

Mendip Local Plan Part II Limited Update: Submission Version

REPRESENTATION FORM - GUIDANCE NOTES

If you need any further information or advice, please contact the Planning Policy Team via e-mail: planningpolicyeast@somerset.gov.uk or by telephone: (0300) 123 2224

What can I make comments on?

The Limited Update includes housing sites to provide an additional 505 dwellings, as required under the directions of the High Court. Representations are invited on the Submission Policies and supporting documents.

In the Submission Local Plan Limited Update, you can make representations on the following documents and supporting information:

- Mendip Local Plan Part II (Sites and Policies) 2006-2029 Limited Update – Regulation 19 Submission Version (June 2024)
- Sustainability Appraisal Report – Submission Version (June 2024)
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report – Submission Version (June 2024)
- Habitat Regulations Assessment – June 2024
- Changes to the Local Plan Part II Policies Map

You can also refer to any of the published supporting information. These will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate with the Plan. These include:

- Site and settlement assessments / maps of assessed sites
- Consultation Statement (Regulation 19)
- Site Selection and Deliverability Report
- Duty to Co-operate Statement of Compliance
- Equalities Assessment

Representations must relate to either the legal compliance or soundness of the Limited Update. Details on what these terms mean are provided below.

If you made a response on the draft plan consultation then these should be re-submitted at this stage.

What should I not make responses on?

- The policies, sites and matters already adopted in Local Plan Part I or II
- More general issues or complaints to the Council which are outside the scope of the Plan (*although these may be passed to other officers in the Council*)
- Matters more appropriately included in the new Somerset Local Plan being prepared by the Unitary Council
- Sites located wholly outside the former Mendip District Council area.
- Comments which relate to planning applications under consideration

Do I have to use the online response form?

The Council would prefer all representations to use the response form on the Consultation Portal ([Somerset Council - Citizen Space](#)).

This helps both the Council and the Inspector summarise and review the main issues for examination. If necessary, you can make comments in a letter or e-mail, but these must have your contact details (address) and identify the policy or site you are responding to. Please be as succinct as possible.

Responses will be published (with names but no other personal details) and submitted with the Local Plan Limited Update. Supporting information should be uploaded onto the Consultation Portal if possible. Please include your name on any supplementary information sent to us - so it can be attached to your representations.

Representations must be in writing. Issues raised through the contact centre or discussions with officers or Councillors are not considered as representations. The same applies to unattributed messages via email or social media.

Can I submit representations on behalf of a group or neighbourhood?

The Council welcomes submissions from groups who share a common view on how they wish to see a policy changed. Please bear in mind that a single representation will be as effective as a large number of individuals submitting separate representations which repeat the same points.

On the Form..... What does legally compliant mean?

Legally compliant is essentially asking whether or not the proposed plan follows the proper procedures in line with planning and environmental legislation.

You should consider the following before making a representation on legal compliance:

- The plan should be included in the LPA's current Local Development Scheme [LDS] and the key stages set out in the LDS should have been followed. The LDS is effectively a programme of work prepared by the LPA, setting out the plans it proposes to produce. The Somerset Local Development Scheme (October 2023) can be found here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/local-development-scheme/> Since publication, timescales for the Limited Update have been amended by the High Court.
- The process of community involvement for the plan in question should be in general accordance with the Somerset Statement of Community Involvement [SCI]. The SCI sets out the LPA's strategy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of plans and the consideration of planning applications. The statement of community involvement can be found here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/statement-of-community-involvement/>
- The LPA is required to undertake Sustainability Appraisal as part of the plan making process and produce a report when it publishes a plan. This should identify the process by which SA has been carried out, and the baseline information used to inform the process and the outcomes of that process. SA is a tool for assessing the extent to which the plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives. SA reports are published with the Regulation 19 documents.

- The plan should comply with requirements in planning legislation.
- The LPA is required engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with neighbouring authorities and certain other bodies over strategic matters during the preparation of the plan. This is known as the ‘Duty to Co-operate’/ Evidence of this is set out in the DTC statement found here:
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/adopted-local-plans/?district=Mendip>

What does ‘soundness’ mean?

Soundness may be considered in the context of its ordinary meaning of ‘fit for purpose’, ‘showing good judgement’ or ‘able to be trusted’.

The Inspector will use the Examination process to explore and investigate the plan, including any main modifications, against the four ‘tests of soundness’ as outlined in National Planning Policy Framework (para 35) which are outlined below:

- (a) Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- (b) Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- (c) Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- (d) Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

Do I need to appear at the public hearings (examination)?

This question is to assist the Local Plan Inspector which individuals and organisations wish to take an active part in the public hearings stage. The Inspector determines who appears at this stage to present evidence and this will reflect the issues to be examined. Usually, the appointed Inspector will recontact respondents when setting up hearings. All hearings are open to the public to attend. No greater significance is attached to representations discussed at the hearings than those submitted as written representations.

Can I submit comments after the deadline? (11.59pm 12th August 2024)

Representations and evidence submitted after the deadline take the risk of being rejected from consideration. Please contact the policy team for advice if your representations are going to be later than the deadline. Ultimately, the Local Plan Inspector determines whether late representations are taken into account.

Will my representations be acknowledged?

Representations made on the consultation portal will be acknowledged automatically. The Council will publish a list of individuals and organisations making representations after the publication period closes.

Can I see or check representations made at Reg 18 Stage?

These are not published online but there is a summary in the Consultation Report found here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/adopted-local-plans/?district=Mendip>

Will the Council make changes to the Plan?

After the Publication period has concluded, the Council will review the representations and make a schedule of matters and issues raised. The timescales for the submission of the Limited Update means that the Council will not propose any material changes before submission.

Where can I find more information on the Examination Process?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-local-plans-procedural-practice/procedure-guide-for-local-plan-examinations>