



Eastbourne Local Plan 2022-2042

Regulation 18 Consultation – February 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

Version 1.0

We are currently preparing a new Local Plan to guide how the town grows and changes up to 2042. We know these proposals raise important questions, and we wanted to explain the thinking behind the Plan.

Eastbourne has a strong history of building new homes. We are proud to have invested in new developments that have made homes for local residents.

Many local families, young adults, key workers and older residents struggle to find homes they can afford. The Local Plan aims to secure more affordable, well-designed, sustainable homes for Eastbourne residents.

The Plan is about much more than housing. It balances housing needs, the flood risk, tourism, infrastructure and the character of the town. The Local Plan doesn't stop changing, but it helps shape where it happens, what it looks like and what it delivers for residents.

Without an up-to-date Local Plan, we are at risk of decisions being taken by Central Government rather than local Councillors, that more speculative development can take place, and makes it harder for us to secure affordable housing, flood protection, green spaces and secure developer contributions.

We will update this FAQ as the consultation progresses.

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1. What is a local plan?

The Local Plan is one of the most important documents shaping the future of Eastbourne. It is the key planning document that will plan and manage growth, regeneration and development across the Borough, based on a vision of what we want Eastbourne to be like in 20 years' time.

The Local Plan is used to guide decisions on the location, amount and type of development the Borough needs. This includes ensuring that new development contributes towards the town becoming carbon neutral; identifying land and uses that are required to create a prosperous economy; protecting what we value in terms of the environment and heritage of the area; creating thriving communities that meet the needs of local residents; delivering the right types of homes in the right locations; and providing effective infrastructure to sustain future growth. Ultimately, the Local Plan is the starting point for determining planning applications for anything from new industrial estates to the extension of an existing house.

As such, it is essential that the Local Plan is kept up to date to enable the Council to proactively guide where, when and how new housing, employment and other development takes place.

As the South Downs National Park Authority is the local planning authority for the South Downs, Eastbourne Borough Council's Local Plan will only apply to the area of the Borough that is outside of the National Park.

2. Why do we need a new local plan?

During 2018 the Government introduced a requirement for all planning authorities to review their local plans every five years, and then update them where necessary.

Eastbourne's current Local Plan, which consists of the Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan 2006-2027 (2013), the Town Centre Local Plan (2013), the Employment Land Local Plan (2016), and the saved policies from the Eastbourne Borough Plan 2001-2011 (2003), is considered to be out of date and needs to be reviewed.

The new Local Plan is needed to respond to changes in the Government's planning policy and legislation, and provide an up-to-date strategy for the future of Eastbourne that reflects the social, economic and technological changes that have taken place over recent years. There have also been changes in priorities, particularly in relation to the 'climate emergency' that was declared by the Council in July 2019, that necessitates a new vision for the future of the town and a new strategy for how this will be achieved.

The new Local Plan sets out a vision, objectives and development strategy for the whole of the Borough covering the period 2022 to 2042, alongside a range of policies that will guide development and infrastructure requirements to ensure that it helps to deliver that vision and strategy. The Plan is informed by robust evidence, community engagement, and cross-boundary cooperation with neighbouring authorities and infrastructure providers.

3. How will the local plan affect me?

The Local Plan guides where and how changes to our town may happen over the period 2022 to 2042. This means that the Local Plan is likely to impact you at some point in the future. For example, you or a family member may need to buy or rent a house. You may work in the area or want to set up a local business. You may want to be able to shop locally and have parks and green spaces near to your home. You may want to make sure that our environment is protected, and that climate change is addressed or ensure that you are able to get to the places you need to easily.

Changes which might affect you now or in the future include:

- the impacts of coastal change and water management
- the protection of existing habitats and creation of new habitats
- the protection of landscapes
- the building of new homes, offices, industrial units and shops
- the routes for walking and cycling paths
- the impacts of new building on the road network
- the provision of community facilities
- the location of parks and outdoor play spaces

4. Why are you consulting people now?

We will continue to work on the new Local Plan over the next few years but at each stage, as we do more work and the plan gets more detailed, we want to hear the views of people who live and work in the plan area. It is important to let us know your views so that we can shape the plan in a way that reflects your views.

5. What have you done with the feedback from the previous Consultations?

We gathered feedback during the 2019/20 Issues & Options consultation and the 2022/23 Growth Strategy consultation, and the representations received have informed the preparation of the Plan.

6. What are the next stages of Consultation?

The Eastbourne Local Plan 2022–2042 is currently at the Regulation 18 stage, where we are consulting with the public and other stakeholders. Following this, we will prepare the final Regulation 19 version of the Plan, bringing together all the evidence gathered before submitting it to the Government for examination. This step-by-step process ensures that local communities are actively involved in shaping the future of the area.

7. How will the responses to this consultation be used?

We will continue working on both the plan and the evidence that supports it until the plan is submitted to a government planning inspector to be examined. At this stage of plan making, we will seek the views of the people that the plan will affect and use that information to shape the next stage of plan making.

The process of producing a local plan is highly regulated and prescribed by the statutory plan making regulations. Further details of how we will consult on the plan are set out in our adopted [Statement of Community Involvement](#).

We will use the consultation views to help shape the next version of the plan which is the Final Local Plan under Regulation 19.

8. How many homes does the Government state Eastbourne needs to build?

The Government's standard model means that Eastbourne needs to build 714 homes a year until 2042.

This nationally set figure does not take into account the South Downs National Park Authority, our Seafront, flood risks and the built-up nature of the town.

The Local Plan is expected to reach as close to that figure as possible, which is why we have to include all potential sites, both those owned by the Council and also those proposed by Developers or Owners. If we do not, then the independent Planning Inspector will fail the Local Plan.

We have identified sites for 301 homes per year. This figure recognizes that the town is constrained by the risk of flooding, green spaces, the Coast and South Downs. However, the Planning Inspectorate will want us to demonstrate that we have explored all potential sites and 'left no stone unturned'.

9. Does Eastbourne need new homes?

The UK has a housing crisis, with many people unable to rent or buy their own property. We have a significant number of residents on our housing list. We need more homes for our families.

We are proud to have been one of the only authorities to continually build new homes for residents, including developments such as The Glen, The Foundry and Lancer Court. The Local Plan continues this investment in homes for local people and responds to the projected population changes.

10. Why are some greenfield sites being considered?

The Council must assess sites that are promoted and potentially deliverable. Landowners and developers formally submit sites for consideration, and the Council must include them in the draft consultation.

We urge you to complete the consultation giving your thoughts on these sites so that this can be added as evidence in our submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

11. You've included an area that is prone to flooding. Why?

The Council must assess sites that have been put forward by developers over the course of the Local Plan duration (2042).

However, any site must demonstrate that it will be safe from flooding for its lifetime, including climate change. This will mean that there must be evidence of sustainable drainage systems, flood defences, and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

If these standards cannot be met, then planning permission cannot be granted. Just because it's in the draft local plan, does not mean it will be developed.

We ask that you complete the consultation so that this can be used in evidence when submitting our Plan to the Planning Inspectorate.

12. New developments will make flooding worse for residents

Development cannot be allowed to increase flood-risk elsewhere.

Any proposed development must demonstrate that it will be safe from flooding for its lifetime, including climate change, that sustainable drainage systems are used and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Consultation will also be required from Southern Water and South East Water to ensure that the new developments do not overwhelm the sewage system.

If these standards cannot be met, then planning permission should not be granted.

13. Why can't you just build on Brownfield sites?

Around 82% of the planned homes are on brownfield land. However, brownfield sites alone cannot meet the future needs of the town with limited vacant land and major flood constraints.

We also have to put forward land and areas that have been identified by developers and owners as part of the consultation for new housing.

14. What about the Sovereign Centre and Fort Fun Sites?

We have made clear that any development at these sites must ensure that the leisure centre is retained including swimming and tourism – either via refurbishment or rebuild.

The centre is almost 50 years old and needs major modernisation. The cost could be in the vicinity of **£12-15million** or more for a refurbishment and a new build entirely would be substantially more than this.

We are committed to developing plans with leisure operators, Government, partners and residents to ensure the long-term provision of leisure and swimming in Eastbourne. This will include full consultations on the future provision of swimming at the Sovereign Centre.

Potential housing development alongside these sites will help to fund the major investment needed to modernise the facilities and is similar to other towns that have had to replace their leisure centres.

15. The Council should just refuse to write a Local Plan due to the nationally imposed housing needs assessment

National Government has made clear that all areas should have a Local Plan by 2029. Without a plan, decisions are likely to be made by the Independent Planning Inspectorate.

Given the housing constraints across the Country, this will give more power to developers and mean more sites are at risk. A Local Plan gives residents more power locally on developments.

16. Is this plan just about housing?

No, the Plan covers a range of areas including jobs, town centre regeneration, climate change, green spaces, the environment, transport aims, supporting our local shopping areas, infrastructure, heritage.

It's also supported our tourism accommodation zone, our HMO restrictions and seafront strategy.

Despite the challenges of the Local Plan, we are really excited about it, the vision for the future, and we want to hear your views.

17. Eastbourne Borough Council will be abolished in 2028. What's the point?

A Local Plan takes on average seven years to develop and pass.

If approved, then the Plan will be adopted and used to determine planning applications. It will form part of the plans of the new unitary authority until they seek to consult on their own Local Plan.

18. What happens next?

This is our early draft consultation. After feedback, the plan will be revised and a further consultation undertaken (Regulation 19).

Following this, the plan will be examined by an independent inspector who will need to be satisfied that the plan is 'sound' and that the Council has explored all potential development sites.

It is important you have your say now, so that we can include this before formal submission.

19. How can I have my say?

The consultation runs for **8 weeks** and responses must be submitted through formal channels (not social media). Details are on the Council's Local Plan webpage – www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/eastbourne-local-plan.

20. Will there be an opportunity to talk to the planning officers?

As part of the consultation, we will be arranging a series of consultation events and exhibitions. The details of these events will be publicised on the Council's website.