

Teignbridge District Council
Executive
10 March 2026
Part i

Teignbridge Local Plan 2029-2044

Purpose of Report

To seek approval to commence work on a new Local Plan for Teignbridge and agree a timetable and budget for the project.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee RESOLVES to:

1. Commence preparation of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2029–2044, prioritising actions to address the shortfall in housing provision created by the updated standard method calculations.
2. Agree the Local Development Scheme as set out in Appendix 1 to come into effect on 20 March 2026.
3. Agree a budget of £105,000 for year one of the project (2026/27)
4. Reconvene the Local Plan Working Group as per the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 2.

Financial Implications

These are as set out in section 2.9.

Gordon Bryant

Head of Finance

Email: gordon.bryant@teignbridge.gov.uk

Legal Implications

These are as set out in section 2.10.

Charlie Fisher, Democratic Services Manager

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Risk Assessment

These are as set out in section 2.11.

Michelle Luscombe Head of Strategy and Partnerships

Tel: 01626 215754

Email: michelle.luscombe@teignbridge.gov.uk

Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

These are as set out in section 2.12.

Michelle Luscombe Head of Strategy and Partnerships

Tel: 01626 215754

Email: michelle.luscombe@teignbridge.gov.uk

Report Author

Michelle Luscombe Head of Strategy and Partnerships

Tel: 01626 215706

Email: michelle.luscombe@teignbridge.gov.uk

Executive Member

Executive Member for Planning (Cllr Gary Taylor)

Appendices

1. Local Development Scheme – March 2026
2. Local Plan Evidence Base
3. Local Plan Working Group Terms of Reference

1. **PURPOSE**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to obtain approval to commence work on a new Local Plan for Teignbridge and agree a timetable and budget for the project.

2. **REPORT DETAIL**

2.1 **Overview**

- 2.1.1 The Teignbridge Local Plan 2020–2040 is currently undergoing examination, and the Inspector's Final Report is expected imminently. Upon receipt of the Report, the Plan will be presented to Full Council with a recommendation for adoption, which is anticipated to take place at the Full Council meeting in May 2026. Once adopted, the Plan will form the principal basis for determining development proposals within the district (excluding areas within the Dartmoor National Park).
- 2.1.2 During the latter stages of preparing the Local Plan 2020-2040, the Government introduced significant reforms to the planning system through the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023. Although we were able to progress the Plan under the transitional arrangements, these arrangements also require the Council to undertake an immediate review of the Plan following its adoption.
- 2.1.3 These arrangements apply to local planning authorities whose adopted housing requirement is less than 80% of the requirement calculated using the new national standard method. The Local Plan 2020–2040 includes a requirement of 720 homes per year, whereas the new standard method indicates a requirement of 1,088 homes per year. As a result, the Council is legally required to begin work on a new Local Plan, to give formal notice of this by 30 June 2026, and to pass the newly introduced 'Gateway 1' stage by 31 October 2026, notwithstanding that the current Plan has not yet been adopted.
- 2.1.4 This report provides a proposed approach and timetable to ensure compliance with these statutory milestones and with the requirements of the new planning system.

2.2 Scope of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2029-2044

- 2.2.1 The scope of new Local Plans under the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2025 is reduced. With the NPPF introducing national Decision-Making policies, Local Plans will not be allowed to repeat or dilute these requirements.
- 2.2.2 The ability to set quantitative standards will be limited to infrastructure provision, affordable housing requirements, parking and design and placemaking. Local Plans should not cover matters which are already addressed by Building Regulations, other than in relation to accessibility and water efficiency standards.
- 2.2.3 Local Plans and will need to focus on the following key areas:
- Vision
 - Spatial strategy (i.e. how and where will development take place)
 - Overall housing requirement (including needs of specific groups)
 - Affordable housing requirement
 - Economic strategy
 - Town centre strategy
 - Infrastructure requirements associated with new development (on and off site)
 - Site specific development allocations to implement economic and housing requirements
 - Streamlined development management policies
- 2.2.4 Local Plans are required to plan for a minimum of 15 years from the point of adoption. It is therefore proposed that the period for the new Local Plan is 2029-2044.
- 2.2.5 As the Local Plan 2020–2040 remains up to date, the intention is to roll forward existing allocations and policies into the new Local Plan 2029–2044 wherever possible, limiting new content to only the essential updates and additional allocations required to address the identified housing shortfall.
- 2.2.6 The full proposed scope is set out in the Local Development Scheme in Appendix 1.

2.3 Timetable

2.3.1 One of the main changes introduced by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 is a 30-month local plan process providing a clear end-to-end framework for creating and adopting local plans.

2.3.2 This new approach is highly prescriptive, with key milestone stages to be reached by specific dates. For Teignbridge, the key dates are:

- Formal notice of preparation and scoping consultation – by 30 June 2026
- Gateway 1 – 31 October 2026 (requires the following to be completed: draft vision; project management arrangements; Land Availability Assessment; risk assessment framework; environmental baseline scoping)
- Gateway 2 – as determined by the Local Planning Authority
- Gateway 3 – 31 October 2028 (submission)
- Examination starts - November 2028

2.3.3 Legally, we must meet the required milestones to ensure an up-to-date Local Plan is in place that fully addresses our housing requirement. However, factors such as Local Government Reorganisation, potential joint working with neighbouring authorities (see section 2.7), and the absence of final regulations mean the proposed timetable may need to change. This is particularly relevant for Gateway 2, which is at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority. A progress review report will therefore be presented to Executive at the end of the 2026 calendar year to provide an update and confirm any additional budget required for 2027/28.

2.3.4 In addition, the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 reinstates a strategic planning system for England. Once the provisions in the Act are commenced (expected summer 2026), places will be required to produce a Spatial Development Strategy. These strategies will deal with strategic and cross-boundary issues and set the context for local plans, which will have to be in 'general conformity' with the Spatial Development Strategy once adopted. The geography for the Spatial Development Strategy has not yet been agreed but is likely to be aligned with strategic devolution areas. This means

that any programme for preparing a Local Plan needs to be understood in the context of preparing a strategic plan for a much wider area.

2.3.5 Given the uncertainties due to the variables set out above it is proposed that we focus on reaching the first two milestones of Formal Notification and Gateway 1, followed by a robust assessment of potential development sites in the district. This will be essential not only to justify which sites are considered suitable for development but also to provide robust explanations for why certain sites are not appropriate and why the district may be unable to absorb unmet need from other areas.

2.3.6 It is likely that during preparation of the plan, Local Government Reorganisation will be implemented, at which point the Teignbridge Local Plan 2029–2044 may be incorporated into a wider development plan for the new authority. To avoid abortive work, the Local Plan must therefore focus on policies and allocations that are transferable to any future plan. Work on the new Local Plan will be limited to elements that will be required regardless of whether the final document is a Spatial Development Plan or Local Plan, ensuring everything produced can be seamlessly carried forward into whichever plan replaces Teignbridge’s as a result of Local Government Reorganisation.

2.3.7 On this basis, the timetable for preparing the Teignbridge Local Plan 2029-2044 as things stand is proposed as:

Stage	Date
Prepare and publish Local Plan timetable (LDS)	March 2026
Formal notice of preparation and scoping consultation	June 2026
Gateway 1: Completion of initial scoping consultation and baseline evidence	October 2026
Gateway 2: Completion of draft plan consultation	November 2026
Gateway 3: Completion of final plan consultation	October 2028
Submission	October 2028
Examination	November 2028-April 2029

Adoption	May-December 2029 (timeframe allowing for modifications consultation)
----------	---

2.4 Evidence requirements

2.4.1 There is a continued requirement for Local Plans to be based on sound and up to date evidence. However, with the Local Plan 2020-2040 being so recently prepared and with the scope of new Local Plans being reduced, there is opportunity to limit the amount of evidence required. It is proposed that we do not repeat or update the following evidence:

- Landscape Character Assessment
- Design Code
- Wind turbine/solar evidence
- Coastal Change Management Areas
- Connecting to Nature
- Carbon statements
- Settlement hierarchy
- Settlement limits
- Town centre studies

2.4.2 Nevertheless, there is a requirement to prepare environmental assessment reports alongside Local Plans, and any new proposals for employment or housing development will need to be properly evidenced and supported by relevant site-specific investigations. The amount and type of evidence required will depend on the preferred strategy for distributing new growth around the district and the number of sites included in that. Wherever possible, opportunities to work with neighbouring authorities will be taken to commission evidence jointly, as well as working with site promoters on preferred options to understand constraints and mitigations associated with these sites.

2.4.3 To fully understand housing requirement and capacity for further growth, there is an option to undertake two discretionary pieces of work which are:

1. **An assessment of local housing need** to test whether the standard method 'starting point' of 1,088 homes per year for Teignbridge is justified and therefore whether an immediate review of the Plan is

required. This work can be undertaken in parallel with the first two milestones of the Plan, as set out in the proposed timetable, ensuring that no time is lost should a Plan still be required.

2. **A review of local landscape designations and sensitive landscape settings**, such as the Undeveloped Coast, Teign Estuary and Teign Valley to ensure adequate protections and landscape management approaches are in place when considering allocations for new development.

2.4.4 The full suite of evidence likely to be required for the plan, with estimated costs, are included in Appendix 2.

2.5 Resource requirements

2.5.1 Current resource is limited to 2.8 full time equivalent planning policy specialists, alongside 0.6 full time equivalent support for data management and community engagement. Given the demanding timetable as set out in section 2.3, this will be insufficient resource to meet the legally prescribed milestones. It is therefore recommended that an additional budget is made available to fund a full time Apprentice or Graduate Planner at a cost of c. £35,000 per year for 1 year, with a view to extending the contract if the Plan progresses as planned.

2.6 Governance and engagement

2.6.1 It is proposed that existing frameworks and governance arrangements are used to progress the Local Plan, enabling a community-led approach to the design of the plan and allocation of development sites wherever communities are willing and able to work with the council within the prescribed timeframes.

2.6.2 Further details will be set out in a Consultation and Engagement Strategy which will be brought to the Executive for approval alongside the scoping consultation in June 2026.

2.6.3 In the meantime, it is recommended that the Local Plan Working Group is reconvened with immediate effect, as per the Terms of Reference included in Appendix 3.

2.7 Opportunities for joint working

2.7.1 Other local authorities in Devon are progressing their Local Plans under either the current or emerging planning system, each following different timelines. We have engaged with some neighbouring authorities to explore opportunities for jointly commissioning evidence, coordinating stakeholder engagement where there is shared interest, and sharing resources where feasible. However, at this stage there is limited appetite for preparing a joint Local Plan. This is due to the differing stages of plan preparation across authorities and the significant time required to establish effective joint governance arrangements, which is not compatible with the tight timescales we are working to.

2.8 Meeting our housing need

2.8.1 Evidence gathered during the 2020–2040 Local Plan process demonstrated that the district faces substantial environmental and infrastructure constraints. As a result, identifying suitable land for this additional level of development will place further pressure on already sensitive and constrained environments.

2.8.2 In addition, the district may face increasing requests from neighbouring authorities to accommodate some or all of their unmet housing need due to limitations within their own areas. This has already been confirmed by Torbay, and similar pressures are likely to arise from elsewhere. Managing this risk requires a rigorous site assessment process and clear, transparent engagement with partners and communities. This will be essential not only to justify which sites are considered suitable for development but also to provide robust explanations for why certain sites are not appropriate and why the district may be unable to absorb unmet need from other areas.

2.9 Financial

2.9.1 To deliver the plan and meet the tests of soundness, additional evidence (section 2.4) and resources (section 2.5) will be required. The estimated cost of additional evidence and examination costs are set out in Appendix 2.

- 2.9.2 Given the uncertainties listed earlier in this report, it is proposed to focus at this point only on evidence and assessments that will be required within the 2026/27 financial year and which can be transferred into a Spatial Development Strategy or whichever plan replaces Teignbridge's as a result of Local Government Reorganisation. Any further evidence to support site specific assessments may be required for 2027/28 but will be addressed in a report to Executive at the end of the 2026 calendar year when there is more certainty on timetable, joint working opportunities, and site options.
- 2.9.3 In recognition of the additional demands created by the new planning system, MHCLG has invited local authorities to apply for financial support. An application was submitted in January 2026, but the outcome, and the value of any grant, will not be known until at least the end of March 2026.
- 2.9.4 In addition, some funding remains within the shared Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) budget, which has previously supported joint evidence work. For any updated housing or economic development needs assessments, we will seek to use these remaining funds and commission the work jointly with neighbouring authorities before drawing on Teignbridge's own budget.
- 2.9.5 Based on current information, the estimated unfunded cost for 2026/27 is approximately £105,000, unless MHCLG support is secured. This includes the costs for funding the two discretionary pieces of evidence proposed in section 2.4.3. relating to local housing need and landscape assessments. It is therefore recommended that the Executive approve a budget of £105,000 to be taken from reserves or in-year savings to support this initial stage of plan preparation, recognising that this funding may not be required should MHCLG grant funding become available or opportunities to commission joint evidence using unspent GESP funds can be used. Making this budget available will allow the timely recruitment of an additional planner, which is essential to meeting the legally prescribed timescales.

2.10 Legal

- 2.10.1 Preparing and updating local plans is a statutory requirement. The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 introduces the statutory framework for the planned reforms set out in this report. The Government will shortly lay the

regulations that will underpin this new approach to plan-making, expected early in 2026.

2.10.2 Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires local planning authorities to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS sets out the plans which are to be prepared, their scope, and the timetable for preparing them. The new Local Plan 2029-2044 will replace the Teignbridge Local Plan 2020-2040 (once adopted).

2.11 Risks

2.11.1 The Local Plan 2020-2040 which is currently at examination stage provides an up to date and robust policy framework for the district and from the date of adoption will carry full weight for 5 years unless:

- there is conflict with another policy in the NPPF.
- the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies (as a result of under-delivery of homes).
- it is superseded by another Local Plan.

2.11.2 There is therefore limited risk of unplanned development taking place in the district if we do not start work on another Local Plan immediately.

2.11.3 Although LGR and the introduction of Spatial Development Strategies causes uncertainty, delaying work on a new Local Plan is not legally compliant, as the Council is required to formally notify preparation of a new plan by 30 June 2026 and reach Gateway 1 by 31 October 2026. Failure to meet these statutory milestones would risk Government intervention and loss of local control over plan-making. It would also shorten the time available to prepare evidence and consult meaningfully, raising the risk of later examination failure.

2.11.4 Other risks are associated with preparation of the new plan, relating to a lack of existing resources and budget (as set out in sections 2.4 and 2.5).

2.12 Environmental/Climate Change Impact

2.12.1 There are no direct environmental or climate change impacts arising from this report but the Local Plan will include policies and site allocations which will have impacts on environments and the climate. These impacts will be

assessed through statutory environmental frameworks, specifically the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

5. ALTERNATIVES

5.1.1. Although the report recommends commencing work immediately on the Teignbridge Local Plan 2029–2044, there are only a limited number of realistic alternatives, each carrying risks, particularly in light of the statutory obligations introduced by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

- **Delay commencement of the new Local Plan:** The Council could choose to delay starting work on the new plan, relying instead on the soon-to-be adopted Local Plan 2020–2040. This plan will be up to date and carry full weight for decision-making on adoption. However, delaying is not legally compliant, as the Council is required to formally notify preparation of a new plan by 30 June 2026 and reach Gateway 1 by 31 October 2026. Failure to meet these statutory milestones would risk Government intervention and loss of local control over plan-making. It would also shorten the time available to prepare evidence and consult meaningfully, raising the risk of later examination failure.
- **Prepare a more limited plan or reduced scope:** The emerging planning system allows some narrowing of scope (e.g., avoiding repetition of national policy). The Council could attempt an even more tightly scoped plan to reduce workload or cost. However, the new system still requires core elements, including a vision, spatial strategy, housing requirement, economic strategy and site allocations. Preparing too narrow a plan risks being found unsound or failing statutory requirements at Gateway 1 and Gateway 3. In addition, the number of homes required to be planned for, taking into account potential for unmet need from other authorities, may require options such as new communities to be considered, which would mean that the scope of development options would be increased rather than reduced.

- **Rely on neighbouring authorities or seek a joint plan:** The Council could explore producing a joint Local Plan with neighbouring authorities. However, the report confirms that neighbouring authorities are working to different timelines and have limited appetite for a joint plan. Establishing joint governance would take significant time, time that the new statutory timetable does not allow. A joint plan would therefore be unlikely to meet required milestones, and the risk of abortive work would be high.
- **Rely on future Local Government Reorganisation to produce a new plan:** A further alternative is to delay preparation of a new plan until anticipated local government reorganisation and allow the successor authority to prepare a new plan. However, this would again fail legal requirements for notice and Gateway 1 and could leave Teignbridge without an up-to-date development strategy during transition. The report notes that delay increases the chance of abortive work but confirms the statutory obligation to proceed nonetheless.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1. This report seeks approval to begin preparing the Teignbridge Local Plan 2029–2044 to meet new legal requirements that oblige the Council to start work immediately, publish formal notice by June 2026, and reach the Gateway 1 milestone by October 2026. It recommends that the Executive agrees the proposed timetable, endorses the Local Development Scheme, and approves the additional budget and staffing needed to deliver the plan and its supporting evidence to achieve the first two milestones, noting that any work undertaken during this time will be transferable to any future plan. Commencing work now will ensure the Council is compliant with national legislation, maintains control over local planning decisions, and is able to plan effectively for the increased housing and infrastructure requirements facing the district.

6.1.2. Nevertheless, given the uncertainty surrounding the timing of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), we propose to revisit our approach once greater clarity is available. However, recognising the risks of delaying progress, particularly as previous national examples show that legislative changes can take significantly longer than anticipated, we recommend beginning work now, focusing only on elements that will not become abortive. This initial phase will include agreed methodological discussions with neighbouring authorities, establishing a consistent approach, and maintaining regular dialogue with MHCLG to ensure alignment with emerging national expectations.

Appendix 1

Proposed Local Development Scheme

To come into force on 20 March 2026

Introduction

Teignbridge Council proposes to prepare one Development Plan Document which will be the Teignbridge Local Plan 2029-2044. The timetable and description are set out below:

Teignbridge Local Plan 20440

This document will set an overall vision and strategy for the area in the context of local circumstances, spatial development strategy, national policy, and core climate and ecological dimensions. It will set out proposals ~~the overall amount of growth~~ for the period to 2044 and implement the overall vision and strategy by allocating sufficient land for new employment, housing/plots/pitches, and other development need, together with broad locations for growth.

Policies will focus on improving our built and natural spaces to support high quality living conditions. They will set out the Council's expectations for high standards of design, development and living conditions to give a clear and improved framework for all future development taking place in the district. They will include expected contributions towards affordable housing and will identify infrastructure to support the delivery of sites.

The Local Plan will include policies and site allocations relating to:

- Climate change including adaptation requirements;
- Design and place-making
- Sustainable transport networks
- Employment (e.g. business development opportunities for knowledge & data driven industries; ~~rural economy~~; expansion & modernisation of leisure/ tourism sites)
- Environmental conditions (e.g. air, water ~~and~~ soil quality; and noise pollution).

- Environmental protection (e.g. landscapes; biodiversity; woodland; protected sites; heritage assets) and standards for GI provision.
- Town centres.
- Natural infrastructure.
- Health and wellbeing, support for social interaction.
- Housing types and standards (e.g. affordable housing; exception sites; custom build; specialist forms of accommodation).
- Physical infrastructure provision.
- Settlement hierarchy.
- Settlement limits.
- Employment allocations.
- Gypsy and traveller site allocations.
- Housing allocations.
- Town centre redevelopment proposals.
- Town specific retail requirements.
- Place specific policies and initiatives.

Timetable:

Stage	Date
Prepare and publish Local Plan timetable (LDS)	March 2026
Formal notice of preparation and scoping consultation	June 2026
Gateway 1: Completion of initial scoping consultation and baseline evidence	October 2026
Gateway 2: Completion of draft plan consultation	November 2026
Gateway 3: Completion of final plan consultation	October 2028
Submission	October 2028
Examination	November 2028-April 2029
Adoption	May-December 2029 (timeframe allowing for modifications consultation)

Appendix 2: Evidence Base

Evidence/Assessment	Indicative cost (26/27)	Indicative cost (27/28)	Indicative cost (28/29)
Economic Development Needs Assessment		£20,000	
Playing Pitch Strategy	£30,000 (underway)		
Environmental assessments	£10,000	£20,000	£10,000
Land Availability Assessment	£30,000		
Settlement facilities review	In house		
Housing Needs Assessment (calculating housing requirements)	£40,000		
Housing Needs Assessment (understanding housing type requirements)		£30,000	
Review of landscape designations and sensitive landscapes	£30,000		
Site specific landscape appraisals		£40,000	
Highways and travel assessments		£50,000	£50,000
Viability assessments		£25,000	£25,000
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment		£30,000	
Heritage Impact Assessments		£30,000	
3D modelling/design for strategic sites			£50,000
Water efficiency standards:		£10,000	
Staff resource	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000
Examination			£100,000
Base budget	-£30,000	-£30,000	-£30,000
Total additional budget required	£105,000	£260,000	£240,000

Appendix 3 – Terms of Reference

Introduction

The Local Plan will be a statutory planning document, setting out the policies and allocations to manage future development for the period 2029 to 2044.

Local Plan Working Group Membership

Membership will be comprised of 9 Councillors as follows (with substitutes permitted if necessary):

- Executive Member for Planning
- Executive Member for Housing and Homelessness
- Chair of Planning Committee
- Chair of Overview and Scrutiny
- 5 other Members nominated by the Council's Political Group leaders to bring the Working Group into political proportionality overall. Group Leaders are to inform Democratic Services of their nominations.

The meetings will be an open forum for all District Councillors to attend if they wish and all Members will be notified when meetings are held. However, the 9 named Members will be the primary advisors and their involvement will ensure continuity throughout the process of preparing the Local Plan.

The group meetings will be attended by Council planning and other officers.

Chairing

The Local Plan Working Group Chair and Vice Chair will be elected annually by the members of the group, at the first Local Plan Working Group meeting following this report to Executive.

Roles and responsibilities

The purpose of the Local Plan Working Group is to provide cross-party Councillor involvement in the preparation of the Local Plan. It will act in the capacity of an informal 'sounding board', giving advice and guidance to officers to progress updates to the Local Plan and other associated planning guidance and infrastructure proposals. The Group will not have decision-making powers.

The group will be expected to consider a range of Local Plan matters and provide political advice on matters such as:

- Timetable and process

- The implications of evidence and other information
- Consultation and engagement
- Draft policies and proposals, including new development sites
- Any other matter which bears on Local Plan preparation and contents

Decision-making

The Local Plan Working Group is not a decision-making body. It will seek agreement and consensus on Local Plan matters and work with officers as appropriate.

It will sometimes be necessary to compromise in order to achieve agreement. A form of collective responsibility should apply to Local Plan Working Group agreements, to support the progress of the Local Plan through the formal decision-making processes within the council.

Administration and support

The Group will generally meet at least 4 times per year but this may vary depend on Local Plan workload.

The Strategy and Policy team will organise and administer the Local Plan Working Group including room bookings, meeting invites, preparation of reports and meeting notes.

Written notice of meetings, along with the agenda and associated papers, will be sent to members of the Local Plan Working Group five days in advance of any meeting. Papers will be marked as confidential where necessary and these should not be circulated outside of the Council. Late items may be distributed when considered appropriate by the Chair.

Meetings will be held as required to ensure the timely progress of the Local Plan. The meetings will be held at the Council Offices.

Reporting

There will be no formal minutes of the group but a note will be taken of the subject matters discussed, witnesses invited and any broad points of agreement or matters to be considered further. The Chair, if required, will report back quarterly to the Executive and twice a year to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The notes will be available to Councillors and council officers but will not be made public as they may contain sensitive information in advance of formal publication of committee reports.

A summary of the discussions and how they have informed Local Plan preparation will be appended to formal reports taken to O&S and the Executive committees alongside the statutory stages of the Plans' preparation.