



**Development
Plan for the
Royal Borough of
Windsor & Maidenhead**

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Planning for the Future – Brief Explainer



July 2026

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The aerial image of Windsor on the front cover is by Doug Harding.

A new Local Plan is being prepared

We are preparing a new local plan called the Development Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and we want to hear your views.

The Plan will help guide how the borough grows and changes up to 2045. It will influence decisions about how and where we provide for homes, jobs, transport, community facilities, the economy and the environment.

We are at the beginning of the plan-making process and the Scoping Consultation is your opportunity to help identify the issues, opportunities and priorities that should shape the new Plan. The Scoping Consultation runs from 30 July to 13 September 2026.

Whether you live, work, study or run a business in the borough, or represent a local community group or organisation, your views can help inform its future.

What is the Development Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

The Development Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead will be the main document used to guide development and land use in the borough.

A local plan is a long-term strategy that guides how an area grows and changes over the next 20 years, shaping where homes, jobs, infrastructure and green spaces are located, and how development can respond to issues such as climate change. Our new Plan will

need to look ahead to 2045 and must respond to significant changes in national planning policy.

In the UK, the planning system is “plan-led”. This means planning applications are normally determined in accordance with the development plan unless there are other “material considerations” not to, meaning it has a significant influence on how places change over time.

The Plan helps ensure that growth is planned and coordinated, rather than happening in an unplanned way.

Find Out More:

- To find out more about the current Local Plan please see the Council’s website, [Adopted local plan | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead](#)
- To understand how planning decisions are made, useful information can be found on the [Planning Portal](#) website and in government guidance, such as [Determining a planning application - GOV.UK](#).
- For more information on the relationship between planning applications and the development plan, please see the government guidance - [Plain English guide to the planning system - GOV.UK](#)
- National Planning policy, known as the National Planning Policy Framework (or NPPF), can be found on the UK Government’s website, at [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK](#).

Why do we need a new Local Plan?

The Government requires councils to prepare up-to-date local plans and plan for future growth.

Since the Borough Local Plan was adopted in 2022, there have been significant changes to national planning policy and the plan-making system. Councils are now expected to prepare plans through a new, streamlined process and plan for future development needs over a longer period.

For the Royal Borough this means:

- Planning for a significantly higher level of housing need, driven by a revised national formula, whilst recognising that we are a constrained borough
- Ensuring that growth is supported by the necessary infrastructure
- Responding to changes in national policy and legislation, including a new plan-making system and the introduction of national decision-making policies
- Preparing a plan within a much shorter timeframe (around 30 months).

What are the consequences of not preparing a Plan?

- If we do not prepare a plan, Development is harder to coordinate
- There is less local control over where development happens

- It may be more difficult to secure the right infrastructure to support communities
- There is a risk that the Government may intervene.

Find Out More:

- To find out more about the new plan-making system, please see the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) blog – [New draft guidance published to support faster and clearer local plan-making – MHCLG Digital](#)
- To understand the formula behind how our minimum housing numbers are determined, please see the Government's [Housing and Economic Needs Assessment Guidance](#).
- For more technical and detailed information on the new planning system, please see the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidance – [Create or update a local plan using the new system - GOV.UK](#)
- To find out about Spatial Development Strategies and the Government's plans for strategic planning, please see the guidance, [Factsheet: Strategic planning - GOV.UK](#) and [Areas for producing spatial development strategies - GOV.UK](#)

Our Royal Borough – A special place, important choices

The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead is a unique place to live, work and visit. Its distinctive character has been shaped over time, with each generation leaving its mark on the borough's towns, villages, landscapes and communities. Today, that legacy is reflected in the rich mix of historic places, valued green spaces, successful businesses and a strong sense of local identity that make the borough special.

Like many areas, we face increasing pressures and competing demands for land. As the borough continues to evolve, there are important choices to make about how it should grow and change. These include how to meet future needs for homes and jobs, how infrastructure should be improved, and how important environmental and heritage areas can be conserved and enhanced. Those choices will involve balancing a range of different factors and priorities.

The choices we make now will help shape the next chapter of the borough's story. The new Plan will guide how the Royal Borough grows and changes, ensuring that future generations can continue to enjoy and benefit from the qualities that make this place special.

What are we asking you about?

This consultation focuses on a number of key topics that the Plan will need to address. These are:



Building Communities

- Providing more housing including more genuinely affordable housing
- Meeting the needs of current and future residents



Caring for what matters

- Safeguarding green spaces and valued landscapes
- Responding to climate change
- Conserving and enhancing heritage and local character



Supporting everyday life

- Planning for transport, schools, healthcare and utilities
- Ensuring development is supported by necessary infrastructure in the right places



A prosperous local economy

- Planning for jobs, town centres, tourism and local businesses
- Encouraging regeneration and investment



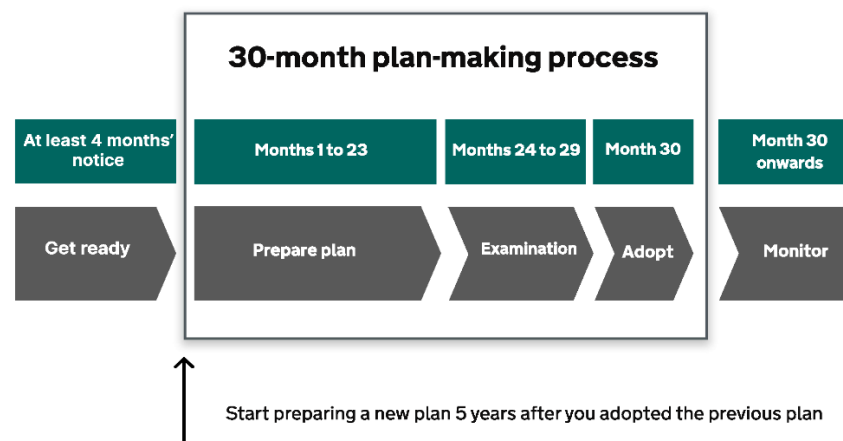
Planning for the right locations

- Deciding where development should – and should not – happen

We are very keen to understand what you think and would strongly encourage you to complete the questionnaire using your own experience and views or read the accompanying 'Planning for the Future – Key Topics' summary document first for additional background information.

How will the Plan be prepared

The Plan will be developed in stages. This process is set nationally and includes formal checks at key points.



- **Stage 1: Scoping and early engagement (now)**
We are identifying the key issues, opportunities and priorities that should shape the Plan.
- **Stage 2: Plan content and evidence**
We will prepare evidence and develop options and prepare approaches for further consultation.

- **Stage 3: Draft development plan**
We will consult on a proposed strategy, planning policies and site allocations for development and other uses.
- **Stage 4: Independent Examination**
An independent Planning Inspector will review the Plan.
- **Stage 5: Adoption**
The Council can then adopt the new Plan.

Find Out More:

- To find out more about the new 30-month plan-making process please see the government guidance, [Create or update a local plan using the new system - GOV.UK](#)
- To view the Council's new Development Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Timetable, please see the Council's website, [New Local Plan Timetable | New Local Plan | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead](#)

What stage are we at?

We are at the very start of the process. We have published a new [timetable](#) and given four months' notice of the intention to commence the preparation of the new plan. The current stage of the process is this 'scoping consultation'.

At this stage we are not proposing development sites or planning policies. We are:

- Identifying and seeking views on the key issues, opportunities and priorities that the new Plan should address, and
- Finding out what matters most to you and how we can engage with you

There is also an opportunity for you to put forward possible sites for future housing and other uses in the Council's [Call for Sites 2026](#).

How to get involved

There will be opportunities to get involved at each stage of preparing the Local Plan.

To find out:

- What stage we are currently at,
- How you can take part, and
- Sign up for updates

Visit our [consultation platform](#).

Shaping the future together

The Plan will affect everyone who lives, works or invests in the Borough.

We encourage you to get involved and help shape the future of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.