



CABINET – 24 NOVEMBER 2017

**HARBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2011 TO 2031 PROPOSED
SUBMISSION
CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval for the County Council's response to the Harborough Local Plan 2011 to 2031 Proposed Submission prepared by Harborough District Council (HDC).

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that;
 - a) The detailed comments on the Harborough Local Plan Proposed Submission document as set out in the Appendix to this report be submitted to Harborough District Council as the views of the County Council;
 - b) The key comments set out in paragraphs 22 to 42 of the report be specifically drawn to the attention of Harborough District Council.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. To ensure that the County Council provides appropriate input at this key stage in the Local Plan process, so that issues of importance for the County Council are clearly expressed and the authority influences the content of the Local Plan.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. Consultation on the Proposed Submission took place from 22 September to 17 November 2017. As agreed with HDC, officers' comments will be submitted before the close of the consultation to ensure key service areas comments are duly made and following consideration by the Cabinet any further comments will be submitted to HDC.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

5. In formulating the County Council's response, particular consideration has been given to the Local Plan's:
 - Consistency with the provisions of the County's Waste Development Documents and Mineral Development Documents;
 - Consistency with the County Council's Strategic Plan 2014 to 2018 and Enabling Growth Plan (March 2015);
 - Consistency with the Leicester and Leicestershire's Enterprise Partnership's (LLEP) Strategic Economic Plan (2014);
 - Impact on the County Council's ability to implement any service or infrastructure it provides,
 - Impact on the County Council's interests as land and property owner; and,
 - Impact on the County Council's role as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for Leicestershire.
6. In making comments the County Council has had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance, the sub-regional economic priorities set out in the Strategic Economic Plan, and the work currently taking place with the City Council, district councils and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) on the Strategic Growth Plan.

Resource Implications

7. There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

8. A copy of the report has been sent to County Councillors representing Electoral Divisions in Harborough District:

Mr. B. L. Pain CC
 Mr. W. Liquorish CC
 Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
 Mr. S. J. Galton CC
 Mrs. R. Page CC
 Dr. S. Hill CC
 Dr. P. Bremner CC

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PART B

Background to the Harborough Local Plan 2011 to 2031 Proposed Submission

National Context

9. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, sets out national objectives for the planning system and how it should operate. It is accompanied by National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) on a range of topics including the importance of local plans and guidance on Community Infrastructure Levy. Local Plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with the NPPF and NPPG, and be prepared in the context of “the duty to do-operate” which applies to all local authorities and a number of other agencies. It provides a mechanism for addressing strategic issues that go beyond individual local authority boundaries.
10. Work is underway on the preparation of a Strategic Growth Plan to 2050 for Leicester and Leicestershire which will greatly assist joint working with the City Council, the Leicestershire districts and the LLEP on strategic planning matters. It is expected that consultation on the draft Strategic Growth Plan will take place in early 2018, prior to publication of the final version later in 2018. A separate report on progress with the Strategic Growth Plan is also being considered by the Cabinet at this meeting.
11. The local planning authorities and the County Council work closely with the LLEP to ensure planning policies and proposals are aligned with sub-regional economic priorities set out in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).

Harborough Local Plan

12. In October 2015, HDC undertook consultation on nine options, which formed its Options consultation on a new Local Plan for Harborough. Detailed officer comments from key service areas at the County Council were submitted to HDC as part of the original consultation.
13. After considering the comments received on the Options consultation and undertaking evidence studies, HDC has developed a Local Plan to meet Harborough District’s needs up to 2031. The consultation on the Harborough Local Plan 2011 to 2031 Proposed Submission document seeks views on the ‘soundness’ of the Local Plan.

Harborough Local Plan 2011 to 2031 Proposed Submission

14. The Local Plan contains policies and proposals for the future development and protection of the district up to 2031, and has been prepared with the knowledge that the next round of Local Plan making beyond this timeframe will be prepared within the context of the emerging Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire and the accompanying emerging Strategic Transport Plan.

15. Provision is made for 12,800 dwellings in the plan period, and a significant amount of dwellings have been already completed or committed (8,140 dwellings), leaving housing land to be found for 4,660 dwellings. This includes a 20 per cent buffer to allow for factors such as further housing requirements arising from potential expansion of employment at Magna Park and to help Leicester City and other local planning authorities within Leicestershire to meet unmet housing need.
16. The Local Plan includes two Strategic Development Areas (SDAs); East of Lutterworth SDA (2,750 dwellings and 23 ha of employment land), and Scraptoft North SDA (1,200 dwellings). Both will involve the creation of new communities with neighbourhood centres, primary schools etc. The Scraptoft North SDA will involve the relocation of the existing golf course to land at Houghton on the Hill.
17. Other major housing allocations are directed towards Market Harborough and Fleckney.
18. New employment provision is mostly directed towards Market Harborough, Lutterworth, Fleckney, and the Kibworths.
19. Up to 700,000sqm of strategic distribution (B8 use over 9,000sqm) for non-rail-served strategic storage and distribution is identified as an extension to, or on the site adjoining Magna Park.

Key Comments

20. The comments include a consideration of the effects of the proposals on County Council landholdings and property assets in Harborough District.
21. Key comments are summarised below, and detailed comments are included in the Appendix.

Transport

22. Leicestershire County Council, in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA), has been working closely with Harborough District Council as part of the Local Plan making process. As such, the LHA is content that the draft submission document is appropriately evidenced and also appropriately deals with transportation considerations at this stage in the planning process.
23. Subject to Harborough District Council's continued commitment to the policies and delivery approaches set out within the document, the LHA supports the submission of the Local Plan and looks forward to working with Harborough District Council in its delivery.

Education

24. Policies F1, MH2 and MH3 include no reference to securing suitable contributions for educational facilities. It may be that the intention is that these are covered by Policy IN1 – Infrastructure Provision, however whilst this policy

refers to the Leicestershire Planning Obligations Policy (LPOP), it only does so in terms of waste, it does not refer to education.

25. Policies L1 and SC1 refer to delivery of Primary Schools 'soon after 300 dwellings'. The County Council would normally, and has with Harborough District Council, requested that the intended provision be available for opening in the September prior to the occupation of 300 dwellings.

Ecology

26. It is acknowledged that the de-declaration of the Scraftoft Local Nature Reserve is also currently being consulted on, and that its de-declaration would enable land to come forward for development as part of the Scraftoft North Strategic Development Area (SDA). The County ecologist has and continues to be actively involved, working through an approach which ensures the retention and management of areas of ecological value whilst enabling the release of some land for future development. This may involve the designation of a Local Wildlife Site.

Waste Management

27. The Local Plan needs to recognise that Waste Management considers proposed developments on a case-by-case basis and, when it is identified that a proposed development will have a detrimental effect on the local civic amenity infrastructure, appropriate projects to increase the capacity to offset the impact have to be initiated. Contributions to fund these projects are requested in accordance with Leicestershire's Planning Obligations Policy and the Community Infrastructure Legislation Regulations.

Economic Growth

28. The County Council supports the new employment land allocated in association with the Lutterworth SDA.
29. The proposed portfolio of B use employment land in the Local Plan, which will provide the opportunity to deliver a range of jobs and economic prosperity in the District and wider area, is supported.
30. The County Council supports the approach taken to strategic storage and distribution (strategic B8 use) at Magna Park in the Local Plan, which has been informed by recent evidence commissioned by Harborough District Council. In particular, it supports additional strategic distribution proposals at Magna Park needing to meet the six criteria set out within the second part of Policy BE2.
31. The emphasis on the vitality and viability of the town centres is supported, and the regeneration emphasis on Lutterworth town centre although it is considered there is scope to strengthen this further.

Strategic Assets

32. Comments from Strategic Assets are made in relation to the County Council's role as landowner. Its main interests in Harborough District are:

- land at Misterton County Farms Estate which forms part of the East of Lutterworth SDA (for which a separate detailed collaborative response will be submitted on behalf of the landowner consortium), and;
- potential smaller scale sites within Market Harborough, Lutterworth and rural settlements throughout the District.

33. Query whether the settlement hierarchy requires further consideration, to enable settlements which are better serviced than others in the same tier of the hierarchy to be more clearly distinguished and potentially receive more development.

34. In general terms the distribution of housing across the settlement hierarchy is supported; however, considers that there needs to be more clarity regarding the future housing needs of key settlements and seeks more flexibility for future housing numbers for smaller settlements.

35. The allocation of the East of Lutterworth SDA as a preferred strategic housing allocation is, in particular, strongly supported. The Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) supported by the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) should therefore inform and provide strategic guidance to the development of later SPDs and Neighbourhood Plans. In considering the distribution of housing in the lower tiers of the hierarchy the Plan needs to demonstrate that those key centres and rural centres with neighbourhood plans will deliver housing numbers based on the current OAN rather than those contained within existing plans which were based on an earlier, much lower, OAN. Without this clarity the methodology could be open to criticism.

36. The integration of the social element of housing for older people and specific groups should be incorporated within the quantum and mix of affordable housing in order to mitigate any negative effect on site viability.

37. The County Council requests that planning consents at Airfield Business Park, Market Harborough (BE1.1a (ii)) and the land south of Lutterworth / Coventry Road, Lutterworth (BE1.1b (ii)) should be shown as existing commitments. Further, the consented site at Gaulby Road, Billesdon (a former highways depot), should also be shown as a commitment.

38. Whilst recognising the desire to concentrate strategic distribution at Magna Park, the proposal in Policy BE2.2 to allocate sites capable of delivering units of at least 9,000 sqm is seen as logical, as is the desire to stimulate economic growth by delivering sites that meet regional and sub-regional demand.

39. Policy BE3 on existing employment areas is supported; BE3.1 being seen as of particular relevance in ensuring that development meets the needs/demands of the wider sub-regional market in addition to local businesses in order to attract inward investment.

40. The allocation of both convenience and comparison retail floor space within the Lutterworth East SDA in Policy RT1 is supported, as is the additional provision within Lutterworth town centre which will complement the development of the new local centre and maintain a balance across the expanded community.
41. Policy L1- East of Lutterworth SDA is strongly supported. Being situated in the M1 corridor within one of the priority areas for economic growth in the Strategic Economic Plan it is clear that Lutterworth should be the focus of major strategic development within the District. The East of Lutterworth SDA is seen to meet best the criteria set out in Key Issues section of the plan and compliments the further development of Magna Park. Further, it is confirmed that the site, which is recognised as the most sustainable location for major development within the district, is available, being owned by a consortium of willing landowners, deliverable and capable of supporting a viable development.
42. Policy L2 – Land south of Lutterworth Road/Coventry Road. Outline planning consent has been granted and accordingly it should be regarded as an existing commitment for the purposes of the Local Plan.

Background Papers

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018

http://www.leics.gov.uk/leics_strategic_plan.pdf

Report to the Cabinet – 16 March 2015 - Enabling Growth Plan -

[http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00004360/AI00043150/\\$6EnablingGrowthPlan.docA.ps.pdf](http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00004360/AI00043150/$6EnablingGrowthPlan.docA.ps.pdf)

Appendix

Harborough Local Plan 2011 to 2031 Proposed Submission - Leicestershire County Council response

Equality and Human Rights Implications

43. There are no equality and human rights implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report. Through their policies, Local Plans 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, through its representations, contribute to the needs of disadvantaged groups.

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