

Local Plan

Pre-options engagement

Bathavon Area Forum - June 2025

Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

***“There is no power
for change greater than a
community discovering what
it cares about”***

Margaret J. Wheatley (2002) Turning to One Another

Why are we talking to you today?

To ensure that there is a common understanding of what the Local Plan is.

To gain a better understanding of the views within our local communities.

To share our Vision for the Chew Valley.

To build relationships and create opportunities to hold conversations.

To share the programme for future engagement and consultation on the Local Plan..

Local Plan – an overview

What is a Local Plan?

- Prepared by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), Local Plans are statutory documents which contain planning policies to guide and shape development.
- Planning policies set out the design principles and requirements that development should follow.
- Local Plans usually cover a period of 15 to 20 years and have a defined geographical area. Once adopted, the Local Plan is the main tool used to determine local planning applications.

Why prepare a new Plan?

- We are coming to the end of our current Plan period. To ensure local planning policies are up to date, we need to produce a brand new Local Plan.
- Work on the new Plan commenced in 2022, however, in December 2024 changes were made to national planning policy. This included changes to the way housing targets are calculated and how the Green Belt is defined.
- To respond to these changes, we have reset the Plan making process including engagement and consultation activities.

Local Plan - the opportunity

A new approach

The resetting of the Local Plan has provided the Council with the opportunity to review its approach to engagement and consultation

The opportunity

- Increase the quality and quantity of outreach and feedback;
- Better align engagement activities across different Council departments;
- Work with community partners.



Engagement vs Consultation

What is the difference and why does it matter?

- In a Local Plan setting there are typically two stages of consultation;
- Consultation must comply with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations (2012);
- Engagement is more flexible and can take place at anytime during the plan making process, lending itself to the deployment of innovative techniques.

Engagement

Is an ongoing process aimed at building relationships, fostering dialogue and sharing information, even without a direct decision-making outcome.

Consultation

Is a statutory process (i.e. legally required) aimed at gathering public opinion on specific proposals or issues, in order to inform decisions on policies, strategies and plans.

The stages of consultation



Engagement

Reg 18

As a minimum, we must notify the relevant organisations (as defined by the Regulations) and invite each of them to make representations about what the new or updated policies ought to contain.

We must then take into account the representations made.

Reg 19/20

We are required to publish the Local Plan in draft and invite the relevant stakeholders (as defined by the Regulations) to submit 'Regulation 20' representations prior to the Submission of the Local Plan for examination.

The stages of consultation



Engagement – May 2025 onwards

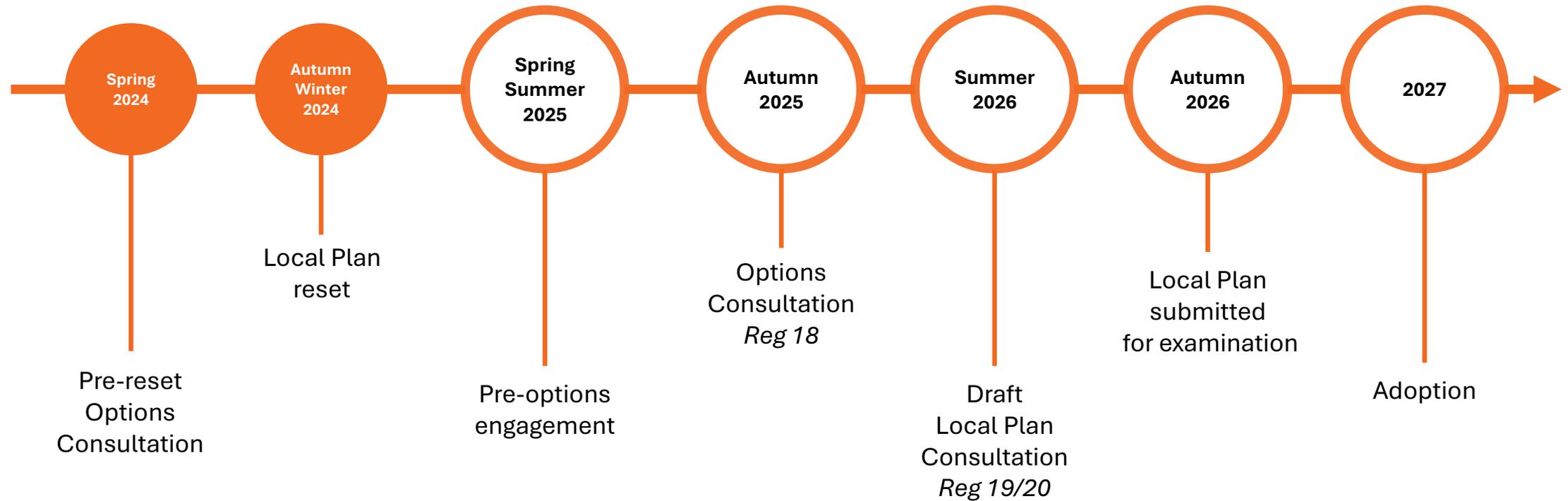


Options Document
(Reg 18)
Autumn 2025



Draft Local Plan
(Reg 19/20)
Summer 2026

Local Plan Programme



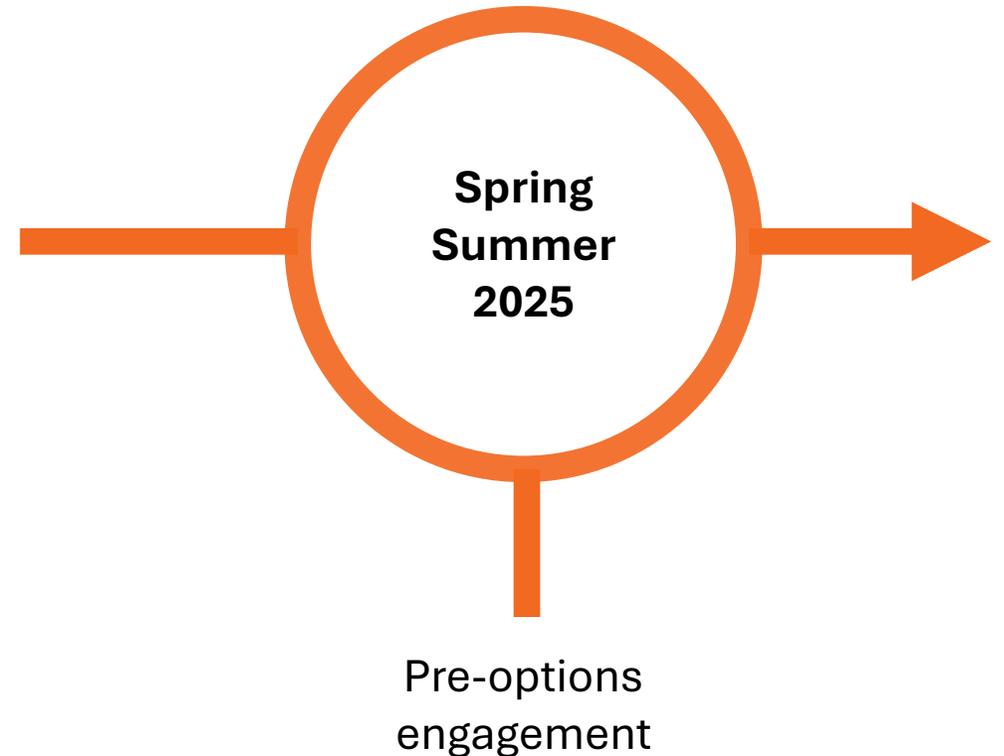
Key messages – Spring Summer ‘25

Focus

- Building relationships, fostering dialogue and sharing information.

5 key messages

- What the Local Plan is and how it shapes planning decisions;
- Why we need prepare a new Local Plan;
- What benefits can growth can deliver/unlock;
- What principles and ambitions will guide development during the Plan period;
- How to engage/consult on the Local Plan and why it is important to do so.



10 'tradigital' methods proposed

Digital

Traditional



Web engagement platform



Social media and short form video and graphic content



Visual minutes



Attending community events and running workshops



Surveys with incentivised response



Digital campaigns



Gamification



Arts led and visual engagement



Vox pops and radio



Community walk and talks

Bathavon

Emerging Vision

The wider ambition

- Access to high quality, affordable housing in the right locations is vitally important to address housing need.
- Focusing on housing alone, however, fails to deliver the types places that people want to live in.
- We want to create sustainable, vibrant communities that have a low carbon impact and are resilient in the face of climate change.



Challenges for the rural areas

- Is not a single place. There are varied geographies and place identities.
- Lack of affordable housing
- Ageing population
- Poor public transport
- Poor digital connectivity
- Limited access to facilities and shops
- Preserving character and local identity
- Climate change resilience and adaptation
- Protection and restoration of natural capital and ecosystem services



The emerging vision

Communities will be empowered to deliver locally led initiatives which help to support and diversify their local economies.

There will be a focus on improving connectivity (walking, cycling and public transport); local energy and food production; and low impact tourism.



What might the Local Plan deliver?

Bottom up and strategically targeted rural growth which meets housing, job and infrastructure needs that is plan led and avoids challenges from speculative developments.



***Engagement
activity***

Prompt questions

Local Plan

- What are your views on the emerging vision for Bathavon / Rural areas?
- Do you agree with the challenges we've presented.
- What are the opportunities?

Engagement platform

We would love your feedback on our engagement platform, which is currently in development.

Please visit the website or scan the QR code:

bathnesplaces.co.uk/localplan



GI / Sustainability

- How could your community get involved in conversations about community owned renewables?
- How do you feel about access to green space in your community?