

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Local Plan?

The Cannock Chase Local Plan is a document which sets out a development plan for the District over a period of at least 15 years upon adoption. All local planning authorities (LPAs) are required by the government to write a Local Plan. The plan sets out the development needs of the District for housing, employment and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, and contains sites to meet these needs. The plan contains local planning policies which will be used in the assessment of planning applications.

What is this consultation about?

The Local Plan has been in production since 2018 and goes through a number of stages in its production. The final draft of the Local Plan (also referred to as the Reg. 19 or Pre-Submission Publication Plan) was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in November 2024 for Examination (see explanation below). This consultation is about potential changes or 'modifications' to final draft version of the Local Plan.

What is the Examination?

The examination is the final stage in the plan process and begins when the plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. Planning Inspector A McCormack BSc (Hons) MRTPI has been appointed to undertake an independent examination into the Cannock Chase District Local Plan.

The Inspector's task will be to consider the soundness and legal compliance of the submitted Plan, based on the criteria set out in paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) and associated regulations, namely the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Town and Country

Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

There is a specific website hosted by the Programme Officer which holds all the information about the Examination <https://www.localplanservices.co.uk/cclocalplan/examination>

However, all comments on this consultation should be sent to the Council, not the Programme Officer, and documents relating to the consultation are available on the Councils website:

<https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/planning-policy-news>

What is a main modification?

A main modification is a change to the plan recommended by the Planning Inspector who is examining the Local Plan. The change may be suggested to fix problems with the plan's soundness and legal compliance, ensuring it meets national planning policies. This is commonly a change to the policy wording, but it could also result in a change to the Policies Map, for example if it affects a site boundary.

How have the main modifications been decided?

The Inspector has considered all the representations made at the previous consultation. He also chaired a set of public hearing sessions held in the Councils Civic Centre during May, June and July this year where issues raised about soundness and legal compliance of the Local Plan were discussed with the Council and other parties present. During these sessions modifications were suggested where they were necessary to address a matter of soundness or legal compliance. Often the Council, sometimes with another party, were asked to draft a modification before a set deadline for review by the Inspector. A set of action points were taken and are available to view on the

Examination website. These sessions were not recorded.

The reasoning for each modification is also set out in the Schedule of Main Modifications.

Have you consulted on the Local Plan before?

Yes. The Council has held four separate consultations on the Local Plan at earlier stages of development, the last being held at Reg 19. stage in 2024.

Issues and Scope - 2nd July - 28th August 2018

Issues and Options - 13th May - 8th July 2019
Preferred Options - 19th March - 30th April 2021

Regulation 19. Pre-submission - 5th February - 18th March 2024

If I made a comment at an earlier stage, do I need to comment again?

There is no obligation to comment on the Schedule of Main Modifications, unless you consider that any of the modifications will impact on the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan.

Please note that if you made a comment on the Local Plan at the last consultation held in February-March 2024, this was sent to the Inspector. As the plan is still subject to examination, these comments are still valid and have been considered by the Inspector. You can only comment on the proposed modifications at this stage, and cannot use this opportunity to comment on the wider content of the Local Plan.

What happens to my comment?

All comments made at this consultation will be provided to the Independent Inspector, to consider whether the local plan is sound and legally compliant.

The comments will be made publicly available, along with your name, but sensitive information will be redacted.

The Councils team will summarise the comments and provide a general response which will be published on the website. However, the Inspector will ultimately determine whether the proposed modifications are necessary.

The Inspector will produce a final report which should address the main issues of soundness and legal compliance and clarify if any of the modifications are subject to change.

What if I want to comment on the Local Plan and not a modification?

There have already been 4 consultations and there is no further opportunity at this stage to comment on the general content of the Local Plan. However, comments made at the previous consultation in 2024 have been considered by the Independent Inspector. If the part of the Plan that you wish to comment on is not subject to change, i.e. there is no proposed modification, then it is not possible to comment on that at this stage.

What is the easiest way to view the modifications?

The Council have produced a version of the Local Plan with amendments highlighted (track change version). This can help to see how each amendment would be viewed in a final version of the plan, if adopted. If you find an amendment you wish to comment on, you should find the reference number for the specific modification in the Schedule of Main Modifications.

What are the proposed additional modifications?

The additional modifications represent minor amendments that are not necessary to address legal compliance or soundness issues, but could comprise factual corrections to wording or amendments to the supporting text including correcting typos, grammar and formatting issues.

As the Inspector is not assessing the additional modifications it is not necessary to comment on these.

How do I see if there are any changes to the sites proposed for development?

The easiest way to view any changes is to look at the version of the Local Plan with amendments highlighted (track change version). All proposed sites for development are shown at the end of the Local Plan in the site allocations section. There are individual boundary maps for each site proposed for development in the Local Plan. Any changes will be highlighted.

How do I make a comment?

You can make a comment using the Council's representation form provided by email or by post. Please see the 'Guidance Notes for Completing the Representation Form' and the 'Statement of Representation Procedure' for full instructions on how to make a comment.

To clarify which modification you are commenting on we ask that you submit a separate representation form for each modification you wish to comment on.

When are the dates of the consultation?

The consultation runs for 6 weeks from the 20th October 2025 until 5pm 1st December 2025.

What are the next steps?

There is a timetable for the Local Plan on the website, called the Local Development

Scheme which sets out the next stages and predicted timescales. The Council does not have control of the Examination timetable but it is anticipated that the Inspector will consider the response to this consultation and then produce a final report. If the Inspector has any concerns, he may write to the Council to ask for more information or hold a further Hearing session, but this isn't expected as the main issues have been discussed.

The Inspector's report will detail his findings, any proposed modifications needed to make the plan sound and ultimately recommends whether the plan should be adopted. If the recommendation is to adopt the Plan, then the Local Plan will be presented at a meeting of Cabinet and Full Council with the recommendation to adopt the Plan, likely in early 2026. If the Inspector's report contains a recommendation not to adopt the Plan then the Council would review the findings to determine the next steps.

How can I be kept informed?

You can request to be added to the planning policy consultation database to receive notifications and keep you up to date with progress on the local plan and other planning policy consultations. You can also request to opt out of future notifications.

You can update your preferences by emailing planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk or writing to Planning Policy, Cannock Chase Council, Civic Centre, PO Box 28, Beecroft Road, Cannock WS11 1BG.

For further information see (Planning Policy):

www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/PrivacyNotice

Alternatively, please check the Planning Policy news pages on the Council's website for updates

[Planning Policy News | Cannock Chase District Council \(cannockchasedc.gov.uk\)](http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/PlanningPolicyNews)

What are the tests of soundness and legal compliance?

Local plans and spatial development strategies are examined to assess whether they have been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether they are sound. These requirements are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/publishing.service.gov.uk) and in legislation.

A local plan is legally compliant if it meets the requirements of the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) and the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#), including adherence to the [Duty to Cooperate](#), the [Local Development Scheme \(LDS\)](#) and [Statement of Community Involvement \(SCI\)](#), and the provision of a [Sustainability Appraisal](#).

Plans are 'sound' if they are:

- a) **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs¹⁹; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- c) **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- d) **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

The Council has produced guidance to help understand how these terms apply when making representations and some general advice is provided below:

If you wish to make a representation about a proposed modification to the plan you should set out clearly in what way you consider the modification impacts the soundness or legal compliance of the plan. If you consider the modification makes the plan unsound or not legally compliant, it will be helpful if you say precisely how you think the wording should be changed or deleted.

You should provide succinctly all the evidence and/or supporting information necessary to support your representation, if applicable. You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions. Any further submissions on a modification may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he identifies.

Where groups or individuals share a common view on the plan, it would be very helpful if they would make a single representation which represents that view, rather a large number of separate representations repeating the same points. In such cases the group should indicate how many people it is representing and how the representation has been authorised.

Please note, when submitting comments we are unable to treat your views confidentially although only your name, and (if applicable) the person or organisation you represent will be publicly attributable - see the Planning Policy Privacy Notice at www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/PrivacyNotice or contact us if you need further information.