



CABINET – 24 OCTOBER 2023

CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL'S LOCAL PLAN

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise members regarding the current position of Charnwood Borough Council's Local Plan, the County Council's position in respect of the latest period of consultation, and progress made on the Interim Transport Contributions Strategy (ITCS).
2. A supplementary report setting out more detail on the issues, in particular concerning the ITCS, is currently being prepared and will be circulated to members and published on the County Council's website as soon as it is available.

Recommendation

3. The Cabinet is asked to note this report and will be asked to consider recommendations set out in the supplementary report.

Reason for Recommendation

4. The supplementary report will set out the proposed response to the latest consultation and consider the management of the risks associated with the delay in implementing the Local Plan.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. Formal consultation on a set of distinct work streams as part of the Charnwood Borough Council's Local Plan commenced on 27 September 2023 and will close on 8 November 2023. Following the close of this consultation and any deliberation by the Inspector, there is likely to be a further 6-week consultation on Main Modifications.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

6. In September 2021, the Cabinet considered a report setting out the County Council's proposed response to the Pre-Submission Charnwood Local Plan. That report included detail of the policy framework within which the Plan sits.

The report also set out an 'in principle' supportive approach to the draft Local Plan to be taken by the County Council, based on a commitment by Charnwood Borough Council to complete further work between then and the Examination in Public and to certain other conditions, including in respect of highways and transportation matters.

7. In May 2022, the Cabinet noted with concern the increasing pressures on the County Council's Capital Programme relating to infrastructure required to support housing and economic growth in the delivery of planned growth. The report set out some of the elements required to manage the financial risk to the Council.
8. In June 2022 the Cabinet considered a report on Highways and Transportation matters in respect of the Charnwood Local Plan, providing background and setting out the County Council's position leading up to the commencement of the Examination in Public. The Cabinet inter alia offered the County Council's support for the draft Local Plan at the Examination in Public, noting the scale of the highways and transportation mitigation package.
9. In September 2022 the Cabinet considered the latest position on the Charnwood Local Plan and approved work towards an interim approach to dealing with planning applications in Charnwood and that, as the local planning authority, Charnwood Borough Council's support for implementation of this interim approach be sought.
10. In November 2022 the Cabinet considered a report regarding the financial implications for the County Council of delivering sustainable and inclusive growth. An approach and a set of principles were agreed in order to address and manage risks, including that the district councils integrate the County Council's requirements relating to delivery of statutory infrastructure in their Local Plans and that the entire cost of statutory infrastructure projects would be recovered from developers (and other appropriate sources) and sufficient contributions secured before the County Council funded scheme delivery.
11. On 10 February 2023 the Cabinet considered a report regarding the County Council's interim approach to securing developer contributions and managing development in respect of highways and education infrastructure needs in Charnwood Borough, pending the adoption of the Charnwood Local Plan. It was resolved that the approach as set out in the Transport Contributions Strategy and Education Infrastructure Evidence Base, be approved and that the Director of Environment and Transport be authorised to make refinements to the Transport Contributions Strategy as required.
12. On 23 June 2023 the Cabinet considered a report advising of the potential risks to the progress of Charnwood Borough Council's Local Plan and the County Council's progress towards securing developer contributions and managing development in respect of highways needs in the Borough, following a change of administration at Charnwood Borough Council. It was resolved, amongst other things, that the County Council remained in support of the Borough Council in demonstrating that the draft Local Plan is viable, but required

assurances from the Borough Council that the Area Transport Strategies and interim approach should be jointly owned and approved by both councils in order to provide assurances that necessary developer contributions would be secured.

Resource Implications

13. The County Council has committed significant resources to engaging in and supporting a collaborative approach to strategic planning, which is intended to facilitate the delivery of growth within the County and mitigate the negative impacts of development.
14. The County Council's Capital Programme includes over £200m to fund infrastructure projects that support growth in the County.
15. The previous approach to delivering infrastructure (highways, schools and some community facilities) has required significant forward-funding from the County Council and in the current financial climate this approach is no longer possible.
16. Adoption of the Local Plan is expected to result in a funding shortfall of at least £120m for highways infrastructure. The County Council will not be able to fund this gap and will require additional developer contributions or other funding to be secured before the County Council could agree to delivery of the associated transport schemes.
17. The County Council continues to seek to provide support for a Local Plan that provides as robust as possible policy platform for securing the provision and infrastructure and services required to support its successful delivery.
18. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

19. A copy of this report and the supplementary report will be circulated to all members.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

20. There are no equality and human rights implications arising from the report.

Environmental Implications

21. The County Council will continue to advise Charnwood Borough Council and other partners as to how best to minimise the impact of the planned growth on the environmental assets of Leicestershire.
22. The impact upon the environment is a key consideration in all planning decisions made within the context of an approved or emerging Local Plan, and

the County Council will seek to ensure that opportunities are taken to enhance the environment through biodiversity net gain and sustainable forms of development.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

23. The County Council works closely with the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Planning Partnership, which includes Leicester City Council, the seven district councils in Leicestershire and the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership.

Officers to Contact

Tom Purnell
Assistant Chief Executive
Tel: 0116 305 7019 Email: tom.purnell@leics.gov.uk

Julie Thomas
Head of Planning and Historic and Natural Environment
Tel: 0116 305 5667 Email: julie.thomas@leics.gov.uk

Ann Carruthers
Director, Environment and Transport
Tel: 0116 305 7000 Email: ann.carruthers@leics.gov.uk

Janna Walker
Assistant Director, Development and Growth
Tel: 0116 305 0785 Email: janna.walker@leics.gov.uk

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 25 November 2022: Managing the Risk Relating to the Delivery of Infrastructure to Support Growth - <https://bit.ly/3EN8P9Z>

Report to the Cabinet on 10 February 2023: Interim Approach to Planning Issues in Charnwood Borough - <https://bit.ly/3MI7XXZ>

Report to the Cabinet on 23 June 2023: Charnwood Borough Council's Local Plan - <https://bit.ly/3RFyeud>