

Neighbourhood Planning Network Meeting

Planning Policy Team

NPN Meeting | 16 September 2026

16th September 2026

Bristol Local Plan Review update.

Local Plan 2045 programme.

WECA upcoming planning consultation.

Changes to pre app process.

Using AI in planning application responses.



Local Plan Review update

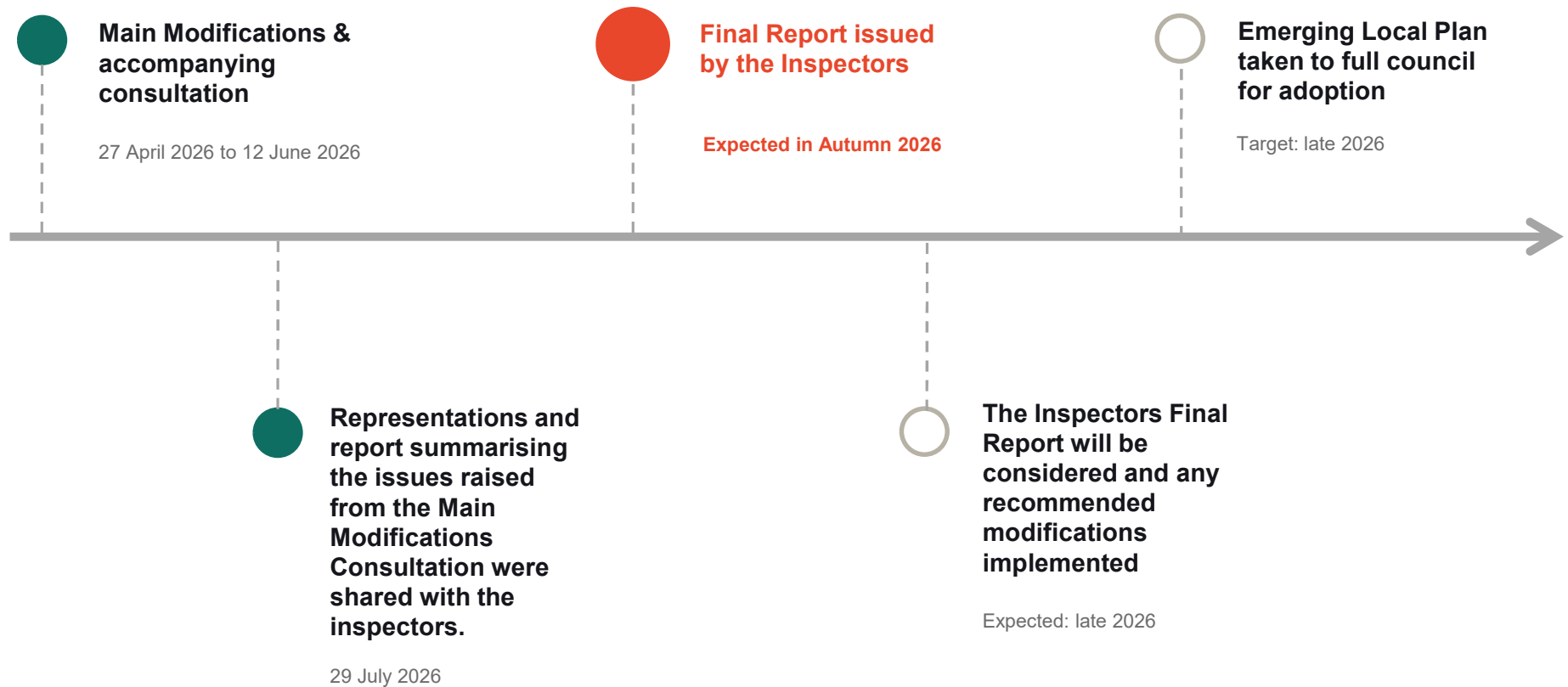
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Overview of where we are in the process of review of the emerging local plan and expected milestones until the end of 2026.



Where we are in the process



Local Plan 2045 programme

Overview of where we are in the process of preparation of the new local plan, why we have been asked to start a review at this stage & what the next steps in the process are

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Why are we updating the Local Plan?

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR CURRENT PLAN?



Why are we updating the Local Plan?

In March 2026, the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 came into force, introducing a new system for preparing shorter and clearer local plans within a 30-month timetable.

Bristol is required to prepare its next local plan under the new system. There is also a particular need to consider how Bristol can respond to its housing need. The housing requirement proposed through the Local Plan 2022-2040 meets less than 80% of local housing need as calculated through the national standard method. The government has confirmed that the Council must begin work on a new plan immediately, under the 'new system' of local plan making.

Programme

Where we are in the process

Before the 30-month process starts



This diagram illustrates the main tasks to complete when you are 'getting ready' to prepare a new plan before the 30-month process starts.



What we've done so far

- Given 4 months 'notice to commence'
- Published the Local Plan timetable



On-going work:

Started the Scoping consultation (open 9th to 30th September 2026)



What's next

- Publish Gateway 1 by 31st October 2026
- Adopt a new Local Plan within 30 months from Gateway 1

Scoping Consultation

BRISTOL LOCAL PLAN 2045 SCOPING CONSULTATION

9-30 September 2026



What we've done so far

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/ask/find-consultation-engagement/309>



The new Bristol Local Plan 2045 centres on Bristol as a Thriving Place



The purpose of the Scoping Consultation is:

- To gather ideas about what should be included in the new Local Plan
- To gain understanding of how you want to engage with the new Local Plan's development

Mayoral Combined Authority SDS Timeline

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Overview of how the Bristol Local Plan 2045 timetable relates to the MCA's Spatial Development Strategy programme, where the overlaps are and what should be considered in the process.



MCA Provisional Timetable



Pre-Application Process Update

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In line with GDPR requirements we will no longer be consulting the Neighbourhood Plan Network on pre-application advice submissions.

The network will continue to be consulted on planning applications. However, pre-application advice and related plans are not publicly available and therefore cannot be shared.



Using AI in planning application responses

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The use of AI when responding to applications needs to be carefully considered in order to ensure it is used effectively.



USING AI IN PLANNING APPLICATION RESPONSES

Key concerns of using AI:

Accuracy

AI generated comments may include references to fictitious policies or case law

Length

AI comments can be longer than necessary to communicate concerns and may be overly repetitive

Relevance

AI comments can be generic and don't appropriately capture the specific concerns of the application

Incorrect use of AI impacts the efficacy of the representation in communicating the respondent's concerns.

When AI may be used:

- AI generated responses are often not necessary
- May be useful to refer concerns to specific planning policies
- Regardless of whether policy is referenced in comments, planning officers will assess the concerns raised against policy

AI comments length

- Quality over quantity
- AI can be used to make comments more concise
- Non-AI comments are often equally/more effective in communicating concerns

Ensuring accuracy in AI generated comments

- PAS guidance can help with this
- Set the context for AI, i.e. outline the policy AI should use
- Use the PAS accuracy prompt