



Title of meeting:	Cabinet / Full Council
Date of meeting:	23 June 2026 & 14 July 2026
Subject:	The Future Portsmouth Plan: Notice of intention to commence local plan preparation
Report by:	Lucy Howard, Head of Planning Policy
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Hugh Mason, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy & City Development
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	Yes
Full Council decision:	Yes

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek authorisation for the formal commencement of a new Local Plan for Portsmouth entitled the Future Portsmouth Plan (FPP). This will be a new style Local Plan, which will be prepared in line with the new plan making system provided by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2002⁴ (as amended by Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023¹); this came into force earlier this year. A new set of regulations namely the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026² provide the regulatory framework for implementing the new plan making system.
- 1.1.2 This report explains the basics of the new plan making system and the advantages of the City Council preparing a new style Local Plan. It explains the risks of doing so at a time of great uncertainty with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), devolution with the creation of a new Strategic Authority for Hampshire and the Solent and a new plan making system which is having obvious teething problems.
- 1.1.3 This report addresses the principle of preparing a new Local Plan and goes through the process of doing so. It does not explore the content of the new Local Plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet agree to recommend to Full Council that it:

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2026/186/contents/made>



1. Approves the commencement of plan making and the publication of the Council's formal Notice of Intention to Commence the Future Portsmouth Local Plan as set out in Appendix 1 on 14 July 2026.
2. Approves the publication of the Future Portsmouth Plan timetable as set out in Appendix 2 of this report on 14 July 2026.
3. Delegates authority to approve monthly and progress updates to the Local Plan timetable to the Assistant Director for Planning & Economic Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy & City Development.
4. Delegates authority to approve the required documents and statements for Gateway 1 to the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy & City Development.'
5. Delegates authority to approve the required documents and statements for Gateways 2 and 3 to the Assistant Director for Planning & Economic Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy & City Development.
6. Delegates authority to publish and submit the required documents and statements for Gateways 1, 2 and 3 to the Assistant Director for Planning & Economic Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy & City Development.
7. Delegates authority to approve all scoping consultations on the Future Portsmouth Plan and its Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Assistant Director for Planning & Economic Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy & City Development.
8. Delegates authority to approve the consultation on the content and evidence of the Future Portsmouth Plan to the Assistant Director for Planning & Economic Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy & City Development.
9. Instructs officers to report to Cabinet and Full Council for approval the statutory consultation on the proposed Future Portsmouth Plan.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Government has introduced a new system of plan making with the intention of making it more streamlined and efficient. The ambitious intention is that it will take a local planning authority only 30 months from the commencement of plan making to the adoption of a new Local Plan. The legal and regulatory framework for preparing a new-style Local Plan is set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026.
- 3.3** The preparation of a new style Local Plan has a number of advantages for the city. Starting work on the FPP will help build confidence with stakeholders and landowners/developers of the Council's commitment to active plan making and plan-led development. This is particularly important for the examination of the Portsmouth Local Plan where there are some current unknowns such as the IROPI (Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest) Opinion at Tipner West. A new lawful Opinion would be addressed in the new Local Plan.
- 3.4** This would be a new style Local Plan and thus different to the Portsmouth Local Plan³ which is currently at examination and due to be adopted in 2027. The

³ <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/development-and-planning/planning-policy/portsmouth-local-plan/>



Portsmouth Local Plan is called a legacy Local Plan, because it was prepared under the previous system of plan making and regulations. The new style Local Plan will be prepared more quickly and should not contain many City-wide development management policies as these are expected to be covered by the new National Development Management Policies set out in the soon to be published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- 3.5 Members will be engaged at all stages of plan making for the FPP. This will be principally through engagement with the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy & City Development (PP&CD), who meets weekly with the Assistant Director for Planning & Economic Growth and the Head of Planning Policy. The opposition spokespeople are invited and are welcome to attend these weekly meetings. There will be workshops and briefings for all Members at key stages of the plan making process. Starting work on the FPP is in line with the Corporate Plan 2024-2026⁴, which is informed by the Imagine Portsmouth 2040 Vision⁵.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The diagram forming figure 1 of this report illustrates the sequence of key local plan-making steps required as part of the new system.
- 4.2 The City Council is at the very beginning of the plan making process with the FPP. Members are being asked to approve the Notice of Intention to Commence the FPP as set out in Appendix 1 of this report and its timetable set out in Appendix 2. Over the summer there will be two scoping consultations on the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the potential content of the FPP. These will run at the same time as a Call for Sites.
- 4.3 Four months later the FPP will pass through Gateway 1, which marks the official commencement of plan making and starts the thirty-month countdown to adoption. The Council will then consult the public on the proposed Local Plan content and evidence including a vision and spatial strategy. Officers will summarise the feedback from that consultation and incorporate its outcomes where appropriate into the content of the new Local Plan.
- 4.4 In winter 2027, the FPP will pass through Gateway 2, which is the Council's first formal submission of documents to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on the FPP for observations and advice. Providing that is successful, the Council will then update the plan as needed in response to the PINS observations and advice at Gateway 2 and we will consult the public on the full Plan. The decision to run this consultation will be made by Full Council.
- 4.5 In summer 2028, the FPP will pass through Gateway 3, which is the Council's second formal submission of documents to PINS on the FPP. If that is successful, the Council will submit the FPP for examination. If the examination

⁴ <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/56.308-Council-Plan-2024-accessible-aa.pdf>

⁵ <https://imagineportsmouth.co.uk/the-vision/>

is concluded satisfactorily and in a timely fashion, the FPP will be adopted in April 2029. This will also be a decision made by Full Council.



Figure 1: Key local plan-making steps

- 4.6 The dates of the key milestones are set out in table 1 and the full details of the timetable are set out in Appendix 2. If approved by Full Council, the full timetable will be published on the City Council's website.

Local Plan Milestones	Target Date
Notice of intention to commence local plan preparation	July 2026
Scoping consultation	Notice published: August 2026 Representations to be received by: September 2026
Gateway 1 Self-assessment summary published	November 2026
Local plan content and evidence consultation	Notice published: May 2027 Representations to be received by: June 2027
Gateway 2 observations & advice sought from PINS	December 2027
Proposed FPP consultation	Notice published: March 2028 Representations to be received by: April 2028
VESTING DAY FOR THE PROVISIONALLY TITLED SOUTH EAST HAMPSHIRE	
Gateway 3 observations & advice sought from PINS	July 2028
Submission of local plan to Secretary of State	August 2028
Adoption of local plan	April 2029

Table 1: Key milestones for the Future Portsmouth Plan

- 4.6 There are a number of significant risks and uncertainties for the timely progression of the FPP to adoption, which this report will address in turn and say how they will be mitigated.
- 4.7 Firstly, LGR means that the administrative area covered by Portsmouth City Council is likely to be included in the new unitary authority provisionally titled South East Hampshire from vesting day on 01 April 2028. This will be just before Gateway 3 in the proposed timetable. It will need to be decided whether to progress the FPP to adoption or to start plan making for the new authority. The published guidance on giving notice of plan making states that the local planning authority needs to re-start the plan preparation process if the geographical area of the plan changes.
- 4.8 Secondly, devolution is happening with the Statutory Instrument for the new Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) of Hampshire & the Solent recently signed and the new authority launching in July. At the same time as the Council consults on the FPP (spring 2028) it will need to invite the MCCA to comment on whether the FPP is in general conformity with the Spatial Development Strategy for Hampshire and the Solent. However, this should only be required if the Spatial Development Strategy is operative by that date, which is currently considered to be unlikely.

- 4.9 Thirdly, there are a number of problems with the legislation and regulations relating to the new plan making system. The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act⁶ 2004 has been updated and now states at section 15C 2) that 'only one local plan may have effect in relation to a local planning authority's area at one time'. This means that after vesting day in April 2028 only one local plan in one local planning area can be used in the determination of planning applications. This raises issues for both emerging and adopted local plans in all the new unitary authorities. We have discussed this with officers at MHCLG, who said that they were aware of the issue and that transitional arrangements may be introduced. As a general comment on the new plan making system, officers are encountering a number of teething problems not least the feasibility of hitting the 30-month target for adoption. Officers at the City Council are working closely with officers at MHCLG, the Planning Advisory Service and other local planning authorities to resolve the teething problems and share emerging best practice in plan making
- 4.10 Fourthly, there is the risk that people will get confused by the City Council starting work on a new style Local Plan before the emerging Portsmouth Local Plan is adopted. The Council will need to take care with its messaging in order to explain the two plan making processes that will run in parallel for a short time. This will be particularly important for the two scoping consultations and Call for Sites that will take place this summer. There may also be confusion with the new Minerals & Waste Plan that the City Council as one of the Hampshire authorities is about to adopt. The FPP will not incorporate minerals & waste.
- 4.11 Fifthly, there will be obvious resourcing issues arising from running the examination of the Portsmouth Local Plan and starting plan making on the FPP. Examinations are very intense periods of plan making as are public consultations. There is an experienced Project Management Officer working closely with the Planning Policy team to advise on resourcing. Going forward, officers are keen to get both examination experience and experience of the new plan making system. Recruitment and retention of local authority planners is problematic, but it is positive that recruitment into two recent vacancies in the team have been successful.
- 4.12 A comprehensive risk register is being drawn up with the Project Management Officer to support the preparation of the FPP. This will be reviewed regularly by a new FPP Board made up of senior managers from across the City Council including Legal, Finance and Corporate Strategy. Great care will be taken that no background study or evidence or model or computer system is commissioned by the City Council that would be unusable after vesting day for provisionally titled South East Hampshire. Discussions are underway with planners who currently work in the other local authority areas that will be covered by provisionally titled South East Hampshire. This will ensure that that the methodologies for emerging evidence-based studies on development potential and other matters such as biodiversity are aligned.

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>



- 4.13 The new plan making system requires local planning authorities to regularly review their local plan timetable. This can result in both monthly and progress updates to the Local Plan timetable. These will all be discussed with the Portfolio Holder for PP&CD at regular informal meetings.

5. Integrated impact assessment

- 5.1 An Integrated impact assessment will be prepared iteratively to support the preparation of the FPP.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The FPP will be prepared in line with the legal and regulatory framework for new-style Local Plan set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026.

7. Director of Finance's comments

- 7.1 The Minister of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government awarded Portsmouth City Council the grant sum of £108,474 from the Local Plan Implementation Fund in March 2026. This funding was provided to support authorities that are committed to bringing a local plan forward early in the new plan making system and helping to ensure good progress is being made. This involved a commitment by the City Council to publish a Notice of Intention to commence Local Plan preparation by 30 June 2026 and publishing a Gateway 1 self-assessment by 31 October 2026. Although there will be a two-week slippage in meeting both milestones this has been discussed with MHCLG.
- 7.2 The Government funding will be useful to kick start the plan making process. However, plan making is expensive. Due to the risks set out above great care will be taken that no study or computer system is commissioned by the City Council that would be unusable after vesting day for the provisionally titled South East Hampshire.

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Signed by:

Appendices:

1. Notice of Intention to Commence the Future Portsmouth Local Plan
2. Timetable for the Future Portsmouth Plan



Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55
Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2026/186/contents/made
Emerging Portsmouth Local Plan	https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/development-and-planning/planning-policy/portsmouth-local-plan/
Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by:



Appendix 1: Notice of intention to commence local plan preparation



Notice of intention to commence local plan preparation

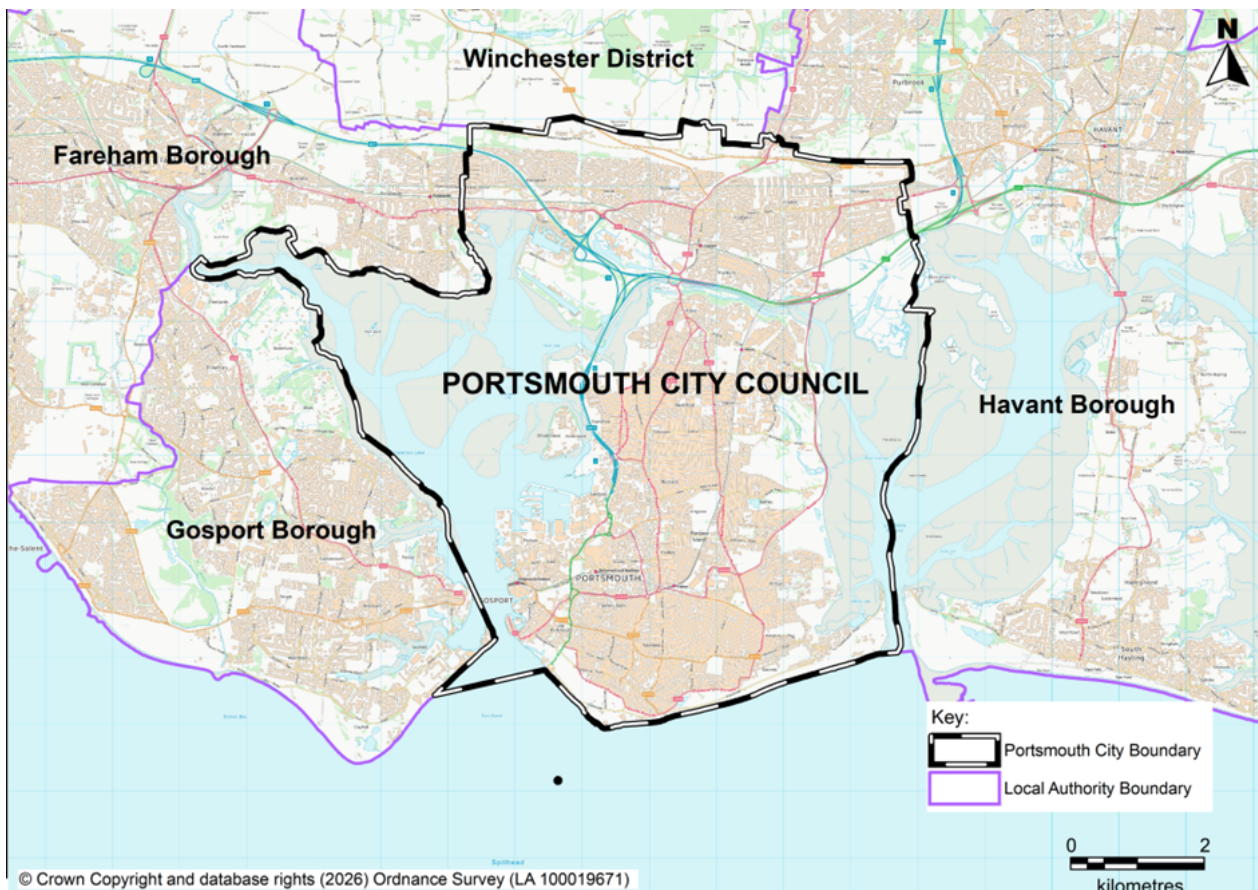
Portsmouth City Council as local planning authority hereby gives notice under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 of its intention to prepare a new local plan to be entitled: the Future Portsmouth Plan.

This notice was published on XX July 2026.

The local plan timetable for the Future Portsmouth Plan can be found at the following webpage: INSERT WEBLINK

The local plan timetable shows that the Council will start the 30-month plan preparation process (Gateway 1) in November 2026.

The Future Portsmouth Plan will cover the administrative area of Portsmouth City. The boundary and the geographical area it will cover is shown on the map below.





Appendix 2: The timetable for the Future Portsmouth Plan (attached as separate appendix)