This Gateway 1 Self-Assessment has been prepared using the Government's self-assessment template. The template advises that each sections should be limited to 250 words. The following responses provide a summary of the progress made to date in preparing the new Stroud District Local Plan and establishing the foundations for subsequent stages of plan preparation.

How we got ready to prepare a new local plan

We officially started preparing a new local plan for Stroud District Council on 30 October 2026.

Government policy says we should adopt the new plan within 30 months of this date. This is to help ensure we have an up-to-date local plan that responds to the needs of the area and our communities.

This self-assessment explains what we did to get ready to meet the 30-month timeframe. It also has links to further information and where you can get updates.

We published a timetable for preparing the plan

The timetable has been prepared to provide a clear and realistic pathway to plan adoption within the Government's proposed 30-month plan-making timeframe. It demonstrates how plan preparation, evidence production, statutory consultation, examination and adoption will be sequenced and managed to maintain progress towards adoption. Key dependencies and decision points have been identified to support effective project management and governance.

The timetable will be monitored and reviewed throughout the plan-making process to ensure it remains achievable and reflects progress made at each Gateway stage. At this stage, the Council is satisfied that the programme provides a credible route to submission and adoption within the expected timeframe, subject to the normal risks associated with plan preparation and the examination process.

Local Plan Timetable (2026-Adoption)

We established project management and governance arrangements

The Council has established project management and governance arrangements to support preparation of the Local Plan within the proposed 30-month timeframe. Officer responsibilities, programme management arrangements and reporting processes have been defined to provide effective oversight of plan preparation, monitor progress against key milestones and manage risks as the programme develops.

To support Member engagement and oversight, the Council has proposed the establishment of a Strategic Planning Advisory Board (SPAB), with revised Terms of Reference currently progressing through the Council’s approval process. SPAB will be a cross-party advisory board comprising elected members and senior officers and will

provide a dedicated forum for consideration of strategic planning matters, including preparation of the Local Plan, emerging evidence, programme progress, key policy issues and strategic risks.

The governance framework establishes clear reporting lines between officers, SPAB and the Council's formal decision-making committees. In relation to Local Plan preparation, SPAB will provide advice and recommendations to Strategy and Resources Committee, while also supporting wider Member engagement through regular reporting to political groups on programme milestones, key developments and emerging issues.

The Council considers that these arrangements provide a proportionate and effective framework for managing plan preparation, maintaining Member involvement and supporting the timely progression of the Local Plan through future Gateway stages.

We planned how we'll consult on the plan

The Council has undertaken a scoping consultation to seek views on the issues that should be addressed through the new Local Plan and on how communities would like to be engaged throughout the plan-making process. The consultation has informed the Council's emerging engagement approach and is helping to shape future consultation activities.

A consultation and engagement strategy is being developed to ensure opportunities to participate are accessible, proportionate and reach a wide range of stakeholders and communities. The Council intends to use a range of engagement methods throughout plan preparation, including online consultation platforms, surveys, email communications, public events, workshops and targeted stakeholder engagement.

Initial analysis of the scoping consultation responses indicates strong support for meaningful and transparent public engagement throughout the Local Plan process. Respondents generally favoured a blended approach combining digital engagement methods, particularly online surveys and email updates, with some face-to-face opportunities such as workshops, drop-in events and public meetings.

Key themes included the importance of clear communication, greater involvement of Town and Parish Councils, engagement with younger people and under-represented groups, and ensuring communities can understand how their feedback has influenced decisions. These findings will be used to refine future consultation activities and support effective community participation throughout the preparation of the Local Plan.

We began scoping the content of the plan

The Council has commenced the scoping stage of plan preparation by collating baseline information on the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the district and identifying the evidence required to support preparation of the new Local Plan. This work is being used to identify the key issues, opportunities and challenges

that the plan will need to address, while recognising that no decisions have yet been made regarding sites, growth distribution or the preferred spatial strategy.

Baseline information is being assembled from a range of sources, including the Authority Monitoring Report, housing delivery and five-year housing land supply monitoring, employment land monitoring, infrastructure planning evidence, demographic and affordability data, transport evidence, environmental information, and data relating to climate change, biodiversity and the natural environment. The Council has also commissioned a Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) and a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment to establish an up-to-date understanding of future development requirements.

Alongside evidence gathering, the Council has undertaken a district-wide scoping consultation and a programme of workshops with key stakeholders, elected members, town and parish councils, infrastructure providers and statutory consultees. These exercises have helped identify local priorities, infrastructure considerations, opportunities and constraints, and areas where further evidence will be required. Reports summarising the outcomes of the consultation and workshop programme have been published and are available on the Council's website. The Council has also commenced early discussions with Gloucestershire County Council, National Highways and other relevant partners regarding both local highway and Strategic Road Network considerations, including matters relating to M5 Junctions 12, 13 and 14, to inform the scope of future transport evidence and infrastructure planning.

Emerging themes identified through the evidence gathering and engagement undertaken to date include housing affordability, economic growth, infrastructure delivery, transport connectivity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity enhancement with a strong protection of the environment, and the provision of community facilities and services.

The Council is also considering relevant national planning policy changes and emerging evidence from Gloucestershire County Council, neighbouring authorities and other key stakeholders. As plan preparation progresses, the Council will continue to develop its evidence base and monitoring framework to inform the plan vision, objectives and future spatial strategy. This work will support the identification and testing of reasonable growth and spatial strategy options, ensuring future decisions are based on a robust understanding of the district's needs, opportunities and constraints.

All Summer 2026 consultation summary documents are available on the dedicated Gateway 1 webpage: Stroud District Local Plan 2026: Gateway 1 - due 30th October 2026

Section 5 - The Council has commenced work on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) required to support preparation of the Local Plan. The SEA will

identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Local Plan and reasonable alternatives, helping to ensure environmental considerations are embedded throughout plan preparation from the outset.

The Council has appointed specialist SEA consultants to provide technical support and advice throughout the plan-making process. Early specialist input informed the development of SEA-related questions included within the initial scoping consultation, helping to ensure environmental considerations formed part of the Council's early engagement activities and evidence gathering.

Work will now begin on the SEA scoping stage, including the identification and review of relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives, the collection of baseline environmental information and the consideration of key environmental issues affecting the district. This work will inform the development of the SEA framework and methodology that will be used to assess the likely significant effects of the Local Plan and reasonable alternatives. The Council is also considering associated assessment requirements, including Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), to ensure environmental considerations are integrated and aligned across the evidence base and plan-making process.

The SEA will play a key role in the identification and appraisal of reasonable growth and spatial strategy options as plan preparation progresses. The Council will continue to prepare the SEA alongside the Local Plan, ensuring that environmental, climate change, landscape, biodiversity, heritage and wider sustainability considerations are integrated into plan preparation. This will support a transparent, proportionate and robust assessment process as the Local Plan progresses through future Gateway stages.

How to stay up to date

The next stage of public consultation is currently scheduled in the published timetable for **summer 2027**. This consultation will provide an opportunity for residents, businesses, landowners, community groups and other stakeholders to comment on emerging Local Plan options and help shape the future of the district.

If you would like to be involved in the preparation of the Local Plan and receive updates on consultation events, evidence studies and key milestones, please ensure you are registered on the Council's consultation database at **local.plan.gov.uk**.

Registering will enable you to receive Local Plan news and notifications directly, including details of future consultation and engagement opportunities. The Council's Local Plan webpage will also be updated regularly as plan preparation progresses, providing access to the latest evidence, consultation reports, programme updates and key documents.

All interested parties are encouraged to register to ensure they are kept informed and have the opportunity to participate as the Local Plan moves forward and consult the new local plan homepage: New Local Plan (2026-Adoption)