

North Somerset Council preparing updated Local Plan

9:43am - 24 September 2024



The council is updating its draft Local Plan to identify potential new locations for development in North Somerset, to help meet the government's new higher housing target for the district of 23,805 new homes over 15 years.

At the end of July, the government announced proposed changes to planning rules which significantly increases the number of new homes required in North Somerset. Read more in our previous news release: <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/news/north-somerset-council-reviewing-local-plan>

The council is now working towards identifying where additional development is possible at sustainable locations across North Somerset, outside areas at risk of flooding or other significant constraints.

The council will be assessing potential locations for new development using the following hierarchy:

1. Development that maximises urban capacity, focusing on previously developed land and reviewing densities.
2. Development at the towns (outside the Green Belt).
3. Development at the larger, most sustainable villages (outside the Green Belt).

4. Development in the 'Grey Belt' in sustainable locations. The government defines the Grey Belt as Green Belt which is either brownfield or makes a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes. The council is reviewing the Green Belt in North Somerset to identify which areas meet this definition.
5. Development in the Green Belt adjacent to Bristol and at the towns.
6. Development in the Green Belt at the larger, most sustainable villages.

North Somerset Council will be consulting on the potential locations to address the government's new housing target in early 2025. This will need to take account of delivery and infrastructure issues, such as strategic transport improvements and the provision of other infrastructure.

After reviewing feedback, the council will amend the draft Local Plan and run a final round of consultation later in 2025, before submitting the plan for examination by an independent inspector.

Councillor Mark Canniford, North Somerset Council's executive member who is responsible for spatial planning, placemaking and economy, said: "With the new government's significantly higher housing target of 23,805 new homes over 15 years, we now have to find space for an extra 8,530 homes over the plan period.

"And as well as new homes, it's vital we have the infrastructure, jobs and facilities in place to support this extra development. We will be looking to the government to help deliver the investment and policies to help us to do this.

"This is an enormous challenge and will result in new development being required in many new locations across North Somerset.

"Around 85% of land in North Somerset is at risk from flooding, part of the Mendip Hills landscape, high-quality Green Belt or protected in other ways for environmental or heritage reasons.

"With this in mind, we'll try to maximise development in our urban areas as much as we can. However, the government have been clear that we need to deliver their housing target, even if that means development in the Green Belt.

"This will be a last resort, but because we have to find space for so many extra houses, this may be our only option in some cases.

"All our communities have a role to play here and should prepare themselves for potentially seeing more development in their area. We want to work closely with them on this. Please do get involved in the consultations next year and look out for further updates from us."

For more information on the Local Plan, visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan2040