

# BROMSGROVE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN DRAFT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION - FAQs

## **What is the Local Plan, why is it needed?**

A Local Plan sets out the Council's policies on land use and guides development. Its purpose is to determine where and how housing, employment, and infrastructure are all delivered in the district over the duration of the Plan period. Local Plans are prepared in accordance with national legislation and policy and are informed by a comprehensive evidence base.

## **Why are you proposing so much housing?**

We are told we need to build more houses by the Government as the population continues to grow. Houses of different sizes are needed to meet the varied needs of local people. The proposed number of houses is calculated based on the Government's standard methodology for calculating Local Housing Need.

## **How do you identify what development is needed?**

A range of evidence and data have been collected to identify the required development. This evidence includes projected population growth, housing needs, employment trends, and infrastructure capacity. All this information can be found in the evidence base documents on our website.

## **How much housing do we need to provide?**

Between now and 2043, in accordance with the revised NPPF, we need to allocate enough land for 12,155 homes to meet our Local Housing Need (LHN). We already have land for around 3,000 homes identified through planning applications and large site allocations that were identified in the current Bromsgrove District Plan, which means we need to find additional land for just over 9,000 homes.

## **Where are you proposing new housing?**

We have proposed a number of sites for housing across the District as part of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan: Draft Development Strategy. However, these proposals are subject to consultation and may change following further engagement.

## **Why can't proposed housing be built over the border in urban areas such as Birmingham or the Black Country?**

All local authorities in England have their own 'local housing need' calculated by the government's standard methodology, this includes the local authorities bordering Bromsgrove District within the West Midlands conurbation. Whilst these authorities have significant areas of brownfield land in comparison to Bromsgrove District, this brownfield land is required to meet their housing targets.

## **Who are we providing housing for?**

We are providing housing for local people across a range of different demographics. The challenge of housing affordability means many younger people are unable to get on the housing ladder until later in life. An ageing population has increased the need for smaller homes, as many older residents are looking to downsize. At the same time, average household sizes have decreased over the years,

reducing the overall demand for larger family houses. Under current Government policy 50% of this housing will be affordable housing.

**Is No development an option?**

No. The Government has made it clear that there is a housing target to meet. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to meet the Local Housing Need of their local area. If the requirements for Bromsgrove District are not met, we risk losing the power to decide where development should take place. That decision would then fall to Central Government.

**What happens if you don't provide enough land for housing or refuse to build the minimum number of new homes specified by Local Housing Need calculations?**

The Local Plan could be found 'unsound' by the Planning Inspector if we fail to allocate sufficient land to meet the calculated Local Housing Need. If we do nothing as a Local Authority and do not have an up-to-date Local Plan, the council may come under pressure to approve development on unallocated sites via speculative planning applications, especially with some of the district's Green Belt now likely to be classed as 'Grey Belt'. We also risk losing planning appeals from developers if we cannot demonstrate that housing needs in the area are being met.

**Has the council challenged the housing targets set by the Government?**

Yes, the Council responded to the Government's 'consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system' on 24 September 2024. Of particular relevance to this FAQ are consultation questions 15, 17 and 19.

The Council's key points to the consultation were:

- Before a new method is adopted, work should be undertaken to compare any differences/ inconsistencies that the two methods might expose and further consultation undertaken.
- Bromsgrove District Council is opposed to increasing the affordability multiplier from 0.25% to 0.6%
- The addition of 318 dwellings per annum over the already challenging standard method numbers is not something the Council can support.

The consultation outcomes were published alongside the revised NPPF and updates to the Planning Practice Guidance.

The key points made by the Council had no bearing on the final changes made to the Standard Method for calculating Local Housing Need and there is no mechanism to challenge the changes made by Government.

[Government response to the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system consultation - GOV.UK](#)

**BROWNFIELD SITES**

**Why aren't we using Brownfield sites first?**

Our priority has always been to develop brownfield sites first. However, the supply of brownfield land in Bromsgrove District is limited and will not be sufficient to accommodate all the new homes required over the next Plan period.

### **Why aren't more brownfield sites proposed for development?**

#### **How many brownfield sites have been included?**

Bromsgrove District has a very limited supply of available brownfield land. Of the 400+ sites that were assessed for their development suitability, only 26 were classed as brownfield sites. Eight sites were discounted for various reasons as part of the Site Assessment process, which can be found in Appendix 1 of the Green belt Exceptional Circumstances Paper

<https://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/media/vptnp0zr/bdc-green-belt-exceptional-circumstances-paper-april-2025.pdf>

Of the remaining 18 sites, 14 were not in the Green Belt. Seven of these sites are more appropriate for employment development and will be considered later as the plan progresses. One site (former Market site, St John Street) has planning permission for community and business uses. Of the remaining six non-Green Belt brownfield sites, the dwelling yield is estimated to be around 136 dwellings, which have been included in the 3000 dwelling commitments figure that contributes towards the overall Local Housing Need figure of 12,155 dwellings.

There are four sites located within the Green Belt, two of which have recently been granted planning approval (one was allowed at appeal). The dwelling yield is 35 dwellings, which have been included in the 3000 dwelling commitments figure that contributes towards the overall Local Housing Need figure of 12,155 dwellings.

The remaining two sites in the Green Belt do not currently align with the proposed Distribution Strategy. If this position were to change, these sites could be included for allocation, thus adding an additional 16 dwellings to the commitments figure.

In total, from brownfield sites with development potential, a yield of 171 dwellings has been identified with the potential for an additional 16 dwellings.

### **What about the impact of development on the environment?**

It is a legal requirement for Local Plans to be assessed on their environmental impact. These reports are called Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and will form part of the evidence base alongside other detailed analysis of environmental issues. Mitigation measures are also proposed to address potential negative impacts.

### **Is the local plan dependent on local infrastructure?**

Infrastructure provision is one of the main considerations in the Local Plan. The Plan will take account of how existing infrastructure can support development and what additional infrastructure provision is needed when new homes are being built. Relevant infrastructure providers will be involved in the plan-making process.

### **At what point will new infrastructure be delivered for new developments?**

As the local plan progresses, an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will support the proposed development allocations in the plan. This will outline the phasing approach and costings of infrastructure that is required to support new development, as advised to the District Council by organisations responsible for the provision of certain types of infrastructure. Whilst some

infrastructure may be needed at the beginning of a development's construction, for example a new access point, other provision may be required after a certain phase of development or when a certain number of dwellings have been built.

**Why has there been mention of a number of strategies or options?**

The distribution options described in the document originate from the nine broad distribution options previously consulted on at the Issues and Options stage. All nine broad distribution options were thoroughly considered, including in the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal, and the options presented in the document reflect the advice from planning officers and the discussions with councillors involved in shaping the Local Plan. If you have preference for a different option, you can let us know via this consultation.

**Why should I get involved? It is already a done deal.**

No, future development has not been confirmed yet. Work has been undertaken to identify some potential housing sites but additional evidence, including further Local Plan consultation, will be needed before final proposals in the Plan are submitted to Central Government.

There are a range of consultation questions in the document designed to collect feedback from the public. It is a chance for anyone interested in the district's future development to have a say on the Local Plan. The earlier you share your views, the more likely they are to influence the final Plan.

The local plan process can be seen in our local development scheme

<https://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/policy/planning-policies-and-other-information/local-development-scheme-lds/>

**What sort of comments should be included in my response to the consultation?**

This is up to the person or organisation making the representation on the Local Plan, however comments should attempt to use specific evidence or examples wherever possible to support points being made about development issues or locations.

**How do I get involved?**

Respondents will have a choice of ways to make their comments including answering questions via an online consultation platform (Commonplace) or sending written comments in by e-mail or by post.

Online form: <https://bromsgroveplan.commonplace.is/>

Email: [bromsgroveplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:bromsgroveplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

Post: Bromsgrove District Council, Strategic Planning and Conservation, Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B61 8DA

**How long does the consultation last?**

The consultation period will be open for comment for **from Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June until 5:00pm on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025.**