



CABINET – 22 JUNE 2021

**URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN RELATION
TO THE LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE STATEMENT OF
COMMON GROUND RELATING TO HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT
LAND NEEDS (MARCH 2021)**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of urgent action taken by the Chief Executive to agree for the County Council to become a signatory to a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) which has been prepared by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities to accompany the emerging Charnwood Local Plan. The key strategic matters covered in the SoCG under the Duty to Co-operate are: Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Employment Needs to 2036; Unmet Need to 2036; and the process of apportioning unmet housing need to 2036.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - (a) Notes the content of Leicester and Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground Relating to Housing and Employment Land Needs (March 2021), appended to this report.
 - (b) Notes the urgent action taken by the Chief Executive to agree for the County Council to become a signatory to the Statement of Common Ground, as a factual statement.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Statement of Common Ground has been prepared jointly by the 9 local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire and its preparation has been overseen by the Members Advisory Group. The SoCG sets out the purpose of the Charnwood Local Plan examination process, the collaboration underway to reach agreement on strategic housing distribution and other matters in line with the Government's Duty to Co-operate.

4. The SoCG demonstrates a reasserted commitment to joint working on long-term strategic planning for housing, economic growth and associated strategic infrastructure across Leicester and Leicestershire.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. The County Council's Constitution provides that the Chief Executive may take urgent action in-between meetings subject to the details being reported to the next appropriate meeting of the body concerned.
6. Approval of the SoCG by all partners was required by Charnwood Borough Council ahead of taking its emerging Local Plan to its Council meeting on 10 June 2021.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

7. The Statement of Common Ground was reported to the Members' Advisory Group on 11 February 2021, which supported taking the SoCG through the respective partners' governance processes.

Resource Implications

8. There are no resource implications for the Council arising from the recommendations in this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

9. This report will be circulated to all Members.

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PART B

Background

10. In December 2020, the Government announced changes to the standard method for calculating housing need. Whilst the need in the districts has remained largely the same, an uplift of 35 per cent to the housing need for each of the 20 largest cities including Leicester City, has resulted in a need of 10,000 additional homes between 2020 and 2036 (600 homes per year). Based on Leicester City's draft supply, this equates to a shortfall of approximately 18,000 homes.
11. The Members' Advisory Group advised that the change in Leicester's housing figure was so significant that it required additional evidence to be undertaken to inform the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) dealing with the apportionment of the increased unmet need arising from the City. This means the Charnwood Local Plan will now be submitted in advance of the apportionment of the increased unmet need being agreed. Charnwood Borough Council is required to ensure that they meet the Government requirement of having an up-to-date Local Plan, meet the requirements for a 5-year housing land supply and to help avoid the consequences of unplanned development.
12. Ahead of submitting its Local Plan for public examination and in advance of the SoCG dealing with the apportionment of the increased unmet need from the City being agreed, Charnwood Borough Council therefore require a separate Leicester and Leicestershire SoCG, a copy of which is attached as the appendix to this report.
13. The SoCG has been prepared by each of the authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire working in collaboration. Its purpose is to set out how the Duty to Cooperate has been met in relation to the following strategic issues: Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Employment Needs to 2036; Unmet Need to 2036; and the process of apportioning unmet need to 2036, to demonstrate that all of the authorities are working together to meet the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate.
14. All local authorities within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area have been asked to approve the SoCG. With the cancellation of the Cabinet meeting on 27 April 2021, the Chief Executive took urgent action to approve the SoCG on 29 April 2021.
15. It should be noted that this SoCG does not apportion and / or distribute unmet need to Leicestershire local authorities. It is a factual statement setting out need, theoretical supply, the scale of unmet need from Leicester City and the process by which unmet need will be dealt with.
16. The SoCG commits partner authorities to a programme of work to underpin the future apportionment of unmet needs, it is anticipated this will be completed in Winter 2021/2022 and comprises:

- i. Housing and Economic Needs Assessment
- ii. Strategic Growth Options and Constraints Mapping
- iii. Strategic Transport Assessment
- iv. Sustainability Appraisal

17. A future SoCG informed by the programme of work will set out the apportionment of the increased unmet need.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

18. There are no Equality and Human Rights Implications directly arising from this report.

Environmental Impact

19. The County Council will continue to work closely with partners to minimise the impact planned growth has on the environmental assets of Leicester and Leicestershire.

Appendix

Leicester and Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground Relating to Housing and Employment Needs (March 2021)