

Manchester Local plan (Publication Draft)

Frequently Asked Questions

This top section will be updated, as new Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are added through the consultation.

Any questions which are added once the consultation has begun will have a date next to them, which indicates when they were added to this document.

About the plan

The Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan (adopted in 2024) provides the strategic context including the scale of housing and employment land that the City needs to identify to deliver the sub-regional spatial strategy. The Manchester Local Plan (Publication Draft) provides more detail about what the strategic policies in PfE mean for Manchester.

The Manchester Local Plan (Publication Draft) covers the whole city. The Plan will guide development in the city up to 2039. The main purposes of the Plan are to:

- set out the non-strategic policies through which the Council will manage development coming forward;
- demonstrates that there is sufficient land to deliver 60,000 homes, 1.4 million sqm of office development and around 65,000sqm industry and warehousing floorspace;
- identify designations, such as those for the protection of the city's environmental and historical assets, our town centres, and employment areas, and,
- facilitate the development of supporting infrastructure, such as transport, education and utilities.

Once adopted, the Manchester Local Plan will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the City. It will be used to assess all planning applications across the City alongside:

- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document;
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document;
- Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan Document; and
- any neighbourhood plans that may come into force during the lifetime of the Plan.

How will Manchester Local Plan benefit me and my local area?

This is our plan for jobs, new home, and sustainable growth – and that is what it will provide. We are seeking to provide the jobs and homes we need in a sustainable way, so they are integrated into our transport network or supported by new infrastructure.

It will create the conditions for achieving our wider ambitions to tackle inequality and address the housing crisis. We believe this Plan will benefit all of our areas and help them to grow and thrive.

Why do we need this plan now?

The Government requires every local authority to produce plans that identify enough land to meet local housing and employment needs.

The Government has recently introduced a new plan-making process. The Manchester Local Plan (Publication Draft) is being prepared under the previous 'legacy' system and Government has given 'legacy' local authorities a deadline of December 2026 to submit their plans for examination.

How is this consultation different from previous ones?

There have been two previous consultations in 2020 and 2025. This plan has been informed by these consultations and the extensive evidence base that has been prepared. We've now published the document that we'd like to put forward as the final plan. This means that we have reached the statutory consultation stage known

as Regulation 19. This is the final stage before the plan goes to the Secretary of State who will then appoint an independent inspector or inspectors to examine the plan.

This consultation is different to the previous ones as comments are sought on two main issues:

- Is the plan legally compliant?
- Is the plan sound?

What do we mean by 'legally compliant'?

People are asked to comment on whether they think the plan is 'legally compliant'. You should consider the following before making comments on legal compliance:

- The Local Plan should be included in the current Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the key stages should have been followed.
- The process of community involvement for the Local Plan should be in general accordance with the LPA's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- The Plan should comply with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations).
- The LPA is required to provide a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) when it publishes a plan. This should identify the process by which the SA has been carried out, the baseline information used to inform the process, and the outcomes of that process.

What makes a local plan 'sound'?

The term 'sound' is used to describe a Local Plan that has been prepared in accordance with what Government expects of local planning authorities. These expectations are set out in paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework as follows:

- a. Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s needs and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that any unmet need from our area or from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development.

This means that the councils must produce a plan which promotes economic growth in its areas and makes provision for the homes, employment and infrastructure which it determines are needed.

- b. Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence.

This means that the councils must have considered other policies and determined its approach based upon the most up to date and robust evidence including for example Strategic Housing Market Assessment, land availability, viability.

- c. Effective – deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground.

This means that the council must be confident that the policies within the Manchester Local Plan (Publication Draft) can be achieved within the plan period (2022 to 2039). The council must also work with neighbouring authorities for example Stockport, Trafford, Bury as well as authorities outside of Greater Manchester which touch our border - Cheshire East, and specific public bodies. Our Statement of Collaboration sets out how we have worked with our neighbours and specific public bodies.

- d. Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

Common Issues

Which version of NPPF has been used to prepare the plan?

The Manchester Local Plan is being prepared as a 'Part 2' plan to PfE, providing more local detailed policy for the city. PfE was prepared under NPPF 2021 therefore this is the NPPF that we have used to prepare the Manchester Local Plan (Publication Draft); however, we have also considered the provisions of the updated NPPF 2024. Background Topic Papers have been prepared and set out what implications, if any, are raised by the NPPF 2024.

Where can I find the Sustainability Appraisal for Manchester Local Plan?

The Manchester Local Plan is accompanied by an Integrated Appraisal which comprises a Sustainability Appraisal (which is mandatory under section 19 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004); a Strategic Environmental Assessment (which is mandatory under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which transpose the European Directive 2001/42/EC into English law); an Equality Impact Assessment (which is required to be undertaken for plans, policies and strategies by the Equality Act 2010).

Why does the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identify more land than required to meet the City's housing need as set out in the Plan?

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is produced annually. It looks at land that is considered suitable for residential development. It identifies land that we expect to deliver housing on over the next 15 years or more.

The SHLAA forms part of the evidence base for Manchester's Local Plan. It shows the areas within the city that have the capacity to accommodate new housing. In numerical terms, the existing supply of potential housing sites identified in the SHLAA is adequate to meet the overall identified need of around 60,000 net additional dwellings.

However, meeting the numerical needs alone, is not enough. We must be able to demonstrate that our land supply has sufficient flexibility within it to show that it represents a deliverable, viable and robust land supply and will deliver balanced and inclusive growth, thereby achieving the overall spatial strategy. Plans need to demonstrate sufficient flexibility in the event that sites do not come forward as expected or if a Planning Inspector deems sites are not suitable or deliverable.

The need for flexibility is supported by the evidence from the Viability Appraisal, which identifies that delivery of the existing land supply may be more challenging in the lower value areas.

Why do we need to build more homes? There are lots of empty houses in Manchester

Vacant dwellings, or empty homes, are a part of any functioning housing market as homes are bought, sold, re-let and refurbished. Concentrations of empty homes vacant for extended periods are potentially problematic, while conversely extremely low levels of vacant properties may indicate extremely high demand. Just over 2.3% of dwellings across Manchester were classed as empty in 2025, which is lower than the level in England as a whole (2.6%), with long term vacancies accounting for less than 1% (0.9%). The City has been successfully tackling vacant dwellings for many years, and it is not considered that the levels of empty dwellings provide any significant opportunities to offset the need to provide new homes.

What type of land are we building on?

Through the Manchester Local Plan (Publication Draft) we're doing all we can to bring forward our brownfield sites in the early stages of the plan period.

All of the land identified as suitable for development is in the urban area, and the vast majority is brownfield. 97% of all housing completions were on brownfield land in 2024/25.

What about the green belt?

There is sufficient urban land to meet all of our housing and employment needs. On this basis, there are no strategic exceptional circumstances for releasing Green Belt land.

How can I take part in the consultation and give you my views?

The consultation is open for 6 weeks between 17 August and 28 September 2026.

The consultation documents can be found at: manchester.gov.uk/localplan.

Only comments received within these dates will be considered by the Inspector.

If sending by post, please ensure enough time is given for your response to arrive by 28th September 2026.

Representations can be made by:

1. Using the online consultation website at
<https://manchester-consult.objective.co.uk/kse>
2. Emailing your comments to planningstrategy@manchester.gov.uk
3. Sending your comments by post to

**Planning and Infrastructure
Manchester City Council
P.O. Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA**

Can I respond anonymously?

Unfortunately, we can't accept anonymous consultation responses. In order for your comments to be considered as part of the formal planning process from this point forward, we (and the planning inspector carrying out the examination) need to be able to contact you - just your name and an email address or postal address is enough.

Can I respond more than once?

Please don't respond more than once. If you respond online, you don't also need to send something through the post, and vice-versa. During analysis of the feedback we will be checking for duplicate responses and removing these.

What has been done to help people to respond consultation effectively?

Consultation on the Manchester Local Plan is carried out in line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the City's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI can be viewed on the Council's website [Statement Of Community Involvement](#).

The first draft of the Local Plan in 2025 saw around 500 residents and organisations providing responses. This plan has taken on board all of the evidence gathered and considered the views submitted as part of these consultations. A report on the 2025 consultation and all of the evidence prepared to support the plan is available on the website, and we have produced guidance to help people respond to the consultation effectively which is available on our website [The local plan review](#).

This is your opportunity to have your say on that plan.

What happens next?

At the end of the consultation phase, the plan will be prepared for submission to the Secretary of State Housing, Communities and Local Government. This marks the beginning of the public examination. The Secretary of State will appoint an independent Inspector to conduct the Examination. Following submission, the process is managed by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), and timetabling will be outside of our control. Further information will be posted on our website as details are confirmed. The Council will also appoint a Programme Officer, who will serve as the main point of contact during the Examination.

Following a public examination and approval by the Secretary of State, the Manchester Local Plan would be ready for adoption by 2027.