



MALDON

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Local Plan for Maldon District Project Initiation Document

July 2026

Version 1

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1. Overview

1.1. Project details

Project Title	Maldon District Local Plan
Project Initiation Document Version	1
Project Initiation Document Date of Publication	Draft – July 2026

1.2 Purpose of this Project Initiation Document

- 1.2.1 This Project Initiation Document (PID) sets out the management framework and approach to delivering a new Local Plan for Maldon District. It provides clarity on the Plan's scope, governance arrangements, resources and timelines.
- 1.2.2 The PID is designed as a reference tool for the project team, Members and stakeholders, which supports effective decision-making and ensuring everyone involved understands their roles and responsibilities throughout the plan-making process.
- 1.2.3 This PID has been prepared utilising the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) template and the information within this PID has been informed by work undertaken by consultants, Arup, who were commissioned by Maldon District Council (MDC) to assist with project and resourcing planning a new Local Plan.

2. Plan Scope

2.1 Role of the Local Plan

- 2.1.1 Our Local Plan is important in providing the vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the long-term sustainable development of Maldon District.
- 2.1.2 As a Local Planning Authority (LPA) covering Maldon District, we have a statutory duty to prepare and adopt a Local Plan. Our Local Plan establishes how land within our area will be used and developed, setting out priorities for housing, employment, infrastructure, design and the environment. In planning for new homes, the government's Standard Method provides the initial benchmark for determining local housing need. Importantly, our policies must contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, avoid inconsistency with national development management policies and align generally with any operative Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) relevant to our area. Once adopted, our Local Plan will serve as the principal basis for making planning decisions, directly shaping the future growth, development, and sustainability of our communities.

2.2 Current Local Plan

- 2.2.1 The [Maldon District Local Development Plan](#) 2014-2029 (MDLDP) was approved in 2017 by the Secretary of State. The approved MDLDP forms the development plan for the Maldon District, alongside 'made' Neighbourhood Plans, the Essex Minerals Local Plan and the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan. It is the principal basis for making planning decisions and shaping future growth within our district.
- 2.2.2 A review of the MDLDP began in 2021. Significant progress has been made since then, including public consultation, updating the evidence base and undertaking a Call for Sites exercise.
- 2.2.3 However, in December 2024 the Government published a National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated sections of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and other updates. This introduced a new way to calculate local housing need. The housing requirement for Maldon district nearly doubled, this required a fundamental review of the sites which could be allocated in a new local plan. The latest housing need figure for the Maldon district is a requirement of 586 homes per annum.

- 2.2.4 In October 2023, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) introduced a new approach to plan-making; the secondary legislation to implement this was published in March 2026¹.
- 2.2.5 As part of the national reforms to the plan-making system, the Government set a limited transition period for Local Plans being prepared under the old/legacy system, with a deadline for submitting the plan for examination by 31 December 2026. However, we have not been able to meet the transitional arrangements to submit before December 2026 in the legacy system due to the need to consider additional new housing sites.
- 2.2.6 To inform the decision to progress a new Local Plan, consultants, Arup, were commissioned in March 2026 to produce a PID, Project and Resourcing Plan, Risk Register and Budget. The final documents were received in July 2026 and have been used to inform this PID.
- 2.2.7 As such, MDC is commencing preparation of a new Local Plan for Maldon District under the new plan-making system.

2.3 Local Government Reorganisation

- 2.3.1 Under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), Essex will be reorganised on 1st April 2028, with all 15 Councils across Greater Essex ceasing to exist and replaced by 5 new Unitary Councils. Maldon District will form part of Mid-Essex Council, along with the areas of Brentwood Borough and Chelmsford City.
- 2.3.2 Government have confirmed that all local authorities should get up-to-date local plans in place as soon as possible and that LGR is not a reason to delay plan-making, even if an authority is unable to progress the plan to adoption before the new unitary is operational².
- 2.3.3 Government have also confirmed their intention that adopted plans can remain in force for the part of the new unitary area to which they relate until they are superseded by a new unitary-wide plan. Government are intending to publish transitional arrangements to address plan-making complexities arising as part of LGR.

2.4 Devolution

- 2.4.1 The Government has confirmed that Greater Essex will proceed with devolution and the establishment of a Combined County Authority, including a mayoral election in 2028.

¹ The Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2026/186/contents/made>

² [Plan-making and local government reorganisation - GOV.UK](#)

- 2.4.2 Essex County Council and the two Unitary Councils (Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock) have commenced preparatory work on a Greater Essex Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). MDC will continue to engage in relation to the SDS to ensure the new Local Plan can respond to and inform the evolving strategic and political landscape across Greater Essex.

2.5 Relationship to other Strategies and Documents

- 2.5.1 The new Local Plan for Maldon District will positively respond to and support the delivery of a range of wider Council and regional strategies and documents, including:

- Maldon District Corporate Plan 2025-2028
- Maldon District Council Our Homes, Our Future – Climate Action Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2028
- Maldon District Future Transport Strategy 2024
- Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Water Strategy for Essex 2024
- Essex Local Cycling and Walking Action Plan
- North Essex Economic Strategy and Action Plan
- Essex County Council Sector Development Strategy
- Greater Essex Economic and Place Framework (in progress)
- Maldon District Council Housing Strategy (in progress)

3 Plan Timeline

3.1 Plan Stage

3.1.1 The key stages in the preparation of the Local Plan and progress at time of publication are as follows:

- **Before notice to commence plan-making**
- Notice of intention to commence plan-making
- Scoping Consultation – content and evidence
- Gateway 1 – self assessment
- Consultation on proposed plan contents and evidence
- Gateway 2 – independent review
- Consultation – proposed Local Plan
- Gateway 3 – stop or go
- Examination to confirm soundness
- Adoption

3.1.2 Maldon District Council have produced a plan-making timetable detailing the intended programme for the preparation and adoption of the new Local Plan for Maldon District.

3.1.3 This timetable is available on the Council website via: *[insert link when available]*

3.2 Local Plan Timeline Summary and Action Log

3.2.1 The intended programme for the preparation of the new Local Plan for Maldon District, including timescales for key milestones is provided within the plan-making timetable outlined above. A summary of this intended programme is provided below along with a key action log. A full project and resourcing plan is managed and maintained by the Planning Policy team.

Ref	Milestone	Actions	Timescale	Status
<i>To be delivered by Maldon District Council</i>				
1	Getting ready to start	Review work completed to date, produce a project and resourcing plan and PID. Initial engagement with relevant internal and external stakeholders.	July-Sept 26	Complete
2	Preparatory evidence gathering and scoping	Preparing and commissioning key evidence, further developing engagement strategy	Sept 26-Jan 27	To do
3	Notification of the start of the LP process	Publish notice to commence plan-making	Sept 26	To do
4	Regulation 20: scoping consultation*	Invite representations on what the contents of the Local Plan should be and how further engagement should be carried out (4 weeks)	Nov 26-Dec 26	To do
5	Gateway 1 – self assessment summary	Set out our readiness to begin plan preparation, this marks the start of the 30-month process	Feb 27	To do
6	Plan vision and strategy development		Dec 26-June 27	To do
7	Spatial options identified		June 27	To do
8	Regulation 23 consultation*	Consult on the plan content and evidence including the draft vision (6 weeks)	Aug 27-Sept 27	To do
9	Preferred option development and drafting the plan		Sept 27-March 28	To do
10	Preferred option identified		Nov 27	To do
11	Gateway 2 – advice	Assessor provides observations and advice on progress towards preparing a sound plan, Gateway 3 prescribed requirements and any further work required	Nov 27	To do
<i>To be delivered by Mid Essex Council</i>				
12	Regulation 27 consultation*	Consult on the proposed Local Plan (8 weeks)	May 28-July 28	To do
13	Process consultation and prepare		July 28-Sept 28	To do

Ref	Milestone	Actions	Timescale	Status
	plan for submission			
14	Gateway 3 – stop/go	Inspector assesses whether the prescribed requirements of the proposed local plan are met, and that the authority is ready to proceed to examination	Sept 28-Oct 28	To do
15	Submission	Submit the Local Plan	Oct 28	To do
16	Examination	Examination of the Local Plan	Nov 28-April 29	To do
17	Adoption	Adopt the Local Plan	May 29	To do

*These are statutory consultations. It is at these stages that the decisions to consult will be formally made by Members at Full Council.

4 Governance and Decision-Making

4.1 Summary of Governance

4.1.1 *The decision to begin a new Local Plan was made at Council on 10th September 2026.*

4.1.2 Planning Policy Working Group (PPWG) is a cross-party Councillor forum for the consideration and discussion of issues relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan and other related planning policy documents. The group does not have decision-making powers but can make recommendations to full Council.

4.1.3 PPWG will receive monthly updates on key actions and progress on the Local Plan. This will also be shared wider with all Members.

4.1.4 The timeline for preparing a new Local Plan is tight. The key touchpoints for Local Plan programme decision making revolve around the three statutory consultations, as well as the final decision to submit and adopt the plan.

4.1.5 Due to LGR, while MDC will continue to progress the Local Plan through the statutory consultation stages, the final decision to submit and adopt the Plan will rest with the Mid-Essex Unitary Authority once it is established. It is acknowledged that formal governance arrangements of the new unitary are unknown at this stage, however this will be monitored as the plan progresses and governance within the PID and Timeline updated as required.

Consultation	Preparatory Actions	Decision
Reg 20 scoping consultation (Nov 2026)	- PPWG to review documentation - Senior Leadership Team to review documentation - All-Member briefing	Full Council (Maldon District Council)
Reg 23 consultation (Aug 2027)	- PPWG to review documentation - Senior Leadership Team to review documentation - All-Member briefing	Full Council (Maldon District Council)
Reg 27 consultation (May 2028)	- PPWG to review documentation - Senior Leadership Team to review documentation - All-Member briefing	Full Council (Maldon District Council)
Submission (Oct 2028)	Briefings to relevant Member and Senior Officer of Mid Essex Unitary	Decision to be made by the new Mid Essex Unitary Authority
Adoption of the plan	Briefings to relevant Member and Senior Officer of Mid Essex Unitary	Decision to be made by the

Consultation	Preparatory Actions	Decision
(May 2029)		new Mid Essex Unitary Authority

4.2 Lead Officers

4.2.1 **Mark Jaggard** is the Director of Place, Planning & Growth. This directorate contains the Housing and Planning Service including the Planning Policy Team responsible for undertaking the work necessary to produce the Local Plan.

4.2.2 **Louise Staplehurst** is the Planning Policy Manager, responsible for the Planning Policy Team which undertakes the work necessary to produce the new Local Plan for Maldon District.

4.3 Lead Member

4.3.1 Maldon District Council does not operate a Cabinet system and therefore there is not a Portfolio Holder responsible for the Local Plan.

4.3.2 The Leader of the Council is Councillor Simon Morgan.

4.3.3 The Chair of the Planning Policy Working Group is Councillor Tony Fittock.

5 Staff Resource and Management

5.1 Overall Management of the Local Plan Process

Name	Job Title	FTE
Louise Staplehurst	Planning Policy Manager	1

5.2 Project Managers

Job Title	Dedicated PM?	Internal or External
Project Support Officer	No	Internal
PMO support	TBC	TBC

5.3 Core Local Plan Team

Job Title	Post status	FTE	Estimated % time preparing the Local Plan
Principal Policy Planner	Occupied	1	
Principal Policy Planner	Occupied	0.8	
Principal Policy Planner	Vacant	0.2	
Senior Policy Planner	Vacant	1	
Senior Policy Planner	Vacant	1	
Policy Planner	Vacant	1	
Policy Planner	Vacant	1	
Project Support Officer	Occupied	0.6	
Project Support Officer	Vacant	0.4	

5.4 Wider Support

5.4.1 It is expected that wider support will be required at various times throughout the plan-making process from internal colleagues.

Who	Why and when
Development Management Planners	Input throughout the process
Principal Heritage and Conservation Officer	To complete the Heritage Impact Assessment for the LP
S106 Officer	Input into the IDP and CIL and relevant policies and evidence as part of the new LP
Strategic Housing Enabling Development Officer	Input into Housing policies and other evidence base where necessary
Health Integration and Wellbeing team	Input into policies and other evidence base where necessary
Economic Development and Tourism team	Input into policies and other evidence base where necessary

Who	Why and when
Environment and Sustainability Manager	Input into policies and other evidence base where necessary
GIS Officer	To assist with GIS mapping where needed throughout the process
Communications Team	To assist with consultations and publicity where resources allow
Legal Team	To assist with legal compliance where necessary
Other	Other support such as finance, procurement, elections and performance/data where necessary.

5.5 External Support

- 5.5.1 Consultants will be required to prepare key components of the evidence base and provide necessary support during Examination. Further details are set out in section 6.
- 5.5.2 We will also require specialist Legal Support from a Barrister or Counsel, as well as a Programme Officer for the Examination Stage of the Local Plan.

6 Evidence

6.1 Existing and New Evidence

6.1.1 To ensure the efficient use of our resources, the evidence base prepared to inform the Local Plan review under the legacy system has been assessed to inform additional evidence requirements for the new Local Plan. This is not an exhaustive list; further evidence base requirements may become apparent as preparation of the Local Plan progresses and public consultation is undertaken. We will also work with other teams within the Council to build upon or commission joint evidence where appropriate.

6.1.2 The tables below set out a summary of the existing evidence base, where it needs to be updated and where new evidence may be required.

Existing Evidence					
Evidence Title	Description	Key Internal Stakeholders	Key External Stakeholders	Author	Requirement
Maldon District Economy Study	Identifies economic growth opportunities in the district up to 2040.	Economic Development	Business community Developers	Consultants	Partial update required
Employment Land & Premises Study	Evidence to inform employment growth, future requirements for sites and supply of land to support economic growth.	Economic Development	Business community Developers	Consultants	Partial update required
Economic Viability Assessment	Assesses the viability of housing development sites. (To be incorporated in the Whole Plan Viability Assessment).	To be incorporated in the Whole Plan Viability Assessment	To be incorporated in the Whole Plan Viability Assessment	Consultants	Partial update required
Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment	Assessment of housing and employment land.	Development Management Housing	Developers Parish/Town Councils ECC – education	In-house	Partial update required

Evidence Title	Description	Key Internal Stakeholders	Key External Stakeholders	Author	Requirement
			planning etc		
Local Housing Needs Assessment	Considers housing need up to 2044.	Housing Development Management	Developers Parish/Town Councils ECC – education planning etc Registered providers Integrated Care Board	Consultants	Partial update required
Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment Update	Identifies Gypsy and Traveller needs over the Local Plan period.	Housing Development management	Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community Adjacent LPAs	Consultants	Partial update required
Nature Conservation Study	Review of local wildlife sites and mapping.	Development Management	Developers / Landowners Natural England Wildlife organisations/ special interest groups Parish/Town Councils Essex Local Nature Partnership	Consultants / in-house	Partial update required
Landscape Character Assessment	Provides a detailed assessments of different landscape character areas within Maldon.	Development Management	Developers Parish/Town Councils Relevant special interest groups	Consultants	No update required.
Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk	Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).	Emergency Planner Development	Environment Agency Lead Local Flood	Consultants	Partial update

Evidence Title	Description	Key Internal Stakeholders	Key External Stakeholders	Author	Requirement
Assessment		Management Health & wellbeing	Authority Developers/ landowners Parish/Town Councils Infrastructure providers Business community Health/Emergency Services		required
Rural Facilities Survey and Settlement Pattern	Existing review of rural facilities and settlement pattern to be replaced by a full Settlement Hierarchy Study	Members Development Management	Parish/Town Councils	In-house	Update required
Integrated Assessment (SEA/HRA/HIA/E QIA)	Assessment of the social, environmental, economic, health, equalities and habitats impact of the Local Plan as it is produced	Relevant internal teams	PINS Developers Statutory consultees – Environment Agency; Natural England; Marine Management Organisation Relevant special interest groups	Consultants	Full update required
Transport and Highways Modelling	Modelling of highways impacts	Development Management	ECC Highways Developers Parish/Town Councils Adjacent LPAs Emergency Services Active Travel England	Consultants	Full update required

Evidence Title	Description	Key Internal Stakeholders	Key External Stakeholders	Author	Requirement
Indoor and Outdoor Sports and Play Strategy	Assessment of indoor and outdoor sports and play provision.	Health and Wellbeing Development Management	Sport England Governing Bodies for each relevant sport Parish/Town Councils Local sports clubs/operators Local community groups	Consultants	Partial update required

New and Additional Evidence					
Evidence Title	Description	Key Internal Stakeholders	Key External Stakeholders	Author	Requirement
Heritage Impact Assessment	Evidence to support site allocations and other strategic heritage policies where appropriate	Conservation and Heritage	Historic England Parish/Town Councils Relevant special interest groups Developers	In-house	Required
Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Delivery Assessment	Evidence to support the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation	Housing Development Management	Gypsy & Traveller communities	Consultants	Required
Water Cycle Study	To help identify water infrastructure capacity and water and flood management infrastructure required to support growth.	Sustainability and Environment Development Management Health & wellbeing	Water/sewerage companies Developers Environment Agency Integrated Care Board	Consultants	Required

Evidence Title	Description	Key Internal Stakeholders	Key External Stakeholders	Author	Requirement
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	To identify the infrastructure baseline in the area, planned provision and infrastructure required to support future growth. This will include blue and green infrastructure.	Development Management Members Health & wellbeing	Infrastructure providers Developers Parish/Town Councils ECC – education etc Integrated Care Board	Consultants	Required
Whole Plan Viability Assessment	To assess development viability within the area and implications of proposed policies. This will incorporate the updated economic viability assessment work.	Relevant internal teams including housing, development management etc.	Developers / landowners Parish/Town Councils	Consultants	Required
Retail Study	To assess retail needs.	Economic Development Development Management	Business community Developers	Consultants	Required
Renewable Energy Study	To assess areas for delivering low carbon and renewable energy.	Sustainability and Environment Development Management	Business Community Developers/ Landowners Operators National Grid	Consultants	Required
Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.	Emergency Planner Development Management Health & wellbeing	Environment Agency Lead Local Flood Authority Developers Parish/Town Councils Health/Emergency Services	Consultants	Required

Evidence Title	Description	Key Internal Stakeholders	Key External Stakeholders	Author	Requirement
Character and Design	Focused on reviewing character of existing settlements and providing wider design evidence to inform policies, this could also include evidence on density.	Development Management Housing Conservation and Heritage	Developers Parish/Town Council Relevant special interest groups Historic England	Consultants	Required
Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment	Focused on wider review of landscape value to help inform policies for specific sites.	Development Management	Developers Parish/Town Councils	Consultants	Required
Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation	Evidence to support climate resilience and sustainable design principles.	Sustainability & Environment Development Management Emergency Planner Health & Wellbeing	Community groups Business Community Water / sewerage Companies Environment Agency Infrastructure providers Developers Parish/Town Councils National Grid Health/Emergency Services Relevant special interest groups	Consultants	Optional

7 Stakeholder Engagement

7.1 Purpose

- 7.1.1 The purpose of the stakeholder engagement strategy is to ensure that the preparation of the new Local Plan is informed by meaningful, inclusive and proportionate engagement with stakeholders throughout the plan-making process. Effective engagement will help build trust, improve the evidence base, identify local priorities and support the delivery of a sound Local Plan that meets statutory requirements and reflects the aspirations of communities, businesses and partner organisations.

7.2 Stages of Engagement

- 7.2.1 Consistent with the regulations and guidance, preparation of the Local Plan will be informed primarily by engagement with stakeholders through three stages of formal public consultation.
1. Regulation 20 scoping consultation – invite representations on what the contents of the Local Plan should be and how further engagement should be carried out (4 weeks)
 2. Regulation 23 consultation – consult on the plan content and evidence including the draft vision (6 weeks)
 3. Regulation 27 consultation – consult on the proposed Local Plan (8 weeks)
- 7.2.2 A summary of responses will be prepared and published for each of these stages.

7.3 Methods of Engagement

- 7.3.1 A range of engagement methods will be used to maximise participation, including:
- Email notification of consultation to statutory and general consultees on the Local Plan Consultation Database, including neighbouring authorities and Town and Parish Councils.
 - Press release issued at start of formal consultations. Opportunities for a further press release during the consultation.
 - Use of the Council's social media channels for publicity.
 - Consultation documents available on Council's website.
 - Hard copy of consultation documents available at the MDC Offices.
 - Access to consultation documents via computer facilities in reception at the MDC Offices.
 - Public and Town and Parish Council consultation events, including the Parish Forums, as appropriate.

- Use of an online engagement platform to ensure responding to consultations is as clear and efficient as possible.

7.3.2 Planning can be technical and this can sometimes lead to uncertainty. As such, consultations should be as clear as possible, through the use plain-English and including a glossary of terms and acronyms where necessary. Consultations will also be clear on how to respond and in which time frame.

7.3.3 All consultation documentation will comply with [WCAG 2.2 accessibility standards](#).

7.4 Stakeholder Groups

7.4.1 The following stakeholder groups will be engaged with throughout the plan-making process:

- Council Members
- Essex County Council
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- Statutory consultees
- Infrastructure providers
- Developers, landowners and Planning Agents
- Local businesses
- Parish and Town Councils
- Residents

7.4.2 There are also some harder to reach groups who do not normally engage as much with plan-making consultations. Consultants have been commissioned to create a specific engagement approach for younger people, whose voices are vital in shaping the future of our district.

7.4.3 The engagement strategy will be further informed and updated through the 'scoping and early participation' stage of the plan-making process and Scoping Consultation, to ensure a robust and effective approach.

8 Budget Overview

8.1 Cost Estimates

8.1.1 The table below outlines a summary of the estimated budget for the new Local Plan, totalling £2,076,900 (for clarity, this has been rounded to £2,075,000).

8.1.2 These costs include Local Plan costs as well as recruitment of a further Policy Planner, Senior Policy Planner and S106 Officer, in addition to the existing staff establishment.

Task	Forecast Spend 26/27 (£)	Forecast Spend 27/28 (£)	Forecast Spend 28/29 (£)	Forecast Spend 29/30 (£)	Estimated Total Cost (£)
Evidence / consultancy costs	515,000	565,000	-	-	1,080,000
Consultation	30,000	30,000	30,000	15,000	105,000
Gateway checks	-	2,000	2,000	-	4,000
Examination	-	10,000	110,000	47,000	167,000
Total Local Plan costs	545,000	607,000	142,000	62,000	1,356,000
Additional salary costs	50,000	150,000	150,000	100,000	450,000
Subtotal	595,000	757,000	292,000	162,000	1,806,000
15% Contingency	89,250	113,550	43,800	24,300	270,900
Local Plan costs + contingency	684,250	870,550	335,800	186,300	2,076,900
Total					2,076,900
Recommended Budget					2,075,000

8.2 Budget Review

8.2.1 The budget will be reviewed monthly working with the Finance Business Partner.

9 Risks and Mitigation

- 9.1 The table below sets out a summary of the key risks identified as part of the Local Plan preparation.
- 9.2 As detailed within the Risk Register, the Council have identified a number of significant risks that could impact upon the delivery of the Local Plan. Where possible, opportunities to eliminate or minimise risks have been identified.
- 9.3 Whilst proposed responses or mitigation measures have been set out, seeking where possible to manage these risks, some areas of risk are outside the Council's control, which could limit many of the proposed mitigation measures.
- 9.4 In conclusion, the risk assessment suggests that the programme for preparation of the Local Plan remains realistic but challenging. Therefore, if production milestones are missed it could be difficult to 'get back on track' without impacting on other elements of the overall programme.
- 9.5 The most fundamental overall mitigation measure that can be made is to ensure sufficient resources are available throughout preparation of the Local Plan and to build-in realistic document production timescales from the outset.

Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
1	Publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework 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 around 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	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.	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	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.	6

APPENDIX 4

Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
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	12	Any new update in guidance will have to be reviewed to ensure that it does not impact the quality of the evidence base.	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	9	Engagement with the other Mid-Essex LPAs throughout the process to ensure wider political buy-in.	6

APPENDIX 4

Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
5	Local Government Reorganisation diverts resource	Officers are diverted from Local Plan due to the need to work on projects related to Local Government Reorganisation.	Delay; Cost	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.	4
6	Publication of the new Spatial Development Strategy 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	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.	8

Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
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	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.	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	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.	15

APPENDIX 4

Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
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	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.	6
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	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.	8

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Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
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 5YHLS is likely to lead to an increase in the number of applications, appeals and large sites coming forward.	Delay	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.	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	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	4

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Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
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	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.	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 undermine 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	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.	6

Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
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 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	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.	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	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.	6

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Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
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	9	Local Plan budget includes contingency fund to account for potential extra work.	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.	Delay	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.	8

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Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
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	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.	3
20	Financial resources are insufficient	Unable to complete Local Plan or additional resource has to be identified from alternative source	Delay; Cost	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.	3

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Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
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	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.	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	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.	4

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Risk number and title		Description	Impact type (delay, cost, quality)	Unmitigated risk score	Mitigation	Mitigated risk score
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	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.	4

Risk Matrix						
Risk 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

Risk Likelihood

Risk Score	
15 - 25	Extremely high
8 - 12	High
4 - 6	Moderate
1 - 3	Low

10 Approval of this PID

Author

Name:	Title	Date Approved
Louise Staplehurst	Planning Policy Manager	31 July 2026

Lead Officers and Members

Name:	Title	Date Approved
Mark Jaggard	Director of Place, Planning & Growth	4 August 2026
Planning Policy Working Group	Planning Policy Working Group	11 August 2026

Full Council

Date of Meeting	Decision
10 September 2026	Approved <i>Authority has been delegated to the Director of Place, Planning & Growth to amend and update this PID, in consultation with the Planning Policy Working Group.</i>

11 Change Log

Date of change (Specifying version)	Author	Reason	Updated Version Title