaken by officers at the project level.
- 3.11 As is standard practice, pressures to the delivery of the Local Development Scheme will be reported to the Planning Policy Committee where appropriate considerations can be made as to whether the timetable requires adjustment, or whether other dependencies within the process need to be re-considered.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The delivery of the New Local Plan and related documents is planned and accounted for within the agreed Local Development Framework earmarked reserve.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council, as local planning authority, is obliged to publish and maintain a Local Development Scheme for its area, in line with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The document attached at Appendix A, and the recommendation set out in this report, would ensure this legal requirement is met.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Local Development Scheme 2023-24, as attached at Appendix A, sets out a timetable for the delivery of key planning documents. The delivery of these key planning documents is considered realistic in the context of existing, agreed resources and budgets. High-level related risks and mitigations are reported within the document.
- 6.2 Nevertheless, any future risks to the timetables set out in the Local Development Scheme which arise as a consequence of resource constraints will be reported to the Planning Policy Committee where appropriate actions to resolve these risks can be considered.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Local Development Scheme 2024-26, as attached at Appendix A, identifies a range of high-level risks to the delivery of the timetable contained within the document. These programme risks will be kept under review and mitigated against wherever possible.
- 7.2 It is expected that future risks to programme delivery will be reported to the Planning Policy Committee where appropriate actions to resolve these risks can be considered.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The report itself is not subject to engagement or consultation but identifies timetables for the undertaking of future consultation. This consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement 2022.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality or diversity impacts arising from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct environmental or climate implications arising from this report.

