



Horsham
District
Council

Horsham District Council Local Development Scheme

2026 – 2027

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Introduction

1. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is the Council's timetable for preparing its Development Plan documents. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires the Council to prepare and maintain an LDS.
2. This iteration of the LDS was produced at a time when the coming into force of the 'new' planning system¹ has triggered a new process for preparing a local plan. The new regulations require that if a local plan's housing requirement in the plan is less than 80% of local housing need, the local planning authority must begin work on a new plan.
3. However, transitional arrangements permit a plan submitted under the 'old' planning system² to progress to adoption. Under the 'old' system, the plan-making authority must prepare a Local Development Scheme. This must specify development plan documents to be prepared or revised, together with a timetable for their preparation or revision. The only development plan document being prepared under the 'old' system is the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-40 (the 'emerging Plan'), thus information on the emerging Plan and timetable to adoption is set out below.

Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 timetable

4. Table 1 sets out the stages of production of the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040. The timetable is dependent on how the Inspector decides to progress the examination, however as the Inspector has agreed the timetable with the Council there is reasonable assurance of its robustness. The most recent stage of plan preparation reached is highlighted in bold text.

¹ 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.

² The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, to the extent saved by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Commencement No. 11 and Saving and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2026.

Table 1 – Timetable for production of the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-40

Subject matter: Horsham District Local Plan 2023-40 Geographical area: Horsham District	
Stage of production	When undertaken
Consultation on Issues and Options for Employment, Tourism and Sustainable Rural Development (Regulation 18)	April – May 2018
Consultation on draft Local Plan (Regulation 18)	February – March 2020
Regulation 19 Plan preparation	April 2020 – December 2023
Publication of Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Local Plan and period of representations	January 2024 – March 2024
Submission of the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 (Regulation 22)	26 July 2024
Examination hearing sessions	10 - 12 December 2024
Examination paused by the Inspector	12 December 2024
New Inspector appointed	28 January 2026
Examination hearing sessions (housing requirement and employment)	21 - 24 April 2026
Agreement of Main modifications and consultation	June, July - August 2026
Examination hearing sessions (spatial strategy, sites, any other matters)	October 2026

Subject matter: Horsham District Local Plan 2023-40

Geographical area: Horsham District

Stage of production	When undertaken
Further main modifications consultation (if needed)	October / November 2026
Inspector's report	December 2026
Adoption	January 2027

Risks and uncertainties

5. There are a number of potential risks which may impact the timetable of the emerging local plan. These risks are outlined in more detail in Table 2, below. These present clear risks to the Council which are outlined in Table 2 below. The mechanisms to mitigate the risks are also discussed.

Table 2 – Risks to local plan production in Horsham District

Risk	Outcome if risk is realised
The Local Plan examination is delayed. A number of causes could lead to this delay. This could include the Inspector's identification of further evidence requirements, delays in consultants or other contributors completing necessary work, additional time required to summarise representations made on proposed modifications, illness/absence of key players (e.g. the Inspector), political barriers or system failure	Adoption of the Local Plan is delayed, or in worst case scenario, Government intervenes leading to Plan withdrawal. Delays or withdrawal of the plan generate a high risk of uncontrolled development at a significant scale whilst no Plan is in place. Careful project management measures are in operation to manage these risks.
The emerging Plan is under examination, yet the Council is legally required to commence preparation of a new local plan whilst the current examination is still live. There is a risk that Strategic Planning resources diverted to preparing a new local plan under the new planning system, leaving inadequate officer and/or financial resourcing to complete emerging Plan examination within anticipated timetable.	As above. This risk is mitigated by the award in March 2026 of £108,000 from Government to support the work required for the new local plan.

<p>The Inspector finds the emerging Plan unsound or fails on legal compliance.</p>	<p>The local plan is withdrawn. Resultant high risk of uncontrolled development at a significant scale. Careful project management measures and legal support are in place to mitigate any risks around legal compliance, in addition to project management measures outlined above</p>
<p>Local Government Reorganisation – it is anticipated that the new unitary Councils will be fully in place by 2028. Whilst it is anticipated that the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-40 would be adopted by HDC prior to the new Council being vested, a significant delay would put this at risk.</p>	<p>If the Plan is delayed significantly there is a risk that the new unitary authority chooses not to adopt the plan. This would lead to uncontrolled development at a significant scale whilst no Plan is in place. Given the timescales set out in this document, this is considered to be a very low risk that can be mitigated through careful project management and timely adoption of the plan.</p>

Conclusion

6. The Horsham District Local Plan 2023-40 has reached the later stages of its examination. If the Plan is found to be legally compliant and is, or is capable of being made, sound the Inspector is likely to recommend main modifications which will be consulted upon in line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), relevant legislation and any issued guidance. Subject to the outcome of consultation, main modifications will be incorporated into the Plan, and the Plan can then be adopted by the Council. This process is expected to complete in early 2027.