MALDON

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Maldon District Local Plan 2040 Scoping Document

Draft - October 2026

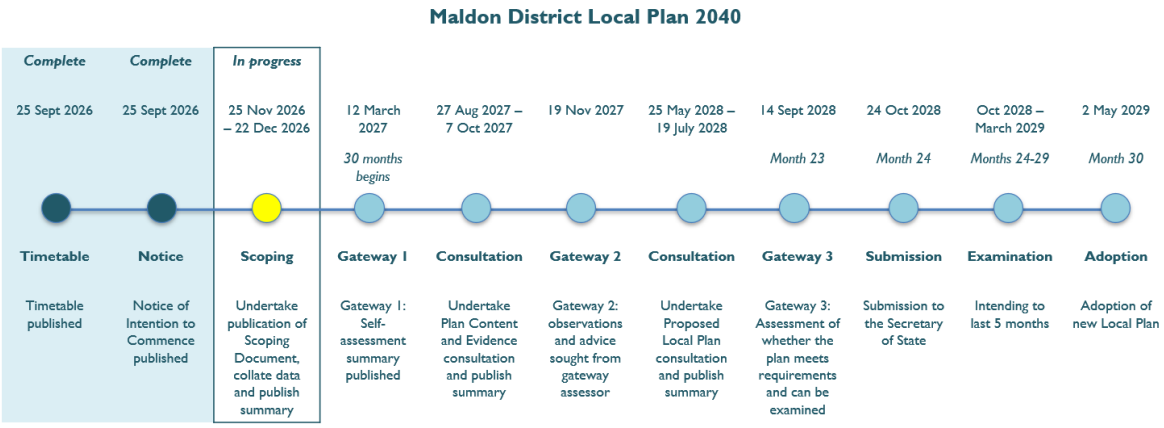
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1. Introduction

1.1 Maldon District Council has decided to commence work on a new Local Plan. The process for preparing a Local Plan has changed, and the new system has a different process to what we were previously used to, with defined stages and a series of 'gateways' to pass through.

1.2 In preparing a new Local Plan, we must follow the process set out in the plan-making regulations and government guidance. Our plan timetable sets out the key stages of this process. The key milestones are summarised in the timeline below, showing where we are in the process.



1.3 Before we formally start the plan-making process following Gateway 1 in March 2027, there are a number of preparatory tasks that need to be completed. So far, we have published our Notice of Intention to Commence plan-making and the associated timetable, meaning we are currently at the 'scoping' stage. At this stage, and as stated in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 under Regulation 20, we are only required to invite representations from general and specific consultation bodies that are specified in the plan-making regulations. We are not required to invite anyone else, however we consider everyone is welcome to share their views.

1.4 This document is referred to as the Scoping Document and is being publicised in accordance with Regulation 20 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026.

1.5 Engagement on this document will be open for 28 days (25 November –22 December 2026, comments to be submitted before midnight). The document will be available to view online at

www.maldon.gov.uk/newlocalplan where responses can be submitted. A hard copy of the document will be available to view at the Council Offices at Princes Road, Maldon. If you would like to speak to a member of the team or need any assistance please contact us via the following:

- Phone: 01621 854477
- Email: localplan@maldon.gov.uk

Handwritten letters will be accepted, please post them to:

Council Offices
Princes Road
Maldon
CM9 5DL

1.6 Your views will help us to develop how we will engage with you throughout the whole plan-making process, which will last for approximately 30 months.

1.7 Following engagement on the Scoping Document, we will move towards Gateway 1. This involves publishing a summary of our readiness to begin plan preparation, including setting out the anticipated elements of the new Local Plan, and how we intend to engage and consult on the Local Plan at the formal stages. Responses received to this Scoping Document will help to inform our Gateway 1 summary.

2. Policy context

2.1 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 that we will need to follow. It also contains national decision-making policies (sometimes referred to as development management policies) that we must not duplicate.

2.2 The plan must focus on a locally specific vision and objectives, a spatial strategy and site allocations to meet development needs. The plan must address the need for new homes, economic development, new infrastructure and environmental and heritage protection.

2.3 In preparing the plan, we will have regard to a range of plans and strategies prepared by other organisations including Essex County Council, Government agencies and infrastructure providers. We will also work with our neighbouring districts to consider cross boundary matters.

2.4 We will also have regard to neighbourhood plans. However, neighbourhood plans will likely need to be updated to align with the new local plan and new national planning policy.

2.5 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). We 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.

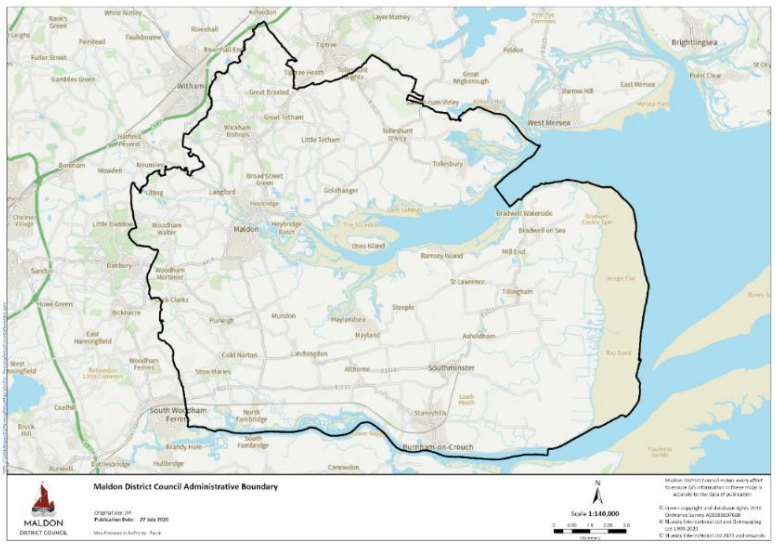
3. Maldon District

3.1 Maldon District is predominantly a coastal and rural area located in the east of Essex. The District covers 139 square miles and is home to around 70,000 people and 3,460 registered businesses. A large proportion of the District's population lives in the main settlements of Maldon, Heybridge and Burnham-on-Crouch and the larger villages of Great Totham, Mayland, Southminster, Tollesbury, Wickham Bishops, with smaller villages and hamlets scattered throughout the District.

3.2 Maldon District maintains a strong coastal and rural heritage which gives it its unique character and distinctiveness, characterised by a rich natural and historic landscape tapestry dominated by the Blackwater and Crouch estuaries and 70 miles of coastline. The whole coastline is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Ramsar site, as well as a range of inland and coastal national and locally designated habitats sites.

3.3 Economically, the District is home to a growing mixture of businesses across the agricultural, manufacturing and service sectors, including specialist marine services. Agriculture, fishing and marine trades such as arable crops, grapes, oysters and salt are harvested and processed around the District.

Figure 1: Location of Maldon District



4. Delivering mixed and balanced communities

4.1 A key part of the new plan is to deliver the new homes which are required. Maldon District's current 'local housing need' is 586 homes per year. This figure is calculated using the standard method, which is a formula set by the Government based on local housing stock and affordability. 586 homes per annum equates to around 7,618 homes over the plan period 2027 to 2040. It is important, through place-making, that we deliver new communities, a place where people can thrive, with good access to facilities, schools, shops and other infrastructure. Using an average household size of 2.3 people per household, the new homes will deliver an additional population of around 17,500 people. It will be important to ensure the homes are supported by the right infrastructure delivered in a timely way.

4.2 This figure for new homes is the starting point for a 'local plan housing requirement' which will also factor in constraints to development and availability of land. We may also need to consider any unmet housing needs from neighbouring areas. There are a couple of options for delivering the amount of housing required; these are a uniform trajectory or a stepped trajectory.

4.3 A uniform trajectory equally divides the number of homes required per year across the plan period. This is a standard approach to housing delivery, particularly for areas requiring an even mix of small and mediums sites which can be started quickly. This approach however can raise challenges in delivering the required homes in the earlier years of the plan due to the length of time it takes to prepare a planning application or the required infrastructure to support the development.

4.4 Another option is to provide this amount of new homes through a stepped trajectory. This is where delivery rates are lower in the earlier years of the plan and increase in the latter years to meet the number of homes required over the plan period.

4.5 The approach to delivering housing over the plan period will be informed by a robust evidence base. Nevertheless, we are seeking

views on the use of the stepped trajectory method, as this approach can reflect the time needed for new strategic sites to come forward, allowing the infrastructure needed to support growth to be planned and delivered alongside development.

4.6 It is important to note that whilst all new homes completed from 1 April 2027 will count towards the local plan housing requirement, we will need to allocate more land for development. It is also important to note that at this early stage of plan making no decisions have been made on where new homes should be located.

4.7 It's not just about how many homes are built. We also need to consider whether the homes being provided are the right type, size and cost to meet the needs of our communities. For many households, finding a home they can afford can be challenging, even where new market housing is being provided. We therefore need to consider a range of needs, including those of newly formed households and people looking to downsize, as well as the need for affordable housing for those whose needs are not met by the market. We must also consider the needs of particular groups including older people, those who may require a bungalow or an accessible home, those who would like to build or commission their own home, and the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. There is no 'one size fits all' solution to meeting the district's housing needs. We are updating our evidence and will use this to shape policies that respond to the different needs and circumstances of our communities.

4.8 We also need to support economic growth, employment, rural diversification and the success of high streets, town and village centres. Tourism and the visitor economy is also an important industry within our district which should be encouraged, along with additional forms of tourist accommodation.

Question 1 – The government has given us a housing figure we have to deliver which is currently 586 homes per year. Do you have any views on how we should address this challenge, or where we should focus growth?

Question 2 – In terms of the housing trajectory, we could plan for the same number of new homes each year across the plan period (uniform trajectory), or for fewer homes in the early years and more in later years, with annual targets increasing in phases (stepped trajectory). Which approach do you think would be most appropriate, and why?

Question 3 – Which different types and sizes of homes should we plan for? For example, terrace homes, flats, smaller homes, detached, semi-detached, bungalows, maisonettes, any other options.

Question 4 - Are there any specific housing needs within the district that you are aware of and if so, how should the plan address this?

Question 5 - How should the plan support economic growth? Please think about employment opportunities, rural diversification, town and village centres, high streets, tourism and tourist accommodation.

5. Character, design and place-making

5.1 We want to meet development needs by creating well-designed, high quality, sustainable places supported by the necessary infrastructure. Through high-quality design and placemaking, we want to create communities whose layout and facilities encourage social interaction, support physical and mental health, and make walking, cycling and public transport part of everyday life.

5.2 It is therefore important any new development becomes a successful community in its own right and not just a residential estate that is dependent on the services within the existing settlement, putting strain on existing infrastructure.

Question 6 - How can the plan deliver well-designed, healthy, sustainable places?

Question 7 – Do you think there are any facilities, design principles or standards of accessibility that would help to ensure that new developments become successful communities?

6. Settlement Hierarchy

6.1 As part of the Maldon District Local Development Plan 2014-2029 (MDLDP), we published a hierarchy of the settlements within the District. The hierarchy is based on the level of facilities within a settlement, the higher the number of facilities the higher the settlement scores. As part of the review of the spatial vision for the new local plan we will be looking at whether these settlements are in the correct position within the hierarchy.

6.2 The definitions used to determine where in the hierarchy a settlement is positioned are as follows:

Main Settlements - Defined settlements with a range of services and opportunities for employment, retail and education. They serve a wide catchment area and contain good public transport links.

Large Village - Defined settlements with a limited range of services and opportunities for employment, retail and education. They serve a limited local catchment and contain a lower level of access to public transport.

Small Village - Defined settlements containing few or no services and facilities, with limited or no access to public transport, very limited or no employment opportunities.

Other Villages - Other rural villages with no defined settlement boundary.

6.3 The hierarchy set out within the approved MDLDP is as follows:

Classification	Settlement
Main Settlement	Maldon, Heybridge, Burnham-on-Crouch
Larger Villages	Great Totham, Mayland, Southminster, Tollesbury, Wickham Bishops

Classification	Settlement
Smaller Villages	Althorne, Bradwell-on-Sea, Cold Norton, Cock Clarks, Goldhanger, Heybridge Basin, Langford, Latchingdon, Little Totham, Mundon, North Fambridge, Purleigh, St. Lawrence, Steeple, Stow Maries, Tillingham, Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Tolleshunt Knights, Tolleshunt Major, Woodham Mortimer, Woodham Walter
Other Villages	Asheldham, Beacon Hill, Dengie, Great Braxted, Hazeleigh, Little Braxted, Ulting

6.4 The settlement hierarchy will be updated to reflect the latest evidence, government guidance and engagement findings; however, we are still welcoming views on the proposed hierarchy.

Question 8 – Do you agree with the hierarchy definitions mentioned above? Please explain why.

Question 9 – Do you agree with the settlement positions as they currently are? If not, which ones would you change and why?

7. Infrastructure

7.1 Maldon district faces a range of infrastructure challenges and constraints which will need to be carefully considered when planning for future growth. To support the local plan, we will work with infrastructure providers such as utility companies, Essex County Council and the NHS Integrated Care Board to prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This will evidence the infrastructure needed to support planned growth, such as healthcare facilities, schools, highway improvements and water/wastewater treatment, and will be informed by a range of separate studies.

7.2 With up-to-date policies and evidence we can secure improvements to infrastructure with new development. This can be on-site as part of larger developments or via payments towards off-site infrastructure improvements. We report on developer contributions secured through planning obligations annually in our Infrastructure Funding Statements.

Question 10 - What infrastructure issues or challenges do we face and how can they be overcome?

8. Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic built environment

8.1 We must address development needs, but we also want to protect and enhance our built and natural environment.

8.2 Maldon district has a variety of landscapes and designated habitats including the internationally important Special Protection Areas (SPA), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and Ramsar sites. Our district also has a rich heritage with scheduled ancient monuments, registered historic parks and gardens, listed buildings and conservation areas. The natural and built environment provide the distinctive character of Maldon district which makes it such a special place.

8.3 The plan will have regard to the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy so that areas identified for biodiversity improvements and nature recovery are protected and enhanced. We will also need to include a policy for avoiding and mitigating recreational impacts on protected habitat sites, where mitigation is currently sought through the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance Mitigation Strategy.

Question 11 - How should the local plan protect and enhance the natural and historic environment?

Question 12 - Are there any specific natural or historic assets in Maldon district that warrant a separate local plan policy, rather than being protected by national policies or legal protection? If so, why?

9. Climate change

9.1 We declared a climate change emergency in 2021, supplemented by further assessments in 2024, meaning we aim to be carbon neutral by 2050. The Local Plan 2029-2040 will play a key role in setting the direction of our climate response over the next 10 years to enable this target to be met.

9.2 Through the new local plan policies, we will ensure we can adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change such as more extreme weather events which can bring increased risk of flooding, heatwaves and drought. To inform the plan, we will commission a range of relevant evidence which will look at water resources/supply and wastewater, flood risk and renewable energy opportunities.

9.3 As a predominantly coastal and agricultural area it is important we support the coastal and farming communities in the face of climate change. Protection of our waterways and retention of high-quality agricultural land lends support to these local industries whilst preserving the district's heritage.

Question 13 – How do you think we should address climate change and environmental sustainability in the local plan?

10. A new vision for Maldon District

10.1 Pulling together the themes discussed above, and taking into account your comments, we will develop a new vision for Maldon district; a vision that acknowledges the need for sustainable development and which protects and enhances the characteristics and features we value most.

10.2 We will ask for your feedback on the draft vision in the first consultation following commencement of plan-making after passing through Gateway 1.

Question 14 - What aspects of the Maldon district do you value and want to protect?

Question 15 - If you could make one improvement to the district, what would it be?

Question 16 – Thinking forward over the next 10 years, what would you like the district to be like for the people who live, work and visit here?

11. Any other comments

11.1 Please take this opportunity to make any other comments that do not fit under the questions above.

Question 17 - Are there any other matters that we should consider when preparing the new plan?

Question 18 - Do you have any other views on what the new local plan could reasonably contain?

12. How should we engage with you?

12.1 The new Local Plan will be informed through engagement with residents, businesses and other stakeholders to ensure they have an opportunity to comment on the local plan.

12.2 The plan-making process includes two consultations prior to the plan being submitted for examination. Anyone can make representations at these stages of public consultation.

- **August 2027 – Consultation on 'Proposed Plan Content and Evidence'**
- **May 2028 – Consultation on 'Proposed Local Plan'**

12.3 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.

12.4 We can publicise the consultations and try to engage with communities, but we would like written comments to be submitted online through our local plan engagement platform. This allows a large number of representations to be processed much more efficiently, speeding up the local plan process.

12.5 We will hold meetings and have correspondence with some key stakeholders throughout the plan-preparation process. This can be necessary to demonstrate cooperation with other plan-making bodies, or to develop the evidence base.

Question 19 - Are there any other ways you would like us to publicise our local plan consultations?

Question 20 – How do you think information about the new local plan should be presented to encourage engagement? For example, shorter plain-English summaries, detailed documents, infographics, interactive maps, videos, other.

Question 21 - Are there any groups or communities that you are aware of that struggle to participate with local plan engagement? If yes, do you have suggestions or improvements we can make to help with this?

Question 22 - How would you like us to engage with you during the preparation of the Local Plan? For example, online engagement, post, email, in-person events, drop-in sessions, other methods.

13. Personal Details

13.1 Before submitting your responses, please complete the following information. Section 14 of this consultation provides information on how your personal data will be handled, why we need it and what it will be used for.

About you:

Name……

Postal address……..

Email address……

Telephone number……..……

About your role:

Responding as an individual: Yes/No

Responding on behalf of an organisation or business: Yes/No

Your organisation……

Your role or status (where you respond on behalf of a business, group or other body)……

Your communication preferences:

Could you please confirm whether you are happy for us to contact you via:

Post

Email

Phone

Would you like us to stay in touch?

Could you please tick whether you wish to receive planning policy updates in relation to the Local Plan:

Yes

No

14. Data protection

14.1 Maldon District Council collects and processes personal data so that it can provide services to residents and communities and carry out its statutory functions. The Council is committed to protecting personal data when you use its services, take part in a consultation or correspond with it.

14.2 Maldon District Council is the data controller for the personal data described in this statement. As data controller, the Council determines why and how personal data is processed and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place.

14.3 This statement explains what information is collected in connection with preparation of the Maldon District Local Plan and other planning policy documents, why it is used, who it may be shared with, how long it is retained and your rights.

Why we use your personal data

14.4 The Council may process your personal data for the following purposes:

- notifying you about consultations and other key stages in preparing the Local Plan and other planning policy documents;
- receiving, recording, analysing and responding to representations made during consultation;
- contacting you where clarification of a representation is required;
- maintaining a consultation database and a record of engagement in the plan-making process;
- submitting the Local Plan, supporting documents and representations for independent examination;
- notifying you about the examination, including hearings, the Inspector's report and the outcome;
- notifying you about adoption or withdrawal of the Local Plan or another planning policy document;
- evaluating the effects of proposed policies and meeting the Council's statutory planning duties; and
- publishing information where planning legislation requires representations and supporting documents to be made publicly available.

14.5 Where a representation is published, this may include your name and the content of your representation. Contact details such as your postal address, email address, telephone number and

signature will not normally be published and will be redacted where appropriate.

Personal data we may collect

- your name;
- your postal address and email address;
- your telephone number;
- your organisation, role or status where you respond on behalf of a business, group or other body;
- identification or reference numbers allocated to your representation;
- location or site information relevant to your representation;
- your consultation response, comments and supporting material; and
- your communication preferences, including whether you wish to receive planning policy updates.

14.6 The Council does not ask you to provide special category personal data for ordinary Local Plan consultation purposes. If you choose to include sensitive personal information in a response, the Council will handle it in accordance with data protection law and will consider whether it should be redacted before publication or disclosure.

Our lawful basis

14.7 Preparing a Local Plan is a statutory planning function. Where processing is required for that function, the Council does not rely on consent.

- Article 6(1)(c) UK GDPR: processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which the Council is subject; and
- Article 6(1)(e) UK GDPR: processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Council.

14.8 Where you separately ask to receive optional updates that are not required as part of the statutory process, the Council may rely on consent under Article 6(1)(a) UK GDPR. You may withdraw that consent at any time. Withdrawal will not affect processing already undertaken or processing that remains necessary under Article 6(1)(c) or Article 6(1)(e).

Who we may share information with

14.9 Personal data may be shared with, or obtained from, the following where this is necessary and lawful:

- the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government;
- the Planning Inspectorate;
- an appointed Planning Inspector and Programme Officer;
- other public authorities and prescribed consultation bodies;
- relevant Council services and officers;
- consultants and professional advisers supporting the plan-making process;
- suppliers providing consultation, document management, software or IT hosting services under contract to the Council;
- the public, where information must be published as part of the statutory plan-making process; and
- a court, tribunal, law enforcement agency or other body where disclosure is required or permitted by law.

Retention and storage

14.10 The Council will retain personal data only for as long as it is needed for the Local Plan or planning policy purpose for which it was collected, including examination, adoption, monitoring, review, legal challenge and record-keeping requirements. Information will be managed in accordance with the Council's records retention arrangements and applicable legal requirements.

14.11 Personal data will normally be held within the United Kingdom. Where a supplier stores or accesses information outside the UK, the Council will ensure that an appropriate lawful transfer mechanism and safeguards are in place in accordance with UK GDPR.

Is providing the information required?

14.12 Certain information, including your name and sufficient contact details, may be needed so that the Council can validate and process your representation, contact you about it and comply with its statutory planning duties. If the required information is not provided, the Council may be unable to accept or fully process your representation or notify you about later stages of the plan-making process.

Automated decision-making

14.13 The Council does not use the personal data covered by this statement to make decisions solely by automated means.

How we protect your information

14.14 The Council uses appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect personal data against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage. Access is limited to those who need the information for an authorised purpose.

Your data protection rights

14.15 Depending on the circumstances, you may have rights to request access to your personal data, ask for inaccurate information to be corrected, request erasure or restriction, object to processing, and request data portability. Some rights may be limited where processing is necessary to comply with a legal obligation or to perform a public task.

14.16 To exercise a data protection right or ask how your information is being used, contact the Council's Data Protection Officer using the details below.

Contact details

14.17 **Data Protection Officer**
Maldon District Council
Council Offices
Princes Road
Maldon
Essex CM9 5DL

Email: dpo@maldon.gov.uk
Website: www.maldon.gov.uk

Complaints

14.18 If you are dissatisfied with the way the Council has handled your personal data, please contact the Data Protection Officer first so that the matter can be considered. You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office, the UK's independent regulator for data protection. Further information is available at www.ico.org.uk.

Review of this statement

14.19 This privacy statement will be kept under review and updated where the Council's processing activities, legal obligations or service arrangements change.