SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Local Plan Review 2040

Gateway 1 Self-Assessment



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1. How we got ready to prepare a new local plan

1.1. Surrey Heath Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan covering the period to 2040. This will be known as the Surrey Heath Local Plan Review 2040 (LPR).

1.2. The preparation of the LPR will follow a new plan-making process introduced through the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2026 ('the Regulations'). The LPR must also be consistent with national planning policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2026 and associated guidance. The new plan-making process requires Local Plans to be prepared in 30 months which starts from the publication of a Gateway 1 Self-Assessment.

1.3. The LPR will cover the current administrative area of Surrey Heath Borough. From 1 April 2027 Surrey Heath will form part of the new West Surrey Council which will become responsible for completing the remaining stages of the local plan review process.

1.4. The following sets out the preparatory work that has been undertaken to demonstrate that the Council is ready to prepare a local plan.

1.5. Further information on the LPR can be found on our LPR webpage.

2. We published a timetable for preparing the plan

2.1. We published a timetable for preparing the Surrey Heath Local Plan on 25th June 2026. The timetable sets out when we expect to carry out the different stages and activities for preparing the LPR.

2.2. The publication of this Gateway1 Self-Assessment and the start of the 30-month process is in line with our published LPR timetable.

2.3. The Local Plan timetable has been reviewed alongside publication of this Gateway 1 self-assessment. It will be regularly reviewed and where appropriate updated.

3. We established Project Management and Governance Arrangements

3.1. Preparing a local plan is a complex process. Thinking early about how the work is planned, resourced and governed helps us monitor progress and keep the work on track as well as identifying and managing risks to delivery.

3.2. Project management is being undertaken within the Planning Policy and Conservation team. We have set out our project management and governance arrangements in a Project Initiation Document (PID) which will be used internally by officers and Members to ensure we are able to progress the LPR in line with the timetable having regard to the following:

- **Governance arrangements** –we have identified how decisions will be made at key points in the process as far as we are able up to the creation of West Surrey Council. In June 2026 the Council's Executive agreed a programme of delegated authority for progressing the LPR up to Gateway 1 as well as agreeing the LPR timetable. The Built Environment and Regulation Portfolio holder has delegated authority to update the LPR timetable;

- **Budgets and resourcing** – we have identified financial and staff resourcing for preparing the LPR as far as we are able to up to the creation of West Surrey Council;

- **Approach to engagement** – as set out in Section 4 we have consulted on our approach to engagement in the Draft Engagement Strategy;

- **Risks** – we have identified key risks to delivering the LPR within 30 months and how these risks will be monitored.

3.3. Much of the PID is likely to only be relevant until 31 March 2027 and will be updated following the creation of the West Surrey Council.

4. We planned how we will consult on the LPR

4.1. Public consultation is essential for the local plan to represent the needs of our communities. It must be easy for people to have their say in a way that works for them, so they can influence the way the area develops. By planning this early, we can ensure people are aware in advance and can get involved from the start.

4.2. We have undertaken an early Scoping consultation to seek stakeholder views on what the Local Plan should contain and how we should engage and consult on the LPR at key stages. As part of the Scoping consultation we published a Draft LPR Engagement Strategy for comments setting out our thoughts on how we propose to engage the public and stakeholders and seeking views on this.

4.3. We identified that our engagement will be guided by the following principles:

- Engage early: Invite input at an early and meaningful stage so stakeholder and community views can shape the Local Plan Review
- Inform clearly: Provide relevant and accessible information
- Work together: Co-ordinate across boundaries and organisations
- Be accountable: Show how consultation comments have been considered and explain where changes have been made to the Local Plan Review as a result
- Protect data: Respect personal privacy in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and our Planning Policy Privacy Notice.
- Stay efficient: Meet the timescales set out in the Local Plan Review timetable

4.4. We are currently analysing feedback from the consultation which will be used to finalise the LPR Engagement Strategy later this year.

5. We began scoping the content of the LPR

5.1. Scoping includes considering how well the existing local plan is working and gathering baseline information about the area. The Council is in the late stages of preparing the Surrey Heath Local Plan 2019 – 2038 and so as yet these new Policies are not in place and have not been monitored.

5.2. To gain an understanding of the development needs for the Borough we have looked at:

- Data about the Borough from sources such as the Census and Indices of Multiple Deprivation;
- Data in other plans and strategies such as the Council Strategy and the Economic Development Strategy;
- Data about local development such as housing and employment delivery and monitoring of existing development plan policies from the Authority Monitoring Reports; and,
- The requirements of national planning policy and guidance including the housing requirement that Government has identified.

5.3. Baseline information has been set out in the Surrey Heath LPR Baseline Report which was published alongside the Scoping consultation. Other evidence, in particular the Strategic Environmental Assessment below will also include baseline information to help inform the development of the LPR.

5.4. The Scoping consultation mentioned in Section 4 above asked stakeholders a number of questions to help inform the scope and content of the LPR. These included views on matters such as:

- The location of future development in the Borough and how to meet increased development needs;
- The approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- The types of new homes that should be provided;
- How the LPR can support our town, district and local centres and economic growth;
- How to ensure appropriate infrastructure is provided;

- The protection of built and natural environment assets;
- The identification of locally specific Green Belt issues; and,
- How to ensure high-quality design and make effective use of land.

5.5. The responses to the Scoping consultation are currently being analysed but will help to inform the draft Local Plan Vision and the scope of policies that will be the subject of further consultation. A Summary of Scoping consultation will be published next year setting out who we consulted, how we consulted them, the main issues raised and how the Council has responded to these.

6. We began a Strategic Environmental Assessment

6.1. In preparing the Local Plan Review we are legally required to identify, describe and evaluate likely significant effects on the environment of:

- implementing the local plan review
- reasonable alternatives, taking into account the plan's objectives and scope

6.2. This process is undertaken through a 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' ('SEA') which will consider how community, national and international environmental protection objectives and any other environmental challenges are taken into account in the plan. There is a current SEA (within a wider Sustainability Appraisal) that supports the emerging Surrey Heath Local Plan 2018 – 2038.

6.3. We are in the process of appointing consultants to undertake the first stage of the SEA process which is to prepare a Scoping Report identifying baseline data and environmental objectives. We are required to consult Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England on the SEA Scoping Report.

7. Other Progress

7.1. In addition to the statutory requirements above we have:

- Issued a Call for sites to help us identify what land may be available for development over the plan period. No decision has been made at this stage as to any sites that may be identified as being suitable for development.
- Scoped out the evidence base studies that we are likely to need to support the LPR and started to prepare or commission a number of these.
- Started key stakeholder meetings to discuss issues that the LPR needs to address.

8. How to stay up to date

8.1. If you would like to be notified when the Council consults on the next stages of the Local Plan Review please sign up for our mailing list.

8.2. Further information can be found on our Local Plan Review webpage.