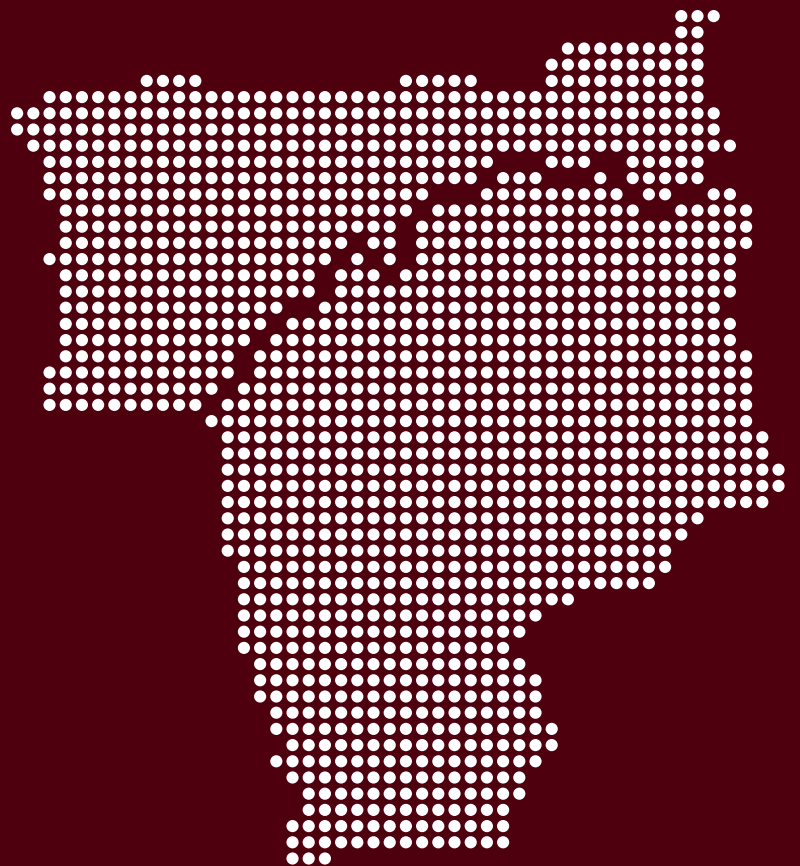


# Local Development Scheme

February 2025



**Sunderland  
City Council**

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# 1. Introduction

1.1 Under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), Local Planning Authorities must prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). Development Plan Documents (DPDs) are required to be prepared in accordance with the LDS and as such, progress made against the LDS will be monitored, and a report, known as the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), will be published annually.

## **Purpose of the LDS**

1.2 The purpose of the LDS is to set out for interested parties the timescales for preparing Sunderland's Local Plan and other planning guidance including Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). It provides up-to-date information so that interested parties will know when they will have an opportunity to participate in the plan-making process.

1.3 This LDS includes;

- A review of policy context;
- An overview of Sunderland Local Plan; and
- The timescales for preparing and reviewing Development Plan Documents and other planning guidance. Included in this section is an overview of each document, the spatial area the plan covers and the timescales for preparing the document.

1.4 This Local Development Scheme replaces the Council's last LDS which was published in March 2024.

## 2. Policy Context

### National Context

- 2.1 The Town and Country (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012 came into force in April 2012. These Regulations prescribe the form and content of a Local Plan and Policies Map and set out procedural arrangements for preparing Local Plans. They also list the prescribed bodies in relation to the Duty to Co-operate, the requirements in relation to the Authority Monitoring Report, and set out how information should be made available for inspection.
- 2.2 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 came into force on 6 April 2012. The Regulations include the process and procedures for setting up Neighbourhood Areas, preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders. Any Neighbourhood Development Plan will need to be in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and strategic planning policy of the local authority. It will also be subject to an independent examination and a referendum before it is adopted as a statutory planning policy document by the City Council. There are currently no Neighbourhood Plan Areas designated in Sunderland.
- 2.3 The NPPF sets out national planning policy guidance and contains the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Framework has been updated a number of times since its original publication. The core planning principles within the Framework include the need for development to be plan-led and to pro-actively drive and support sustainable economic development. Various strategic priorities must be addressed in the Local Plan, including policies to deliver the homes and jobs needed together with any necessary retail, leisure and other commercial development.
- 2.4 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was launched in March 2014 and is updated as necessary by the Government. The PPG contains guidance on a wide range of planning matters, for example, on housing and economic development needs assessments and on housing and economic land availability assessment.

### Evidence

- 2.5 In accordance with the NPPF, Local Plans must be based on relevant and up-to-date evidence. In preparing Sunderland's Local Plan, the Council will bring together a wide range of evidence documents to underpin and justify the Local Plan. This will include, amongst others, background studies, research, surveys and feedback documents. Once complete, these documents will be published on the Council's website. This evidence base will continue to be reviewed and updated where necessary.

### Duty to Cooperate

- 2.6 Any Development Plan Document must be prepared in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate, legal and procedural requirements, and be sound. As part of the Duty to Co-operate, the Council is committed to working collaboratively with other local authorities, the North East Combined Authority (NECA) and other prescribed bodies on matters of cross boundary and sub-regional significance.

## **Assessments**

- 2.7 All policies and proposals contained within a Development Plan Document will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and also a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment, where appropriate. This involves scoping reports and assessments throughout the preparation of the Local Plan to ensure an iterative approach to consider policies.

### 3. Sunderland's Local Plan

#### Current Development Plan

3.1 The current adopted statutory development plan for Sunderland is:

- **Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015-2033 (Adopted January 2020 and reviewed December 2024);**
- **International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP) Area Action Plan (AAP) 2017-2032 (Adopted November 2017 and reviewed October 2022);** and
- Saved policies of the **Unitary Development Plan (Adopted 1998) and Unitary Development Plan Alteration No.2 (2007).**



#### Sunderland's Core Strategy Development Plan Review

3.2 In accordance with the NPPF and PPG a review of the Core Strategy and Development Plan was undertaken in December 2024. This was required to determine whether the policies of the plan remain effective, fit for purpose and consistent with national policy.

3.3 The review concluded that the policies within the plan continue to be in general conformity with the NPPF and PPG, remain broadly effective in delivering the overall CSDP's vision and objectives, and form an appropriate basis on which to determine planning applications. Therefore, a review of the plan was not required at that point in time.

#### International Advanced Manufacturing Park Area Action Plan Review

3.4 As the IAMP AAP was adopted on 30 November 2017 a review of this plan was undertaken in October 2022. This review concluded, that at that point in time, the policies of the AAP remained effective and consistent with national policy.

#### Draft International Advanced Manufacturing Park Area Action Plan 2024-2042

3.5 Notwithstanding the above, opportunities brought about through the designation of the site as part of the North East Investment Zone (IZ), changes brought about through the EU trade and Cooperation Agreement and the emergence of technological change in the automotive and advanced manufacturing sectors has necessitated a need to continue to develop an agile and flexible response to the further development of the IAMP. As such it has been necessary to prepare a new IAMP Area Action Plan (AAP). Further details are provided in Section 4.

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

3.6 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are intended to expand upon or provide further details to policies in the Local Plan. New or replacement SPDs will go through a consultation process in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). SPDs are not subject to examination but are adopted by the City Council, having been informed by community and stakeholder involvement in their preparation. Once adopted, SPDs will form part of the Local Plan as non-statutory documents.

### **Statement of Community Involvement**

3.7 The Council must also produce an SCI setting out how it intends to consult and involve the community in the preparation and review of local development documents and in development management decisions. The Council's latest SCI was adopted in June 2020.

### **Authority Monitoring Report**

3.8 The AMR assesses whether policies, targets and milestones have been met and it will inform the review of the Local Development Scheme. The AMR is published annually.

## 4. Local Plan and other planning guidance timescale

4.1 This section outlines timescales for two distinct types of documents:

- The preparation of new Development Plan Documents; and
- The preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents.

### New Development Plan Documents

Local Plan	
Role and purpose	Sets out strategic and non-strategic policies, allocations and designations for development of the City. The plan may also contain development management policies.
Coverage	City wide
Status	Development Plan Document
Chain of Conformity	In accordance with legislation and national planning policies and guidance
Timetable <sup>1</sup>	
Regulation 18 Draft	Summer/Autumn 2026
Regulation 19 Draft	Spring 2027
Submission	Autumn 2027
Adoption	Winter 2028

### New International Advanced Manufacturing Park AAP

4.2 As set out earlier (para 3.5), the Council (alongside South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council) have prepared a new draft IAMP AAP which upon adoption would replace the current AAP. The timetable below outlines key dates and stages.

New IAMP AAP	
Role and purpose	Sets out policies to support the delivery of an advanced manufacturing park on land to the north of the Nissan site. Upon adoption the new AAP would replace the current version
Coverage	IAMP AAP Area
Status	Development Plan Document
Chain of Conformity	In accordance with legislation and national planning policies and guidance. Accords with strategic policies in the Core Strategy.
Timetable	
Regulation 18 Draft	Summer 2024

<sup>1</sup> Timetable is currently based on the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This will be subject to change once the Government publishes details of the new plan-making system which are anticipated in Summer/Autumn 2025.



Regulation 19 Draft	Spring 2025
Submission	Autumn 2025
Adoption	Winter 2026

### Supplementary Planning Documents

4.3 A number of SPDs will be prepared to support adopted policies within the Local Plan. The information below provides details on the SPDs which the Council intends to prepare and update, together with key milestones. Please note that the list is not exhaustive and the Council may seek to prepare additional SPDs in the future, at which stage this LDS will be updated to reflect this.

SPD	Role and Purpose	Coverage	Preliminary consultation	Draft SPD (Regulation 12/13)	Adopt SPD (Regulation 14)
<b>Biodiversity</b>	To provide further guidance on how the Council will seek to deliver biodiversity net gains within the city	City wide	Scoping Report: Winter/Spring 2020 <sup>2</sup>	Summer 2025	Winter 2025
<b>Planning Obligations update</b>	To provide further guidance on when planning obligations will be required and the nature of these requirements	City wide	Scoping Report: Winter 2025 <sup>3</sup>	Spring 2025	Autumn 2025

<sup>2</sup> Consultation on the Biodiversity SPD Scoping Report took place between 24 February and 30 March 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Consultation on the Planning Obligations SPD Scoping Report took place between 6 January and 3 February 2025.

## **5. Delivering the Local Plan and other planning guidance**

5.1 The Council will use effective programme management techniques in the delivery of their Local Plan, evidence base and other planning guidance.

### **Strategic Plans Team**

5.2 The Local Plan is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Strategic and Sustainable Plans Manager. A Planning Policy Team Leader, two Senior Planning Policy Officers and a Planning Policy Officer provide the bulk of the Council's resource to progress the Local Plan, but specialist expertise is drawn from elsewhere across the Directorate and wider Council when required.

### **Governance**

5.3 Regular briefings will be provided to the Council's Senior Management Team to ensure that the preparation of the Local Plan helps to deliver corporate priorities. Key elected Members will be briefed, as appropriate.

### **Evidence Preparation**

5.4 The complex nature of the Local Plan means that external advice and evidence preparation will continue to be required at all stages of plan preparation. The engaging of these services will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's established procurement processes.

### **Budget**

5.5 The preparation of the Local Plan is supported by an ongoing annual budget allowance identified within the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan.

### **Risk Assessment**

5.6 An assessment has been carried out of the factors that could affect the ability of the Council to deliver the Local Plan in accordance with the indicated programme. Actions to manage these risks have been identified. This is included in Appendix 1

## Appendix 1

Risk Identified	Likelihood/ impact	Management Action
<b>Programme Slippage</b>	<p>Low/High</p> <p>The Council is required to meet the milestones for development plan documents in the LDS. Failure to deliver against the key milestones will be damaging to the reputation of the local planning authority and the absence of up-to-date planning policies will hamper the realisation of the Council's vision and lead to uncoordinated developments in the City.</p>	<p>The Council will ensure that progress is carefully monitored and that priority is given to achieving the key milestones set out in the LDS.</p>
<b>Staff Resources</b>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Loss of experienced staff will impact on the production of documents. Two members of staff work reduced hours.</p>	<p>Ensure that sufficient staff resources with the necessary experience and expertise are available for plan production. Where vacancies arise, these will be filled as quickly as possible, where financial resources permit. Work on the Local Plan will be made a priority and additional resource brought in from other teams, where necessary. Consultants will be engaged to provide specialist advice.</p>
<b>Financial Resources</b>	<p>Low/ Medium</p> <p>Government spending cuts continue to affect resources across the Council. Sufficient financial resources are required to prepare documents and consult.</p>	<p>Ensure the Local Development Scheme informs the Council's Medium Term Financial planning. Use of a ring-fenced reserve ensures that expenditure can be managed over Local Plan cycle.</p>
<b>Resources of external agencies</b>	<p>Medium/ High</p> <p>The preparation of the Local Plan will require considerable input from other organisations (Environment Agency, Natural England, National Highways, etc). Many will be involved in the preparation of Local Plans by other authorities. They are also being affected by reduced resources which could affect their capacity to provide input to the Local Plan.</p>	<p>In order to minimise risk, the Council will seek to talk to such organisations as early as possible and build upon existing working relationships in order to minimise slippage of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The LDS provides forward notice of the Council's Local Plan programme. Regular liaison takes place between key infrastructure bodies and statutory consultees.</p>

<b>Legal compliance/ soundness/ legal challenge</b>	<p>Low/ Medium</p> <p>The Planning Legislation and Regulations place specific responsibilities on the Council regarding the need to prepare a plan that is “sound”. Failure to prepare a plan that is “sound” will result in the Local Plan being rejected by the Planning Inspectorate.</p>	<p>The Council will seek to ensure that the Local Plan is legally compliant, “sound” and based upon a robust evidence base. The Council will work closely with the Planning Inspectorate at all stages to ensure that the tests of soundness are met. The Council will take legal advice on the plan process as appropriate.</p>
<b>Failure to comply with the Duty to Cooperate</b>	<p>Medium/ High</p> <p>A legal duty on the Council for the Local Plan. The duty cannot be demonstrated retrospectively therefore failure to demonstrate it will have significant effect.</p>	<p>Ensure cross-boundary strategic priorities are scoped at an early stage and early sustained engagement with adjacent authorities, NECA and other key stakeholders is established. Document engagement and outcomes and how this has led to effective policies on strategic matters. Statements of Common Ground will be prepared with duty-to-cooperate partners, including neighbouring local planning authorities and NECA.</p>
<b>Changes in national policy/ legislation</b>	<p>Medium/ High</p> <p>Changes to the statutory process or new substantive policy which affects the content and direction of local policy preparation and decisions may cause delays to the programme.</p>	<p>The Council will carefully monitor new policy and legislation and give priority to managing any impacts on the key milestones set out in the LDS. Advice will be sought from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.</p>

## Glossary

### **Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)**

The AMR monitors progress in preparing documents in the Local Development Scheme and assesses the extent to which planning policies are being implemented successfully.

The AMR also updates monitoring information in key subject areas, including housing, economic development and retail, and examines the implications of the information for the Development Plan.

### **Development Plan Documents (DPDs)**

Development Plan Documents are planning policy documents which make up the Local Plan. They help to guide development within a local planning authority area by setting out the detailed planning policies, which planning officers use to make their decisions on planning applications.

DPDs were introduced as part of the reforms made to the planning system through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **Duty to Cooperate**

The duty to cooperate was created in the Localism Act 2011. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.

The duty to cooperate is not a duty to agree, but local planning authorities should make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination.

Local planning authorities must demonstrate how they have complied with the duty at the independent examination of their Local Plans. If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate that it has complied with the duty then the Local Plan will not be able to proceed further in examination.

The NPPF contains a requirement to produce, maintain and update a statement of common ground with neighbouring authorities.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

The Local Plan may require a Habitats Regulation Assessment, as set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 if it is considered likely to have significant effects on European habitats or species, located in the local planning authority's area or in its vicinity.

### **Local Plan**

Local Plans have statutory development plan status and are subject to rigorous procedures involving community involvement and formal testing through examination by an independent Planning Inspector to assess whether a plan has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, legal and procedural requirements and whether it is sound.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The NPPF is a single document that sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Government's vision of sustainable development. The NPPF prioritises the role of planning in supporting economic growth.

### **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**

The PPG is an online resource setting out further detail on the Government's national planning policies set out in the NPPF.

### **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

A document which sets out how a Council will engage with communities in reviewing and preparing planning policy documents and consulting on planning applications.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

### **“Soundness”**

A Local Plan must be 'sound'. The tests of soundness are set out in paragraph 35 of the NPPF. A plan must be:

- Positively prepared
- Justified
- Effective
- Consistent with national policy.

### **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

A type of planning document that provides support, and additional detail on the implementation of policies contained in Local Plans. An SPD is a material consideration, but carries less weight than a Local Plan.

### **Sustainability Assessment (SA)**

Examines the impact of proposed plans and policies on economic, social and environmental factors, and ensures that these issues are taken into account at every stage so that sustainable development is delivered on the ground. It also appraises the different options that are put forward in the development of policies and the process of allocating sites. Each Development Plan Document that the Council produces is accompanied by its own SA.

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