

Date:

Wednesday 24 June 2026 at 6.00 pm

Venue:

Council Chamber, Dunedin House, Columbia Drive, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6BJ

Agenda

1. Livestreaming

This meeting will be filmed for live and / or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for 12 months. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.

If you attend and make a representation to the meeting, you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed. When admitted to the Council Chamber you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for livestreaming and / or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured, please contact Democratic Services prior to attending the meeting.

If there are any technical difficulties with the livestreaming, the meeting will still proceed.

2. **Welcome and Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 10)
3. **Apologies for Absence**
4. **Declarations of Interest**
5. **Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan** (Pages 11 - 28)



Ged Morton
Director of Corporate Services
Tuesday 16 June 2026

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please.

Contact: Democratic Services Manager, Judy Trainer on email judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk

Key – Declarable interests are :-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

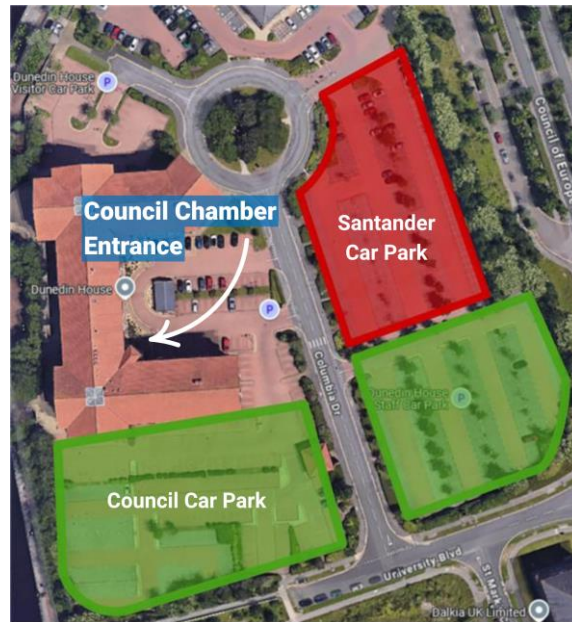
- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

This page is intentionally left blank

Council Chamber, Dunedin House Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping

Entry

Entry to the Council Chamber is via the Council Chamber Entrance, indicated on the map below.



In the event of an emergency alarm activation, everyone should immediately start to leave their workspace by the nearest available signed Exit route.

The emergency exits are located via the doors on either side of the raised seating area at the front of the Council Chamber.

Fires, explosions, and bomb threats are among the occurrences that may require the emergency evacuation of Dunedin House. Continuous sounding and flashing of the Fire Alarm is the signal to evacuate the building or upon instruction from a Fire Warden or a Manager.

The Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point is in the overflow car park located across the road from Dunedin House.

The allocated assembly point for the Council Chamber is: D2

Map of the Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point - the overflow car park:



All occupants must respond to the alarm signal by immediately initiating the evacuation procedure.

When the Alarm sounds:

1. **stop all activities immediately.** Even if you believe it is a false alarm or practice drill, you MUST follow procedures to evacuate the building fully.
2. **follow directional EXIT signs** to evacuate via the nearest safe exit in a calm and orderly manner.
 - do not stop to collect your belongings
 - close all doors as you leave
3. **steer clear of hazards.** If evacuation becomes difficult via a chosen route because of smoke, flames or a blockage, re-enter the Chamber (if safe to do so). Continue the evacuation via the nearest safe exit route.
4. **proceed to the Evacuation Assembly Point.** Move away from the building. Once you have exited the building, proceed to the main Evacuation Assembly Point immediately - located in the **East Overflow Car Park**.
 - do not assemble directly outside the building or on any main roadway, to ensure access for Emergency Services.

5. await further instructions.

- **do not re-enter the building under any circumstances without an “all clear”** which should only be given by the Incident Control Officer/Chief Fire Warden, Fire Warden or Manager.
- do not leave the area without permission.
- ensure all colleagues and visitors are accounted for. Notify a Fire Warden or Manager immediately if you have any concerns

Toilets

Toilets are located immediately outside the Council Chamber, accessed via the door at the back of the Chamber.

Water Cooler

A water cooler is available at the rear of the Council Chamber.

Microphones

During the meeting, members of the Committee, and officers in attendance, will have access to a microphone. Please use the microphones, when invited to speak by the Chair, to ensure you can be heard by the Committee and those in attendance at the meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank

REPORT TO COUNCIL

DATE 24 JUNE 2026

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

COUNCIL DECISION/KEY DECISION

Housing and Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Richard Eglington

Stockton on Tees Local Plan

Summary

The Local Plan report was deferred at the Council meeting on the 20th May 2027, following a series of questions. These have been circulated to all Members, along with the relevant answers, they are also included at Appendix 3 of this report for completeness. Officers have also met with the Conservative Group Leader to discuss and answer those questions.

Subsequently, the matter is brought back to Council in order that the item can be reconsidered with a view to progressing a new Local Plan in line with the timetable at appendix 1. It is important that the timetable is adhered to in order that the two statutory backstops can be met i.e. submission of the intention to commence plan making by 31 December 2026 and entry into Gateway 1 by 30 April 2027. Failure to comply with those requirements risks intervention by the Secretary of State in the plan-making process.

In January 2024, in accordance with Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, a five-year review of the Local Plan concluded that a full update through a new Local Plan was required.

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 came into force on 25 March 2026, introducing a new regulatory framework for the preparation of Local Plans, Minerals and Waste Plans, and Supplementary Plans. This report seeks Council's agreement to commence a new Local Plan in accordance with the 2026 Regulations authorising all required elements to allow for progression through the 'getting ready' stage.

The report also seeks approval to establish a cross-party consultative and advisory steering group to support the Local Plan process.

Recommendations

1. Council approves the commencement of a full update of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) as amended and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026.
2. Council delegates the preparation, publication and submission of a 'Notice of intention to commence the Stockton on Tees Local Plan' to the Director of Regeneration & Inclusive Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport and that this will be made available in accordance with the Local Plan Timetable and no later than September 2026.
3. Council approves the preparation and submission of an updated Local Plan Timetable in broad accordance with Appendix 1 and authorises its submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and its publication.
4. Council delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration & Inclusive Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member to update and publish the Local Plan Timetable monthly or as required, to ensure an up-to-date timetable is publicly available in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026.
5. Council approves the commencement of a Design Guide Supplementary Plan to comply with the requirement of Section 15B and 15F(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration & Inclusive Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport to produce a draft document for consultation.
6. Council authorises officers to explore the preparation of a Joint Minerals and Waste Plan with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities and delegate to the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport, the responsibility for all matters relating to Stockton-on-Tees Borough, including;
 - a. the commissioning of an associated evidence base (as necessary);
 - b. develop a 'Joint Minerals and Waste Plan agreement' under section 15I of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) as amended;
 - c. develop a Minerals and Waste Plan Timetable;
 - d. undertake a 'scoping consultation' on the joint Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Local Plan; and
 - e. produce all associated documentation to allow to progress the joint Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Local Plan to progress through Gateway 1.
7. Council delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration & Inclusive Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport, to agree commencement of the scoping consultation for the Local Plan which will:

- a. provide an opportunity for residents, community groups, businesses and other interested parties to register to be notified of Local Plan updates, via the Council website;
 - b. consultation taking place in accordance with the Local Plan Regulations;
 - c. consultation material being made publicly available ; and
 - d. a consultation plan being produced prior to Gateway 1 after having regard to comments made during the statutory scoping consultation.
8. Council delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration & Inclusive Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport, to undertake all necessary steps to inform and prepare the documents for the Gateway 1 self-assessment which may include commissioning evidence, undertaking a call for sites and preparing draft vision, Local Plan content and consultation plan, on the proposed local plan.
 9. Council approves the formation of a cross-party consultative and advisory Members working group in broad accordance with the draft Terms of Reference at Appendix 2 to support the Local Plan process.

A New Plan Making system

1. In January 2024, in accordance with Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, a five year review of the Local Plan was undertaken. This review concluded that a full update, in the form of a new Local Plan, was required. Council agreed with this recommendation and confirmed that progressing a new Local Plan under the emerging plan making system represented the most robust and cost-effective way forward.
2. In the interim period, work has progressed on developing internal governance arrangements, preparing conservation area appraisals, and building up elements of the evidence base which includes transport surveys/modelling and a review of the Local Wildlife Sites.
3. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 introduced a new plan-making framework that fundamentally reshapes the development plan system with a streamlined 30-month process. The Government has since introduced the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 on 25 March 2026 confirming the procedures for this new plan-making framework.
4. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's agreement to commence a new Local Plan in accordance with the 2026 Regulations and to give notice to MHCLG of the Council's intention to commence plan-making. This will ensure compliance with the Government's backstop deadline of 31 December 2026. The associated recommendations will enable progression of the Local Plan through the 'getting ready' stage and support the completion of all necessary preparatory steps required to enter the formal plan-making process, known as Gateway 1.
5. As part of the new Local Plan process, all plans prepared under the new system must publish a Gateway 1 self-assessment by 30 April 2027. Upon entering Gateway 1, there

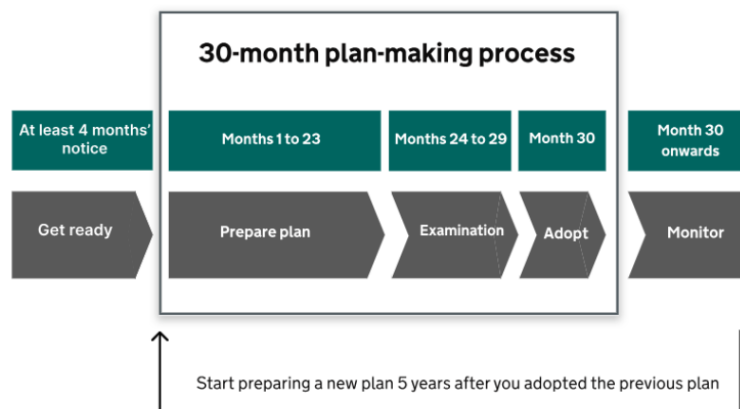
is a statutory 30-month period within which the Local Plan must progress through all stages to adoption.

6. To ensure timely progress and compliance with statutory requirements, appropriate delegations will be required to enable officers to undertake and complete the necessary procedural steps, with Council continuing to make decisions on the substantive elements at the relevant stages of the process.
7. At this stage, authorisation is sought to proceed through the various preparatory steps to enable progression towards Gateway 1. Further reports providing updates and seeking relevant approvals and delegations will be presented at the appropriate stages.
8. For completeness, Members should be aware that the Secretary of State has powers to intervene in the plan-making process where key milestones are not achieved or where satisfactory progress is not being made.

Process Overview

9. Under the new plan-making system, there are new statutory requirements which the council must adhere to, to ensure a plan process is compliant with legislation. This includes a 30-month timeframe for plan preparation and adoption and involves scoping consultation, two plan consultations and progression through three gateways as the Local Plan progresses through the system.
10. The overall process is outlined within the figures below;

Figure 1 – 30-month Local Plan process



11. As part of the new Local Plan process, all plans under the new system must give notice of intention to commence by 31st December 2026 and publish a Gateway 1 self-assessment by 30th April 2027.

‘Getting ready’ stage (a minimum of four months prior to Gateway 1)

12. Prior to progressing through ‘Gateway 1’ is the ‘Getting ready stage’ which should occur a minimum of four months before. This stage is about being ready to start plan making and being confident that adoption can be achieved within the 30-month timeframe. The focus is on plan preparation rather than the technical detail.

13. The key requirements of this stage are;

- preparing and publishing a local plan timetable;
- issuing a notice to commence plan making;
- establishing project management and governance arrangements about the preparation of the plan;
- developing an approach to consulting and engaging on the plan;
- developing the anticipated content of the plan, including base line information, vision, land availability and evidence; and
- progressing the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Figure 2 – ‘Getting ready’ - before the 30 month process starts



14. The steps required under the new statutory plan making processes can only be undertaken once a notice of intention to commence and a Local Plan Timetable have been submitted to MHCLG and published.

Preparing the plan (months 1-23)

15. Once Gateway 1 is passed, the 30-month period begins and a summary of the scoping consultation must be published. This must explain the key issues raised and how the responses received have been considered.

16. During this phase the authority must also;

- finalise the draft vision, aims and objectives of the Local Plan;
- consider site selection and gather evidence to support key priorities and allocations such as housing, employment land and infrastructure;
- undertake stakeholder engagement and address cross-boundary matters;
- begin drafting planning policies based on the evidence/appropriate justification; and
- undertake public consultation on the proposed plan content and evidence for a minimum of six weeks.

17. A consultation summary must then be published, highlighting those issues raised and how they have been considered. Where appropriate this may influence the overall strategy and policies which would inform a draft version of the Local Plan.

1. Figure 3 – Local Plan preparation process



Gateway 2

18. The next stage is to seek the observations and advice from the Planning Inspectorate on the draft version of the Local Plan, which seeks to achieve an early resolution on its soundness and likely areas of concern ahead of progress towards Gateway 3.
19. After consideration by the Planning Inspectorate, the advice received must be published alongside any necessary updates to the Local Plan. An eight week consultation is then undertaken of the proposed Local Plan and associated information including policies map and supporting evidence, again a consultation summary must then be published.

Gateway 3

20. This stage seeks to establish whether the plan is ready to progress to an examination. The Local Plan to be examined must be submitted alongside other supporting information and a statement of compliance.
21. An assessor from the Planning Inspectorate will advise and decide whether the plan is ready to be submitted for examination. If Gateway 3 is passed, then the plan must be submitted for examination. If not, the necessary changes will need to be made and the gateway must be done again.

Examination and adoption (Months 24-30)

22. At this stage the Local Plan is submitted for examination by the Planning Inspectorate where its overall soundness is tested. Those who have commented on the plan will have the opportunity to present their view at the examination.
23. As a result of the examination further modifications may be suggested and these will need to be consulted on and considered prior to any adoption of the Local Plan.
24. In some instances, the Inspector may consider that further work is required and the examination may be paused for up to 6 months to allow for that work out to be carried out.
25. Following a successful examination, the Local Plan can be adopted and the policies map published.

Supplementary Plans

26. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 introduces Supplementary Plans as a replacement for Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which have traditionally been used to provide additional detail to support Local Plan policies and are a material consideration in decision making.
27. Under the reformed system, SPDs will no longer be capable of being adopted after 30 June 2026. Instead, Supplementary Plans will form part of the statutory development plan alongside the Local Plan, although these are subject to formal process, including preparation (including consultation), examination and adoption.
28. During the transition period, existing SPDs will remain in effect until a new Local Plan under the new plan making system is adopted.
29. Consideration will be given to incorporating the key aspects of the current SPD's into future planning policy or whether to produce supplementary plans, at this stage a design guide supplementary plan is considered necessary and recommendation 6 of this report seeks approval to begin work on the pre-commencement stage of a Design Guide Supplementary Plan, and delegates the formal publication of a 'notice of commencement' to the Director of Inclusive Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing at the appropriate time.

Members Working group

30. To ensure that the new Local Plan has broad Member support across the political spectrum, from its inception to adoption, it is considered essential to have Member involvement.
31. To facilitate that aim, a cross-party working group acting as a consultative and advisory group is proposed, providing ongoing debate / dialogue as the emerging Local Plan progresses. It would remain that substantive decisions and updates to the Local Plans progress would be reported through to place-making board, CMT and Planning

committee, as appropriate. For the avoidance of doubt, key decisions on Local Plan progress will remain with Cabinet and Council.

32. The group would be politically balanced and based on the current composition of the Council. It would consist of the following;
 - Seven elected members
 - Based on the current political balance, include three Labour members, three Conservatives members and a representative from the Thornaby Independent Association.
 - Representation on the group will be via nominations from group leaders
 - Membership of the group will be reviewed annually through the Council's AGM to maintain political balance
33. The group would be supported at officer level by the Planning Services Manager and Principal Planning Policy Officer with support and input from other officers responsible for producing elements of the evidence base or policies as appropriate. It is envisaged that the group would meet on a quarterly basis, with the potential for more frequent meetings should there be a requirement, depending on the stage of the Local Plan.
34. As the new Local Plan system requires a new plan to be produced every 5 years, it is anticipated that the working group is likely to be required beyond this new Local Plan.

Resource Implications

35. An existing budget for the Local Plan preparation has been agreed and at this stage there are no additional Local Plan costs associated with commencing plan-making under the new system.
36. The Local Plan will continue to be progressed by the current resources of the Planning Services team which will remain under review to confirm that sufficient capacity and resource remain available to ensure delivery is achieved. As detailed in paragraph 7 at this stage, authorisation is sought to proceed through the various preparatory steps to enable progression towards Gateway 1 only. However, to achieve timely progress in line with statutory requirements and 30-month timetable, future delegations to Officers will be necessary at various stages of the plan making process. Further reports and requests for those delegations will be made to Cabinet/Council at the appropriate stages.
37. Additionally cross service support on the production of the plan and associated evidence base will be provided as necessary.
38. Members should also be aware that the Secretary of State has powers to intervene in the plan making process should the relevant milestones not be achieved and that satisfactory progress is not being made

Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

39. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken, and due regard will be given to Section 149 of the Equality Act as the Local Plan progresses.

Corporate Parenting Implications

40. The report does not contain any corporate parenting implications.

Financial Implications

41. The production of a new Local Plan, associated evidence base can be met from existing budgets.

Legal Implications

42. The new plan-making system has introduced new legislative requirements which the Stockton on Tees Local Plan will need to be progressed against.

43. In line with the Council's constitution, plan making system is the sole responsibility of full Council

44. The Local Plan is subject to a statutory procedure and is open to legal challenge.

Risk Assessment

45. The development of a new Local Plan is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/Councillors

46. A new Local Plan will introduce a series of planning policies which will apply and inform decision making across all wards in the Borough.

Background Papers

- National Planning Policy Framework
- National Planning Practice Guidance
- Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026
- [New local plan-making system roadmap - GOV.UK](#)
- [30-month local plan process: an overview - GOV.UK](#)

Name of Contact Officer: Simon Grundy

Post Title: Planning Services Manager

Telephone number: 01642 528550

Email address: simon.grundy@stockton.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 – LOCAL PLAN TMEABLE (DRAFT)

Activity	Indicative start date
Notice of intention to commence plan preparation	June/July 2026
Start of the 'scoping consultation'	October 2026
End of 'scoping consultation'	November 2026
Publication of Gateway 1 self-assessment	Feb/March 2027
Plan preparation period	March 2027 – Feb 2029
Consultation on 'proposed local plan content and evidence' starts	September 2027
Consultation on "proposed local plan content and evidence" ends	Mid October 2027
Gateway 2 Submission	November 2027
Consultation on "proposed local plan" starts	October 2028
Consultation on "proposed local plan" ends	December 2028
Gateway 3 Submission	February 2029
Submit examination	March 2029
Adoption	September/October 2029

DRAFT



APPENDIX 2– STOCKTON ON TEES LOCAL PLAN – MEMEBRS WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE (DRAFT)

Role and Purpose of the Local Plan Working Group

1. This Local Plan working group is being established to support the development of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.
2. The Local Plan must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and be informed by the available evidence gathered.
3. Members will be asked to share their knowledge and insights of Stockton on Tees as a whole and help create an informed local plan, which aims to meet the needs of the Borough and benefits all areas our communities.
4. The Working Group is advisory and has no decision-making powers. Its purpose is to aid greater understanding of issues and policy development.
5. The Local Plan working group will;
 - Consider and comment on documents that relate to the Local Plan including (but not restricted to) policy options, draft policies and evidence studies prepared to support the Plan.
 - Identify potential gaps in the evidence base, assist in helping to develop the outputs of technical work and other information into policy development.
 - To monitor progress on the preparation of the Local Plan

Membership of the Local Plan Working Group

6. The group will comprise of seven elected members and be broadly apportioned in line with the political balance of the Council.
7. Membership will be identified by the group leaders of the respective parties. Group leaders are encouraged to try and ensure there is a balance in the geographic representation
8. The Working Group will agree the Chair
9. The Chair shall be responsible for the effective conduct of meetings and ensuring clear conclusions are reached.
10. Members appointed to the Working Group are expected to make every effort to attend meetings and where they are unable to do so, appoint a substitute. In addition they will be expected to;

- Promote engagement with the Local Plan process particularly with local community groups, residents and stakeholders
- Engage with their political groups, ensuring that all members are kept informed on the local plan progress
- Be proactive in contacting officers to resolve any points of confusion ahead of the meeting

11. The lead officer for the working group will be the Planning Services Manager and supported by the Principal Planning Policy Officer. Items will be prepared and presented to the Group by Officers from the Planning Policy team and officers from the Council when relevant.

Local Plan Working Group - Process and Principles:

12. The Members be supported by officers and consultants as appropriate.
13. The Working Group will support the development of a new Local Plan to ensure progress is made in a timely manner and meets the statutory timeframes and associated Gateways.
14. The focus of the Working Group is on key issues for the Local Plan, not all related detailed issues.
15. Meetings to be held on a quarterly basis or as may be otherwise be required
16. Meetings are not open to the public, but outcomes from the Working Group will be made available to all Members as appropriate.
17. Any associated papers (reports, resolutions, minutes etc.. should be treated as confidential unless it is stated / agreed otherwise, or the information is already in the public domain.
18. Confidential information should not be shared with other parties, including other Councillors and outside organisation.

DRAFT



This page is intentionally left blank

Response to Questions at Council

• **What work has been undertaken on the Local Plan since January 2024?**

Since the January 2024 report, further details around the new plan making system have been awaited. Following the General Election, the Government confirmed their commitment to a new streamlined plan making process and extended the deadlines for submission of plans under the older system, also known as legacy plans. The January 2024 Council report sets out why Officers considered a new Local Plan under the emerging plan making system was considered the appropriate route.

As detailed in the report, the new regulation for plan making came into force on the 25th March 2026.

In the period since January 2024, an Officers 'Local Plan Working Group' has been stood up which includes a variety of representatives who will feed into the new plan making process. The group reports into the Councils Project Management Office and associated governance arrangements.

Alongside these arrangements, Officers have scoped out requirements to support the Local Plan process and reviewed the guidance produced by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). This has resulted in the development of a draft Project Initiation Document (PID) and use of PAS's 'readiness checker' both of which will be required to inform the Council's entry into Gateway 1.

With regards to developing the evidence base to support the new Local Plan, to date the following has been undertaken;

- a) traffic surveys have been commissioned, those which have already been completed have also informed an update to the Councils highway model.
- b) A review of the Councils Local Wildlife sites is underway via the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
- c) Conservation Area Appraisals are also well underway (also see question below)
- d) Work on consultation tools and formation of a consultation database to keep interested parties updated on the progress of the local plan.

• **The original recommendation sought to commence work in advance of the new Local Plan process, why wasn't this original resolution enacted?**

As detailed above, the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 came into force on 25 March 2026. This introduces the new regulatory framework for the preparation of Local Plans.

Crucially, until the legislation was introduced it was not possible to commence the local plan under the new plan making system. The regulations also set out some dates where specific milestones must be met, such as;

- Serving a notice of intention to commence plan making by 31 December 2026
- Entering Gateway 1 by 30 April 2027, and no sooner than 4 months before serving the notice of intention.

The regulatory framework for plan making and those above mandatory requirements were not known in January 2024 and subsequently there is no authorisation from Council to undertake those statutory steps.

Consideration at the Council meeting on the 20th May 2026 was therefore the earliest opportunity the relevant approvals could be sought from Council, in order that the required statutory stages can be met.

As set out above, significant progress has been made in scoping the local plan and the evidence gathering, overseen by the Officer Working Group.

- **What is the status of and what consultation has occurred on the conservation area appraisals**

The Council has eleven conservation areas across the Borough and work commenced on reviewing those conservation areas through conservation area appraisals in 2024.

At this current time, nine of the conservation area appraisals have been completed.

Due to planned works within Yarm and Stockton town centres, a decision was made to leave those appraisals until last, however, the Yarm Conservation Area Appraisal is nearly complete and work will then begin on the Stockton Conservation Area Appraisal later this year.

A quick review will be undertaken of those conservation area appraisals produced earlier on, with a consultation on those taking place as a whole, in due course.

- **Paragraph 31 – should committee read council**

This was a typing error and has been corrected for the June 2026 report

- **Members working group and Terms of reference**

The decision to create a Member Working Group must be taken by Council and it was appropriate to seek approval to create the group at the same meeting where approval was sought to formally commence the process under the new regulations.

The terms of reference enclosed within the report are draft and it will be for the Members Working Group to comment and agree on at the first meeting. They were drafted to assist Members in gaining an understanding into the broad purpose of the group.

Reference to the Chair being from the administrative party was simply a reflection, by officers, of the previous arrangements within earlier versions of the Members Working Group and it will be for the group to collectively decide upon the Chair.

Legal advice has been sought regarding Membership of the group and there is nothing to legally prevent Members of Planning Committee from sitting on the Members working group. Consideration will need to be given by any Member sitting on either or both groups to manage any potential conflicts of interest.

Whilst Members of the Working Group will be encouraged to share updates across their political groups, in some cases there will be the potential for sensitive information to be shared. Members will need to act appropriately to ensure confidential information is not shared.

- **Delegations referenced at para 36, are they the same as the report or additional**

Additional delegations will be required, in order to meet with the 30 month timeframe for producing a new Local Plan. However, at this stage all the associated approvals and delegations within the report allow Officers to progress matters through the 'getting ready' stage only.

A further report to Council will follow in early 2027, which will seek Authorisation to enter 'Gateway 1' and seek further delegations to begin the plan making process.

As Members will be aware with the Boroughs Local Elections taking place next May, there is also the need to factor in the pre-election period within those timescales to ensure that the statutory backstop dates can be achieved.

For clarity, Officers intend to undertake a phased approach to securing delegations to progress the plan making process, ensuring that Council has oversight at the relevant stages.

- **Save Yarm Petition**

Officers are aware of the 'Save Yarm' petition and it has been discussed at the Officers Local Plan Working group. The petition will be taken to the Member Working Group, if agreed to be established, as agreed at Council.

Although matters raised within the Yarm Housing petition are noted, potential land allocations and policy designations across the Borough (including housing) would fall into Gateways 1 and 2 of the Local Plan process.

As detailed within the report, what is being sought at this stage is approval to undertake the various steps as part of the 'getting ready' stage, ahead of entering 'Gateway 1' early in the new year.

This page is intentionally left blank