

Maldon Local Plan Risk Register
Last updated: 14/07/2026

Number	Title	Risk Description	Impact type (Delay, Cost, Quality)	Unmitigated Probability	Unmitigated Impact	Unmitigated Risk Score	Mitigation	Mitigated Probability	Mitigated Impact	Mitigated Risk Score
1	Publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is delayed	The final NPPF is delayed and not published until the local plan is well underway. A new version of the NPPF is due to be published this summer (2026) by central government, following consultation on a draft proposal in winter 2025-26. To be deemed sound, the Local Plan must be consistent with national policy. If national policy changes during Local Plan preparation, revisions may need to be made, potentially delaying the programme.	Delay	3	3	9	Engage with the relevant authorities to get early insights into the NPPF updates. This can help in anticipating changes and preparing for them in advance. Identify early key issues likely to come forward in the new NPPF based on the consultation proposal and future-proof the plan as much as possible.	3	2	6
2	Content in the new National Planning Policy Framework is not as expected.	The content of the NPPF is not as expected/unclear and leads to a need for significant re-work. If unexpected changes are required, there will be a delay to the programme, as well as unexpected costs in remediating the issue. The content of the new NPPF does not cover all local issues and additional work is required to develop locally specific development management policies.	Delay; Cost	2	4	8	By the end of summer 2026, assess the likelihood of needing significant rewrite and factor in contingency in the programme. Regularly review and update the plan to align with any new announcements or changes in the system.	2	3	6
3	Changes to policy and guidance during preparation of Local Plan	Government keeps publishing further local plan policy or guidance well into the preparation of the Local Plan which has costs and programme impact due to rework required.	All	4	3	12	Any new update in guidance will have to be reviewed to ensure that it does not impact the quality of the evidence base.	4	2	8
4	Local Government Reorganisation leads to abortive work	The Local Plan does not reach an advanced enough state by April 2028 and the work completed is not taken forward by the new Mid-Essex Authority.	Delay; Cost	3	3	9	Engagement with the other Mid-Essex Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) throughout the process to ensure wider political buy-in.	3	2	6
5	Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) diverts resource	Officers are diverted from Local Plan due to the need to work on projects related to Local Government Reorganisation.	Delay; Cost	4	3	12	Senior leadership to monitor allocation of LGR tasks closely and prior to diverting any Local Plan resource, ensure that an alternative resource to backfill the Local Plan requirement is secured first.	2	2	4
6	Publication of the new Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) leads to re-work	The Local Plan will need to be in conformity with an as yet unformed Combined Authority's Spatial Development Strategy, of which little is known about its contents or how and when it will be produced. If published late in the Local Plan making process, it may lead to significant re-work, particularly if the SDS apportions a Local Housing Need for Maldon which differs from the current Local Housing Need as calculated through the Standard Method.	Delay; Cost	2	5	10	The preparation of a Spatial Development Strategy will have to be done jointly with the unitary authorities which it will cover and who will have an opportunity to shape the SDS.	2	4	8
7	Devolution	There is a risk that Maldon officers are asked to be involved in the preparation of the new Spatial Development Strategy for the new Combined Authority, which would divert them from work on the Local Plan.	Delay	2	5	10	Additional resources would have to be considered to ensure that an SDS workstream would not impact work on the Local Plan. This risk is unlikely to be restricted to Maldon and a coordinated approach and sharing of resources with neighbouring authorities should be considered.	2	4	8
8	The 30-month local plan timetable is not met due to lengthy governance processes which do not provide the flexibility required to make decisions at the right time	The 30-month local plan timetable is not met due to the length of the governance processes internally to the Council, which create delays in decision-making and delays to the overall Local Plan programme.	All	4	5	20	The programme was built with sufficient leading time to Full Council meetings at the required decision-making points. Any further governance requirements would delay the local plan programme. New proposed Governance arrangements should help create certainty. Regular updates to the Local Plan programme will help plan any extraordinary Council sessions.	3	5	15
9	Full Council cycle does not fit with the requirements of the Local Plan programme and extraordinary meetings cannot be arranged.	The programme was based on the assumption that extraordinary meetings would be scheduled for Full Council to enable timely decision-making for the local plan. If extraordinary Full Council meetings cannot be scheduled, this will delay the local plan programme.	Delay	4	4	16	Proactive local plan management and programme updates should inform continuous dialogue with the Council's democratic services to ensure that extraordinary Full council sessions can be scheduled in good time.	2	3	6

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10	Inability to recruit suitable candidates into planning policy team	The market for planning policy planners is currently difficult and recruitment for the two additional resources required in the team to deliver the local plan is likely to be challenging.	Delay, cost	4	4	16	In the short term, contractors and consultants can be utilised to balance resourcing of the project to ensure that the evidence base studies are started in time to meet the programme.	4	2	8
11	Officers focusing on other priorities	The Local Plan programme proposed is ambitious and is based on officers assuming responsibility for a set list of business-as-usual tasks. Any changes to this resourcing e.g. to deal with a new service tasks or due to an increase in BAU work (e.g. neighbourhood plans) would risk delays to the overall Local Plan programme. This is especially relevant in the current context of the Council, where a lack of SYHLS is likely to lead to an increase in the number of applications, appeals and large sites coming forward.	Delay	4	4	16	Ensure buy-in into the Local Plan at the corporate level to ensure that priorities are clearly understood and that agreement to outsource ad-hoc tasks is in place. Recruitment of a s106 officer should be undertaken as soon as possible to free up the required resources within the planning policy team.	3	2	6
12	Requisite technical expertise is not available in the market at the right time	Government's plan making reforms and emphasis on all LPAs having a plan in place asap means there is increased demand for consultancy services. This may lead to delays in the production of evidence base studies or Local Plan deliverables if the requisite expertise cannot be sourced at the relevant time.	Delay	3	4	12	Start of the selected key evidence base as soon as possible. Appoint legal counsel on a call-off basis so advice can be quickly sought across the lifetime of Local Plan production	2	2	4
13	Evidence base studies or Local Plan deliverables take longer to complete than anticipated or there are unforeseen delays	Delays to the delivery of evidence base studies or Local Plan deliverables delay overall Local Plan programme.	Delay	3	4	12	A significant number of the evidence base studies have already been commissioned and are either in progress or completed. Effective programme management to constantly monitor project progress and arrange additional support where necessary.	2	3	6
14	Not enough sites submitted through Call for Sites to meet Local Housing Need (LHN)	If an insufficient number of sites are submitted, this will undermined the Local Plan's ability to demonstrate a deliverable and developable land supply to meet its Local Housing Need and risk the Local Plan not being deemed sound.	Quality; Delay	3	3	9	Proactively engage with landowners, developers, and agents to encourage site submissions as well as reopening/extending the Call for Sites if needed. Consider engagement with neighbouring authorities to see whether they could accommodate some of the need.	2	3	6
15	Unclear ownership of transport modelling	Lack of clarity over the ownership of the County Transport Model following local government reorganisation (LGR) and the end of Essex County Council (ECC) as an entity increases uncertainty in the plan and programme. Even if the Model is transferred to the successor body, reorganisation of teams may lead to loss of skills and / or knowledge and may also lead to a delay in service delivery whilst a new team beds into new roles.	Delay, Cost	5	4	20	Establish interim agreements or memoranda of understanding to secure access to existing modelling tools and data. Document all assumptions and limitations in the evidence base to ensure transparency during examination.	4	4	16
16	High response rates to public consultations	Longer period required to consider and process response that might impact overall Local Plan programme.	Delay, Cost	2	4	8	Purchase of consultation software will offer efficiency gains that will help offset high response rates. Tailor consultation material to ensure that respondents clearly understand the purpose of the Local Plan. Combine this with minimising the number of open questions to reduce the volume of responses that need to be analysed. Encourage respondents to make digital submissions via consultation software to reduce processing time.	2	3	6
17	Consultation and engagement identify a need for further work, including new evidence base studies	Delay to overall Local Plan programme and potential additional costs	Delay, cost	3	3	9	Local Plan budget includes contingency fund to account for potential extra work .	3	2	6
18	Key stakeholders lack capacity to respond within required timeframe	Delay to overall Local Plan programme depending on how essential a response is considered to Local Plan drafting.		3	4	12	As part of the preparation of the Regulation 20 scoping consultation, engage with key stakeholders to ensure they are clear on timescales and required inputs. Ensure that data and other inputs required by stakeholders is provided in a timely fashion, so that the Council does not hold up stakeholder's work.	2	4	8

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19	Lack of buy-in from and participation by community and wider stakeholders	There is a risk that the plan is found unsound at examination if stakeholder input is not conducted effectively. More broadly, if adopted without sufficient buy-in, the Local Plan will not adequately reflect the people and residents of Maldon.	Quality	2	4	8	The programme allows for community and stakeholder engagement in the early phase of the plan making process, ensuring a sense of ownership of the new plan. The Project Initiation Document will include a community engagement strategy to maximise participation. Work with a consultancy specialised in youth engagement will minimise risks for this group.	1	3	3
20	Financial resources are insufficient	Unable to complete Local Plan or additional resource has to be identified from alternative source	Delay; Cost	2	4	8	Detailed consideration given to the budget requirements for the Local Plan. Only those workstreams considered essential have been included within the resource plan and budget. A contingency fund has been included within the budget to offset unknowns, including the need for further site level evidence base studies. Regular review of Local Plan budget by Strategic and Resources Committee to ensure that sufficient budget remains. Early proactive engagement with the new unitary authority to ensure the local plan budget remains ringfenced to fund the local plan examination.	1	3	3
21	Programme slippage	Due to a very ambitious programme to submit the plan by October 2028, limited contingency was built into the programme. Delays to any part of the programme will have a knock on effect and risk creating programme slippage. This will in turn cause disruption to the quality and or cost of later parts of the programme. If delays push the programme too far back, it will risk further impacts on meeting the 30-month local plan programme, potentially jeopardising submission of a sound plan.	All	4	5	20	A programme has been prepared to reflect the interdependencies of different workstreams, with contingency where possible. The Council will also engage early and proactively with local stakeholders, and on other parts of the programme where external input is required and where risk of programme delays is greatest.	3	4	12
22	Local Plan not deemed sound	There is a risk that following the final submission of the plan the Local Plan is deemed unsound at Examination.	Delay; Cost	2	5	10	The Local Plan programme seeks to ensure that the right processes are in place to make the plan sound. A review of this risk and associated mitigation will be undertaken following the first two gateway reviews to ensure the right level of mitigation is put in place. Gateway checks, which form part of the new Local Plan making system, should help identify potential soundness issues, allowing them to be addressed prior to Examination.	1	4	4
23	Legal fees	The costs of counsel advice at Examination will be highly dependent on the type of issues which arise through the Local Plan preparation and cannot be very accurately forecasted at this stage. It is possible that legal costs may be higher than currently forecasted.	Cost	4	2	8	Some legal advice has been forecasted in the programme and this will be kept under review as the plan preparation progresses and the main issues are identified, ensuring the final legal costs can be updated as accurately as possible as early as possible.	2	2	4

		Risk Score				
Impact	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Key		
1	3	Low risk
4	6	Moderate risk
8	12	High risk
15	25	Extremely high risk