



## Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan Examination Guidance Note

**Inspectors:** G Davies BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI  
U P Han BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI  
F Bradley BRP (NZ) MRTPI

**Programme Officer:** Ian Kemp, [ian@localplanservices.co.uk](mailto:ian@localplanservices.co.uk)

**Examination Webpage:** [Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan Examination](#)

21 May 2026

---

### Introduction

1. The Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (hereafter referred to as the Plan) was submitted for examination on 22 December 2025. This note provides guidance on the procedural and administrative arrangements for the examination.
2. All participants should familiarise themselves with the contents of this note, particularly those who intend to submit written statements and/or participate in the hearing sessions.
3. Inspectors G Davies BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI, U P Han BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI and F Bradley BRP (NZ) MRTPI have been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine the Plan.

### Programme officer

4. The programme officer for the examination is Ian Kemp, who works independently of the Councils, under the appointed Inspectors' direction. The main tasks of the programme officer are to act as a channel of communication between the Inspectors and all parties, to facilitate the smooth running of the examination and to ensure that all documents received are recorded and distributed.
5. Any procedural questions or other matters that you wish to raise should be made through the programme officer. Please let him know if you have any specific needs in relation to attendance or participation at the hearing. His contact details are as follows (email is preferred):

Local Plan Services  
PO Box 241  
Droitwich  
Worcestershire WR9 1DW  
Email: [ian@localplanservices.co.uk](mailto:ian@localplanservices.co.uk)  
Phone: 07723 009166

## **Examination website**

6. All documents associated with the examination are available to view on the examination website: [Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan Examination](#). The website will be updated with any news and additional documents relevant to the examination.
7. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the programme officer who will make alternative arrangements.

## **Role of the Inspectors**

8. The role of the Inspectors is to examine whether the Plan has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is sound. To be sound the Plan needs to meet the tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The tests are that the Plan should be:
  - 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;
  - justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
  - 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
  - consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.
9. The Inspectors will work with the Councils and participants in the examination in a positive, proactive and pragmatic manner. However, it is not their role to make improvements to the Plan, provided that it is sound and legally compliant.
10. All written and oral representations made during the Regulation 19 consultation and examination will be considered by the Inspectors. However, the examination will focus on those matters which the Inspectors consider to be material to legal compliance and soundness and their subsequent report will not necessarily reference every representation made.

## **The examination**

11. The examination is likely to move through the following stages, which are set out in the [Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations](#). These are:
  - preparation of hearing statements in advance of the hearing sessions
  - hearing sessions

- consultation on any main modifications (necessary changes to the plan)
  - the final report
12. The timing and stages are subject to change depending on how the examination proceeds. For example, there may be additional stages if the Inspectors find that more evidence needs to be prepared.
13. There are three possible outcomes to the examination:
- the submitted plan is sound and legally compliant
  - the submitted plan is not sound and/or legally compliant but could be made so by changes known as main modifications, if necessary following the preparation of additional evidence
  - the submitted plan is not sound and/ or is not legally compliant and could not be made so. In such an outcome the Inspectors are likely to recommend that the Councils withdraw the Plan.

### **Changes to the Plan**

14. The starting point for the examination is that the Councils have submitted a Plan that they consider to be legally compliant and sound. Now that the Plan has been submitted for examination there are only two means by which changes can be made to it:
- main modifications recommended by the Inspectors
  - additional (minor) modifications made by the Councils
15. The Inspectors can only recommend main modifications if they are necessary to make the submitted plan legally compliant and/or sound. Main modifications are changes which, either alone or in combination with others, would materially alter the plan or its policies. Any potential main modifications are likely to be subject to public consultation and may require further sustainability appraisal and/or Habitats Regulations Assessment.
16. Additional modifications are changes which do not materially affect the policies in the Plan. They may be made by the Councils on adoption and do not fall within the scope of the examination. The Councils are accountable for any additional modifications that are made.
17. The Councils have prepared schedules of main and additional modifications that they propose should be made to the Plan (GNC4A and GNC4B). These schedules replace an earlier combined document (SD11). As part of the examination, the Inspectors will consider whether any of the suggested changes are necessary as main modifications for the Plan to be sound and legally compliant. Interested parties are invited to comment on the Councils' proposed modifications where relevant.
18. In addition to the Councils' proposed modifications, the Inspectors will consider modifications suggested by other participants, and any modifications they consider are necessary to make the Plan sound and legally compliant. These main modifications will be subject to further consultation in due course.

19. The Plan is accompanied by proposed changes to the Policies Maps (SD3). While the proposed changes to the Policies Maps are not subject to examination, it is necessary that they illustrate geographically the application of policies in the Plan.

### **Representations made on the Plan**

20. The Councils have prepared a Consultation Statement (SD6) along with appendices. These include details of the consultations that have taken place on the Plan, a summary of the main issues raised in the representations, and the Councils' responses to those representations.
21. For the purposes of the Plan which has been submitted for examination (SD/2), the Regulation 19 consultation representations are those set out on the examination website under 'Regulation 19 Representations – 2025'. However, for the avoidance of doubt we will also have regard to representations made in response to the consultation on an earlier iteration of the Plan, which are set out on the examination website under 'Regulation 19 Representations – 2024'.

### **Consideration of alternative site allocations**

22. Some representations have proposed that different or additional sites to those included in the submitted Plan should be allocated for development. These are sometimes referred to as 'omission sites.'
23. Representors should note that it is not part of the Inspectors' role to examine the soundness of omission sites. Such sites will not normally be discussed at the hearings. Should it be the case that additional or alternative sites need to be included in the Plan to make it sound, the Inspectors would look to the Councils in the first instance to respond to that issue.

### **Initial Questions to the Councils**

24. Following the Inspectors' initial assessment of the Plan, a number of initial questions were raised seeking further information and clarification on certain points (ID1 and ID2). The Councils' responses to the initial questions are available to view on the examination website (GNC1 and GNC4 with appendices).

### **Matters, Issues and Questions**

25. Following consideration of all the evidence and representations, and the Councils' responses to the initial questions, the Inspectors have published their Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) that will be the focus of the examination and the basis for discussion at the hearing. Representors are invited to respond to the MIQs in writing and/or in person at the examination hearing.

### **Written statements**

26. Representors may submit written statements **but only on the questions raised in the MIQs relevant to the representation(s) they submitted at Regulation 19 consultation stage.** The Councils should provide written statements responding to all the MIQs.
27. Written statements should be a **maximum of 3,000 words per Issue.** The word limit does not include appendices. Appendices should only be included if they are directly relevant and necessary and should not be used as a means of increasing the word count. There is no need to re-submit Regulation 19 consultation representations as part of hearing statements, as these are already part of the evidence that will be considered by the Inspectors.
28. In preparing statements, you should:
- clearly identify the numbered question(s) you are seeking to answer
  - only answer the question(s) which are of direct relevance to your original representation(s) made at Regulation 19 consultation (referencing the representation ID number)
  - submit a separate statement for each Issue and/or Strategic Allocation
  - where relevant, state whether any of the Councils' suggested modifications would resolve any of your concerns and make the Plan sound.
  - where relevant, suggest modifications that in your view would make the Plan legally compliant and/or sound
  - not introduce new evidence or arguments or comment on matters which go beyond the scope of the Inspectors' questions
  - ensure compliance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations and not contain any personal details such as names, email addresses or telephone numbers
  - If you use artificial intelligence to create or alter any part of your statement you should make this clear and follow the Planning Inspectorate's guidance.
29. The Councils' statements should also be focussed and succinct but because they have to answer every question, it may be necessary for them to exceed the word count.
30. **All written statements should be submitted to the programme officer no later than 17:00 on Friday, 26 June 2026.**
31. Written statements will be posted on the examination website, so that they are available to all participants and anyone else who wishes to read them. As they will be available in this way, they will not be circulated directly to participants. However, anyone who is unable to access them on the website should contact the programme officer to make alternative arrangements for viewing.
32. Other than these statements no other written evidence will be accepted, unless the Inspectors specifically request it.

## **Examination hearing**

33. An important part of the examination will be the hearing which provides a forum to test whether the Plan is legally compliant and sound, concentrating on the key issues and matters that require further discussion. The MIQs will form the basis of the discussion at the hearing.
34. The hearing will be a public event, and anyone may attend as an observer. However, **only those who have made representation(s) seeking to change the Plan have a right to participate in the hearings.**
35. **Any representor eligible to make a representation to the examination who wishes to participate at the hearing should advise the programme officer of that intention in writing no later than 17:00 on Friday, 19 June 2026, stating which session(s) they wish to attend and the Issue(s) and/or Strategic Allocation(s) they wish to discuss.** Confirmation is required by all those wishing to attend the hearing, including those who indicated a desire to attend at the Regulation 19 stages.
36. It is important to stress that written representations carry the same weight as those made orally at a hearing session. Therefore, participation at the hearing is only likely to be beneficial if you want to participate in the discussion on the MIQs, as relevant to your written representations.
37. Representors who are not seeking changes to the Plan, including those who have made representations supporting it, do not have a right to take part in the hearings. However, the Inspectors may invite additional participants to take part in particular hearing sessions if they think that would assist them in assessing the soundness and legal compliance of the Plan. Where the Inspectors already have sufficient information, they may not need to consider a particular issue further at the hearing.
38. The hearing will be led by the Inspectors as a structured discussion over a number of separate sessions. Participants may be professionally represented but there will be no formal cross-examination of other participants or any detailed presentation of evidence.
39. If you have any specific needs or requirements to enable your attendance at and/or participation in the hearing, please inform the programme officer in good time.

### **The hearing programme**

40. A formal Notice of Examination Hearing will be published on the examination website setting out the date, time and venue for the hearing.
41. A draft hearing programme has been published to give an indication to participants on the likely structure, content and timing of hearing sessions. Once hearing statements have been submitted an updated hearing programme will be published confirming which representors are scheduled to attend each session.
42. It will be for participants to check the hearing programme and to ensure that they are present at the correct time, as the structure and timings are liable to change.

Participants should also be aware of the scheduled reserve sessions, which will be used as required.

### Site visits

43. During the course of the examination the Inspectors will make site visits to the Plan area. Site visits will be carried out on an unaccompanied basis unless it is necessary for them to enter private land. In such circumstances, the programme officer will make the necessary arrangements with the relevant parties.

### Close of the examination

44. The examination will close when the Inspectors' report is submitted to the Councils. The Councils must then decide whether to adopt the Plan. It can only be adopted if it incorporates any main modifications that the Inspectors recommend are necessary to make the Plan legally compliant and/or sound.
45. The Councils should publish the examination report as soon as reasonably practicable after receiving it.

### Further information

46. Further information about the preparation and examination of local plans:

[Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations](#)

[Local plans: the examination process](#)

[Local plans: taking part in examinations](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

[Planning Practice Guidance](#)

[Use of Artificial Intelligence](#)

47. Relevant legislation:

[Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#)

[Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

### Summary of Key Dates

48. The key dates for the examination are as follows:

<b>19 June 2026</b>	<b>Deadline to confirm attendance at hearing</b>
<b>26 June 2026</b>	<b>Deadline for submission of written statements</b>
<b>14 July 2026</b>	<b>Hearing opens</b>