

Report to Councillors on Local Plan Update July 2026

In the Local Plan draft which was open for consultation in Autumn 2025 there was an expectation that Dorset Council would complete the plan process with a Final Draft forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in December 2026.

Since that consultation the Government have changed the way the Local Plans are to be prepared and what is to be contained therein. Within these changes there is a requirement to have completed Local Plans submitted for examination by December 2026. Dorset Council, as a result of changes in the NPPF and the volume of comments received from the 2025 consultation find themselves being in a position where it is not possible to meet this deadline.

Dorset Council therefore intend to prepare their forward plans according to the new scheme. I provide more detail below but in essence it means that instead of having a Local Plan for examination by December 2026 the expectation is now that a plan under the new scheme will not be ready for inspection until autumn 2028.

Under the new scheme there are 7 stages

1. Scoping (and consultation for 21 days)
2. Gateway 1
3. Content and Evidence Consultation (6 weeks)
4. Gateway 2
5. Consultation on Local Plan (8 weeks)
6. Gateway 3
7. Examination and Adoption

Details for these stages is to be confirmed by Dorset Council and the timetable may be subject to review and change but at the present time the consultation dealines are as follows

- Scoping – 25 October 2026
- Evidence Collecting – April/June 2027
- Proposed plan – March/May 2028

This means that in May 2028 Dorset Council will be in the position they were in last year when we were consulted. However Dorset has indicated that they will bring forward as much relevant data from the 2025 consultation as possible in the new Local Plan.

Obviously time will tell what we, as a Parish Council, will be expected to achieve but this is my thoughts at the moment. If you want more detail then please look at the attached report that will be presented to Cabinet on 28th July. It is my intention to attend that meeting if possible.

Prepared by

Cllr Stephen Hillier

22 July 2026