

Tell us what
you think!

Luton Local Plan Review

Community Involvement Paper – Issues and Options

A new Local Plan for Luton
Planning for Luton's Future



Summary Booklet
December 2024

Luton



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What is the purpose of this consultation?

We are producing a new Local Plan for Luton. We have published a **Community Involvement Paper** which is available to view on our website here www.luton.gov.uk/newlocalplan

It sets out what we think are the issues and the current options for preparing the new Local Plan. We are asking for your views to enable us to shape our Local Plan for Luton. This booklet is based on the Community Involvement Paper, which provides further detail.

We will use the comments and feedback we receive at this stage to inform the next stage in the production of the Local Plan.

Why we need a new Local Plan for Luton

We have an existing Local Plan available here www.luton.gov.uk/newlocalplan which was completed (adopted) in 2017. The new Local Plan will look similar to this when it is completed.

This Plan is now seven years old, government policy and legislation has changed and new issues have emerged.

The new Local Plan will also help deliver our more recent council-wide Luton 2040 Vision.

How is a Local Plan produced?

A Local Plan is a land use or spatial plan that responds to issues and needs. It will contain planning policies and identify appropriate areas and sites for development, such as for new homes, offices, shops, and community facilities.

Our Local Plan will take about 4 years to produce and there are a number of key stages we need to undertake.

In preparing the new Plan, we will be:

- Identifying the key issues that need to be addressed
- Establishing the development needs that need to be met including for new homes
- Identifying sites to make sure we have a supply of land to meet needs
- Identifying sites and areas to bring about positive change in Luton
- Ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is in place to serve new development
- Working with our neighbours, expert advisors and infrastructure providers
- Listening to our residents, businesses and communities





The story so far

Work for the Local Plan is at the early stages. We want to ensure that a wide cross-section of views are obtained from across our communities, including from seldom heard groups such as young people.

Key stakeholders, local organisations, businesses and the development industry also have a key role to play. We will continue to work with neighbouring authorities, including potentially to explore how they could help meet Luton's housing and other needs if required.



Vision and Objectives

We need to develop a Vision for the Local Plan. The purpose of the Vision for the Local Plan is to set out what Luton might look like in 15 years time or more. Our draft Vision is:

A transformed town which enhances its existing social, environmental and economic assets and delivers our 2040 Vision. Where high quality, sustainable new developments, regenerate and re-shape our town centre and wider urban area, providing new homes, jobs and an environment where companies want to invest. Where effective infrastructure is provided to facilitate growth and enable sustainable travel. Where accessible community facilities, services and open spaces are provided and natural and historic environments are preserved and enhanced, continuing efforts to improve life outcomes and creating a place where people want to live, work and stay.

What do you think of our draft Vision?

We also need to establish objectives for the Local Plan. These will guide our policy making for the Local Plan. Our draft objectives are:

- Putting the delivery of Luton 2040 at the heart of planning decisions
- Identify sufficient land in sustainable locations to meet needs and enable sustainable sites to come forward to encourage regeneration and renewal
- Provide for a range of high quality, energy efficient new homes, including adaptable housing, homes to meet specialist needs and affordable homes, focusing on social rented homes
- Provide for the needs of Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in suitable and sustainable locations
- Create sustainable, well-designed, safe, inclusive, mixed communities, with access to services and facilities in order to help address poverty, including child poverty and improve health outcomes
- Create an inclusive and accessible urban environment in order to help tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and encourage social interaction and activity
- Explore the opportunity to utilise public sector land, assets and delivery mechanisms to help unlock sites, particularly for new affordable homes
- Allocate sufficient land and enable sustainable sites to come forward to meet our needs including for housing and employment

- Raise the value and productivity of the local economy, encourage high value jobs, and support the growth of all types of employment, particularly high-tech, emerging and growth sectors such as AI and support digital connectivity across the town
- Provide for education needs, including working with the University and colleges to raise the level of skills and ensure that local companies invest in the local workforce, embedding social value
- Ensure Luton remains competitive and attractive to business investment and innovation and as a place to live and work
- Encourage visitors, including those using the airport, to stay in the town, use leisure and cultural facilities and visit surrounding open spaces, landscapes and attractions
- Ensure that new developments enable improvements in health and wellbeing and life outcomes, including through the provision of new open space, improvements to the built environment and opportunities for active travel
- Maintain and improve the vibrancy, vitality and viability of our town centre, shopping areas and local centres, facilitate urban renewal, encourage healthy food opportunities, and allow for a range of shops and leisure destinations to promote activity and an inclusive night time economy
- Promote net zero carbon developments, with high sustainable construction standards and low embodied carbon, to ensure new developments deliver the highest viable energy efficiency, including the use of decentralised energy
- Ensure the efficient use of resources and support a local zero-carbon energy system that reduces Luton's reliance on global fossil fuels and prioritises community energy
- Deliver developments that minimise and are resilient to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events such as flooding, increased rainfall, drought and heatwaves and improve air quality
- Protect and maximise opportunities for biodiversity net gain and the enhancement of Luton's natural assets

- Protect and enhance the natural environment, including open spaces, landscapes, green infrastructure and waterways, provide a linear park for the town, and minimise pollution
- Provide sufficient accessible, well maintained good quality services, facilities and infrastructure, to meet health, education, transport, open space, sport, recreation, cultural, social and other community needs
- Recognise and celebrate the importance of Luton's history and its historic assets and conserve and enhance its historic environment including its conservation areas, listed buildings and cultural assets, and encourage the effective re-use of historic buildings
- Promote good design, including of new buildings, conversions, and public spaces, and allow innovative design solutions, including taller buildings in appropriate locations
- Improve the amenity and function of our existing neighbourhoods, including addressing parking issues
- Prioritise active travel and increase the attraction of, and opportunities for public transport, ensuring high standards of connectivity and accessibility to services for all
- Reduce dependency on the private car as a mode of travel, facilitating the creation of a net-zero-carbon transport network and secure improvements to transport infrastructure
- Work with our partners to coordinate the identification and provision of infrastructure to support a productive sustainable economy and the provision of new homes

What do you think of our draft objectives?

Our Future Strategy

We will need to form an overall strategy for the new Local Plan at the next stage which will set out the overall pattern and scale of development proposed. We currently think our Local Plan could cover the period to 2045.



Do you have any views on what our future strategy should look like, where we should identify new sites for development and what factors and information we should consider?



What time period do you think our Local Plan should cover?

Key Issues and Options

Luton is a modern, diverse town with a vibrant mix of cultures, skills and languages, new developments are in the pipeline and many projects and initiatives have and aim to make improvements to the town. Luton however faces some significant issues and challenges.

The population of Luton often has worse health outcomes than the national average and there is a lack of skills in some sectors. There are instances of anti-social behaviour and crime.

We have an ageing population, some people are living in poor quality housing, there are empty homes, housing needs are not always being met and in places our urban, natural and historic environment requires protection and improvement.

Luton is built up to its boundaries, there are areas of traffic congestion, new infrastructure is required and achieving high quality developments can be challenging in the face of difficult financial conditions. New development can lead to pressures on local services and infrastructure.

In our Community Involvement Paper we have set out what we think are the issues for Luton and options for the creation of planning policies for our Local Plan to help to address them. However, we are seeking your views.

Tell us what you think the issues are in Luton

How can these issues be addressed and what should the policies in the new Local Plan do?



Providing sustainable and suitable homes

Key housing issues we think the Local Plan needs to consider:

- Existing poor quality housing and living conditions, homelessness, empty homes, and a lack of affordable homes
- Luton is built up to its boundaries with limited land available for new homes.
- The financial costs of building housing on brownfield sites in an urban area like Luton, meaning it is difficult to secure effective new developments
- The small size of homes that have been built in Luton in recent years and the impacts of the sub-division of existing larger homes
- How we can address the significant need for new homes, provide more high quality affordable housing, homes for those with specialist needs and for travelling communities
- The number, mix and size of homes we need, their design, where new homes are located and how they are delivered



Are there any housing issues that you want to tell us about?



What do you think new Local Plan Policies should do?



Supporting Economic Development

Key economic issues we think the Local Plan needs to consider:

- The loss of some employment sites and the type of commercial buildings built in Luton in recent years
- How Luton's changing economy should develop in the future considering its excellent location in the region and the new ways people work following Covid 19
- The role of the airport and key businesses in providing jobs and growth opportunities
- How we encourage business investment and growth that benefits Luton's residents, improving local skills and earnings and reducing unemployment
- The amount of employment land we need, where new sites are located and how they are delivered considering Luton is built up to its boundaries.
- The type of jobs and businesses that we need and attract, considering changing sectors and future technologies
- The role of an improved town centre in providing jobs and how we can encourage more visitors to stay in the town



Are there any economic issues that you want to tell us about?



What do you think new Local Plan Policies should do?



Town Centre and Retail

Key town centre and retail issues we think the Local Plan needs to consider:

- The town's current and future role as a retail centre in the sub-region, considering other nearby towns and cities and changing shopping trends including on-line shopping
- How we address a prevalence of hot food takeaways, some anti-social behaviour and poor quality environments and spaces
- The approach we take to proposals in the town centre and our district and neighbourhood centres in providing for retail, leisure community uses and jobs
- Thinking about recent and planned developments, how Luton town centre can be further improved including to make it safer, more inclusive and accessible
- How we can encourage more walking and cycling and determine the amount of parking we need in light of existing illegal parking and loss to new development



Are there any town centre and retail issues you want to tell us about?



What do you think the new Local Plan policies should do?



Health and Wellbeing

Key health and well-being issues we think the Local Plan needs to consider:

- How we address high levels of deprivation and improve life outcomes in Luton
- How we create healthy communities, including through good design, to encourage walking and cycling and improve access to community facilities
- The health services we need and where they should be located
- The approach we take to protect against negative impacts from noise, light pollution and hazardous substances and improve air quality



Are there any health and well being issues that you want to tell us about?



What do you think new Local Plan policies should do?



Addressing and adapting to climate change

Key climate change issues we think the Local Plan needs to consider:

- How we mitigate against the impacts of climate change, including instances of flooding in Luton, such as reducing CO2 emissions and promoting renewable energy
- How we adapt to impacts of climate change, including the approach we take towards our buildings, such as making them more energy efficient, and the provision of green spaces and tree cover to reduce the effects of heat
- The decarbonisation of transport and how we can encourage more walking and cycling in Luton
- The need to improve water quality in our rivers and improve water efficiency in new developments
- How we deal with waste and encouraging recycling
- The Local Plans role in helping Luton become a net zero town by 2040



Are there any issues relating to addressing and adapting to climate change that you want to tell us about?



What do you think new Local Plan policies should do?



Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

Key issues relating to the natural environment we think the Local Plan needs to consider:

- How we can protect and enhance sites of biodiversity and pursue opportunities for net gains in biodiversity in Luton
- The prevention of unsympathetic changes of use which may increase the risk of harm to heritage assets
- How we can prevent the loss of green space, enhance current areas and provide more accessible green space and tree planting in Luton, given it is a built-up area and current lack of provision in some areas
- Building on plans to open up the river Lea to create a linear park, how we can improve the river corridor for wildlife and make it more accessible
- How to protect any areas of valued landscape and Green Belt in Luton and whether areas of lower value Green Belt could be developed



Are there any issues relating to the natural environment that you want to tell us about?



What do you think new Local Plan policies should do?



Community Facilities, Indoor Sport and Recreation

Key issues relating to Community Facilities, Indoor Sport and Recreation we think the Local Plan needs to consider:

- How to address lower life expectancy and physical inactivity in Luton
- Which indoor sports and recreation facilities we need and where
- How we address gaps in the provision of community facilities in some neighbourhoods
- The accommodation of burials and cremations given Luton's limited land availability
- How we can provide for education needs when some schools are at capacity



Are there any issues relating to community facilities, indoor sport and recreation you want to tell us about?



What do you think new Local Plan policies should do?



Historic Environment

Key issues relating to the historic environment we think the Local Plan needs to consider:

- How we can prevent the further loss of historic buildings and preserve and enhance Conservation Areas in Luton.
- How to prevent unsympathetic changes of use which may increase the risk of harm to heritage assets.
- How we can deliver high quality development and regeneration that respects and integrates with Luton's historic environment and brings historic buildings back into appropriate use.



Are there any issues relating to Luton's historic environment you want to tell us about?



What do you think new Local Plan policies should do?



Placemaking and Design

Key placemaking and design issues we think the Local Plan needs to consider:

- What we can do about derelict and vacant sites and previous poor design effecting the feel and function of town
- How we can encourage good design of the built environment including ensuring buildings and public spaces are improved and designed to be accessible and inclusive
- How we can ensure that public areas and buildings are safer for residents and visitors
- The approach we take to design to provide clarity and guidance about design quality and expectations for proposed developments
- How and where tall buildings could be provided thinking about line of sight and the existing townscape



Are there any public realm and design issues you want to tell us about?



What do you think new Local Plan policies should do?



Connectivity and Transport

Key connectivity and transport issues we think the Local Plan needs to consider:

- How we address an increase in private car ownership, high levels of commuting by private car into Luton, congestion and inappropriate parking
- How we can encourage safe walking and cycling and improve connectivity to help reduce use of the car and emissions
- The loss of and lack of parking in some areas in the town and consideration of the amount of parking we need in the town
- The approach we take to electric vehicles and how new technology such as fast broadband can help reduce car ownership and the need to travel
- How we can integrate different modes of transport in hubs and make the most of our railway stations, rail routes and bus services, including through park and ride sites
- The transport infrastructure that should be provided including to secure economic growth
- The transport infrastructure required to serve the airport and how to address any impacts on the town from the airport
- The connectivity of housing and employment areas, including new developments on the edge of Luton, to services and facilities in the town



Are there any connectivity and transport issues you want to tell us about?



What do you think new Local Plan policies should do?



Sustainable Infrastructure and Infrastructure Funding

Key infrastructure issues we think the Local Plan needs to consider:

- The infrastructure that we need and how it will support growth in Luton
- The potential adverse effects of new infrastructure on the local environment in determining our strategy
- The financial costs of new infrastructure and how it will be delivered
- How new developments will be supported by new infrastructure including transport and utilities infrastructure (gas, water, electricity, telecommunications) as well as social infrastructure such as schools and community facilities
- The infrastructure we should be asking developers to contribute towards, such as community facilities
- The supply of energy and increasing demand on the network from larger uses of energy, such as data centres
- How we can support the expansion of electronic communications and digital mobile networks to help secure growth



Are there any infrastructure issues you want to tell us about?



What do you think new Local Plan policies should do?

Planning Policies

The existing Local Plan was adopted (completed) in 2017. While producing a new Local Plan, we will need to decide whether we want to keep (“save”) any of the current policies, which policies to amend, which ones to delete entirely and new policies that we may want to create.



Do you have any views about our existing policies and what local development management policies we need?

Evidence for the Local Plan

As well as considering comments we receive, we will be collecting evidence and information to inform the Local Plan.



What information do you think we should collect to inform the Local Plan?

General Comments



Is there anything else you would like to tell us about?

Next Steps

These are the key steps we expect to take in the production of the Local Plan after we have looked at your comments:

- Draft Plan and Options public consultation – **March/April 2026**
- Proposed submission Plan public consultation – **June/July 2027**
- Submission of the Plan to the Planning Inspectorate – **January 2028**
- Local Plan Examination – **January to July 2028**
- Completion (Adoption) of the Local Plan – **December 2028**

How can I make comments?

The document and supporting documents are available to view on-line on the Council's website here www.luton.gov.uk/newlocalplan

Hard copies of the documents and supporting documents will also be available to view at the following locations during the consultation period (excluding early closures on 24 and 31 December and bank holidays):

Luton Town Hall (Reception)	George Street Luton LU1 2BQ	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 9am–5pm Weds: 10am–5pm
Luton Central Library	St George's Square Luton LU1 2NG	Mon: 9am–7pm Tues, Weds, Thurs, Fri: 9am–6pm Sat: 9.30am – 5pm Sun: 11am – 5pm
Leagrave Library	124 Marsh Road Luton LU3 2NL	Mon: 9am–7pm Tues, Weds, Thurs, Fri: 9am–6pm Sat: 9.30am – 5pm
Stopsley Library	592–596 Hitchin Road Luton LU2 7UG	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 9am–5pm Weds: 1pm–6pm Sat: 9.30am–1pm
Lewsey Library	Landrace Road Luton LU4 0SW	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 9am–5pm Weds: 1pm–6pm Sat: 9.30am–1pm
Marsh Farm Library	Lea Manor School Northwell Drive Luton LU3 3TL	Mon, Tues: Closed Weds: 1pm–6pm Thurs: 9am–6pm Fri: 1pm–6pm Sat: 9.30am–1pm

Submitting Comments

We encourage you to use our online consultation portal to make comments via our web page here www.luton.gov.uk/newlocalplan Alternatively, you can email your response to localplan@luton.gov.uk or send it by post to Luton Borough Council Freepost - Planning Consultation . You can also drop off your response at the Town Hall, Upper George Street Luton LU1 2BQ during the hours above.

Please note we are unable to accept anonymous responses. When you respond, you must consider and agree to the Privacy Notice with the consultation documents in order for your responses to be considered. All valid responses will be publicly available. However, your contact details will be private except for your name/organisation. Your details and your comments will be held on our private consultation database so that we can keep you informed. You can contact us at anytime by emailing localplan@luton.gov.uk if you wish to be no longer contacted.

If you have any questions please contact us on **01582 548528**

Comments must be submitted by 5pm on 7 February 2025.

Call for Sites

We are undertaking a call for sites alongside the consultation on this document. We are asking for sites to be submitted to us for consideration for including in the Local Plan going forward. These could be sites for housing, employment, local green space and other uses. We have produced an online form which is available here www.luton.gov.uk/newlocalplan

Public exhibitions

Come and speak to us at public exhibitions in Luton:

- Luton Point Shopping Centre (near the exit to Bute Street/the train station)
Tuesday 17 December 2024, from 10am to 6pm
- Luton Point Shopping Centre (near the exit to Bute Street/the train station)
Wednesday 8 January 2025, from 10am to 6pm
- Council Offices, Town Hall, Committee Room 3
Thursday 23 January 2025, from 10am to 5pm



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comments



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