



CABINET – 24TH NOVEMBER 2017

**LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN
CONSULTATION DRAFT**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of work undertaken since the Strategic Growth Statement was published in August 2016 and to seek approval to undertake public consultation on the draft Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) for Leicester and Leicestershire which has been developed by the County Council, Leicester City Council, the seven Leicestershire district councils and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership.
2. The Strategic Growth Statement formed the first part of a three-stage process to prepare a Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire. Over this last year work has been ongoing on the second stage of this process, to prepare a draft Strategic Growth Plan for consultation. A copy of the draft is appended to this report.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that -
 - (a) The collaborative work undertaken to develop the draft Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire, including its 'endorsement' by the Members' Advisory Group (MAG), be noted and welcomed;
 - (b) The proposed consultation and engagement exercise on the draft Strategic Growth Plan and the timetable for that consultation as set out in the report be approved;
 - (c) Further reports be submitted to the Cabinet in 2018 advising on the Leicestershire County Council response which will be forwarded to the MAG, setting out the consultation responses received, and seeking approval for the final version of the Strategic Growth Plan.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. To recognise the ongoing co-operation and collective work between the local authorities and the LLEP that has taken place over the past year to enable the preparation of the draft Strategic Growth Plan (and, prior to that, to produce the Strategic Growth Statement). This has included the Members' Advisory Group, comprised of representatives from each partner authority, which has commended the draft SGP for consultation.
5. To enable all residents and other stakeholders to comment on the proposals contained within the draft SGP, before the final document is submitted for approval.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. The Consultation Draft Strategic Growth Plan was considered and endorsed by Member Advisory Group (MAG) on 6 November 2017.
7. The Scrutiny Commission will consider the Consultation Draft Strategic Growth Plan on 24 January 2018; and its comments will be submitted as part of the consultation process.
8. The draft SGP is being submitted to all partner local authorities during November and December 2017 and approval is being sought for the proposed consultation and engagement exercise and related timetable.
9. The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Board will receive a report on the proposed consultation arrangements for information.
10. It is intended that consultation will be held in early 2018. The consultation responses will then inform the final version of the Strategic Growth Plan which will be submitted to the Cabinet and other partners for approval. Subject to approval it is expected that the final SGP will be published in Summer/Autumn 2018.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

11. In June 2016 the Cabinet approved the Strategic Growth Statement for consultation. This formed the first part in the development of the SGP. The Statement set out the rationale and proposed process for preparation of the SGP, identified the defining characteristics of the local area and challenges faced by local authorities, outlined the evidence base and spatial options to be considered in formulating an SGP, and set out initial objectives and ambitions for the future.

Resource Implications

12. There are no resource implications arising from this report. Officer time and funding for consultancy work have been contributed by all partners. The cost of future communications work will need to be funded by partners.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

13. A copy of this report will be circulated to all members under the Members News in Brief Service.

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PART B

Context

14. Until 2010, the strategic planning framework for Leicester and 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*' required by the Localism Act 2011.
15. In Leicester and Leicestershire, recognising that the strategy of the East Midlands Regional 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. In view of the important role of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) in the delivery of infrastructure and economic growth, it became an additional partner in the process.
16. The Strategic Growth Plan has therefore been prepared jointly by the ten partner organisations in Leicester and Leicestershire, i.e. all eight of the local planning authorities, the County Council as the highway authority, the City Council as a unitary authority with combined planning and highways responsibilities, and the local enterprise partnership. Leicester and Leicestershire is fortunate in that the Housing Market Area, the Functional Economic Market Area, and the area covered by the LLEP have the same geographical boundaries, making it easier to plan for the future. Although it is necessary 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.
17. The development of the SGP is being overseen by the 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 MAG 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 element is overseeing the preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan.
18. The need for an SGP was explained in the Cabinet report of June 2016. In summary it will -
 - (a) Support partners to plan effectively for the future, giving Local Plans a consistent framework and helping to make decisions on infrastructure and secure Government funding.

(b) Give some control over accommodating and supporting future growth and help to protect and enhance environmental assets.

(c) Provide confidence to the market, the Government, local businesses and residents that the local councils and the LLEP are working together to improve the area.

19. There are also risks in not having a Strategic Growth Plan - the inevitable development would be unplanned and lack infrastructure, local councils could not protect key assets, development/ investment would go elsewhere, the 'duty to co-operate' would not be met, and decisions may be taken away from local people
20. The Strategic Growth Statement was the first stage in the preparation of the Plan. This was the subject of public consultation in August/September 2016. Consultation responses were reported to MAG in early 2017.

Draft Strategic Growth Plan

21. The Draft Plan sets out a strategy for the growth and development of Leicester and Leicestershire in the period to 2050, allowing partners to consider the longer term needs of the area and opportunities which might extend beyond the conventional timeframe of a Local Plan. The MAG has considered the distribution of housing and employment land over a shorter time frame (2011-2031 and 2011-2036) in order for a more detailed framework for the preparation of Local Plans to be in place.
22. 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 and Leicestershire were incorporated in emerging plans, strategies and funding programmes.
23. As the Consultation Draft Plan has been developed, a number of events have been held for Members of the County Council to keep them advised of progress.
 - All Member briefing 7 February 2017 following the publication of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) on 27 January 2017;
 - All Member briefings on 27 September 2017 and 1 November 2017

Proposed Consultation process

24. 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 consultation standard' which each local authority will adopt.

25. 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.

26. It is expected that all material relating to the consultation exercise will be held on the Strategic Growth Plan website (llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk) Partner agencies will also advertise the link on their own websites. Arrangements will also be made for comments to be submitted by post.

27. It is expected that consultation will begin during week commencing 8 January 2018 for a period of twelve weeks.

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

29. It is expected that the final version of the Strategic Growth Plan will be presented to the MAG for consideration in summer/early autumn 2018 and subject to it being supported would then be submitted to the partner authorities for approval (in the case of the County Council this would be by means of a further report to the Cabinet).

Equality and Human Rights Implications

30. The Strategic Growth Plan, and the Local Plans which are subsequently formulated within its framework, have significant implications for disadvantaged people living in Leicestershire. By seeking to ensure economic growth is secured and an appropriate provision of affordable homes is made, the County Council can contribute to the needs of disadvantaged groups.

31. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) has been undertaken and will be revisited at the next key stage in the preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan. The outcomes of the most recent assessment will be available to view as part of the consultation process.

Environmental Implications

32. A Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment has been undertaken; this will be revisited at the next key stage in the preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan. The outcomes will be available to view as part of the consultation process.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet – 17 June 2016 – Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan – Strategic Growth Statement

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4603&Ver=4>

Appendix

Consultation Draft Strategic Growth Plan

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