

Summary of the Lichfield District Local Plan 2043: Issues and Options



Lichfield
District Council

Introduction

The government requires all local planning authorities to produce a local plan, which sets out the vision of their areas and identifies where and how development should take place.

The new local plan, to be known as the Local Plan 2043, will cover the period of 2022 to 2043, and will help to make sure that we provide homes, jobs, services, and facilities to meet the needs of our population in a sustainable way, while protecting and enhancing our districts important environment and heritage.

The first formal stage of the Local Plan 2043 is this Issues and Options consultation. The Issues and Options document begins to consider some of the key issues facing the district and several possible ways in which these could be addressed.

Have your say on the issues and options

We are now seeking your views on what you think the key issues facing the district are and how you think we might best address these. It includes approximately 30 consultation questions which are designed so that you can provide your views on the key issues and how these might be addressed.

The Issues and Options document does not allocate land nor provide preferences for where development will or won't be located in the new local plan.

You can help shape the future of Lichfield District by getting involved with the Local Plan 2043, the can view the consultation, make comments and register for alerts on all future consultations be using our dedicated consultation portal at: <https://lichfielddc-consult.objective.co.uk/kse> or scanning the QR code below.



The consultation is runs from 30 October 2024 until 23:59pm on 11 December 2024. All comments must be submitted to be considered. More information about the consultation and the Local Plan 2043 is available on our website at: <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/localplan2043>.

Comments can be submitted online via the portal at: <https://lichfielddc-consult.objective.co.uk/kse>.

Alternatively, you can email comments to developmentplans@lichfielddc.gov.uk or by writing to us at: Policy & Strategy, Lichfield District Council, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, WS13 6YU.

In addition to the full issues and options document which includes the 30 plus questions we have prepared this executive summary and a shorter survey of five key questions which you can complete should you not wish to provide comments on the full document. The issues and options short survey

is available for you to view and complete on the [consultation portal](#) or using the methods described above.

What is the local plan?

A local plan is a document prepared by a local planning authority, in this case Lichfield District Council, which sets out a vision and framework for the future development of the area. It will set out where certain types of development, including new homes, new businesses, new shops and facilities will be located, and includes policies which we will use when considering planning applications.

We have a current local plan, which consists of the [Local Plan Strategy](#) (which was adopted in 2015) and the [Local Plan Allocations](#) (which was adopted in 2019). However, these plans must be updated and continually revised to make sure they continue to be the most appropriate plan for the district. Our current local plan covers the period from 2008 to 2029 so is coming toward the end of its time. Government requires local plans to look forward at least fifteen years so we think the new local plan should cover the period from 2022 to 2043.

Once adopted the Local Plan 2043 will replace the current local plan. The new plan will need to reflect changes in the district and to national planning policy which has taken place since 2015. There are several changes to national policy which have taken place, and it is anticipated further significant change will take place in the future. It will be important for the local plan to take account of these changes when they happen.

Local plans are required to be based upon a large and detailed [evidence base](#) which must be kept up to date and inform the plan as it is drawn up. As we progress the new local plan the evidence will be reviewed and updated and published on the council's website for you to read and consider. The issues and options document details the extent of the evidence and when we expect parts of this to be completed.

What is the timetable for the local plan?

We are required to set out the estimated timetable for the production of our new local plan in a document called a [local development scheme](#). The timetable set out is as follows:

- Local Plan 2043: Issues and Options consultation (Regulation 18 consultation). **This document is this stage of the plan's process.**
- Local Plan 2043 publication consultation – to commence October/November 2025.
- Submission for examination – March/April 2026.
- Examination – July/August 2026.
- Adoption – January 2027.

This timetable will be continually kept under review and updated should this become necessary. For example, if changes to national planning policy mean we need to do additional work or change our approach then we would update the timetable to reflect this.

What is in the Local Plan 2043: Issues and Options?

The issues and options document is the first formal stage of consultation on our new local plan. You can read the [full document on our website](#); this summary has been prepared to provide an overview of the document to help you respond to the consultation or read those sections which interest you in more detail.

National and local context

Local plans must be prepared in accordance with national planning legislation, policy and guidance issued by the government. National planning policy and guidance is set out within the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) and the [Planning Practice Guidance](#) (PPG). A key test for any local plan is that it is consistent with national policy and guidance, it is really important that our new local plan does this.

Following the general election in July 2024 the government has undertaken a consultation on its proposed changes to the NPPF, which includes changes to the number of homes council's need to plan for and changes to how we consider the green belt. Our [response to the consultation](#) is available for you to read on our website. Whilst we await the government's response to the consultation we will continue work on the local plan and ensure we respond to any changes to national policy appropriately.

Locally, we published our [Lichfield District 2050 Strategy](#) in May 2024 which sets out our collective commitment to make Lichfield district the most confident, prosperous, active and green part of the country by 2050. The local plan is a key part of the delivery of our strategy and sets out that we will need to work together with the County Council, our town, city and parish councils, our partners, organisations, and our residents.

Spatial portrait of Lichfield District

To help us plan for the future of our district, we need a clear understanding of the characteristics of the district today, and the key issues which the local plan needs to address. We have prepared a [detailed spatial portrait](#) which has been published alongside this consultation and provides an in depth look at the characteristics of the district and its people.

Review of our adopted planning policies

We have undertaken a review of the policies within our current local plan to understand which are still broadly fit for purpose, which need to be updated, which need to be replaced and those which are no longer needed. The issues and options document presents this review and concludes that as we prepare the new local plan, many of our existing policies will need to be changed to a greater or lesser degree.

Evidence base review

Local plans must be based upon, and supported by, an extensive and robust evidence base. This evidence will inform the decisions which the local plan ultimately will need to make. We have an extensive [evidence base](#) which will continue to be updated as we progress our new local plan. Within the issues and options document, we have provided a review of existing evidence base to show where and when we think this needs to be updated.

Key issues and objectives

This is the key to the issues and options document and draws upon what we know about the district, the national and local context and identifies the key issues we think our new local plan will need to tackle. The issues we think need to be addressed are:

- Identifying sufficient sites to meet housing needs and consideration of wider unmet needs.
- Significant housing development has taken place within and around our city and some of our existing towns and villages.
- There is a lack of affordable homes to meet the needs of our residents.

- Our growing and changing population, including an increase in the number of older persons.
- Regeneration opportunities exist including in Burntwood town centre and Lichfield city centre and across other settlements.
- There is a perception that infrastructure delivery has not kept up with new development.
- We need to protect our heritage and historic assets.
- There is a perception that the quality and design of recent new development has been poor.
- Identifying sufficient sites to meet our employment needs.
- Significant numbers of residents commute outside of the district for higher salaried job opportunities than exist within it.
- Significant reliance on the car as a method of transport and a lack of sustainable transport options.
- Pockets of deprivation exist within the district.
- Lack of overnight and longer stays within the district for tourists.
- Health inequalities and high levels of obesity in parts of the district.
- Tackling and adapting to the impacts of climate change.
- Protecting of our natural environment, including sites of international, national, and local significance.

The issues and options document then proposes thirteen objectives for the new local plan under the four themes identified within Lichfield District 2050. The objectives we propose are:

Confident communities	Prosperous communities
<p>Objective 1: Meeting our housing needs.</p> <p>Objective 2: Delivery of affordable homes and meeting specialist housing needs.</p> <p>Objective 3: Delivery of appropriate infrastructure.</p> <p>Objective 4: Protecting our historic environment and assets.</p> <p>Improving the design of new development.</p>	<p>Objective 6: Meeting our employment needs.</p> <p>Objective 7: Enhancing the vitality of our centres.</p> <p>Objective 8: Providing diverse employment opportunities and reducing the number of people commuting outside of the district for work.</p> <p>Objective 9: Addressing pockets of deprivation.</p> <p>Objective 10: Enhancing the tourist economy.</p>

Active communities	Green communities
<p>Objective 11: Encouraging healthy lifestyles.</p>	<p>Objective 12: Tackling the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change.</p> <p>Objective 13: Protecting and promoting our natural environment.</p>

Each of the objectives is considered in greater detail within the issues and options document, where we set out what we know about the issue and how we could seek to try and address this.

How much and where should new development be located?

A key part of the issues and options document is to set out the types of development we need to plan for and the possible options we have over where that development could be located.

Housing

The Local Plan 2043 will need to include policies that plan for and provide the right number of new homes to meet our needs across the plan period. We are required by national policy to identify enough sites to meet our local housing need, the delivery and location of new homes is a key element of all local plans and can often be contentious.

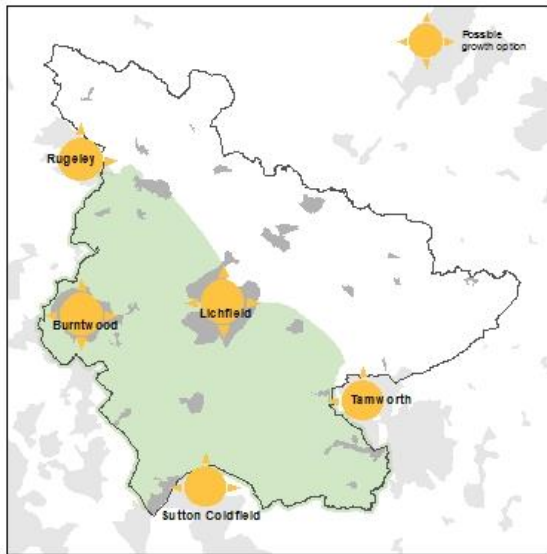
The starting point in knowing our local housing need is by using a ‘standard method’ which is set out by government in national policy and guidance. Government have recently consulted on changes to the ‘standard method’ which would significantly change the number of homes which would need to plan for, the table below shows the current local housing need and the possible figure if the governments consultation proposals are introduced.

Current local housing need	Potential local housing need
<p>289 homes a year</p> <p>6,069 homes between 2022 and 2043</p>	<p>753 homes a year</p> <p>15,813 homes between 2022 and 2043.</p>

We responded to the governments consultation and set out our concerns on the potential increase in our local housing need. You can read [our response on our website](#). Whilst there is currently some uncertainty over the total number of homes we will need to plan for, our evidence to date demonstrates that, we will need to identify some new sites in the district through our new local plan.

Where we choose to build new homes and where we choose not to is a key aspect of the spatial strategy of the new plan. At this stage we have not decided what the spatial strategy should be and are using the issues and options consultation to set out four possible spatial options for where we could build new homes and are asking for your opinions on these. The four options are set out below, along with some of their key opportunities and challenges.

Option 1: Town focused



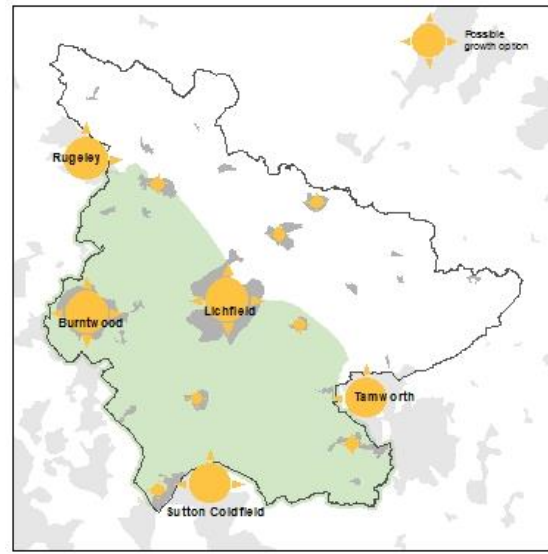
Opportunities

- Development takes place closest to where need arises.
- Development located closest to existing services, facilities, and infrastructure for new residents.
- Additional growth can support and result in improvements to existing services and facilities.

Challenges

- Significant growth, particularly of Lichfield City, to the east of Rugeley and north of Tamworth has taken place in recent years.
- Likely to require extensions to existing settlements, including possible implications for Green Belt.
- fewer options to deliver small and medium sized sites.
- Increased pressure on existing services, facilities, and infrastructure.
- Potential impact on our heritage and historic assets.

Option 2: Town and key village focused



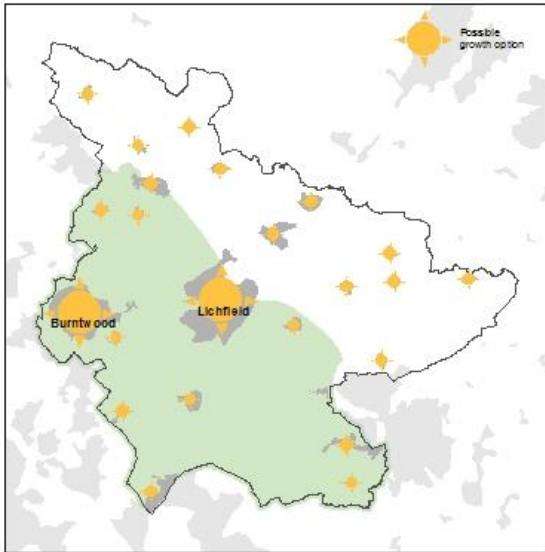
Opportunities

- Development takes place closest to where need arises.
- Supports existing rural services and facilities.
- Increased housing delivery across the district would result in greater choice.
- Maximise use of existing infrastructure by spreading development across a range of settlements.
- Opportunities to deliver small and medium sized sites.

Challenges

- Growth has already, or will continue, to take place in several of these settlements.
- Likely to require extensions to existing settlements, including possible implications for Green Belt at some settlements.
- Increased pressure on existing services, facilities, and infrastructure.
- Smaller sites have more limited ability to fund infrastructure improvements.

Option 3: Dispersed development



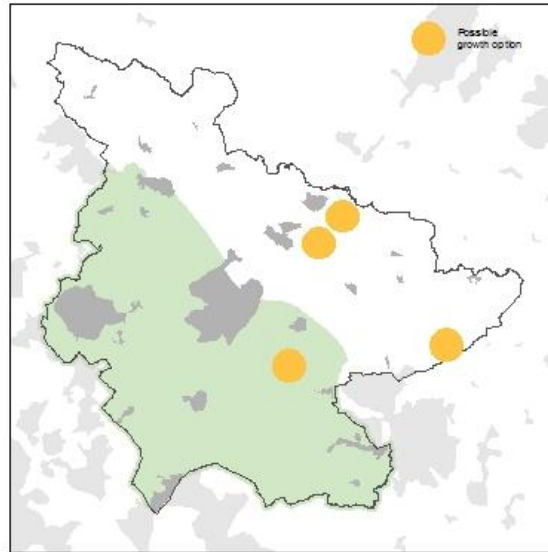
Opportunities

- Development takes place closest to where need arises including meeting rural housing needs.
- Supports existing rural services and facilities which can often be the most under threat.
- Increased housing delivery across the district would result in greater choice.
- Benefits of development including planning obligations spread across the district.
- Greater opportunities to deliver small and medium sized sites.

Challenges

- Increased reliance on private car as smaller settlements unlikely to benefit from sustainable transport.
- Likely to require extensions to existing settlements, including possible implications for Green Belt.
- Unlikely to result in major new infrastructure as sites are more widely dispersed.
- Limited services and facilities, unless improved, for new and existing residents.

Option 4: New settlement focused



Opportunities

- Reduces the pressure on existing settlements and infrastructure.
- Opportunities for major infrastructure provision in specific location.
- Development in accordance with garden city principles and place shaping.
- Can provide for housing need across multiple plan periods.
- Protects our heritage and historic assets.
- Can provide for a significant number of affordable.
- Potential to extend the availability of sites to meet our employment needs.

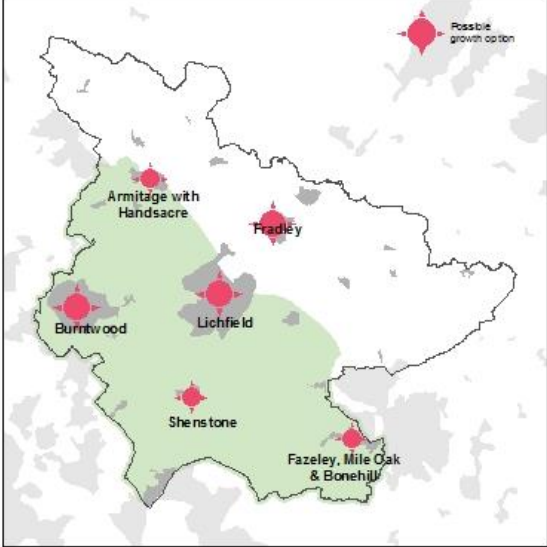
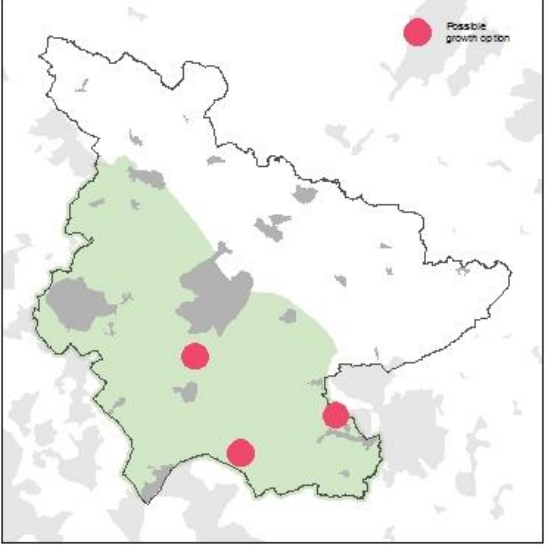
Challenges

- Such developments take longer to begin so homes may not be delivered until the later stages of a plan period and beyond.
- Require significant infrastructure which can significantly affect viability.
- Delivery of infrastructure elsewhere in the district likely to be more limited.
- Slower delivery rates due to the risk of market saturation.
- Limited opportunities to deliver small and medium sized sites unless undertaken with other options.

Employment

Much like the delivery of new homes, local plans are required to identify and allocate sufficient sites to meet its employment needs, be that for new office development, manufacturing space and distribution and warehousing. We are currently undertaking further work on our evidence base which will tell us how much land we need to identify within the new local plan.

Whilst there is uncertainty in respect of the total level of employment land which will need to be planned for, it is possible that additional sites beyond those already identified within our evidence will be needed to meet our development requirements. Much like with new homes, the location of new employment development is a key part of the new local plan’s spatial strategy. Whilst we have not at this stage decided where development should and shouldn’t be located, we consider there are two broad spatial options for the locating of new employment development. These are the redevelopment and expansion of existing employment areas such as those in Armitage with Handsacre, Burntwood, Fradley, Fazeley Shenstone and Lichfield, or the identification of new locations in the district. The two options are set out below, along with some of the opportunities and challenges presented.

Option 1: Existing employment areas	Option 2: new employment locations
	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of previously developed land in existing employment areas. • Development close to similar uses and makes best use of existing infrastructure. • Additional growth can assist the vitality of existing areas. • Create more job opportunities within the existing area. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pressure on existing services and facilities. • Potential that insufficient land is available within existing. 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of larger scale employment growth and contribute to meeting our needs. • Potential to deliver employment opportunities in proximity to the strategic transport network. • Significant development provides opportunities for significant infrastructure delivery. • Spreads the benefit of employment across wider parts of the district. • Could come forward alongside large scale residential development. <p>Challenges</p>

Option 1: Existing employment areas	Option 2: new employment locations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could lead to increased number of trips by less sustainable methods of transport. • Settlements without existing employment areas could stagnate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All possible options are located within the Green Belt. • May require significant infrastructure, in particular highways and access. • May impact the delivery of existing sites and previously developed sites. • Locations may be remote from existing communities which could consolidate less sustainable commuting patterns.

How can you engage with this consultation?

This summary document has been prepared to give you a flavour of the issues and options which we are consulting upon. If you want to read more on any of these areas, then the full [Local Plan 2043: Issues and Options](#) document is available on our website.

Within the document there is further detail on the elements described above and approximately 30 detail questions for you to answer should you wish. You can answer as many or as few of these as you wish.

For those note wishing to answer the detail questions within the full document we have also developed a short survey to accompany this consultation which consists of five key questions which can be answered on our website at the following: <https://lichfielddc-consult.objective.co.uk/kse>

The consultation is runs from 30 October 2024 until 23:59pm on 11 December 2024. All comments must be submitted to be considered. More information about the consultation and the Local Plan 2043 is available on our website at: <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/localplan2043>.

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