



Cannock Chase District Council
Local Plan 2026 – 2046
Scoping Consultation



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is the first stage of consultation in the preparation of the Council's new Local Plan. Our existing Local Plan was adopted by the Council in March 2026 but requires to be updated to meet the Government's new requirements. Cannock Chase's new Local Plan will be prepared under the new system of plan-making, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026.
- 1.2. This stage of the local plan preparation process follows the publication of the Notice to Commence a new Local Plan and the publication of the Local Plan Timetable, both of which have been issued on 26 June 2026.

What is this consultation about?

- 1.3. The purpose of the Scoping Consultation is to provide meaningful early engagement in the plan-making process by seeking views from local residents and stakeholders as to what the plan should contain and how future engagement should be carried out.
- 1.4. We want your views on the key issues that will shape our District. This includes your views on the current Local Plan and whether the Plan's current vision and priorities are still right. We're also asking for your thoughts on the challenges of planning for more homes, the infrastructure needed to support growth, how we can protect and enhance our built and natural environments, support jobs and the economy, tackle climate change, and create well-designed and healthy communities. This will help us confirm the content of the new Local Plan.
- 1.5. To help you respond to the consultation, this document sets out matters which the Council considers are relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan in accordance with Regulation 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026.
- 1.6. The consultation period will run from Monday 3 August until 5pm on Monday 14 September 2026 and details of how to respond are included at the end of the document and on the Local Plan 2026 – 2046 web page: [6. New Local Plan 2026-2046 | Cannock Chase District Council](#)

Why are we updating the Local Plan?

- 1.7. The Government requires us to update our Local Plan to respond to their reforms to the planning system intended to increase the delivery of new homes and support economic growth.
- 1.8. Cannock Chase was identified in the Government's Guidance published on 6 March 2026 as one of 39 local authorities required to publish a notice of intention to commence plan-making by 30 June 2026 and to publish a Gateway 1 self-assessment by 31 October 2026¹.

¹ [Rollout of the new local plan-making system - GOV.UK](#)

- 1.9. The Council will be producing a new style Local Plan under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 and responding to the further changes to the planning system introduced through the proposed updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published for consultation in December 2025. This means that our new Local Plan will be produced within a 30-month formal period and will be in a predominantly digital format.
- 1.10. The Plan will set out a vision and spatial strategy for the District and focus on site allocations and local spatial policies. More general policies will be replaced by the national decision-making policies contained in the NPPF, and where applicable evidenced specific local context policies to support these.

What is the process for updating out Local Plan?

- 1.11. As part of the early stage of preparing the Plan, we are running this Scoping Consultation to gather views on what the Plan should cover, how communities and stakeholders should be involved. A 'Call for Sites' will also be undertaken in the early stages of preparation to gain an understanding as to what land is available for development; further information on this is available on the Council's website.
- 1.12. During this period, we will also be updating our evidence base to inform the work on the new Plan. This includes work already undertaken to update our Green Belt Assessment and further studies to provide a clearer understanding of the Council's housing and employment needs.
- 1.13. The new system then includes two formal consultation stages:
 - **Proposed Local Plan Content and Evidence 'Vision and Strategic Options' – anticipated May-June 2027:** this consultation will focus on the draft vision of the Plan and proposed aims and objectives, the proposed spatial strategy and a summary of the evidence gathered/still to be gathered.
 - **Consult on the proposed Local Plan – anticipated February – March 2028:** this will be a consultation on the full draft Plan before it is submitted for independent examination.
- 1.14. Full details of the timescales for producing the new Local Plan are set out in the Council's Local Plan timetable which can be viewed on the Local Plan web page: [Local Plan 2026-2046 Timetable | Cannock Chase District Council](#). This will be kept up to date throughout the period our new Plan is being prepared.

2. Changes to the national planning system

- 2.1. The Government has made some changes to the planning system that will have a direct impact on how we plan for Cannock Chase's future growth. These are summarised below.

Changes to increase housing supply

- 2.2. The Government has stated that councils must plan to meet all of their local housing needs and a new mandatory method was introduced in 2024 for calculating the minimum number of dwellings councils need to plan for. This method was not applicable for the current adopted Local Plan. The new method is based on a proportional increase in existing dwelling stock, with an extra uplift in areas where homes are less affordable. This means most Councils, including Cannock Chase, now have higher housing targets.
- 2.3. The current adopted Local Plan has a housing figure of 264 dwellings per annum for the first five years post-adoption rising to 314 dwellings per annum from year six. The new Local Plan for Cannock Chase will be required to plan for 522 dwellings per annum a 97.7% increase.

Changes to Green Belt policy

- 2.4. The Government now clearly states that if there's a shortage of homes or business space, this can count as a valid reason to change Green Belt boundaries when making Local Plans. This means councils must look at their Green Belt and consider changes to meet these needs – unless doing so would seriously harm the purpose of the Green Belt as a whole.
- 2.5. A new category of land called 'Grey Belt' has been introduced. This includes land in the Green Belt that's either previously developed or doesn't strongly serve one of the following key Green Belt purposes – stopping urban sprawl, keeping protection between towns or protecting historic towns. Grey Belt should be considered first if there is a need to release Green Belt land. There is also now more scope to redevelop previously developed land in the Green Belt.

Promoting economic growth

- 2.6. There is a requirement for the Local Plan to meet the needs of a modern economy, including identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics.

Change to the use of Supplementary Planning Documents

- 2.7. Our current Local Plan has a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which relate to it and provide additional policy guidance on a number of specific planning related topics. These include the Cannock Chase Local Design Guide SPD – which provides detailed guidance to ensure the high-quality design of new development – and Developer Contributions and Housing Choices SPD – which sets out the Council's approach to securing developer contributions from new developments that require planning

permission. SPDs will be replaced by Supplementary Plans in the new plan making system. We will therefore need to consider whether there is detail from our existing SPDs (which remain a material consideration in decision making until the updated Local Plan is adopted) which can be embedded in the new Local Plan and whether there is the need for more detailed requirements to be included in future Supplementary Plans to be prepared.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 2.8. Proposed plans, policies and strategies must be tested using a systematic, high-level process to evaluate their potential environmental effects before being approved. This is usually carried out through the process of SEA. Within the new planning system, the Government is intending to replace SEA and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) with Environmental Outcomes Reports (EORs). However, at the current time these requirements have not been formalised through regulations and, as such the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 continue to apply.
- 2.9. In addition, the requirement for a broader Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating social and economic, as well as environmental considerations, has been removed. For previous local plan reviews the Council undertook SEA as part of the SA of the Local Plan.
- 2.10. As a result, and during this transition period, SEA and HRA will be required to inform preparation of the plan.

3. What are the key considerations for our Local Plan content?

- 3.1. Given its recent adoption, there is much in the Local Plan 2018 – 2040 which we think is still relevant.
- 3.2. Therefore, our starting point is the existing Local Plan particularly focusing on the vision and updates to the District Profile (which sets out the key issues facing the District) and then considering any changes that impact upon the Local Plan 2018 – 2040 objectives.
- 3.3. We will also be asking if there are any other issues which you think the new Local Plan should cover and if you have any thoughts on the options that should be considered in the next round of consultation e.g. any specific policy content, revised or new policies.

Q1. What do you consider should be included in the content of the new local plan?

Local Plan Vision

- 3.4. The first step in updating the Local Plan is to consider the plan content, particularly in the context of the vision and spatial strategy of our existing adopted Local Plan.

The Vision for Cannock Chase District in 2040

Cannock Chase will be a prosperous and attractive district where people will want to live, work, socialise and spend their leisure time supported by services that our community needs. It will be a place where businesses will want to invest, creating new jobs and delivering sustainable places. It will provide the platform for healthier lifestyles around quality homes, access to leisure opportunities and infrastructure, support the transition to a low carbon economy, while improving and protecting its distinctive character and nationally significant landscape.

- 3.5. The new Local Plan will extend the Plan period by six years to 2046 to help inform the spatial vision we would like to know your thoughts.

Q2. To what extent do you agree with the vision for Cannock Chase in the current adopted Plan?

Q3. What do you value most about the place where you live?

Q4. What would you like this District to be like in the future?

Key Themes (Proposed)

- 3.6. The Local Plan will cover lots of themes, the starting point for consideration is the current plan, and we'd like to know your thoughts on the following questions.

Theme 1: Meeting our Housing Need and Providing Housing Choice

- 3.7. Recent changes to the NPPF present both challenges and opportunities. The increased housing target of 522 dwellings per year means we must identify additional land beyond current allocations, prioritising brownfield development wherever possible. While the existing Local Plan target remains valid until 2031 or the adoption of a new Local Plan, we need to update to meet this higher housing target and avoid unplanned growth. In doing so, it creates an opportunity to meet Cannock Chase's long term future housing needs, including securing affordable housing. However, challenges relating to increased pressure on existing infrastructure and services will need to be addressed and planned for thoroughly.
- 3.8. Those sites allocated in the Local Plan 2018 – 2040 Plan will be reconsidered as part of the new Local Plan to ensure their continued availability and deliverability, as well as to update any housing figures where applicable.
- 3.9. The current adopted Plan prioritised the re-use of previously developed land, including the former Rugeley Power Station site, with strategic growth opportunities being prioritised around the Cannock, Hednesford and Heath Hayes, and Rugeley and Brereton areas with minimal development opportunities in Norton Canes.

Q5. To what extent do you agree with the existing priority areas for development set out in our current Local Plan?

Q6. Are there any places that you think could benefit from new homes? *You might want to consider places with good transport links, access to jobs, or where new homes could help regenerate underused or neglected land or help support underutilised local services.*

Q7. Community facilities, health facilities, open space, schools, timing of delivery, transport, other. What do you think we need to consider in planning for more homes?

Theme 2: Securing Economic Prosperity

- 3.10. The current Local Plan identifies a need for 74ha or employment land over the 22-year plan period from 2018 – 2040. Ensuring sufficient employment land is critical to supporting economic prosperity in Cannock Chase. The challenge for Cannock Chase will be the need to balance future needs with additional homes planned for, and the extended plan period, means that our new plan will need to identify further employment land for development.

- 3.11. The new Plan will also need to address the requirement in the NPPF to meet the needs of a modern economy, including identifying suitable locations and addressing locational requirements for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics.

Q8. Where do you think new jobs should be located in Cannock Chase?

Q9. What types of employment should we be seeking to target?

Theme 3: Protecting and enhancing the Natural Environment

- 3.12. Our increased housing target presents significant challenges and opportunities in relation to protecting and enhancing the natural environment. The level of housing and employment land currently allocated within the adopted Local Plan will no longer be sufficient to meet the new housing requirement and in turn the employment requirement. This reinforces the need to continue prioritising the development of brownfield sites, maximising the use of previously developed land. However, there will likely be a need for additional land, and further release of Green Belt land may need to be considered.
- 3.13. The introduction of the Grey Belt land classification also presents challenges in the context of maintaining the permanence of the Green Belt in the long term, increasing the risk of scattered or unplanned development. Development that comes forward in this manner can undermine the strategic approach to growth, making it more challenging to secure the necessary supporting infrastructure and potentially eroding the long-term permanence of the Green Belt.
- 3.14. Cannock Chase also comprises of 40% National Landscape which - with the exception of the identified villages - is wholly within the Green Belt, further to this, consideration will also be required to be given to the sensitive nature of the Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) within the District alongside other designations.

Q10. How should we balance the need for more homes with protecting open spaces, the natural environment, the National Landscape and the Green Belt?

Q11. What is required to protect our high-quality environments and help to deliver nature recovery?

Theme 4: Design, Healthy Lifestyles and Safe Communities

- 3.15. The adoption of the Local Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2026 (SPD) provides a clear framework for achieving high-quality, locally distinctive design across the District in support of the adopted Local Plan policies. Good design also has much wider benefits, for example, addressing climate change and also improving health and well-being by encouraging more active lifestyles.

- 3.16. We will need to consider how design is embedded in the new Local Plan, combining detail set out within the Design Guide SPD and the potential for more detailed Design Codes, and also having regard to the Government's draft Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance (January 2026) and the proposed changes to the NPPF (Consultation held in December 2025).
- 3.17. The Council will need to consider the existing open space (including equipped play) and recreational facilities across the District. Alongside considering the potential leisure and tourism need and recreational pressure within the District to provide accessible outdoor recreational facilities without harming the natural environment.

Q12. How can planning and development support high-quality design, which is appropriate for and reflective of Cannock Chase?

Q13. How can we ensure new development promotes healthy and active lifestyles for new and existing communities?

Q14. How should we balance any potential leisure and tourism need with recreational pressures on the natural environment and local communities?

Q15. If there is an identified need for leisure and tourism facilities, where do you think they should be located and what types should we be seeking to target?

Theme 5: Protecting Landscapes, Townscapes and Heritage

- 3.18. Cannock Town Centre is undergoing a period of significant change with the continuing regeneration project, and works are ongoing to consider regeneration projects in Rugeley Town Centre; supported by the Town Centre policies within the adopted Local Plan and the relevant site allocations. The proposals are being undertaken to improve the town centre environment and public realm, whilst also broadening the range of uses in town centres in line with national policy.
- 3.19. Changes to the Use Class Order have made it much harder to control development of traditional town centre uses. In 2020, a broad 'Class E' was introduced for commercial uses which means that a shop could be converted to a range of uses (for example a café, office or gym) without planning permission. The purpose is to allow greater flexibility for business owner whilst ensuring that centres remain vibrant, but it does mean there is less control over uses and monitoring can be difficult.
- 3.20. The town centre and primary shopping area boundaries were adjusted as part of the adopted Local Plan works and as such it is not proposed to make any further amendments to them as part of the new Plan. Cannock Chase's town centres, as with other town centre environments, face the ongoing challenge of

ensuring it remains vibrant and relevant in an increasingly online retail world. It is essential that the emerging Local Plan considers appropriate uses in response to this.

- 3.21. The new Local Plan will also consider the historic environment including the eight Conservation Areas across the District and listed buildings as an important part of the District's character and the approach to appropriate and good design within Cannock Chase.

Q16. How can we protect and enhance the vibrancy of our town centres?

Q17. What aspects of the District's heritage matter most to you, how can it be protected, and how it should shape sustainable development into the future?

Q18. How can we protect our unique heritage, natural and town landscapes?

Theme 6: Infrastructure, Transport and Connectivity

- 3.22. The District is located at a strategic road/rail transport crossroads between the north-west and south-east via the M6 Toll/M6 and West Coast Main Line railway and east – west via the A5/M54 corridor, and the West Midlands and wider Staffordshire.

- 3.23. The current Local Plan looks to provide accessible development and ensure development proposals give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements and where possible facilitate access to high quality public transport, address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility, and create places that are safe, secure and attractive. Considering that good accessibility is key to delivering sustainable development and that by requiring development to maintain the current functioning of the transport system and supporting improvements to it within the Local Plan will deliver economic, environmental and social net gain.

- 3.24. The new Local Plan must continue to ensure that new development is planned for having regard to the capacity of existing infrastructure provision, whilst identifying the most appropriate areas for growth which can be supported by improved and enhanced infrastructure. By locating development in sustainable locations, the impact of development can be better managed and mitigated.

Q19. What do you think we need to consider in planning for supporting infrastructure?

Q20. Do you find it easy to move around the District freely and get to where you want to go?

Q21. Is there anything else you feel we should consider as we start to prepare the new Local Plan?

4. Your thoughts on how we consult

- 4.1. We want to make sure your voice is heard as the Local Plan develops. As part of this process, we want your views as to how we communicate and engage with the local community, residents and interested parties.
- 4.2. We have previously engaged with the local community and other important stakeholders in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) ([Statement of Community Involvement \(SCI\) | Cannock Chase District Council](#)). The SCI sets out how and when the community will be involved in the preparation of the Local Plan and other planning documents and how they will be consulted on planning applications.
- 4.3. In line with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 a Draft Communication and Engagement Strategy (CES) setting out how the Local Authority will communicate and engage with the local community, residents and interested parties on the production of the Local Plan and any Supplementary Planning Documents has been written and forms part of the Scoping Consultation Documents.
- 4.4. An update to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement to reflect the CES and the changes to the regulations will be undertaken in due course.
- 4.5. Your feedback on the draft CES will help shape our engagement strategy.

Q22. How should the authority engage with you in the preparation of the Local Plan?

Q23. Are the methods of communication set out in the CES reflective of those you found most useful during the previous local plan consultations?

Q24. Are there any alternative methods of communication you would like the Council to consider?

Q25. What might prevent you from taking part in our consultations and how could this be overcome?

5. What are the next steps?

- 5.1. After this consultation ends, all feedback will be reviewed. This will help us ensure we are responding to the views of our communities right from the start of the process of updating our Local Plan and that we are engaging with you in the most effective ways.
- 5.2. As referred to above, there will be a further two formal consultations for you to help shape the Plan: the first is anticipated in May/June 2027 and will focus on the vision of the Plan, proposed aims and objectives, the proposed spatial strategy and a summary of evidence gathered and still to be gathered. The second is expected in February 2028 and will be a consultation on the full draft Plan before it is submitted for independent examination.
- 5.3. All information of the Local Plan process can be found on our consultation web page: [6. New Local Plan 2026-2046 | Cannock Chase District Council](#). This will be kept up to date throughout the period we are updating our Local Plan.

6. How to respond to the consultation

- 6.1. We want to understand what the content of our new Local Plan should be and the key issues you think it should address. We also want your views on how we communicate and engage with you during this process.
- 6.2. You can access the representation form here:
<https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy>
- 6.3. Representations can also be made on the provided forms in the following ways:

Email: planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk

Post: Planning Policy, Cannock Chase District Council, Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 1BG

- 6.4. The consultation runs from Monday 3 August until 5pm on Monday 14 September. Submissions received after the deadline will not be accepted.