2026

Engagement Strategy

Planning Policy

Nuneaton and Bedworth

Borough Council

Nuneaton & Bedworth

United to Achieve

Local Plan Engagement Strategy

2026

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Contents

Introduction....3
Purpose....3
Principles of engagement....4
How we will consult....5
Who we will consult....6
When we will consult....8
Scoping consultation....8
Proposed plan content and evidence stage....8
Proposed Local Plan stage....9
Other opportunities to engage....9
Monitoring and review....11

Introduction

The Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the Borough, which will replace the existing Borough Plan Review adopted in December 2025. Although the Borough Plan Review was recently adopted, the government's new local housing need for the Borough, together with new government regulations[1], means that some councils whose local plans do not meet the new housing need threshold, must begin preparing a new style Local Plan within a 30-month timeframe. As NBBC is one of these councils, we have begun preparing a new Local Plan, which will be known as the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Local Plan (NBBLP) in line with national requirements and timescales. The new Local Plan will ensure that we are able to sustainably plan for the higher housing requirement that the Government has set and provide the necessary infrastructure to support a higher population.

Engagement is a key part of the local plan-making process, and the Council is committed to engaging at an early stage so that local residents, businesses, community organisations, service providers, developers, landowners and other stakeholders have meaningful opportunities to influence the future of the Borough throughout key stages of Local Plan preparation. The purpose of this Engagement Strategy is to set out the framework for how this process should be done.

In line with the new government guidelines[2], the consultation programme creates opportunities for residents and stakeholder to get involved at key stages throughout the new plan-making process.

The first of these – the Scoping Consultation – took place between 29th June and 10th August 2026 and provided valuable insight into how local communities would like to engage in the preparation of the Local Plan. The findings from the Scoping Consultation have directly informed the approach set out in this Engagement Strategy.

Purpose

The overall aim of this Engagement Strategy is to set out an effective and transparent framework for how engagement should be carried out throughout Local Plan preparation, so that engagement will be meaningful and constructive.

Therefore, the Engagement Strategy will:

[1] Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026
[2] Engaging the public when preparing a local plan - GOV.UK

- identify **what** we will consult on
- identify **who** we will consult
- identify **how** we will consult
- identify **how long** the Council will consult for at different consultation stages

Principles of engagement

The responses from the Scoping Consultation, together with the new government guidelines[3], have informed the Council's principles of engagement, which will work to ensure that engagement is:

- **Easy and accessible**: communication will be clear, concise and easy to understand, keeping jargon to a minimum. Information will be accessible to all regardless of age, gender, faith, race or disability. Information will be made available in alternative, accessible formats if requested.
- **Meaningful**: engagement activities will be appropriate to the stage of plan preparation and designed to encourage constructive and meaningful participation.
- **Early**: stakeholders will be involved at the earliest appropriate opportunity to ensure views can influence the direction and content of the emerging plan.
- **Continuous**: engagement will not be confined solely to statutory consultation periods; ongoing discussions with communities, infrastructure providers and key stakeholders will continue throughout plan preparation.
- **Transparent**: the key themes raised from the consultations will be published together with an explanation of how representations have been taken into account.
- **Proportionate**: consultations will maximise the opportunity for community involvement, while making sure resources are proportionate and time/cost-effective.
- **Accountable**: a framework will be put in place reports and monitors how feedback has been used to influence plan-making.

[3] Engaging the public when preparing a local plan - GOV.UK

How we will consult

The new government guidelines outline the key milestones in the plan-making process at which the public should be consulted. These are outlined in the later part of this document. As each stage is different, the methods that are used should be appropriate to each individual stage. The consultation approach will be tailored to the needs of the individual stage and its objectives.

Recognising that different stakeholders have different needs, we will offer a range of methods – including digital and non-digital formats - to ensure everyone has a chance to get involved. This variety of consultation methods is also important in order to avoid 'consultation fatigue' and to maintain public interest in the planning process.

The engagement methods listed here are directly informed by the government guidelines on engagement, the Scoping Consultation (completed in August 2026), and initial evidence gathering and data analysis.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough ranks in the 10% fastest growing local authority areas in England and Wales[4]. As such, the Borough must make a concerted effort to keep its Engagement Strategy and methods up to date to adapt to a growing population.

Furthermore, almost 11% of residents in the Borough identify as being disabled or limited a little[5]. The Council has taken this into account when devising its Engagement Strategy, to ensure that everyone, regardless of disability, can partake in consultation. This is ensured, for example, through facilitating online drop-ins and providing alternative formats, on request, to allow people with physical disabilities to participate more easily. The Council is committed to using a variety of engagement methods to ensure that vulnerable and under-represented groups are heard.

Below are some of the methods we may use to advertise and conduct consultations:

Digital:

- Publishing information on the Council's website
- Sending emails to all those registered on the Council's consultation database
- Issuing press releases

[4] ONS (2025). *Population estimates for England and Wales: Mid-2024.*
[5] ONS (2023). *How life has changed in Nuneaton and Bedworth: Census 2021.*

- Advertising on social media
- Running online drop-in sessions via Microsoft Teams

In-person:

- Holding ward-based drop-in sessions
- A member of the Planning Policy team will be available every weekday of the consultation period to talk to, in-person, at the Town Hall about the Local Plan.

Telephone:

- A member of the Planning Policy team will be available every weekday of the consultation period to talk to, on the phone, about the Local Plan.

Furthermore, other methods may be used such as:

- Engagement workshops with internal departments, members, neighbouring authorities, and Warwickshire County Council.
- Updates provide on progress to the Local Plan Committee.
- Re-starting the Infrastructure Delivery Plan Group meetings to liaise with all relevant infrastructure providers.

Who we will consult

Preparing the new Local Plan requires effective engagement and coordination with a diverse range of stakeholders including residents, community groups, landowners, businesses, investors, infrastructure companies, and more.

The Council is committed to hearing from all those who live, work or have an interest in the Borough, to ensure that the new Local Plan reflects local needs and aspirations.

The Council maintains the Planning Policy consultation database which allows interested individuals and organisations to receive updates about key stages of the consultation process and the Local Plan preparation.

Below are the main groups by category we will engage:

Members of the Public, Businesses and Community
• Public • Voluntary groups

- Groups representing those who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010
- Groups who represent businesses in the Borough
- Specific organisations set out in legislation
- Landowners and developers
- Anyone on the Planning Policy consultation database.

Infrastructure providers

- Cadent Gas
- National Gas
- National Grid
- National Highways
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- Office of Rail and Road
- Transport for West Midlands
- Severn Trent Water

National Bodies

- Active Travel England
- Canal & River Trust
- Historic England
- The English Sports Council
- The Mining Remediation Authority

Environmental Bodies

- Natural England
- The Environment Agency
- The Forestry Commission

Government & Local Authorities

- Internal NBBC departments
- NBBC Councillors
- Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board
- Homes England
- Warwickshire County Council (with regards to education, highways management, flood management and local nature recovery strategy)

When we will consult

Under the new government regulations, new-style Local Plans must be produced within a 30-month timeframe. Throughout this period and prior, stakeholders have been and will be engaged at key points, to ensure they have a chance to influence the Local Plan at appropriate and significant times.

The three key consultation stages are:

- Scoping Consultation (took place between 29th June and 10th August 2026)
- Proposed plan content and evidence stage (proposed timescales: June – August 2027)
- Proposed Local Plan stage (proposed timescales: April – May 2028)

Scoping consultation

The Scoping Consultation took place between 29th June and 10th August 2026. The purpose of the Scoping Consultation was to consult the public and local stakeholders about the main issues facing the Borough, gather views on what the new Local Plan should focus on, and find out how people would like to be involved as the plan progresses.

The Scoping Consultation took the form of an electronic questionnaire that was advertised on the Council's website (copies were available via email and paper form if requested), the Planning Policy consultation database was notified, and a press release was issued.

The responses from the Scoping Consultation will be summarised and published on the Council's website after 30th October 2026 when the Council passes through Gateway 1.

Proposed plan content and evidence stage

For this consultation stage, the Council will consult for a total of six weeks in order to meet the statutory requirements.

What we will consult on:

In accordance with regulation 23 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, the Council is required to consult on the proposed plan content and supporting evidence. The consultation document will include the following.

- A draft vision and proposed measurable outcomes

- Any proposed aims and objectives
- A proposed spatial strategy approach
- A summary of the evidence gathered to date and evidence that will be gathered going forward

Other aspects such as draft policies, including site allocation policies, may be included at this stage. After the consultation, summaries of the representations received and an explanation of how the Council have considered the feedback will be published.

Proposed Local Plan stage

For this consultation stage, the Council will consult for a total of eight weeks in order to meet the statutory requirements.

What we will consult on:

In accordance with regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, Councils are required to consult on the proposed local plan. The consultation will include the following.

- Proposed local plan
- A map of proposed local plan policies
- Details of the evidence gathered
- A summary of the main issues raised at the previous statutory consultations and how the Council have addressed them

After the consultation, summaries of the representations received and an explanation of how the Council have considered the feedback will be published. Updates will be made to the Local Plan and supporting evidence base before the Council progresses to the next plan-making stage (Gateway 3).

Other opportunities to engage

Gateway 2 Assessment

Following the receipt of the Gateway 2 report from the independent assessor, the Council will publish both the information we submitted, along with the report itself on the Council's website. Physical copies of these will also be made available for inspection at the Town Hall.

The Council will notify everyone listed on the Planning Policy consultation database, in addition to sending a copy of the gateway assessor's report to everyone identified or referred to in the observations or advice.

The report provided by the gateway assessor must include observations and advice on:

- progress towards meeting certain prescribed requirements – if you submit a draft statement of compliance, this will assist the assessor in providing this
- progress towards preparing a local plan which is in general conformity with an operative spatial development strategy, where relevant
- issues relevant to the soundness of your emerging local plan and advice on preparing a sound plan

The report may also include observations and advice on:

- your overall approach
- consistency with national policy
- the evidence to support your local plan
- what to expect at Gateway 3 and during the examination – including the provision of any specific procedural guidance that might assist you to prepare for them

Opportunities for engagement will take place before the consultation on the proposed local plan.

Gateway 3 Assessment

At this stage, the Council will make information available on the observations and advice the Council have received from the assessor as soon as is reasonably practicable. Additionally, the Council will publish the documents submitted to the gateway assessor, along with a Gateway 3 completion statement, confirming the date the Council successfully passed the Gateway.

Public examination

At the public examination stage, anyone who has opted-in to the consultation database will be provided with details of the examination. This will include the date, time and place of the hearings. If a further public consultation on the plan is necessary during the examination, the Council will make a decision as to whether the changes are significant enough to warrant further consultation.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring is essential to ensure that engagement activities remain effective, inclusive and responsive throughout the preparation of the new Local Plan. The Council will monitor participation throughout the preparation of the Local Plan and will review engagement activity following each consultation stage.

Monitoring may include:

- Number of consultation responses
- Attendance at events
- Geographic distribution of responses
- Representation of priority groups
- Website and digital engagement metrics
- Planning Policy consultation database sign-ups

Where participation from specific groups of people is low, the Council will consider additional targeted engagement activity.