



Cabinet – 24th November 2017

Comments on the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan

The Plan invites every council in Leicestershire to sign up to a development strategy which seeks to predict in 2017 how many houses and employment sites will be needed in 20-30 years time. The world will be a very different place by then. The covering report refers to the strategic planning framework which existed prior to 2010.

Regional Plans and their predecessors (County Structure Plans) sought to plan ahead for 20 years at a time recognising the inevitable economic and social changes which take place. The National Planning Policy Framework states that councils should “Ensure their plans are based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area.”

The SGP acknowledges that there are no reliable estimates of population or household change and that the projected housing needs are based on estimates. It is difficult to understand how it is possible to produce a credible or sound plan on this basis.

The proposed housing numbers are eye watering - they will no doubt make a lot of developers and landowners happy but for residents in the areas expected to take this growth it will cause huge concern and uncertainty for many years.

Liberal Democrats



Leicestershire

Sadly this is a car dependent strategy which relies on the Government funding and building an expressway around the south and east of Leicester which City planners claim would "open up the area for development." At this stage it is a concept which has no status and is a long way from being a done deal.

Many people will question why some County politicians have already signed up to this road without any assessment of its environmental impact on the historic landscape of Leicestershire. Evidence from organisations such as CPRE suggests that new roads fill up quickly and that in the end you can't build your way out of congestion.

Furthermore there is a real concern that housing developments served off the road will become dormitory commuter villages where the vast majority of people commute by car. For these reasons we wish to place on record our serious concerns about the proposal to allocate 40,000 houses in a growth corridor along a mythical road and a southern gateway.

A series of massive commercial developments are already proposed across much of southern Leicestershire, a move which can be expected along the length of the proposed Expressway. Whilst these will provide employment it has to be asked whether the loss of great swathes of countryside can be justified in return for the fairly minimal contribution to employment numbers bearing in mind that most of the warehousing will be the subject to fully automated processes.

No acknowledgement is given to how local communities in the County will feel about having to accommodate significant levels of unmet housing need arising in the City. There has been general support and acceptance over many years for spatial strategies which prioritised urban concentration and regeneration.



Within the last few weeks the Government has spoken about a renewed emphasis on brownfield land and funding for infrastructure in cities and urban areas to bring forward more housing on previously developed land. Local Authorities are now required to produce a brownfield land register which will, in principal, grant planning permission on sites in the register. Any re-distribution of housing numbers from the City must be fair, reasonable and justified.

The SGP fails to demonstrate how these issues have been addressed and as a result many people will feel the distribution of housing in the plan is inherently unfair.

Simon Galton

Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

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