



CABINET – 13 SEPTEMBER 2024

RESPONSE TO THE HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH REGULATION 18 DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION (JULY 2024)

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Members on the current position of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's (Hinckley and Bosworth BC's) Local Plan and the County Council's position in respect of the latest period of consultation.
2. A supplementary report to seek approval for the proposed response as the views of the County Council 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.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. Consultation commenced on 31 July 2024 and will close on 27 September 2024.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

6. In 2018, the County Council, Leicester City Council, the seven district councils in Leicestershire, and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, (LLEP) approved the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) which provides the long-term vision for planned growth for the area up to 2050. With particular regard to Hinckley and Bosworth, the SGP identifies the A5 as an Improvement Corridor and in addition, Hinckley (alongside the towns of Coalville, Loughborough, Lutterworth, and Market Harborough) is identified as an Area of Managed Growth where growth will be managed through Local Plans.

7. In March 2019, the County Council responded to Hinckley and Bosworth BC's Local Plan Review: New Directions for Growth. A number of concerns were raised, including about the lack of consultation with the County Highway Authority and insufficient reference to the policy framework provided by the agreed SGP.
8. The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Transport Priorities (LLTSTP) was approved by the Cabinet in November 2020. This document has a plan period to 2050 and was developed by the County and City Councils alongside the SGP to ensure the long-term development needs and associated transportation requirements are co-ordinated.
9. In 2021, the County Council and its partners (Leicester City Council, the seven district councils and the LLEP), commissioned the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA). The HENA, published in June 2022, provides evidence that across Leicester and Leicestershire, the projected housing need from 2020 to 2036 is 91,400 dwellings and employment land need from 2021 to 2036 is 344 hectares.
10. In September 2021, the County Council responded to Hinckley and Bosworth BC's draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation and expressed the need for closer partnership working with Hinckley and Bosworth BC across key disciplines and at a senior officer level in recognition of:
 - the challenges presented by the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in the Borough and wider area;
 - the lack of capacity on the Local Road Network;
 - the need to take a strategic approach to education and other infrastructure provision; and
 - the need to secure deliverable planned growth supported by infrastructure rather than 'unplanned' speculative development.
11. The report noted that, at that time, the level of partnership working needed to understand the strategy of the proposed Local Plan, how it would be delivered and how the impacts would be mitigated, had not been achieved. It further set out that the County Council was of the view that in order to achieve the required level of partnership working, a revised timetable would be needed (and agreed with relevant stakeholders) to build in time for appropriate dialogue and to share and consider technical evidence.
12. In October 2021 the Cabinet considered a further report regarding Hinckley and Bosworth BC's emerging Local Plan. The Cabinet agreed that the County Council would continue to work with the Borough Council to develop a Local Plan that was sound and deliverable, but that if Hinckley and Bosworth BC decided to publish a Regulation 19 Local Plan that did not satisfactorily address the County Council's concerns, it would raise a formal objection as part of the consultation process, and at Examination in Public.
13. In December 2021, the County Council became a signatory to a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) relating to South Leicestershire Local Plan Making,

aligning the gathering of evidence and activity in the development of new local plans for three districts in the south of the County.

14. The Council's Strategic Plan (2022 to 2026) has five strategic outcomes, including 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure' and a 'Clean, Green Future' to ensure Leicestershire has the infrastructure to meet the demands of a growing population, whilst looking to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable resource usage.
15. In February 2022 the Cabinet authorised the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member, to submit comments on behalf of the County Council, prior to the end of the Hinckley and Bosworth BC Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation period. The report reiterated that to date, insufficient evidence had been provided to demonstrate that the Local Plan meets the tests of soundness as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and as a result, this was likely to form the basis of the County Council's response.
16. 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.
17. In September 2022, the County Council became a signatory to a SoCG relating to Housing and Employment Land Needs in Leicester and Leicestershire, setting out how the City Council's identified unmet needs would be accommodated in the County. Hinckley and Bosworth BC approved the SoCG at its Council meeting in January 2024.
18. In November 2022, the Cabinet received a paper setting out the financial implications for the Council of delivering sustainable and inclusive growth and agreed the approach and principles the Council would adopt to address and manage these risks.

Resource Implications

19. 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.
20. The County Council's Capital Programme includes over £200m to fund infrastructure projects that support growth in the County.
21. 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.

22. 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 of infrastructure and services required to support its successful delivery. Increasingly there are challenges to achieve this, these challenges are included in a separate report to be considered by Cabinet on 13 September 2024 setting out the proposed response of the County Council to the National Planning Policy Framework Proposed Changes consultation which extends until 24 September 2024.
23. 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

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

Equality Implications

25. There are no equality implications arising from the report.

Human Rights Implications

26. There are no human rights implications arising from the report.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

27. The County Council works closely with the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Planning Group, which includes Leicester City Council and the seven district councils in Leicestershire.

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Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 23 November 2018: Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan – Consideration of Revised Plan for Approval - <https://bit.ly/3SjDH8P>
Report to the Cabinet on 29 March 2019: Response to Consultation on Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Local Plan Review: New Directions for Growth - <https://bit.ly/3W1EVqP>

Report to the Cabinet on 20 November 2020: Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Transport Priorities 2020 to 2050 - <https://bit.ly/3SlGT3y>

Report to the Cabinet on 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) - <https://bit.ly/3SmMCpl>

Report to the Cabinet on 17 September 2021: Response to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation - <https://bit.ly/4eZoHHG>

Report to the Cabinet on 26 October 2021: Urgent item - Development of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's New Local Plan - Latest Position - <https://bit.ly/4eWRIDO>

Report to the Cabinet on 14 December 2021: South Leicestershire Local Plan Making Statement of Common Ground (November 2021) - <https://bit.ly/3Ujew8K>

Report to the Cabinet on 29 March 2022: Response to the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Pre Submission Local Plan (2020 - 2039) Regulation 19 Consultation - <https://bit.ly/4bCyn88>

Report to the Cabinet on 23 September 2022: Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities – Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing and Employment Land Needs - <https://bit.ly/3ubU67a>

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

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