



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

Scrutiny Commission
Council

8 November 2018
27 November 2018

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan

Report of Director (Environment and Planning)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable Members to consider the revised Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (the revised SGP) which is attached as Appendix A to this report.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that:

- a) The Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) "*Leicester and Leicestershire 2050: Our Vision for Growth*" be approved;
- b) The Chief Executive of each SGP partner authority, following consultation with the Leader of that authority and the Joint Strategic Planning Manager, be authorised to agree, prior to publication, any final minor amendments to the SGP which do not significantly change the overall content or purpose of the document; and
- c) Member concerns raised at Scrutiny Commission to be given consideration.

2.2. Reason for the report:

- a) Approval of the SGP will put in place a key long-term strategy for the future development and prosperity of Leicester & Leicestershire.
- b) The revised SGP is being submitted to each participating authority for approval during the autumn/early winter and it is likely that, during this process, the need for some minor changes will be identified. Enabling the

Chief Executive to make such amendments following consultation with the Leader and Joint Strategic Planning Manager (JSPM) will avoid unnecessary delay. The JSPM reports to all partner organisations and acts on behalf of the Members' Advisory Group (MAG).

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 The report to Council on 7 December 2017 set out the background to the development of the draft SGP including the revocation of regional spatial strategies by the government in 2012 and the resulting need for local planning authorities to consider strategic planning within the context of the 'duty to co-operate' required by the Localism Act 2011.
- 3.2 In Leicester & Leicestershire, it was decided by the local planning authorities that long term strategic planning would be more effective if undertaken across the City and the County, and included the local enterprise partnership, the LLEP, as a partner.
- 3.3 The SGP has, therefore, been prepared jointly by the eight local planning authorities (the borough and district councils), the County Council as the highway authority and the City Council as a unitary authority with combined planning and highways responsibilities. Each of these is represented on a Members' Advisory Group (MAG) which, supported by senior officers, has overseen the preparation of the Plan. The LLEP attends MAG in the capacity of an observer. Homes England (formerly the Homes & Communities Agency) attends the senior officer group in the capacity of an observer.

4. POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 4.1 On 12 July 2016 Council approved the Strategic Growth Statement for consultation. This formed the first stage in the development of the SGP. The Statement:
- set out the rationale and proposed process for the preparation of the SGP
 - identified the defining characteristics of the local area and challenges faced by the partners
 - outlined the evidence base that would be assembled and the generic spatial options to be considered in formulating a SGP, and
 - set out initial objectives and ambitions for the future.
- 4.2 A Consultation Draft SGP was considered and endorsed by the Members' Advisory Group on 6 November 2017. It was subsequently approved for the purpose of public consultation by Council on 7 December 2017. A 17 week consultation period began on 11 January 2018 and closed on 10 May 2018.
- 4.3 A 17-week consultation period took place from 11 January -10 May 2018 and summary documents are available. This included:
- press releases, periodic media coverage
 - emails/letters to statutory consultees
 - emails/letters to organisations and groups identified by partners
 - public exhibitions
 - copies of the Draft SGP and summary leaflets
 - paper copies of questionnaires and all evidence at main offices
 - SGP website
 - links to the SGP website from partner websites
 - social media messages

- 4.4 A total of 588 respondents were received, 79% of which were from members of the public. These comments have been analysed and considered during the preparation of the revised SGP. Although many of the comments received, particularly from members of the public were not in favour of the A46 Expressway, it is a critical infrastructure element of the strategy. Without it the other elements of the Plan cannot be realised, especially the focus for growth along this new route which benefits the borough as much of the route will likely fall outside Hinckley and Bosworth. If the A46 Expressway option is not sustained as part of the Plan, the same level of growth will still need to be accommodated within Leicestershire which will require a redistribution of the housing need. A summary of key changes is attached as Appendix B.
- 4.5 In line with the Statement of Community Involvement, those respondents who provided contact details have been informed that a revised plan has been prepared. The opportunity for further comment will take place during the preparation of Local Plans.
- 4.6 The Members Advisory Group meeting of 24 September 2018 considered and agreed the revised Strategic Growth Plan to allow for agreement through each partner's governance process with the aim of all partners agreeing to approve the revised Strategic Growth Plan by the end of 2018.

5. THE REVISED STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN

- 5.1 The SGP will:
- support partners to plan effectively for the future, giving Local Plans a consistent framework, help to make decisions on infrastructure and secure Government funding
 - give some control over accommodating and supporting future growth and help to protect and enhance environmental assets, and
 - provide confidence to the market, Government, local businesses and residents that the local councils and the LLEP are working together to manage the growth of the area in a plan-led and co-ordinated manner.
- 5.2 There are risks in not having a SGP and these are summarised in Appendix C.
- 5.3 As the SGP has been developed, a number of events have been held for Members to keep them advised of progress. This has included the SGP being a standing item on the regular Planning Policy Member Working Group agenda (to which all Members are invited) and specific all-Member briefings on the SGP, at which the Joint Strategic Planning Manager for Leicester and Leicestershire presented, on 15 March 2018 and 25 July 2018. The draft Plan also went through normal governance procedures in autumn/winter 2017 as follows:
- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| • Executive (as informal item) | 23 August 2017 |
| • Executive Briefing | 13 November 2017 |
| • Scrutiny | 23 November 2017 |
| • Council | 07 December 2017 |

Key elements of the SGP

- 5.4 The SGP sets out a strategy for the growth and development of Leicester & Leicestershire in the period to 2050, enabling partners to consider the longer term needs of the area and opportunities which extend beyond the conventional timeframe of a Local Plan. MAG considered the distribution of housing and employment land

over the period 2011-31 and 2011-36 in the context of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (January 2017) in order to give a more detailed framework for shorter term Local Plans.

- 5.5 There have been on-going discussions with organisations such as Network Rail and Midlands Connect to ensure that their emerging policies and proposals are incorporated in emerging plans, strategies and funding programmes where necessary. Although the Plan will help to support rail improvements it does not include or promote the proposed Hinckley Strategic Rail Freight Interchange. This proposal is being pursued through the National Significant Infrastructure Projects process so will be determined by a government appointed Inspector rather than through the local planning authority which is Blaby District Council.
- 5.6 The SGP proposes that most development will take place in major strategic locations with less development happening in existing towns, villages and rural area; in so doing, it allows new development to be focused along transport corridors and close to employment centres.
- 5.7 The five building blocks that have been used to prepare the Plan are an understanding and appreciation of:
- the existing settlement pattern
 - national policies, particularly in relation to planning, housing and infrastructure provision
 - the local economy and how it is supported by the Midlands Engine Strategy (March 2017)
 - road and rail networks and the proposals and priorities of the Midlands Connect Strategy (March 2017), and
 - our environmental, historic and other assets.
- 5.8 Four priorities are identified in the SGP:
- creating conditions for investment and growth
 - achieving a step change in the way that growth is delivered
 - securing essential infrastructure
 - delivering high quality development.
- 5.9 Analysis has indicated that through existing and emerging Local Plans and planning permissions provision can be made for the amount of new housing needed in the area to 2031. This will be achieved through a mixture of major strategic sites already identified in Local Plans (approximately 40%) and smaller scale growth on non-strategic sites (approximately 60%). The proposed new spatial distribution of strategic development, therefore, does not need to focus on this time period but it remains an important part of the plan e.g. we wish to accelerate the delivery of consented and allocated sites and we need to secure the infrastructure which is essential to their success.
- 5.10 Beyond 2031, the SGP proposes that more growth should be directed to strategic locations. This requires new strategic infrastructure to open up land for development and the Midlands Connect Strategy (setting out key transport priorities for the East and West Midlands) lays the foundations for this.

Proposed Growth Areas and Improvement Corridors

- 5.11 The proposed growth areas are:
- Leicester City
 - the A46 Growth Corridor

- the Leicestershire International Gateway
- the A5 Improvement Corridor
- the Melton Mowbray Key Centre for Regeneration and Growth

5.12 Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Lutterworth and Market Harborough are identified as areas where growth would be managed in Local Plans. Improvement of the A5 corridor is essential to reducing congestion in the borough, to deliver already planned housing growth and to support delivery of major industrial sites which already have Local Plan allocations and/or planning permission. Managing the delivery of consented/allocated sites in and around the borough will be achieved through Local Plans.

5.13 In the villages and rural areas, the SGP proposes that there will be limited growth consistent with providing for local needs.

6.0 EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

6.1 By seeking to secure economic growth is secured, and appropriate provision for market and affordable homes is made, the implementation of the SGP can contribute to meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups across Leicester & Leicestershire.

6.2 An Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EqHRIA) has been undertaken. The outcomes of the assessment are available to view in a report which supports the SGP. The assessment considers a number of options for the spatial distribution of growth within Leicester & Leicestershire, including that of the SGP. It is clear that different options have the potential to impact, in different ways, on matters such as age, disability, race, religion or belief (some positive, some negative and some neutral). Other matters are not likely to be affected.

6.3 As this is a high-level strategic plan, however, the responsibility for mitigating any adverse impacts upon individuals or community groups will fall to subsequent statutory plans, primarily Local Plans prepared by individual authorities. In most cases, it will be important to ensure that specific infrastructure and services are planned effectively to deal with the specific needs of these groups. The EqHRIA ensures that the partner organisations are aware of the various impacts of the SGP and enables them to put in place any necessary mitigating measures and/or enhancements.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) (SEA) has been undertaken together with a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The outcomes are available to view in a report supporting the SGP. The SA concludes that the SGP has the potential to deliver significant positive effects in relation to health and well-being; housing; and economy and employment. Minor positive effects are reported in relation to climate change and cultural heritage (although, in the case of the latter, minor negative effects are also reported as well). Minor negative effects are reported in relation to water; and moderate negative effects in relation to landscape and land. Mixed effects are reported in relation to transport and travel i.e. significant positive effects in relation to the focusing of development in strategic locations and minor negative effects in relation to potential congestion on nearby routes. Uncertain negative effects are recorded in relation to biodiversity and minerals. Where significant effects are identified, measures to

mitigate these have been suggested, if possible. Further measures to enhance the positive effects have also been suggested, where possible.

- 7.2 The SA reports that the findings broadly support the preferred strategy as it would generate the most benefits in terms of employment and housing growth. It reports that the focus of growth at key areas of economic growth and infrastructure capacity is also likely to reduce the length of car trips, and encourage sustainable modes of travel (particularly where there are strong rail and bus links into the City of Leicester). It also states that, in terms of environmental effects, the preferred approach does not generate any major negative effects and performs better or the same as the alternatives in this respect.
- 7.3 The SA acknowledges the role of the SGP in establishing broad preferred locations for longer term growth to provide a framework for statutory Local Plans. It states that the broad locations would evidently be able to accommodate a range of different growth levels so, if subsequent work based on updated evidence confirms that a higher level of growth ought to be pursued in certain locations, then this can be considered at that stage. A higher level of growth (than the notional projected housing requirement) will have largely negative impacts. This is supported by the SA findings which suggest that the negative effects for every option would be likely to increase and this could lead to major negative effects on the built and natural environment, water and transport infrastructure.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH

Key changes from the Draft Plan

- 8.1 In terms of key implications for Hinckley and Bosworth Borough, the following change to the draft Strategic Growth Plan is highlighted below:
- The Southern Gateway designation close to the borough has been deleted. In its place is the A5 Improvement Corridor which extends from near Lutterworth to where the borough ends at Atherstone on the A5. This is to emphasise the importance of the A5 improvement to the delivery of committed growth.

Benefits of the Strategic Growth Plan

- 8.2 By supporting the joint work carried out to date and approving the Strategy Growth Plan, Hinckley and Bosworth borough is in a better position to negotiate large scale infrastructure investment of benefit to the borough and is afforded a greater level of support and protection in relation to speculative growth pressures. The key benefits of the Plan are:
- The Strategic Growth Plan has been district led and influenced i.e. The A5 Improvement Corridor designation
 - The Plan also reflects opportunities identified in the Midlands Connect Strategy (2017), for the A5 Expressway and road service improvements.
 - The Plan also reflects plans in Leicestershire County Council's Prospectus for Growth document (Sept. 2017) for detailed A5 improvements which include section widening and improvement to the Dodwells roundabout. It also includes proposals for capacity improvements on the A47 at junction A47, improvements to two key junctions in the town on Rugby/Hawley Road and Brookside and potential capacity improvements on the B4669 and B4667;
 - Alongside road improvements, delivery of rail improvements such as upgrades to the Leicester to Coventry and Leicester to Birmingham routes;
 - Protection of environmentally sensitive areas as illustrated on Figure 5: Assets (SGP pages 15-16);

- The SGP spatial strategy directs major growth beyond the borough rather than a traditional spatial distribution of growth based on population which would have resulted in a higher level of need to be met;
- By forging a strong joint partnership and agreeing a common strategy the borough can mount a stronger defence against inappropriate development and external growth pressures;
- The strategy will help us to deliver essential community infrastructure linked with new growth;
- There is strong government support for joint, cross-border planning such as demonstrated by the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan partnership and this is reflected in the new National Planning Policy Framework (paras. 24-27);
- HBBC would be able to demonstrate compliance with the statutory '**duty to co-operate**' which is a necessary requirement of district plan making;
- The Plan safeguards HBBC's position regarding housing numbers and ability to progress the Local Plan in a timely manner;
- Leicestershire's current infrastructure is patently not fit for purpose and needs investment. The Strategic Growth Plan puts Leicestershire firmly on government's radar – success has already been seen for example Melton bypass and successful Housing Investment Fund bids;
- Growth will happen but the Plan helps HBBC control the scale and location of development through our Local Plan.

8.3 There are risks to consider should the Strategic Growth Plan not be endorsed by all local authorities in Leicestershire, which are set out in the Appendix C Risk Assessment

8.4 The proposals and options for growth contained in the Strategic Growth Plan (once adopted) will need to be articulated through the Borough's Local Plan from now and throughout the period up to 2050. The Strategic Growth Plan, as a non-statutory plan, does not allocate development sites; that will still be the preserve of Local Plans. Although the Strategic Growth Plan is geared towards growth accelerating from 2031 it is important to work the foundations for this future growth into our plan now. If agreed the Local Plan Review needs to reflect the strategy for the Strategic Growth Plan but express it in a way that fits with our own aspirations for growth and place making (i.e. sustainable growth to keep communities thriving, neighbourhood planning and growing skills and technology based industries).

8.5 This report was considered at Scrutiny on 8 November 2018 where Members raised concerns related to the Strategic Growth Plan and in particular the A46 expressway and where it might connect within/close to the borough. These concerns are set out in the minute extract which will be appended to this report for Council.

9. EXEMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

9.1 Open session

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [CS]

10.1 Currently there is £28,289 set aside for the Strategic Growth Plan. Any additional costs would require approval in accordance with financial procedure rules.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [MR]

11.1 None

12. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

12.1 This report relates to all 3 Priority Ambitions of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Corporate Plan (2017-2021), namely:

- People
- Places
- Prosperity

13. CONSULTATION

13.1 None

14. RISK IMPLICATIONS

14.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

14.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

14.3 A Risk Assessment table specific to the Strategic Growth Plan is attached at Appendix C.

15. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The Strategic Growth Plan will provide a strategic planning framework for Leicester and Leicestershire for the foreseeable future. It will include strategic policies and directions for growth that will impact on all communities in Hinckley and Bosworth and therefore consultation on all stages of the plan is essential to ensure appropriate engagement and understanding.

15.2 How Equality and Human Rights have been taken into account are contained in the body of the report.

16. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

16.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data Protection implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background Papers (not appended but available on request)

- Background papers: Consultation reports
- Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment
- Sustainability Appraisal

Appendices

- Appendix A: Strategic Growth Plan
- Appendix B: Summary of key changes from Consultation Draft Plan
- Appendix C: Risk Assessment

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