



# Sefton Local Plan Scoping Report

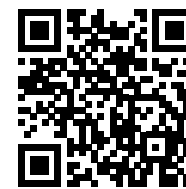
July 2026





# Sefton Local Plan Scoping Report

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# Purpose of This Report

Sefton Council is preparing a new Local Plan to replace the current Local Plan which dates from April 2017.

This report is the first step. It sets out the topics the Plan must address, the issues we already know about, and the questions we want to ask residents,

businesses, and stakeholders at this early stage.

This will help shape the direction and content of the new Local Plan before we begin drafting policies or identifying sites for development.

## What Is a Local Plan?

A Local Plan is the planning document that every Council is required to produce. It will include:

- How much development is needed (including homes, employment, open spaces and leisure facilities, schools, health centres, public transport and shopping)
- Where development should go
- Where development should not go and why land should be protected

- Planning policies used to decide planning applications covering a whole range of issues (set out in this document)
- How growth and regeneration will take place

The Local Plan must include a range of topics set out in national policy but can also focus on local issues.



## Why We Are Preparing a New Local Plan

There are several major reasons why we need a new Local Plan for Sefton:

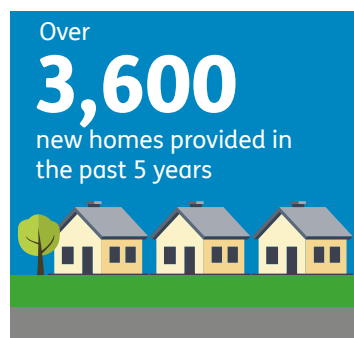
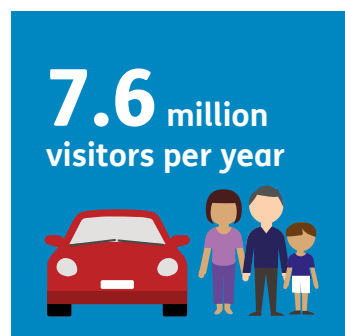
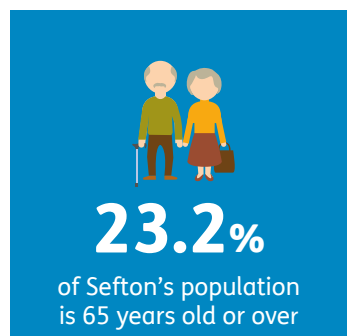
- Changes to national planning policy (including revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework and emerging changes signalled by Government).
- Evidence on how many new homes we need, economic conditions, infrastructure capacity (e.g. schools, medical and dental practices), and environmental constraints.
- Local priorities such as climate change, nature recovery, health and wellbeing, regeneration of town centres, and ensuring the right mix of homes.
- The need for certainty for communities, developers, and infrastructure providers.
- We need to plan for Sefton's development needs for the next decade or so as most of Sefton's current development sites have been built.

Early engagement helps ensure the Local Plan reflects Sefton's needs, opportunities, and challenges.





# About Sefton



# Local Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives

The Local Plan will include a vision for the area for the period of the plan. It should be aspirational but realistic and clearly express how the Council and its residents would like its communities and neighbourhoods to evolve. We would like to hear from you what you think should be in the vision; how you think your area should be in 15-20 years' time. The key topic areas in this document may help with ideas for the vision.

The vision will be supported by up to 10 objectives which will cover the key outcomes that the Local Plan is looking to achieve. These must be measurable so that we can tell if the Local Plan is successful or not. It is likely that the

objectives will be linked to the key topic areas in this document, but we would like to hear through the consultation if you think these are the right priorities.





# Housing Need and Housing Growth

## What the Local Plan Must Do

- Identify the overall number of new homes we require over the plan period.
- Provide a sufficient supply of land for new homes in the right places.
- Ensure we provide a suitable mix of homes, including affordable homes, family homes, homes for first time buyers, homes for older people, homes where care is provided, homes for care leavers, homes for people with mobility issues, and gypsy and traveller pitches.

- Promote well designed, sustainable communities that fit in with existing communities.

## Issues to Consider

- Changes to population and to the number of households, and migration in and out of the Borough.
- The need for different types of housing, including social rent and affordable homes.
- Capacity within existing towns and villages to meet Sefton's housing needs.
- The role of small sites, 'brownfield' land, conversions and infill developments to meet some of Sefton's needs.

- Whether our neighbours (e.g. Liverpool) can meet some of Sefton's housing needs.
- Whether we need to allocate land in the Green Belt to meet some of Sefton's future housing growth.







### Tell us ...

1. **What types of homes does Sefton need most?**
2. **Which areas are suitable for new housing?**
3. **How can new development fit into existing communities?**





# Infrastructure: Transport, Utilities, Digital and Social Infrastructure

## What the Plan Must Do

- Ensure new development is supported by adequate services, facilities and infrastructure.
- Provide for transport, highways, public transport, walking, cycling and wheeling, open spaces and playing fields, schools, health, emergency services, water, energy, and digital connectivity.
- Work with delivery partners (such as the NHS, Local Education Authority, United Utilities etc) to co-ordinate investment and growth.
- Explore ways to secure financial contributions from development to help provide and expand infrastructure.

## Issues to Consider

- Transport capacity and congestion hotspots.
- Bus service integration, rail enhancements, walking, cycling and wheeling routes.
- Making sure schools have enough places for children and taking account of pressures on our healthcare system.
- Electricity grid capacity and water supply infrastructure.
- Digital connectivity.
- Parks, play spaces and sports pitches.





## Tell us ...

1. What infrastructure challenges should the Plan address?
2. Where are infrastructure improvements most needed?
3. How can we make easy for people to move around and access homes, jobs, shopping, education, hobbies and other services.





# Economy, Employment, and Skills

## What the Plan Must Do

- Identify future needs for employment land and premises.
- Provide a sufficient supply of land for employment uses in the right places so that jobs are in easy reach of workers.
- Provide space for new businesses to start and for small and medium sized businesses to grow.
- Support key employment sectors, including digital and creative, financial, logistics, port related activity, construction, supply chain businesses, health, tourism, and the visitor economy.
- Protect important employment areas while allowing flexibility for new business sectors.
- Encourage a range of businesses that can provide a range of different job opportunities.
- Help secure job opportunities for local people from new development, including young people, care leavers, long-term unemployed, and people with mobility challenges.

## Issues to Consider

- That some areas have higher levels of unemployment and lower educational and training attainment than others.
- That different businesses have different land and premises requirements.
- Changing working patterns (working from home) that have changed what space some businesses need and what space people need at home to work.



- Supporting businesses to grow whilst avoiding or mitigating the impact of businesses on our residents.
- Enabling businesses to access a well-trained and plentiful workforce who can get to jobs by different types of transport.

### Tell us ...

1. **Where should new employment development be located?**
2. **How can the Local Plan support business growth and local jobs?**
3. **How can the Local Plan help secure job and training opportunities for Sefton's residents?**





# Town Centres and Shopping

## What the Local Plan Must Do

- Set out a strategy for Sefton's main centres, including Southport, Bootle, Maghull, Netherton, Formby, Ainsdale, Birkdale, Churchtown, Aintree (Old Roan), Seaforth, Crosby and Waterloo.
- Help provide a range of uses in Sefton's smaller local centres and shopping parades.
- Support appropriate shopping, leisure, culture, events and commercial uses in appropriate places.



## Issues to Consider

- Reduced demand for traditional retail space has resulted in a large number of vacancies in Sefton's centres and parades.
- Opportunities for new homes in centres where appropriate but restricting poor quality conversions.
- The role of high streets in community life and economic growth.



- Night-time economy opportunities and how best to manage these.
- Need to try to restrict the number of fast-food takeaways in most deprived areas and close to schools.







**Tell us ...**

- 1. What role should each centre play in the future?**
- 2. What improvements would help revitalise our centres?**



# Regeneration

## What the Local Plan Must Do

- Identify key areas and sectors for regeneration.
- Promote policies that support regeneration and change.
- Maximise the re-use of vacant and derelict land and buildings.
- Support appropriate opportunities to remediate degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.

## Issues to Consider

- A number of larger towns in Sefton have an industrial legacy which has left vacant but contaminated land.
- Cost of cleaning contaminated land can restrict new development opportunities.
- The benefits of regenerating areas are huge and can bring pride and activity to Sefton's communities and helps reduce deprivation.

- The more land in our towns we can redevelop, reduces the amount of green field land that may be needed.
- Parts of Sefton attract a lot of visitors who support jobs for local people.
- The role of Sefton's natural assets (e.g. coast) in regeneration and the need to ensure they are managed appropriately.







## Tell us ...

1. Which areas of Sefton should be a priority for regeneration?
2. How can more visitors be attracted to the borough and be encouraged to stay?





# Climate Change, Energy, and Low Carbon Development

## What the Local Plan Must Do

- Support Sefton's response to a changing climate.
- Plan for renewable energy, carbon reduction, and adapting to changes in our climate.
- Promote sustainable design and construction.
- Consider the risk from flooding and coastal change when identifying land for development.

## Issues to Consider

- Risk of flooding and change to our coastline.
- Heatwaves, surface water drainage, and green infrastructure.
- Low to zero carbon development and energy efficiency in new developments.
- Opportunities for solar, wind, and district heating.







## Tell us ...

1. How should the Local Plan help reduce carbon emissions?
2. Where could renewable energy or nature based solutions be located?
3. How could the risk from flooding and coastal change impact development?





# Natural Environment, Biodiversity, and Green Belt

## What the Local Plan Must Do

- Protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological networks.
- Safeguard valued landscapes, open spaces, parks, and Sefton's coast.
- Plan to manage recreational pressure on Sefton's internationally protected coast.
- Review Green Belt boundaries only if necessary and supported by evidence.
- Respond to the government's new policies on Green Belt.

## Issues to Consider

- New national requirements for biodiversity net gain.
- The capacity of existing habitats to absorb additional visitor pressure.
- Opportunities for new nature networks including applying the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- That nature should be considered as critical infrastructure.







**Tell us ...**

1. **Which natural areas do communities value most?**
2. **How should the Plan balance development with environmental protection?**





# Health, Wellbeing, and Social Inclusion

## What the Local Plan Must Do

- Support healthy lifestyles through planning.
- Address inequalities and ensure services are accessible.
- Plan for accessible open spaces, nature, sports facilities, and community infrastructure.
- Ensure all communities have access to affordable, nutritious, and fresh food.

- Limit the expansion of poor quality, unhealthy food and fast food, particularly in low income areas and close to schools and colleges.
- Make sure places are safe and crime and the fear of crime are addressed so people feel confident to use community spaces.
- Help reduce pollution, including air, noise and water pollution.

## Issues to Consider

- Parts of Sefton are ranked high for deprivation and there are huge disparities in health across the borough.
- The need to promote healthy ageing and access to healthcare.
- Poor air quality in key locations.
- Safety, community cohesion, and inclusive design.
- The role of nature in improving health and wellbeing.







## Tell us ...

1. **What helps create healthy and safe neighbourhoods for all?**
2. **How can the Local Plan address inequalities?**
3. **How can the Local Plan help reduce pollution?**



# Design, Placemaking, and Heritage

## What the Local Plan Must Do

- Set clear expectations for high-quality design.
- Protect and enhance heritage assets and conservation areas.
- Incorporate national design guidance and local character.

## Issues to Consider

- Ensuring quality and character in new developments.
- Protecting the heritage in Sefton's towns and villages and bringing back into viable use vacant and derelict assets.
- Buildings, outdoor areas and neighbourhoods that are well-designed and 'fit for purpose' and easy to adapt to people's needs and mobility.

- The role of open space, landscaping and recreation areas in well-designed places.
- Designing to make places accessible and create lifetime neighbourhoods.







**Tell us ...**

- 1. What makes places in Sefton distinctive?**
- 2. How can new development improve the character of the borough?**



# Minerals, Waste, and Resource Management

## What the Plan Must Do

- Ensure a steady and adequate supply of construction materials.
- Plan for waste facilities in line with national and regional strategies.
- Encourage sustainable use of resources.

## Issues to Consider

- The need for and location of any new waste facilities.
- Safeguarding of mineral resources.
- Reducing construction waste and promoting recycling.
- Whether minerals and waste matters should be included in the Local Plan or as often is the case, in a separate document at the Merseyside level.





## Tell us ...

1. Are there particular issues with waste or recycling infrastructure?
2. Are there any new types of waste infrastructure needed?
3. How should Sefton plan for long term resource use?
4. Should a separate Waste Plan be prepared rather than as part of the Local Plan?





# Coastal Change, Flood Risk, and Water Management

## What the Local Plan Must Do

- Manage development in areas at risk of flooding or erosion and ensure areas at most risk are left undeveloped.
- Plan for long term coastal change and resilience.
- Ensure sustainable drainage systems are incorporated when needed in new development.

## Issues to Consider

- The changing nature of Sefton's coastline.
- Sea, river and surface water flood risks and how these can impact the location of new development.
- Working in partnership working with the Environment Agency and United Utilities.







### Tell us ...

1. How should the Plan respond to coastal and flood risk challenges?
2. Where are drainage or flooding issues most significant?





# Evidence Base

The Local Plan must be supported by a comprehensive evidence base. This will include:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment – this looks at the amount of housing needed and includes an assessment of how many of those homes should be market, affordable, to meet a specialist need, and the mix of house sizes (number of bedrooms).
- Housing Land Availability Assessment – this looks at how much land we have available in Sefton to meet our identified housing needs and identifies where that land is.

- Employment Land and Premises Study – this looks at how much land we have available in Sefton to meet our identified employment needs and identifies where that land is.
- Retail and Town Centre Study – this looks at the current health of the centres in Sefton and how they should change to be successful. The study will also look at if there is a need for additional retail floorspace in the borough and where this could go.

- Infrastructure Delivery Plan – this report will look at the current capacity issues with a range of services and infrastructure (e.g. schools, health facilities, utilities, public transport, playing fields, parks and open spaces, community buildings and spaces), identify where improvements are necessary and how these will be secured.
- Transport Modelling and Strategy – this will look at the impact of where we propose new development and assess whether the transport network can cope if upgrades and investment are needed or whether the amount of development should be reduced.
- Flood Risk Assessments – these will assess flood risks from all sources and help determine which are the preferred sites for new development and which sites should be left undeveloped.





- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Studies – these will look at which areas in Sefton have important biodiversity and ecological value and which areas are important to retain for their landscape, recreational or agricultural value.
- Viability assessments – these will determine what benefits can be secured from new development and will ensure that what the Council ask for does not make a development unviable, and therefore unlikely to be built.

- Integrated Assessment – this is the name given to an assessment that will consider the social, economic, environmental, health and equality impacts of the proposed Local Plan and suggest ways policies can be improved to maximise benefits and reduce harm.
- Habitats Assessments, including an assessment required by law of the impact of the Local Plan on internationally important nature sites.

The evidence will be commissioned, published and updated as the plan progresses.

Additionally, the Local Plan will take account of a range of strategies and plans that the Council have published, will be published or updated during the Local Plan process. These will include:

- Sefton Council Corporate Plan
- Sefton Economic Strategy
- Visitor Economy Strategy
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Sefton's Climate Change Emergency Plan
- Local Transport Plan
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan





# Cross Boundary Matters

Sefton will work with neighbouring councils, statutory bodies, and infrastructure providers to address issues that cross local authority boundaries, such as:

- Housing markets
- Transport links
- Shared regeneration opportunities

- Port and logistics growth
- Coastal change
- Nature Recovery
- Waste and minerals planning
- Water and utilities infrastructure

Early engagement will help shape this shared work.





# Engagement Approach

We would like to hear from residents and others about how we engage on the Local Plan so that you can comment and feed in your ideas. The following is a list of activities that we can choose to do for the Local Plan (subject to resources):

- Online surveys and reports
- Public engagement sessions across the borough
- Engagement with town and parish councils, community and voluntary groups, businesses, young people, and hard to reach groups
- Engagement with businesses through Invest Sefton and the Sefton Economic Forum

- Conversations with infrastructure providers and key stakeholders
- Promotion through social media, local media, and Council website
- Letter/leaflets to each household
- Documents available in libraries and other key locations
- Interactive website with videos and other engaging material

- Making documents and reports available in different formats so they are easy to read and understand.

Please let us know what the best way is to get your views on the Local Plan as it progresses through its various stages.





## Next Steps

The stages involved in a Local Plan are clearly defined in government regulations. Following this stage, the Council will work on an initial draft of the Local Plan content, taking account of comments made at this stage and a range of evidence it has. The first draft of the Local Plan will be available for public comment during the latter half of 2027. The second draft of the Local Plan will be available for public comment during 2028.





## Conclusion

This Scoping Report marks the first step in preparing a new Local Plan for Sefton. We want to work with residents, businesses, and organisations to shape a plan that delivers the homes, jobs, infrastructure and services, and environment the borough needs for the next 15-20 years.

This early engagement is crucial in setting the direction of the Plan, identifying what matters to you, and ensuring the Plan reflects the aspirations of communities across Sefton.



## How to Comment

Comments can be made through the Council's online Consultation Portal - **Sefton Council - Citizen Space**

By email to [local.plan@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:local.plan@sefton.gov.uk)

By post to **Planning Department,  
Magdalen House, Trinity Road, Bootle  
L20 3NJ**

Comments should be received no later than midnight on **18th September 2026**.





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