



South Tyneside Council

item 7

New Local Plan

This document has been classified as: **Not
protectively marked**

**Andrew Inch, Senior Manager-Planning
Cabinet – 27 May 2026**

Report to Cabinet

Cabinet Portfolio/Lead Member: Lead Member for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Investment

Report of Stuart Wright, Director of Place Strategy

Subject: Commencement of plan-making for a new Local Plan

Date: 27 May 2026

Wards affected: all

Council ambitions: Financially secure, Healthy and well, Connected to jobs, Part of strong communities and, Targeting support to make things fairer

Does the report and any appendices contain information which has been identified as confidential or exempt?

- No, this report does not contain information identified as confidential or exempt.

For Executive Decisions only:

Is the decision a Key Decision? Yes

Is it included in the Forward Plan? Yes

If not in the Forward Plan is the report: N/A

Relevant Scrutiny Chair: Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny? Yes

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet endorsement to commence work on progressing a new Local Plan for South Tyneside in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 and national plan-making reforms.
2. The Council is one of 39 authorities in England that are required by Government to give notice of commencement of plan-making under a new system for Local Plans by 30 June 2026 and, to have reached the first of three gateway stages in the process by 31 October 2026.
3. Separately, but at the same time, the Council is also continuing to progress the emerging South Tyneside Local Plan (2023 – 2040) towards formal adoption following completion of Examination in Public hearing sessions (July 2025/ January 2026) and a Main Modifications Consultation in March/April 2026. The Council remains under a Government direction to facilitate examination of the Local Plan and to consider the plan for adoption. This progression of the current Local Plan is a distinctly separate process to the requirement to produce a new Local Plan for the Borough.

Background Information

4. In December 2024 the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In order to support the Government's growth agenda and commitment to significantly increase housebuilding nationally, the revised NPPF made significant changes to the methods by which local housing needs were calculated. For South Tyneside, the annual housing requirement to be planned for increased from 309 dwellings to 621 dwellings. To reflect the fact that a number of authorities were already at an advanced stage of preparing Local Plans, albeit with lower housing requirements, the NPPF included transitional arrangements which still allowed such plans to progress if they had reached 'Regulation 19' stage. This applied in South Tyneside and where the current Local Plan was able to be submitted for examination on 11 March 2025 following a Government direction requiring its submission by 12 March 2025.
5. Paragraph 236 of the NPPF also made it clear at that time, 'that if the housing requirement in the plan to be adopted meets less than 80% of local housing need, the local planning authority will be expected to begin work on a new plan, under the revised plan-making system under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (as soon as the relevant provisions are brought into force in 2025), in order to address the shortfall in housing need'.
6. The relevant provisions under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 were brought into effect on 25 March 2026 through the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, meaning that the requirements of

NPPF Paragraph 236 are similarly brought into effect. To this end, on 6 March 2026 MHCLG published a list ([Rollout of the new local plan-making system - GOV.UK](#)), including South Tyneside Council, as one of 39 authorities that must publish a notice of intention to commence plan-making by 30 June 2026 and to publish a Gateway 1 self-assessment by 31 October 2026.

7. Accordingly, the Council must, firstly, take the steps required in order to be able to publish a notice of intention to commence plan-making by 30 June 2026 and secondly, be in a position to publish a Gateway 1 Self-assessment by 31 October 2026.
8. Set out below in Table 1 is a high-level timetable for the progression of a plan under the new plan-making system including the steps identified in paragraph 7 above. Of particular note are the significantly accelerated timescales for plan-making and adoption, with the regulations requiring that a plan is adopted within 30 months of passing the Gateway 1 stage:

Table 1: High-level timetable

Stage	Activity	Indicative timescales
Get ready	Notice to commence Plan Making and publication of Local Plan Timetable	By 30 th June 2026
	Scoping Consultation	Summer /Autumn 2026
	Gateway 1 Self – Assessment Checklist	By 31 st October 2026
Months 1-23		
Plan preparation	Local Plan Vision and Strategy Development	November 2026 – Summer 2027
	Public consultation on Vision and Strategy (6 weeks)	Late Spring/early Summer 2027
	Gateway 2 (PINS)	Autumn 2027
	Draft Plan Preparation	Winter 2028
	Public consultation (8 weeks) on Local Plan	Early 2028
	Gateway 3 (PINS)	Summer 2028
Months 24-29		
Examination	Submission of Local Plan for Examination in Public	Autumn 2028
	Examination in Public	Winter 2028/ Early 2029
Month 30		
Adoption	Plan Adoption	Spring 2029

Notice of Intention to Commence

9. The notice of intention to commence involves giving formal notice of the Council's intention to start plan-making and where that must be at least 4 months before passing through Gateway 1.
10. Cabinet approval is sought to submit the above details to MHCLG and publish the notice of intention to commence.
11. The notice itself involves the publication on our website and where it must provide the following information:
 - Name of the planning authority preparing the plan
 - Title of the plan
 - specification if all or part of a minerals and waste plan will be incorporated into the local plan, and
 - a written description of the area and a map showing the boundary

International Advanced Manufacturing Park Area Action Plan (IAMP AAP)

12. Of relevance to the final bullet point is the International Advance Manufacturing Park (IAMP). At present, the IAMP is subject to a jointly prepared Area Action Plan (AAP) with Sunderland City Council which was adopted in 2017.
13. Cabinet should note that both Sunderland City Council and South Tyneside Council have jointly progressed a new IAMP AAP which has been subject to Regulation 18 consultation (July – September 2024) and Regulation 19 consultation (March to May 2025). The new AAP sought to increase the flexibility of the document going forward to be appropriately aligned to the North East Investment Zone. Following the consultation, both Councils have reviewed the document and the circumstances around the need for a new AAP. Given that the IAMP area is now either developed out or consented, it is considered that there is no longer a requirement for a development plan document specific to that area. The Councils are therefore no longer intending to progress the AAP to examination and approval is sought to revoke the Regulation 19 draft IAMP AAP.
14. It is, therefore, proposed that the part of the IAMP within South Tyneside would form part of the area to be covered by the new Local Plan.
15. Sunderland City Council would take the same approach with regard to the area of IAMP within their administrative boundary. The area currently covered by the existing IAMP AAP would be subject to allocations /policies within the new local plans and both authorities will continue to work collaboratively with each other during the plan-making process, including on evidence and delivery. It should be noted that the existing IAMP AAP will remain part of the Development Plan for the Borough until the new Local Plan is adopted.

Local plan timetable

16. The new plan making system will require the Council to publish and regularly update a Local Plan Timetable. At the same time as the Council gives notice of

its intention to commence, we will also publish the Local Plan timetable. This will build on the timescales identified in Table 1 above and where it will show how the Council will prepare and adopt a plan within a 30-month timeframe.

17. It should be noted that there is an expectation for the timetable to be updated and amended as the plan is progressed and requirement for the timetable to be made publicly available on the Councils website and Council offices. To be able to produce regular updates of a Local Plan timetable to meet the requirements set out in the regulations will require delegated authority.

Scoping consultation

18. Before passing through Gateway 1 which we are required to do by 31 October 2026, we are required to complete a scoping consultation addressing matters including what the plan should contain and how we will engage with stakeholders going forward. In doing so we are required to notify and invite the views of the public and a number of specific consultation bodies set out in the regulations.
19. The scoping consultation must take place after or alongside publishing the notice of intention to commence. It is anticipated that the scoping consultation will take place during late summer/ autumn 2026. The consultation will provide opportunities for residents and stakeholders to give their views on key issues and priorities for the Local Plan.

Call for sites

20. At the same time as the scoping consultation, it will also be necessary to undertake a call for sites. This will involve asking landowners and other interested parties to identify any land that they consider is suitable to meet the Borough's development needs over the plan period.

Gateway 1

21. Gateway 1 is the first of 3 mandatory gateways to support adopting the plan within 30 months. As set out by MHCLG, the Council must complete and publish a Gateway 1 self- assessment summary by 31 October 2026. The areas set out in regulations to be covered by the Gateway 1 self-assessment include:
- Publishing the Local Plan timetable
 - Establishing project management and governance arrangements for the preparation of the plan.
 - The local planning authority's proposed approach to consultation and engagement in preparing the local plan.
 - The anticipated content of the local planning authority's local plan.
 - Progressing the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
22. The publication of the Gateway 1 self-assessment summary marks the start of the 30-month plan preparation process. At this point the plan would progress through the remaining plan making stages as identified in Table 1.

Main issues and Options to be Considered

What happens if the Council do not make progress on a new local plan?

23. The Government has made it clear that the Council must start work on a new plan by the date set out in regulations and that we will be expected to prepare a plan within 30 months from publishing our Gateway 1 self-assessment (31 October 2026). Furthermore, the Government has made it clear that if the Council fails to make progress with plan-making, they will consider intervening to accelerate plan progress. The Council has already been subject to Government intervention in order to progress the current draft Local Plan, thus evidencing the very real threat of Government intervention. Reflective of this approach, the Council was contacted by MHCLG in early April seeking the submission to them of details of an indicative Local Plan timetable.
24. Accordingly, it is considered that, in the circumstances, the Council is required to take the necessary steps to commence plan-making under the new system and in accordance with the high-level timetable at Table 1.

Implications

25. Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to produce a Local Plan which meets the identified needs for the Borough. As set out in Paragraph 22, there could be reputational implications of not progressing a new Local Plan and a second government intervention in the Council's plan making.
26. The main implications of progressing a new Local Plan for the Borough will be associated with the scale of development to be considered as part of the new Local Plan. Paragraph 4 notes that the Borough's annual housing requirement as identified by the Government's Standard Method calculation requires the Council to plan for 621 dwellings per annum. This equates to a minimum Local Housing Need of 9,315 dwellings over a 15-year plan period.

Financial and Resources

27. There are no additional Local Plan costs associated with commencing plan-making under the new system. The Local Plan will be primarily financed through existing budgets.
28. The Council submitted an Expression of Interest for New System Plan Funding from MHCLG. The funding is provided to support authorities bringing a local plan forward early in the new plan-making system. The Council has successfully been awarded £108,474 to support the progression of a new Local Plan. However, that funding has been awarded to the Council on the basis that it commits to achieving the following milestones:

- *Publishing a Notice of Intention to commence Local Plan preparation by 30 June 2026; and*
- *Publishing your Gateway 1 self-assessment by 31 October 2026.*

29. Failure to meet the above milestones would mean the Council would need to return the funding to Government. It should be noted that these milestones also align with those required by Government to begin plan-making under the NPPF transitional arrangements.

30. In addition to the above funding, the Council secured £70,000 Green Belt review funding. Some of the funding has already been utilised to develop a regionally developed methodology for undertaking such assessments.

Legal and Governance

31. Preparing and updating local plans is a statutory duty. The duty is established through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (as amended) and reinforced by national policy. In this case, and particularly for South Tyneside (and 38 other local authority areas) the Government has set clear timescales in which the Council is required to commence plan-making in the Borough. It should be noted that the Secretary of State (SoS) has legal powers to intervene where Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) fail to make adequate progress in this regard.

32. The Council is required to establish project management and governance measures by Gateway 1 to support the plan-making process and deliver the Local Plan to the identified timetable.

Risk

33. The following risks and mitigations have been identified in relation to progressing the new Local Plan:

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
Staff & Resources		
Insufficient staff capacity and skills	Medium	• Ensure sufficient resource with necessary experience and expertise are available. • Use of consultants / short term contracts to provide specialist advice.
Budgetary Limitations	Medium	• Continue to apply corporate budgetary management processes.

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
		Ensure efficient use of financial resource and pursue opportunities to reduce costs i.e. joint working with neighbouring authorities
Securing appropriate external consultees	Medium	- Engage with procurement team to identify appropriate suppliers - Build on working relationships with existing external consultants
Political Risk		
Failure to gain political support	Medium/High	Engage with lead member and other members and ward councillors regularly throughout the process
National and Regional Policy		
Changes to National planning legislation, policy and guidance	High	- Monitor new and emerging policy at the point of publication and prioritise managing any impacts on key milestones. - Where necessary, seek advice from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Planning Inspectorate, and the Planning Advisory Service.
Delays in progress Spatial Development Strategy	Medium/Low	Work closely with NEMCA and neighbouring authorities.
Plan-Making		
Failure to progress plan making in line with timetable	High	- Setting realistic project timeframes and rigorous monitoring of workstreams. - Engage with lead member and other members and ward councillors regularly throughout the process via new governance structures - Procure digital platform to improve plan making efficiency.
Failure to prepare a plan that is sound or legally compliant	Low	- Ensure the plan is based upon robust evidence. - Work closely with the Planning Inspectorate. - Ensure an ongoing and effective dialogue with adjoining authorities and key stakeholders recorded in statements of common ground. - Ensure compliance with legal requirements and review at Gateway milestones.
Environmental/ Infrastructure constraints affecting spatial options	Medium	Early liaison with infrastructure providers and statutory consultees

Equality and Diversity and Community

34. In accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the new Local Plan will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. No assessment has been undertaken at this point given the current stage in the process.
35. Additionally, there is a statutory requirement to produce a sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment during the preparation of the Local Plan. The sustainability appraisal considers the economic, environmental and social implications of the plan and its policies whereby identifying and mitigating potential adverse impacts.

Environmental and Sustainability

36. This report addresses the procedural requirements to commence a new Local Plan and in themselves do not directly impact on the climate emergency or reducing emissions.
37. The new Local Plan will be prepared in compliance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which provides a clear focus on mitigation and adapting to the impacts of climate change and to support the transition to net zero. The update of the Local Plan provides the opportunity to look at a revised policy framework that supports the national focus on climate change and mitigation and how planning can support the Council's Climate Action Plan.

Council Ambitions, Policies, Strategies and Plans

38. The new Local Plan will be required to align with the Council's Vision and Ambitions. Key existing Council documents including the Vision, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Sustainable South Tyneside will help inform the scope of the new Local Plan. There will also be the opportunity for emerging Council strategies to inform the plan.
39. The new plan-making system sets out new requirements for early engaging/plan scoping and consultation on the plan content and draft plan. These stages are outlined in this report and identified in Table 1. An engagement strategy will be produced to ensure transparency of the processes and when and how stakeholders can become involved.
40. Following each stage of consultation there is a requirement for the Council to publish a summary of the consultation setting out the main issues raised and how regard has been had to comments at the point the summary is published.

Recommendations

41. This report has set out the background and requirement for the Council to seek to commence the preparation of a new Local Plan for South Tyneside. Accordingly, it is recommended that the following are agreed:

- Cabinet approves the Local Plan Timetable as set out at Table 1 of the report and authorises its submission to MHCLG and its publication (Regulation 4 and 5);
- Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to update and publish the Local Plan Timetable as required to ensure an up-to-date timetable is publicly available (Regulation 6);
- Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Place Strategy in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to agree commencement of the scoping consultation (Regulation 20);
- Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to approve, submit and publish documents for Gateway 1 self-assessment (Regulation 21), Gateway 2 (Regulation 26) and Gateway 3 (Regulation 31);
- Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to agree the content of and commencement of Consultation: proposed Local Plan content and evidence, including draft vision (Regulation 23) and Consultation on the proposed local plan (Regulation 27) with feedback brought back to a future Cabinet meeting.
- Revoke the draft International Advanced Manufacturing Park Area Action Plan (IAMP AAP) and its associated evidence base and endorse the inclusion of the area within South Tyneside's boundary in the new Local Plan.

Reasons for Recommendations

42. The reasons for the recommendations above are as follows:

- To comply with new plan-making regulations.
- To ensure compliance with the requirement that Local Plans to be prepared under the new system give notice of intention to commence by 30 June 2026 and publish Gateway 1 self-assessment by 31 October 2026.
- To agree decision-making processes to support the Council's ability to meet the Government prescribed plan-making period of 30-months.
- To proceed with the statutory requirement to produce an up-to-date Local Plan that will provide the framework for planning decisions in South Tyneside.
- Given it is the Government's stated ambition for all planning policies to be contained within a single Local Plan document, it is proposed that the policies of the International Advanced Manufacturing Park Area Action Plan (IAMP AAP) should be incorporated into a new Local Plan.

List of Appendices

None

New Local Plan

Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 gives the public right to inspect background papers for reports. Report Authors must set out at the end of the report a list of documents which have been relied upon in writing the report, or which contain facts or matters on which the report has been based.

This needs to include published works such as legislation and where possible provide weblinks to these documents. Where a weblink is not available, the document must be provided electronically to Democratic Services at the same time as the report to be published for inspection.

Reports containing confidential or exempt information as defined by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and which will be considered in private do not need background papers to be referenced.

Background papers must be retained for a period of four years.

The following is a list of the background papers (excluding exempt papers) relied upon in the preparation of the above report:

Background Paper	File Ref:	File Location