



# REPORT TO CABINET

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	9 June 2026
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK NEW LOCAL PLAN – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PLAN-MAKING PROCESS
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Cllr James Moriarty
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Michael Burton (Principal Planner)
<b>CONSULTEES</b>	Assistant Director (Environment and Planning), Planning Policy Manager, Chief of Staff, Democratic Services Manager, Principal Lawyer
<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	

<b>KEY DECISION</b>	YES/NO
<b>DECISION MAKER</b>	Cabinet
<b>IS THE REPORT OPEN OR EXEMPT</b>	OPEN/EXEMPT

<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	YES/NO
<b>HR IMPLICATIONS</b>	YES/NO
<b>POLICY IMPLICATIONS</b>	YES/NO
<b>STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS</b>	YES/NO
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>	YES/NO
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	YES/NO
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT COMPLETED</b>	PRE-SCREEN COMPLETED BUT FULL EIA NOT REQUIRED

<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b>
<p>The new system for plan-making came into force on 25 March 2026. This sets a statutory 30-months timetable for preparation of the Local Plan, plus 4-months advanced notice, with the formal launch of the Local Plan made through a statutory notice of intention (NoI).</p> <p>The timescales and milestones within the process are set out in law and are therefore non-negotiable. Given this there is a need to agree how this is to be achieved in accordance with the Borough Council's decision-making processes.</p> <p>The 30-months timetable is extremely challenging, so would require most decisions to be taken through delegated powers. This report sets out how the Council's Scheme of Delegation should be applied to the plan-making process. This would enable the legal timescales and milestones within the plan-making process to be met and ensure the appropriate political governance and oversight is in place.</p>



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet resolves to:

1. Approve the Governance arrangements for the plan-making process, in accordance with the December 2025 Scheme of Delegation.

**REASON FOR DECISION**

To ensure the Council meets the deadlines, requirements and statutory obligations of the new plan-making system, as introduced through the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act (2023), the Planning and Infrastructure Act (2025) and the associated plan-making regulations introduced in 2026.

**CORPORATE STRATEGY**

How does this proposal support our Corporate Priorities [Our priorities | Corporate Strategy 2023 - 2027 | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk](#)

<b>Promote growth and prosperity to benefit West Norfolk</b>	Preparing an up-to-date Local Plan is necessary to achieving sustainable development. The national definition for sustainable development (National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 8) includes an economic objective, whereby the Local Plan needs to incorporate policies to ensure that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity.
<b>Protect our Environment</b>	The Local Plan needs to include policies to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes an environmental objective, which includes making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.
<b>Efficient and effective delivery of our services</b>	n/a
<b>Support our communities</b>	The Local Plan will include policies for delivering housing (of the correct type and in appropriate locations) and community infrastructure. These will contribute towards fulfilling the NPPF social objective, to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed places with accessible services and open spaces.



- 1.1 The Government, through the new planning system, legally requires Local Plans to be prepared within a 30-months timetable, plus 4 months in advance for issuing the Nol (official start of Local Plan preparation) and undertaking a preliminary Scoping consultation. The formal launch of the Local Plan will be accompanied by the following:
- Notice of intention (**Nol**) to commence Local Plan preparation;
  - Project Initiation document (**PID**);
  - Local Plan Timetable (**LPT**); and
  - Details of how consultation and engagement for the plan-making will be undertaken.
- 1.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 were published on 3 March 2026. These Regulations came into force on 25 March 2026, when the new plan-making system, as instigated through the 2023 Levelling-Up & Regeneration, and 2025 Planning & Infrastructure Acts, became “live”. The Government (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) has already written to the Borough Council, specifying that the Borough Council will be in the first tranche of local planning authorities, requiring publication of our Nol by 30 June 2026 (Appendix 1, below).

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The new planning system introduces many significant changes, particularly regarding plan-making. These represent the most significant changes to the system for over 20 years; notably:
- Statutory deadlines/ milestones for preparing a Local Plan (30 months, from start, to publication of Inspectors’ Report);
  - Replacement of Local Development Scheme with a Local Plan Timetable and the introduction of a project initiation document;
  - Removal of statutory requirement to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI);
  - Replacement of Supplementary Planning Documents with Supplementary Plans; the latter requiring independent examination;
  - Removal of statutory “Duty to Cooperate”;
  - Use of digital technology in plan-making;
  - Removal of requirement to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (although Strategic Environmental Assessment will remain a statutory obligation).



2.2 The Government has already produced some guidance about the new plan-making process (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/30-month-local-plan-process-an-overview>). The diagram below, extracted from the process guidance, shows the 30-months timeframe and how this would translate into the LPT for the new Local Plan.

**Process overview**



2.3 The legislation requires the Local Plan Timetable to specify dates for reaching key milestones in the plan-making process (2026 Local Planning Regulations, Regulation 4). The need to specify dates is a new legal obligation for the Borough Council (Appendix 2, below).

2.4 The implications of Regulation 4 are that the LPT needs to fulfil these statutory deadlines. **Failure to meet these deadlines may lead to Government intervention in the plan-making process.** Recent actions by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have indicated the Government would not be averse to intervening to ensure the Local Plan is delivered in a timely way.

2.5 As a recent example, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Matthew Pennycook MP, wrote to Three Rivers District Council (18 March 2026) about their Local Plan Council ([Three Rivers District Council: Local Plan Intervention letter - GOV.UK](#)), (Appendix 3, below) as follows:

*“It is my firm view that the available evidence demonstrates that the Council’s Regulation 19 draft plan fails to propose allocating all appropriate housing sites available that could contribute towards meeting housing need”, concluding that “the plan [as submitted, with the supporting evidence base] is*



*unsatisfactory and that the Council is failing to do something necessary in respect of preparing the local plan. This meets the statutory test for intervention under section 21 and 27 of the 2004 [Planning and Compulsory Purchase] Act". In the letter, the Minister also directed Three Rivers District Council to allocate 7 additional sites, to meet at least 85% of the defined local housing need.*

- 2.6 Under most legislation, going back many decades, the Secretary of State (on behalf of the Government) has held extensive powers of intervention in the planning system. However, these have always been intended to cover all eventualities, and it was always extremely unlikely that these powers would ever be invoked.
- 2.7 Notwithstanding, the 2026 Regulations set statutory deadlines for producing a Local Plan. It is reiterated that, if these target deadlines are not met, then the Secretary of State could intervene and remove responsibility for plan-making from the Council. The Three Rivers letter strongly indicates that the Government is more likely to intervene in the process than has been the case in the past.

#### **Role and function of the Local Plan Task Group**

- 2.8 When the current Local Plan 2021-2040 was being prepared (October 2016 – March 2022) and examined (March 2022 – February 2025), this required regular meetings of the Local Plan Task Group (**LPTG**), to consider and advise the executive (Cabinet) when decisions were necessary for the plan to proceed. Each time a Cabinet decision was needed, this required a significant lead-in time (6-7 weeks); as well as the need to go before the scrutiny panels, often both R&D and E&C committees.
- 2.9 The new 30-months statutory timeframe for the Local Plan preparation means that **it is virtually impossible to continue the approach previously applied to preparation of the Local Plan, if the legal deadlines are to be met.** Therefore, it is necessary to put in place robust mechanisms for the day-to-day governance of the plan-making process. It is recognised that key stages will require authorisation by Cabinet and/ or Full Council, but day-to-day decision-making ought to be the responsibility of the Assistant Director, advised by the LPTG.
- 2.10 The LPTG effectively functions as a proxy Member Panel, given that it is appointed by, and reports directly to, Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing. Furthermore, the Portfolio Holder is chair for the LPTG, with the Task Group itself meeting in public (both broadcasted and minuted). It is therefore emphasised that there should be no need for this process to be repeated through the Environment and Community, and/ or Regeneration and Development Panels.
- 2.11 Updated Terms of Reference for the LPTG were agreed by Cabinet on 23 April 2026, which should help to streamline the plan-making process.



## **Relevant aspects of Council's Scheme of Delegation (December 2025)**

- 2.12 The Scheme of Delegation (**SoD**) is regularly reviewed and updated; its most recent iteration being agreed in December 2025. The SoD already provides a framework for day-to-day decision making on behalf of the Council. This report will focus upon where the portfolio holder and/ or relevant Chief Officer (for the Local Plan; the Assistant Director, Environment and Planning) have specific delegated powers that are relevant to plan-making (Appendix 4, below).
- 2.13 The SoD includes a range of functions relevant to Local Plan preparation that are delegated to individual portfolio holders. In turn, many day-to-day matters are further delegated to relevant officers. The Local Plan will cover many matters that are relevant to various different portfolio holders. However, the portfolio holder for Planning and Licensing is the lead contact for the Local Plan, given that this is explicitly referenced at paragraph 3.1 of the SoD.

## **3 Proposal**

### **Application of the SoD to Local Plan preparation**

- 3.1 The SoD states throughout that day-to-day management and implementation of policy is delegated to the Chief Executive and/ or relevant Chief Officer. In the case of the Local Plan, that is the Assistant Director for Environment and Planning.
- 3.2 The Local Plan Task Group was first established by Cabinet in 2011 to allow Members with an interest in the Local Plan to be actively involved in the plan-making process. Although it does not have specific decision-making powers, it has continued to advise Cabinet, the portfolio holder and officers, to ensure continued political engagement in the Local Plan. This function will continue for the new Local Plan, as illustrated by the new/ updated Terms of Reference for the Task Group, agreed by Cabinet on 23 April 2026.
- 3.3 It is reiterated that the Task Group (like Member Panels; e.g. Regeneration and Development Panel) meets in public, with the proceedings broadcast and meetings formally minuted. Individual Members, over and above those appointed to the Local Plan Task Group, have the opportunity to attend and participate in meetings, under Standing Order 34.
- 3.4 Accordingly, significant decisions regarding the direction of the Local Plan will be made through the Local Plan Task Group, advising the portfolio holder and officers. Task Group meetings can be set up relatively quickly and, on an ad hoc basis, as and when necessary. This means there is no need for extensive lead-in times (unlike for Cabinet and supporting Panels), which could undermine the LPT (statutory) deadlines.
- 3.5 In practice, day-to-day agreements/ resolutions regarding the Local Plan will need to be taken by a combination of Task Group, portfolio holder and/ or officer delegated decisions. This is entirely dependent upon the



consequential or material implications of individual decisions. Decision-making broadly fits into the following categories (Appendix 5, below):

- Operational matters;
- Minor consequential amendments to existing policies;
- New policies, or significant policy changes.

## **LGR**

- 3.6 For completeness, it is anticipated that LGR will come into effect on 1 April 2028, in the course of the Regulation 27 consultation (see below), and the subsequent stages of Local Plan formation would be taken forward by the new West Norfolk unitary authority.
- 3.7 New governance structures will likely be implemented in due course to address this. However, the current proposals are necessary in any event.

## **Local Plan Timetable: Key milestones and proposed level of decision**

- 3.8 In developing the Local Plan Timetable, officers have considered which level of decision should be taken for each milestone. Appendix 6 (below) provides an explanation as to how decisions should be taken at each stage, in relation to the key milestones in the process (as defined by the 2026 Regulations).
- 3.9 Nevertheless, Cabinet approval is needed for key consultation stages; e.g. Regulations 20 and 27. As key decisions, full Council approval is only needed for adoption by the West Norfolk unitary authority (Regulations 19 and 39 respectively). Appendix 6 explains that decisions for all other stages in the process will be taken by a combination of Member and/or officer delegated decisions, as appropriate. However, all decisions will be overseen by the Local Plan Task Group.
- 3.10 Overall, operational decisions for technical matters such as procurement of external expertise would normally be taken as officer delegated decisions. Where a policy direction would need to be agreed, in most instances this would be taken by the portfolio holder, under recommendations of the Local Plan Task Group. Member Delegated decisions may also be required (potentially subject to call-in) on occasions, on matters of specific urgency.
- 3.11 There is also the provision in the Council's Constitution (Part 4, Standing Orders, paragraph 12.15) to take decisions through without the availability of call-in if they are deemed to be Urgent if needed. However, it is still important that we keep Members informed, as far as possible. Although this emergency power may be useful, it does not circumvent the long (6-8 weeks) lead-in time for taking reports to Cabinet. Therefore, it remains critical that day-to-day decision making for the Local Plan is delegated to the Local Plan Task Group, portfolio holder and/ or Chief Officers (in accordance with the SoD).



## **4 Options Considered**

- 4.1 The mechanisms for taking decisions in preparing the Local Plan 2021-2040 (adopted March 2025) were ad-hoc. In the early stages of plan-making (2016-2020), the process was led by the Local Plan Task Group, although this group does not have any formal decision-making powers.
- 4.2 Consideration has been given as to whether it is necessary to clarify/ explicitly define how decisions could be taken for Local Plan preparation under the new system, or whether the existing ad-hoc arrangements are sufficient. The latter was not considered a reasonable alternative option, given the new legal obligations such as strict statutory deadlines/ milestones that it is necessary to adhere to.
- 4.3 Effectively if the legal timescales for Local Plan preparation are to be met there is no other option than what is being proposed. This would ensure timescale and milestones are met and the process accords with the Borough Council's Scheme of Delegation.

## **5 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Preparation of a new Local Plan is a statutory obligation and ensuring efficient and appropriate arrangements and procedures in place is necessary to achieve this outcome.
- 5.2 Budgets for preparing a new Local Plan have recently been agreed. Funds have been set to accord with the streamlined 30-months timetable for preparing the new Local Plan, as required by the new system.

## **6 HR Implications**

- 6.1 There are no HR implications.

## **7 Policy Implications**

- 7.1 The proposed governance arrangements for preparation of the new Local Plan are needed to support efficient and effective plan-making, under the new planning system (as introduced through the 2023 Levelling-Up & Regeneration Act (LURA), 2025 Planning & Infrastructure Act (P&IA) and associated 2026 Regulations).
- 7.2 Clear and efficient governance arrangements are critical to ensure the Borough Council can undertake plan-making in accordance with the statutory requirements. These are ultimately about positive planning; i.e. delivering a new Local Plan under the reformed system for plan-making.
- 7.3 When adopted, the new Local Plan will replace the current Local Plan 2021-2040. This will provide the necessary statutory spatial planning framework for



nearly 20 years ahead, up to the mid-2040s.

The proposed governance arrangements are important to achieve timely adoption of the new Local Plan.

## **8 Climate Change and Environmental Implications and considerations**

- 8.1 There are no direct environmental considerations. However, delivery of an effective Local Plan in accordance with the necessary legal requirements ought to achieve positive environmental outcomes.

## **9 Statutory and Legal Implications**

- 9.1 The preparation and adoption of an up-to-date Local Plan within a 30-month timetable is a statutory obligation, under the following legislation:

- 2023 Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act (LURA), which introduced significant changes to the planning system, including statutory deadlines for accelerated plan-making and national development management/ decision-making policies;
- 2025 Planning and Infrastructure Act (P&IA), which introduced new powers for plan-making, with reference to utilities, National Strategic Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), planning fees and delegation of decision making
- The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Commencement No. 11 and Saving and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2026
- Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026

- 9.2 The 2026 Regulations “turned-on” the new planning system, with effect from 25 March 2026. This entails the establishment of robust and efficient governance arrangements to deliver the new Local Plan within the statutory timeframe.

## **10 Local Government Reorganisation Implications**

- 10.1 It is anticipated that LGR will come into effect on 1 April 2028. Therefore, it is expected that the subsequent stages of Local Plan formation will be taken forward by the new West Norfolk unitary authority.
- 10.2 New governance structures will likely be implemented in due course to address this. However, the current proposals are necessary in any event.

## **11 Health and Safety Implications**

- 11.1 There are no health and safety implications.

## **12 Consultees**

- 12.1 In addition to the lead Member (Cllr James Moriarty), the following officers have been consulted and/ or engaged in preparing this report:



- Assistant Director, Environment and Planning;
- Planning Policy Manager;
- Chief of Staff;
- Democratic Services Manager; and
- Principal Lawyer.

12.2 This report is directed internally, given that it relates to internal processes (governance) and the Council's constitution (specifically the Scheme of Delegation). The process of engaging internal consultees focuses upon ensuring that the governance arrangements for preparing a new Local Plan under the newly implemented system correctly align with the Scheme of Delegation (December 2025).

12.3 Notwithstanding, wider public consultation and engagement is fundamental to plan-making. A consultation strategy will be developed and finalised following the preliminary Scoping Consultation, September 2026 (Regulation 20).

### **13 Equality Impact Assessment**

(Pre screening report template attached)

13.1 The EIA Pre-Screening process has revealed no negative impacts arising from the proposed governance arrangements for the plan-making process. The completed Pre-Screening EIA form is attached.

### **14 Risk Management Implications**

14.1 Preparation of a Local Plan in accordance with the statutory timetable is about fulfilling the Borough Council's legal functions. There could be risks of sanctions upon the Council if we fail to meet our legal obligations.

### **15 Conclusions**

15.1 The launch of the new Local Planning system, with effect from 25 March 2026, requires the Council to prepare a new Local Plan within a mandatory 30-months timeframe. To ensure this can be achieved expediently, it is therefore necessary that clear governance arrangements are in place to meet the various statutory deadlines set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026.

15.2 This report has been prepared within the overall framework set by the Council's Scheme of Delegation (December 2025). It explains how the Scheme of Delegation should apply to the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the Borough. It utilises a red/ amber/ green notation (appendices 5 and 6, below), to explain the level at which decisions will be taken during the plan-making process:

- Red: Cabinet and/ or Council level decision;



- Amber: Member Delegated Decision; or
- Green: Officer Delegated (operational) Decision.

## **16 Background Papers**

- 16.1 Borough Council Constitution, March 2026: Part 3 (Scheme of Delegation) and Part 4 (Standing Orders):

<https://democracy.west-norfolk.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=429&Mid=2220&Ver=4&bcr=1&info=1>



**LIST OF APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1: “support for early starters” letter, 15 January 2026
- Appendix 2: The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, Regulation 4
- Appendix 3: Minister of State for Housing and Planning letter to Three Rivers District Council about their Local Plan, 18 March 2026
- Appendix 4: Scheme of Delegation (December 2025) – relevant sections/ paragraph references for Local Plan preparation
- Appendix 5: Decision-Making Structures – Levels at which individual decisions can be taken
- Appendix 6: Local Plan Timetable: Key milestones and proposed level of decision

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Borough Council Constitution, March 2026: Part 3 (Scheme of Delegation) and Part 4 (Standing Orders):

<https://democracy.west-norfolk.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=429&Mid=2220&Ver=4&bcr=1&info=1>

**PRE SCREENING EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

For equalities profile information please visit [Norfolk Insight - Demographics and Statistics - Data Observatory](#)

Name of policy/service/function	King's Lynn and West Norfolk new Local Plan – Governance arrangements for the plan-making process			
Is this a new or existing policy/service/function? ( <i>tick as appropriate</i> )	New	<input type="checkbox"/>	Existing	X
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened.  Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations and identify relevant legislation.	<p>The implementation of the new planning system from March 2025 through the 2023 Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act, 2025 Planning &amp; Infrastructure Act, and associated Regulations, requires effective governance arrangements for efficient decision-making.</p> <p>It remains necessary to ensure public engagement and transparency in the plan-making process. However, there are statutory deadlines and milestones that need to be met at all stages in preparation of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Day-to-day decision-making for the local is divided between Cabinet, the Local Plan Task Group, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing and officers, as appropriate.</p>			



	<p>This report provides clarification and explanation for how the current (March 2026) Borough Council's Constitution (particularly the Scheme of Delegation) should apply to plan-making, in order to meet the Council's legal obligations.</p> <p>Other key legislation that plan-making needs to accord with, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2018 Data Protection Act;</li> <li>• 2017 Habitat Regulations (as amended);</li> <li>• 2010 Equality Act;</li> <li>• 2004 Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations;</li> <li>• 1998 Human Rights Act.</li> </ul>
<p>Who has been consulted as part of the development of the policy/service/function? – new only  <i>(identify stakeholders consulted with)</i></p>	<p>The report relates to internal processes and procedures, as set out in the Council's Constitution (March 2026). These are essential to ensure the Local Plan can be prepared in a timely and efficient manner and (critically) fulfil statutory deadlines and milestones.</p> <p>In preparing this report, the following stakeholders have been consulted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Governance, Democratic Services, Legal Officers</li> <li>• Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing</li> </ul> <p>It is emphasized that the report seeks to clarify existing arrangements, to allow for preparation of a new Local Plan under the new system (which came into force in March 2026).</p>

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>			
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<p><b>1.</b> Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			X	
	Disability			X	
	Sex			X	
	Gender Re-assignment			X	



Please tick the relevant box for each group. NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.  <b><i>If potential adverse impacts are identified, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 2) will be required.</i></b>  <i>*For more information on health inequalities please visit <a href="#">The King's Fund</a></i>	Marriage/civil partnership			X	
	Pregnancy & maternity			X	
	Race			X	
	Religion or belief			X	
	Sexual orientation			X	
	Armed forces community			X	
	Care leavers			X	
	Health inequalities*			X	
	Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)			X	

**Please provide a brief explanation of the answers above:**

Preparation of the Local Plan is a legal obligation upon the Borough Council. The plan-making process is covered by a range of primary and secondary legislation, including the 1998 Human Rights Act and 2010 Equality Act. The Local Plan is intended to address all aspects (economic, environmental and social) of sustainable development and deliver benefits for all communities and groups. To pass examination, it will be necessary to demonstrate that the Local Plan fulfils our legal obligations re the Human Rights and Equality Acts.

Effective and efficient governance arrangements are necessary to ensure successful delivery of a new Local Plan within the statutory timeframe.

Question	Answer	Comments
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	Yes/ No	n/a – No negative impacts identified
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	Yes/ No	n/a – No negative impacts identified

**If 'yes' to questions 2 - 3 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:**

**Decision agreed by EWG member: .....**



<b>4.</b> Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section	<del>Yes</del> / No	<b>Actions:</b> n/a – No negative impacts identified	
		<b>Actions agreed by EWG member:</b> .....	
<b>5.</b> Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	<del>Yes</del> / No	<b>Please provide brief summary:</b> The new Local Plan is intended to deliver benefits for all communities, in terms of sustainable development. It is noted that secondary benefits for people could be achieved, through effective governance arrangements, to ensure effective and timely delivery of the Plan.	
<b>Assessment completed by: Name</b>	Michael Burton		
<b>Job title</b>	Principal Planner (Planning Policy)		
<b>Date completed</b>	17 March 2026		
<b>Reviewed by EWG member</b>	<b>Claire Dorgan</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>5 May 2026</b>
<b>✓ Please tick to confirm completed EIA Pre-screening Form has been shared with Corporate Policy (<a href="mailto:corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk">corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk</a>)</b>			



OFFICIAL



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

*Arthur Young  
Deputy Director*

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Email:  
[localplanfunding@communities.gov.uk](mailto:localplanfunding@communities.gov.uk)

15 January 2026

Dear Chief Executive,

**Implementation of reforms to the plan-making system – support for early starters**

I am writing as your local authority submitted a plan for examination on, or before, 12 March 2025 and the housing requirement in the plan as submitted for examination was meeting less than 80% of local housing need, calculated using the standard method in national planning practice guidance 2024 [link](#). You will, therefore, be required to start a local plan early in the new plan-making system by publishing your notice to commence plan preparation by 30 June 2026 and publishing your Gateway 1 self-assessment by 31 October 2026.

I would like to offer your local authority support to help meet this timeframe. The Government has recently announced a minimum of £14 million for plan-making and part of that is specifically for authorities who begin a plan early in the new system. Further detail of the fund and the expression of interest form can be found [here](#). Your authority could access in the region of £120,000, although the funding awarded could be more or less than this amount.

If you wish to apply for this funding please **submit an expression of interest by the deadline 17:00pm on 28 January 2026**. If you have any questions regarding the funding, please email: [localplanfunding@communities.gov.uk](mailto:localplanfunding@communities.gov.uk)

Separately, we would also like to offer your officers a meeting to discuss any questions you have on commencing work on your new local plan and how we can most effectively support you to do so. If you would like to meet please select one of these [appointments](#).

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Young  
**Deputy Director – Development Plans**

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**Appendix 2: The Town and Country Planning  
 (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026,  
 Regulation 4**

Regulation 4 requires the following dates to be specified in the LPT. The LPT operates as a live operational document and is required to be updated at least every month and when key milestones are reached.

<b>Regulation 4    (relevant    para)</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Associated    Regulation</b>
4(1)(a)	Date of notice of intention to commence Local Plan preparation	Regulation 19
4(1)(b) and (c)	Dates for scoping consultation	Regulation 20
4(1)(d)	Date on which Local Planning authority will make their self-assessment summary (in advance of Gateway 1, when the 30-months timetable will start)	Regulation 21
4(1)(e) and (f)	Dates for notice of plan content and evidence consultation (first draft Local Plan consultation)	Regulation 23
4(1)(g)	Date on which observations and advice will be sought (check in advance of Gateway 2 by appointed Planning Inspector(s))	Regulation 26
4(1)(h) and (i)	Dates for proposed Local Plan consultation (pre-submission draft version)	Regulation 27
4(1)(j)	Date on which observations and advice will be sought (check in advance of Gateway 3 by appointed Planning Inspector(s))	Regulation 31
4(1)(k)	Date on which the Local Planning authority will submit their proposed Local Plan to the Secretary of State	Regulation 34
4(1)(l)	Proposed date of adoption	Regulation 39



**Appendix 3: Minister of State for Housing and  
Planning letter to Three Rivers District Council  
about their Local Plan, 18 March 2026**



**Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government**

**Matthew Pennycook MP**

*Minister of State for Housing and Planning*  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE  
Leader, Three Rivers District Council  
Three Rivers House  
Northway  
Rickmansworth  
WD3 1RL

18 March 2026

Dear Cllr Giles-Medhurst

Thank you for providing me with the full body of evidence that underpins the Three Rivers draft plan. Having considered it carefully, I am writing to inform you that the Secretary of State is now directing the Three Rivers District Council ('the Council') in respect to its emerging local plan ('the plan').

In my letter to you of 14 November 2025, I made clear that I expect Three Rivers to bring forward a plan that meets identified need as far as possible; that reflects national policy, including in relation to Green Belt release; and that is capable of being found sound at examination.

In my subsequent letter of 5 February 2026, I reiterated my concern that your emerging plan was not satisfactory and my lack of confidence that it was capable of being found sound or legally compliant at examination. In that same letter, I notified you that as a result of my reservations, I was exercising my powers under section 21A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ('the 2004 Act'), to direct the Council not to take any step in connection with the adoption of the Plan, while I considered whether to give directions under section 21 and section 27 of the 2004 Act.

Having reviewed the draft plan alongside the additional evidence you provided, it is my considered opinion that the Regulation 19 draft plan approved for consultation at the Full Council vote on 27 January has not engaged sufficiently with the concerns I have conveyed to you.

As you will know, Section 21 of the 2004 Act provides the Secretary of State with intervention powers where they think that a local plan is unsatisfactory. Section 27 of that same Act provides the Secretary of State with broad default intervention powers where they believe a local planning authority is failing or omitting to do anything that it is necessary for them to do in connection with the preparation, revision or adoption of its Local Plan.

Local planning authorities are required to publish and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS), as set out in section 15(1) of the 2004 Act. Section 15(4) of the 2004 Act provides that the Secretary of State may direct changes to a local development scheme where they consider that



amendments are necessary to ensure that the authority's development plan documents fully and effectively cover the whole area.

It is my firm view that the available evidence demonstrates that the Council's Regulation 19 draft plan fails to propose allocating all appropriate housing sites available that could contribute towards meeting housing need. The Council are therefore proposing a plan which is highly likely to be found unsound at examination. On this basis, it is clear that the plan is unsatisfactory and that the Council is failing to do something necessary in respect of preparing the local plan. This meets the statutory test for intervention under section 21 and 27 of the 2004 Act

I have also considered the criteria laid out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which states that intervention under S27 of the 2004 Act "*should have regard to plan progress and local development needs*":

- **Plan Progress:** The current Three Rivers Local Plan, adopted in October 2011, is now almost 15 years old. It therefore stands as one of the oldest in the country and the policies it contains are likely to be significantly out of date. Progressing an unsatisfactory plan risks failure at examination and long delays until an up-to-date adopted plan is in place, with work having to restart in the new planning system. This would continue to leave the Council vulnerable to piecemeal and speculative development, with reduced public engagement and fewer guarantees that it will make the most of the area's potential.
- **Development needs:** The Council has consistently delivered below the target set by the standard method. The latest Housing Delivery Test (HDT) 2023 is the 5th lowest in the Country with a score of 30%, putting the LPA in the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This is unlikely to change without the adoption of an up-to-date Local Plan. The Council area is also one of the least affordable in the country, with an affordability ratio of 12.3 - meaning the median house price is 12.3 times the median annual earnings - compared with the England average of 7.7. There continues to be a significant need for additional social and affordable housing delivery in the area, which is unlikely to be met whilst the Council does not have an up to date local plan.

Taking all of the above into account, I consider that the intervention criteria are met, and that intervention is justified.

Pursuant to the powers in section 21 (1)(a) of the 2004 Act I am directing the Council to:

1. **Per Section 21(1)(a): make modifications to your proposed Regulation 19 plan to include, as a minimum, the sites set out below lifting the requirement to approximately 85% of need:**

- CFS26a Kings Langley Estate south
- CFS21 Land at Rousebarn Lane
- PCS4 East Green Street
- PCS47 South of Little Oxhey Lane
- NCFS12 Land East of Oxhey Lane
- NCFS6 Land to East of Watford Road
- Additionally, OSPF22 Batchworth Golf Course should lease issues be resolved



- 2. Per Section 21(1)(a): review and update the draft plan and evidence base in readiness for Regulation 19 consultation and Submission including where necessary in order to account for the additional sites.**

I previously gave a direction to the Council under section 21A of the 2004 Act, whilst I considered whether to make a direction under section 21 of the 2004 Act. The above direction under section 21(1)(a) supersedes the previous direction given under section 21A.

In addition, per section 27 of the 2004 Act I am directing the Council as follows:

- 3. Per Section 27(2)(b): Commence a revised Regulation 19 consultation by 31 July 2026 for a minimum period of 6 weeks;**
- 4. Per Section 27(3)(b): Submit your plan by 30 November 2026 with any proposed minor modifications necessary agreed by the Head of Planning Policy and the Director of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member on the Local Plan. Should proposed modifications be more significant this should be set out to the Secretary of State, allowing him to consider whether further action is necessary;**
- 5. Per section 27(2)(b): Not to take any step to withdraw the plan and report monthly (from the date of this letter) to my officials on the progress of the plan;**
- 6. Per Section 27(2)(b): Progress the plan up to the end of the examination process;**
- 7. Per Section 27(4)(b): On conclusion of the examination, to publish the Planning Inspector's recommendations and reasons; and**
- 8. Per Section 27(5)(b): On conclusion of the examination, to consider adopting the plan, including any main modifications recommended by the Planning Inspector deemed necessary to make the plan sound.**

Pursuant to section 27(8) of the 2004 Act, the Secretary of State has issued directions under section 27(2) and section 27(5) in order to ensure that, following the modifications required by direction under section 21(1)(a), the plan is afforded the best possible opportunity to undergo independent examination. The intention is to enable the Inspector to determine whether the modified plan is legally compliant and sound.

Finally, to avoid delays to plan making and ensure the plan is submitted for examination before the December 2026 deadline, per section 15(4) of the 2004 Act, I am also directing the Council to:

- 9. Per section 15(4) of the 2004 Act: Publish on your website a revised Local Development Scheme by 30 June 2026 to reflect directions set out above. For avoidance of doubt this should include the following milestones:**
  - Regulation 19 consultation to commence by no later than 31 July 2026
  - Submission of the plan for examination should be no later than 30 November 2026



The above directions will remain in force until withdrawn by the Secretary of State. Should you fail to comply with the directions in this letter, I will consider taking further action.

Notwithstanding this direction and the evidence you have already provided, I would like to give you an opportunity to set out by 25 March 2026 any exceptional circumstances which in your view suggest that intervention is not appropriate in this case. To be clear, this neither alters nor removes the direction set out in this letter.

I want to reiterate that I am committed to working constructively with you to ensure that Three Rivers can deliver the high-quality homes and essential infrastructure needed to underpin ambitious and sustainable growth. My officials will maintain ongoing engagement with your officers and will be in touch shortly to discuss next steps.

Yours sincerely,

**MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP**  
Minister of State for Housing and Planning



**Appendix 4: Scheme of Delegation (December 2025) – relevant sections/ paragraph references for Local Plan preparation**

<b>SoD para ref</b>	<b>Functions (description)</b>	<b>Delegation</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder: Leader</b>			
1.11	Developing and managing external strategic relationships	Chief Executive (CE) and Chief Officers (COs)	<p>The Local Plan has implications for external stakeholders, both within and beyond the Borough boundaries (e.g. adjacent local authorities).</p> <p>Government guidance requires the preparation of Statements of Common Ground, to demonstrate cooperation and collaboration with key stakeholders. These matters should be regarded as operational.</p>
1.12	Shared services, Partnerships and Joint Working arrangements	CE and COs	<p>The Borough Council is already an active participant in many long-established partnerships, with relevance for plan-making.; e.g. Norfolk Strategic Planning Forum.</p> <p>Day to day responsibilities can continue under existing delegated powers, as day-to-day/ operational matters.</p>
1.14	Policy development and submission to Council	CE/ Monitoring Officer/ COs/ Chief Finance Officer	<p>The Local Plan forms a significant policy statement for the Council, which will remain in force for a significant period (typically 5-10 years). This requires regular professional input and expertise by relevant officers.</p> <p>The CO, supported by the Planning Policy team, will continue to provide the necessary professional advice and expertise, although the Council will ultimately need to approve and adopt the policy framework (as set by the Local Plan).</p>
<b>Portfolio Holder: Planning and Licensing</b>			
3.1	Development of Local Plan, planning performance and Land Use Policies	CO	<p>Para 3.1 provides the main day-to-day delegated power through which the Local Plan will be prepared. In practice, this requires active engagement</p>



SoD para ref	Functions (description)	Delegation	Analysis
			<p>with the relevant portfolio holder(s).</p> <p>Specific power is given to the CO to agree consequential amendments to planning policy; i.e. incorporating changes to the Local Plan, as this progresses (e.g. changes to national policy/guidance).</p>
<b>Portfolio Holder: Climate Change and Biodiversity</b>			
5 (5.1-5.6)	Climate change and Biodiversity	CE and COs	<p>The draft NPPF sets out a suite of themes and topics that the Local Plan will need to cover. The NPPF requires the Local Plan to consider policies regarding climate change, renewable energy, biodiversity, local character/ landscape and transport.</p> <p>These matters are all delegated to the CE and COs, so these can be managed and implemented on a day-to-day basis through delegated powers. However, the Council will ultimately need to approve and adopt the policy framework (as set by the Local Plan)</p>
<b>Portfolio Holder: Environment and Coastal</b>			
6.2	Coastal Issues, Shoreline Management and flood and water management including water quality/ usage	CE and COs	<p>The Coastal Change Management Area (Wolferton Creek – Hunstanton) has long been a matter covered by the Local Plan (currently policies LP15 and LP17). The Local Plan also includes policies for water efficiency and flood risk management (LP18 and LP25 respectively).</p> <p>The new Local Plan will similarly consider such issues, so policies could continue to be managed and implemented through delegated powers. However, the Council will ultimately need to approve and adopt the policy framework (as set by the Local Plan)</p>
<b>Powers delegated to Cabinet</b>			



<b>SoD para ref</b>	<b>Functions (description)</b>	<b>Delegation</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
11 (11.1-11.7)	Cabinet		<p>SoD section 11 sets out the specific role/ function of Cabinet. This includes making recommendations to the Council for Local Plan policies.</p> <p>Cabinet also operates where functions, actions or powers are not explicitly delegated to officers.</p>



**Appendix 5: Decision-Making Structures – Levels at which individual decisions can be taken**

To provide clarification about how delegated powers may be applied in practice to preparation of the Local Plan, the matrix below shows how delegated powers should be applied to the Local Plan process. This provides the additional clarification needed, to ensure the statutory deadlines can be achieved.

**[NOTE: colours are for illustration, not to indicate risk scoring]**

Category	Examples of where Local Plan decisions should be taken
<p>Cabinet and/ or Council decision</p>	<p>Applying the SoD, Cabinet and/ or Council decisions should be reserved for major decisions; e.g. authorising publication of draft development plan documents (in this case, the Local Plan).</p> <p>Key milestones, such as statutory consultation stages, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scoping consultation (Regulation 20); and</li> <li>• proposed Local Plan (pre-submission draft version) consultation (Regulation 27).</li> </ul>
<p>Member Delegated decision; or LPTG recommendation (in lieu of Member Delegated decision)</p>	<p>The LPTG was set up specifically as a forum to make recommendations to Cabinet and/ or the portfolio holder regarding the Local Plan. Typically, such decisions may take the forms of topic papers or statements of preferred options/ approaches; e.g. recommendations regarding the settlement hierarchy, individual site-specific allocations/ designations, or non-designated heritage assets (locally listed buildings).</p> <p>In most cases, a LPTG meeting would be convened and any recommendations or proposals put forward would be minuted, as if these were Member Delegated decisions taken by the portfolio holder. There may, however, be occasions where a Member Delegated decision may be separately needed.</p>
<p>Officer Delegated decision</p>	<p>As demonstrated, powers delegated to the Chief Executive and/ or Chief Officers (Assistant Directors) are extensive. These predominantly relate to day-to-day operational decisions.</p> <p>Officers have been required to undertake extensive procurement for the preparation of evidence base documents to support the Local Plan, including the housing needs assessment, strategic flood risk assessment and landscape character assessment. These are typically below £100,000 in value; i.e. within the Chief Officer's powers of approval. Any studies exceeding £100,000 (up to £250,000) would require approval of the portfolio holder (as a Member Delegated decision).</p>



**Appendix 6: Local Plan Timetable: Key milestones and proposed level of decision**

2026 Reg No	Description	Date(s)	Proposed decision type/ role of LPTG	Commentary/ explanation (NB – all key milestones will be preceded by LPTG)
19	Notice of intention to commence Local Plan preparation	May/ June 2026	Operational (Chief Officer) decision: LPTG informed of Nol and Local Plan Timetable (LPT) publication, supported by relevant publicity (press release, consultation emails etc)	<p>The Nol represents the formal launch date for the Local Plan. Previously, this required a Cabinet recommendation, followed by confirmation from the full Council.</p> <p>The Government has already written to the Council (Appendix 1), thereby setting plan preparation deadlines (Nol: 30 June 2026). In turn, this defines the LPT. The legislation (2023 LURA and Regulation 19) mandates preparation of a Local Plan and the contents of the Nol, meaning this initial plan-making stage is wholly operational.</p>
20	Scoping consultation	July – Sept 2026	<p>Cabinet decision: consultation materials presented to LPTG for consideration (in its quasi-panel role), followed by Cabinet sign-off.</p> <p>Cabinet to agree specific delegated powers for officers to review consultation feedback and proceed through Gateway 1 (Regulations 21 and 22). Explicit powers should be agreed by Cabinet to delegate day-to-day matters for plan-making to the Portfolio Holder and senior officers (as appropriate), advised by the LPTG.</p>	<p>The Scoping consultation requires the production of a range of policy documents, for consultation (preliminary stage of plan-making). Therefore, Cabinet approval would be necessary to approve specific Scoping consultation documents (e.g. Scoping/ issues and options questions; sites put forward through February – March 2026 Call for Sites; growth options etc).</p> <p>The Constitution (Part 3: Terms of Reference) specifies functions reserved for the full Council, including adopting policies (G.3). Otherwise, Part 3 specifies Cabinet's role, including whether to delegate specific powers to the relevant Portfolio Holder and/ or senior officers (B.3 and B.4). Accordingly, Cabinet should approve consultation materials and specific delegation of powers to the Chief Officer to approve the self-assessment and Gateway 1 passage (Regulation 21), an operational matter.</p>
21 and 22	Self-assessment summary and Gateway 1	October 2026	Operational (Chief Officer) decision: Scoping (Regulation 20) consultation feedback and other supporting documentation will be	Gateway 1 represents the formal start of the plan-making process, when the statutory 30-month timetable commences. It is preceded by a self-assessment; a check to ensure all the legal



2026 Reg No	Description	Date(s)	Proposed decision type/ role of LPTG	Commentary/ explanation (NB – all key milestones will be preceded by LPTG)
			presented to LPTG for information, with specific powers to complete the self-assessment and proceed through Gateway 1 (Regulations 21 and 22), having been already agreed by Cabinet.	<p>obligations have been met, in advance of starting the formal plan-making process.</p> <p>The self- assessment is a professional/ technical part of the plan-making process. This is an administrative matter, considering whether the necessary legal requirements have been met and implications for policymaking.</p> <p>Accordingly, this is an operational matter, although the Portfolio Holder and Local Plan Task Group should be kept informed.</p>
23	Notice of plan content and evidence consultation (assembly of evidence base)	Nov 2026 – Feb 2027	<p>Operational (Chief Officer) decision: following Gateway 1, officers will collate the evidence base (studies and background papers) and prepare Regulation 23 consultation material.</p> <p>This will be presented to the LPTG for information, in advance of the Regulation 23 consultation.</p>	<p>Formal preparation of material for the plan content and evidence consultation will commence immediately, as soon as Gateway 1 (Regulation 21) is passed. The evidence base will consist of studies prepared by external consultants, together with in-house (officer) prepared studies and background papers.</p> <p>It is anticipated that draft policies/ preferred options will be pulled together and presented to LPTG, for Member consideration and to inform the Portfolio Holder.</p>
23	Notice of plan content and evidence consultation (initial draft Local Plan preferred options/ policy approach consultation)	March – April 2027	<p>Member delegated decision: materials for Regulation 23 consultation will be presented to LPTG, for Member consideration.</p> <p>The LPTG will advise the Portfolio Holder, allowing approval of consultation documentation as a Member Delegated decision.</p>	<p>Materials for the notice of plan content and evidence consultation (consultation and supporting evidence base documents) will need to be considered by the LPTG. Consultation material will include a draft vision (with measurable outcomes) and initial proposed strategy/ direction (without necessarily detailed draft policies).</p> <p>This (first post-Gateway 1) stage in the process involves initial policy development and the publication of consultation materials and supporting documentation. However, through specific delegated powers it is proposed should accompany the Scoping consultation (anticipated July</p>



2026 Reg No	Description	Date(s)	Proposed decision type/ role of LPTG	Commentary/ explanation (NB – all key milestones will be preceded by LPTG)
				<p>2026 Cabinet decision) the decision for the Regulation 23 consultation could be taken by the Portfolio Holder (advised by the LPTG).</p> <p>Political activity and publicity around the consultation may be restricted by pre-election (formerly known as purdah) rules (after 25 March 2027). Although the required Cabinet decision should pre-date the pre-election restrictions, it will be necessary to be mindful of the implications for running the Regulation 23 consultation itself.</p>
24 and 25	Publication of summary of consultation on proposed local plan content and evidence	June – July 2027	Operational (Chief Officer) decision: following the Regulation 23 consultation, feedback will be collated by officers and presented to the LPTG, for information.	<p>The Regulation 23 consultation represents the first public iteration of “direction of travel” for the new Local Plan.</p> <p>Feedback from the Regulation 23 consultation will inform drafting of detailed Local Plan policies. Feedback will be presented to the LPTG for information. The draft Policies Map will also need to be developed, which will show potential locations for growth and/or site allocations.</p>
24 and 26	Preparation for Gateway 2: Appointment of Planning Inspector to review emerging Local Plan and supporting evidence base	July – October 2027	Operational (Chief Officer) decision: Regulation 23 consultation feedback collated by officers and presented to LPTG, for information	<p>Regulation 23 consultation feedback and available evidence base will be considered in drafting detailed policy text and supporting background/ topic papers. Background/ topic papers provide a bridge between the evidence base and emerging policies.</p> <p>Emerging draft Local Plan policies/ preferred options and evidence base/ background papers (supporting documents) will be submitted to be submitted to Secretary of State/ appointed Planning Inspector(s). The appointed Inspector(s) will advise on whether the emerging Local Plan and supporting evidence base are sufficiently robust to fulfil requirements of Regulation 24 and allow progress to Regulation 26 (Gateway 2).</p>



2026 Reg No	Description	Date(s)	Proposed decision type/ role of LPTG	Commentary/ explanation (NB – all key milestones will be preceded by LPTG)
26	Gateway 2: observations and advice from an appointed person	Nov – Dec 2027	Operational (Chief Officer) decision: LPTG will be informed of feedback from the appointed person (Planning Inspector), and advice as to whether or not the emerging Local Plan is sufficiently robust to pass Gateway 2.	<p>The Gateway 2 assessment is an independent professional/ technical part of the plan-making process, undertaken by an appointed Inspector. This is the initial independent/external analysis of the emerging Local Plan. The appointee would give initial consideration as to whether the emerging Plan is “sound”; i.e. meets the necessary legal and procedural tests.</p> <p>Following on from the development/ refinement of the Local Plan through the Regulation 24 process, officers need to collate documents for the appointed person (Planning Inspector) to assess. The process will require Chief Officer (Executive Director) approval, prior to submission of documents to the appointed Planning Inspector(s).</p>
27	Consultation on the proposed local plan	March – April 2028	<p>Cabinet decision: draft (proposed) Local Plan (pre-submission draft) will be developed by officers and presented to Cabinet for approval to go to consultation under Regulation 27.</p> <p>Cabinet will need to agree explicit powers to delegate matters relating to the Local Plan examination (following submission to the Secretary of State) to senior officers (as appropriate). The LPTG would oversee preparation of the proposed Local Plan.</p>	<p>The proposed Local Plan forms the formal draft version of the Plan that the Council wishes to submit to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>The proposed Local Plan consultation document and supporting evidence base will need to be considered by the LPTG. The focus for the Regulation 27 consultation will be the tests of soundness (i.e. to inform the Plan examination).</p> <p>Given that this stage in the process represents a significant policy development stage, then Cabinet approval will be necessary. It will be necessary to secure explicit delegation to senior officers, to allow the Local Plan to progress through Gateway 3, and onto examination (following the Regulation 27 consultation).</p> <p>It is anticipated that local government reorganization (LGR) will come into effect on 1 April</p>



2026 Reg No	Description	Date(s)	Proposed decision type/ role of LPTG	Commentary/ explanation (NB – all key milestones will be preceded by LPTG)
				<p>2028, so the Regulation 27 consultation would likely overlap the formation of the new Council. The consultation would therefore be a legacy project for the Borough Council, which would then need to be taken forward by the new West Norfolk unitary authority.</p>
30	Publication of summary of consultation on the proposed local plan	June – August 2028	<p>Member delegated decision: feedback from Regulation 27 consultation will be presented to LPTG, for Member consideration.</p> <p>The LPTG will advise the Portfolio Holder, allowing approval of any changes to the proposed Local Plan and progress to Gateway 3 as a Member Delegated decision.</p>	<p>Feedback from Regulation 27 consultation (regarding the tests of soundness) will be collated, and potential changes to the pre-submission draft Local Plan and Policies Map duly considered (with reference to Regulation 27 feedback and the evidence base).</p> <p>Feedback will be presented to the LPTG for consideration, with draft policy changes presented to the Portfolio Holder for approval.</p>
31-33	Gateway 3: prescribed requirements assessment by an appointed person	Sept – October 2028	<p>Operational (Chief Officer) decision: LPTG will be informed of feedback from the appointed person (Planning Inspector), and advice as to whether or not the emerging Local Plan is sufficiently robust to pass Gateway 3.</p>	<p>Gateway 3 represents the final stage in the plan-making process. Whether or not the Local Plan can proceed to examination is dependent upon preliminary assessment by the appointed Planning Inspector(s), under Regulations 31 and 32.</p> <p>Following on from the Regulation 27 consultation, officers need to collate and assemble a library of documents for the appointed person (Planning Inspector) to assess. The process will require Chief Officer (Executive Director) approval, prior to submission to the appointed Planning Inspector(s). The Inspector(s) may require further work to be undertaken, prior to passage of Gateway 3, so this may entail a repeat process.</p> <p>The Gateway 3 assessment is the final stage in the process that is led by the local authority. It is an independent professional/ technical part of the plan-making process. The Portfolio Holder</p>



2026 Reg No	Description	Date(s)	Proposed decision type/ role of LPTG	Commentary/ explanation (NB – all key milestones will be preceded by LPTG)
				and Local Plan Task Group will be kept informed.
35	Independent examination: local plans	Nov 2028 – April 2029	Operational (Chief Officer) decision(s): LPTG will be regularly informed about progress of the Local Plan during the independent examination. LPTG will be kept informed regarding the proposed Main Modifications (preparation for consultation), although these are directed by the Planning Inspector(s).	<p>From submission (Gateway 3), the Local Plan process (independent examination) is led by the appointed Inspector(s). However, following the written and hearings stages of the examination, there will be a need for a final (Main Modifications) consultation.</p> <p>The Main Modifications are directed by the Inspector(s); therefore, proposed Main Modifications are an operational matter, forming part of the ongoing examination. Feedback from the Main Modifications consultation will be collated and presented to the Inspector(s).</p>
37	Publication of the recommendations and reasons of the examiner: local plans	May 2029	Operational (Chief Officer) decision: LPTG will be informed of receipt and publication of Inspector's Report	Publication of the Inspectors' Report is a solely operational matter. This requires publication on the website and notification of interested parties in accordance with the project plan.
39	Adoption of local plan	June – July 2029	Cabinet and Council decision: adoption of Local Plan as part of the Council's policy framework (Constitution Terms of Reference, para G.3). LPTG would be advised of proposed adoption, in advance of Cabinet and full Council.	<p>Adoption of the Local Plan process requires Council approval, as this represents adoption of an entirely new suite of policies.</p> <p>It is expected that the Local Plan would be adopted by the West Norfolk unitary authority, as a legacy Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk area development plan document.</p>