

Recommendations from the Regeneration and Development Panel held on 22nd July 2026

RD21 **CABINET REPORT - LOCAL PLAN SCOPING CONSULTATION**

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The Planning Policy Manager presented the report on the Local Plan Scoping Consultation and outlined the new legislative framework and consultation process.

Members were advised that the new local plan system, introduced through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and Local Plan Regulations 2026, required plans to be prepared within a 30-month period. This process incorporated three stages of consultation (scoping, draft plan, and submission) alongside three gateway assessments to ensure progress remained on track. It was noted that the Council had published its Notice of Intention and timetable, formally commencing the four-month plan preparation period.

The Chair thanked the Planning Policy Manager for the report and invited questions and comments from Members, as summarised below.

Members of the Panel highlighted the importance of providing member briefings to ensure all councillors were fully informed and able to support the consultation process.

Councillor Blunt also emphasised the need for strong engagement with parish councils.

In response to questions from Councillor Bone, the Planning Policy Manager highlighted that particular emphasis was being placed on engaging groups that had historically been underrepresented in planning consultations, including young people, economically active residents and those experiencing deprivation. The Planning Policy Manager explained officers had worked with colleagues in Communications to develop a programme of engagement activities including events at educational establishments, food banks and community venues, to maximise participation. The Planning Policy Manager confirmed they would be engaging with community organisations as well.

In response to comments from the Chair, the Planning Policy Manager confirmed that officers were continuing to engage with Anglian Water regarding water infrastructure requirements, that a local housing needs assessment had been commissioned, and that the Council would continue to respond to emerging national planning policy and legislative changes as the Local Plan progressed.

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

Cabinet resolves to:

- 1) Agree that the Local Plan Scoping Consultation takes place for 4 weeks, from 1 to 29 September 2026 (inclusive), to comply with the legislation, Government direction, and the Borough Council's Local Plan Timetable.
- 2) The final Scoping Consultation material be agreed by the Assistant Director for Planning under delegated powers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing.