

AGENDA ITEM 13

MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL

20TH JULY 2016

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES

LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN STAGE 1: STRATEGIC GROWTH STATEMENT

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks the approval of Council to endorse the Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan - Stage 1: Strategic Growth Statement
- 1.2 The Strategic Growth Statement forms the first part of a three-stage process to prepare a Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire. The ten partners who have agreed to prepare a Strategic Growth Plan are the seven District Councils of Leicestershire, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Council :

- (i) Approves the Strategic Growth Statement for the purpose of consultation (the Strategic Growth Statement is included as Appendix A to this report; and
- (ii) Authorises the Head of Regulatory Services to make any minor drafting or formatting changes which do not change the overall sense or purpose of the document arising out of consideration of the Statement by the other partner authorities.

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Council, working with the County Council, Leicester City Council, the other seven district councils, and the LLEP is preparing a Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) for Leicester and Leicestershire.
- 3.2 This exercise is being overseen by a Members Advisory Group (MAG), comprising representatives from each of the local authorities, together with the LLEP whose representative attends as an observer. The MAG is supported by a Strategic Planning Group, made up of senior officers from the local authorities. The Members' Advisory Group is responsible for assisting in the proper execution of the statutory Duty to Cooperate, by which local planning authorities and other key stakeholders, including the County Council, are required to co-operate on strategic planning issues, including employment and housing land provision, affecting local plans. A key role for the MAG is overseeing the preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan. The MAG considered the draft Strategic Growth Statement at its meeting on 28 April 2016 and will be recommended to approve the draft text for consultation purposes at its meeting on 9 June 2016, subject to the agreement of the constituent organisations.

3.3 The proposed Combined Authority for Leicester and Leicestershire will have responsibilities for strategic planning, alongside those for skills and transport, and it is expected that the final Strategic Growth Plan will be submitted for approval to the Combined Authority if its timetable coincides with its establishment.

3.4 **Why is a Strategic Growth Plan needed?**

3.4.1 There are three main reasons why a Strategic Growth Plan is needed:

a) It will support partners to -

- see 'the bigger picture' and plan effectively for the future;
- prepare Local Plans within a consistent framework;
- make decisions on infrastructure and investment and compete for, and secure funding from, the Government.

b) It will provide control over -

- how forecast growth will be accommodated and supported;
- the nature, location, quantum, timing, and speed of large scale new development;
- the planning gain packages that come with it;
- the protection and enhancement of environmental assets.

c) It will provide confidence to the market, Government, local businesses and residents that the councils and the LLEP -

- have ambition for Leicester and Leicestershire;
- understand the property market;
- are genuinely working together;
- would use available funding wisely; and
- can use growth to resolve existing problems.

3.4.2 There are also risks that if no Strategic Growth Plan exists:

- Development will come anyway, but will be unplanned;
- Development and infrastructure will not be synchronised;
- Local Authorities would be unable to protect key assets;
- Existing problems, for example, congestion 'hot spots', will remain unsolved;
- Leicester and Leicestershire would lose development and investment to other areas;
- The 'Duty to Co-operate' would not be fulfilled;
- Decisions may be taken out of the hands of local people.

3.4.3 Leicester and Leicestershire is a very attractive place; its strengths and opportunities are of national importance. It includes a young, diverse, multi-cultural City, thriving market towns and popular villages, with three strong universities, and distinctive environmental assets in a central location with good connectivity.

3.4.4 The area has genuine opportunities for growth which include a distinctive offer of design, manufacture and distribution, potential to export more goods and services, innovation and technology, research and enterprise, a step change potential for Gross Value Added (GVA) and pay, and national infrastructure investment with private sector growth.

3.4.5 There are also a number of threats which need to be addressed, namely:

- Low GVA per head of population;

- Key roads are congested, there are problem junctions and rural roads are under strain;
- Gaps in connectivity in the strategic railway network;
- Limited bus network in rural areas, some gaps in the City;
- An ageing population, not as economically active as some areas.

3.4.6 The Strategic Growth Plan will be a non-statutory plan so there will be flexibility regarding its content. To date, the MAG has agreed a three-stage process. The Strategic Growth Statement forms this first stage; essentially, it includes an explanation as to why partners are preparing a Strategic Growth Plan, proposes a vision and objectives, summarises the evidence base, and sets out generic options for the spatial distribution of growth and next steps. The Strategic Growth Statement also signals that work has started on the preparation of a Strategic Growth Plan.

3.4.7 The three stages are as follows:

- Stage 1 (consultation Summer 2016): Strategic Growth Statement – a long term vision to 2050.
- Stage 2 (consultation Summer 2017): Development of the Draft Plan – to include housing targets, employment land, areas of search/directions of growth, major infrastructure requirements, protecting environmental assets.
- Stage 3 (consultation late 2017/early 2018): Final Plan.

3.5 The Strategic Growth Statement

3.5.1 The draft Strategic Growth Statement has the following chapter headings:

- Why We Are Preparing a Strategic Plan
- Changing Context
- Leicester and Leicestershire Today
- Vision and objectives
- Preparing the Strategic Growth Plan
- Next Steps

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Strategic Growth Plan will be a non-statutory plan. However it will play a key role going forward in planning and particularly the development of Local Plans as it fulfils some important elements of the duty to co-operate, particularly in the longer term directions of growth and associated infrastructure provision.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report. Officer time, funding for consultancy work and supporting joint working arrangements have been contributed to by all partners and are incorporated into existing budgets.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 The Strategic Growth Plan will be a non-statutory plan. There are no direct legal implications arising from its development.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 There are no direct community safety implications as a direct result of this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 There are no equality and human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to be undertaken at key stages in the preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan. An initial EIA will be undertaken on the Strategic Growth Statement.

9.0 RISKS

9.1

L I K E L I H O O D	A	Very High				
	B	High				
	C	Significant				
	D	Low				
	E	Very Low		2		
	F	Almost Impossible	1			
			Negligible 1	Marginal 2	Critical 3	Catastrophic 4

IMPACT

Risk No	Risk Description
1	Failure of all constituent organisations to subscribe to the Growth Statement
2	Widespread opposition to the statement following consultation

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no direct climate change issues arising from this report.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 The Strategic Growth Statement will be published for consultation at the end of July 2016. It will contain plans and graphics to enhance the meaning of the text, and will include branding which will be used throughout the preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan. An analysis of consultation responses will be reported to the MAG and constituent partner organisations as part of the preparation of a Draft Strategic

Growth Plan.

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All.

Contact Officer J Worley, Head of Regulatory Services

Date: 14 July 2016

Appendices : 1: Draft Strategic Growth Statement.

Background Papers: None