Stevenage Borough Council

Local Plan Timetable

1 Introduction

1.1 The Local Plan timetable sets out the anticipated key milestone dates for the preparation and adoption of the new Stevenage Borough Local Plan to be prepared by Stevenage Borough Council. The timetable outlines the opportunities for public and stakeholder engagement. The Local Plan timetable has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 4 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

1.2 The Local Plan timetable came into effect on 26 November 2026 and replaces the Council's Local Development Scheme, last published in June 2025. The Council published its notice of intention to commence local plan preparation in accordance with Regulation 19 (1) of the above regulations on 26 November 2026, details of which is available on our website.

1.3 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan will only cover local plan matters. It will not cover minerals and waste as Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for the preparation of planning policy for minerals and waste development in Hertfordshire.

2 Scope of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan

2.1 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2011–2031) was formally adopted by Stevenage Borough Council on 22 July 2026. This followed an independent examination in public and receipt of the Inspector's Report into the examination of the Plan, concluding that the Plan was judged to have been found 'sound'. The adoption of the Local Plan updated the previous Local Plan, adopted on 22 May 2019.

2.2 The Council is now in the process of reviewing and replacing the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2011–2031) which will set out a vision and strategy for where new housing, employment and other development alongside supporting infrastructure will take place up to the end of a new plan period. Work is underway and progress is being made. As a result of the new national guidance, our overall timetable will aim for adoption of the plan by September 2029.

2.3 The Plan will also contain local policies that are not covered by the national decision-making policies to be contained in the forthcoming National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Together, these policies will be used to determine planning applications, guiding what can be built, where, and how. The scope and content of the Local Plan will be reviewed following the scoping consultation and the subsequent local plan content and evidence base consultation.

2.4 The new Stevenage Borough Local Plan will be produced as a new style local plan under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. The Plan will be prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, which came into force on 25 March 2026, and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). In addition, the Plan will respond to the changes to the planning system through latest version of the NPPF, published on 17 August 2026. In light of preparing the Local Plan under the new plan-making system, the Plan will be prepared and adopted within 30 months once it passes through Gateway 1.

2.5 The geographical area of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan will cover the entirety of the administrative area of Stevenage Borough Council only, as detailed in the notice of intention to commence local plan preparation. The Council is not proposing to prepare a joint local plan with another local planning authority.

2.6 When the Council confirms whether it will be preparing any supplementary plans, these will be included in an update to the Local Plan timetable. For each supplementary plan, the subject matter and geographical area, site or sites that each of those supplementary plans is to relate to will be confirmed.

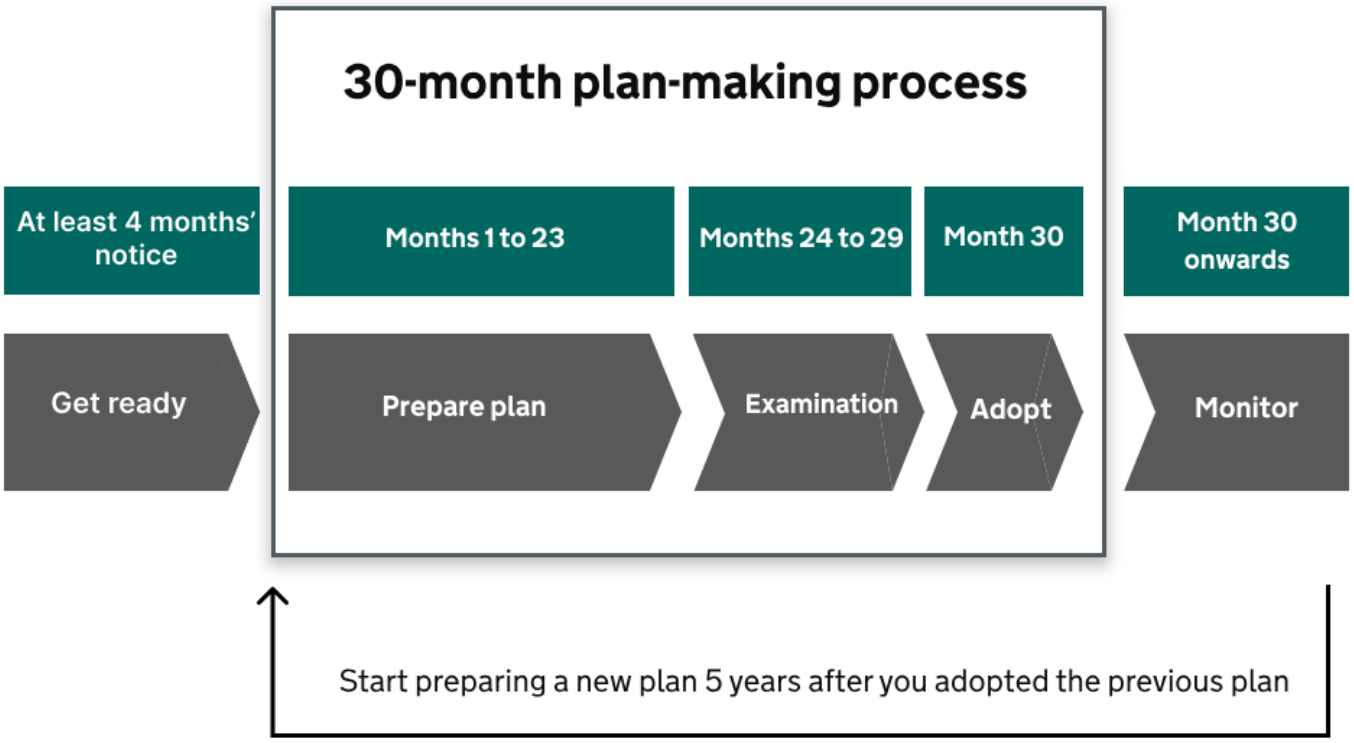
2.7 The Council must ensure that for every part of its area, the development plan includes requirements with respect to design that relates to development, or development of a particular description, which the authority considers should be met for planning permission for the development to be granted. The Council will ensure that the development plan includes requirements with respect to design to meet section 15F of the Act.

3 Timetable for the preparation of the new Stevenage Borough Local Plan

3.1 An overview of the new plan-making process is provided in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Illustration of the main stages and timings in the 30-month process (Source: GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/guidance/30-month-local-plan-process-an-overview)





3.2 The first stage is to publish the local plan timetable and notice of commencement of plan-making. The notice is a minimum 4 months' notice before formally preparing the Local Plan and the start of the 30-month period to adopt the Local Plan. The commencement of the 30-month period starts when the Council passes through Gateway 1 (publication of the self-assessment summary).

3.3 The new local plan-making system allows for **three consultations**; a scoping consultation (before the 30-month formal process begins); proposed local plan content and evidence consultation; and finally, the proposed local plan consultation (prior to submission of the proposed local plan for independent examination).

3.4 The anticipated key milestone dates for the preparation and adoption of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan are shown in Table 1 below. The timetable will be updated as soon as is reasonably practicable once the relevant event has occurred or consultation has commenced.

Table 1: Local Plan timetable for the Stevenage Borough Local Plan.

Stage	Date	Comments
Notice of Intention	26 November 2026	Formal notice that the Council intends to commence a new Local Plan.
Timetable	26 November 2026	Will be published alongside Notice of Intention.
Scoping Consultation	4 January – 15 February 2027	First consultation that covers detail on early plan content, community engagement and environmental assessment.
Gateway 1: Self-Assessment	31 March 2027	Formal commencement of 30-month process for Stevenage Borough Council.
Consultation: Proposed Local Plan Contents and Evidence	16 June – 28 July 2027	Will include Visioning document to focus the direction of the new Plan and maximise engagement in the Plan.
Gateway 2: PINS Advice	6 December 2027	The first time we meet the Planning Inspectorate to check in on progress and ensure the direction we are taking is in accordance with the soundness tests of the NPPF.
Consultation: Proposed Local Plan	26 June – 18 September 2028	This is the first time the public and stakeholders will be able to comment on the new version of the Local Plan.
Gateway 3: PINS Advice	11 December 2028	The second time we meet the Planning Inspectorate; at this time, the Plan will be scrutinised to ensure it meets the tests of soundness, iron out any outstanding issues and can be duly submitted for Examination.
Submission to Secretary of State	12 February 2029	Once Local Plan is deemed ready to submit to Government.
Examination in Public	Spring / Summer 2029	Dependent on availability of Planning Inspectors and the scope of issues to be examined, though Gateways 2 and 3 will have provided opportunity to work through this in advance.
Adoption	30 September 2029	Completion of 30-month process. Followed by 6-week legal challenge.

4 Monitoring and updating of the Local Plan Timetable

4.1 The Council will review the Local Plan timetable monthly from the date it came into effect and update it as necessary and as soon as is reasonably practicable when any changes are required.

4.2 The Council will also update the Local Plan timetable, as necessary and as soon as is reasonably practicable, including if any of the following events happen:

- Any further consultations that the Council decides to hold or if further observations and advice will be sought by Gateway 3 as necessary.
- Any key examination related events as necessary (main modifications consultation or pause of examination).
- If the Local Plan is withdrawn under section 15E of the Act or revoked under section 15G of the Act.
- Details of any supplementary plans that the Council decides to prepare.

4.3 A schedule of the amendments to the Local Plan timetable are recorded in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Schedule of amendments to the Local Plan Timetable.

Amendment No.	Date	Schedule of Amendments

5 Finding out more

5.1 You can find out more about the emerging Local Plan on our website.

5.2 The Local Plan timetable is available for inspection at Stevenage Borough Council, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 1HN during office hours and at libraries across the borough during their respective opening hours.

5.3 If you have any questions or would like further information, you can contact the Council's Planning Policy team in the following ways:

- By e-mail: Planning.Policy_SBC@stevenage.gov.uk
- By post: Planning Policy Team, Stevenage Borough Council, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 1HN.