

Chapter 1 – Introduction

What is the Local Plan?

This Local Plan is a statutory planning document prepared by Rutland County Council. It sets out the strategic vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the County, as well as the planning policies which will help to determine the future location, scale, type and design of new development in Rutland. It seeks to ensure local development is built in accordance with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Plan also includes site allocations to meet the vision and objectives of the Plan.

The Local Plan, together with any Neighbourhood Plans prepared by town and parish Councils or other appropriate bodies, make up the “Statutory Development Plan” which has important status in determining future planning applications in the area.

The Local Plan in Rutland currently comprises three separate “Development Plan Documents”.

Why is the Local Plan important?

An up-to-date Local Plan is the main way that councils set their planning policies. Without an up-to-date Local Plan, councils can lack the policies they need to prevent inappropriate or damaging development in their area.

The Government requires all local planning authorities to provide a long-term Local Plan to meet our needs for the future. If the Council does not have an up-to-date plan, development will still take place. However, the Council will be less able to use its own planning policies to help decide where development should go.

It is also important that local people are given the means to have their say in the future development of their communities, and this is best done through the Local Plan consultation process.

Why is the Local Plan being reviewed?

Rutland County Council is reviewing its Local Plan in order to:

- reflect changes to national planning policy and guidance, particularly the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012 and revised in 2023
- produce a single Local Plan document as recommended by government planning policy in the NPPF
- extend the Plan period to 2041 to ensure that there will be a 15-year time horizon from adoption for strategic policies as recommended in the NPPF. This will allow the Council to anticipate and respond to long term requirements and opportunities, such as those arising from major improvements in infrastructure
- provide for additional new housing, employment and other development that will be required to meet future needs over the extended Plan period

Which documents are being reviewed?

The following Development Plan Documents (DPDs) are being reviewed and it is intended that they will be replaced by this single Local Plan:

- Minerals Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD (October 2010)
- Core Strategy DPD (July 2011)
- Site Allocations and Policies DPD (October 2014)

A list of the existing policies that will be replaced and the policies that it is intended will replace them is shown in Appendix 2.

A glossary of the terms used in this document is shown at the end of the document.

Withdrawal of the Rutland Local Plan 2018-2036

Work had previously been undertaken to prepare a new Local Plan covering 2018-2036. However, in accordance with Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended, the Rutland Local Plan 2018-2026 was withdrawn in 2020.

What is the Plan period?

This Local Plan covers the period from 2021 until 2041. This will ensure that it will cover at least the required 15-year time-period after the Plan has been adopted by the Council.

What are we now consulting on?

This 'Preferred Options' Plan is part of the Plan Preparation (Regulation 18) stage and will include a consultation period, taking place in autumn 2023. Consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Local Plan Regulations and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

Indicative Timescales

This stage in the plan making process is the publication of a draft version of Rutland's Local Plan indicating the preferred options for growth, supported by evidence. It follows previous community engagement under the Call for Sites and Issues and Options consultation.

- Call for Sites – spring 2022
- Issues and Options consultation – summer 2022
- Preferred Options Plan (Regulation 18) consultation– autumn 2023
- Submission Draft Plan (Regulation 19) consultation – autumn 2024
- Submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination – January 2025
- Examination of the Local Plan - 2025

- Main modifications, as recommended by the Independent Planning Inspector – date to be determined
- Adoption and publication – date to be determined

How do Neighbourhood Plans fit in?

Neighbourhood plans are community-led and provide a powerful spatial planning tool for local communities to shape and influence where development will go and what it will look like in their local area. Introduced by government through the Localism Act 2011, the process provides the opportunity for local communities to exercise greater influence through plans, policies and orders that meet the needs of the local community.

Local Planning Authorities have a general duty to support communities producing neighbourhood plans. The Council has developed a step-by-step Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit to provide support and guidance throughout the process from scoping the plan and building the evidence base, to ensuring the plan is in general conformity with strategic planning policy. A successful plan also depends on local participation, leadership and ownership, empowering communities and supporting local capacity building. The Council therefore recognises the importance of good governance, inclusion and wide engagement in the process of developing neighbourhood plans.

When adopted by the Council, neighbourhood plans form part of the Statutory Development Plan which forms the basis for determining planning applications. Neighbourhood plans provide policies on issues of a non-strategic, local nature. They should look to add locally specific detail to the strategic policies included in the Local Plan and should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area.

Neighbourhood planning activity in Rutland

Where we have parish or town councils and they wish to prepare a neighbourhood plan, they will be required to take the lead in neighbourhood planning on behalf of their communities. Outside such areas, then it is possible to establish a “Neighbourhood Plan Forum” to undertake this role.

Neighbourhood plans are adopted or ‘made’ following a public referendum. Policies in these plans are used alongside the Local Plan and national policies to determine planning applications in these areas.

Within Rutland, Uppingham was a National ‘frontrunner’ in the development of a neighbourhood plan following the Localism Act 2011, starting work on their plan in 2012.

Table 1: Adopted Neighbourhood Plans (as at August 2023)¹

Neighbourhood Plan Area	Adoption
Barrowden & Wakerley	October 2019
Cottesmore	December 2016
Edith Weston*	June 2014
Greetham	October 2017
Ketton & Tinwell	August 2023
Langham	December 2022
Market Overton	February 2023
Oakham & Barleythorpe	December 2021
Uppingham*	January 2016

The latest information on current neighbourhood plan designations in Rutland can be viewed on the Rutland County Council website:

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/Planning-building-control/local-Plan/neighbourhood-Plans>

Table 2: New Neighbourhood Plans which are being prepared (as at August 2023)²

Neighbourhood Plan Area	Area Designated
North Luffenham	February 2020
Whissendine	July 2020
Wing	June 2017

Review of Neighbourhood Plans

The Local Plan review establishes the strategic policies setting out how much housing and employment and retail development is needed to meet the needs of the County over the Plan period and the broad locations where this should be developed.

Neighbourhood plans must be in “general conformity” with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan. The strategic policies are those which are essential to delivering the overall planning and development strategy for Rutland, such as those that set out the number of homes that should be built and where. Paragraph 65 of the NPPF requires that strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the Plan period. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations.

¹ Plans marked with an asterisk (*) are currently being reviewed.

² This table shows new plans in preparation where the area does not currently have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood plans which are being prepared or reviewed after the Local Plan is adopted can allocate additional sites for development within their town or village. However, they cannot propose less development within their town or village than that set out in this Local Plan. When the new Local Plan is adopted, all neighbourhood plans will need to be reviewed by the relevant parish and town councils to ensure that they will be (or remain) consistent with the Local Plan.

Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

A Sustainability Appraisal (SA/SEA) is being undertaken as part of the Plan making process. The SA is an iterative document which appraises the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the Plan's proposals. It is used to inform the preparation of the Preferred Options (Regulation 18) Plan and development of the preferred strategy and policy direction following the issues and options consultation stage. An essay report will be published at each stage when the Local Plan is consulted upon. We have now published 2 Interim SA/SEA reports, one in October 2022 and October 2023.

A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is also being undertaken as part of the Plan making process. The HRA is also an iterative document which assesses the potential impacts of the Plan's proposals on the conservation of European Designated sites. The HRA 'Issues and Options Consultation' document was received by the Council in May 2022 and is used to inform the preferred policy strategy. Further iterations of the HRA will be received during the Plan process.

How to use the Plan

The policies of the Plan should not be read in isolation from each other as more than one policy may apply to a particular site or issue. For this reason, the Plan does not normally include cross referencing between policies.

The preparation of the Plan has been supported by a number of evidence-based studies that have been prepared or commissioned by the Council. These can be found at <https://www.rutland.gov.uk/planning-building-control/local-plan/new-local-plan/local-plan-evidence-base> .

How and when do comments need to be made?

Comments on this Preferred Options (Regulation 18) Plan should be submitted to the Council by 8th January 2024, using where possible the online consultation platform available on the Council's website.

What happens next?

The Council will assess the comments received from the Preferred Options (Regulation 18) consultation and the Local Plan will be further developed, taking into account both feedback received and the evidence base.

This work will culminate in the production of a Final Submission Draft (Regulation 19) which will be subject to a formal six-week pre-submission consultation period. Consultation at Regulation 19 is on the basis of whether the Local Plan is “sound” and “legally compliant” prior to its submission to the Secretary of State. If the Council proposes to amend the Local Plan, then further statutory consultation under Regulation 19 will need to be undertaken on the proposed changes.

When adopted, the Local Plan will become part of the Statutory Development Plan which provides the framework for the Council’s decisions on future development proposals in Rutland.