

Creating Successful Places

Local Plan – Initial Proposals Document

Regulation 18



December 2023

How can I have my say on this consultation document?

Consultation on the Local Plan – Initial Proposals Document and the associated Integrated Impact Assessment will commence at 9am on Monday 18th December 2023, with the consultation period closing at 5pm on Monday 19th February 2024.

We recognise that some of the sites included within this Plan may have already been subject to public consultation through their inclusion in other Council documents and strategies and/or through the planning application process. Comments raised through these other consultation activities have been used to inform this consultation document. However, it is still important to raise your comments again if they are still relevant.

All responses should be made on-line via the Council's interactive consultation portal at [**consult.thurrock.gov.uk**](https://consult.thurrock.gov.uk). If you do not have access to the internet, a paper comments form will be made available on request at the Civic Offices and in all libraries in the Borough.

If you need help with your representations or wish to discuss either the content of the consultation documents or how to submit your comments, please contact the Local Plan Team: [**localplan@thurrock.gov.uk**](mailto:localplan@thurrock.gov.uk).

There will also be opportunities to meet with members of the Local Plan Team face-to-face at the 'Your Place, Your Voice' community planning events that are being held throughout the consultation period. Please visit our website for details on times and locations at [**thurrock.gov.uk/localplan**](https://thurrock.gov.uk/localplan).

How will my comments be used?

All consultation responses received, together with a summary of how the Council has taken them into account in the preparation of Thurrock's new Local Plan, will be recorded in the Report of Consultation, which will be submitted to the Inspector for consideration as part of the examination of the Plan.

The Report of Consultation will be updated and published at each key stage of the plan making process so that everyone can see how their views are helping to shape the development of this plan.

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Section 5: Planning for the right level of growth in the right places

We know that over the next 15 years the borough will need to adapt, change, and grow to address the opportunities and challenges we are facing now and in the future. We need to make sure that this is done in a way that is socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable, with the necessary supporting infrastructure in place. Growth must not occur "at any cost". Development should be inspired by the unique character of the area and respond to local needs, challenges, and opportunities.

The section sets out information on the level of growth that we need to try and plan for, and the work that we have undertaken so far when considering potential patterns for new growth.

What level of growth are we planning for?

The new Local Plan, when adopted, will set out the level of growth being planned for in Thurrock up to 2040. At this stage we are still exploring options and are not able to set out specific 'targets' for new homes, employment floorspace and other commercial uses. The reason is that targets are not just based on what is needed, they are also based on the amount of land available for those uses and whether those uses can actually be delivered.

National planning policy is clear that Councils should seek to meet its development needs in full.

Understanding our needs

National planning policy sets out a number of different development need studies that should be undertaken when reviewing or preparing a new Local Plan. The Council has recently updated three of its needs assessments. We still need to update work on our retail, leisure, and open space needs but these assessments ideally need to consider locations for future housing/employment growth.

The Thurrock Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) (March 2023) recommends that there is a need to plan for approximately 27,000 new jobs under a higher growth scenario primarily associated with the Thames Freeport designation and that we try to identify a sufficient supply of employment land to meet these needs.

The South Essex Housing Needs Assessment (June 2022) indicates that there is a need for 23,320 new homes. The previous 2016 South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment and 2017 Addendum used a localised economic uplift assumption to calculate the overall housing need for Thurrock.

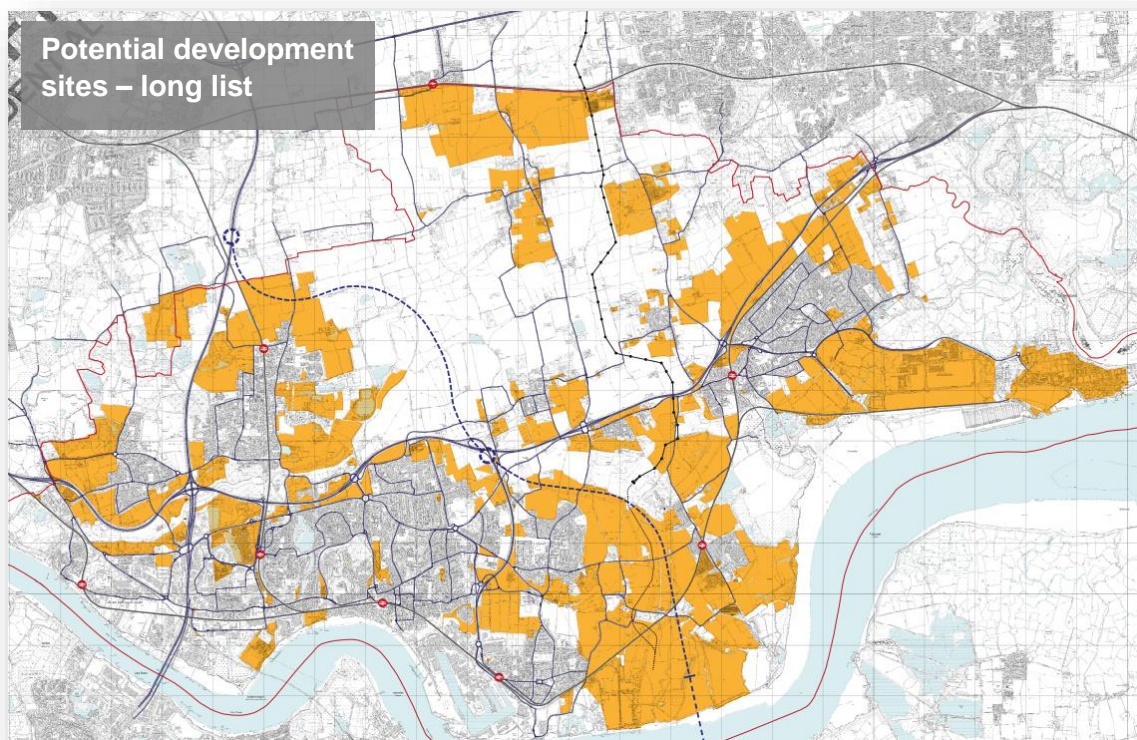
The 2022 South Essex Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) was prepared in advance of the Thurrock EDNA. We feel that further work is needed to check whether the job forecast in the EDNA is likely to materially affect our housing need requirements going forward. This work hasn't been completed yet so the 23,320 figure should be treated as a conservative need figure.

We have also updated our evidence looking at how many additional pitches are required for Gypsies and Travellers. The Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) assessed the current and future need arising from all the existing Gypsy and Traveller sites and the Travelling Showpeople sites at Chadfields Tilbury and Fairacres, West Thurrock. The assessment of need at Buckles Lane will be set out in a separate study. The GTAA noted that the total pitch needs to 2040 is for 75 additional pitches arising from gypsy and traveller households of all definitions (i.e., people who still actively travel and people who no longer travel i.e., older people). It also identifies a need for 7 travelling showperson plots from the two Travelling Showpeople sites assessed in the GTAA.

Assessing potential development sites

When adopted, the new Local Plan will identify land for new homes (including specialist housing needs), employment/commercial floorspace and supporting infrastructure to meet the identified needs of communities and businesses. It will also provide opportunities for additional development proposals to come forward that might not have been identified at the time of writing the Plan (windfall sites).

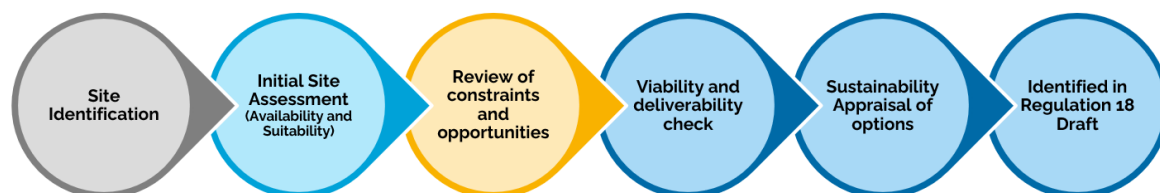
Since work began on the new Local Plan, the Council has identified over 400 potential development sites – these include sites that have been submitted to the Council (call for sites); sites that had previously been subject to a planning application; and council owned sites. The initial identification of a site and subsequent assessment does not give these sites any planning status and is separate to applying for planning permission.



Up until now, assessment work on these sites has been undertaken in a manual way – we did an initial sieve to check which sites were actively being promoted (available). This process filtered out approximately 130 potential sites leaving around 270 sites. We then undertook a high-level assessment for each of the remaining sites, considering the impact

that planning/development constraints would have on individual sites and/or collections of sites.

At this point in the site assessment/selection process, we have chosen to not undertake a more detailed review of Green Belt boundaries. This review will be undertaken once we have reviewed responses to this consultation document and have a clearer idea which potential growth options we should continue to explore.



The Council has recently started collaborating with a company called Urban Intelligence to develop a digital site assessment tool that would allow the Council to assess more sites in a shorter timeframe through increased automation. Over the next few months, we will be inviting site promoters to use this new assessment tool and resubmit sites they are promoting. This will mean that site promoters will be able to update information relating to their sites quicker and view assessment results without having to scroll through a large PDF document.

Exploring the potential of different spatial options

The Issues and Options (Stage 2) consultation set out a number of spatial options, each based on different development pattern – i.e., new settlement, large or smaller scale urban extensions, village expansions, etc.

Over the last year we have sought to build upon this initial analysis by evaluating a set of new spatial options based on land that is being actively promoted for development. Site suitability and development phasing was not considered at this stage.

Table 1: Estimates for the number of homes could be brought forward on land that is being actively promoted - by settlement

Settlement	Baseline	Baseline + Low	Baseline + Medium	Baseline + High
Aveley	19	1000	2000	2700
Bulphan	2	50	450	2500
Chadwell St Mary	123	1500	3500	5500
Corringham	62	750	2500	5000
East Tilbury (and Linford)	217	700	2000	3750
Fobbing	188	200	300	550
Grays (inc. Chafford, Little Thurrock, Stifford Clays)	366	1000	2000	2800
Horndon on the Hill	1	75	300	900
Langdon Hills	181	181	181	181
North Stifford	0	0	80	280
New Horndon/North Stanford/Lower Langdon (potential new town)	0	0	0	4000
Orsett	6	220	675	1400
Purfleet-on-Thames	2850	2850	2850	3200
Southfields	0	0	600	1500
South Ockendon	94	2600	6000	9000
Stanford-le-Hope	257	800	1800	2500
Tilbury	229	300	600	600
West Horndon (settlement within Brentwood)	0	0	1500	7000
West Tilbury	0	0	0	0
West Thurrock (inc. Lakeside)	78	1000	1500	4000

The Council initially assessed 5 spatial options:

- **Option 1: Focus on locations that are currently the most connected.** This option would include existing commitments and brownfield sites in the urban area; high growth in settlements with good connectivity by rail and bus; an urban extension at West Horndon; and low growth in all other areas. This option would generate approximately 31,300 new homes with associated supporting infrastructure.
- **Option 2: Increased development in locations that have direct access to key services and facilities.** This option would include existing commitments and brownfield sites in the urban area; high growth in settlements with good connectivity/access to essential social infrastructure; and low growth in all other areas. This option would generate approximately 39,800 new homes with associated supporting infrastructure.
- **Option 3: Increased development in the smaller villages.** This option would include existing commitments and brownfield sites in the urban area; high growth in the rural villages; low growth at West Horndon; and medium growth in all other areas. This option would generate approximately 32,000 new homes with associated supporting infrastructure.
- **Option 4: New settlement at West Horndon.** This option would include existing commitments and brownfield sites in the urban area; a new settlement in West Horndon; medium/low growth in well-connected areas; and low growth in all other areas. This option would generate approximately 31,000 new homes with associated supporting infrastructure.
- **Option 5: New settlements at West Horndon and Lower Langdon.** This option would include existing commitments and brownfield sites in the urban area; new settlements at West Horndon and Lower Langdon; and low growth in all other areas. This option would generate approximately 24,200 new homes with associated supporting infrastructure.

Subsequently we also evaluated a further option (**Option 6**) which looked at no additional Green Belt release. This option would include existing commitments, windfall sites and potential opportunity areas and deliver approximately 7,300 new homes.

Option 6 scored the best in terms of the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA). However, the IIA assumes that all objectives should be treated equally and the reality is that if we were to pursue this option it would have a severe impact on the economy and the local housing market, which has stalled over the last few years, resulting in the Council (at the time of writing) having less than a year's housing supply in terms of our five year supply requirements. Delivering enough homes is important because most of our housing needs are driven by households already in the borough – people living longer; births; children growing up and wanting to leave their parental home; and relationships breaking down.

Going forward we have decided to focus on Spatial Option 2 (which alongside Option 1 scored highly in the IIA) alongside further exploration of potential new places that could help deliver much-needed new homes in the borough and, if designed right, could create compact, more walkable and sustainable communities.

Essentially the approach we are taking is making sure that growth is focused on the places where it can help improve connectivity and help facilitate infrastructure improvements that would make places more resilient and sustainable in the future.