

Local Plan 2026 – Leaflet release 10.02.2026 from Rochford District Council.

An early look at the Local Plan

Your area. Your views.

Consultation has begun on an early draft of the Rochford District Local Plan.

This is an opportunity for **you** to shape how the district could change over the next 15 to 20 years.

A good Local Plan is one the community creates together. We want a Local Plan that's based on local evidence, not arbitrary targets. **Please help us gather that evidence.**



Come to a drop-in session!

Rayleigh - Mill Arts & Events Centre, SS6 7ED - **19 February**, 1pm-5pm

Hullbridge - Hullbridge Community Centre, SS5 6PA - **23 February**, 3pm-7pm

Hockley - Old Fire Station, SS5 4QH - **25 February**, 3pm-7pm

Rochford - Freight House, SS4 1BU - **3 March**, 1pm-5pm

Great Wakering - Memorial Hall, SS3 0EF - **5 March**, 3pm-7pm

What is a Local Plan?

When someone applies for planning, the Council has to follow a set of rules and guidelines to decide whether to say yes or no.

The Local Plan adds a local layer to those guidelines.

It's not about building more – in fact, it's about protecting the district from inappropriate development.

That's the Local Plan in a nutshell, but there's more to it than that!



Why should you care?

The Local Plan influences decisions that affect your everyday life, including:

- » The character of your town or village
- » Traffic levels and public transport
- » Pressure on GP surgeries and schools
- » Green space, wildlife and flood risk
- » Where development is permitted or restricted

A **strong** Local Plan is one that the whole community creates **together**.

What does the Local Plan need from you?

We want your comments on the early draft. Residents can help identify problems, gaps in evidence and local priorities early on.

The most impactful comments are those that provide evidence.

You don't need to be a planning expert. Local knowledge matters! You don't have to comment on everything. You can focus on what matters to **you and your area**.

**Rooted in local evidence, based on local need
and reflective of the local voice.**

What stage are we at?

The 'Regulation 18' Local Plan is an early draft document. It sets out options and ideas, **not** decisions.

It covers things like:



Where new homes and businesses *might* go



How towns and villages could grow or change



Protection of countryside, green spaces and heritage



Transport, roads, walking and cycling



Schools, health facilities and other infrastructure



Climate change, flooding and environmental issues

Nothing is fixed at this stage. This consultation is to test ideas and hear from local people before the plan is developed further.

What happens next?

The consultation closes on **Tuesday 24th March 2026.**

Then all your comments will be reviewed. More evidence will be gathered and tested. The draft will be revised.

A more detailed version (Regulation 19) will be published later, with another consultation before it is submitted for the independent Planning Inspector to see in December.

There may be a further consultation next year if the Inspector asks for changes.

Sign up to the newsletter

If you have an email address, you can sign up for planning news at www.rochford.gov.uk/tellmemore

How to read the early draft

You can view the Regulation 18 draft:

Online www.rochford.oc2.uk/document/231

Visit the Rochford District Council website for:

- The full draft Local Plan
- Background evidence
- Plain English guidance on planning topics
- Advice on how to make comments that carry weight



In person

Printed copies available at:

- Rochford District Council reception inside Rochford Library, 8 Roche Close SS4 1PX
- Other local libraries across the district
- The Mill Arts & Events Centre, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh SS6 7ED
- Clements Hall Leisure Centre, Hockley SS5 4LN
- Rayleigh Leisure Centre, Rawreth Lane SS6 9NF

Paper response forms can also be collected from these locations

Need another format?

Large print, translated, audio and Braille versions available on request. Contact Rochford District Council on 01702 546366 or via the website.

Using AI to comment

It's becoming more common for people to use AI tools to help draft consultation responses. That's OK if it helps – but what's most valuable is your own original views, supported by local knowledge, personal experience, site-specific details and/or photos, documents and other evidence.



The Local Plan is a big document (around 300 pages) but you don't need to comment on everything unless you want to. Responses that clearly reflect real places, real issues and real people make the biggest difference.