

Lake District National Park Authority

Project initiation document

Lake District Local Plan
October 2026

Lake District
National Park

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1. Overview

Project Title: Lake District Local Plan

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Purpose of this Project Initiation Document

1.1. This Project Initiation Document (PID) sets out the management framework and approach for delivering the Lake District Local Plan. It provides clarity on the scope of the local plan, governance arrangements, resources, and timelines.

1.2. The PID is designed as a reference tool for officers, stakeholders, and Authority members, supporting effective decision-making and ensuring everyone involved understands their roles and responsibilities throughout the plan-making process.

1.3. This PID has been prepared using the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) template.

2. Plan Scope

Role of the plan

2.1. As a local planning authority (LPA), we have a statutory duty under both the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and amendments made by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 to prepare and adopt a local plan.

2.2. The Lake District Local Plan establishes how land within our area will be used, setting out priorities for housing, employment, infrastructure, design and environmental standards. The local plan will provide a clear, deliverable and legally compliant spatial strategy and policy framework to guide development over a 15-year period from 2029 – 2044.

2.3. Once adopted, the local plan will serve as the principal basis for making planning decisions, shaping future growth, development and sustainability of Lake District communities. Adopted neighbourhood plans retain their status as part of the development plan, however policies within them can become out of date if they conflict with the new local plan once adopted.

Summary of Plan scope

2.4. The Lake District Local Plan will cover the whole of the Lake District National Park area and will cover a period of at least 15-years from the date of adoption and is anticipated to extend from 2029 to 2044.

2.5. The new Lake District Local Plan will build on the vision established by the Lake District National Park Partnership Plan and will develop a spatial strategy for the sustainable development of the Lake District over the period to 2044. The spatial strategy will identify areas for growth and protection, it will provide a clear approach to housing and employment distribution, including affordable housing.

2.6. The Lake District Local Plan will allocate land for housing, employment and mixed-use development. The allocations will need to be suitable, available and achievable within the plan period, taking account of viability.

2.7. Development management policies will be included that focus on local issues including affordable housing, housing mix, density, tourism accommodation and employment. Development management policies will avoid duplication with those in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2.8. The development of the local plan will be supported by an overall Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

2.9. The Lake District National Park Authority is also a Minerals and Waste Planning Authority; the Lake District Local Plan will also form the next Minerals and Waste Plan for the Lake District.

2.10. The local plan will be supported by a Design Code Supplementary Plan, providing design guidance for specific types of development across the Lake District.

Relationship to other relevant plans and programmes

2.11. At a regional level, the local plan must be aligned with any Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).

2.12. At present there is no SDS in place that covers the Lake District area but a Mayoral Combined Authority covering Cumbria has been established and will be developing an SDS.

2.13. At a local level the local plan has a relationship to a number of other relevant plans, listed below:

- Lake District National Park Partnership Plan 2026
- Westmorland and Furness Council Plan 2023-27

- Cumberland Council Plan 2023-27
- The Destination Management Plan for Cumbria 2024-30
- Going for Growth: Cumbria's Economic Strategy 2025-2045
- Westmorland and Furness local cycling and walking infrastructure plans
- Cumberland Council local cycling and walking infrastructure plans
- Lake District Active Travel Network Plan
- Cumbria Transport Infrastructure Plan 2022-2037
- Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Westmorland and Furness Climate Action Plan
- Cumberland Council Climate and Nature Strategy 2024-27
- Cumberland Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 to 2028
- Westmorland and Furness Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2034
- Cumberland Council Best Start in Life Strategy
- Westmorland and Furness Council Best Start in Life Strategy

2.14. Existing local plans, development plan documents and supplementary planning documents will be superseded by the new Lake District Local Plan. The existing Cumbria Minerals and Waste Plan will either be superseded by a new minerals and waste plan or through the Spatial Development Strategy.

3. Plan Timetable

Plan Stages

3.1. The Lake District National Park Authority have produced a plan-making timetable detailing the intended programme for the preparation and adoption of new planning documents. The plan-making timetable is available on the new local plan website.

Plan Timetable Summary

2.1. Plan stage:

☑ Before notice to commence plan making

☑ Notice to commence plan making

☑ Gateway 1 – self assessment

☐ Vision and strategy development

☐ Gateway 2 – independent review

☐ Gateway 3 – stop or go

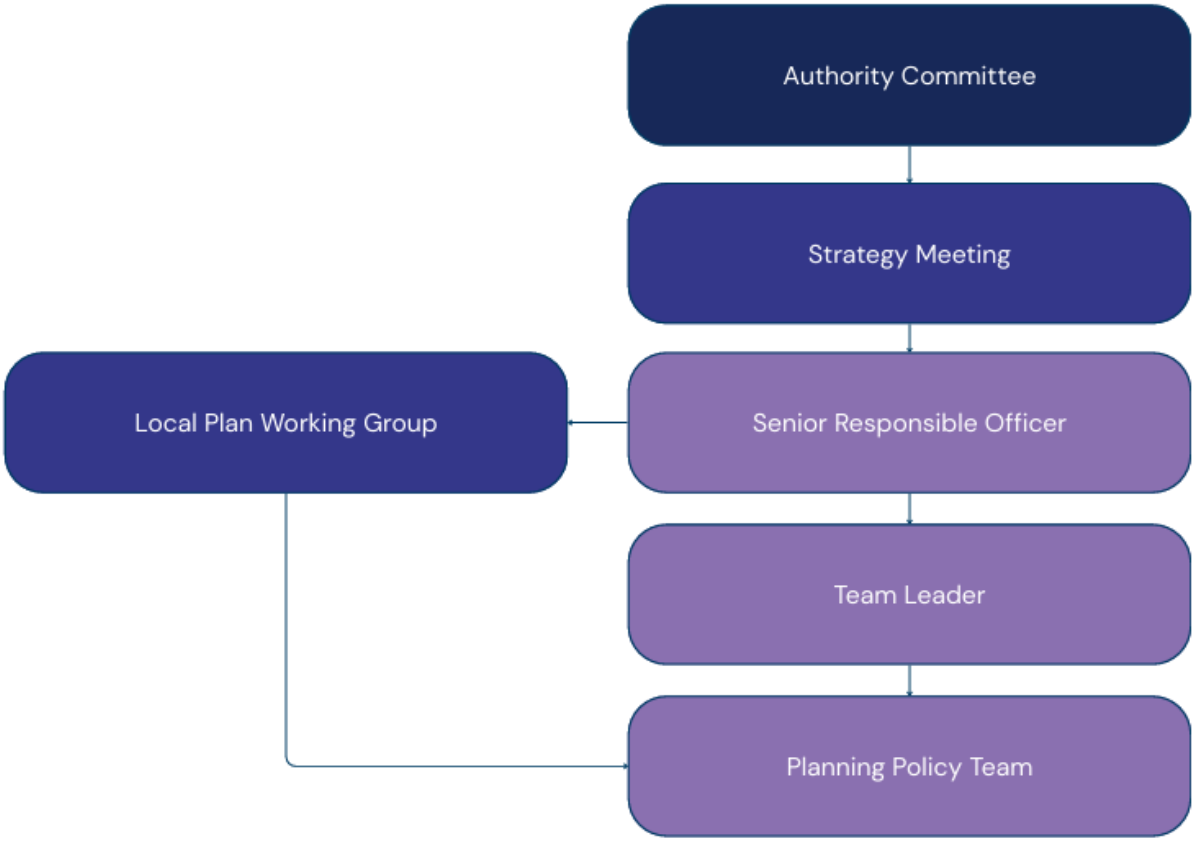
☐ Examination

4. Governance and Decision-Making

Summary of Governance

4.1. Preparing the Lake District Local Plan will require close collaboration between members, officers, partner organisations, residents, communities, landowners, businesses and local groups.

4.2. To ensure effective delivery of the local plan review, it will be subject to a formal project management and operational structure. The governance structure is set out below.



4.3. Day to day work developing the local plan will be undertaken by the Planning Policy Team, overseen by the Team Leader.

4.4. The Team Leader, in collaboration with the Planning Policy Team, will prepare papers at each relevant stage of the local plan timetable. These papers will be taken to the local plan working group where feedback will be recorded.

4.5. The Senior Responsible Officer will make any further recommendations and sign off stages to proceed onto Authority committee for decision making.

Decision making

4.6. **Authority Committee** is responsible for decisions at key milestones in the plan-making process. The Authority Committee meets approximately eight times in each year, and all Authority Members are invited to attend.

4.7. To ensure effective governance, Authority may delegate final decision making, where they are dependent on the outcomes of actions associated with other decisions to the Director of Sustainable Development.

Lead Officers

4.8. Hanna Latty is the Director of Sustainable Development. This directorate contains the Strategy, Environment and Partnerships Teams and the Development Management Team.

4.9. Robert Allison is the Strategy and Partnerships Head of Service. This service includes the Planning Policy Team responsible for undertaking the local plan review.

4.10. Phil Drane is the Strategy and Policy Team Leader, responsible for the Planning Policy team which undertakes the local plan review.

Advisory Board

4.11. **Strategy meetings** operate in a similar way to a working group. Local plan issues and updates will be shared at Strategy Meetings prior to Authority. Members attend Strategy Meetings but do not making any decisions. Strategy Meetings are not open to the press or public.

4.12. The **Local Plan Working Group** is a forum for the consideration and discussion of issues relevant to the preparation of the local plan. This group consists of Members and officers and does not make decisions.

5. Staff Resource and Management

Overview

5.1. Staff resourcing required to prepare the next Lake District Local Plan includes the Planning Policy Team supported by officers across a range of other services as required.

Management of the Local Plan Programme

Name	Job Title	Full-Time Equivalent
Phil Drane	Team Leader – Strategy and Policy	1.0

Local Plan Team

Name	Job Level	Post Status	Job Title	Full time equivalent	Estimated percentage of time preparing Local Plan
Chloe Swift	Strategy Planner	Occupied	Strategy Planner	1.0	80%
Abigail Holt	Strategy Planner	Vacant	Strategy Planner	1.0	80%
Laura McClinton	Graduate Strategy Planner	Vacant	Graduate Strategy Planner	1.0	70%

Project Manager

Name	Job Title	Dedicated officer	Full-Time Equivalent
Phil Drane	Team Leader – Strategy and Policy	No	Internal

Wider Corporate Support Needs

What is required?	When will it be required?	Who will deliver?
Support during preparation and analysis of evidence base	Throughout baselining and other evidence preparation	ICT and GIS Team
Support during consultation and engagement	Throughout statutory consultation and early participation	Communications Team
Support producing local plan materials	As required in preparation for consultation	Communications Team
Support producing local plan digital materials, webpages and mapping	As required for consultation and publishing the digital local plan	ICT and GIS Team, Communications Team
Support during preparation and analysis of evidence base. Support during site assessment and policy development	During evidence preparation, site assessments process and policy development	Historic Environment Advisers, Natural Environment Advisers, Access and Recreation Adviser, Development Management Team.

External Support Needs

5.2. Consultants may be required to prepare key components of the evidence base and provide necessary support during examination.

6. Evidence

Evidence Requirements

6.1. Successful delivery of the Lake District Local Plan must be supported by a proportionate evidence base, the components of which are referenced below.

Key Evidence	Area Covered	In house or externally commissioned	Key stakeholders required	Dependencies on other evidence documents
Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Environmental Outcome Report	LDNP	Hybrid. SEA screening to be undertaken in house. SEA report likely to be externally commissioned.	Historic England; Natural England; Environment Agency	Integral to site assessment. Will inform baselining and identification of measurable outcomes. Dependent on findings from other evidence including SFRA.
Housing Needs Assessment	LDNP	In house	Housebuilding industry; key local employers, residential and commercial agents.	LDNP population projection.
Housing Land Supply Evidence	LDNP	In house	Historic England; Natural England; Environment Agency	SFRA
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1	LDNP	External commission	Environment Agency	NAFRA2 data

Key Evidence	Area Covered	In house or externally commissioned	Key stakeholders required	Dependencies on other evidence documents
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2	LDNP	External commission	Environment Agency	SHELAA
Transport Evidence Base	LDNP	External commission	W&F Council; Cumberland Council	
Transport Assessment	LDNP	External commission	W&F Council; Cumberland Council	Transport evidence base
Housing and Employment Site Selection Assessment	LDNP	In house	Statutory consultees	SHENA SFRA
Whole Plan Viability Report Stage 1: High Level Stage 2: Full baseline	LDNP	External commission	Developers; site promoters; planning and viability consultants; Registered Providers; community and neighbourhood groups	SHENA SHELAA IDP
Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People Assessment	Cumbria	In house		
Open Space Study	LDNP	In house	W&F Council; Cumberland Council	Site assessment work
Habitat Regulations Assessment	LDNP	External	Environment Agency; Natural England	
Local Aggregates Assessment	Includes Cumberland Council and W&F Council (minerals planning authorities)	In house	North West Aggregates Working Party	

Key Evidence	Area Covered	In house or externally commissioned	Key stakeholders required	Dependencies on other evidence documents
Waste Needs Assessment	Includes Cumberland Council and W&F Council (waste planning authorities)	External commission (BPP)	Internal: waste services (Cumberland and W&F)	
Strategic Landscape Character Assessment	Cumbria	External commission		
Design Code	LDNP	External commission – LUC		
Settlement study and hierarchy	LDNP	Internal		
IDP Baseline report	LDNP	Internal		
Settlement boundaries	LDNP	Internal		
Retail Needs Assessment	LDNP	Internal		
Local List	LDNP	Internal		
Lake District National Park Partnership Plan	LDNP	Internal	Lake District National Park Partnership	

7. Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement Approach

7.1. The engagement approach sets out how we will involve communities, stakeholders, Members and statutory bodies throughout plan preparation. We aim to complete meaningful and proportionate engagement, making it clear which areas people can influence at each stage of plan making.

7.2. The main objective of local plan stakeholder engagement is to ensure target audiences are aware of the local plan consultation, its purpose and how they can get involved in the local plan review to achieve high-quality participation.

7.3. Identified key audiences to engage with include families and young people hoping to live and work in the Lake District, entrepreneurs and developers, current residents, farmers, community groups and parish councils, landowners, businesses and investors.

7.4. Consultation will take place at each plan making stage as set out below and engagement will continue throughout the development of the plan. Consultation and engagement will utilise digital tools but will not be fully digital.

- **Get ready: Scoping and early participation.** Purpose: to understand the scope of the plan, approach to engagement and views on key issues and opportunities.

- **Prepare the plan: Proposed content and evidence.** Purpose: to consult on proposed spatial strategy, aims, objectives, evidence and draft policies.

- **Prepare the plan: Proposed plan.** Purpose: to consult on local plan, proposed local plan policies, site allocations and designations.

Communications Approach

7.5. Communications about the local plan review will centre around nine key messages:

1. Get involved
2. Easy to understand and accessible
3. Focus on sustainability
4. Climate action
5. Housing
6. Nature recovery
7. Local communities and farming
8. Collaboration

9. Design excellence

7.6. To ensure communications reach the intended audience, personas have been developed and the nine key messages will be appropriately tailored to reach the intended audience.

Consultation and engagement tools

7.7. We will seek to adopt innovative approaches to engagement using digital technology and forward-thinking methods to capture feedback we receive. We are working with the Communications Team to ensure the most appropriate methods are used at each stage of the process including:

- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Workshops
- Attendance at events
- Email updates
- Press releases
- Social media

What consultation and engagement has already happened?

7.8. In summer 2025, the Authority consulted on the Lake District National Park Partnership Plan, which is the management plan for the Lake District. This plan sets out the vision, ambitions and objectives for the Lake District for the next 25 years. Feedback from the Partnership Plan consultation highlighted the challenges and issues communities encounter, this feedback has informed work on the local plan to date.

7.9. In late 2025 we organised a series of planning seminars that were open to all but were particularly targeted at Town and Parish Councils across the Lake District. The objective of these seminars was to build capacity in residents and communities, so they are informed about what the local plan is, how and when they can get involved to have meaningful contribution.

7.10. To aid the planning seminars, a ‘What is Planning?’ booklet was produced that has since been handed out at Town and Parish Council cluster events and other relevant meetings.

8. Budget Overview

8.1. The Authority has sufficient budget and resources in place to support the preparation and delivery of the local plan. Appropriate financial provision has been identified within existing budgets, with resources kept under review throughout the plan-making process to ensure the local plan can be progressed effectively.

8.2. The Authority has received Local Plan Implementation Funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The funding award of £108,474 will be used to fund evidence preparation when required and to support digital communication tools. Acceptance of the funding is based on the commitment to publish the Notice of Intention to commence local plan preparation by 30 June 2026 and Publishing the Gateway 1 self-assessment by 30 October 2026.

9. Risks and Mitigation

Summary of key risks identified

9.1. The table below shows the risk log which summarises risks in the production of the Lake District Local Plan.

Risk	Description of the risk and effect	Likelihood	Risk level	Mitigation
Programme and governance				
Achievability of timescales associated with the new plan-making process and changes to the plan-making timetable	• The local plan is not progressed within the 30-month timetable or fails key milestones. • Delays in evidence preparation and failure of partners to provide evidence on time could, for example, cause delays in the overall programme. • Delays in the publication of standardised templates create a risk to the local plan timetable. • There is also uncertainty about the capacity of the Planning Inspectorate to manage numerous local plans and Spatial Development Strategies submitted around the same time.	Medium	Medium	• Robust programme management and regular monitoring of programme and risks. • Clear governance structure. • Build in flexibility in the programme at the scoping stage, maintaining contingency within timetable.

Risk	Description of the risk and effect	Likelihood	Risk level	Mitigation
Cumbria-wide Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)	• The need for a SDS could cause delays and/or duplication with local plan evidence; Caused by the need for a new mayoral authority (devolution) to have an SDS with similar evidence being gathered to support the document; Resulting in delays, duplication or inconsistencies with LDNP local plan evidence base.	Low	Low	• MHCLG working on joint guidance.
Resources				
Insufficient budgetary provision to adequately finance the local plan. Rising Planning Inspectorate Fees	• Timetable delays, a longer examination period, risk of legal challenge, impacts of national planning policy requirements, additional evidence base needs or political changes (national or local).	Medium	Medium	• Close monitoring of the local plan budget and anticipated future commitments. • Ensure risks are raised during the budget monitoring process. • Use effective project management to secure procurement efficiencies. • Ongoing engagement with section 151 officer, corporate leadership team and members.
Lack of capacity/resources to deliver planning policy documents in line with identified timescales	• Delays to overall local plan timetable. • Reduced plan quality.	Medium	High	• Provide appropriate training to encourage staff retention and upskill team. • Consider recruitment incentives and the use of consultants where specific expertise is required.

Risk	Description of the risk and effect	Likelihood	Risk level	Mitigation
Lack of in-house skills for specialise areas of policy work/evidence studies	• Delays to overall local plan timetable. • Compromised evidence base. • Reduce plan quality.	Medium	High	• Obtain training for areas where expertise is lacking. • Seek support from the 'Planning Advisory Service' (PAS). • Engage consultants where specialist skills are required to short timescales and in-house development is unrealistic.
Lack of capacity/resources within external organisations (Consultancy agencies, government agencies/departments and the Planning Inspectorate)	• Delays to local plan timetable due to large number of LPAs progressing through a local plan review simultaneously. • Delays to examination.	Medium	Medium	• This risk is primarily outside the influence or control of the Authority, but mitigation measures include: - Use of effective project management to secure procurement efficiencies e.g. procuring the same consultancy to produce multiple evidence documents. - Liaison with PINS to ensure early warning of any problems.
Policy and legislation				
Changes in national policy and legislation which require a significant alteration to local plan content and timetable	• New regulations and the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework have already experienced significant delays. The new NPPF is expected to be finalised in summer 2026.	Medium	Medium	• Maintain robust evidence and awareness of further changes to national planning policy and associated guidance to address emerging issues and priorities. • Liaise with government agencies - MHCLG, New Towns Task Force, Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and

Risk	Description of the risk and effect	Likelihood	Risk level	Mitigation
	• The staggered publication of plan-making guidance has led to uncertainty.			Planning Advisory Service (PAS) - to identify upcoming changes.
Resource and alignment with emerging Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)	• An SDS for Cumbria will be emerging as the new local plan progresses.	High	Medium	• Engagement with Cumbria Combined Authority to ensure new local plan aligns to the SDS.
Engagement and Consultation				
Lack of collaboration from neighbouring councils and other public bodies	• Lack of progress on cross-boundary maters risk the soundness of the new local plan, potentially undermining its effectiveness and the successful delivery of key strategic initiatives.	Medium	Medium	• Maintain appropriate ongoing engagement with statutory partners (e.g. neighbouring authorities, government agencies and other relevant statutory bodies) on identified cross boundary issues from the outset. • Ongoing cross boundary communication will support the timely identification and resolution of key issues.
Significant public opposition to the new local plan	• High response rates could generate an unexpectedly large volume of feedback, creating programme slippage.	Medium	Low	• Engage additional staff resources during and after consultation periods as required. • Use of external specialists where necessary and appropriate. • Investment in digital consultation systems to enable the best user experience and encourage online responses to be received.

Risk	Description of the risk and effect	Likelihood	Risk level	Mitigation
Problems or inability to engage with key stakeholders and local community representatives	• Lack of input from statutory bodies and delivery partners may undermine the robustness of technical evidence and assumptions. • Limited community engagement can erode public trust and diminish the perceived legitimacy of the local plan.	Medium	Low	• Continue to engage and maintain good relationships with residents, local community groups and other key stakeholders. • Investment in enhanced digital consultation systems to enable the best user experience and encourage online responses.

10. Approval of this Project Initiation Document

Author name:	**Title**	
Chloe Swift	Strategy Planner	
Name:	**Title**	**Date Approved**
Phil Drane	Team Leader – Strategy and Policy	
Robert Allison	Head of Strategy and Partnerships	
Hanna Latty	Director of Sustainable Development	

11. Change Log

Date of change	**Author**	**Reason**	**Updated Version Title**
	Chloe Swift	Publication	V1