



Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Document 2026

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Form

Date created	April 2026
Approved by	Cabinet 15 April 2026
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1. Name of project, service or Strategy	Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Document (Policies and Site Options)
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2. Why is this policy needed?

The Regulation 18 Consultation Document sets out the Council’s emerging spatial strategy, thematic planning policies and potential site options to guide development across the Borough over the plan period.

The preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), which requires local planning authorities to prepare development plan documents.

The consultation is undertaken in accordance with:

- Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, which requires the Council to notify and invite representations from consultation bodies and other stakeholders
- The Council’s adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which sets out how communities will be engaged in plan-making

The Local Plan is needed to:

- Ensure the Borough has an up-to-date development plan in line with national policy, and guidance
- Identify how housing, employment and infrastructure needs will be met
- Provide a clear and coordinated spatial strategy for growth
- Support sustainable development and inform decision-making on planning applications

Without an up-to-date Local Plan, there is an increased risk of unplanned or speculative development and reduced ability to manage growth in a coordinated and sustainable way.

3. Who may be affected by the proposed policy?

The draft Local Plan has the potential to affect all residents, businesses and visitors within the Borough.

Groups likely to be affected include:

- Residents living in proximity to potential development sites
- Individuals in housing need, including younger people and families
- Older people and those requiring accessible or specialist accommodation
- Businesses requiring land or premises
- Communities reliant on local infrastructure, services and facilities

Impacts may vary geographically depending on the distribution of development.

4. What are the key aims of the proposed policy?

The key aims of the draft Regulation 18 Local Plan are to:

- Establish an overarching spatial strategy to guide the location, scale and type of development across the Borough
- Identify how housing and employment needs will be met in full over the plan period
- Provide a consistent and up-to-date policy framework to guide planning decisions
- Support the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with national policy
- Balance the need for growth with the protection of environmental assets, where appropriate
- Maintain the overall strategic integrity of the designated Green Belt to ensure the openness and separation between settlements in accordance with national policy and guidance
- Ensure that development is supported by appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities
- Promote well-designed, inclusive and accessible places that meet the needs of existing and future communities
- Provide a clear basis for community and stakeholder engagement on the future development of the Borough

These aims reflect the early, consultative nature of the Regulation 18 stage, where options are being presented and tested prior to the preparation of a preferred strategy.

5. Impact of the policy

Description of the Impact	Nature of the Impact Positive, Negative, Neutral (Explain Why)	Extent of the impact Low, Medium, High (Use L,M,H)
Age	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased housing supply may improve access to housing for younger people and families • Deliver higher quality designed housing to the support the Borough's existing stock • Provision of suitable and adaptable housing may support older people, including those wishing to downsize or live independently • Improved infrastructure and services may benefit all age groups <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development in certain locations may place pressure on existing services used by particular age groups, such as schools or healthcare, if not delivered in step with growth • Changes to local environments may be perceived negatively by some age groups <p><u>Neutral</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this stage, no direct or disproportionate impacts on any specific age group have been identified • Detailed impacts will depend on the final distribution of development and infrastructure delivery 	H
Disability	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies promoting accessible and adaptable housing can support people with disabilities • New development may provide opportunities to improve accessibility in the built environment to a wide range of services, facilities, amenities, opportunities and to the natural environment 	H

	<p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not carefully managed, increased demand on infrastructure and services may affect accessibility for some individuals • Some individuals may experience barriers to engaging with consultation materials if alternative formats are not available <p><u>Neutral</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific adverse impacts identified at this stage • Detailed accessibility considerations will be addressed at later stages of plan-making and development 	
Gender	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to housing, employment and services may benefit all genders <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific negative impacts identified <p><u>Neutral</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No differential impacts identified at this stage 	L
Gender reassignment	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan supports inclusive communities and access to services for all individuals <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific negative impacts identified <p><u>Neutral</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No differential impacts identified at this stage 	L
Marriage/Civil partnership	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased housing supply may benefit households in different forms, including couples and families <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific negative impacts identified <p><u>Neutral</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No differential impacts identified at this stage 	L
Pregnancy & Maternity	<p><u>Positive</u></p>	L

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to housing, employment opportunities, services and facilities may benefit families and those with young children Planning for infrastructure such as healthcare and open space may support wellbeing <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased demand on services may affect availability if infrastructure delivery does not keep pace with development <p><u>Neutral</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific adverse impacts identified at this stage 	
Race	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased housing and access to services may benefit a diverse population The plan supports inclusive and sustainable communities <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential barriers to engagement may exist for some groups if consultation is not fully accessible or inclusive <p><u>Neutral</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No disproportionate impacts identified at this stage 	L
Religion/belief	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future development may support access to community facilities, including those used by faith groups <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific negative impacts identified <p><u>Neutral</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No differential impacts identified at this stage 	L
Sexual orientation	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan supports inclusive communities and access to services for all <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific negative impacts identified <p><u>Neutral</u></p>	L

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No differential impacts identified at this stage 	
<p>Socio-economic* Eg: Single parent, Low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, etc. (It is non-statutory however council has chosen to implement this duty. Decision makers are expected to use their discretion to consider the impact on people with a socio-economic disadvantage)</p>	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased housing supply, including affordable housing, may benefit lower income households Provision of employment land and services may support economic opportunities Improved infrastructure may enhance access to jobs and services <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development may increase pressure on infrastructure and services if not delivered alongside growth The distribution of development may affect some communities more than others depending on location <p><u>Neutral</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No disproportionate impacts identified at this stage Impacts will vary depending on the final spatial strategy and delivery of infrastructure 	H

6. What steps have you taken or plan to take to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the service or policy development e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups?

The Council has undertaken, and will continue to undertake, a range of consultation and engagement activities to ensure that the whole community, as well as specific groups, have the opportunity to participate in the development of the Local Plan.

Steps taken to date include:

- Consultation on a previous version of the Local Plan in 2024, supported by a comprehensive programme of engagement, including both online consultation and in person events open to the wider community
- Targeted stakeholder engagement in relation to the Settlement Visions between November 2025 and January 2026, including a series of in person and online sessions with invited stakeholders, representative groups and key organisations
- A further period of wider engagement in March 2026 on the Settlement Visions, including in person events open to all residents and stakeholders

For the current Regulation 18 consultation, the Council will:

- Publish consultation materials online, including the Regulation 18 document, supporting evidence and an online response platform
- Provide opportunities for written representations from individuals, community groups, statutory consultees and other stakeholders
- Engage directly with statutory consultees and representative bodies in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
- Use a range of communication channels to raise awareness of the consultation, including the Council's website and other appropriate media
- Seek to ensure materials are accessible and available in alternative formats where reasonably required

The approach is informed by the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, which seeks to ensure inclusive and proportionate engagement. Feedback from all groups will be considered in refining the Local Plan as it progresses.

7. What are the sources of data/information used to inform the assessment?

The assessment has been informed by a range of quantitative and qualitative data sources relevant to plan-making, including:

- Local Plan evidence base – including the Local Housing Needs Assessment, Economic Study, infrastructure and service capacity studies, and other technical evidence prepared to support the plan
- Census and Office for National Statistics data – national and local population data to understand the composition, characteristics and needs of the community
- Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) – assessment of the environmental, social and economic effects of the emerging Local Plan
- Settlement Vision engagement – feedback from stakeholder and public engagement undertaken between November 2025 and March 2026
- Previous Local Plan consultation responses – including representations received during earlier consultation in 2024
- Consultation responses at Regulation 18 – feedback from residents, statutory consultees, community groups and other stakeholders
- Internal Council data – including information relating to population, infrastructure, service provision and community needs
- Equality and diversity monitoring – existing data on protected characteristics collected through council services where available
- National policy and guidance – including the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant planning practice guidance
- Legislative framework – including duties under the Equality Act 2010

This combination of data sources ensures that the assessment is evidence-based and reflects the needs, characteristics and experiences of the borough’s communities, while remaining proportionate to the strategic and consultative nature of the Regulation 18 stage.

8. Please explain how and when the actual equality impacts of the Local Plan will be reviewed and monitored.

The equality impacts of the Local Plan will be reviewed and monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the plan-making process and following adoption.

As the Local Plan progresses, the EqIA will be updated at key stages, including at Regulation 19, to reflect any changes to policies, site allocations and the spatial strategy. Consultation responses, including those relating to equality impacts, will be considered as part of this process.

In addition, the Sustainability Appraisal, which incorporates Strategic Environmental Assessment, will continue to assess the social effects of the plan, including impacts relevant to equality considerations.


Following adoption, the implementation of the Local Plan will be monitored through the Council’s Authority Monitoring Report. This will include monitoring of housing delivery, infrastructure provision and other relevant indicators, which may highlight any emerging impacts on different groups within the community.

Where monitoring identifies potential adverse impacts, this will inform future reviews of the Local Plan and associated policies.

9. Does the EqIA indicate that the strategy would have a medium or high negative impact on one or more equality groups?

No

10. Sign off

Name	Role (i.e. Project Sponsor, Head of Service)	Date
Liz Beighton 	Head of Planning, Economic Development and Climate Change	14 April 2026