

South Warwickshire Local Plan – FAQs

What is the South Warwickshire Local Plan?

A Local Plan is a legal document that Councils are required to prepare, and which sets out the future land use and planning policies for the area over a set period of time. Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils are working together to create a new South Warwickshire Local Plan for the two areas – which we refer to as South Warwickshire. This is the first time that we will have a plan for South Warwickshire, and it will ensure that there is a consistent approach to planning and building across both areas over the years to come.

Why are Stratford and Warwick District Councils working together to produce a joint Plan?

The geography of South Warwickshire means that Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick Districts have a strong relationship in relation to infrastructure (M40/A46/rail links/etc), the economy (JLR, Tourism, commuting), population migration, social and cultural offer, and environmental assets (such as the River Avon and canal network). For these reasons there is a strong planning case for closer working on strategic planning issues. A single plan will enable us to tackle the strategic and cross-boundary issues together to create a strong strategic framework for the area.

Given these economic, social and geographic synergies between the two Districts and the fact that both Councils are keen to commence an early review of their adopted Local Plan/Core Strategy, it makes sense to work together to produce a single plan that covers the whole of South Warwickshire.

Why do we need to produce the Plan now and when will it be completed?

Councils are required to review their Local Plans every five years. The Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy was adopted in 2016 and the Warwick District Local Plan was adopted in 2017. As such, there is a need for both Councils to review their Plans in the near future.

To some extent the timescales for producing the South Warwickshire Local Plan will depend upon its scope and this is something that we will be consulting on as part of the Scoping Consultation in spring 2021. However our indicative timetable aims for the Plan to be adopted in spring 2024.

What will happen to the existing Stratford-on-Avon Core Strategy and Warwick District Council Local Plan?

The new Local Plan for South Warwickshire is expected to replace the strategic policies within the existing adopted Plans which both run to 2031. It is anticipated

that the more detailed policies will be saved for a period of time and then reviewed at a later date in a more detailed plan or plans.

What is the process for preparing the Plan?

There is a statutory process that the preparation of all Local Plans have to comply with, general guidance on plan-making is available on the following government website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making>

When will people be able to get involved and have their say on the Plan?

Community and stakeholder involvement will be crucial in developing the Plan, and there will be a number of opportunities for people to contribute at the various stages of the preparation of the plan. The first public consultation is scheduled for spring 2021 when we will be running a public consultation on the scope of the South Warwickshire Local Plan. Further information on this consultation and details of how to comment will be available in due course.

What is the role of elected Councillors in developing and approving the Plan?

As this Plan is being prepared on behalf of both Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils, we have set up a joint South Warwickshire Local Plan Advisory Group. This Group is made up of elected councillors from both Councils, and which will have a key role in the development of the Plan throughout the plan-making process.

While there will be some key stages of Local Plan preparation that require formal approval by each of the authorities Full Council, a joint Executive Committee is in the process of being set up which will be made up of Councillors from both Councils. This Committee will make many of the decisions relating to the South Warwickshire Local Plan, these decisions will be binding on both Councils.

Will the Plan be affected by the proposed reforms to the planning system?

The Government consulted on its '[Planning for the Future' White Paper](#) and '[Changes to the current Planning System](#)' consultation during 2020, setting out a package of proposals for fundamental reform of the planning system, including the scope of Local Plans. The government has not yet announced when changes will be brought into effect; however there may be interim measures for Local Plans which are in preparation. Once the Government announces what and when any changes will be introduced, we will assess how this will affect the South Warwickshire Local Plan.

The Government has advised that the proposed reforms should not be seen as an opportunity to pause the preparation of plans and address the development challenges facing local areas.

Can a Neighbourhood Plan come forward before the emerging Local Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan can be developed before or during preparation of the emerging Local Plan. It is important that the Local Planning Authority works closely with Neighbourhood Plan groups to ensure that there aren't any conflicts between Neighbourhood Plan policies and Local Plan policies. Section 38 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires conflict to have been resolved in favour of the policy contained in the last document that has become part of the Development Plan.

Does a Neighbourhood Plan need to be in conformity with the draft emerging South Warwickshire Plan?

No, not until the South Warwickshire Local Plan has been through examination and has been formally adopted. Any emerging Neighbourhood Plan policies need to continue to be in conformity with the adopted Local Plan or Core Strategy. However, it should be noted that Neighbourhood Plans should be aware of new evidence that is being used to help prepare the South Warwickshire Local Plan that may supersede older evidence.

Will a Neighbourhood Plan need to be updated once the South Warwickshire Local Plan has been adopted?

There will not be a requirement to do so. However, if Neighbourhood Plan policies conflict with Local Plan policies they may become out of date for a Neighbourhood Plan area if they were adopted before the Local Plan is adopted. Where this is the case, the most recent adopted plan takes precedence. This would not necessarily mean that the whole of the Neighbourhood Plan is out of date but just those specific policies that are superseded by Development Plan policies.

How will the Covid-19 pandemic affect the content of the Plan?

It is too soon to know yet what the effect of the pandemic will be on future land use planning across South Warwickshire. As the Plan evolves we will use emerging evidence on the impact of Covid-19 to inform how it should influence the approach that we take.