

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S

REPORT TO ECONOMY & PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 15 December 2025

Report Title: Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Local Plan 2040

Submitted by: Deputy Chief Executive

Portfolios: Strategic Planning

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To provide an update on the emerging Borough Local Plan.			
<u>Recommendation</u>			
That the Committee notes the update on the progress of developing a new Local Plan for the Borough.			
<u>Reasons</u>			
To provide an update on the progress of developing a new Local Plan. To ensure that the process of adopting a Local Plan is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).			

1. Background

- 1.1** The Local Plan sets the vision and framework for how the Borough will grow up to 2040. It sets out targets for the number of jobs and homes to be delivered in the Borough and provides a spatial strategy to guide development to the most sustainable locations. On its adoption, the Plan will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the Borough.
- 1.2** The Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on the 12 December 2022, requested that a standing item be added to future meeting agendas to provide an update on the current position with regards to the preparation of the emerging Borough Local Plan.
- 1.3** The Borough Council submitted the Local Plan for examination on the 20 December 2024. Inspector Anne Jordan (BA Hons) MRTPI has been appointed to examine the Local Plan.
- 1.4** All comments received at the Final Draft Local Plan (at Regulation 19 stage) were sent to the Secretary of State on the submission of the Plan for consideration. The Inspector holding the examination considers the evidence

provided by the Council to support the Plan and any representations which have been put forward by local people and interested parties.

1.5 There are three potential outcomes to the examination process:

- a) The Plan as submitted by the Council is found to be sound and legally compliant.
- b) Changes (known as 'main modifications') to the Plan are considered necessary to make it legally compliant and sound; or
- c) The Plan is deemed unsound and/or not legally compliant with any deficiency (ies) unable to be remedied through main modifications. In this outcome, the Council is asked to withdraw the Plan from examination.

1.6 The outcome for a large proportion of plan examinations is (b), involving 'main modifications' – changes to the plan deemed necessary to make the Plan sound. Proposed main modifications that the Inspector considers necessary are subject to public consultation for a period of six weeks during the examination. At the end of the examination, the Inspector will send a report to the Council with their findings including confirming final recommended main modifications. After that, the Plan, incorporating the main modifications, can be adopted by the Council. Upon adoption the Plan would become part of the statutory development plan for the Borough and would replace most policies in the Joint Core Strategy 2009 and legacy Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2003.

1.7 A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") was published by the Government in December 2024. In line with the transitional provisions of the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 234b & 236 respectively) for Local Plan making, where a Local Plan has been submitted for examination on or before the 12 March 2025 and the emerging Plan provides for less than 80% of local housing need, the Local Planning Authority will be expected to begin work on a new plan, under the revised plan-making system provided for under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (as soon as the relevant provisions are brought into force in 2025) in order to address any shortfall in housing need. This is the position faced by the Council following the publication of the NPPF in December 2024.

2. Issues

2.1 A Local Plan 'examination library' webpage has been created: - [Local plan examination – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council](#). The examination library provides regular updates on the examination. The Inspector and Programme Officer, appointed to assist the Inspector with the running of the examination maintain the library. Any updates to the website are facilitated by the Council. The examination library contains documents submitted to the Inspector on the submission of the Local Plan and then regular updates on the Local Plan examination, including letters and correspondence that the Inspector issues to the Council and formal responses by the Council in return.

2.2 Further to responses being made by the Council to information requests from the Inspector, public examination hearing sessions were confirmed and held from the 20 May to 26 June 2025.

- 2.3 The Inspector issued her post hearing views on the 1 August 2025 and asked the Council to undertake some additional work. The Council duly responded to the Inspector and additional matters raised on the 22 September and the 3 October 2025 respectively.
- 2.4 Following correspondence from the Inspector, on the 27 October 2025, the Council has moved onto the next stage of the examination process, the Main Modifications consultation stage. Here, the Council consults on a schedule of modifications required to the Local Plan following the outcomes of the examination process. Other consultation documents include a list of additional minor modifications (focused on non-material matters such as formatting) and supporting documentation including Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. Changes to the Policies Map are also consulted upon at this stage which are necessary to reflect the implications of changes being proposed to the Local Plan.
- 2.5 Consultation on Main Modifications commenced on the 5 November 2025 and will end on the 17 December 2025. This is a technical stage of consultation with views sought only on the schedule of Main Modifications, alongside the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment reports. Responses are asked to consider whether the Main Modifications proposed are sound (positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy) and legally compliant.
- 2.6 Once the consultation on the Main Modifications ends, all responses to the consultation will be forwarded on to the Planning Inspector for consideration when preparing the final report on the examination of the Local Plan. If the Inspector finds the Plan sound, the Council may then be able to take steps to adopt it. This would be a decision for Full Council.

3. **Recommendation**

- 3.1 That the Committee notes the update on the progress of developing a new Local Plan for the Borough.

4. **Reasons**

- 4.1 To provide an update on the progress of developing a new Local Plan. To ensure that the process of adopting a Local Plan is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 The Council has expressed its clear intention through the approval of a Local Development Scheme (Local Plan Timetable) to adopt a new Local Plan providing a comprehensive set of up-to date planning policies for the Borough.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 In accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'), the Council has a statutory duty to prepare planning policies and maintain an up-to-date development plan.

- 6.2 Secondary legislation relating to the preparation of development plan documents is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 The Local Plan is supported by an Equality Impact Assessment as part of its Sustainability Appraisal. This will consider how development proposed and planning policies impact on different groups in the community.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 The preparation of the Local Plan is resourced through the Planning Policy budget and full use of the Local Plan reserve.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 9.1 Changes in National Policy, Legislation and Guidance - The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act may have implications for the formulation of future Local Plans. The Council is awaiting the publication of secondary legislation and regulations in relation to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act that may have an impact upon future Plan making. A consultation is expected shortly on an updated National Planning Policy Framework. The Planning and Infrastructure Bill is also making its way through Parliament and is expected to receive Royal Ascent shortly. This may also have a future impact on Planning and Local Plan making.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

- 10.1 As the Local Plan is primarily focused on the use of land and the achievement of sustainable development, overall levels of growth and the relationship to the environment and infrastructure then several of the UN Sustainable Development Goals will overlap with the aims of the Plan.



11. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council ☒

We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.

- Site allocations in the Local Plan will support sustainable development in the Local Plan up to 2040, including sites in the Council's ownership

One Digital Council ☒

We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.

- Consultation on the Local Plan will include appropriate references to online and digital platforms to engage with the consultation

One Sustainable Council ☒

We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle

- The Local Plan includes policies to support the Council's urban tree planting schemes and policies in relation to energy efficiency and renewable energy

12. Key Decision Information

12.1 This report and the recommendations contained within it relate to the preparation of a new Borough Local Plan. Decision reports associated with the formal consultation and submission of the Local Plan will affect all wards in the Borough.

13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 Cabinet – 02 September 2025 - [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 2nd September, 2025, 2.00 pm – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council](#)

13.2 Cabinet – 4 February 2025 – Local Development Scheme - [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 4th February, 2025, 2.00 pm – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council](#)

13.3 Cabinet – 15 October 2024 – Cabinet Decision Funding the Local Plan Examination - [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 15th October, 2024, 2.00 pm – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council](#)

13.4 Council – 24 July – Council decision to consult on the Final Draft Local Plan - [Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 24th July, 2024, 7.00 pm – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council](#)

14. List of Appendices

14.1 None

15. Background Papers

15.1 The Local Plan examination website can be viewed here: - [Local plan examination – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council](#)