

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 15 September 2025

Report Title

Local Development Scheme

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out a programme for the preparation, adoption and review of Rotherham Local Plan documents. The report outlines an updated LDS to reflect the revised National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024 and the significantly increased housing target for Rotherham, which necessitates a new Local Plan.

Recommendations

That Cabinet recommends to Council that the Local Development Scheme be adopted.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Rotherham Local Plan: Local Development Scheme
- Appendix 2 Equality Part A – Screening
- Appendix 3 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

[The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

[Rotherham Local Plan 2013 – 2028](#)

[Local Development Scheme \(Council Meeting 11 September 2024, minute 58 refers\)](#)
[Planning overhaul to reach 1.5 million new homes](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Local Development Scheme

1. Background

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires local planning authorities to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS sets out a programme for the preparation, adoption and review of the development plan documents that comprise the Rotherham Local Plan.
- 1.2 The LDS is not a development plan document; it does not include any policies or allocate sites for development. It is a programme that sets out the development plan documents that the Council will progress to adoption, with a timetable and milestones for each document. It also includes a risk assessment.
- 1.3 The LDS was last revised in July 2024 (Cabinet 29/07/24, minute 30 and Council Meeting 11/09/24, minute 58 refer). The timetable updated the milestones for the Core Strategy Partial Update and included the South Yorkshire Joint Waste Plan as a new development plan document. The Council then consulted on the Core Strategy Partial Update between August and September 2024.
- 1.4 The Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and new “standard method” to calculate the housing target for local authority areas in December 2024. This new target is now mandatory. The housing target for Rotherham has more than doubled from 544 to 1,111 new homes a year.
- 1.5 Officers had an advisory visit from the Planning Inspectorate in January 2025 to explore options for continuing the Core Strategy Partial Update. However, given the significant uplift to Rotherham’s housing target and the likely changes to the distribution of growth around the Borough this implies, the Inspector’s clear advice was to prepare a complete new Local Plan under the new plan-making system. Continuing with the Core Strategy Partial Update would result in a significant risk of the Local Plan not being found sound during the Examination in Public by a planning inspector and would therefore not be fit to be adopted by the Council, resulting in abortive work, wasted time and considerable expense.
- 1.6 The updated LDS therefore replaces the Core Strategy Partial Update and sets out a timetable to produce a new Local Plan. This course of action is unavoidable, given the Government’s changes to the NPPF and the imposition of a much higher housing target on Rotherham.
- 1.7 The Planning and Infrastructure Bill published in March 2025 introduces Spatial Development Strategies (SDS), to be prepared by combined authorities. The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) will be responsible for preparing the SDS for South Yorkshire, in conjunction with the constituent local authorities. Local plans must be in general conformity with the SDS.

1.8 The Council is working with the other South Yorkshire authorities of Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield to prepare a new Joint Waste Plan, to replace the Plan adopted in 2012. Work is ongoing to reconsider the scope and content of the Joint Waste Plan and its relationship with the emerging South Yorkshire SDS, given the strategic nature of waste planning. Due to this new requirement, it is not possible for the LDS to give a timetable to prepare a Joint Waste Plan at present.

1.9 The updated LDS is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Approval of the LDS is sought to comply with Planning legislation, to enable the preparation of a new Local Plan that provides an up-to-date planning policy framework for the Borough's future growth and development.

2.2 It is important that the Council adopts a realistic and achievable programme for the new Local Plan. The process of adopting the plan will involve examination by the Planning Inspectorate; one of the legal compliance checks by the Inspector is that the document has been produced in conformity with the timetable set out in the LDS.

2.3 The LDS does not cover the detailed content of the new Local Plan or other Local Plan documents nor the process for preparing and consulting on them. Any future draft documents will be subject to separate reports requiring Cabinet or Council approval prior to public consultation, submission and adoption.

2.4 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance envisages regular updates to local development schemes, usually annually. Progress against the timetable in the LDS will be monitored, along with emerging legislation and regulations that may impact the Local Plan, and any updates considered in due course.

2.5 Milestones for the new Local Plan are summarised below:

New Local Plan	
Notice of Plan commencement	October 2026
Gateway 1 (self-assessment)	February 2027
Public consultation on draft Plan (vision, options and local priorities)	June / July 2027
Gateway 2 (PINS assessment)	February 2028
Public consultation on draft Plan (pre-submission)	June / July 2028
Gateway 3 (PINS assessment)	November 2028

Submission of Plan to Secretary of State	December 2028
Examination by Government-appointed Planning Inspector	January / June 2029
Adoption of the Plan by the Council	July 2029

- 2.6 Several studies and background documents will be prepared internally to enable the programme of work to be progressed. Additional expenditure will be required to provide robust evidence to ensure that the new Local Plan meets the requirements of relevant legislation, as well as the costs associated with undertaking public consultation and independent examination.
- 2.7 The costs for the new Local Plan are not known at present but are likely to exceed £1m over the course of the process to prepare, consult on, examine and adopt the plan. This estimate is based on the costs to produce the Local Plan Core Strategy and Sites and Policies documents over a number of years. The revised regulations to confirm the stages required for the new plan-making system are expected in late 2025 or early 2026, along with Government guidance on the required content for new local plans. When the position is clearer, officers will be able to estimate likely costs with more certainty.
- 2.8 Pre-production work for the new Local Plan will require a review of the Rotherham Green Belt. The Council has successfully applied for the Government's Green Belt Review Fund Grant and been awarded £70,000 to support this work. Officers will review and apply for any other applicable funding that the Government makes available, subject to the normal internal approvals.
- 2.9 The costs for the Joint Waste Plan and required evidence base are estimated to be in the region of £400,000 in total. These costs will be incurred for work that cannot be completed in house and other statutory costs such as Sustainability Appraisal, Flood Risk Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment, Transport/Infrastructure Study, site assessment work and plan drafting, and Planning Inspectorate fees for independent examination. Accurate costs for each element are not known at present as they are dependent on the scope of work required, which will not be determined until preliminary work on the plan is completed and the number of candidate sites is known. The costs may also change, if the scope and content of the Joint Waste Plan changes due to any overlap with the emerging South Yorkshire SDS.
- 2.10 The costs for the Joint Waste Plan will be shared among the four authorities based on the population size of each authority. Rotherham's population is around 19% of the South Yorkshire total, resulting in a contribution of around £77,000. This contribution is expected to be required over the financial years from 2025/26 to 2027/28. The City of Doncaster Council is acting as lead on procurement and will ensure that relevant legislative and procedural

requirements are met. Rotherham, Barnsley and Sheffield Councils will transfer funds to Doncaster as required at appropriate stages. The four local authorities have signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Letter of Agreement to this effect.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Option 1: Recommend that Council adopt the LDS

Adoption of the LDS would allow progress to be made towards allocating budget and officer resources for, and taking forward, the new Local Plan.

3.2 Option 2: Do not adopt the LDS

Should the Council decide not to adopt the LDS then progress cannot be made with the new Local Plan. Where Local Plan policies are out of date the Council's ability to deliver its strategic objectives would be harmed. Given the Council's significantly higher housing target, the Council would be at risk of decisions being challenged by planning appeals. This would reduce the ability to provide certainty for residents, developers and investors.

3.3 Option 1 is the recommended option. This would enable a challenging but achievable programme for the new Local Plan, to ensure an up-to-date Local Plan is in place. This would assist the Council in progressing its strategic objectives for the Borough and delivering the significant uplift in new homes required by the Government.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 The timetable set out in the LDS has been informed by discussions with other Council service areas that are likely to contribute to the new Local Plan. Similarly, discussions have taken place with the other South Yorkshire authorities on the Joint Waste Plan and the relevant portfolio holders at each authority have been briefed.

4.2 There is no requirement to undertake public consultation on the LDS; however, the document does indicate when public consultation on the new Local Plan is programmed to take place.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 Under the Council's Constitution, the development plan for Rotherham Borough is part of the Policy Framework. As such, the adoption of an updated LDS concerning the timetable for development plan documents should be considered by a meeting of the Council.

5.2 Subject to approval by Cabinet, the updated LDS would be recommended to Council for adoption at the next available meeting.

5.3 On adoption, the LDS would be published on the Council's website. Work would then progress on the new Local Plan in line with the timetable set out in the LDS.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The cost of producing the LDS has been managed within existing budgets. The adoption of the LDS sets out a timeline for completion of the Local Plan and South Yorkshire Waste Plan. There is no provision for these costs, which are estimated to be £1.1m and as such, they will need to be considered as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process and Medium Term Financial Strategy update. These plans, and future plans, need to be incorporated into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 6.2 Any procurement activity undertaken to support the recommendations detailed in this report must be undertaken in compliance with relevant procurement legislation (Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023, whichever is applicable) as well as the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules, with the exception of the Joint Waste Plan referred to at section 2.11. As the City of Doncaster Council are acting as the lead on this procurement, it will be their procurement procedure rules apply, albeit they will still be required to follow the same legislative requirements.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2024 (as amended) requires a Local Planning Authority to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). Further ensuring that an up-to-date LDS is in place will provide a steer for future development and neighbourhood plans under the provisions of the planning legislation. A failure to adopt the LDS within a required timeline will leave the Council at risk of planning decisions for refusal being challenged by planning appeals and reduce the ability of the Council to challenge planning applications when required.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 There are no implications for children and young people and vulnerable adults arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 An equalities screening has been completed and is attached as an appendix. A full equalities analysis is not required.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no direct implications on CO₂ emissions or climate change.

- 11.2 The Carbon Impact Assessment attached as an appendix has been reviewed by the Climate Change Officer.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1. The implications for partners or other directorates are mainly associated with awareness of the programme for undertaking the new Local Plan. Briefings and joint working will be undertaken as appropriate.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Local planning authorities are required to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme under The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). If the preparation of documents differs significantly from the timetable set out in the LDS, this is likely to lead to a finding of non-compliance with the statutory legal test at the independent examination of the relevant document, making it “unsound”. An unsound plan cannot be adopted by the Council.
- 13.2 Ensuring that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place will provide a steer for all future development and neighbourhood plans under the provisions of legislation. Failure to do so may leave the Council at risk of planning decisions being challenged by planning appeals, and reduce the ability to provide certainty for residents, developers and investors.
- 13.3 Costs have been estimated based on current information. There is a risk that additional budget may be required should the results of public consultation, technical work or legislative changes highlight the need for further work. Furthermore, the final cost of examination will be determined by the timetable established by the independent planning Inspector, which is beyond the Council’s control.
- 13.4 The LDS includes a risk assessment setting out potential risks, their impact and likelihood, and mitigation measures.

14. Accountable Officers

Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	27/08/25
Assistant Director, Financial Services (Deputy S.151 Officer)	Rob Mahon	20/08/25
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	18/08/25

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