



Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission

Date of Commission meeting: 25th October 2018

Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan

Report of the Director of Planning, Development and
Transportation

Useful Information:

- Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Summary

To enable the Scrutiny Commission to consider the revised Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (SGP), as it progresses towards adoption. The SGP is attached as Appendix A to this report.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny

It is recommended that the Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) "*Leicester and Leicestershire 2050: Our Vision for Growth*" be noted and supported.

3. Supporting Information**3.1 Timetable for Approval**

- Formal approval by the City Mayor is expected to take place in November 2018.
- Other local authorities are being recommended to approve the revised SGP during autumn/winter 2018.

4.0 Background

4.1 The Strategic Growth Statement published in August 2016 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 joint local authority Members' Advisory Group on 6 November 2017.

- Following a presentation to the EDT&T Scrutiny Commission by Pat Willoughby, the Joint Strategic Planning Manager on 18th December 2017, progress of the SGP was welcomed and it was resolved that further reports be submitted to the Commission as the Plan progresses.

- The SGP was subsequently approved for the purpose of public consultation by the City Mayor on 20th December 2017.
- A 17 week consultation period began on 11 January 2018 and closed on 10 May 2018.

5.0 Context

5.1 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 LLEP, as a partner.

5.2 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 City Mayor represents the City Council. 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.

5.3 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.

6.0 Key elements of the SGP

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

- 6.4 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
 - the area's environmental, historic and other assets.
- 6.5 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.
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 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

- 6.8 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
- 6.9 Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Lutterworth and Market Harborough are identified as areas where growth would be managed in Local Plans.
- 6.10 In the villages and rural areas, the SGP proposes that there will be limited growth consistent with providing for local needs.

Public Consultation

6.11 A 17-week consultation period took place from 11 January-10 May 2018.

Activities included:

- press releases, periodic media coverage
- emails/letters to statutory consultees
- emails/letters to organisations and groups identified by partners
- public exhibitions. This included an exhibition at the Granby Street Customer Services Centre, with copies of the Plan and leaflets at other customer service centres and Council Libraries
- 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

6.12 A total of 588 responses 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. A summary of key changes is attached as Appendix B.

6.13 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.

7.0 Implications for the City Council

7.1 The development strategy set out in the SGP is welcomed, as it sets a new long term strategic approach to enabling and accommodating growth across Leicester and Leicestershire.

7.2 The City Council has formally declared that it will be unable to fully accommodate its own housing need. The extent of this need will be assessed as part of the preparation of the City Local Plan.

7.3 The new National Planning Policy Framework released in July 2018 has necessitated the consideration of key issues such as housing capacity and assessment of sites which impact on the preparation of the Local Plan. With the Council's unmet housing need, the preparation of the Local Plan must carefully incorporate the guidance set out in the new NPPF. A draft Local Plan is therefore expected to be launched for consultation from Spring/Summer 2019.

8.0 Appendices

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

9. Financial, legal and other implications

9.1 Financial implications

There are no immediate resource implications for the Council as support for the development of the Plan is being resourced through existing staffing and operational budgets. The long term delivery of the SGP will be dependent on the necessary resources being secured to finance the delivery of key infrastructure required to enable the delivery of the SGP

Paresh Radia - Finance

9.2 Legal implications

There are no implications from a Legal Planning perspective arising from this report as any changes to planning policy will be brought into effect by the formal local plan process in due course.

Clare Sinnott, Solicitor (Commercial, Property and Planning Team) (ext 37 1408)

9.3. Climate Change implications

9.3.1 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) (SEA) has been undertaken together with a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Where development within Leicester City is identified within the Strategic Growth Plan, the need to mitigate the environmental impacts of this development will primarily be addressed through Leicester's Local Plan. In addition the LLEP's Energy Infrastructure Strategy will inform the approach to sustainably meeting future energy demands within the LLEP area.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

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.

9.3.2 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.

9.3.3 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.

9.4 Equality Impact Assessment

9.4.1 An Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EQHRIA) has been undertaken jointly – summarised below. Specific issues that arise will be addressed through Local Plans.

Hannah Watkins –Equalities Manager

By seeking to ensure that 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.

9.4.2 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.

9.4.3 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.

9.5 Other Implications

N/A

10. Background information and other papers:

Available on the SGP website:

<http://www.llestrategicgrowthplan.org.uk/the-plan/stage-three/>

11. Is this a private report ? No

APPENDIX B

Key changes made following consultation on the Draft Strategic Growth Plan

The Consultation Draft is available on the SGP website :

<http://www.llestrategicgrowthplan.org.uk/>

Matter	Explanation
Chapter 3: Accommodating our Growth	
Ch 3: Title changed from ' <i>Accommodating Our Growth</i> ' to ' <i>Planning for Our Growth and Infrastructure</i> '.	Emphasises relationship between growth and infrastructure.
Ch 3: Re-drafted to bring together two time periods 2011-31 and 2031-50 (housing numbers as before).	Provides clarity on scale of growth over long term; better support for funding bids.
Ch 3: New text on aligning growth, infrastructure and services; focus on delivery, removing barriers to development; increasing speed.	Emphasises need for infrastructure to support committed and new development; identifies other infrastructure needs and priorities.
Chapter 4: The Building Blocks for our Plan	
Ch 4: New text added on the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).	Explains how we will address changing government policy.
Ch 4: New text and plan relating to environmental, historic and other assets.	Emphasises that such assets are an important consideration when planning for and integrating growth into its environment, context and setting.
Chapter 5: Our Overall Approach	
Ch 5: New text on ' <i>Investment and Growth</i> '	Recognises that Leicester & Leicestershire will continue to grow so we have to plan for this; links to the LLEP's emerging Local Industrial Strategy; and ensures that local aspirations are reflected in the SGP.
Ch 5: New text on ' <i>Securing essential Infrastructure</i> '	States that wide range of infrastructure is needed; promised infrastructure needs to be provided in parallel with the delivery of growth; much of this from the public sector but also collaboration with private sector.
Ch 5: Text on garden cities agenda brought forward.	To emphasise the way in which this agenda will lie at the heart of our proposals to give social, economic and environmental focus to the delivery of growth in a plan-led way

Chapter 6: Our Spatial Strategy	
Ch 6: New text to emphasise that the SGP will be delivered via Local Plans	To emphasise that local planning authorities intend to be at the forefront, managing the delivery process
Ch 6: A46: identified as the <i>'The A46 Priority Growth Corridor'</i>	Reinforces the message that the new A46 Expressway is a critical infrastructure element of the strategy without which growth on the scale/speed proposed would not be possible.
Ch 6: <i>Northern Gateway'</i> : Re-defined and identified as <i>'The Leicestershire international Gateway'</i>	Recognises the increasingly international importance of this area with East Midlands Airport, East Midlands Gateway, HS2 station, major employers, new roads, etc.
Ch 6: <i>'Southern Gateway'</i> deleted; replaced with <i>'A5 Improvement Corridor'</i>	Emphasises the importance of the A5 improvements to the delivery of committed growth
Ch 6: Lutterworth deleted as <i>'Key Centre for Growth'</i> ; re-designated as an <i>'Area of Managed Growth in Local Plans'</i>	Allows the local planning authority to focus on current proposals for growth and manage future development in Local Plans
Ch 6: Melton Mowbray renamed <i>'Key Centre for Regeneration and Growth'</i>	Better reflects the aspirations of the local authority for growth and regeneration supported by new infrastructure
Strategy Plan revised	Amended in line with changes.
Housing numbers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced by 2,000 dwellings in the area of Harborough DC • Increased by 800 dwellings in the area of Melton BC • Increased by 1,200 dwellings in the area of North West Leicestershire DC 	Provides a more sustainable distribution and accurately reflects the positive aspirations of local authorities.
General changes to the text in various places	
Clear support for public transport enhancements; including radial routes and railways not in Midlands Connect Strategy e.g. Leicester-Burton Line and around Melton Mowbray.	Better reflects the aspirations of the partners in terms of public transport improvements.
Recognition of the need for public transport to support growth.	Amended to emphasis aspirations for improved public transport as part of a sustainable transport strategy.
Importance of delivering infrastructure in parallel with growth in order to support both long term growth and growth committed through the grant of planning permission.	Emphasises that infrastructure is needed to support both long term growth and sites which already have planning permission.
Emphasis on relationship/dependency between strategic and 'lower order'	Recognises that improvements to the wider network will be needed to support

infrastructure	the strategic road and rail improvements highlighted in the Plan.
Emphasis on delivery.	Emphasises that development in the period 2011-31 needs to be accelerated.
Align homes and jobs; recognising LLEP priorities.	Recognises the desire to reduce levels of commuting and the relationship between major employment centres and new homes.
Clear support for regeneration e.g. Coalville Town Centre	Acknowledges that growth can take the form of regeneration and redevelopment of brownfield sites.