



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All Wards

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Cabinet
Strategic Planning & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

9th April 2001
9th May 2001

REPLACEMENT CITY OF LEICESTER LOCAL PLAN

Report of the Director of Environment and Development

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1 Purpose of Report

To inform Cabinet of progress on the Replacement City of Leicester Local Plan and to outline future actions and timetable leading to the formal deposit of the Local Plan this Autumn. To seek the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's views on the content of the Replacement Local Plan.

2. Background

2.1 The City Council is required by statute to have a Local Plan covering all its area. The preparation of local plans gives local communities the opportunity to participate in the process of where development should be accommodated in their area. Government guidance makes the preparation of district wide local plans mandatory for all areas. It is not sufficient for local planning authorities especially in areas of development pressure, to seek to rely on national and regional guidance and the provisions of the structure plan. The Government is therefore committed to a 'plan led' system. This reduces and avoids the risk of unplanned and uncoordinated developments occurring by default through appeals and the possibility of costs being awarded against the Council. The production of local plans is also monitored through Best Value and Audit Commission performance indicators. Local planning authorities should state whether a local plan has been adopted in the last five years.

2.2 The Local Plan :

- sets out planning policies and proposals for the use of land, and the control of development and transportation policies as they relate to land use.
- translates to the local scale the regional and strategic guidance contained in the Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands and the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan.
- sets out policies that guide development control recommendations on planning applications, and allocates sites for various categories of development.

3. Report

3.1 Timetable and Consultation Arrangements

The current Local Plan covers the period 1991-2001 and was adopted in December 1994 after a lengthy local public inquiry. The replacement Local Plan (RLP) will cover the period up to 2011. The RLP contains new priorities which reflect new Government guidance on a range of issues including; urban design, regeneration and mixed use, addressing social exclusion, sustainability, and the integration of land use and transportation policies.

3.2 The drafting of the Deposit version of the Plan is nearing completion following extensive internal consultation and will now be considered by Cabinet and Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee over the next few months. An invitation to Members to view the Plan and meet officers for discussion is also proposed. A Member Steering Group is also to be established as detailed in the covering report. Following final approval at Cabinet, the RLP will be placed on formal 'deposit' for public consultation leading to a public local inquiry. An indicative timetable is attached as Appendix A.

3.3 The latest version of the Replacement Local Plan is available on the Council's Intranet. A detailed glossary has also been produced which will be appended to the Plan. As part of the formal consultation, Departments received the written statement and copies of plans showing the key changes to the Proposals Map. Due to the prohibitive costs of production I am unable to reproduce sufficient copies of the revised Proposals Map. However if there is any need to see particular aspects of the map, the computerised version can be viewed by contacting the Development Plans Group. A copy of the map will be displayed at the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

3.4 I am also giving early consideration to a suitable venue for the local plan inquiry proposed towards the end of 2002. In addition to the usual venues, the search will need to consider commercial venues. During the search for facilities to accommodate the Structure Plan 'examination in public', the County cricket club's facilities at Grace Road were considered suitable but were not available. The inquiry into Leicester City Football Club's initial planning application which was subsequently withdrawn, was also scheduled to be held at Grace Road. I propose that this venue be nominated as the preferred choice for the local plan inquiry.

3.5 Local Plan Format - Overall Strategy

The Plan seeks to foster the objectives of the six priority areas highlighted in the Community Plan. These are:

- **Environment** - promotion of a high quality built and natural environment.
- **Jobs and Regeneration** - consolidate and diversify the local economy
- **Health and Social Care** - improving access to facilities and services for all
- **Diversity** - addressing inequalities and meeting the needs of communities.
- **Community Safety** - improving safety and personal security.
- **Education** - securing and promoting learning environments.

3.6 Strategic Themes

Strategic themes running through the Plan include making the most efficient and sustainable use of urban land, strengthening the economy, fostering refurbishment and urban regeneration, strengthening the City Centre and other more local centres, identifying key development areas, achieving high quality urban design, taking account of air quality, protection from other pollution, conserving energy, waste minimisation, maintaining and enhancing a strategic green network, access to facilities, personal security, and equality of opportunity for all the City's residents. The Local Plan also incorporates a section on minerals planning. I am hopeful that this will remove the need for a separate Minerals Local Plan.

The following list is illustrative of policy areas in the Plan which reflect the above themes:

3.7 Special Policy Areas

- Enhancing the role and primacy of the City Centre
- Potential Development Areas with potential for regeneration and mixed uses
- Ashton Green and the promotion of sustainable development
- The Riverside and environmental improvements
- Braunstone New Deal Area
- Beaumont Leys and Hamilton commercial zones.

Land Use and Transportation

The Plan also seeks to integrate land use and transportation strategies. It reflects the Local Transport Plan which guides the implementation of transport and traffic measures. The Plan incorporates policies to improve air quality and proposes new parking standards. Supplementary planning guidance on Vehicle Parking Standards has been prepared and it is intended to publish this SPG for consultation with the Local Plan.

Planning For Additional Homes

The Deposit Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan makes housing provision for 15,000 new homes in the City up to 2016. About 8,500 houses are already committed within the major development areas. The remaining 6,500 are expected to be provided in strategic regeneration areas and other windfall sites. An updated urban capacity assessment has been carried out to inform both the Structure and Local Plans. The recent developer interest in City Centre conversions and other major brownfield sites has resulted in additional capacity being identified for about 1,200 dwellings, giving a revised total housing provision of 16,200 for Leicester. The Local Plan covers a shorter period than the Structure Plan and the requirement to 2011 will be for about 12,200 houses. Although the identified supply exceeds this requirement it is acknowledged that all of the sites will not be fully developed within the Local Plan period.

Locating Office, Retail, and Leisure Uses

Plan policies will require these high traffic generators to locate within existing centres or if sites are not available, on their edge, and only in out of centre locations when such sites are not available and public transport access can be secured. The priority is therefore a sequential approach.

Other policy areas

These include the protection of the strategic green network, developer contributions, the future of secondary school sites, and the protection of employment land.

3.8 Key Issues

There are also several aspects of the Plan which are likely to initiate significant public debate. These are :

- The surplus secondary school sites – the consideration of potential development of the sites and local community needs.
- Blackbird Road Playing Fields - proposed residential development.
- Allotments – allocating allotments with development potential after the findings of the allotments review.
- Transport Schemes - such as the Evesham Road / Saffron Lane link, the Eastern District Distributor Road, and a new Park & Ride proposal off Soar Valley Way/Lutterworth Road.
- The Abbey Lane Business Park – and the potential to develop the science and technology park adjoining the National Space Centre.

4. Financial, Legal and Other Implications

4.1 Financial Implications

Costs of producing the Plan will be met within existing budgets. Incorporating the City of Leicester Minerals Local Plan within the Local Plan will result in considerable savings. However, there are concerns about the cost of the Local Plan Inquiry anticipated towards the end of 2002. The Development Plans Inquiries budget has been increased by an additional £20,000 in this year's Budget Strategy. However costs for the Structure Plan 'examination in public', (EIP) commencing in June are likely to increase due to increased charges for conducting the E.I.P. The costs for the Local Plan Inquiry are dependent on the length of the inquiry, and will have implications for budgetary provision at that stage. This will be addressed in next year's Budget Strategy.

4.2 Legal Implications

The Local Plan forms part of the statutory development plan framework as required by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Public consultation procedures are covered by government regulations and a national code of practice.

4.3 Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph references within this report
Equal Opportunities	YES	3.5 – 3.7
Policy	YES	3.5 – 3.7
Sustainable and Environmental	YES	3.5 – 3.7
Crime and Disorder	YES	3.5 – 3.7
Human Rights Act	YES	Planning policies can have implications for the use of land and property.

5. Consultations

Intra-departmental consultations have taken place at officer level. An early draft of the Replacement Plan went to the then Chief Officers meeting, and the views of other departments were sought through a Local Plan Liaison Group, Sustainable Cities Officer Group (SCOG) and review groups on playing fields, allotments, secondary schools, housing etc. Initial consultation with the Government Office for the East Midlands also took place.

Formal inter-departmental consultation took place from September to December 2000. Copies of the draft Plan were sent to each department for comment along with plans showing the main changes to the proposals map. There were no major issues to be resolved, and comments from departments have been incorporated into the latest draft Written Statement (April 2001).

6. Background Papers - Local Government Act 1972

Replacement City of Leicester Local Plan – Draft Deposit Draft – April 2001

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APPENDIX A

REPLACEMENT CITY OF LEICESTER LOCAL PLAN - INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Director's Board	27th February
Cabinet	9th April
Strategic Planning & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee	9th May
Development Control Sub-Committee	8th May
Members Invitation	w/c 21 May (to be confirmed)
Member Steering Group	w/c 21 st May (tbc.)
Cabinet (final approval)	18th June (to be confirmed)
Plan Printing and Publicity	End June - 7th September
Plan on Public Deposit	10th September - 19th October (six weeks)
Discussion with objectors to consider changes to Plan	Late 2001 - Early 2002
If changes made as a result of above then a revised deposit stage will commence	Proposed May - June 2002
Whether no changes to Plan are proposed or revised deposit stage is agreed - a Public Local Inquiry will be held	2002 (October)
Inspector's report received	Dependent on Inspectorate (within one year of Inquiry)
City Council response to Inspector's report and any proposed modifications	
Plan Adoption	2003 - 4