



The Government has introduced significant changes to the way local plans are prepared. As a result, our council is one of 39 councils across England that must begin preparing a new local plan following government planning reforms that came into force in March this year – despite having adopted its current local plan less than a year ago. The changes require

affected councils to prepare plans under a revised national system and new timetable, in order to meet increased housing targets.

The new local plan will cover the Chichester plan area, which includes all parts of the district outside the South Downs National Park. The South Downs National Park Authority prepares a separate local plan for areas within the National Park.

One of the most significant changes is that some planning policies currently set through local plans will, in future, be set nationally. This is intended to create a more consistent planning framework across the country while allowing local plans to focus more clearly on local priorities.

As a result, the new Chichester local plan will concentrate on the issues that matter most to our communities, including where new homes and employment land should be located, the additional infrastructure needed to support growth, how we respond to climate change, and how we support the future of our city, towns, villages and neighbourhoods.

A local plan is one of the most important documents a council such as ours produces. It is a long-term blueprint for how an area will grow and develop over the

next 15 years. It helps to determine where new homes, jobs, schools, transport improvements and community facilities should be located, while protecting the landscapes, biodiversity, heritage and local character that people value.

Without a clear plan, development can be more reactive and less predictable. A local plan provides a framework that helps manage growth in a way that benefits both current and future residents.

While local plans support growth, they are equally important in safeguarding the character and identity of an area. They help protect valuable green spaces, landscapes, wildlife habitats, heritage assets and conservation areas from inappropriate development. By balancing development needs with environmental considerations, local plans help ensure that communities can grow without losing the qualities that make them distinctive and attractive places to live.

New homes and businesses need supporting infrastructure. Schools, healthcare facilities, roads, public transport, utilities and recreational spaces all play a crucial role in creating thriving communities. A local plan helps coordinate this infrastructure alongside new development, ensuring that growth is accompanied by the services and facilities that residents need. This strategic approach helps communities remain sustainable and resilient as they expand.

Our existing Local Plan and Site Allocations Development Plan Document remain in place and will continue to guide planning decisions until a new plan is adopted.

From 7 August to 25 September, we are inviting residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders to get involved in the first stage of preparing the new local plan, which will guide development to 2045.

At this early stage, we are not consulting on specific development sites or detailed planning policies. Instead, we want to hear your views on the opportunities, challenges and priorities facing the Chichester plan area in the years ahead.

We're keen for you to tell us what you value most about your local area; the challenges you think the Chichester plan area will face in the future; the issues that should be prioritised; and how you would like to be involved as the plan develops.

You can find out more by visiting: www.chichester.gov.uk/new-local-plan-2045 and you can take part from midday on Friday 7 August at:

www.chichester.gov.uk/localplanconsultation

This is your opportunity to help shape the direction of the Local Plan from the very beginning and influence the future of the Chichester plan area for generations to come.

Best Wishes

Cllr Bill Brisbane, Cabinet Member for Planning at Chichester District Council