



Plan Mid Devon

Gateway 1 Self Assessment of readiness for local plan preparation

Summary

Local Government re-organisation and plan making

In July 2026 the Government confirmed how local government re-organisation will affect existing local authorities in Devon. Most of Mid Devon will be transferred to a new unitary “Devon Council” which will also include North Devon and Torridge and parts of East Devon, West Devon, the South Hams and Teignbridge. Six parishes in Mid Devon, including Crediton, Crediton Hamlets, Colebrooke, Hittisleigh, Cheriton Bishop and Newton St Cyres will be transferred to a new unitary “Exeter Council”. At that time it was expected that local government re-organisation would come into force on 1st April 2028. However, on 7th September 2026 the Government subsequently announced a review in the Government’s plans for local government re-organisation. Local government re-organisation for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay will be paused while that review is carried out.

The Government has made clear that local government reorganisation is not a reason to delay plan making, and it is expected to publish transitional regulations to deal with the various complexities arising because of local government reorganisation.

We will carefully consider these transitional regulations to understand what implications they may have for the preparation of the new local plan, and work with partners in the new local government structure as necessary to help ensure that up to date plan coverage of the whole area of the former Mid Devon district is achieved as soon as possible.

In advance of those transitional regulations we will continue to prepare the new local plan at pace in line with the local plan timetable that is currently published, including passing through its Gateway 1 self-assessment.

About Gateway 1 Self-Assessment of readiness

The Government has introduced a revised plan-making system through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, supported by new Regulations and national guidance. A central element of the reforms is the introduction of a series of “Gateway” assessments designed to assess plan progress and ensure local plans are prepared efficiently and in accordance with national policy requirements.

Gateway 1 takes place at an early stage of plan preparation and provides an opportunity for local planning authorities to demonstrate that appropriate governance, resources, evidence gathering, stakeholder engagement and project management arrangements are in place to support the preparation of a sound local plan.

We are currently progressing the preparation of a new local plan for Mid Devon (which will be called Plan Mid Devon) and are now required to undertake a Gateway 1 Self-Assessment. The Self-Assessment evaluates the Council's readiness and capacity to prepare the local plan and identifies any areas requiring further work, additional evidence or enhanced project management arrangements.

The Government requires local planning authorities to prepare their local plans in 30 months. The 30-month period for preparing Plan Mid Devon will start on the date the local plan passes through Gateway 1.

As part of Gateway 1 we are required to publish and make available a self-assessment summary. The self-assessment must set out details relating to the following:

- Local plan timetable
- Project management and governance arrangements for the preparation of the local plan
- Proposed approach to consultation and engagement in preparing the local plan
- Anticipated content of the local plan
- Any obligation arising under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

The local plan timetable indicates we will publish and make the self-assessment summary available on the 19th October 2026.

Gateway 1 Self-Assessment conclusion

The Gateway 1 self-assessment has concluded that the appropriate governance, resources and project management arrangements are in place to support the preparation of the Council's local plan, and that substantive progress has been made in gathering technical evidence, defining the local plan's scope and its content, and in undertaking a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the local plan.

The outcome of the self-assessment is that the Council is now ready to prepare the local plan in 30 months as set out in the local plan timetable and can pass through Gateway 1.

How we got ready to prepare a new local plan

We published a notice of intention to commence local plan preparation on the 26th May 2026.

While some preparatory work has already been undertaken the preparation of the new local plan will formally commence from the 19th October 2026 when this

summary of the Gateway 1 self-assessment is published and made available. The new local plan will be called “Plan Mid Devon”.

Government policy says we should adopt the new plan within 30 months. This helps ensure we have an up-to-date local plan that responds to the needs of the area and our communities.

This page explains what we have done to get ready to meet the 30-month timeframe.

Information about Plan Mid Devon is published on the Council’s website here: [New Local Plan 2026 - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](#) and also on the Let’s Talk Mid Devon community engagement hub here: [Plan Mid Devon | Let's Talk Mid Devon](#).

We have published a timetable for preparing the local plan

The timetable for preparing Plan Mid Devon is published on the Council’s website here: [Local Plan Timetable May 2026 | Let's Talk Mid Devon](#)

The timetable shows when we expect to carry out the different stages and activities for preparing the local plan, specifying dates for these as required by the new plan making regulations. It helps us check if and how we can adopt the plan within the 30-month timeframe. We will keep this updated each month and as we make more progress.

The timetable shows that Plan Mid Devon will be adopted in April 2029. The key dates for preparing the local plan are set out in the local plan timetable as follows:

Timetable for the preparation of the local plan	
Stage of plan preparation	Date
Date on which the local planning authority will make their notice of intention to commence local plan preparation available	26 th May 2026
Date on which the local planning authority will make a notice of scoping consultation available	26 th May 2026
Date on or before which representations will have to be received by the local planning authority (scoping consultation)	10 th July 2026
Date on which the local planning authority will make their (gateway 1) self-assessment summary available	19 th October 2026

Date on which the local planning authority will make a notice of plan content and evidence consultation available	22 nd January 2027
Date on or before which representations will have to be received by the local planning authority (consultation on proposed local plan content and evidence)	8 th March 2027
Date on which observations and advice will be sought (gateway 2)	1 st November 2027
Date on which the local planning authority will make a notice of proposed local plan consultation available	21 st January 2028
Date on or before which representations will have to be received by the local planning authority (consultation on the proposed local plan)	20 th March 2028
Date on which observations and advice will be sought (gateway 3: prescribed requirements assessment)	3 rd July 2028
Date on which the local planning authority will submit their proposed local plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination	4 th September 2028
Date on which the local planning authority will consider adopting the proposed local plan	1 st April 2029

We have established project management and governance arrangements

Preparing a local plan is a complex process which is led and undertaken by the Council's Forward Planning team. We have developed a Project Initiation Document using the template provided by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) for the startup of Plan Mid Devon's preparation. The Project Initiation Document sets out:

- a summary timeline for preparing the local plan;
- a summary of the Governance arrangements;
- details of staff resource and management;
- the key evidence that will be used to inform the local plan;
- the approach to stakeholder engagement;

- a budget overview and cost estimates for the local plan's production;
- the key risks and mitigation.

The preparation of Plan Mid Devon will be informed through multiple pieces of technical evidence and studies. Some of these will be undertaken by officers and others will be outsourced and undertaken by suitable external consultants with the necessary technical expertise and experience. The production of the key evidence is monitored by the Forward Planning team and records are kept up to date. The Forward Planning team also monitors the progress of the local plan's production against the key milestones in the local plan timetable.

The Forward Planning team is supported by other people within the Council's Planning Department and from other service areas including housing, environmental health, revenue and benefits, property and leisure services. It is also supported by officers from Devon County Council, including ecology, transport, education and public health.

Guidance advises us:

- to consider our governance procedures
- to ensure we have efficient sign off processes in place with key decisions makers

The Council's **Director of Place and Economy (Project Sponsor) and Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration** are regularly kept informed of progress, identified risks and how these will be mitigated. This provides oversight of the plan preparation progress. Delegated authority will be sought and given to the Director and Cabinet Member to approve and sign off revisions to the local plan timetable and local plan consultation documents where these are minor in nature, and to approve the publication of consultation summary reports.

The preparation of the local plan and its technical evidence and studies is reported to the Council's **Planning Policy Advisory Group (PPAG)** which typically meets every month. This is a non-decision making cross-party elected member and officer internal advisory group established to support the involvement of elected members in developing planning policy throughout the preparation of the local plan. The PPAG takes direction from the Council's Cabinet and considers, discusses and helps shape policies intended to deliver the Council's strategic objectives.

The Council's **Cabinet** is responsible for taking formal decisions about the local plan, including recommendations made to it by the PPAG, for example the approval of draft local plan documents for consultation. Where the PPAG is unable to reach consensus, options are presented to the Cabinet for a decision.

The Council's **Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group (PES PDG)** has responsibility for dealing with matters relating to the resourcing or timetable of production of the new local plan. The PES PDG typically meets every three months and receives a Planning summary report which includes updates about how the preparation of the new local plan is progressing.

The Council's **Full Council** is responsible for approving the submission of the local plan documents to the Secretary of State for their independent examination. The Full Council is also responsible for approving the adoption of the local plan so that it forms part of the statutory development plan covering Mid Devon district excluding the part of the district that is situated within the Dartmoor National Park.

Where deemed necessary, the Council's **Scrutiny Committee** may review aspects of the Local Plan process, providing constructive challenge and recommendations to support continuous improvement and effective decision making. Scrutiny provides an additional opportunity to consider the effectiveness of engagement activities, review emerging evidence and ensure the local plan reflects the needs of Mid Devon's communities.

We planned how we will consult on the local plan

Public consultation is essential for the local plan to represent the needs of our communities. It must be easy for people to have their say in a way that works for them, so they can influence the way the area develops. By planning this early we can ensure people are aware in advance and can get involved from the start.

We have undertaken a scoping consultation to get people's views on what the local plan should contain and also how the Council should engage with them in preparation of the local plan.

We have used this consultation to help us prepare an **engagement strategy**. This describes how we will consult and communicate with our communities as we continue to prepare the local plan. We are expecting significant engagement from our residents since the new local plan will include a new spatial strategy for the future planning of the district and it will identify proposed site allocations for development. While the approach for engagement will be **digital first but not digital only** and there will be a combination of on-line and face to face / in person engagement methods to help maximise participation while being proportionate to the resources available and meeting the local plan's timetable. Online public consultation will be channelled through the Council's Let's Talk Mid Devon community engagement hub.

We will plan a mix of consultation and communication approaches to get more people involved. This includes:

- face to face / in-person drop in events and exhibitions at the three main towns of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton
- virtual meetings
- online activities

We will maximise the use of available technologies to help analyse responses more quickly and publish these on our website.

The Engagement Strategy will be used by the Council as a basis for preparing a programme for specific engagement events at each stage of consultation on the local plan.

You can find information about upcoming consultation activities on the Council's Let's Talk Mid Devon community engagement hub.

[Plan Mid Devon | Let's Talk Mid Devon](#)

[Plan Mid Devon- Engagement Strategy August 2026 | Let's Talk Mid Devon](#)

We began scoping out the content of the local plan

Scoping includes considering how well the existing plan is working and gathering baseline information about the area. This helps to identify our future needs and ambitions. Starting this early means we can begin preparing the new plan with a clear vision, which makes it quicker and easier to consult on the plan and make decisions about it.

We published a notice of scoping consultation report on the 26th May 2026. This report identified contents likely to be included in the local plan and also possible contents that may be included:

Likely contents

- Plan period 2026 – 2046
- Introduction to Mid Devon
- Vision, objectives, measurable outcomes and spatial strategy
- Roles and functions of settlements
- Town centre hierarchy and extents
- Overall housing (including Gypsy and Traveller), employment and other development targets and a housing trajectory
- Neighbourhood plan housing targets

- Site allocations
- Infrastructure proposals and route/site protections
- Local Green Space
- Local nature recovery strategy implications and nature conservation sites
- Development management policies / requirements as permitted or required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - Settlement limits
 - Affordable housing
 - Housing mix
 - Self-build homes
 - Design and placemaking
 - Housing for the elderly and special needs
 - Accessible homes targets
 - Green infrastructure and open space standards and requirements
 - Parking standards
 - Contributions from development towards improvements such as transport, education, community facilities and other infrastructure
 - Town centre boundaries
 - Information and assessments required by planning applications

Possible contents

- Identifying where ground conditions may inhibit development
- Safeguarding land for flood risk management
- Land protected or safeguarded for habitat improvement or other purposes
- Defining zones around certain dangerous locations where development should be restricted
- Identifying heritage features at risk and a strategy for their conservation
- Identifying areas of search for renewable energy generation development
- Development management policies / requirements as permitted or required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - Applying national standards for internal space in dwellings and water efficiency
 - Minimum density standards for new development

- Water efficiency standards in new development
- Viability review mechanisms
- Retail impact threshold for proposals outside town centres
- Requirements for transport statements, transport assessments and travel planning in new developments
- Planning considerations of Air Quality Management Areas

Comments were invited on these contents and these will be carefully considered to help inform the preparation of the local plan.

[Plan Mid Devon | Let's Talk Mid Devon](#)

To gain an understanding of the development needs for our area, we have looked at the existing evidence about our area and the people our plan needs to provide for. This has included calculating the district's housing requirement using the Government's 'standard method', and undertaking a housing and economic needs assessment together with other technical studies.

We have also considered our current local plan and how well it has delivered for our communities and what may need changing.

Using the information we have gathered along with the input from our decision makers, we have:

- begun to draft a vision for the area
- started to understand the development requirements for our area

Finally, we have started:

- to identify where new developments could be located
- looking at what new planning policies and information or data we will need for decision making about new developments, having regard to national planning policies in the NPPF

These activities will inform a Proposed Plan content document which will be published in early 2027 and consulted on, alongside technical evidence that will be available at that time.

A summary of the scoping consultation for the local plan will be made available and published on the Council's website in the autumn 2026 following the publication of this Gateway 1 self-assessment summary.

We began a Strategic Environmental Assessment

We are legally required to identify, describe and evaluate any likely significant effects on the environment of:

- implementing the local plan
- reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the local plan

This process will consider how community, national and international environmental protection objectives and any other environmental challenges are taken into account in the local plan. It will help us to predict significant environmental effects and develop ways of preventing, reducing and offsetting these.

It is important we start this work early and are transparent about how we are doing the assessment when engaging stakeholders and communities.

We have appointed a suitable external consultant to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the local plan throughout the stages of the local plan's preparation. This will include the environment report. A Scoping Report will identify relevant plans and programmes and baseline information, looking at the area's environment and relevant designations to identify potential issues or problems.

The local plan will also be subject to a Habitat Regulations Assessment which will be undertaken by Devon County Council's ecology team.

How to stay up to date

Updates about upcoming consultation activities can be found on the Council's Let's Talk Mid Devon community engagement hub and on the Council's Facebook page.

[Plan Mid Devon | Let's Talk Mid Devon](#)

[Mid Devon District Council | Tiverton | Facebook](#)

You can also contact the Council's Forward Planning Team by:

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