

**Pre-examination checklist for local plans prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**

**Introduction**

The Planning Inspectorate’s Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations was updated on 23 September 2025 to introduce this pre-examination checklist for local planning authorities to complete for local plans prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The examination checklist now forms part of the Service Level Agreement between the Planning Inspectorate and local planning authorities for all plans published under regulation 19.

This version of the checklist is for development plan documents made under the 2004 Act such as area action plans, partial updates to local plans, “part 2” plans that are not intended to be a full local plan as described in the NPPF and associated planning policy guidance

**Purpose of the pre-examination checklist**

The purpose of the checklist is to help local planning authorities ensure their plan is “ready for examination” as referred to in section 20 of the 2004 Act. Ready for examination means:

* All of the necessary practical arrangements are in place.
* Essential evidence and other documents are ready for submission.
* The rationale for the plan content is clear.

Local planning authorities may find it helpful to refer to the checklist during the preparation of plans, and Inspectors holding local plan advisory meetings with local planning authorities will offer to discuss the examination checklist.

**Before submission**

The local planning authority should complete the checklist after considering all representations made under regulation 20 and finalising the documents it intends to submit under regulation 22 (see further information below under “Completing the pre-examination checklist”).

The completed checklist should then be sent to the Planning Inspectorate (Plans.admin@planninginspectorate.gov.uk) before the plan is submitted. The local planning authority should await a written response before submitting their plan under regulation 22.

**Planning Inspectorate’s response to the checklist**

The Planning Inspectorate will aim to provide a written response to the local planning authority within 10 working days of receiving the pre-examination checklist. The written response will either confirm that the plan is ready for examination, or set out specific actions that the Planning Inspectorate recommends the authority takes before submission.

**Submission of the plan for examination**

If the Planning Inspectorate’s written response to the completed checklist is that the plan is ready for examination, the local planning authority should submit it promptly.

If the Planning Inspectorate’s response recommends specific actions before submission, they should be addressed by the local planning authority as appropriate. Once the actions have been taken, and the authority is satisfied that the plan is ready for examination, it should submit the plan and other documents.

The submission documents should include the checklist the authority had completed before submission, the Planning Inspectorate’s written response, and a letter explaining how any actions specified in that response have been addressed.

**Appointment of the examining Inspector**

Following submission of the plan and other documents under regulation 22, an Inspector will be appointed to examine the plan in accordance with the timescales set out in the Service Level Agreement.

**Publication of the checklist and correspondence**

The checklist that the authority had completed before submission, the Planning Inspectorate’s written response, and the authority’s letter explaining how the specified actions had been addressed will be published on the examination website along with the plan and all other submission documents.

**Completing the pre-examination checklist**

This checklist is relevant to development plan document made under the 2004 Act such as area action plans, partial updates to local plans, “part 2” plans that are not intended to be a full local plan as described in the NPPF and associated planning policy guidance.

The local planning authority is requested to answer all of the following questions by ticking the box next to either “yes” or “no” for each.

Where requested, a hyperlink to the relevant document(s) should be provided along with reference number(s)[[1]](#footnote-1) and specific pages / paragraph numbers in the document where appropriate.

If the answer to any question is **RED** capitalised (rather than **blue**), a brief explanation (maximum 250 words) should be provided beneath the yes / no answer (using a box as provided as an example under question 1.1).

Where relevant, the explanation for any **RED** capitalised answers should be a summary of, and refer to, the reasoned justification in the Plan or part of the supporting evidence.

It is important to note that **RED** capitalised answers do not necessarily mean that the Planning Inspectorate will recommend that the local planning authority takes further actions before submitting the plan for examination; that will depend on the number and nature of such answers and the explanations provided for them.

**1. Practical arrangements for the examination**

**Programme officer**

1.1 Is a suitably experienced Programme Officer, who meets the requirements set out in PINS guidance[[2]](#footnote-2), in post?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  | **PO details** |  |

Explanation for **RED** capitalised answer (maximum 250 words)[[3]](#footnote-3)

1.2 Does the Programme Officer have sufficient time available for a period of at least one year to input effectively to the examination?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

**Examination website**

1.3 Will an examination website, that complies with PINS guidance[[4]](#footnote-4), be operational shortly after the plan has been submitted for examination?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  | **Weblink** |  |

**Venue for hearings**

1.4 Will the Council be able to ensure that a suitable venue, that complies with PINS guidance[[5]](#footnote-5), is available for the examination hearings?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

**Video conferencing facilities**

1.5 Will the Council be able to provide video conferencing facilities (such as Microsoft Teams) to facilitate virtual hearing sessions or virtual input to physical hearing sessions should these be necessary?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

**LPA staff and resourcing**

1.6 Will the Council have sufficient staff and resources, including any consultancy or specialist support used in the preparation of the plan and evidence, available for a period of at least one year to input effectively to the examination?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

**2. Legal requirements**

**Local development scheme**

2.1 Was the plan prepared in accordance with the Council’s local development scheme as required by section 19(1) of the 2004 Act?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

**Public consultation**

2.2 In preparing the plan did the Council comply with their statement of community involvement as required by section 19(3) of the 2004 Act?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

**The duty to cooperate**

* 1. Has the Council completed a Duty to Cooperate Statement and signed statements of common groundwith all other relevant LPAs and prescribed bodies intended to demonstrate that it engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in relation to strategic matters as required by the duty to cooperate under section 33A of the 2004 Act?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

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| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

* 1. Does the Duty to Cooperate Statement identify:
1. The strategic matters[[6]](#footnote-6) that needed to be addressed during the preparation of the plan?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. The LPAs and other prescribed bodies that were engaged with in relation to each strategic matter?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. Specific activities that were undertaken in liaison with all of the relevant LPAs and prescribed bodies from the start of the preparation of the plan (initial regulation 18 consultation) up until the date on which it was submitted for examination?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. The main areas of agreement in relation to each strategic matter?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

2.5 Are there any significant outstanding issues where agreement has not been reached in relation to any strategic matter?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **YES** |  | **No** |  |

2.6 Are there are any relevant LPAs or prescribed bodies with whom duty to cooperate statements of common ground that have not yet been agreed and signed?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **YES** |  | **No** |  |

**General conformity with the London Plan**

2.7 If relevant[[7]](#footnote-7), has the Mayor of London made a representation (under section 24(5) of the 2004 Act or regulation 20 or regulation 21) advising that the submitted plan is in general conformity with the London Plan?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

**Sustainability appraisal**

2.8 Was the plan informed throughout its preparation by a sustainability appraisal?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

2.9 Does the sustainability appraisal report include the following information as may reasonably be required, taking account of (a) current knowledge and methods of assessment; (b) the contents and level of detail in the plan; (c) the stage of the plan in the decision-making process; and (d) the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment[[8]](#footnote-8)?

1. An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as a European site (within the meaning of regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017)?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues such as (a) biodiversity; (b) population; (c) human health; (d) fauna; (e) flora; (f) soil; (g) water; (h) air; (i) climatic factors; (j) material assets; (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage; (l) landscape; and (m) the inter-relationship between the issues referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (l)?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
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| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with SEA regulation 17.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. A non-technical summary of the information referred to above?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

2.10 Does the sustainability appraisal report also include relevant, adequate and proportionate information relating to social and economic issues (in addition to the environmental information required by the SEA regulations referred to in the questions above)[[9]](#footnote-9)?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

2.11 Does the sustainability appraisal report identify and appraise reasonable alternatives that take account of the objectives and geographical scope of the plan[[10]](#footnote-10)?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

2.12 Was the appraisal of the reasonable alternatives carried out using the same methodology and level of detail as the appraisal of the policies and proposals in the plan[[11]](#footnote-11)?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

**Habitat regulations assessment**

2.13 Has the Council carried out a habitat regulations assessment of the Plan under regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) which considers the likely significant effects of all the development proposed in the Plan (in combination with other relevant plans and projects) on relevant habitat sites[[12]](#footnote-12) in the plan area and elsewhere?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

2.14 If **NO**, has the Council published a habitat regulations screening report that demonstrates that the development proposed in the plan (in combination with other relevant plans and projects) will not be likely to have any significant effects on relevant habitat sites in the plan area or elsewhere (without taking into account any mitigation measures[[13]](#footnote-13))?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

**Superseded policies in the adopted development plan**

2.15 Does the plan identify all of the policies in the adopted development plan that are intended to be superseded by policies in the plan and state that fact as required by regulation 8(5)?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  | **Plan page(s)** |  |

**Regulation 22 consultation statement**

2.16 Has the LPA prepared a consultation statement setting out:

1. who was invited to make representations on the plan at Regulation 18 consultation stage, how those representations were invited, a summary of the main issues raised, and how the representations were taken into account?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

1. the number of representations made under Regulation 20 and a summary of the main issues raised in those representations?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

2.17 Does the consultation statement comprehensively and succinctly summarise all of the main issues raised in representations made under Regulation 20 and set out the Council’s response to each following the approach set out in the PINS Procedure Guide and PAS guidance[[14]](#footnote-14)?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Doc ref** | **Doc hyperlink** | **Relevant page(s)** |

**Representations**

2.18 Are all of representations made under Regulation 20 formatted and referenced ready to be posted on the examination website in accordance with PINS guidance[[15]](#footnote-15)?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

2.19 Will all of the representations made under Regulation 20 be readily accessible on the examination website, with each representor’s full set of comments available in one downloadable document, and will those documents be ordered alphabetically by representor name?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

**Supporting documents**

2.20 Has the LPA prepared all of the supporting documents which it considers are relevant to the preparation of the plan[[16]](#footnote-16) (ie all of the evidence that is necessary to justify the plan)?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **NO** |  |

**3. Questions relating to potentially significant soundness issues**

3.1 Are there any soundness issues raised in representations made under regulation 20 that could potentially require a significant amount of work to address during the examination?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **YES** |  | **No** |  |

End of validation checklist

1. Each proposed submission and supporting document (Regulation 22) should have a unique reference number agreed with the Programme Officer in accordance with PINS guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plan-examination-webpages-advice-for-local-planning-authorities> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-programme-officers-local-plan-examinations/guidance-for-programme-officers-local-plan-examinations#rolekey-tasks-at-each-stage-of-the-examination> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Cut and paste this explanation box beneath any question that you have given a **RED** capitalised answer to and insert a brief explanation (max 250 words). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plan-examination-webpages-advice-for-local-planning-authorities> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-programme-officers-local-plan-examinations/guidance-for-programme-officers-local-plan-examinations#rolekey-tasks-at-each-stage-of-the-examination> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. A “strategic matter” is (a) sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact in at least two planning areas, including (in particular) sustainable development or use of land for or in connection with infrastructure that is strategic and has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, and (b) sustainable development or use of land in a two-tier area if the development or use is a county matter or would have a significant impact on a county matter [section 33A(4) of the 2004 Act]. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. If the LPA is a London Borough or a Mayoral development corporation. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. SEA Regulation 12(3). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. NPPF 33 and PPG ID:11-001-20190722. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. SEA Regulation 12(2) and PPG ID:11-018-20140306. The subjects listed (a) to (c) are not specified in legislation or national policy, but experience indicates that it may be necessary to identify and appraise reasonable alternatives in relation to them (as well as other elements of the plan as appropriate). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [Calverton PC v Nottingham CC [2015] EWHC 1078 (Admin)](https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2015/1078.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. PPG ID: 65-005 to 007-20190722. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. [Local Plan Reg 22 Consultation Statement | Local Government Association](https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/plan-making/local-plan-review-update/consultation-engagement/local-plan-reg-22-consultation) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plan-examination-webpages-advice-for-local-planning-authorities> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Regulation 22(1)(e). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)