

Meeting:	Executive
Meeting date:	14 April 2026
Report of:	Garry Taylor, Director of City Development
Portfolio of:	Councillor Michael Pavlovic, Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities

Decision Report: Plan-making activity and Local Plan Review

Subject of Report

1. This paper sets out a revised and accelerated approach to refreshing York's Local Plan, responding to funding opportunities, national policy context, and placing the authority in the best position to shape our spatial development ambitions in the context of new regional functions - to deliver the change that best meets our community's needs.
2. The Local Plan review will set a refreshed vision and framework for the future development of the area in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as considering how to conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and achieve well designed places.
3. York's Local Plan was adopted in February 2025. However, changes including to the plan making process and national growth targets mean that it must be refreshed. Making the change now will
 - Bring additional government funding of £108k against the total estimated cost of £1.8m to support for the process.
 - Best place us to optimise community benefits.

- Ensure growth happens at the scale and in the places that can best meet community needs.
 - Support infrastructure including transport, schools and health that must be planned, funded and delivered aligning with existing allocations.
 - Ensure we are not exposed to pressure for less well planned and lower quality outcomes for the City that are likely not optimising existing and planned infrastructure across schools, health, roads and transport.
4. To meet these objectives, the report presents a Plan-making Activity Schedule (Annex A) for the Council from April 2026, superseding previous versions of the Local Development Scheme.
 5. As part of this schedule, it includes starting a new Local Plan aligned to the new plan-making system from summer 2026 with a recommendation to formally initiate and notify of this intention by June 2026.
 6. This paper also presents the final Statement of Community Involvement (Annex C) for adoption, which sets out how we will notify and work with the community throughout the preparation of plans and through decision-making for applications.

Benefits and Challenges

7. York is operating within a rapidly changing policy, economic, social, and environmental context. National reforms to the planning system, regional strategies through the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, and evolving expectations on a complex range of issues require the Council to maintain an up-to-date spatial framework. Our local policy will be able to set an effective spatial response that optimises benefits for communities.
8. A timely review enables York to:
 - Align with national housing and economic growth objectives.
 - Integrate regional strategies, including the forthcoming Spatial Development Strategy.
 - Ensure delivery of infrastructure that supports sustainable and inclusive growth.
 - Embed the city's 10-year strategic vision within the statutory planning framework.

9. The schedule (Annex A) sets a clear work programme for these plan-making priorities. Maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan timetable is a statutory requirement; The updated schedule consequently delivers on this statutory duty. Against this, plan-making progress can be monitored, and an effective project-based delivery plan can be implemented, including consideration for resourcing. Since the Interim LDS (April 2025) we have:
 - successfully delivered the Community Infrastructure Levy, which came into force on 1 February 2026
 - Published a Validation List to support submissions of planning applications
 - Delivered to adoption 2 Neighbourhood Plans.
10. The new Schedule considers the outstanding aspects of implementation of our adopted Local Plan and builds in a Local Plan review from summer 2026. Initiating this early review is an opportunity to ensure York is strategically aligned and that local policy is responding appropriately. We will be able to embed the city's 10-Year Strategic vision and refresh our spatial approach and programme for the area. It will use adopted strategies and growth ambitions to inform how spatial planning policy can enable the delivery of our wider city vision agreed with partners before these become out of date. A refreshed plan and evidence base will also review and pay careful attention to providing an adequate supply of land to meet our growth ambitions and residents' needs, identifying what infrastructure is required, and how it can be funded and brought forward in the most efficient manner which drives most community benefits.
11. The Local Plan and the site allocations it contains, is a core part of the York Prospectus, and a refreshed Local Plan will allow us to fully embed the approaches and deliverables. We know, from undertaking an economic and social value assessment, that the value added as a result of supporting growth and economic development is £12.1bn from the prospectus alone.
12. Whilst new legislation removes the ability to adopt 'Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)', the introduction of 'Supplementary Plans' gives the potential to bring forward design policy or site allocations outside the local plan cycle. The Schedule provisionally includes a Supplementary Plan for Gypsy and Traveller provision, which could include reviewing allocations in the current plan. This could support decisions made in March 2024 regarding the

identification and benchmarking of alternative sites ahead of adoption of the next Local Plan.

13. Additionally, to maximise the value of work to date and best shape development, we recommend the suite of prioritised SPDs underway is converted into helpful non-statutory guidance. This will form a material consideration in decision-making and could remain agile should it need to be updated in response to changing legislative requirements ahead of the new plan coming into force.
14. A key challenge for programming is that the national policy landscape has changed significantly and timescales for plan-production are now set in legislation. Consequently, resourcing is a key challenge and a cross-directorate consideration. Sufficient resourcing and capacity are necessary to facilitate the effective delivery of a robust new plan. It should be noted that following the initiation of plan production, the Secretary of State (SoS) has legal powers to intervene where Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) fail to make adequate progress or where a draft plan is considered unsatisfactory. This risk can be mitigated through technical expertise and maintaining an up-to-date LDS that accurately reflects the stages and deadlines of plan preparation.
15. The revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (Annex C) reflects comments received through consultation in 2025 and the requirements of the new planning system, in order to give communities the best chances to shape proposals. For plan-making activities, a bespoke consultation strategy is required. This approach is flexible to allow for changes through the process should requirements change over time ensuring a robust and collaborative approach to engagement.

Policy Basis for Decision

National legislation

16. The plan-making activities set out in Annex A must accord with the following legislation:
 - Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
 - Planning Act 2008
 - Localism Act 2011
 - Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA 2023)
 - Planning and Infrastructure Act (PIA) 2025

- Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026
 - The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012
 - The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012
 - The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)
17. A new National Planning Policy Framework expected in summer 2026 will provide the overarching policy context, with local plans expected to avoid duplication of national policy. This will dictate the content of new plans.

Local policy and strategic framework

18. Since the preparation of the adopted Local Plan (2012-2018), there has been significant city-wide strategy development in York, articulated in the city's collective vision set out in 'York 2032: The 10-Year Plan'. The refreshed Local Plan must reflect the city's strategic ambitions as articulated in York 2032 and related strategies on climate change, the economy, health and wellbeing, transport, skills and culture. The plan will provide a coherent basis for delivering sustainable development across the city. All of the above need to shape the development plan for the city.
19. It is anticipated that as plan-making will continue to cover a broad range of issues, it will have a positive effect on ensuring the city develops spatially in a high-quality and sustainable way that corresponds to local ambitions. This can be articulated more fully through the development of the local plan review and any new neighbourhood plans.

Council Plan

20. The plan-making programme supports the Council Plan priorities of equalities, affordability, climate action and population health. Detailed alignment will be demonstrated in future reports on specific plan-making stages.

Financial Strategy Implications

21. The development of a new local plan gives rise to significant resource requirements. The costs are likely to be spread across the timetable for production between 2026-2030, fitting with the government's timetable for production of a new local plan, subject to members agreement to progress this year. Currently it is

anticipated that c£1.8m is required over the period 2026/27-2029/30 to fund:

- Additional staffing capacity
 - Supplies and services such as consultant led evidence production and Planning Inspectorate costs
 - Consultation and engagement
 - Legal support
22. Grant funding from the Government has been made available for new-plan-making, contingent to agreeing to meet key milestones in 2026; this is formal notification being announced by June 2026 and Gateway 1 completed by 31 October 2026. MHCLG has confirmed CYC will receive £108.5k to support plan-making in York. MHCLG is to confirm arrangements in due course should the timetable not be met; consequently, there is a risk of clawback of the funding if we do not meet the key milestones.
23. Further funding is necessary to facilitate the programme of plan-making activity. This is particularly required to allow concurrent action to facilitate development plans documents locally and regionally and specifically in relation to enabling production of a new Local Plan for York, inclusive of a refresh of the evidence base. The Council will also be working with North Yorkshire Council and YNYCA to co-commission evidence. There may also be further opportunity for grant funding which will be pursued should this become available.
24. Securing the funding would support meeting the requirements of the first statutory Gateway (1), which requires demonstration that *“we have a robust approach to manage, govern, resource and finance the preparation of the plan that supports the delivery of the local Plan timetable”*¹.

Recommendation and Reasons

25. Executive is recommended to:
- i. Approve and publish the Plan-Making Activity Schedule, inclusive of the Local Plan Timetable (Annex A)

¹ MHCLG: [readiness checker for gateway 1](#)

- ii. Approve formal notification of plan-making by June 2026 with delegated authority to the Director of City Development to issue the notification;
- iii. Approve the Statement of Community Involvement (Annex C)

Reason: To enable the Council to benefit from government funding for local planning authorities that commit to start their local plans by 30 June 2026 and complete Gateway 1 by 31 October 2026 in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2026 and legislative framework.

- iv. Delegate authority to the Director of City Development, in consultation with the Member for Housing, Planning & Safer Communities:
 - a. To approve and update, when necessary, a Local Plan Consultation and Engagement Strategy;
 - b. To approve updates to the Local Plan timetable, when necessary;
 - c. To approve and publish the statutory ‘scoping stage’ consultation;
 - d. To approve, publish and submit the required documents and statements for statutory Gateways 1, 2 and 3;
 - e. To approve all evidence documents, reports and supporting data and analysis for publication;
 - f. To formally submit the proposed City of York Local Plan for Independent Examination once Gateway 3 is successfully completed.

Reason: To ensure the efficient delivery of the local plan programme and timely decision-making during the 30 months preparation period and its submission following completion of the formal stages of preparation.

- v. Authorise Officers to prepare a work programme for discussing Local Plan preparation at Planning Policy Advisory Group

- vi. Instruct Officers to report to Executive for approval on the proposed Local Plan content and evidence for statutory consultations during the 30-month preparation period.

Reason: To ensure detailed political oversight and consideration at key stages of the local plan programme.

- vii. Delegate approval of consultation strategies for non-statutory guidance to the Director of City Development.

Reason: To continue effective implementation of the adopted Local Plan (2025)

Background

New planning system

26. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 introduce a reformed, faster system for preparing local plans, including mandatory statutory Gateways and a 30-month timetable triggered at Gateway 1 (see Annex B for detail).
27. While the Council may delay initiation until 2029, doing so would risk outdated policies, reduced weight in decision-making, misalignment with neighbouring authority plans and the strategic vision set for York to 2032 as well as potential loss of government funding.

National Planning Policy Framework Consultation 2026

28. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the UK Government's overarching planning policies for England and explains how these must be applied in both plan-making and decision-taking. It provides a national framework within which local planning authorities prepare Local Plans and determine planning applications, ensuring that growth and development occur in a sustainable, plan-led manner. The NPPF emphasises that up-to-date Local Plans are essential, and planning law requires that decisions be made in accordance with these plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
29. A revised NPPF has been consulted upon and will align with the new regulatory system. Local policies will need to be scoped

carefully to avoid duplication of national content. The new NPPF is expected for release with immediate implementation in Summer 2026.

Supplementary Planning Documents

30. The announcement that SPDs should not be pursued post 30 June 2026 limits the capacity to continuing drafting those prioritised previously by Executive. To maintain clarity and support decision making, officers propose:
 - Production of non-statutory guidance.
 - Signposting to national guidance.
 - Continued use of pre-application and design review processes.
31. To ensure opportunity for comment, targeted consultation can be undertaken with interested parties and the guidance, where considered necessary, can be taken to be agreed via an Executive Member Decision Session. This should ensure material weight through the decision-making process.

Statement of Community Involvement

32. In March 2024, an Executive decision² was made to consult on an updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The previous SCI was adopted in 2007 and was supplemented by an update in 2020 to cover the restrictions introduced by the Covid pandemic regulations.
33. The SCI has been updated to reflect modern consultation practices, including digital engagement, and to accommodate new legislative requirements. Public consultation was undertaken in late 2025, and feedback has been incorporated into the final version. The recommended approach in the revised SCI (Annex C) builds in flexibility to allow for new and emerging technologies, and different ways of working, to be considered, as necessary.

Consultation Analysis

Statement of Community Involvement

34. Consultation on a draft SCI ran for 8 weeks between 15 October 2025 and 10 December 2025. While there is no requirement to consult on a review of the SCI, best practice suggests that

² <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=67005>

consultation is beneficial to ensure transparency of the plan-making and decision-making process. Annex D sets out our consultation statement reporting on the process and outcomes of the consultation.

New plan-making activity

35. Internal consultation has been undertaken with senior officers and technical specialists to shape the revised Plan-making Activity Timetable.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

Plan-making Activity Schedule

36. Options for the Plan-making Activity Schedule are:
 - i. To approve and publish the Plan-making Activity Schedule (Annex A)
 - ii. To amend the Plan-making Activity Schedule with delegated authority to the Director of City Development in conjunction with the Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities for publishing.
37. Option (i) to approve the timetable of plan-making in the Local development Scheme (Annex A) is recommended as it reflects consideration for the new plan-making system and the recommendations to take forward option (iii) and (vi) (see below).
38. Whilst option (ii) to amend the Local development Scheme is not recommended, should different decisions be made in relation to the contents included, this option could be taken forward. Delegated authority to the Director of City Development is recommended as part of this option to ensure expedient publishing of any alternative timetable.

Considering a Local Plan Review

39. Options for commencing a new Local Plan are:
 - iii. Whether to initiate a new Local Plan by summer 2026 by way of a formal notice;

- iv. To delay initiation of a new Local Plan to a later date (no later than October 2029);
 - v. To delegate authority to the Director of City Development in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities preparation of the Local Plan and publishing of relevant evidence as well as submission of necessary documentation for each statutory gateway.
 - vi. For Members to consider the content of prepared plans prior to consultation.
 - vii. Alternative delegations to options v and vi.
40. Options (iii)-(vii) have been considered to inform the content of the LDS and timetable therein, particularly in relation to the changes taking place in the planning system. Option (iii) is recommended to initiate a new Local Plan to ensure it is up-to-date and relevant against contemporary policy, including the YNYCA Spatial Development Strategy (pending commencement).
41. The Council could choose to wait to commence plan making to the 5-year statutory deadline for commencement (up until October 2029). However, whilst pragmatic changes were made to the adopted plan during the Examination, it was examined against the 2012 NPPF and significant legislative and national policy have taken place. We also know that there will be limited weight attributed to current adopted policy where it is inconsistent with the introduction of the new NPPF, which may impact decision-making. Delay could also mean we would be unable to respond effectively to regional strategy, and we may not be able to draw down funding currently offered for early commencement; there is no guarantee of future funding for new plans. For these reasons, option (iv) is not recommended.
42. Options (v) and (vi) are recommended to ensure that timely progress can be made against key milestones to ensure alignment with the new Planning regulations. To ensure political oversight, preparation decisions are recommended to be made in consultation with the relevant Executive Member(s) and for consultation versions of the Local Plan to be brought before Executive. Alternatively, Option (vii) would allow for alternative consideration for decision-making.

Supplementary Planning Documents

43. Options considered for Supplementary Planning Documents are:
- viii. To continue production of Supplementary Planning documents
 - ix. To halt SPD production in favour of non-statutory guidance.
44. It is also recommended that option (ix) is taken forward to allow continued guidance to support the adopted local plan (2025) to be implemented effectively. The announcement that SPDs should not be pursued post 30 June 2026 limits the capacity to continuing drafting and would likely mean adopting the documents post the June deadline set by the Government. The background section of the report identifies alternatives to publishing SPDs which would still have material weight for decision-making. On this basis, Option (viii) is not recommended.

Statement of Community Involvement

45. Options considered for the SCI are:
- x. To approve the updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
 - xi. To not publish the updated Statement of SCI
46. The SCI has been subject to external consultation and builds in flexibility to allow consideration for changes in regulatory duty as well as consultation methods. It also updates practices for consultation during the decision-making process. Consequently, option (x) is recommended. This will also allow the SCI to form part of the supporting evidence for new plan-making, aligned to the requirements of the new planning system.

Organisational Impact and Implications

47. **Financial:** If Members approve the development of the new local plan, the Council will need to ensure sufficient funding is available to resource the development of a new local plan in line with statutory requirements.
48. The estimated cost (£1.8m) takes into account expected inflation over the next three years, as well as assumptions about the level

of evidence required and the duration of examination periods. These factors may change, which could affect the overall cost.

49. One off funding, largely held in reserves, has been set aside to fund the work over the next 3 years and where external funding is made available it will be sought to reduce the financial burden on the Council.
50. Funding was previously awarded for the production of the Climate Change (sustainable design and construction) SPD. There is c.£20k remaining funds which could be transferred, with agreement, to support local plan making.
51. There are no financial implications in relation to Neighbourhood Planning. LPAs can claim grant funding from government to cover their statutory Neighbourhood Planning duties. These duties include providing advice/assistance, arranging examinations and running referendums and is currently set at £20k per plan.
52. Activity relating to the production of non-statutory guidance and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) are to be delivered within existing capacity and resources.
53. **Human Resources (HR):** The additional required capacity identified in the report will be established and resourced in accordance with Council Policy.
54. **Legal:** Preparing and updating local plans is a statutory duty. The duty is established through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (as amended) and reinforced by national policy. Failure to progress a local plan in a timely manner can expose the authority to increased planning risk, including the weight being afforded to existing policies and greater vulnerability to speculative development. The new legislative framework for plan making is set out in Annex B to this report.
55. **Procurement:** Whilst there are no direct procurement implications relating to report itself, it is likely that new plan-making activity will require procurement. Where this is the case, all works and/or services must be procured via a compliant, open, transparent, and fair process in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and where applicable, the Procurement Act 2023. Further advice regarding the procurement process and development of procurement strategies must be sought from the Commercial Procurement team.

56. **Health and Wellbeing:** The Local Plan review will be positive for the health of the city, giving more scope to consider healthy placemaking and embed this in local policy. This should reflect the wider determinants of health, which are a diverse range of social, economic and environmental factors which influence people's mental and physical health. Systematic variation in these factors constitutes social inequality, an important driver of health inequalities in York which lead to around an 11 year gap in life expectancy. The quality of the built and natural environment such as air quality, the quality of green spaces and housing quality impact significantly on health.
57. Whilst a Healthy Placemaking SPD was in development, we note this will now likely be translated into non-statutory guidance which will aim to further articulate healthy planning policy for the city.
58. Additionally, Section 106 and future CIL contributions from developers can have positive health and wellbeing benefit, through things like Affordable housing, Transport/highways and sustainable travel, Education, Health care, Sport, recreation and open space, and ecology. To help us achieve the council plan 2023 to 2027 – One City for All developer contributions should be considered in the context of wider determinants of health.
59. **Environment and Climate action:** The Local Plan review will continue to consider a delivery plan for meeting sustainable development objectives and conserving its environmental assets. We note that the regulatory regime will require an environmental output report and a Strategic Environmental Assessment to consider and assess the impacts of the approach.
60. **Affordability:** The Local Plan Review and its supporting evidence base is critical to review our housing need, unlock availability and support the delivery of a pipeline of more affordable housing for those living and working in the city. It will therefore improve opportunity for those with lower incomes and their families.
61. **Equalities and Human Rights:** An EIA has been produced and is attached at Annex E. There are no identified adverse effects as a result of this report. It is noted that further EIA will be produced alongside future documents.
62. **Data Protection and Privacy:** The data protection impact assessment (DPIAs) screening questions were completed for the recommendations and options in this report and as there is no

personal, special categories or criminal offence data being processed to set these out, there is no requirement to complete a DPIA at this time. However, this will be reviewed following the approved recommendations and options from this report and a DPIA completed if required.

63. **Communications:** Communications, consultation and engagement is a statutory stage of plan-making which will help to ensure partners, businesses, communities and residents are given the opportunity to provide feedback on all documents outlined and to be involved in the development of the plans set out in the schedule at Annex A. The approach set in the SCI will ensure a structure communication and engagement plan is agreed for each plan-making process.
64. **Economy:** The plan will underpin long-term economic growth. The production of planning policy guidance is considered to support the economic ambitions for the city and quality decision-making relevant to employment opportunities.

Risks and Mitigations

65. The following risks and mitigations have been identified:

	Risk Description	Risk Rating	Mitigation
R1	Slippage in the project programme causing delays to evidence, drafting or statutory stages.	Red	Maintain detailed project plan and critical path; conduct regular programme reviews; commission technical evidence early.
R2	Changes to national planning policy requiring amendments to approach, evidence or timetable.	Red	Monitor national policy announcements; build timetable flexibility; prepare rapid impact assessments on new guidance.
R3	Evidence base incomplete, delayed, or becoming out of date, risking challenge.	Red	Commission studies early; ensure robust quality assurance and peer review; update key evidence on a rolling basis.
R4	Technical evidence (transport, viability, housing need etc.) disputed by stakeholders.	Amber	Use reputable consultants; apply transparent methodologies; engage stakeholders early; clearly document assumptions.

R5	Low participation or poor-quality engagement affecting representativeness of consultation.	Amber	Use a wide range of engagement channels; target under-represented groups; provide clear accessible consultation materials.
R6	High-level objections from statutory bodies or authorities as part of effective cooperation.	Red	Maintain regular liaison meetings; share drafts early; record actions in a statutory consultation log; escalate unresolved issues early.
R7	Failure to meet statutory/legal requirements (SEA/SA, HRA, EqIA, consultation).	Amber	Maintain compliance checklists; obtain legal review at key stages; document statutory steps thoroughly.
R8	Insufficient staff capacity or skills affecting quality and programme.	Red	Plan workloads clearly; supplement with consultants; secure required budget; implement staff retention and recruitment measures.
R9	Budget constraints limiting ability to commission evidence, undertake engagement or progress effectively through examination .	Amber	Early cost planning; regular budget monitoring; prioritise essential evidence; use procurement frameworks.
R10	External economic or political shifts affecting deliverability of the preferred strategy.	Amber	Monitor economic/political indicators; use scenario planning; draft flexible policy wording that can adapt to conditions.
R11	Environmental constraints or infrastructure dependencies affecting spatial options.	Amber	Early liaison with infrastructure providers; integrate climate adaptation evidence; review mitigation strategies regularly.

Wards Impacted

66. No direct implication for Wards. Documents outlined in the timetable will be applicable to all Wards.

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

Author

Name:	Alison Cooke
Job Title:	Head of Strategic Planning Policy
Service Area:	Strategic Planning Policy, City Development
Telephone:	01904 551467
Report approved:	Yes
Date:	31/03/2026

Co-author

Name:	Ben Murphy
Job Title:	Head of City Development
Service Area:	City Development
Report approved:	Yes
Date:	31/03/2026

Background papers

- Executive April 2025: [Decision - Local Development Scheme](#)
- [Executive Decision 12/09/2024](#) – Prioritising Supplementary Planning Documents
- Executive November 2025: [Agenda item - Community Infrastructure Levy](#) 04/11/2025.

External

MHCLG: [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Plans\) Regulation 2026](#)

MHCLG: [New local plan-making system roadmap](#), including:

- [30-month local plan process: an overview](#)
- [Getting ready to prepare a new plan](#)
- [Give notice of your plan-making](#)
- [Gathering baselining information to prepare your new plan](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework: proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK](#)

Annexes

- Annex A: Plan-making Activity Schedule
- Annex B: Overview of Legislative changes
- Annex C: Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
- Annex D: Statement of Community Involvement Consultation Statement.
- Annex E: Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)