
Planning Policy and Local Plan Advisory Group**13 October 2026**

Report of the Head of Strategic Planning Policy.

Local Plan Update**Summary**

1. This report seeks to update PPLPAG on progress on the preparation of the new Local Plan and the supporting Local Plan timetable.
2. Following PPLPAG in June, this report includes an update on evidence base commissioning to support the new Local Plan, as requested.

Recommendations

3. The Committee is asked to:
 - i. Note the decision taken to scope minerals and waste policies into the Local Plan
 - ii. Note the revised plan-making timetable following re-notification for plan-making and release of the Scoping Consultation
 - iii. Endorse the proposed approach to preparation of the Local Plan evidence base and identify any additional evidence or amendments to the proposed programme that Members consider should be investigated.

Reason: To ensure that the Local Plan is informed by a proportionate and robust evidence base which addresses York's key spatial planning issues and supports timely preparation of the Plan.

Background

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

4. The new National Planning Policy Framework was released on 17 August, implementing significant changes to national policies for plan-making and decision-making. The majority of changes were included in the NPPF consultation earlier in the year, presented to PPLPAG in June 2026. Key changes include:
- Becoming more rules based and explicitly splitting plan-making / decision-making policies in each section
 - Introducing an updated presumption in favour of Sustainable Development, including policy/ presumptions for development inside and outside of settlements.
 - Increasing the ambition of the 'default yes' (presumption in favour) for development around well-connected stations in the top 80 Travel to Work Areas.
 - Updating policies to support increased densities
 - Tailoring minimum densities to maximise overall supply
 - Requiring flexibility when applying parking standards to large retail and similar redevelopment schemes
 - Recognising the role of strategic sites
 - Revising policy on local standards
 - Providing clearer support for telecommunications development
 - Updating policies which safeguard against the loss of facilities
 - Strengthening policy on Protected Landscapes

Local Plan preparation and scope

5. Since PPLPAG last met in June 2026, the scope of the Local Plan has changed to incorporate minerals and waste policies. This was initiated a decision by of the North York Moors National Park Authority to include minerals and waste policies into their new Local Plan rather than prepare a review of the adopted Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (2022) prepared with North Yorkshire (NYC) and City of York Council.
6. This decision triggered consideration for how to proceed given that a new plan would be required produced either as a new joint plan with NYC or independently by CYC. It was recognised that there were benefits and efficiencies to including these policies within the new Local Plan, particularly as consultation had not started on the formal scoping consultation. Consequently, officers sought a decision to scope in minerals and waste policies into the new Local Plan via Executive Member Decision Session in in July 2026.

7. To align with the regulatory framework, this necessitated the reissuing of our formal notification of plan-making on 30 July¹. A report to Executive to endorse this approach and note the implications to carry this forward into the new Local Plan is being considered on 6 October (post publication of this report).
8. The Scoping Consultation on the new Local Plan launched on Monday 28 September 2026 and runs until Sunday 8 November 2026 (6 weeks). The Scoping consultation particularly asks for views on:
9. *What the new Local Plan should cover and how York could change and grow:* recognising that it will set York's long-term strategy for homes, jobs, transport, the environment, heritage, climate action and community facilities over a likely 15-year period. It must reflect new national requirements, including higher housing targets, updated Green Belt rules, strengthened climate and environmental policies, and alignment with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority's Spatial Development Strategy.
10. *What evidence can help us better understand York and its communities:* The consultation summarises key evidence around housing need, affordability, spatial strategy options, climate resilience, transport challenges, economic growth, heritage protection and the needs of different communities. It also highlights the council's wider commitments through the Council Plan '*One City for All*' and the 10 years strategy '*York 2032*'.
11. *How we should engage through the process:* The Scoping stage helps identify the right communities, groups and partners to involve throughout plan-making. We want to provide opportunities and make it as simple as possible for everyone to become involved in the planning process, regardless of their circumstances. We are taking a 'digital first, not digital only' approach to the consultation. To support this, we have prepared a [Local Plan Engagement Strategy](#), [Scoping Consultation Strategy](#) for this consultation and [Equalities Impact Assessment](#), which set out our proposed approach to engagement in the Local Plan. This forms part of the consultation and can be commented on
12. The outcomes of the consultation will be collated and reported in due course. This will form a key workstream to inform Gateway 1 and policy direction of the plan.

¹ [Notice to commence plan-making of York Local Plan 2045 – City of York Council](#)

Local Plan ‘Call for sites’

13. A ‘call for sites’ was also launched on 28 September 2026 and runs until 18 December 2026. This allows for the submission of land to be considered to meet the needs of York identified in the next plan. Submission of a site does not mean it will be allocated. All sites will be subject to a site selection process to identify the most suitable sites for development.

Local Plan Timetable

14. The plan-making activity timetable (Annex A) has been adjusted to reflect notification on the 30 July 2026 and a delay to the start of the scoping consultation to consider the contents of the revised NPPF. We have also published a Schedule of Amendments to the timetable for transparency², as required by the regulatory framework.
15. The revised dates for meeting the key milestones are summarised in Table 1. Importantly, triggering of the 30-month preparation period for the Local Plan by Gateway 1 is now scheduled for December 2026 rather than 31 October 2026.

Table 1: Local Plan Preparation Milestones

Key stages of plan-making	Anticipated date
Notice of intention to commence local plan preparation made available	July 2026
Notice of scoping consultation made available	September 2026
Deadline for receipt of representations in response to scoping consultation	November 2026
Gateway 1: Summary of self-assessment of readiness for local plan preparation made available	December 2026
Notice of proposed local plan content and evidence consultation made available	July 2027
Deadline for receipt of representations in response to proposed local plan content and evidence consultation	September 2027
Gateway 2: Observations and advice sought from the 'appointed person' in relation to progress on the proposed local plan	November 2027
Notice of proposed local plan consultation made available	July 2028
Deadline for receipt of representations in response to proposed local plan consultation	September 2028

² <https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/10763/schedule-of-changes-to-local-plan-timetable-28-september-2026>

Key stages of plan-making	Anticipated date
Gateway 3: Observations and advice sought from the 'appointed person' on compliance of the proposed local plan with the prescribed requirements	October 2028
Submission of the proposed local plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination	January 2029
Adoption of the local plan	June 2029

Evidence Base

16. A robust evidence base is fundamental to preparing a sound and effective Local Plan. It provides an objective understanding of the area's needs, opportunities and constraints, ensuring that policies and site allocations respond to local circumstances rather than assumptions. Evidence on matters such as housing need, employment, infrastructure, transport, the environment, viability and land availability helps the council identify appropriate development requirements, assess reasonable alternatives and demonstrate that the strategy can realistically be delivered. In the interim, this evidence can also become a material consideration for decision making alongside the adopted Local Plan.
17. The NPPF requires that the Local Plan is supported by a proportionate evidence base helping to demonstrate at examination that the approach taken is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The evidence should be proportionate to the issues and decisions being considered, making effective use of existing information and avoiding unnecessary or overly detailed assessment.
18. The evidence base and rationale for the emerging new evidence being commissioned is set out in Annex A. Paragraphs 19-21 present the commissions being taken forward in summary.
19. To aid consistency and inform effective cross-boundary cooperation, CYC officers have been working with neighbouring authorities and the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to co-commission evidence where appropriate. So far this has resulted in the following commissions:
 - Green Belt assessment – covering the whole of York's Green Belt;
 - Infrastructure Studies:
 - Infrastructure Capacity Study (ICS) and Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs)

- Growth Potential Study (GPS)
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
20. Although we are no longer preparing a joint minerals and waste plan, there is ongoing discussion regarding commissioning of evidence due to the cross-boundary nature of how waste is processed and locational supply of minerals that may be required.
21. The Strategic Planning Policy Team are also preparing or supporting preparation for the following commissions to inform the Local Plan:
- Housing Needs Assessment (see separate report to this meeting)
 - Local Housing Needs Assessment
 - Support Housing needs Assessment
 - Gypsy and Travelling Accommodation Assessment
 - Economy Evidence
 - Economic Needs Assessment
 - Employment Land Review
 - Main Town Centre Uses Assessment
 - Visitor Accommodation Needs and Supply Study
 - Green and Blue Infrastructure studies
 - Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
 - Strensall Common Visitor Survey
 - GBI Standards (such as open space provision)
 - Environmental Outcomes Report (Strategic Environmental Assessment)
 - Habitat Regulations Assessment
 - Viability Assessment
 - Transport Assessment and modelling
22. Preparation of the Local Plan will be informed by further Council evidence as necessary and relevant to demonstrate the spatial and policy approach required. The scoping consultation may also reveal sources of information that can be used to support the emerging policy approach.

Consultation

23. Consultation with PPLPAG is sought on the approach to evidence. The outcomes of this will be compiled with the outcomes of the scoping consultation to refine and detail evidence base commissioning.

24. Internal technical officers have helped to shape the specifications which have been agreed for procurement. Technical officers will continue to be engaged throughout its preparation to ensure it is fit for purpose and meeting the objectives specified.

Options

25. Members are invited to consider the proposed approach to preparation of the Local Plan evidence base. The following options are available:
26. **Option 1: Endorse the proposed evidence programme as set out in this report.**
This would enable officers to continue commissioning and preparing the identified evidence in accordance with the Local Plan timetable. The programme has been developed having regard to national policy requirements, the emerging scope of the Local Plan, technical officer input and opportunities to work jointly with neighbouring authorities and the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.
27. **Option 2: Endorse the proposed evidence programme, subject to additional or amended evidence being prepared.**
Members may identify additional matters which they consider should be investigated or request that the scope or priority of particular evidence studies is amended. Officers would consider these alongside the outcomes of the current Scoping Consultation and advice from relevant technical specialists before determining whether additional or amended evidence is necessary and proportionate.
28. **Option 3: Seek a reduction or reprioritisation of the proposed evidence programme.**
Members could identify studies which they consider should not be progressed, should have a reduced scope or should be undertaken at a later stage. This could reduce or defer expenditure but would need to be considered against the need for a proportionate evidence base capable of supporting the spatial strategy, policies and site allocations and demonstrating the justification and effectiveness of the Plan through the plan-making process.

Analysis

29. **Option 1 is recommended**, while retaining flexibility to refine individual commissions as the evidence base develops. The proposed programme covers the main matters expected to inform the new Local

Plan. Joint commissioning is also being pursued where appropriate to improve consistency and support consideration of cross-boundary issues. The reports have been costed into the overall financial package to support the preparation of the Local Plan.

30. Option 2 provides greater opportunity for Members to influence the evidence programme and may identify locally important issues requiring further investigation. However, any additional work should be proportionate and have a clear role in informing the Local Plan to avoid unnecessary cost, duplication or pressure on the programme. The outcome of the current Scoping Consultation should also help identify whether there are gaps in the proposed evidence base or existing sources of evidence that can be utilised.
31. Option 3 could reduce the immediate resource and financial requirements associated with evidence preparation. However, reducing evidence without a clear justification could create gaps in the evidence needed to establish the Plan's strategy or policies and could result in further work being required later in the plan-making process, which would have implications for the overall timetable.

Council Plan

32. The preparation of the new Local Plan and its supporting evidence base will contribute directly to the ambitions of the Council Plan, One City, for all 2023–2027. The Council Plan identifies four core commitments of equalities and human rights, affordability, climate and environment, and health and wellbeing, which are intended to inform decision-making across the Council. The Local Plan will help deliver these priorities by planning for the homes, jobs, infrastructure and services York needs; supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth; addressing housing affordability and the needs of different communities; protecting and enhancing the environment; responding to climate change; and helping to create healthy, accessible and sustainable places. The proposed evidence base will ensure these objectives are informed by robust evidence and translated appropriately into the spatial strategy and policies of the new Local Plan.

Implications

33. **Financial:** Preparation of the Local Plan evidence base will require expenditure on specialist studies and consultancy support. Commissions will be managed within approved budgets and in

accordance with procurement requirements, with joint commissioning pursued where this offers value for money. Any additional evidence requirements will be subject to available resources.

34. **Human Resources (HR):** There are no direct HR implications. Preparation of the Local Plan and its evidence base will require ongoing officer resource across relevant Council services, which will be managed as part of the plan-making programme.
35. **Equalities:** The evidence base will help ensure that the Local Plan responds to the needs of different communities and supports inclusive plan-making. Equalities considerations will continue to inform preparation and consultation through an iterative Human Rights and Equalities Impact Assessment process.
36. **Legal:** The Local Plan must be prepared in accordance with the relevant statutory plan-making framework and national planning policy. The evidence base, including statutory environmental and habitats assessments, will support the Council in meeting these requirements.
37. **Crime and Disorder:** There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the recommendations. Community safety and the creation of safe places will be considered through the preparation of relevant Local Plan policies.
38. **Information Technology (IT):** There are no significant direct IT implications. Existing and appropriate digital systems will be used to support evidence management, consultation, mapping and plan preparation.
39. **Property:** There are no direct property implications. The site assessment process may consider Council-owned land alongside other potential development sites, but any subsequent decisions relating to Council property would be subject to separate appropriate processes.
40. **Other:** Preparation of the evidence base has implications across planning, transport, housing, infrastructure, economic development and environmental services. Relevant technical officers will continue to inform and review evidence to ensure it is robust, proportionate and fit for purpose.

Risk Management

41. The principal risks relate to ensuring that the Local Plan is supported by a robust and proportionate evidence base available at the appropriate stages of plan preparation. Delays in procurement, consultant appointment or delivery of key evidence commissions could affect the plan-making timetable and increase costs. These risks will be managed through early procurement planning and commissioning, prioritisation of critical evidence, programme and budget monitoring, joint commissioning where appropriate, and regular review of evidence requirements and delivery against key Local Plan milestones.

Contact Details

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	Report Approved	x	Date	05/10/2026
Wards Affected:			All	X
For further information please contact the author of the report				

Background Papers:

- Executive 14 April 2026 - [Decision - Plan-making activity and Local Plan Review](#)
- [Agenda for Decision Session - Combined Executive Member Decision Session on Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 10.00 am](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK](#)

Annexes

Annex A Plan-making Activity Schedule
Annex B Evidence Base Commissions

List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

- CYC – City of York Council
- GBI – Green and Blue Infrastructure
- GPS – Growth Potential Study
- HR – Human Resources
- ICS – Infrastructure Capacity Study
- IDP – Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- IT – Information Technology
- NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework
- NYC – North Yorkshire Council
- PPLPAG – Planning Policy and Local Plan Advisory Group