

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 31 JANUARY 2022**QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 34****Question asked by Mrs Sharon Scott**

“Please can the Chairman explain why the ‘Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing growth and change (April 2021)’ report is considered to be an appropriate basis by which to measure the future needs of warehousing in Leicester and Leicestershire.

It was commissioned from GL Hearn with major input from developers who have a vested interest in developing the warehouses and have little consideration of the welfare of the residents of Leicestershire or environmental needs.

The projections in the report are based on Leicestershire continuing to act as a national rather than a regional distributor which does not sit well with Government policy of locating freight hubs close to the market they are intended to serve.

Would the Chairman agree therefore that Council tax payers would have been better served by a report prepared by an independent management consultant such as Deloitte or PWC who would have been more likely to have considered Government policy, Climate change and local welfare and needs?”

Reply by the Chairman

The study entitled ‘Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing growth and change’ (April 2021) forms an important part of the evidence base for Leicester and Leicestershire authorities’ Local Plans, highlighting the current and future needs of the sector, with particular emphasis on future floorspace and land needs to 2041.

The Study provides an updated understanding of decarbonisation, ecommerce, property market and needs generated by the warehousing and logistics sector, and is essential evidence to inform Local Plan making and the development management process.

It has been undertaken by consultants working to a brief specified by planning officers across Leicester and Leicestershire with experience of strategic warehousing planning issues in their respective areas.

The needs of local communities are central to Local Plans which look ahead fifteen years to plan for sustainable growth in a balanced way. It is through the Local Plan making process that the balance is considered between the need to provide land for growth and the protection of environmental assets.

Developer input was an important aspect of the study as it helps the local authorities to understand the latest market thinking, how the market has changed since the last study and how it is anticipated to change moving forward. This information provides

a greater depth of understanding for planners and others which can be utilised alongside other Local Plan evidence (such as local employment studies, landscape sensitivity studies, Sustainability Appraisal etc.) in considering future Local Plan policies and in decision making through the development management process.

Strategic warehousing in Leicestershire fulfils the role of National and Regional Distribution Centres (NRCs and RDCs), and it is understood that this will continue to be the case in the future although with an increased emphasis on RDCs.

Recommendations from the study are already being used to the benefit of communities in Leicestershire; for example, supply data is being collated and shared more frequently so an understanding of strategic warehousing planning applications, refusals and planning permissions granted across Leicester and Leicestershire can be understood more quickly and inform the consideration of future proposals.

The study was commissioned through a robust procurement process which provided the opportunity for all interested consultants to tender for the work. GL Hearn were appointed through this process.