

SOUTHAMPTON CITY VISION

PREPARING OUR DEVELOPMENT PLANS

A Local
Development
Scheme for
Southampton

March 2025



SOUTHAMPTON
CITY COUNCIL

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PREPARING OUR DEVELOPMENT PLANS

A Local Development Scheme for Southampton

What is this document?

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all local planning authorities to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). In accordance with the Act, this document sets out how and when the Council will prepare its Development Plan Documents (DPDs). DPDs are the statutory components of the Development Plan; the statutory plan on which all planning applications in the city are decided.

The objectives of this document are:

- To meet the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; the Planning Act 2008; the Localism Act 2011; the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 and the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG);
- To accord with the Council's strategy for engagement as set out in the 'Involving you in Planning' document (2020);
- To present a plan that ensures a continued and up to date planning policy framework for Southampton; and
- To be accessible and user friendly for everyone.

Why is this document important for Southampton?

It is Southampton City Council's obligation to produce this document and to ensure it is updated regularly, in accordance with Government requirements. However, as the document is required to include details of the proposed Development Plan changes, as well as a timetable for the works, it is also a great starting point for the local community and other interested parties to find out more about the planning of the city and to keep track of progress.

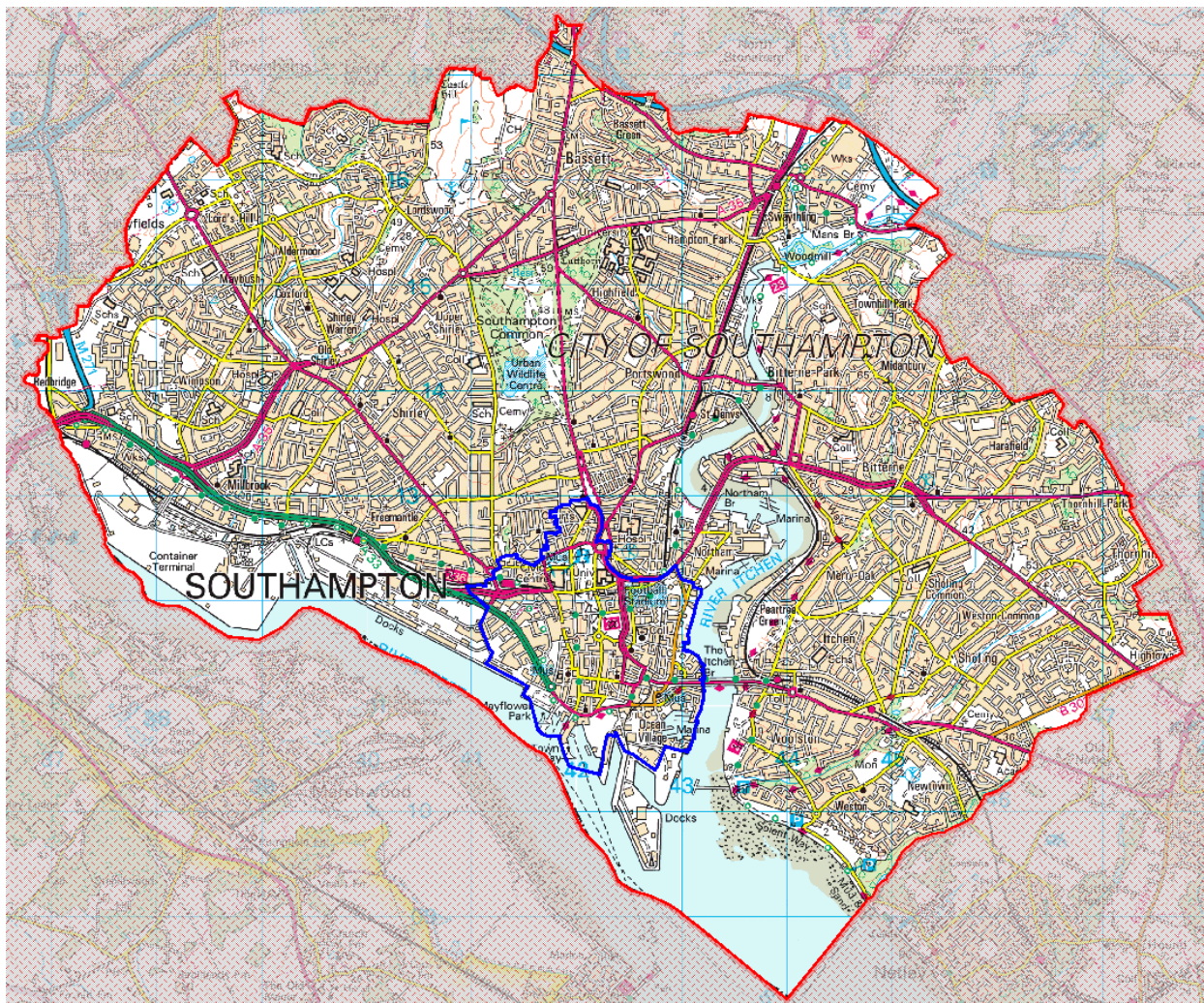
As a focal point in central southern England, and the principal city in south Hampshire, Southampton is an important regional location for growth and the development of new homes; additional employment opportunities; transport connections; as well as retail, leisure and education facilities. It is also the home of a globally important port, for both cruises and the transport of goods, and is a gateway to the Isle of Wight. It is therefore important that the Development Plan recognises all of the above and allows us to take advantage of any opportunities whilst promoting sustainable growth, protecting and enhancing the city's natural and historic environment whilst ensuring vibrancy and attractiveness is maintained.

However, planning issues often change over time and policies can sometimes prove ineffective in tackling new problems or aiding us to drive forward change or growth when new opportunities arise. It is therefore vital to update the Development Plan regularly and to ensure it is relevant to local planning issues. However, the Council also believes it is

important to keep this document up to date so that local people, businesses and other interested parties can stay properly informed about why, how and when we plan to make changes.

What is Southampton's Development Plan?

Southampton City Council's Development Plan comprises a series of documents which, as a whole, set out the aspirations for the city, the long-term strategic plans for Southampton, as well as a variety of other non-strategic planning policies to manage development within the city boundary (see Figure 1). The Development Plan is also what both the planning officers and planning committee consider development proposals against to ensure that we, as the local planning authority for Southampton, are making consistent decisions in the best interest of the city.



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Figure 1: Map of Southampton, including city boundary (red) and city centre boundary (blue)

What documents form the existing Development Plan for Southampton?

Southampton's Development Plan currently comprises the following five documents (four DPDs and a Neighbourhood Plan) as shown in Figure 2. Further details on each of these documents, and the areas they apply to, are provided below.

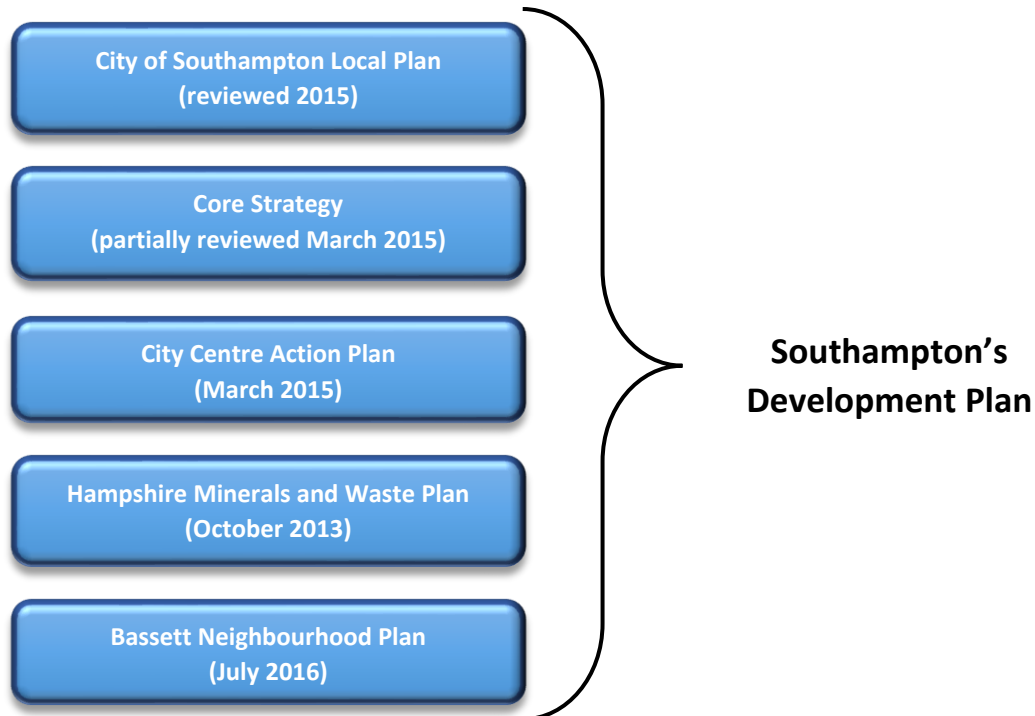


Figure 2: Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Plans that form Southampton's existing Development Plan

City of Southampton Local Plan March 2006 and Review 2015

The original Local Plan was adopted in 2006 to provide a land use framework for the entire city. A revised version of the Local Plan Review initially produced in 2010 when the Core Strategy was published and a list of 'saved' policies that remain in operation was also produced. A further review was produced in 2015 following the adoption of the City Centre Action Plan and Core Strategy Partial Review. The Amended Local Plan Review (March 2015) is therefore the latest version of this document and replaces parts of the original plan to align with Southampton's other adopted DPDs (listed below).

Core Strategy 2010 and its Partial Review March 2015

The original Core Strategy provided an overarching vision for Southampton to the year 2026, providing strategic policies for the city's economic development and spatial approach to planning. The 2015 Partial Review updated the document with three focussed changes that responded to altered priorities, more recent evidence and changing legislation. These were:

- Introduction of the national 'presumption in favour of sustainable development';

- A reduction of office and retail targets; and
- Changes to the biodiversity policy

City Centre Action Plan March 2015

This document was based upon the priorities set out in a masterplan undertaken in 2012. With a time horizon to 2026, the City Centre Action Plan (CCAP) has a vision and strategy for the city centre (see Figure 1 for city centre boundary).

The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013

This plan covers the administrative areas of Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council, Portsmouth City Council, New Forest National Park and the part of the South Downs National Park which falls within the administrative boundary of Hampshire County Council. It addresses the supply of minerals (e.g. for the construction industry), including the approach to safeguarding the mineral wharves in the city; waste management facilities (e.g. the need to increase recycling); and policies to protect the environment and communities (e.g. to ensure minerals and waste facilities manage issues such as traffic, noise and dust).

Bassett Neighbourhood Plan 2016

The Bassett Neighbourhood Plan was adopted by the Council on 20 July 2016, and runs up to 2029. It contains policies that seek to protect the green spaces, trees and the existing character in the ward of Bassett, acting to positively steer development and change in the area. It identifies high, medium and low density areas for housing in this ward with an emphasis upon the provision of family homes in response to identified need, managing traffic and controlling the growth of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

What changes are proposed for Southampton's Development Plan?

As explained above, and depicted in Figure 2, the current Development Plan for Southampton comprises five documents (four DPDs and a Neighbourhood Plan). However, the Local Plan, Core Strategy and City Centre Action Plan have now become outdated, and we would like to make the Development Plan easier to comprehend and more user-friendly. As such, we are planning to combine the types of policies covered by these three outdated DPDs into a singular document – a new Local Plan called 'Southampton City Vision' (see Figure 3).

The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan is also undergoing a partial update in partnership with neighbouring Councils. This process is led by Hampshire County Council. The partial update was submitted by the Hampshire Authorities under Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 in July 2024. The examination hearings were held by an independently appointed Planning Inspector in February 2025. Further details on the progress of the partial review update are included in Hampshire County Council's Local Development Scheme on the [Hampshire County Council website](#).

Finally, the Bassett Neighbourhood Plan is now due for review as more than five years have passed since the plan was first published in July 2016. This review will need to be led by the Bassett Neighbourhood Forum, with support and guidance from the Council, and is expected to commence once the new Southampton City Vision is further advanced. This will help to ensure that the plan meets the prescribed basic conditions. This includes the need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies and priorities of the emerging Local Plan.

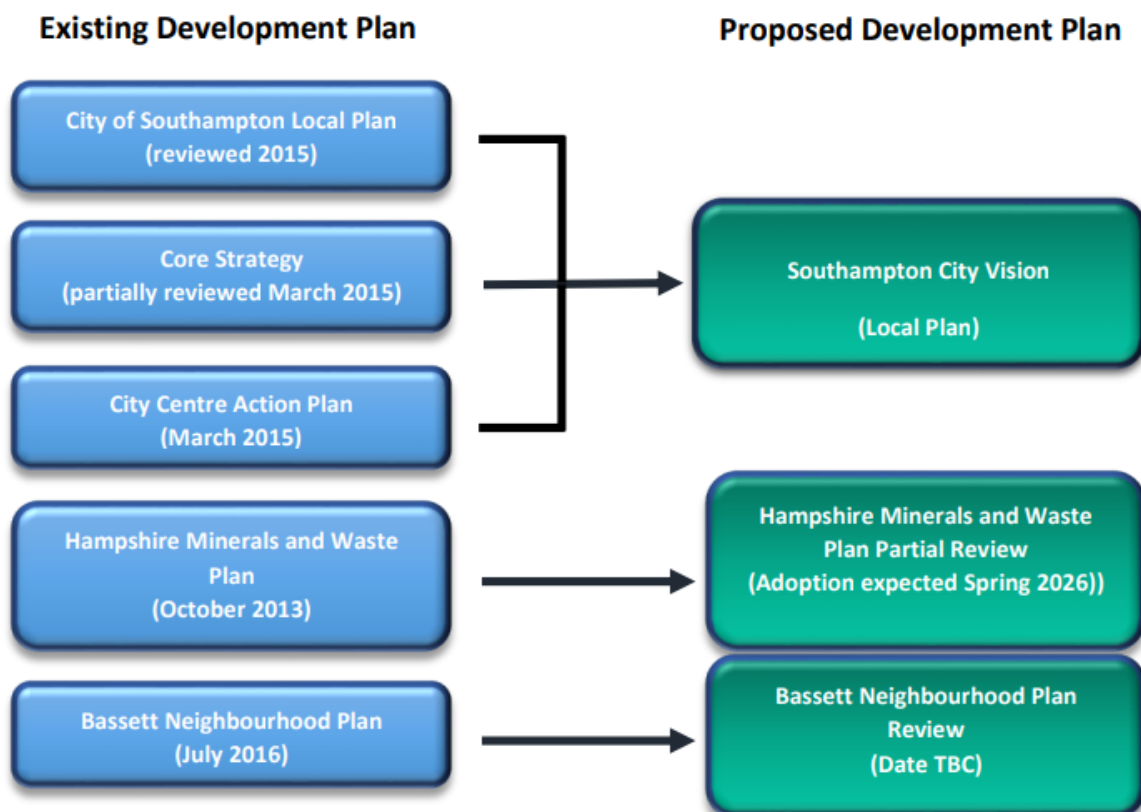


Figure 3: Existing Development Plan vs. Proposed Development Plan

The above sets out the documents that comprise the Council’s current Development Plan (in blue) and the documents that will replace these (in green) in order to assist in the effective management of development across the city. In light of this, the LDS (this document) will be updated regularly to ensure that there is proper and timely communication of the Council’s planned changes and the timescales for the production of any new documents.

The new Local Plan, ‘Southampton City Vision’

The future development needs of Southampton will be set out in this long-term strategy to manage development, protect the environment and promote sustainable communities. It will set out how Southampton’s growth needs will be met and will include policies for assessing planning applications and new development proposals across the whole of the city.

In developing this new Local Plan, we have the chance to take a fresh look at the challenges and opportunities in the city and to think about where the Council might be able to update planning policy to help tackle or take advantage of certain matters. This new document will also plan for Southampton's continuing growth and ensure that the new homes, businesses, jobs, shops and infrastructure the city needs can be delivered at the right time and in the right places.

Appendix 1 sets out the timetable of milestones in the plan's preparation and estimated dates for evidence gathering, the Regulation 19 proposed submission stage, submission of the plan for examination and final adoption by the Council. Since the last LDS was published in November 2022 there have been a number of matters that have affected the Council's ability to progress the Local Plan in accordance with the previously published timetable. Whilst progress has been made on the Southampton City Vision Local Plan, the Government has introduced or stated imminent major changes to national planning policy and practices which have caused interruption to the programme.

More specifically, new versions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) were published in 2023 and 2024 which have needed to be reviewed and acknowledged or adhered to within the Local Plan preparation to ensure the emerging plan is compliant with the most up to date NPPF. There has also been significant uncertainty around changes to the plan-making system as a whole following proposed changes in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA). There have been several Government consultations on detailed matters relating to planning reform which have taken significant officer time to respond to and some expected changes have also increased the risk of abortive costs.

Given the Council's recent financial situation, it has been considered necessary to review the commission of some major evidence documents in order to ensure these are not abortive costs once new secondary legislation and guidance is published. It should be noted that this secondary legislation and guidance, related to the LURA, is needed by planners to ensure a compliant "new style plan" to be delivered. However, Government has confirmed that this is not expected to be published until Summer/Autumn 2025. These documents, or parts of them, were expected to be published in Autumn 2024 under the Conservative Government but following the change to a Labour Government in July 2024, publication is now expected in the Summer/Autumn 2025.

How will the Council ensure that the Local Plan milestones are reached effectively and on time?

To deliver the programme as set out in the timetable (Appendix 1) it will be important to:

- Produce a sound and robust evidence base that responds to the requirements of the new plan-led system;
- Ensure stakeholders and the community are involved in the process, in accordance with the 'Involving you in Planning' document (2020);
- Ensure that we deliver on all legislative requirements including the forthcoming Government planning reforms;

- Review and allocate sufficient resources (staffing and financial) to carry out the required tasks;
- Review and monitor work undertaken (e.g. through updates to the Annual Monitoring Report); and
- Assess risk, in terms of both mitigation and contingency

The Council will also keep this document, and the relevant planning documents, under regular review, amending its programme of work as necessary to ensure the continuation of sound planning strategies and policies for Southampton.

In particular, secondary legislation linked to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023) is expected to be published by Government in Summer/Autumn of 2025. As soon as this is available, the Strategic Planning team intends to undertake a review of the new regulations and guidance related to plan-making and ensure this document is updated to reflect any necessary changes, particularly for the emerging Southampton City Vision Local Plan, linked to national planning reform.

How will the Council report on the progress of the Development Plan changes?

Southampton City Council Website

The Planning Policy webpages on the website will be kept up to date throughout the development of any new development plan documents, including those associated with the new 'Southampton City Vision' Local Plan. We will use these pages to communicate overall progress, provide information on any consultations or engagement activities that are being undertaken, publish any background documents that will support the plan and to publish the plan itself.

Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)

The AMR is a document that is required to be produced annually in order to provide monitoring updates on a range of planning matters and measure the effectiveness of the Council's planning policies. This document will update on progress towards any milestones set out in the 'Preparing our Development Plans' document and identify whether or not any of the proposed timescales require adjustment.

APPENDIX 1 – SOUTHAMPTON CITY VISION LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE

Date	Milestone	Description
March 2025 – December 2026	Produce Technical Reports for Evidence Base	Stakeholder engagement, refining options and writing up the pre-submission Plan factoring in the Government’s planning reforms
December 2026	Publish Pre-Submission Plan	To be published under Regulation 19 along with a proportionate evidence base which will factor in the Government’s planning reforms
	CONSULTATION: Pre-Submission Plan	
January 2027 – June 2027	Finalise Evidence Base / collate submission materials	Feedback outcome of consultation / finalise any outstanding areas of the evidence base if necessary
June 2027	Publish and Submit Final Plan to Planning Inspectorate (PINS)	Submission materials to be collated / Planning Inspector will be appointed to examine the submitted Local Plan
September 2027	Adoption of the Southampton City Vision Local Plan	Examination period and outcomes leading towards final adoption estimated to take three months from submission