



**Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council**

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

Scrutiny Commission
Council

23 November 2017
07 December 2017

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire– draft for consultation

Report of Director (Environment and Planning)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise Council of the work undertaken to date in the preparation of a Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 (i) That Council notes and endorses the process which has been undertaken in the preparation of a Draft Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire;
- (ii) That Council notes that the Consultation Draft Plan has been endorsed by the Members' Advisory Group (MAG) which oversees the preparation of the Plan;
- (iii) That the consultation process and timetable is approved; and
- (iv) That a further report is brought back to Council to consider the consultation responses and approve the final version of the Plan.

3. REASON FOR THE REPORT

3.1 To demonstrate support for the collaborative working that has taken place across the seven Districts/Borough Councils, Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership;

3.2 To note that MAG has been engaged in and supports the proposed document;

- 3.3 To ensure that all partners are in support of the process and that it is consistent across the County, and that all residents and stakeholders have an opportunity to make comments on the proposals; and
- 3.4 To ensure that there is an opportunity to scrutinise the final version of the plan before it is agreed

4. POLICY JUSTIFICATION AND PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 4.1 The preparation of a Strategic Growth Plan will provide a clear message to central government that Leicester and Leicestershire is aware of its potential in terms of growth and by planning ahead and together this potential can be realised and developed to the benefit of our communities now and into the future. The risk of not having such a plan means that growth is likely to occur with less joined up control and direction and the sub-regions would not be able to bid for national infrastructure investment opportunities that would help to address many of the challenges the county currently faces, with particular reference to the strategic road network.
- 4.2 An initial stage of consultation on the production of the Strategic Growth Plan, the Strategic Growth Statement, was consulted upon in September 2016 for a 6 week period. The Strategic Growth Statement set the context for the emerging growth plan by identifying defining area characteristics, opportunities, challenges and the ambitions for future growth in the sub-region. It also outlined the evidence base and spatial options that would be considered in formulating the strategy, these being urban intensification, urban concentration, sustainable urban extensions, concentration on key settlements, employment-led growth, dispersed growth, new settlements and growth corridors. Comments received on this consultation and further evidence gathering and analysis work have been used to inform the publication of the draft Strategic Growth Plan which is the document that Members are now asked to endorse for a period of public consultation.

5. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 5.1 Until 2010, the strategic planning framework for Leicester & Leicestershire was set out in the East Midlands Regional Plan (2009), the regional spatial strategy for the East Midlands. In 2010, however, regional spatial strategies were abolished by Government and local planning authorities were encouraged to consider strategic planning within the context of the '*duty to co-operate*' imposed by the Localism Act 2011.
- 5.2 In Leicester and Leicestershire, recognising that the strategy of the East Midlands Regional Strategy would be implemented through proposals in the current round of Local Plans, the local planning authorities decided that strategic planning for the longer term would be more effective if undertaken across the City and County as a whole. Responding to the important role of the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) in the delivery of infrastructure and economic growth, the LLEP became an additional partner in the process.
- 5.3 The Strategic Growth Plan has, therefore, been prepared jointly and on a collaborative basis by the ten partner organisations in Leicester & Leicestershire i.e. all eight of the local planning authorities, the County Council as highway authority, the City Council as a unitary authority with combined planning and highways responsibilities, and the local enterprise partnership. Leicester & Leicestershire is fortunate in that the Housing Market Area, the Functional Economic Market Area and the area covered by the LLEP are the same: having the same geographical

boundaries for these areas means that it is easier to plan for the future. Although there is a need to collaborate with authorities outside Leicester and Leicestershire, the intention is that provision for housing and economic development needs will be met from within the area.

- 5.4 The Strategic Growth Statement, published in August 2016, stated that the ten partner organisations had agreed that the Strategic Growth Plan would:
- be clear about the opportunities and challenges that are to be faced
 - provide an agreed scale and direction for future growth, reflecting the evidence available and the will of the partners
 - create a single consistent strategic framework for Local Plans, economic investment plans, transport and other infrastructure plans
 - ensure that Leicester & Leicestershire is positively positioned to take advantage of private sector inward investment opportunities and national programmes for investment
 - provide the right conditions for the growth of indigenous businesses, and, at the same time, protect the area's natural resources, environment and historic assets.
- 5.5 The current Consultation Draft Plan takes forward this work. It sets out a strategy for the growth and development of Leicester & Leicestershire in the period to 2050. This time period allows the partners to think about the longer term needs of the area and to consider opportunities which might extend beyond the conventional timeframe of a Local Plan. Within this longer time period, however, MAG has considered the distribution of housing and employment land for the periods 2011-2031 and 2011-2036 so that the partners have a more detailed framework for the preparation of Local Plans.
- 5.6 The Strategic Growth Statement was the first stage in the preparation of the Plan. Having completed governance procedures in early summer 2016, it was the subject of public consultation in August/September 2016. The document stated the ambition of the partners was to overcome the problems that are experienced by existing communities, and to accommodate growth in new developments that have a real sense of place and purpose. It also explained that the partners wanted to raise the bar in terms of the quality of development so the focus has been on how the City and the County can be improved for local people and businesses, and, therefore, how growth can be delivered at the right time, in the right place, with the essential infrastructure that it needs. Consultation responses were reported to MAG in early 2017.
- 5.7 Throughout the discussions on the Strategic Growth Plan, the focus has been on defining a long term future for Leicester & Leicestershire, looking ahead as far as 2050. This end date was chosen, in part, to provide additional flexibility in terms of the potential solutions that might be considered but also because other stakeholders were known to be planning for, and trying to secure funding for, projects with end dates which extended well beyond the timeframe of a Local Plan.
- 5.8 Since work started on the Strategic Growth Plan, other organisations have progressed their own work at different speeds (e.g. Network Rail, Highways England, the Midlands Connect Partnership) but there has been a constant dialogue to ensure an awareness of their emerging policies and proposals, and that projects considered to be vital to the future of Leicester & Leicestershire were incorporated in emerging plans, strategies and funding programmes.

- 5.9 As the Consultation Draft Plan has been developed, a number of events have been held for Members to keep them advised of progress. The Strategic Growth Plan has been a standing item and discussed with Members at the monthly Planning Policy Member Working Group. Due to the significance of the emerging Strategic Growth Plan and its correlation to the borough's own review Local Plan, all Members, not just members of the Member Working Group are invited to attend. Those Members not able to attend scheduled meetings are offered the opportunity of talking to officer's on a 1-2-1 basis at their convenience. In addition, on 15 September 2017, Pat Willoughby the Joint Strategic Planning Manager gave a presentation on the development of the Strategic Growth Plan and recorded Member comments in order to feed these back through the preparation process.
- 5.10 In addition the Council's Executive Lead for Regeneration has attended a number of MAG meetings, as the Council's representative, at which the shape, structure and content of the Consultation Draft Plan has been discussed.
- 5.11 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, will not be allocating development sites that will still be the preserve of Local Plans. Although the emerging Strategic Growth Plan is geared towards growth accelerating from 2031 it is important to work into our plan now the foundations for this future growth. The Local Plan Review will reflect the strategy for the emerging 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).
- 5.12 Although a key aim of the Consultation Draft Strategic Growth Plan is to send a clear message about Leicester and Leicestershire's growth potential to central government, it is emphasised that growth of this scale and ambition can only be achieved if it is truly infrastructure led, i.e. significant development cannot be accommodated without major investment in essential infrastructure and services. Infrastructure that is critical to the delivery of the Strategic Growth Plan is the A46 and A5 Expressway proposals as without these it would be difficult to realistically achieve the overarching strategy for growth. This is supported by the work of the A5 Transport Partnership, which the Borough Council leads, that continues to highlight the need for progress on improving the A5 as a key facet of the strategic road network, now and into the future in Leicestershire, Warwickshire and beyond.

6. PROPOSED CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 6.1 With the Consultation Draft Strategic Growth Plan having been endorsed by MAG, a period of public consultation now needs to take place. The detail and the extent of consultation that is to take place will vary between the partner organisations to provide flexibility for each to reflect their own practices. In practice, however, there needs to be an 'agreed minimum' which each local authority will adopt. It is recognised that the LLEP has a different role in this process.
- 6.2 The following will provide the basis of the public consultation:
- The Consultation Draft Plan
 - A short, simple consultation leaflet. It is anticipated that this would constitute an A3 sheet of paper folded in such a way that the reasons for preparing the plan are set out on the front page, the strategy diagram with explanatory notations are set out on the centre spread and the final page should provide details of

proposed housing numbers and ways in which consultation responses can be submitted.

- Copies of all supporting documentation
- A standard presentation, with notes, to be used by individual organisations to ensure that a consistent message is conveyed.
- A consultation questionnaire
- One or more joint press releases

6.3 The consultation process will be managed, primarily, through the web sites for both the Strategic Growth Plan and partner organisations. It is anticipated that all material will be held on the web site for the Strategic Growth Plan with a link from partner organisations. Arrangements will also be made for comments to be submitted by post.

6.4 It is proposed that consultation should start during week commencing 8 January 2018 and continue for twelve weeks (thereby concluding by end of March 2018/beginning of April, depending on the start date).

6.5 All consultation responses will be reviewed and reported, in the first instance, to MAG. At the same time, consideration will be given to whether amendments to the Draft Plan will need to be made. It is anticipated that the final version of the Strategic Growth Plan will be presented to MAG for consideration in summer/early autumn 2018. If agreed, it will proceed through the governance arrangements of the partner organisations.

6.6 It is intended to link consultation on this document as part of the programme of consultation on this council's Directions for Growth – Issues Scope and Options Local Plan Review document. The consultation plan for the Local Plan review will include wide ranging manned consultation events including specific engagement activities with our parishes and Neighbourhood Plan Groups. This will ensure that the Consultation Draft Plan will be subject to a high level of engagement and the relationship between the two documents is clear.

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

7.1 This report will be taken in open session.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (IB)

8.1 Currently there is £37,000 set aside for Strategic Growth works. Any additional costs arising from the consultation will require approval in accordance with financial procedure rules.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [AR]

9.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to comply with its Duty to Cooperate. The recommendation within this report ensures that the Council can demonstrate that this duty has been discharged.

10. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

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

- People
- Places
- Prosperity

11. CONSULTATION

11.1 None

12. RISK IMPLICATIONS

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

12.2 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.

12.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Not contributing to the production of the Strategic Growth Plan would jeopardise the plan as a whole and would severely limit the Borough Council's ability to demonstrate that we have met the Duty to Cooperate in plan making.	Contributing fully to the production of the Strategic Growth Plan in terms of costs and officer time will ensure that the Council not only meet the Duty, but also that the interests of the Borough are ingrained in the document.	Head of Planning

13. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

13.1 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.

13.2 An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) is to be undertaken as part of the preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan. A Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment/Habitats Regulation Assessment is being undertaken which will also inform the preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan.

14. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

14.1 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: Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire – consultation draft

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