Knowsley Council

Knowsley BETTER TOGETHER



KNOWSLEY'S

LOCAL PLAN

DRAFT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026

Knowsley Local Plan Engagement Strategy

Introduction

1. This Strategy sets out how the Council will engage with communities and other stakeholders throughout the process of preparing a new Local Plan for Knowsley. The Council is committed to making the planning system as inclusive and representative as possible. The Council therefore believes that involving communities and other stakeholders fully and creatively in the design, development and delivery of its planning services is crucial.

2. The Planning system in England is ‘plan-led’ therefore Local Planning Authorities (like Knowsley Council) must prepare and have an up-to-date Local Plan for their area covering a specific plan-period. Local planning documents and policies are used to help manage and shape development in an area.

3. The Council has transitioned to the 'new style' plan-making system introduced by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026. One of the key elements of the new style plan-making system is the Local Plan Engagement Strategy, this replaces the previous Statement of Community Involvement.

4. This Strategy will be kept under review and, if needed, will be updated after each engagement stage to incorporate feedback, reflect changes in national guidance and respond to learning as the Local Plan progresses.

How we will Engage

5. General Engagement Principles

- **Early Engagement** – communities and other stakeholders will be engaged at the earliest practical stage in the Local Plan preparation process.
- **Clear Communications** - communities and other stakeholders should understand the reason the Council are seeking their view, the range or extent of the consultation, and the next steps. The Council will include the use of plain English and as far as possible the avoidance of jargon, and the use of illustrative material where possible.
- **Foster Inclusivity** – The Council will encourage feedback from all communities by using multiple consultation methods, making accessible consultation document formats available, holding consultation events in accessible locations and liaising with existing community groups.
- **Effective Feedback** – The Council will produce a Summary of Consultation for each of the consultations during the Local Plan making process to describe how the Council has participated with the community and other stakeholders.

Consultation Tools

6. The Council will ensure that engagement in the Local Plan is far-reaching , accessible and reflective of the diversity of communities across Knowsley. Therefore, a mix of digital and more traditional approaches to consultation have been selected.

7. Different methods of consultation may be used depending on the nature of the subject involved, audience and Council resources to ensure effective and thorough community involvement. To maximise responses from a broad range of stakeholders, the Council will consider the use of the following consultation tools:
    - Online
        - Council Website – Electronic copies of documents will be made available on the Planning Policy section of the Council's website.
        - Online Presentations and webinars - providing information in relation to the relevant consultation
    - Email
        - Email correspondence and notifications to consultees on the Local Plan database.
        - An electronic version of the document can be made available via email on request.
    - Physical Materials

    - Printed copies of relevant planning documents will be made available at Halewood, Huyton, Kirkby, Prescot and Stockbridge Village libraries and at the Council's Main Office in Huyton.
- Media engagement
    - Knowsley News – Regular updates on the development of the Local Plan, as well as details of how residents can have their say, will be shared on Knowsley News.
    - Sharing regular updates with local media to help to cascade key messages and facilitating interviews
- Existing Networks
    - Sharing regular updates in established community networks and newsletters including the Stronger Communities Newsletter, Business newsletter
    - Regular updates shared through partner agency channels such as the Chamber of Commerce and local housing association newsletters
    - Young People, education providers and headteachers, care experienced young people and other children in our role as corporate parent
    - Council Internal Communication Channels
    - Elected Member Briefings
    - Local MP Updates
- Social Media
    - Content will be provided on the Council's corporate social media accounts including Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn
- In person events
    - Drop-in events will be used to publicise information about the Local Plan and will provide opportunities to ask questions

Delivery

<u>Council Officers</u>

8. Council Officers will lead the day-to-day delivery of engagement. This includes organising the consultation, working with stakeholders, and making sure that all feedback is recorded and considered as the Local Plan develops.

9. The Planning Service will be responsible for publishing consultation materials and sharing summaries of the responses received at each stage, so that people can see how their views have been taken into account.

<u>Elected Members</u>

10. Elected Members play an important role in overseeing the Local Plan and its engagement. This will include acting as the voice of the community representing the interests of their wards and the wider Knowsley community, taking part in any

workshops and briefings, making decisions on the publication of the Local Plan Content and Evidence document and the Draft Local Plan for consultation and adopting the Local Plan. This ensures that the Local Plan reflects local priorities and that decisions are informed by community views.

Planning Aid

11. Planning Aid England (PAE) is funded by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and offers a range of planning services and support in order to empower individuals and communities to engage in the planning process.

12. Planning Aid offer a number of services which could be beneficial for anyone seeking planning advice including:
    - A free web resource for planning advice - www.planningaid.co.uk
    - A free email advice service accessible via an online enquiry form
    - Bespoke planning support for individuals and groups, usually in areas of more severe socio-economic disadvantage.
    - Community engagement, outreach and capacity building
    - Workshops and training on the planning system

Legal Requirements

13. The Council will comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) which came into effect on 1 January 2021 and sets out the key principles, rights, and obligations for most processing of personal data in the UK, except for law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

Who we will Engage

Local Community

14. The Council will seek to engage with the local community including local residents and businesses to ensure that their views are considered during the preparation of the Local Plan.

Local Plan Database

15. The Council maintain a database of people and organisations including specific and general consultation bodies, people who have been involved in planning policy consultations in the past, as well as people who have said that they may be interested in this in the future, or who just wish to be kept informed of forthcoming changes to the planning policy framework in Knowsley. We will email or write to these people when we carry out planning policy consultations. If you wish to be added, please send an email to localplan@knowsley.gov.uk. Your information will be held in accordance with GDPR as set out on the Privacy Notice and you may unsubscribe from receiving updates at any point by emailing localplan@knowsley.gov.uk.

16. Once on the database, the Council strongly encourage individuals and organisations to inform us if their contact details have changed or they no longer want to be on the database so that it can be updated. The database will be maintained through yearly contact. All personal information held on the Local Plan database will be securely stored and only used for the purposes of preparing the planning policy documents.

Specified Organisations

17. The Council is legally required to invite certain bodies to make representations at each consultation. This includes representatives from the general consultation bodies that the Council consider appropriate and specific consultation bodies that the Council consider may have an interest in the proposed Local Plan. Regulation 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 sets out what general consultation bodies and specific consultation bodies are. The bodies that the Council propose to consult are set out in appendix 1.

Strategic Cooperation

18. Effective strategic planning across local authority boundaries will play a vital and increasingly important role in delivering sustainable growth. In preparing the

Local Plan, the Council will work collaboratively with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, neighbouring authorities such as Halton, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and West Lancashire , infrastructure providers such as Scottish Power and United Utilities and other relevant bodies to address strategic matters that operate at a wider-than-local scale.

Artificial Intelligence

19. The Council understands that some people may choose to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create or to support responses to the Local Plan consultations. Whilst the Council does not wish to prevent this, it is considered that it should be used transparently and responsibly. The Council should be informed where AI has been used to create or substantially change any part of the response. It will be the responsibility of the respondent to ensure that the information generated by AI is accurate, appropriate and relevant to the Local Plan or matter being considered. Where a response raises complicated technical matters including references to legal matters or previous case precedent the Council may contact you to request clarification to ensure that it is fully understood by both parties what the specific concerns being raised relate to and how they are relevant to Knowsley and the Local Plan. The Council would always advise that sensitive data or personal information is not shared with AI tools.

20. Due to the evolving capability and application of AI we will keep this guidance under review.

21. The Council may use AI within appropriate guidelines, policies and procedures to summarise consultation statements and identify key issues for further development. Where AI has been used, the Council will ensure that this is made clear.

Legal Requirements

22. In relation to plan-making, under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, the Council needs to ensure that information is made available to specific consultation bodies; general consultation bodies and other consultees. The key stages involved in plan-making which are followed by the Council are also set out in these Regulations.

Local Plan Engagement

Local Plans

23. The process of producing a Local Plan involves various stages, each of which require consultation/communication with stakeholders and communities. These are set out below.

Scoping Consultation (Reg 20) – November 2026

24. This consultation stage provides the local community and other stakeholders with the opportunity to have their say at the very start of the plan-making process. The Council will ask for views on what to include in the local plan and how to approach future local plan engagement. This consultation should last for at least 21 days.

Local Plan Content and Evidence Consultation (Reg 23) – July 2027

25. This consultation stage provides the local community and other stakeholders with the opportunity to comment on the proposed Local Plan content and evidence. This consultation must last for a minimum of 6 weeks. The Council will ask for views on:
    - the draft vision and proposed measurable outcomes;
    - any proposed aims and objectives;
    - the proposed spatial strategy approach; and
    - a summary of the evidence the Council intend to gather and details of the evidence the Council have already gathered.

Consultation on the Proposed Local Plan (Reg 27) – July 2028

26. This consultation stage provides the local community and other stakeholders with the opportunity to comments on the proposed Local Plan. This consultation must last for a minimum of 8 weeks. The Council will ask for views on:
    - the proposed Local Plan;
    - a map of the proposed Local Plan policies;
    - details of the evidence the Council have gathered; and
    - a summary of the main issues raised at the previous consultations and how the Council have addressed them.

Local Plan Examination (Reg 35) – August 2029

27. A local plan must pass an ‘examination in public’ overseen by a Planning Inspector before it can be adopted and come into force. The examination scrutinises the submitted plan, associated evidence and any additional written submissions.

28. Responses to public consultation may be summarised and will be made publicly available to view on the Council's website. The Council redacts comments from individual members of the public to remove personal data in respect of email addresses, telephone numbers and signatures. However, they may be required to be provided as part of a statutory process, such as a public inquiry, hearing, or examination. If this is the case we will contact you to obtain your permission for them to be submitted Libellous, discriminatory, or otherwise offensive comments will not be made publicly available.

Document reproduction and charging

29. If requested, we are legally obliged to make available in a different format (e.g., a different language, large print) any of our adopted planning policy documents. Such requests should be lodged with our Customer Services team via email customerservices@knowsley.gov.uk or by telephoning 0151 443 4031.

30. Anyone is entitled to request a copy or view a copy of an adopted or consultation planning policy document which is published on our website. Copies are available at our principal reception at the Council's Main Office in Huyton and the borough's libraries, during normal working hours. There is a charge for copying documents and enquiries about purchasing a copy of a document should be directed to the Local Plan team preferably via email to localplan@knowsley.gov.uk or by telephoning 0151 443 2326.

Appendix 1:

General Consultation bodies:

(a) voluntary bodies, some or all of whose activities benefit all or part of the planning authority's area;

(b) bodies which represent the interests of persons in the planning authority's area who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010(**10**);

(c) bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the planning authority's area;

Specific Consultation bodies:

- Active Travel England
- Electronic Communications (Register of persons with powers under the Electronic Communications Code)
- Canal and River Trust
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Mining Remediation Authority
- Sport England
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Highways Agency
- Highways Authority (Knowsley Council)
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission (Historic England)
- Homes and Communities Agency (Homes England)
- NHS Integrated Care Board (NHS Cheshire and Merseyside)
- NHS Commissioning Board (NHS England)
- Electricity (List of all electricity licensees including suppliers | Ofgem)
- Cadent Gas
- United Utilities
- Integrated Transport Authority (Liverpool City Region and Merseytravel)
- Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England
- Neighbourhood Forum (in Knowsley and adjacent authorities) (Halewood Neighbourhood Forum, Windle Parish Council, St Helens Rainford Parish Council, St Helens)
- Network Rail
- Office for Nuclear Regulation
- Office for Rail and Road

- Responsible Authority for LNRS (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority)

Neighbouring Authorities

- Halton Council
- Lancashire County Council
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- Liverpool City Council
- Sefton Council
- St Helens Council
- West Lancashire Council
- Parish Councils