REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF PLACE, PLANNING AND GROWTH

to
COUNCIL (EXTRAORDINARY)
11 NOVEMBER 2026

MALDON DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2040 - REGULATION 20 SCOPING DOCUMENT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 For the Council to agree and publish the Regulation (Reg) 20 Scoping Document for the Maldon District Local Plan 2040. This notification will provide key stakeholders (general and specific consulting bodies) and the local community with the opportunity to comment before the start of the plan making process. The focus of this document is on what should be included in a future Local Plan and how we should engage during future consultations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council:

(i) agrees the content of the Reg 20 Scoping Document for the Maldon District Local Plan 2040 and the associated questions (**APPENDIX 1**) for public engagement between 25 November 2026 until its closing date on 22 December 2026;

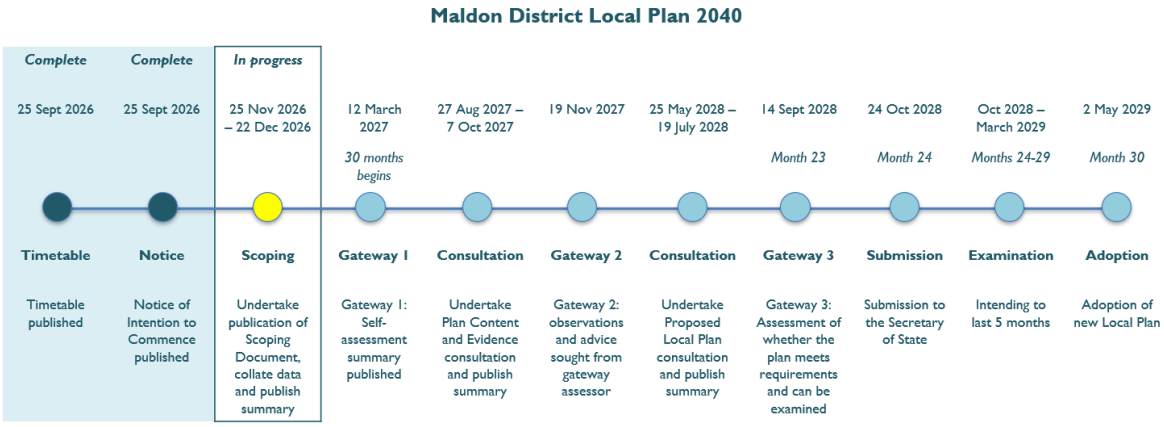
(ii) delegates authority to the Director of Place, Planning and Growth, in consultation with of the Chairperson of the Planning Policy Working Group to make minor changes to the content and format the Reg 20 Scoping Document (**APPENDIX 1**) prior to the start of the scoping.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Background

3.1.1 An earlier version of the Scoping Document was considered by the Planning Policy Working Group (PPWG) on Thursday 8 October 2026. An all-Member briefing on the Document was also held on 27 October 2026. Amendments have been made following engagement with Members.

3.1.2 On 10 September 2026, Council members agreed to commence work on the Maldon District Local Plan under the new 30-month plan-making system. The timetable for the Local Plan was also agreed and included the dates for the commencement of the Reg 20 Scoping, notifying key stakeholders of the Council's intention to start a new Local Plan.



3.1.3 Preparatory work on the new Local Plan formally commenced on 25 September 2026 when the Council published the Notice of Intention to Commence Plan Making and the associated Timetable on the Council's website: www.maldon.gov.uk/newlocalplan. The publication of these documents marked the start of the required four-month period prior to Gateway 1.

3.1.4 Gateway 1 is the first of three mandatory Gateways that the Council needs to pass through as it prepares a new Local Plan. Gateway 1 requires the Council to publish a self-assessment summary demonstrating its readiness to start the formal 30-month local plan process. It is intended that the Gateway 1 self-assessment summary will be published on 13 March 2027. The Council then has 24 months to prepare the plan and undertake consultations prior to submitting the plan for examination, with adoption taking place in month 30.

3.1.5 Before the Council publishes its Gateway 1 self-assessment, it needs to be making progress in the five areas set out in the regulations:

- prepare and publish a local plan timetable *(this has been completed and was published on 25 September 2026)*
- establish project management and governance arrangements about the preparation of the plan *(this has been completed as part of the PID [Project Initiation Document] agreed at Council on 10 September)*
- establish the Council's approach to consulting and engaging on the Local Plan *(this will be informed by responses to the Scoping Document)*
- anticipated content of the Local Plan *(this will be informed by responses to the Scoping Document)*
- progressing the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) *(this will begin to be informed by responses to the Scoping Document)*

3.2 Scoping Document Requirements

3.2.1 The next step in the plan-making process is the publication of the Regulation 20 Scoping Document. This report to the Council is seeking Members consideration of the contents and publication of the Scoping Document.

3.2.2 The Scoping Document must commence after the publication of the Notice of Intention to Commence Plan-Making and Timetable and will inform the Gateway 1 self-assessment.

3.2.3 The Scoping Document provides the local community and other key stakeholders with the opportunity to have their say at the start of the plan-making process. The Council must ask for views on:

- what to include in the Local Plan,
- how to approach future Local Plan engagement, and
- any other matter which the Council wants to consult on.

3.2.4 During this notification the Council must invite representations from:

- general consultation bodies the Council considers appropriate, and
- specific consultation bodies the Council considers may have an interest in the preparation of the Local Plan.

3.2.5 These consultation bodies are specified within the plan-making regulations 2026. The Council does not have to invite anyone else, but anyone can make representations at this stage.

3.2.6 The Scoping Document will run between the 25 November and 22 December 2026, as detailed within the published timetable, as agreed at Council on 10 September.

3.3 Proposed Scoping Document

3.3.1 The draft Scoping Document is attached at **APPENDIX 1**. As set out in paragraph 3.3.3 of this report, the Government's requirements for a Reg 20 Scoping are high-level. The proposed Scoping Document has therefore been prepared to provide an appropriate level of detail on the key matters to be considered, while remaining proportionate to this early stage of plan preparation. The content is considered to accord with the Government's requirements. More detailed consultation on the proposed content of the Local Plan will be undertaken at the future stages of plan preparation (August 2027: consultation on the proposed plan content and evidence and May 2028: consultation on the proposed local plan).

3.3.2 The previous work and consultations undertaken to inform the Local Development Plan review have been feeding into the Scoping Document and the emerging work on the Local Plan.

3.3.3 The new plan must be consistent with national planning policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026 was published on 17 August 2026 and contains plan-making policies which the plan will need to accord with. The NPPF also contains national decision-making policies (sometimes referred to as development management policies) that must not be duplicated in the Local Plan. As a result, the new Local Plan scope is reduced and will look different to previous plans.

3.4 Engagement on the Scoping Document

3.4.1 Engagement will be planned to give as many people as possible the chance to have their say, while making the best use of officer's time and resources. Digital engagement methods will be used where appropriate, alongside non-digital options to ensure the Scoping Document is accessible and inclusive, allowing people to take part in the way that works best for them.

3.5 Amendments to Scoping Document wording

3.5.1 Due to the tight time frames, it is important that minor changes can be made to the Scoping Document and formatting to ensure deadlines are met. Minor adjustments to wording and formatting may be required when adapting the content for an online survey to ensure it is suitable for digital presentation. To reassure Members, a minor change is a change which does not alter the underlying policy intent, legal effect, substantive rights, responsibilities, powers or decision-making arrangements set out in the document.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The proposed Scoping Document is consistent with Government requirements and will place the Council in a position to publish its Gateway 1 self-assessment summary in early 2027, while maintaining alignment with the agreed and published timetable.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2025 – 2028

5.1 The Scoping Document is a key milestone in the process of the preparation of the Maldon District Local Plan 2040.

5.2 Supporting our communities

5.2.1 The Corporate Plan highlights that the district needs more homes to meet the demand of our growing population and government targets, including affordable homes and temporary housing. Developing a new Local Plan will contribute towards these priorities.

5.3 Investing in our District

5.3.1 The Corporate Plan identifies that the Council is seeking to provide a better place for residents, businesses and visitors, ensures the right development is in the right places, and delivery of well-designed housing and healthy places. Developing a new Local Plan will contribute towards these priorities.

5.4 Growing our economy

5.4.1 The Government links the delivery of new homes to the need to support the economy. The housing sector provides jobs within the district and assists in supporting the local and national economy. A new Local Plan will support the delivery of new homes as well as economic growth opportunities.

5.5 Protecting our environment

5.5.1 A new Local Plan will contain policies to support the protection of our environment and mitigate the environmental impact of new developments.

5.6 Delivering good quality services

5.6.1 Progressing a new Local Plan helps to shape future development to create well-connected, sustainable communities with improved local services and amenities.

6. IMPLICATIONS

(i) **Impact on Customers** – Working on a new Local Plan benefits customers by shaping future development to create well-connected, sustainable communities with improved local services and amenities.

(ii) **Impact on Equalities** – There are no direct impact upon equalities arising from the recommendations in this report. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the new Local Plan.

(iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – There are no direct risks arising from the recommendations in this report. The funding for the plan was agreed at Council on 10 September 2026.

(iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – There is no direct impact on resources (financial) arising from the recommendations in this report.

(v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – There is no direct impact on resources (financial) arising from the recommendations in this report.

(vi) **Impact on Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation** – There are no direct impacts on Devolution or Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) arising from the recommendations in this report. The Government is encouraging Councils to continue to progress Local Plans despite the decision to pause and review LGR. A new Maldon District Local Plan will provide a legacy for the district.

Appendices: **APPENDIX 1** – Scoping Document

Background Papers: None.

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