

Government Consultation on Plan-Making Reforms

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The government has previously consulted on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and, as noted elsewhere, we await their response to the results of that consultation.
- 1.2. On 25th July 2023, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities published an open consultation titled “Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms.” This report briefly sets out the purpose of that consultation and the time limit for a response.

2. SCOPE OF CONSULTATION

- 2.1. The consultation seeks views on the government’s proposals to implement the parts of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which relate to plan-making, to make plans simpler, faster to prepare and more accessible.
- 2.2. The consultation, whilst hosted online, runs to eighty-eight pages when printed, with forty-three directly posed questions. The Planning Policy team have begun the process of assessing its content to gain an understanding of the implications for Stockport and will draft a proposed response to the questions. The consultation can be viewed in full at [Plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/plan-making-reforms-consultation-on-implementation)
- 2.3. The government’s stated aim is for plans to be simpler to understand and use, and positively shaped by the views of communities about how their area should evolve. It is intended that plans should clearly show what is planned in a local area – so that communities and other users of the plan can engage with them more easily, especially while they are being drawn up.
- 2.4. The government also wants plans to be prepared more quickly and updated more frequently to ensure more planning authorities have up-to-date plans that reflect local needs which will reduce uncertainty, which the government has identified as a critical issue. This process is intended to make the best use of new digital technology to drive improved productivity and efficiency in the plan-making process.
- 2.5. The government is seeking views on:
 - a proposed set of core principles for local plan content;
 - a new requirement for plans to include focused, specific and measurable visions, shaped by community views and informed by key baseline information;
 - a framework for local development management policies; and
 - an approach to nationally defined digital templates, to help authorities draw up better plans more easily and enable more consistency, whilst maintaining space for flexibility

2.6. There is significant detail in the document, however, perhaps the most relevant for future plan-making relates to the proposed 30-month timeframe. The government's diagram for this is shown below (Fig.1). As part of any potential changes the government is also consulting on possible transitional arrangements from the current to the new plan-making system.

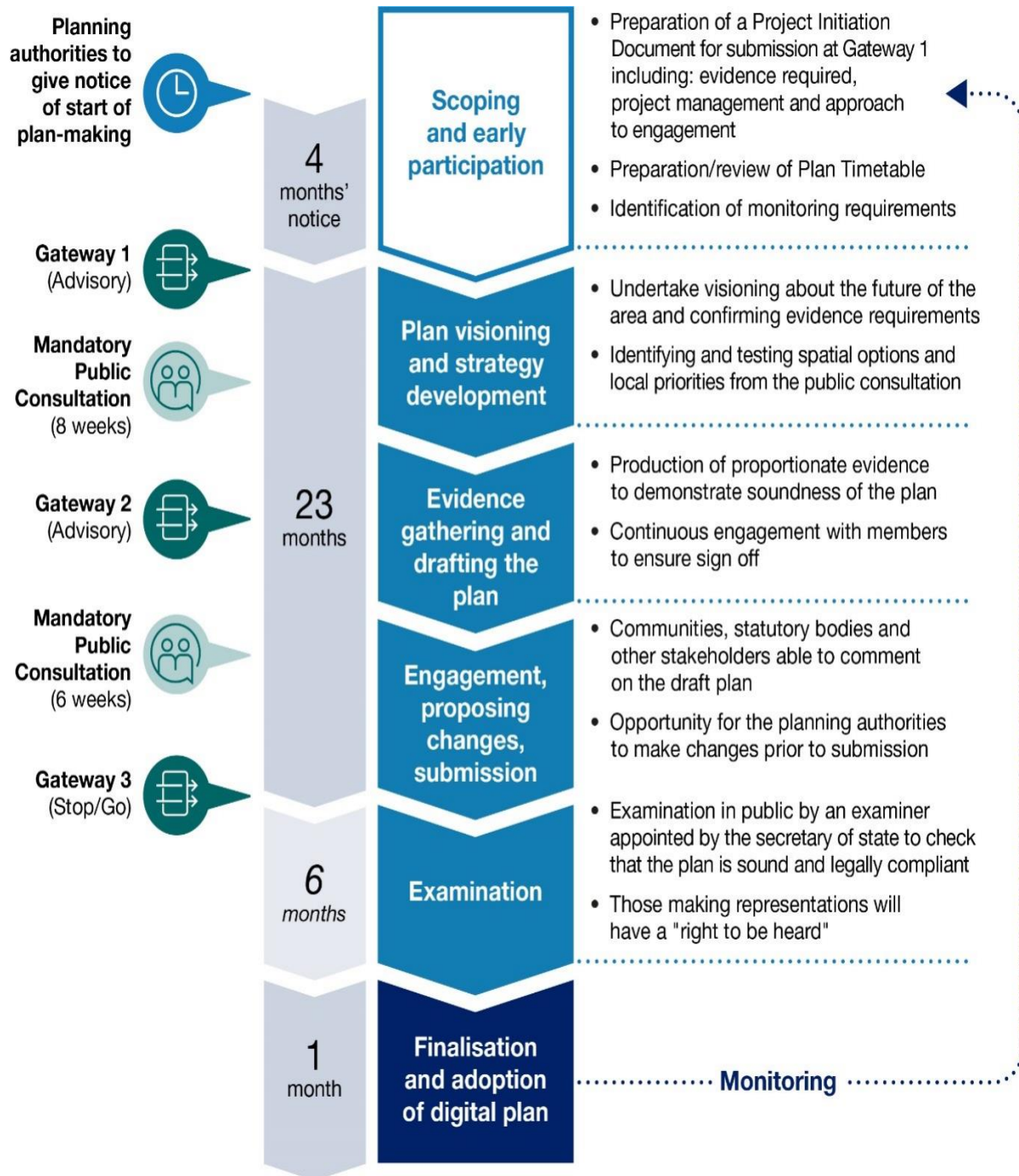


Fig. 1 The proposed 30-month plan timeframe

3. RESPONSE DEADLINE

- 3.1. The consultation closes on 18th October 2023. At this stage, the Planning Policy team is still considering the document, its implications and the proposed response from the council.
- 3.2. It will be necessary for the council's response to be finalised in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Housing.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.

Anyone requiring further information should contact Steve Johnson on 0161 474 3509, or by email to steven.johnson@stockport.gov.uk