

COTSWOLD LOCAL PLAN 2026-2043 PUBLICATION DRAFT, AUGUST 2026

REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is this consultation about?

Cotswold District Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2026 to 2043. Once adopted, it will replace the current Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 and provide the planning policy framework for future development and planning decisions across the district.

The Council is consulting on the Publication Draft Local Plan, which is the final draft of the plan before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. This stage of the process is known as the Regulation 19 Consultation.

The Publication Draft Local Plan sets out the Council's proposed strategy for accommodating future housing, employment development, infrastructure, community facilities and environmental protection across the district up to 2043. It also includes the planning policies that will be used to guide future development and determine planning applications.

At this stage, comments should focus on whether the plan is **legally compliant** and **sound**, as these are the matters that will be considered by the Planning Inspector during the examination process.

The Publication Draft builds on the earlier Regulation 18 consultations undertaken during the preparation of the Local Plan. Comments received during those consultations have been considered alongside updated evidence and technical studies in preparing the Publication Draft Local Plan.

How long does the consultation last?

The Regulation 19 Consultation runs for **six weeks**, from **Monday 24 August 2026 until 23:59 on Monday 5 October 2026**.

Comments received after this deadline will not be accepted.

All representations submitted during the consultation period will be considered by the Council and submitted alongside the Local Plan and supporting evidence to the Secretary of State. They will also be made available to the independent Planning Inspector(s) appointed to examine the Local Plan.

Can comments only be made on soundness and legal compliance?

At the Regulation 19 stage, the Council is seeking views on whether the Publication Draft Local Plan is **sound** and **legally compliant**. These are the matters that will be considered by the Planning Inspector during the examination of the plan.

In broad terms, this means considering whether:

- the Council has planned appropriately for the district's housing, employment and infrastructure needs,
- the Local Plan is supported by robust and proportionate evidence,
- the Local Plan can be delivered over the plan period to 2043, and
- the Local Plan is consistent with national planning policy and supports sustainable development.

Representations submitted at this stage will be considered by the Council and submitted to the Secretary of State alongside the Local Plan and supporting evidence for consideration by the Planning Inspector(s). To have the greatest influence during the examination process, comments should be clear, concise and focused on the soundness and legal compliance of the Publication Draft Local Plan.

What is meant by "soundness"?

National planning regulations require local planning authorities to submit a plan for examination that they consider to be sound. A sound plan is one that is:

- **Positively prepared** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Planning Inspector will consider whether the Local Plan meets these tests when examining the plan.

How does the Cotswold District Local Plan fit with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)?

Following Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Gloucestershire, anticipated in 2028, responsibility for the Cotswold District Local Plan will transfer to the new unitary authority. Once adopted, the Local Plan will remain part of the development plan for the area and will continue to be used in determining planning applications until it is replaced by a new local plan.

The preparation of the Cotswold District Local Plan remains important while LGR takes place to ensure that the district has an up-to-date planning framework in place to guide

development, protect valued assets and support the delivery of homes, jobs and infrastructure.

Hasn't the public already been consulted on the Local Plan?

Yes. The Council has consulted extensively throughout the preparation of the Local Plan and has engaged with residents, businesses, landowners, community organisations, statutory consultees and other stakeholders at key stages of the process.

The Local Plan journey so far

- June 2020: A review of all adopted Local Plan policies identifies the need for updates. Work begins on a Partial Local Plan Update, focusing on climate change, ecological priorities, national policy changes and lessons learned from implementing the adopted Plan.
- **February-March 2022:** Public consultation is undertaken on the Issues and Options for the Partial Local Plan Update.
- January 2024: The Council approves the preparation of a Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan to plan for growth beyond 2031 and maintain an up-to-date planning framework.
- **February-March 2024:** Public consultation is undertaken on the Draft Policies of the Partial Local Plan Update and the Issues and Options for the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan.
- December 2024: The Government publishes a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), introducing a new mandatory method for calculating housing need. Cotswold District's housing requirement more than doubles, requiring a new approach to plan-making.
- July 2025: The Council merges the Partial Local Plan Update and the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan into a single Full Local Plan Review, and prioritises its delivery.
- **November 2025:** Public consultation on the Preferred Options Local Plan 2026-2043, setting out the Council's indicative strategy for accommodating future growth across the district

Comments received during these earlier consultations have helped shape the Publication Draft Local Plan and have been considered alongside updated evidence and technical studies. However, it is important that we hear your views on the Publication Draft Local Plan itself, as this is the version proposed for submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination. If you wish your views to be considered by the Planning Inspector, you should submit a representation during this consultation period.

What happens when people comment on the Local Plan?

The Council will review all representations received during the consultation period before submitting the Local Plan, supporting evidence and consultation responses to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

At the Examination in Public (EiP), an independent Planning Inspector appointed by the Government will assess the Local Plan, the evidence supporting it, and the representations received during the Regulation 19 Consultation. The Inspector will consider whether the plan is sound and legally compliant before issuing a report and recommending whether the plan can proceed to adoption.

The Inspector may also recommend changes to the Local Plan, known as Main Modifications, which would be subject to a further round of public consultation before the examination is concluded.

Why does the Council need a Local Plan?

Local planning authorities are expected to prepare and maintain an up-to-date Local Plan to guide future development and provide the basis for decisions on planning applications.

The Local Plan provides the framework for shaping how the district grows over the coming years. It identifies where development should take place, what infrastructure is needed to support new communities, and how the district's natural, historic and environmental assets should be protected and enhanced.

The Local Plan covers a wide range of issues, including:

- the provision of new homes,
- the creation of employment opportunities,
- the delivery of infrastructure, services and community facilities,
- the protection of the natural and historic environment, and
- the policies used to determine planning applications.

Without an up-to-date Local Plan, the area is much more vulnerable to piecemeal and speculative development, that may come forward in an unplanned way, that may not achieve the quality standards the Council would like to see and where planning for infrastructure is likely to be less effective.

Why does the district have to provide so many new homes?

The Government introduced a revised standard method for calculating housing need in 2024. This methodology is used to determine the number of homes that local planning authorities are expected to plan for.

The changes resulted in a significant increase in the housing requirement for Cotswold District, as well as for many other areas across the country. Under the revised standard method, Cotswold's annual housing need increased from 475 homes per year to **1,054 homes per year**.

Can the district meet the government housing target (housing need)?

Yes. The Council considers that the district can meet its identified housing requirement for the plan period.

A number of additional potential development sites were submitted to the Council during the Preferred Options consultation in 2025. These sites have been assessed alongside other sites already identified through the plan-making process and through the Council's ongoing Call for Sites.

The Publication Draft Local Plan identifies a range of sites that are, or can be made, sustainable locations for development, have relatively limited constraints, and are largely located outside the Cotswolds National Landscape.

The proposed strategy seeks to balance the need for new homes with the protection and enhancement of the district's important environmental, landscape and heritage assets.

How many houses will be built?

The Publication Draft Local Plan makes provision for 18,911 homes over the period 2026 to 2043. This represents 993 homes above the identified housing requirement of 17,918 homes, providing around 5.5% headroom.

Planning Inspectors examining Local Plans have often regarded a modest level of headroom as an important factor in ensuring that housing needs can be met throughout the plan period. It provides flexibility should some sites take longer than expected to come forward or deliver fewer homes than originally anticipated.

The majority of new homes are proposed on strategic site allocations. Given the scale and complexity of many of these sites, delivery is expected to take place over a number of years. The Local Plan therefore includes a phased approach to housing delivery, recognising that some strategic sites will come forward later in the plan period.

The proposed housing supply comprises:

- **11,302 homes** on ten new strategic site allocations,
- **2,282 homes** on the saved strategic allocation at **The Steadings**, south-west of Cirencester,
- **1,468 homes** on thirty-three non-strategic site allocations, and
- additional homes expected to be delivered through existing planning permissions, commitments, windfall development and other sources of supply.

Together, these sources are expected to provide sufficient housing to meet the district's identified needs and maintain flexibility throughout the plan period.

Who decides whether the Local Plan can be adopted?

The Local Plan will be examined by an independent Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The Inspector's role is to assess whether the Plan has been prepared in accordance with legal requirements and whether it is sound.

The Inspector will examine the Local Plan, the evidence supporting it and the representations submitted during the Regulation 19 Consultation. The Inspector may also hold public hearing sessions as part of the Examination in Public.

Following the examination, the Inspector will issue a report setting out their conclusions and recommending whether the Plan can be adopted. It is likely the Inspector will recommend changes, known as Main Modifications, which must be consulted upon before the Plan can proceed to adoption.

How do I make my views known?

The quickest and easiest way to respond is online via our consultation portal at **www.cotswold.gov.uk/localplan**

Comments can also be submitted in the following ways:

- By email using the response form to Local.Plan@cotswold.gov.uk
- By post to: Planning Policy and Infrastructure Team, Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX

The consultation questionnaire will ask whether you believe the Local Plan is sound and legally compliant. It is helpful to explain why you consider the plan to be sound or unsound, legally compliant or non-compliant, and to suggest any changes you think are necessary.

Representations must be received by 23:59 on 5 October 2026.

Please note

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Plan process, representations can only be accepted where they are submitted in writing and include the respondent's name and address. Anonymous comments and verbal representations cannot be treated as duly made representations.

The Council is required to make all duly made representations available for public inspection as part of the examination process. Details of how personal information is collected, used and protected are set out in the Council's Local Plan consultation privacy notice:

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/support/privacy-and-data/service-privacy-notice/local-plan-making-consultation-privacy-notice/>

Are any public events being held?

Yes. The Council will be holding a series of drop-in exhibitions during the consultation period. These events provide an opportunity to learn more about the Publication Draft Local Plan, speak with planning officers, ask questions and find out how to submit representations.

You can attend any of the following events:

- **Tuesday 25 August 2026**, 1.00pm to 7.30pm
Fairford Community Centre, Fairford, GL7 4AF
- **Friday 28 August 2026**, 1.00pm to 7.30pm
Cirencester Baptist Church, Chesterton Lane, Cirencester, GL7 1YE
- **Tuesday 15 September 2026**, 1.00pm to 7.30pm
Redesdale Hall, High Street, Moreton-in-Marsh, GL56 0AX
- **Tuesday 22 September 2026**, 1.00pm to 7.30pm
Chipping Campden Town Hall, High Street, Chipping Campden, GL55 6HB

These are informal drop-in events and there is no need to book in advance. Consultation materials will be available to view, and members of the Planning Policy team will be on hand to answer questions about the Local Plan and consultation process.

Where can I see the documents?

As well as the public events above, the Local Plan and all the evidence to support it is available online. The consultation documents can be viewed and downloaded via the Council's website at: <https://cotswold.gov.uk/localplan>

The consultation documents can be seen at the following locations:

- Council offices in Cirencester (Trinity Road, GL7 1PX) and Moreton-in-Marsh (Moreton Area Centre, High Street, Moreton-in-Marsh, GL56 0AZ), and
- Public libraries in the district.

Hard copies of the consultation documents are also available on request. There will be a printing fee which will vary for the length of each document.