

FULL COUNCIL

12th DECEMBER 2017

REPORT OF HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & REGULATORY SERVICES

LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Council of the work undertaken to date in the preparation of a Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that:

- (i) Council notes and endorses the process which has been undertaken in the preparation of a Draft Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire;**
- (ii) Council notes that the Consultation Draft Plan has been endorsed by the Members' Advisory Group (MAG) which oversees the preparation of the Plan (Appendix 1 to this report);**
- (iii) The consultation process and timetable is approved; and**
- (iv) A further report is brought back to Council to consider the consultation responses and approve the final version of the Plan.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Until 2010, the strategic planning framework for Leicester & Leicestershire was set out in the East Midlands Regional Plan (2009), the regional spatial strategy for the East Midlands. In 2010, however, regional spatial strategies were abolished by Government and local planning authorities were encouraged to consider strategic planning within the context of the 'duty to co-operate' imposed by the Localism Act 2011.
- 3.2 In Leicester and Leicestershire, recognising that the strategy of the East of England Plan would be implemented through proposals in the current round of Local Plans, the local planning authorities decided that strategic planning for the longer term would be more effective if undertaken across the City and County as a whole. Responding to the important role of the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) in the delivery of infrastructure and economic growth, the LLEP became an additional partner in the process.
- 3.3 The Strategic Growth Plan has, therefore, been prepared jointly and on a collaborative basis by the ten partner organisations in Leicester & Leicestershire i.e. all eight of the local planning authorities, the County Council as highway authority, the City Council as a unitary authority with combined planning and highways responsibilities, and the local enterprise partnership. Leicester & Leicestershire is fortunate in that the Housing Market Area, the Functional Economic Market Area and the area covered by the LLEP are the same: having the same geographical boundaries for these areas means that it is easier to plan

for the future. Although there is a need to collaborate with authorities outside Leicester and Leicestershire, the intention is that provision for housing and economic development needs will be met from within the area.

- 3.4 The Strategic Growth Statement, published in August 2016, stated that the ten partner organisations had agreed that the Strategic Growth Plan would:
- be clear about the opportunities and challenges that are to be faced
 - provide an agreed scale and direction for future growth, reflecting the evidence available and the will of the partners
 - create a single consistent strategic framework for Local Plans, economic investment plans, transport and other infrastructure plans
 - ensure that Leicester & Leicestershire is positively positioned to take advantage of private sector inward investment opportunities and national programmes for investment
 - provide the right conditions for the growth of indigenous businesses, and, at the same time, protect the area's natural resources, environment and historic assets.
- 3.5 The current Consultation Draft Plan takes forward this work. It sets out a strategy for the growth and development of Leicester & Leicestershire in the period to 2050. This time period allows the partners to think about the longer term needs of the area and to consider opportunities which might extend beyond the conventional timeframe of a Local Plan. Within this longer time period, however, MAG has considered the distribution of housing and employment land for the periods 2011-2031 and 2011-2036 so that the partners have a more detailed framework for the preparation of Local Plans.
- 3.6 The Strategic Growth Statement was the first stage in the preparation of the Plan. Having completed governance procedures in early summer 2016, it was the subject of public consultation in August/September 2016. The document stated the ambition of the partners was to overcome the problems that are experienced by existing communities, and to accommodate growth in new developments that have a real sense of place and purpose. It also explained that the partners wanted to raise the bar in terms of the quality of development so the focus has been on how the City and the County can be improved for local people and businesses, and, therefore, how growth can be delivered at the right time, in the right place, with the essential infrastructure that it needs. Consultation responses were reported to MAG in early 2017.
- 3.7 Throughout the discussions on the Strategic Growth Plan, the focus has been on defining a long term future for Leicester & Leicestershire, looking ahead as far as 2050. This end date was chosen, in part, to provide additional flexibility in terms of the potential solutions that might be considered but also because other stakeholders were known to be planning for, and trying to secure funding for, projects with end dates which extended well beyond the timeframe of a Local Plan.
- 10.8 Since work started on the Strategic Growth Plan, other organisations have progressed their own work at different speeds (e.g. Network Rail, Highways England, the Midlands Connect Partnership) but there has been a constant dialogue to ensure an awareness of their emerging policies and proposals, and that projects considered to be vital to the future of Leicester & Leicestershire were incorporated in emerging plans, strategies and funding programmes.

- 3.9 As the Consultation Draft Plan has been developed, a number of events have been held for Members to keep them advised of progress. This included an 'all Member briefing' and discussion held on August 2017 and a more detailed discussion by the Melton Local Plan Working Group on 14th September 2017. The comments from both sessions were collated and incorporated into the Draft Plan as part of this version. These included:
- Reference to the importance of digital infrastructure in the period of Plan
 - A continued ambition for the growth of Melton Mowbray commensurate with that in the Local Plan continuing after 2036
 - The value of improved Connectivity of Melton Mowbray to other centres and the new A46 'Expressway'
 - The continued role of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (MMDR) as a key factor to 'unlocking' growth potential.

3.10 In addition the Cllr Higgins has attended a number of MAG meetings, as the Council's representative, at which the shape, structure and content of the Consultation Draft Plan has been discussed.

3.11 Proposed Consultation process

3.12 With the Consultation Draft Strategic Growth Plan having been endorsed by MAG, a period of public consultation now needs to take place. The detail and the extent of consultation that is to take place will vary between the partner organisations, to provide flexibility for each to reflect their own practices. In practice, however, there needs to be an 'agreed minimum' which each local authority will adopt. It is recognised that the LLEP has a different role in this process.

3.13 The consultation process will be managed, primarily, through the web sites for both the Strategic Growth Plan and partner organisations. It is anticipated that all material will be held on the web site for the Strategic Growth Plan with a link from partner organisations. Arrangements will also be made for comments to be submitted by post.

3.14 It is proposed that consultation should start during week commencing around 8 January 2018 and continue for eight weeks (thereby ending sometime during the first week in March 2018, depending on the start date).

3.15 All consultation responses will be reviewed and reported, in the first instance, to MAG. At the same time, consideration will be given to whether amendments to the Draft Plan will need to be made.

3.16 It is anticipated that the final version of the Strategic Growth Plan will be presented to MAG for consideration in summer/early autumn 2018. If agreed, it will proceed through the governance arrangements of each partner organisation.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The plan sets out the longer term growth implications for the Borough and for Melton Mowbray in particular, with a horizon extending to 2050. Its timeframe includes that of our current Local Plan (2011 -36) but there is a very strong synergy with its content over that period.

- 4.2 The Draft Plan will be available to the Inspector and other parties participating in the Local Plan Examination scheduled for late January 2018 and will be expected to feature in that process. It is particularly significant on the context of housing requirements and the issue of 'unmet need' within the housing market area.
- 4.3 The Draft Plan is referenced in the Local plan under Policy SS6 as a potential trigger for review of the plan, should it in its final version result in quantitative of spatial requirements that are not compatible with the Local Plan.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no Financial or other resource implications at present. The Council contributes to the Joint Strategic Planning manager and the work carried out to produce the Draft Plan on a proportionate basis from existing budgets.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWER

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

- 8.1 There are no changes that affect the Equalities Impact Assessment Report.

9.0 RISKS

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

Risk No	Risk Description
1	Impact on Melton Local Plan
2	Legal challenge from dissatisfied interested parties
3	Significant opposition to the content of the SGP

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 The Draft Plan proposes a n approach to management future development in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 It is proposed that consultation should start during week commencing around 8 January 2018 and continue for eight weeks (thereby ending sometime during the first week in March 2018, depending on the start date). The following will provide the basis of the public consultation:

- The Consultation Draft Plan
- A short, simple consultation leaflet. It is anticipated that this would constitute an A3 sheet of paper folded in such a way that the reasons for preparing the plan are set out on the front page, the strategy diagram with explanatory notations are set out on the centre spread and the final page should provide details of proposed housing numbers and ways in which consultation responses can be submitted.
- Copies of all supporting documentation.
- A standard presentation, with notes, to be used by individual organisations to ensure that a consistent message is conveyed.
- A consultation questionnaire.
- One or more joint press releases.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All wards

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Date: 28th November 2017

Appendices : Appendix 1 – Consultation Draft SGP

Reference : X:\Cttee, Council & Sub Cttees\Council Meetings\2017\18