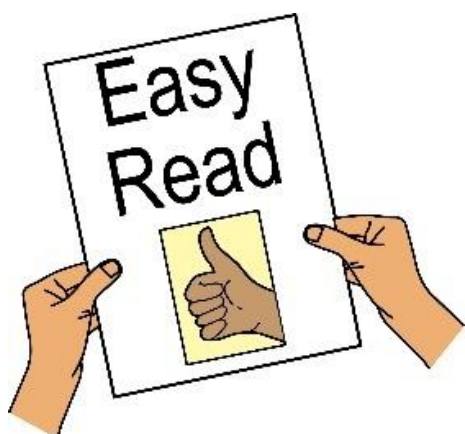




Guide to Local Plans

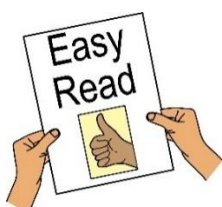
Easy Read Version

Part 1



Guide to Local Plans – Part 1

Local Plan: this is an important document made by local planning authorities. Local plans set out any developments that will happen in the future.

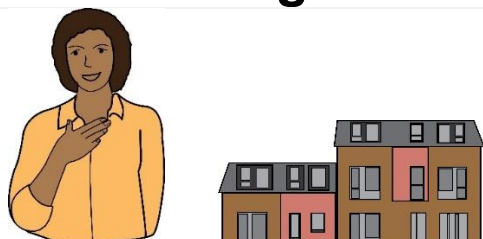


This is the Easy Read version of this document.



This is Part 1 of 2 of this document.

What is this guide about?



Most people only get involved in planning when a new **development** affects them.



But by then, lots of decisions have already been made.

Development: this means things being built in the area such as housing, green spaces and community spaces.



It's important to get involved early in Local Planning. This gives people and communities a chance to shape planning in their area.



This guide tells you:

- what a Local Plan is
- how it is made
- how you can take part in the process

1. The Local Plan



1a. What is it?

A Local Plan is an important document made by **local planning authorities**. Local plans set out any developments that will happen in the future.

Local plans are used in the United Kingdom.

Local planning authorities: this is the part of your local council that makes decisions about developments happening in your area.



They plan for things like:

- housing



- green spaces
- the economy
- community spaces
- **infrastructure**

Infrastructure: this means basic public services. For example, roads, public transport and electricity supplies. These things are really important for everyone to live well.



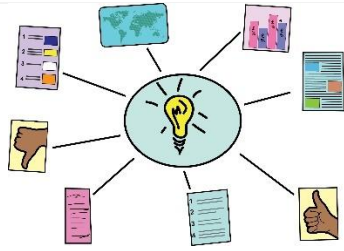
Local plans also help to:

- look after nature.
- care for the history of a place. For example, caring for important old buildings.

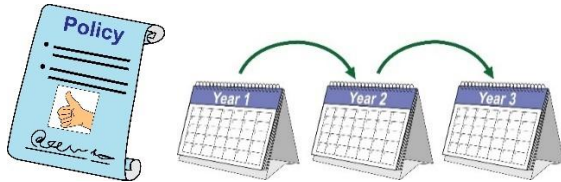


- encourage good design of places.
- deal with the effects of **climate change**.

Climate change: this means the Earth is getting hotter and the weather is changing because of pollution.

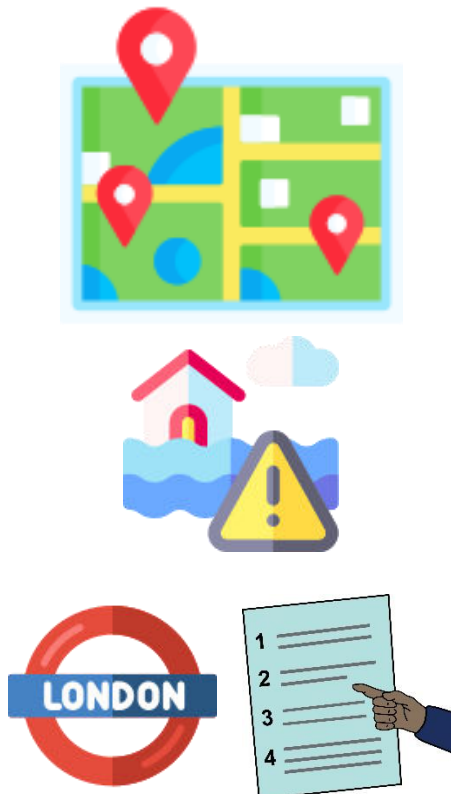


Local Plans can be 1 document or lots of documents. They can be about lots of different things. For example:



- **Strategic Policies.** These are long-term plans that set out a vision for the future. They set out long-term goals.

Policy: this means rules set out by the council or government.



- A Policies Map. This shows on a map what is planned for development and where.

They also include information on things like flood risk. This means how likely an area is to flood.

Policies Maps also point out areas highlighted in the London Plan.



- **Non-Strategic Policies.** These documents give plans for areas and neighbourhoods.

Or plans for types of development. For example, where blocks of flats will be built.

- **Area Action Plans** These are plans for specific locations. For example, planning to re-develop an old school.

These plans are optional. This means that Local Planning Authorities can decide if they need them or not.



A Local Plan is really important to help local planning authorities. It helps them to solve problems.

For example, it can:

- help how people travel.
- make sure development happens in the most suitable places.
- support high streets and town centres.
- help meet the needs of different groups in the borough in a fair way.

The Local Plan helps shape the future of communities.



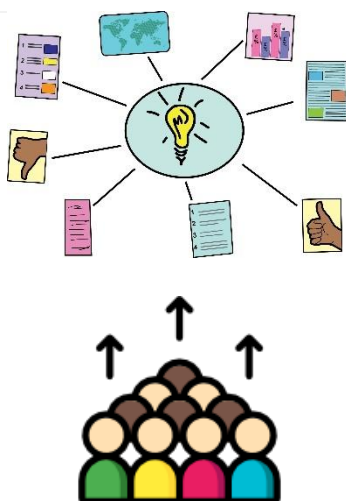
However, it does not:

- run shops.
- control waste collection.
- put limits on the prices of homes and buildings.
- make rules for businesses about things like employment.



5 Years

Local planning authorities must review their plans every 5 years and then make a new one. This is because lots of things can change in that time.

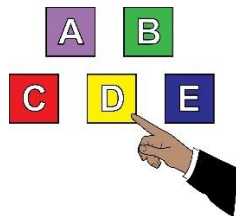


Local authorities must think about new information.

For example, there might be an increase in population. This means more people living in the area.



The plan must also agree with any new policies that the Government makes.



Making the new plan involves:

- Finding out about future needs and opportunities in the area
- Thinking about what the options are to meet these needs



- Involving local communities and businesses. Involving other people and organisations that are interested.



- Finding out information about **sustainability** and the housing market.



This is to help make decisions and to make sure the plan will be **sustainable**.

Sustainability or sustainable: this means making sure that what we are doing today does not affect the future badly. For example, not planning on doing things which will damage the environment in the future. Or making sure there is enough money to do things in the future.



A Local Plan must also fit in with other bigger plans and policies. For example:

- Plans happening across the country
- **The London Plan**
- **Neighbourhood Plans**
- Other long-term plans

The London Plan: this is the big main plan for development in London.

Neighbourhood Plan: these are plans that let local people decide how their area should develop.



Local planning authorities must keep the public and communities updated.

They must give updates about their planning activities and their Local Plan progress.



Residents can find information about this on their local planning authority's website.



By law, local planning authorities must make their Local Plans sustainable.

2. How does the Local Plan fit in with bigger plans?



Every local planning authority must follow rules for making their Local Plan. These rules are made by the Government and are the same across the United Kingdom.



They can also work with other authorities on the plan if they want.



The Government wants all areas of England to have a Local Plan that is up to date. This is to make sure every authority is planning in the same sustainable way.



Local Planning Authorities must decide about planning applications in the same way. This so they follow the rules in the Local Plan.



Local Planning Authorities can look at other issues in their areas, if they think this is appropriate.



They must follow the rules unless there is a very good reason not to. For example, if there is not enough money to do something.



15 Years

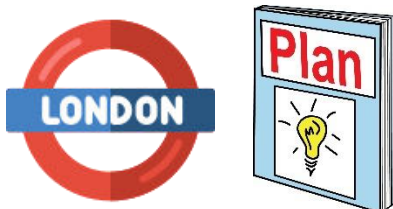


Policies must look at least 15 years into the future. This is so that local planning authorities can plan things in the best ways.

For example, planning housing or looking at what **residents** will need in the future.

Residents: this means the people that live in a borough.

2a. Making Local Plans for London Boroughs



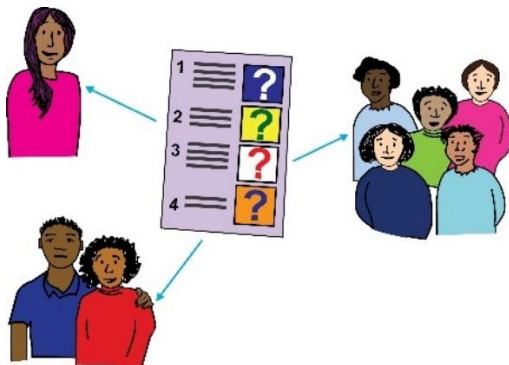
Local Plans must fit in with the Mayor's London Plan. The London Plan is the big main plan for development in London.



When writing the Local Plan, local planning authorities must keep checking with the Mayor. This is to make sure their plan fits with the London Plan.

This checking process takes about 2 years.

3. The stages of the Local Plan



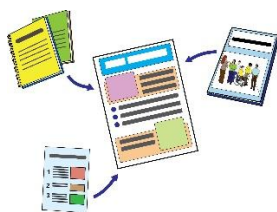
Here are the 4 stages of creating a Local Plan:

Stage 1 - Collecting information and Early Consultation.

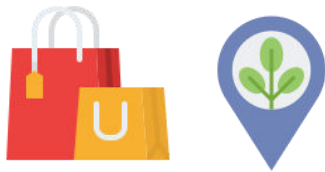
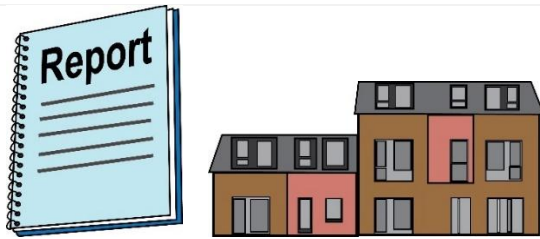
This is under Regulation 18.

Consultation: here, this means asking people to have their say about a development in their area.

Regulation: this is a rule or law made by the Government to control how things are done.

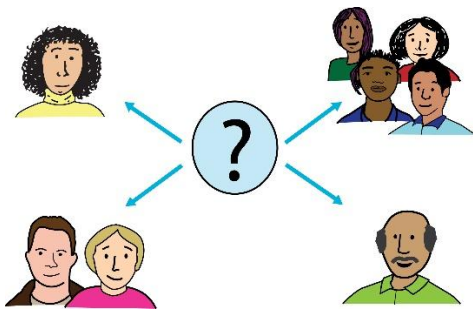


The Local Plan process starts with local authorities collecting lots of information.



Then they create reports on big issues such as:

- housing
- jobs
- retail – this means shops and shopping.
- environment
- landscape.



6 weeks

At this stage, the local planning authority will ask people to have their say. They will ask residents and all other people and organisations that are affected by the planning.

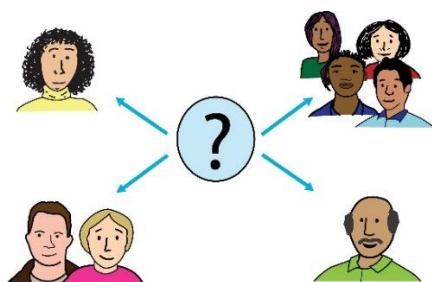
This consultation takes 6 weeks.



They ask residents for their views on the needs of local people. They will talk about possible development sites and areas that need protection.



This information helps to identify the big issues and what can be done about them. This is how the plan starts to take shape.



Stage 2 - Consultation stage. This happens before sending off the Local Plan to Inspectors

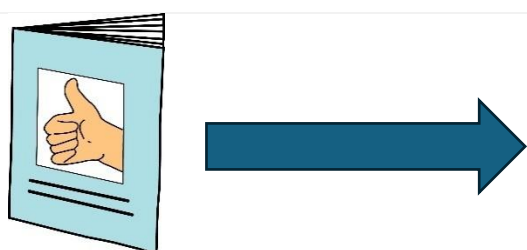
This is under Regulation 19.



When they have thought about all the information they collected, the Council publishes the first draft of the Local Plan.



The community then have 6 weeks to give feedback. If they need to make big changes, the Council might need to do more work on it with the community.



When everyone is happy with the new draft of the Local Plan, the Council sends it off to the **Planning Inspectorate.**

Planning Inspectorate: this is a part of the Government that looks at planning and development in the United Kingdom. They examine Local Plans.



Stage 3 – The final touches are added to the Local Plan. Then it has an Independent Examination. This is part of Regulation 22.

Independent Examination: this is an important step in the local planning process. The examination makes sure the plan meets the law. It is carried out by somebody outside of the local planning authority.



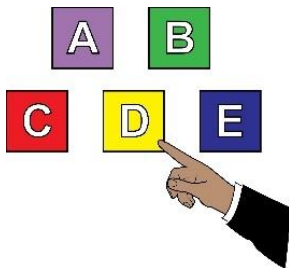
The final draft of the Local Plan then has an Independent Examination by a Planning Inspector.



The Inspector checks that the plan meets legal requirements. This means checking it does not break the law.

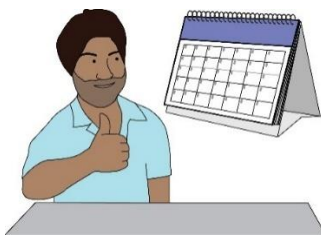


The inspector checks that the plan is '**sound**'.



This means:

- It meets the area's needs. It works with other authorities if needed.
- Local planning authorities have looked at the facts when making the plan.
- They have looked at what else could be done. They have looked at the best options.

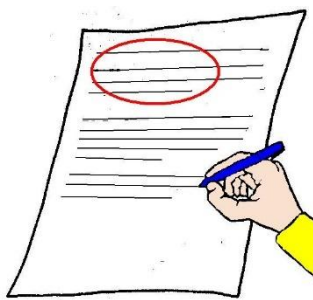


- All the work can be done in the time the Plan says. Everyone can work with it.
- It is in keeping with other policies in the United Kingdom. Especially policies about sustainability.



During the Independent Examination, interested people can still give in information. They might hold **public hearings**.

Public hearing: this is a formal, open meeting. Here, the public can learn about and share their opinions on local planning.

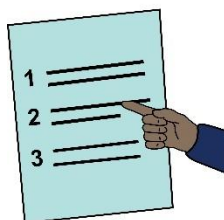


If they need to, the local authority can ask the Inspector for changes to the Plan. This is so they can approve it.



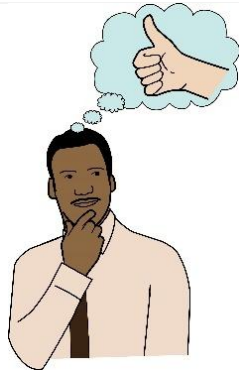
Stage 4 - The Inspector's Report and Accepting the Plan.

This is part of Regulation 24.



After the Independent Examination, the Inspector gives a report with **recommendations**.

Recommendation: here, this means suggestions about how to make local planning better.



If the plan is found 'sound', the Inspector will recommend that everyone accepts the report. But they will suggest some changes if needed.



The local planning authority can also make small changes if needed.



If the Inspector does not recommend the plan being accepted, the local planning authority might still accept it. This is if it makes the changes that the Inspector has suggested.



Once the Local Plan is completed, the Council accepts it at a full Council meeting. All the Borough's Councillors and the Mayor attend the meeting.



This then ends the process of making the Local Plan. Unless someone has a problem with it by law.



The Secretary of State has the power to get involved but this rarely happens.

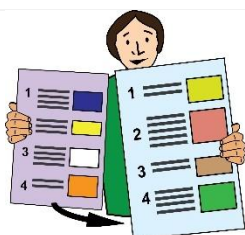
Secretary of State: this is a top government official in charge of a specific area, like health or education.



The finished Local Plan then becomes the main document which guides future development in the area.



Important! Until the Council accepts the Local Plan, the Plan can't be used for making decisions about developments.



This is the end of Part 1. Please go to Part 2 now.

This document was put into Easy Read by the Empower Team at People First.

You can visit their website here:

www.peoplefirstltd.com

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a voice for people with learning difficulties