

Bassetlaw Local Plan 2026 – 2045

Scoping Consultation

September 2026



Bassetlaw
DISTRICT COUNCIL
— North Nottinghamshire —

Contents

Introduction	3
Why are we producing a new Local Plan?	3
Changes to the national planning system	3
East Midlands Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)	5
Neighbourhood Planning	6
Change to Supplementary Planning Documents	6
Bassetlaw Local Plan 2045 progress	6
Strategic Environmental Assessment/Habitats Regulations Assessment	7
Purpose of the Scoping Consultation	7
What are the key considerations for our Local Plan?	11
Spatial Strategy	11
Economic Growth	12
Housing	13
Town Centres	14
Rural Area	16
Place-Making	17
Natural and Historic Environment	18
Climate Change	20
Transport and Infrastructure	22
Draft Bassetlaw Engagement Strategy	25

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the first stage of consultation in the preparation of the Council's new Local Plan. Bassetlaw'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 It will not include minerals and waste planning matters. These are addressed by Nottinghamshire County Council, the minerals and waste planning authority.
- 1.3 This stage of the local plan preparation process follows the publication of the Notice to Commence the Local Plan and the publication of the Local Plan Timetable, both of which were issued on 11 June 2026.
- 1.4 Local Plans are the basis of England's planning system, shaping how places grow and develop. They set out where new homes, jobs, infrastructure, and community facilities will be located, and provide clarity for residents, businesses, and developers about what changes to expect in different parts of the district.

2. Why are we producing a new Local Plan?

- 2.1 The current Local Plan was adopted by the Council in May 2024. We have a statutory duty to prepare a Local Plan and keep it under review every 5 years. A new Plan is needed to provide a strong planning framework to maximise opportunities for communities, businesses and the environment from two regional growth areas within Bassetlaw; at the Trent Valley Supercluster and Explore Park (part of the East Midlands Investment Zone), and to align with changing national planning policy.

3. Changes to the national planning system

- 3.1 The government has introduced a new Local Plan system under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. It has fundamentally changed the process for preparing Local Plans, to speed it up and to deliver more succinct documents that are easier for people to use.
- 3.2 The Council will be producing a new style Local Plan under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026. This means that our new Local Plan will be produced within a 30-month formal period and will be in a predominantly digital format.
- 3.3 By starting the new Local Plan process now we will be in a much stronger position to have a new Plan for the Bassetlaw area by 2029 helping to manage impacts on and maximise opportunities for communities.
- 3.4 Since the current Plan was adopted the Government has changed the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), most recently in August 2026, which will have a direct impact on how we plan for Bassetlaw's future growth. Key changes include:

National Decision-Making Policies

- 3.5 The NPPF (2026) includes National Decision-Making Policies. These are standardised national policies that are designed to cover planning issues that are applied regularly in the consideration of planning applications. New local plans should not duplicate, substantively restate or be inconsistent with the content of national decision-making policies. But the introduction of national decision-making policies provides an opportunity for the new local plan to focus on detailed planning matters that are important locally. Examples will be highlighted in section 10.

Changes to increase housing supply

- 3.6 In December 2024, the Government announced major changes to the way that local housing needs – the annual housing figure each area must deliver - is calculated. National planning policy introduced a new mandatory standard method which applies a percentage increase to the existing stock of housing in each council area. This means most councils, including Bassetlaw, now have higher housing targets.
- 3.7 Under this new approach Bassetlaw's minimum local housing need has increased to 643 dwellings per annum, a 19% increase on the 540 homes per annum required in our adopted Local Plan. We can still plan for 540 homes per annum until the current Local Plan is 5 years old (2029). Then we must plan for the standard method figure.

Promoting economic growth

- 3.8 National policy requires the Local Plan to meet the needs of a modern economy. This could include identifying suitable locations for clusters, networks and sites to support knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries and the infrastructure and facilities to support their growth such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics. The plan should also make provision for the expansion or modernisation of other businesses of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth.

Managing climate change

- 3.9 Plans are required to support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risks and coastal change. The Plan should give substantial weight to the benefits associated with improving energy efficiency of existing buildings and securing renewable and low carbon energy through new development.

Vision-led approach to transport provision

- 3.10 National policy now requires a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable places that realise opportunities from the existing transport network and pursue integrated opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport.

Greater emphasis on healthy communities

- 3.11 A Local Plan must enable and support healthy lives, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

Greater commitment to prioritising development on brownfield land

- 3.12 There is a renewed commitment in national policy to prioritising the use of brownfield land - sites that have previously been developed - for new development. This approach is intended to encourage regeneration of urban areas but in Bassetlaw this could also include larger brownfield sites in the rural area.

4. East Midlands Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)

- 4.1 Bassetlaw is part of the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA). The Mayoral Combined Authority is a Strategic Planning body under the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 and will lead on the preparation of a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for the East Midlands. This will set out the overarching spatial framework for the East Midlands long-term growth and the major infrastructure required to support it.
- 4.2 Our Local Plan will need to be in general conformity with the SDS. Once adopted, the SDS will form part of the development plan for the Bassetlaw area and carry full weight in decision-making.
- 4.3 The SDS is at a very early stage. The Government has confirmed that emerging Strategies should not delay the preparation of Local Plans, but it will be important to ensure that the Council fully engages in the preparation of the SDS. We are already working closely with EMCCA and neighbouring authorities as they prepare their own Local Plans, ensuring consistency in evidence base preparation where possible, and ensuring that our respective plans will be well placed to help deliver the Spatial Development Strategy.
- 4.4 EMCCA have already published the East Midlands Growth Plan (2025), which will inform the production of the SDS. The [Growth Plan](#) identifies seven Strategic Growth Areas as the focus of growth and change within the East Midlands. Four cover Bassetlaw: Trent Valley Supercluster, Canal Corridor (including the East Midlands Investment Zone), Heartlands and The Loop.
- 4.5 Two of these contain spatial growth projects seen as priorities to deliver regional growth and change. Our Local Plan will need to provide local planning policies that contribute to the delivery of the following regionally significant growth areas and projects:

Trent Valley Supercluster: three spatial growth projects are identified:

- West Burton B Power Station - STEP Energy Fusion Prototype
- Cottam Former Power Station
- High Marnham Former Power Station

Canal Corridor: one spatial growth project at:

- Explore Park, Worksop (Investment Zone)

5. Neighbourhood Planning

- 5.1 The Localism Act 2011 gave communities the right to shape their local area through the preparation of neighbourhood plans. These plans empower communities to document the spatial characteristics and development needs of their local area and translate them into planning policies. The issues addressed by neighbourhood plans are distinctly local in scope, intended to supplement but not duplicate or contradict with national, regional and local planning policy. Once adopted, neighbourhood plans form part of the Development Plan and have full weight in decision-making.
- 5.2 The development of neighbourhood plans is well-established in Bassetlaw, with 27 adopted [All neighbourhood plans: listed | Bassetlaw District Council](#). The proactive culture of community-led planning is also supported by [Know your Place | Bassetlaw District Council](#), an engagement tool devised by the Council to support communities to identify and document their spatial priorities. The new Plan will look to neighbourhood plans and Know Your Place to better understand key planning issues and opportunities that may exist in different parts of Bassetlaw.

6. Change to Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 6.1 Our current Local Plan is supported by nine [Supplementary Planning Documents | Bassetlaw District Council](#) which provide additional policy guidance on different planning topics. These include for design codes, planning obligations, affordable housing, biodiversity net gain, trees, health impact assessment, houses in multiple occupation, householder extensions and managing recreational impact at Clumber Park SSSI.
- 6.2 SPDs are no longer able to be produced in the new plan-making system. We will therefore need to consider whether there is detail from our adopted SPDs (which remain a material consideration in decision-making until the new Local Plan is adopted) which can be embedded in the new Local Plan.

7. Bassetlaw Local Plan 2045 progress

- 7.1 The Council published a Notice of Intent to Commence a new Local Plan and the Local Plan Timetable on 11 June 2026. Before we can formally start the plan-making process the Council must undertake this Scoping Consultation.

- 7.2 The scoping consultation is an opportunity for communities and stakeholders to give views at a very early stage about what the new Local Plan should include and to understand how communities and stakeholders would like to be engaged on the Plan.
- 7.3 The Call for Sites is the second opportunity for the Council to gain an understanding about what land is available for development. The first Call for Sites was undertaken in June-September 2025.
- 7.4 Full details of the timescales for producing the new Local Plan are set out in the Council's [Local Plan Timetable | Bassetlaw District Council](#). This will be kept up to date throughout the period our new Plan is being prepared.

8. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) / Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 8.1 Proposed plans, policies and strategies must be subject to a robust, high-level process to evaluate their potential environmental impact prior to adoption. This is usually undertaken through an SEA. Within the new planning system, the Government is intending to replace SEA with Environmental Outcomes Reports. However, at the current time these requirements have not been formalised through regulations and, as such an SEA is still required.
- 8.2 The requirement for a broader Sustainability Appraisal incorporating social and economic, as well as environmental considerations, has been removed.
- 8.3 As a result, the SEA will be integrated within an Equalities Impact Assessment, and a Health Impact Assessment to ensure the wider impacts of the Local Plan are carefully considered and addressed.
- 8.4 An HRA assesses whether the Local Plan will have a significant adverse effect on the designated features of one or more nature sites afforded the highest level of protection in the UK: Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites which are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. None of these sites are within Bassetlaw but some are located close to the district's boundary so we must consider the new Plan's impact upon relevant sites.
- 8.5 Additionally, the Sherwood Forest 'prospective potential' SPA (ppSPA) boundary extends into the district at Clumber Park SSSI. Natural England recommends a precautionary approach to any plans which could affect the ppSPA. For the current Local Plan, Natural England advised that assessment upon the Sherwood Forest ppSPA should be undertaken separately, as a 'shadow HRA'. The same approach will be applied to the new plan.

9. Purpose of the Scoping Consultation

- 9.1 The purpose of the Scoping Consultation is to provide the community and stakeholders with the opportunity to give views at the start of the plan-making

process about what the new plan should contain and how future local plan engagement should be carried out.

- 9.2 The new Local Plan will include a vision and objectives for Bassetlaw over a 15 year period. It will also include 10 measurable outcomes to help us monitor progress towards the vision. An initial SWOT Analysis overleaf has been undertaken to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within Bassetlaw, providing a structured, objective way to understand the context of the district and help inform the vision for the new Local Plan.
- 9.3 The SWOT analysis has been drawn from our baseline which provides the current picture of the district. It includes:
- Our planning dashboard which shows baseline data in an interactive GIS form
 - [Authority Monitoring Reports | Bassetlaw District Council](#) which provide up to date planning data about how well the current Local Plan is working and any planning issues that may exist
 - Infrastructure Capacity Baseline Assessment which sets out the current infrastructure provision in the district.
 - [Vision 2040](#) (the Council's corporate plan) sets out the Council's priorities for the next few years
 - Community views have been taken from:
 - Adopted neighbourhood plans [All neighbourhood plans: listed | Bassetlaw District Council](#), and
 - Know Your Place activities [Know your Place | Bassetlaw District Council](#)
- 9.4 Section 10 provides more detail about the content of the SWOT analysis, structured around key spatial planning themes. It is not intended to cover every point of the SWOT analysis in detail but to provide a starting point for feedback. Each theme has one or more questions for you to provide your feedback.
- 9.5 Section 10 also gives an indication about the new evidence the Council intends to use to inform different parts of the new Local Plan.
- 9.6 Our Engagement Strategy is in Section 11. It explains how we will engage communities and stakeholders at each stage of the plan-making process. It asks you for your views about how you would like to be engaged in future.

Strengths • Well defined geographic housing and economic market area. • Consistently strong housing and employment land delivery rates. • Good small or medium housebuilder activity in rural areas. • Housing is relatively affordable compared to other parts of the UK. • Strong labour market and diverse portfolio of employment sites and premises, from regionally important strategic employment sites to small scale rural employment. • Two regional growth areas at Trent Valley Supercluster and Explore Park, including four regionally significant growth projects. • Availability of several substantial brownfield sites. • Strong provision of main town centre uses within the town centres and neighbourhood centres. • High Street Rental Auction reducing town centre vacancy rates. • Strong north – south connectivity via A1 and East Coast Main Line and east - west via A57, A631 and Sheffield-Lincoln rail line. • One station on the East Coast Main Line at Retford with direct services to London. • Good access to major nearby towns and cities by road/rail. • Rich natural assets including Clumber Park SSSI, as well as Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites. • Extensive historic environment including over 1000 listed buildings and 33 conservation areas, many within villages. • Over 10,000 ha of woodland, including 600 ha of ancient woodland, almost double the average for England. • Good access to parks and open spaces in most settlements. • Significant neighbourhood plan coverage and actively-engaged communities. • Strong sense of community identity and local pride.	Weaknesses • Land values are lower than many places in the County, limiting viability, especially in rural locations and for brownfield land. • Mismatch between housing stock and need, including for smaller and older households, particularly in rural communities. • Housing affordability challenges, especially for younger people and first time buyers. • Average weekly wage in Bassetlaw is much lower than the national average (in 2025 it was 11.5% less than the national weekly wage). • Lack of skilled employees available to support some industries. • Higher than average proportion of residents aged 65+, and a projected decline in families and working age residents risks undermining the long term sustainability of some services. • Significant life-expectancy gap (c.9.7 years for males and 10.8 for females) between those living in areas of high and low deprivation. • Some parts of the district are within the 35% most deprived areas nationally, 13 Lower Super Output Areas are within the 20% most deprived in England. • Higher childhood obesity rates than the national level. • Parts of the district lack infrastructure to support new housing/businesses, including highways capacity constraints on local and strategic roads/junctions • Poor road and public transport connectivity, particularly within the rural area, alongside a limited cycle network, increasing car dependency. • Loss of community facilities (shops, pubs, post offices, community spaces) in smaller settlements. • Limited full fibre broadband connectivity in parts of the district, including the rural area. • Declining species and habitats, reflecting national trends. • Increasing loss of best and most versatile agricultural land to development. • Increasing visitor numbers to natural assets such as Clumber Park may increase pressure on these sensitive landscapes.
Opportunities • Diversify the type and tenure of housing to meet identified needs.	Threats • Development viability and market uncertainty risks reduce infrastructure contributions from developers.

• Explore the potential for areas in the district to meet a strategic employment need. • Build on recent economic success in the district and increase future supply chain opportunities and inward investment. • Create a range of jobs and secure social value through growth at Trent Valley Supercluster and Explore Park. • Grow the visitor economy to benefit businesses and communities. • Plan strategically for new and improved transport infrastructure to and within the Trent Valley Supercluster to improve regional and local connectivity for jobs/freight. • Improved frequency of public transport alongside enhanced active travel could reduce car dependency and traffic. • Plan strategically for new infrastructure ensuring growth supports improved facilities and services. • Build upon the district's national electricity grid connectivity to secure renewable energy provision in appropriate locations as part of the district's transition to net zero. • Explore options for local renewable energy networks and partnerships, to mitigate and adapt to climate change by producing electricity with a lower impact. • Protect and enhance the natural environment, landscape and historic character of the district through high quality new development. • Harness the district's green infrastructure, open space and active travel networks to improve physical and mental wellbeing. • Through major development inform the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. • Secure long-term, sustainable benefits for ecosystem functions, water quality and food resilience, farming and climate change across the district including the Trent Valley Supercluster.	• Achieving higher housing targets in a challenging economic climate, with material and labour supply constraints. • Residential market capacity and absorption rates. • Skills and labour shortages and a growing gap between high and low paid jobs. • Decline of town centres from a changing economy (retailing and other main town centre uses). • Ageing population increases pressures on health, social care and emergency services with implications for labour supply. • Capacity of the rural area to accommodate new development, particularly the Trent Valley Supercluster. • Cumulative impact on infrastructure, unless mitigated through comprehensive infrastructure planning. • Limited access to wider public funding to enhance local infrastructure. • Perception of crime and anti social behaviour can disincentivise investment and positive use of public spaces. • Dispersed settlement pattern within a large district makes consistent service provision challenging. • Potential decline of rural communities through service closures (shops, pubs) and a lack of housing choice, particularly smaller and affordable homes. • Proliferation of solar development may lead to the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. • Pressure to ensure new developments are sustainable and resilient in the face of climate change, including managing flood risk. • Environmental impacts from recreation on designated national and local wildlife sites.
--	---

10. What are key considerations for our Local Plan?

SPATIAL STRATEGY

- 10.1 Changes to national policy present both challenges and opportunities for the distribution of growth in Bassetlaw. Meeting the needs of a modern economy, supporting a transition to net zero and providing for a new housing target means we need to make the most efficient use of land, using previously developed land where possible.
- 10.2 National policy emphasises the value of re-using brownfield land for development. This is particularly important in town centres where the re-use of previously developed or underused land and buildings can enhance town centre vitality.
- 10.3 The new Plan can make notable gains in terms of a brownfield-first approach. Bassetlaw has several large brownfield sites which are promoted for regional growth. These include the three former coal fired power stations within the Trent Valley Supercluster at West Burton, Cottam and High Marnham, as well as Explore Park (within the East Midlands Investment Zone).
- 10.4 The opportunity to positively re-use these substantial sites and others could contribute to meeting a range of needs. Even so, it is unlikely that all the district's needs can be met on previously developed land. The new Plan will need to carefully manage competing demands for land so we can balance and prioritise the need for homes, jobs, clean energy and infrastructure in the most appropriate places, to help minimise unplanned growth and the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and to protect our natural and built historic environment.
- 10.5 Developing brownfield land can provide an opportunity to remediate degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land, leaving the environment and water resources, in a better position. Remediation and redevelopment can be challenging and can involve overcoming significant cost and legal constraints, which can slow development and infrastructure unless significant investment is in place to support wider growth ambitions.
- 10.6 Optimising the use of land includes identifying minimum densities for housing proposals. National policy requires higher densities in accessible places like town centres and near public transport. Identifying minimum densities elsewhere is also recommended; we could use adopted design codes to inform our approach. Optimal use of land could also include mixed-use development so that homes, jobs and community facilities are located close together, making it easier for residents to access everyday services without using the car.

QUESTION 1

Do you think there are any challenges or opportunities we should be aware of in relation to efficient use of land?

Evidence base

- *Settlement Role and Function Study* – builds up a picture of the settlements in Bassetlaw and how they relate to each other.
- *Settlement Hierarchy Study* - identifies and groups together settlements that perform similar roles and puts them into a hierarchy which will influence the distribution of growth.
- *Land Availability Assessment (LAA)* – a technical study which assesses the suitability, availability and deliverability of land for development in the district
- *Agricultural Land assessment* – a technical study that assesses the amount and extent of best and most versatile agricultural land in Bassetlaw
- *Trent Valley Supercluster Masterplan Framework* – a spatial masterplan to inform planning of the Trent Valley Supercluster area.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

- 10.7 Ensuring sufficient employment land is available is critical to support Bassetlaw's ongoing economic success. We need to ensure that employment land meets the needs of inward investors as well as changing business needs and is well located and accessible, helping residents to live and work within Bassetlaw.
- 10.8 The Trent Valley Supercluster and Explore Park provide an opportunity to progress economic growth within these areas. But to capitalise on the scale of economic potential available our new Local Plan will need to identify employment sites elsewhere to support the supply chain and other industries required to meet the needs of a modern economy.
- 10.9 It is equally important that local employment needs are met. Providing a range of employment and mixed-use sites is essential to foster the growth of existing businesses and for new, innovative start-ups to prosper. A clear policy framework is also required to support a thriving and diverse rural and visitor economy.
- 10.10 However, we will need to balance future employment needs with additional homes planned for over the new plan period.
- 10.11 It is important that residents are able to capitalise on the variety of economic growth opportunities emerging within the district. The current Local Plan requires an employment and skills plan from major employment development, with guidance within the Planning Obligations SPD. We will need to consider whether this requirement should be extended to cover different types of economic development and if the planning guidance should be embedded into new Local Plan policy.

QUESTION 2

Are there any places where new jobs could be located in Bassetlaw?

You might want to consider places with good transport links, access to homes, or where new businesses could help regenerate underused or neglected land or help support underutilised local services.

QUESTION 3

Do you think there are any other challenges and opportunities we should be aware of in relation to economic issues?

Evidence base

- *Land Availability Assessment (LAA)* – a technical study which assesses the suitability, availability and deliverability of land for development in the district
- *Brownfield Register* – monitors all available brownfield sites.
- *Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)* - evaluates future local needs and demands for housing (market and affordable) and employment land in the district
- *Bassetlaw Logistics Study* - assesses the future demand for strategic warehousing and logistics facilities
- *Trent Valley Supercluster Masterplan Framework* – a spatial masterplan to inform planning of the Trent Valley Supercluster area.
- *Planning Obligations SPD (2025)* – provides guidance about how commonly used planning obligations will be secured.

HOUSING

- 10.12 Recent changes to national policy present both challenges and opportunities. The increased housing target of 643 homes per annum means we must identify additional land beyond current allocations, prioritising brownfield land wherever possible. While the existing Local Plan target remains valid until 2029, the new Plan will need to meet the higher housing target after that to minimise unplanned growth.
- 10.13 Sites allocated in the current Local Plan/neighbourhood plans which have not developed will remain allocated for development to meet the housing numbers set out in current plan. Looking forward, it is likely that a proportion of the homes with planning permission now, and some of those completed by the time the new Local Plan is adopted will count towards our new housing target.
- 10.14 Providing for new homes creates an opportunity to meet Bassetlaw's long term housing needs, ensuring a range of housing options are available to meet the needs of all residents, including securing more affordable housing, for rent and ownership. It also brings the prospect of being able to secure more homes for an ageing population and those with specialist needs, helping to meet residents changing needs over time, enabling residents to retain independence and access more specialist support where necessary.

- 10.15 However, challenges relating to increased pressure on existing infrastructure and services will need to be addressed and planned for thoroughly.
- 10.16 The new Local Plan will provide an opportunity to understand and plan for the land and housing needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, ensuring their accommodation needs are appropriately met within Bassetlaw.

QUESTION 4

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.

QUESTION 5

What do you think we need to consider when planning for more homes in Bassetlaw?

Evidence base

- *Land Availability Assessment (LAA)* – a technical study which assesses the suitability, availability and deliverability of land for development in the district
- *Brownfield Register* – monitors all available brownfield sites.
- *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA)* - identifies current and future housing needs for Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities
- *Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)* - evaluates future local needs and demands for housing (market and affordable) and employment land in the district
- *Bassetlaw 5 Year Housing Land Supply Statement* – annual assessment identifying a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against the housing requirement
- *HMO Study (2025)* – evaluates the need for Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in the district.
- *Affordable Housing SPD (2025)* – provides guidance about the way the Council will secure affordable housing from new development
- *Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD (2025)* - provides guidance about the way the Council will manage HMOs in the district

TOWN CENTRES

- 10.17 Town centres across the UK are experiencing significant change. Once focused on retail activity, they now face pressures from online shopping, out-of-town retail parks and changing work patterns, all of which have reduced footfall and increased vacancy levels.

- 10.18 Bassetlaw reflects this national picture. Its town centres have seen rising vacancy rates, the loss of major retailers and banks, and long-term empty units. In some places, this has been compounded by lower incomes and reduced spending power, which have weakened the traditional retail offer and contributed to an over-reliance on lower-value uses.
- 10.19 The move away from retail-dominated high streets towards more inclusive, flexible and sustainable places provides an opportunity for Bassetlaw's town centres to continue to evolve. Each town centre is supported by a place-distinct strategy. Prepared through extensive consultation with communities, local businesses and key stakeholders these provide a robust basis to inform future policy direction within the new Plan.
- 10.20 Ensuring each town centre has a strong housing and employment offer will also help to broaden the use of the town centres and increase the level of activity. This will contribute to developing each centre into vibrant, multifunctional hubs that support economic, social and cultural life.
- 10.21 Changes to the Use Class Order in 2020 have made it much harder to control development of traditional town centre uses - 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. This gives greater flexibility for business owners' but means there is less control over uses and monitoring can be difficult.
- 10.22 Bassetlaw has historically seen pressure for out-of-centre retail sites. The current Local Plan has sought to address this issue and direct development to the Town Centres and/or central regeneration areas, along with a wider network of local centres across the district, which a local policy must continue to address.

QUESTION 6

Do you think there are any other challenges and opportunities we should be aware of in relation to Bassetlaw's town centres?

Evidence base

- *Retail and Town Centre Health Check and Assessment of Commercial Potential (2024)* – health check assessments for each town centre and an assessment of commercial potential for different town centre uses.
- *Worksop Town Centre Masterplan Vision (2020)* – sets out a vision for the regeneration of Worksop central area.
- *Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan (2024)* - a community-led plan that sets out local planning policies for the use and development of land within Retford town centre
- *Harworth & Bircotes Town Centre Masterplan Vision (2025)* – sets out a vision for the regeneration of Harworth & Bircotes central area.

- *Retail Needs Assessment* – assesses future retail needs of residents to determine if additional convenience and/or comparison floorspace is required.
- *Town Centre boundaries review* – an assessment of the current town centre boundaries to determine if they are performing effectively and remain fit for purpose

RURAL AREA

- 10.23 Our increased housing target presents significant challenges and opportunities for the rural area. The level of land currently allocated within the Local Plan will not be sufficient to meet the new housing target. This reinforces the need to continue prioritising and maximising the development of brownfield sites. However, the further release of land will be required.
- 10.24 In doing so, it creates an opportunity to contribute to sustainable rural communities', by ensuring a range of market, affordable and specialist housing options, including smaller properties are available to meet residents' needs. However, challenges relating to increased pressure on existing infrastructure and services will need to be addressed and planned for thoroughly.
- 10.25 Some parts of the rural area, including the eastern part of the district have limited public transport provision and access to a connected cycle and pedestrian network. This is compounded by limited full fibre broadband coverage in some areas. This means rural communities can be reliant on the car, but some may also be at risk of physical and social exclusion. Through growth, improving physical and digital access to services within the rural area to create a more consistent distribution of facilities will need to be considered and addressed.
- 10.26 Bassetlaw's rural area includes a range of different landscape types and distinctive rural villages, set within a working rural landscape. The new Plan will need to balance options for growth whilst minimising potential impacts upon the quality and openness of different landscapes, protecting the local character of settlements, and maintaining and enhancing farm sustainability and supporting domestic food production.

QUESTION 7

Do you think there are any other challenges and opportunities we should be aware of in relation to Bassetlaw's rural areas?

Evidence base

- *Made Neighbourhood Plans* - [All neighbourhood plans: listed | Bassetlaw District Council](#)
- *Know Your Place* - [Know your Place | Bassetlaw District Council](#)
- *Settlement Profiles (2026)* – summarise the size, population and local service provision within each rural settlement

- *Infrastructure baseline assessment* – identifies the current capacity of physical, community and green/blue infrastructure within the district
- *Agricultural Land assessment* – a technical study that assesses the amount and extent of best and most versatile agricultural land in Bassetlaw
- *Settlement boundary review* - sets out the methodology for reviewing and defining settlement boundaries and considers if existing boundaries are fit for purpose
- *Green Gaps Assessment* - evaluates and reviews the extent of open land between settlements to prevent coalescence

PLACE-MAKING

- 10.27 The current Local Plan has a comprehensive set of policies and guidance to secure high quality design. However, the new Local Plan must align with national policy and the Government's Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance (January 2026), which introduces a more standardised approach to design of development.
- 10.28 The new Local Plan is required to set out a clear design and placemaking vision based on an understanding of local character and density. There is an opportunity to embed key details from the Bassetlaw Design Code SPD within policy and consider whether area/site-specific design guides, codes and masterplans are needed. This could be for town centres, regeneration areas, key development sites and/or locations with potential for intensification.
- 10.29 The new Plan provides a significant opportunity to continue to address local health and well-being needs and help reduce health inequalities by shaping the wider determinants of health, including the quality of housing, access to sustainable transport, availability of healthy food, and the condition of the built and natural environment.
- 10.30 National planning policy places strong emphasis on ensuring development is supported by appropriate community and public service infrastructure, such as shops, post offices, pubs, libraries, healthcare, schools, and community spaces. These services help sustain neighbourhoods, particularly in rural areas where provision can be limited, and the loss of a single facility can have a significant impact upon the health, well-being, and social and economic life of our communities.
- 10.31 Sustaining provision can be challenging in the current economic climate and in some cases, proposals that increase the numbers of residents or occupiers may help secure the long-term operation of local amenities achieving wider community benefits.
- 10.32 National policy says that where the local plan does not set out locally specific standards for open space relevant national green infrastructure standards should be used. Using national standards is unlikely to reflect the local picture in a rural area like Bassetlaw and is likely to see opportunities to provide and/or improve open space to meet community needs lost. There is a significant

opportunity to use up-to-date, locally tailored evidence to inform the policy approach to guide future investment and planning decisions for open space.

- 10.33 Health Impact Assessments (HIA) inform the design of larger housing developments (50+ homes) maximising the benefits housing development can contribute to healthy place-making, with guidance set out in an SPD. We will need to consider whether this requirement should be extended to cover different types and size of development and if the planning guidance should be embedded into new Local Plan policy.

QUESTION 8

Do you think there are any other challenges and opportunities we should be aware of in relation to place-making?

Evidence Base

- *Made Neighbourhood Plans* - [All neighbourhood plans: listed | Bassetlaw District Council](#)
- *Baseline Infrastructure Capacity Assessment* – a technical assessment detailing the existing level of infrastructure provision within the district.
- *Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)* – will identify all infrastructure projects coming forward and those necessary to accommodate levels of proposed growth.
- *Open Space Needs Assessment (2023)* – provides an assessment of all the district's open spaces. This document is updated annually through the Authority Monitoring Report.
- *Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (2026)* – the PPOSS provides an assessment of the district's playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities.
- *Bassetlaw Design Code SPD (2025)* – provides guidance about the approach to the design of new development
- *Planning Obligations SPD (2025)* – provides guidance about how commonly used planning obligations will be secured.
- *Built Sports Facilities Strategy* – an assessment of all the district's indoor sports facilities.
- *Rapid Health Impact Assessment SPD (2025)* - provides guidance about how the rapid health impact assessment should be used.
- *Trent Valley Supercluster Masterplan* - a spatial masterplan to inform planning of the Trent Valley Supercluster area.

NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- 10.34 The new Local Plan will need to protect and enhance the natural and historic environment while planning positively for future growth and meeting identified needs.
- 10.35 National policy asks that we set out a positive strategy for the historic environment, including for local assets most at risk, conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets on the local list.

- 10.36 Through the new Plan there is an opportunity including through design codes and masterplans to draw on the contribution the historic environment can make to the character and quality of development and identify opportunities to safeguard and enhance heritage assets in the long-term.
- 10.37 Opportunities exist within the new Plan to support the conservation, enhancement and recovery of landscapes, sensitive waterbodies, and habitats and species of principal importance. In doing so, we will continue to work across boundaries to maximise opportunities at a landscape scale including for the Humberhead Levels and the Trent Valley. We will also consider options to manage landscape sensitivity at a local level, recognising the value that landscape can bring to the character and distinctiveness of our settlements, particularly in the rural area.
- 10.38 It is important that green/blue infrastructure is embedded within the Trent Valley Supercluster and Explore Park. This will ensure that these regionally significant growth areas make a notable contribution to a resilient, well connected green/blue infrastructure network and deliver multiple benefits to the natural and historic environment and for communities.
- 10.39 National legislation requires new development to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), which ensures that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state post-development. BNG must be delivered either on the development site or at an off-site location.
- 10.40 National policy says that local plans should only exceed the statutory net gain requirement where this is for specific site allocations and is fully justified and deliverable. We have an opportunity to consider an alternative requirement in some locations but must balance the cost of securing environmental benefits with that for other infrastructure to ensure development will remain deliverable.
- 10.41 Where BNG cannot be delivered on-site, developers can buy off-site BNG units from habitat banks to meet the requirement. It is positive we have one habitat bank in Bassetlaw helping to ensure reinvestment in Bassetlaw's biodiversity can be secured. However, we need more habitat banks and offsetting areas within the district to manage impacts from the new Local Plan.
- 10.42 The Clumber Park SSSI, forming part of the Sherwood Forest ppSPA has been identified as being at risk of harm from recreational impact associated with housing growth from the current Plan. Potential impacts from the new Plan upon the SSSI and other protected sites will need to be considered and addressed.
- 10.43 With the removal of SPDs from the planning system, decisions will be needed on how best to re-present existing guidance on the natural and historic environment within the new Local Plan.

QUESTION 9

Do you think there are any other challenges and opportunities we should be aware of in relation to the historic and natural environment?

Evidence Base

- *Conservation Area Appraisals and management plans* – detailed reports providing an overview of the history and development of each area and defines which specific features contribute towards their character and distinctiveness.
- *Bassetlaw Heritage at Risk Strategy and Register (2022)* - sets out the Council's approach to tackling heritage 'at risk' across the district. The accompanying register provides an update on buildings/sites previously identified at risk
- *Non-designated Heritage Assets in Bassetlaw (2019)* – sets out the local list
- *Unregistered Parks and Gardens (2017)* – historic parks and gardens of local historic importance
- *Bassetlaw Heritage Assessment* – assesses the historic environment and considers the impacts of the Local Plan growth upon it.
- *Historic Environment Record* – a record of the historic environment including archaeological sites in the district
- *Landscape Character Assessment (2009, review 2022)* – assesses the varied landscape within Bassetlaw and contains information about the character, condition and sensitivity of the landscape through nine Policy Zones
- *Green Gaps Assessment* - evaluates and reviews the extent of open land between settlements to prevent coalescence
- *Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)* – establishes and maps priorities for nature recovery within the County.
- *Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)* – assesses the impact of and mitigation for Local Plan growth on key designated nature sites.
- *Bassetlaw Design Code SPD (2025)* - provides guidance about the approach to the design of new development
- *Biodiversity Net Gain SPD (2025)* – provides guidance about the approach to securing biodiversity net gain
- *Managing Recreational Impact at Clumber Park SSSI SPD (2025)* - provides guidance about the approach to managing impacts at Clumber Park
- *Trees and Development SPD (2025)* - provides guidance about the approach to managing trees and hedgerows through new development
- *Trent Valley Supercluster Masterplan Framework* - a spatial masterplan to inform planning of the Trent Valley Supercluster area.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- 10.44 The Council committed to reaching a net zero carbon target locally by 2045 on 21 September 2023. This means we must carefully consider the environmental impacts of any new development in Bassetlaw.

- 10.45 The new Local Plan will need to support the district's ongoing transition to a net zero future. This includes promoting energy-efficient design of buildings and spaces, renewable and low-carbon energy generation, and patterns of development that reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, by encouraging walking and cycling both within sites and to surrounding areas.
- 10.46 Equally important is ensuring that development is resilient to climate impacts. We will need to consider increased risks of flooding, overheating, and water stress by directing development away from areas at the highest risk of flooding, by encouraging design approaches that respond to higher temperatures and more extreme weather events, and by supporting sustainable drainage systems and promoting water efficiency.
- 10.47 Particular consideration will be given to the quality of water resources, which are highly sensitive to climate change and development pressures. Opportunities exist through development, including through the Trent Valley Supercluster to promote the sustainable use of water and ensure that impacts upon the quality of the River Trent and its tributaries is considered and addressed.
- 10.48 The Trent Valley Supercluster is expected to support and develop innovative clean energy technologies including a nuclear fusion prototype (known as STEP) and hydrogen. We have a significant opportunity through this regional growth area to explore with partners the provision, use and potential upscaling of innovative clean energy technologies to meet identified needs.
- 10.49 There is also the prospect of exploring options for local renewable energy networks and for co-locating potential customers and suppliers of surplus heat or energy to secure lower impact electricity within the Trent Valley area.
- 10.50 Over the last few years Bassetlaw has experienced an increase in the number and extent of renewable energy proposals, particularly for solar energy either through Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects or as smaller proposals. This is linked to the extent of national electricity grid infrastructure within the district, including national switching stations at the three former power station sites within the Trent Valley. Connections can make renewable energy more viable but the potential impacts upon local character can cause concern for our rural communities.
- 10.51 National policy explains that there is a national need for clean energy. This carries significant weight in the consideration of development proposals. We will need to balance the need for clean energy with other demands for land, particularly in the rural area, by considering appropriate locations for further clean energy developments, including for solar energy.

QUESTION 10

How do you believe planning and development could help support climate action and clean energy in Bassetlaw?

Evidence base

- *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* – evaluates and maps all current and future flood risks from rivers, the sea, surface water, groundwater, and reservoirs, guiding sustainable land use and development decisions
- *Bassetlaw Sequential Test* - applied during preparation of a Local Plan to steer the allocation of development sites towards areas of lowest flood risk
- *Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Position Statement (2026)* – sets out the position for locally determined renewable and low carbon energy proposals
- *Agricultural Land assessment* – a technical study that assesses the amount and extent of best and most versatile agricultural land in Bassetlaw
- *Trent Valley Supercluster Masterplan Framework* - a spatial masterplan to inform planning of the Trent Valley Supercluster area.

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 10.52 By road, Bassetlaw benefits from a well-connected highway network, including the A1 running north–south and key A roads such as the A57, A60, A631 providing strategic routes across the district. These also provide connections to surrounding towns, cities within the East Midlands, Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire regions. But local capacity constraints exist at key junctions and roads particularly at peak times.
- 10.53 By rail, Retford rail station provides direct access to the East Coast Mainline and London within 2 hours, whilst Worksop, Retford and Shireoaks stations have good connections to the Sheffield-Lincoln railway line, with Worksop also having a direct rail link to Nottingham. But rail access outside of these areas is more limited although infrastructure exists enabling options to be considered to improve rail connectivity within the district.
- 10.54 Public transport from Worksop and Retford bus stations give access to the wider district as well as to nearby towns within the East Midlands, Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire. But parts of the rural area have less frequent coverage particularly on evenings and weekends.
- 10.55 The local cycle network in Worksop and Retford makes cycling between home, work and education possible, whilst National Cycle Network routes 6 and 647 connect Worksop to Sheffield, Nottingham and Lincoln. A public rights of way network also crosses the district. Coverage elsewhere is limited to on-road cycling and pavements where they exist.
- 10.56 We are required by national policy to incorporate a vision-led approach to transport planning, to create better integration of travel modes, to support the objective of creating healthy, connected and inclusive places. Through the Local Plan there is an opportunity to align growth and transport infrastructure provision and secure improvements across a variety of modes of transport to help improve and manage identified impacts. To do this we need to:

- Work closely with the East Midlands Combined County Authority, National Highways and the Local Highways Authority to help deliver the goals, policies and priorities in the emerging Local Transport Plan
 - Through design, ensure high quality, sustainable connections and access to development, with priority given to walking, cycling and access to bus services and railway stations, so growth is supported by sustainable and accessible travel options
 - Coordinate development, including at the Trent Valley Supercluster and Explore Park with the provision of new and improved transport infrastructure and services
 - Manage the impact of additional vehicle trips generated by new development, including their individual and cumulative effects on congestion, road safety and air quality, particularly in relation to reducing carbon emissions from transport in line with national requirements and our local climate commitments
 - Plan local parking provision carefully so it supports development needs while making efficient use of land and encouraging sustainable travel choices.
- 10.57 By locating development in sustainable locations the impact of development can be better managed and mitigated. We must continue to ensure that planning of new development considers existing infrastructure capacity and when identifying the most appropriate areas for growth, recognise opportunities to secure infrastructure improvements.
- 10.58 Improving infrastructure capacity is not limited to transport, community and green infrastructure. We must also make sure that growth is supported by appropriate utilities infrastructure such as for water supply, waste water, drainage, electricity and digital connections.
- 10.59 Without forward planning, it can be difficult to secure utilities connections and other forms of infrastructure at the right time particularly for larger developments, developments that use significant water/energy or for growth within the rural area where existing provision may be more limited. We must continue to work with infrastructure partners to make sure that infrastructure capacity is understood from an early stage. This will enable all options for infrastructure provision to be considered.
- 10.60 To help deliver infrastructure in a timely manner, we will need to consider all potential sources of funding. This can include use of planning obligations (developer contributions), the Community Infrastructure Levy, partner funding e.g. the County Council as the Local Education Authority receive Government Basic Needs Funding for school improvements, and other funding sources such as from EMCCA or Homes England. We do not expect that one source of funding will deliver infrastructure in its entirety.
- 10.61 The new Local Plan must also be able to adapt to changing circumstances. We must make sure that policies are flexible so we can continue to secure needed infrastructure even when the viability of development is an issue.

- 10.62 In addition, the Local Plan will need to be able to respond to future technological and societal change. This could include new approaches to service delivery and the infrastructure associated with digital technology, data storage, and the transition to low-carbon energy systems.

QUESTION 11

How do you believe planning and development could help support the provision of infrastructure and services in Bassetlaw?

Evidence base

- *Bassetlaw Transport Study* – assesses the current transport network, including for road, rail, public transport, walking and cycling; assesses the impact Local Plan growth is expected to have and will identify mitigation to manage identified impacts.
- *Retford Walking and Cycling Audit (2021)* – assesses the walking and cycling network in Retford and identifies opportunities for improvement
- *Infrastructure Funding Statement* – an annual statement of receipts and expenditure secured by developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and a summary of key projects delivered. [Annual Reports and Infrastructure Funding Statements | Bassetlaw District...](#)
- *Planning Obligations SPD (2025)* – provides guidance about how commonly sought planning obligations will be secured.
- *Affordable Housing SPD (2025)* – provides guidance about how affordable housing will be secured from new development.
- *Baseline Infrastructure Capacity Assessment* – a technical assessment detailing the existing level of infrastructure provision within the district.
- *Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)* – will identify all infrastructure projects coming forward and those necessary to accommodate levels of proposed growth.
- *Local Plan Viability Assessment* – assesses whether proposed development typologies are deliverable when all development costs, landowner and developer returns are taken into account, including contributions towards infrastructure.
- *Trent Valley Supercluster Masterplan Framework - Framework* - a spatial masterplan to inform planning of the Trent Valley Supercluster area

11. Draft Bassetlaw Engagement Strategy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This draft Engagement Strategy sets out how the Council will engage communities and key stakeholders in the preparation of the new Bassetlaw Local Plan. It explains who will be engaged, when engagement will occur throughout the plan-making process, and how consultation will be delivered.
- 1.2 It has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 and forms part of the evidence base required at Gateway 1. It identifies when public participation will occur in the plan-making process, sets out how documents and information will be made available, explains how representations will be invited and considered; and provides for the publication of summaries of engagement and outcomes.
- 1.3 The strategy sets out the key features of how the Council will undertake early scoping consultation to inform the scope, key issues and evidence base of the Local Plan. It provides the approach for consultation on proposed plan content and supporting evidence, as well as formal consultation on the proposed Local Plan prior to submission. Compliance will be demonstrated through Consultation Summary Reports which will be prepared at each stage, and the production of a final Consultation Statement to be submitted alongside the Plan. This Strategy will be kept under review and updated where necessary, following each stage of consultation.
- 1.4 The strategy also supports the effective delivery of the plan-making process by providing a structured and proportionate framework for engagement across all stages of the Local Plan. It also ensures that opportunities for participation are clear, transparent and accessible, in line with statutory requirements relating to the availability of documents and information and aligned with the Gateway process. In addition, it establishes a consistent approach to recording, analysing and reporting consultation outcomes within Consultation Summary Reports and the final Consultation Statement.
- 1.5 Through this approach, the Council will ensure that:
- Stakeholders and communities are able to influence the content of the Local Plan at key stages
 - Consultation is proportionate, transparent and evidence-led
 - A clear and auditable record is maintained demonstrating how consultation has informed plan-making
 - All relevant statutory requirements are met, reducing the risk of delay or challenge at Gateway assessments and independent examination

Statement of Community Involvement

- 1.6 The Council's adopted (SCI) sets out the current statutory framework for consultation in planning matters. For plan-making, the SCI sets out the

Council's approach to engagement for plans prepared under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

- 1.7 This Engagement Strategy has been prepared to support the newer requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 which underpin the production of a 'new-system' local plan, prepared under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023). It will replace the plan-making section of the SCI. Guidance for engagement in development management and neighbourhood planning is available on the Council's website, meaning the SCI is no longer in use.

Understanding Our Communities

- 1.8 The approach to engagement has been designed to be meaningful, proportionate, and in line with the principles set out in the Government's 30-month local-plan making process. National guidance emphasises a digital-first approach, but the Council recognises the diverse nature of our communities and the varied barriers they can face to participating in the plan-making process. So our approach will not be digital-only.
- 1.9 Different communities may face different barriers to engagement, including access to digital services, awareness of the planning process, or the ability to take part in formal consultation. This strategy recognises these differences and sets out how engagement will be adapted to ensure a more inclusive approach.

Governance

- 1.10 The Council will manage engagement on the Local Plan in a clear and coordinated way, ensuring that activities are well organised, transparent, and aligned with the wider work of the Council.
- 1.11 The Planning Policy Team will lead the day-to-day delivery of engagement. This includes organising consultation activities, working with stakeholders, and making sure that all feedback is recorded and considered as the Local Plan develops.
- 1.12 The team will also be responsible for publishing consultation materials and sharing summaries of the responses received at each stage, so that people can see how their views have been taken into account.
- 1.13 Engagement will be coordinated with the Council's wider communications and engagement activity to ensure a consistent and joined-up approach. This will include:
- Using the Council's website and consultation platforms as the main way for people to take part
 - Promoting consultations through appropriate media channels
 - Making sure opportunities to get involved are accessible to all communities

- 1.14 This approach helps avoid duplication and ensures that engagement is clear, consistent and it is easy to take part.

Role of Elected Members

- 1.15 Elected Members play an important role in overseeing the Local Plan and its engagement. This includes:

- Acting as the ‘voice of the community’ representing the interests of their wards and the wider Bassetlaw community
- Helping to shape the direction of the plan at key stages
- Taking part in workshops and briefings
- Considering the feedback received through consultation
- Making decisions on the publication of draft and final versions of the Local Plan

- 1.16 This ensures that the Local Plan reflects local priorities and that decisions are informed by community views. Updates and decisions will be reported to Members via all Member briefings, regular reports, briefings and engagement with Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

2. Engagement Principles

- 2.1 Engagement in the preparation of the Local Plan will be guided by the following principles:

- **Digital-first but not digital-only:** Digital methods will be used as the primary channel for engagement, supported by targeted in-person activity to ensure inclusivity.
- **Inclusive and accessible:** Engagement will be designed to reach a broad and representative cross-section of the community, ensuring that all groups have the opportunity to participate.
- **Proportionate and targeted:** Activities will be focused on the key decisions at each stage of plan-making, ensuring that engagement is meaningful and aligned to the scope of the issues being considered.
- **Stage-based and timely:** Consultation will be undertaken at the defined stages of plan-making, including scoping, plan content and evidence, and the proposed Local Plan, in line with regulatory requirements.
- **Transparent and accountable:** The Council will clearly communicate the purpose of each consultation and publish summaries of representations received, demonstrating how responses have informed the development of the Local Plan.
- **Evidence-led and auditable:** All engagement activity will be recorded, analysed and reported to provide a clear audit trail supporting Gateway assessments and independent examination.
- **Coordinated and efficient:** Engagement will be managed in a coordinated way across the Council and its partners, aligning with wider communications activity and avoiding duplication.

- **Collaborative and partnership-based:** The Council will work with partners, infrastructure providers and stakeholders to support effective engagement and inform plan development.

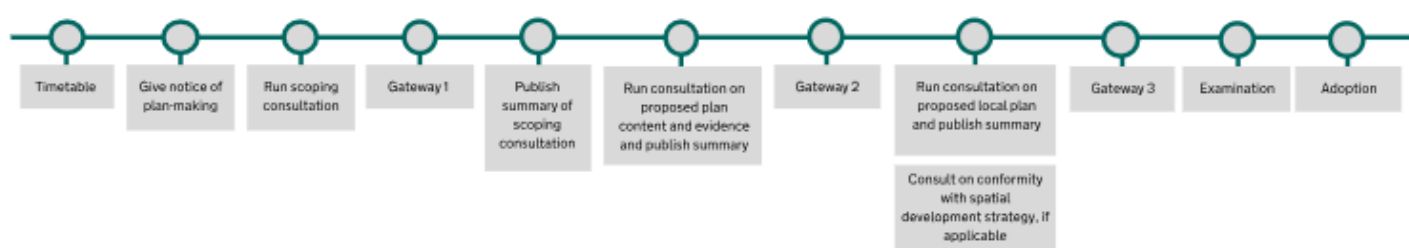
2.2 These principles ensure that engagement is effective and inclusive, but compliant with statutory requirements and capable of demonstrating how consultation has informed the preparation of the Local Plan.

3. Engagement Activity

3.1 Engagement activities will be aligned with the following key plan-making stages.

- **Scoping stage:** Early engagement to identify key issues, priorities and evidence requirements. This will include open consultation and targeted engagement with stakeholders.
- **Plan content and evidence stage:** Consultation on the proposed direction of the Local Plan, including spatial options, themes and supporting evidence.
- **Proposed local plan stage:** consultation on the complete draft local plan prior to submission for examination. At each stage, the Council will clearly communicate the purpose of the consultation and the decisions being informed

Tasks in local plan-making where the sequence is required by law



3.2 Engaging underrepresented groups marks a significant challenge for local authorities and may require innovative methods to encourage participation where traditional methods have failed to be effective. Section 5 provides an overview of the engagement techniques to be used at each plan-making stage, including techniques to be used to better engage with underrepresented groups.

Engagement with Site Promoters

3.3 The availability of sites to meet development needs is a fundamental component of plan-making and the Council seeks to work positively and proactively with the development industry to assess, select and refine development opportunities.

3.4 The Council will carry out call for sites exercises at different points throughout the plan-making process with the aim of ensuring all stakeholders have sufficient and equal opportunity to represent their interests and will ensure that

all parties are treated consistently and fairly. It is essential that the council is able to consider all available land options to develop a draft plan and to enable this, call for sites will be widely promoted.

- 3.5 The Council will publish clear guidance on submission requirements, assessment criteria and timescales to support this process. All representations will be recorded and considered in a structured and impartial manner, and feedback will be provided through published reports rather than through ongoing individual negotiation.
- 3.6 To ensure fairness and avoid any perception of preferential treatment, the Council will only enter into discussions on the merits of individual sites at appropriate stages within the process. Engagement will be focused on clarifying process, evidence requirements, timescales and informing the development of site-specific policies in order to secure the best outcomes for communities.
- 3.7 This approach will help maintain the integrity of the plan-making process, ensure a level playing field for all promoters, and support robust, evidence-based decision-making that can withstand independent examination.
- 3.8 Whilst the council cannot prevent promoters from submitting sites at any point within the plan-making process, the council will not consider and assess proposals after the publication of the draft plan. Any sites submitted after this point will be recorded as omission sites and retained for presentation to examination if required.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

- 3.9 The Council may use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist with the administration and analysis of consultation responses, preparation of summary reports, accessibility improvements and other engagement activities. AI will not determine planning policy or replace officer judgement. All outputs generated using AI will be reviewed by suitably qualified officers before being relied upon. The Council will ensure that any use of AI complies with data protection legislation, information governance requirements and the Council's corporate AI policies.
- 3.10 The Council will consider representations on their planning merits and not on the basis of whether AI has been used. To ensure that officers are able to focus fact checking responses, including whether legal references are correct, respondents are encouraged to disclose where AI has been used to generate significant parts of a submission.

4. Recording representations

- 4.1 To ensure that engagement is meaningful, transparent and supports the preparation of a robust Local Plan for each stage of consultation, the Council will:

- Record and report representations in a transparent way in a Consultation Summary report/Consultation Statement
- Set out how responses have been considered and have informed the development of the plan
- Maintain a clear and proportionate audit trail of engagement activity
- Keep the local plan timetable up to date

These outputs will form part of the evidence base for Gateway assessments and independent examination.

5. Plan Programme and Timeline

Stage	Key Points	What will the Engagement Strategy seek to achieve?	Possible Activities
Preparation and Notice Period	- Prepare and publish local plan timetable. - Publish Notice of Intention to Commence Plan-Making. - Hold Scoping Consultation: engagement on what the Local Plan should contain and how communities and stakeholders want to be involved (this consultation will take place over a 6-week period). - Publish Consultation Summary report - Gateway 1 self-assessment	- To officially notify the public on the Council's intention to commence plan making. - To invite views on what the plan should contain and feedback on key issues that should be addressed. - To invite views about communities and stakeholder would like to be engaged with the plan. - To encourage engagement during the scoping consultation.	- Make documents available for public inspection at the council offices and local libraries during period of consultation. - Information posted on the Council's Local Plan Review webpage and Planning Policy Consultations page. - Local Plan baseline dashboard will provide planning data about the current picture of the district. - Targeted social media posts to promote the consultation. - Send emails to statutory bodies, specific and general consultees and all registered to the Council's Planning Policy database - Publish legal notice in local media and on Council's website - Some in person events in order to encourage engagement of underrepresented groups. - Venues should be located near public transport and have a good geographic spread. This ensures that the events are accessible to a variety of people. - Posters will be distributed across the district to advertise the events. - Use existing council forums, parish forums, and business forums to promote the consultation. - Promote the consultation in Council newsletters. - Local Plan Explainers to be added to the Council's website and available at events. - Local Plan Explainer video to be added on the Council's YouTube channel. - Online and hard copy comment forms will be provided, be used online and in print to encourage engagement. - QR codes will enable access to the online consultation form. Freepost address will make responding accessible to all.

Stage	Key Points	What will the Engagement Strategy seek to achieve?	Possible Activities
Proposed plan content and evidence and publish summary.	- Run consultation on proposed content and evidence and publish summary (this consultation will take place over a 6-week period). - At the same time, consult the East Midlands Combined County Authority as the spatial development strategy authority to seek their views on if the proposed local plan is in general conformity with the spatial development strategy. - Produce Consultation Summary report - Gateway 2 Planning Inspectorate assessment.	- Building on the work done at the scoping stage, to gather views to help establish the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and content of the local plan. - To encourage as many residents/organisations as possible to engage with the material and to gather their views. - To create a Consultation Summary to inform the final version of the plan.	- Make documents available for public inspection at the council offices and local libraries during period of consultation. - Information posted on the Council's Local Plan Review webpage and Planning Policy Consultations page. - Targeted social media posts to promote the consultation. - Local Plan baseline dashboard will provide planning data about the current picture of the district. - Publish legal notice in local media and on Council's website - Send emails to statutory bodies, specific and general consultees and all registered to the Council's Planning Policy database - Some in person events in order to encourage engagement of underrepresented groups. - Venues should be located near public transport and focus on areas of growth/change. This ensures that the events are accessible to a variety of people. - Posters and leaflets will be distributed across the district to advertise the events. - Use existing council forums, parish forums, and business forums to promote the consultation. - Promote the consultation in Council newsletters. - Update Local Plan Explainers on the Council's website and make available at events. - Use Local Plan explainer videos on the Council's YouTube channel. - Online and hard copy comment forms will be provided, to be used online and in print to encourage engagement. - QR codes will enable access to the online consultation form. Freepost address will make responding accessible to all. - If site allocations are included, site notices will be posted around each site to raise awareness and encourage feedback.

Stage	Key Points	What will the Engagement Strategy seek to achieve?	Possible Activities
• Submission of the Plan	• Consultation on the Proposed Local Plan: consultation on the full draft Local Plan (this consultation will take place over an 8-week period). • Finalise the plan • Produce Consultation Summary report • Gateway 2 Planning Inspectorate assessment	• To encourage engagement with the formal consultation on the Draft Plan. • To identify any proposed changes in response to comments made.	• Make documents available for public inspection at the council offices and local libraries during period of consultation. • Information posted on the Council's Local Plan Review webpage and Planning Policy Consultations page. • Local Plan baseline dashboard will provide planning data about the current picture of the district. • Publish legal notice in local media and on Council's website • Targeted social media posts to promote the consultation. • Send emails to statutory bodies, specific and general consultees and all registered to the Council's Planning Policy database • Use existing council forums, parish forums, and business forums to promote the consultation. • Promote the consultation in the Council newsletters. • Update Local Plan Explainers on the Council's website and available at events. • Use Local Plan explainer videos on the Council's YouTube channel. • The comments form used will be designed to encourage online use but also allows them to be printed and used by those who are unable to access online. • Online and hard copy questionnaires will be provided in order to gather consultation responses. • Forms and questionnaires will be designed to be accessed and used in a simple way in order to encourage engagement. • QR codes will enable access to the online consultation form. Freepost address will make responding accessible to all.
• Examination	• A Local Plan examination involves an independent assessment conducted by a Planning Inspector to	• To inform people of the Local Plan examination process, and timetable.	• Update Local Plan Explainers • Add a Local Plan Examination webpage to the Council's webpage • Targeted social media posts to promote the examination.

Stage	Key Points	What will the Engagement Strategy seek to achieve?	Possible Activities
	determine if the draft local plan is legally compliant and sound.		Send emails to statutory bodies, specific and general consultees and all registered to the Council's Planning Policy database
Finalisation and adoption of digital plan	- The Inspector issues the Inspector's Report. - The Local Plan is then placed before the local authority. By law, the decision to formally adopt the Local Plan must be taken by a vote of the full council. - After the vote, an Adoption Statement must be published along with the final Local Plan.	- To communicate the Inspector's decision on the local plan by adding it to Inspector's Report section on the Council's website. - To communicate and advertise the Council's consideration and intention to adopt the Local Plan.	- Information posted on the Council's Local Plan Review webpage - Targeted social media posts to promote the publication of the Inspector's Report and the local authority decision. - Publish Adoption Statement where appropriate in the local media and on the Council's website - Send emails to statutory bodies, specific and general consultees and all registered to the Council's Planning Policy database - Update Local Plan Explainers on the Council's website - Use Local Plan explainer videos on the Council's YouTube channel.

6. Monitoring and Review

- 6.1 This is the Council's proposed engagement strategy for Bassetlaw as it begins to prepare a new Local Plan. It includes a range of engagement techniques and activities in an attempt to better engage with a diverse audience including underrepresented groups.
- 6.2 The Council will monitor engagement activity throughout the preparation of the Local Plan to ensure that it is effective, proportionate and accessible.
- 6.3 This will include:
- Reviewing participation levels at each stage of consultation
 - Understanding which groups are engaging and where additional targeted activity may be needed
 - Monitoring feedback and enquiries to identify key themes or areas of concern
- 6.4 The Consultation Summary reports will be published at each stage, including summaries of representations, so that participants can see how their views have been considered.
- 6.5 Your feedback on this will help to shape our engagement strategy. We welcome your views on which of these approaches would be most effective, whether there are other engagement methods we should consider, and how we can best ensure that all communities are able to participate meaningfully in the Local Plan process.

QUESTION 12

Do you have any views on how we can best ensure that all communities are able to meaningfully participate in the Local Plan process?