

Joint Statement by the Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities on Collaborative Planning

1. The Leicester and Leicestershire authorities have worked collaboratively on both strategic and local planning matters for many years. This has included joint working on the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (November 2014). The MoU relates to the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing and how it would be met within the Housing Market Area (HMA).
2. More recently, the authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEEP) have embarked on the production of a non-statutory Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) which will set out the aspirations of the partner organisations to plan positively for growth in Leicester and Leicestershire in the period to 2050. A joint consultation on the first stage of the SGP (the 'Strategic Growth Statement') took place in August/September 2016 and it is currently anticipated that consultation on the Draft SGP will take place during summer 2017 with a view to adoption in late 2017/early 2018. The SGP will provide the overarching strategic framework for the preparation of Local Plans.
3. In the meantime, the partner organisations recognise the need for all local authorities to have an up to date Local Plan in place and are keen to ensure that the current programme of Local Plans can be expedited. As a result, in parallel with work on the SGP, a series of studies which will support both the SGP and Local Plans is being jointly commissioned. A revised assessment of the OAN for housing and jobs is recognised as a priority task and a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) for Leicester and Leicestershire is in preparation. Stakeholder consultation on the HMA and Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) took place in June 2016 and further work is progressing; it is anticipated that the work will be complete at the end 2016/early 2017. It is further anticipated that, if there is a significant change in the OAN, this will create the need for a replacement MoU; preliminary work on the nature and form of any such agreement is already taking place. The partner organisations recognise that the OAN will be thoroughly examined through the development plan process, and continue to discuss authority level OAN and how this will contribute to the OAN for the wider HMA.
4. The HMA authorities understand that some authorities might wish to progress their Local Plans before joint working on the HEDNA and discussions on the HMA-wide spatial distribution are complete given the government's current emphasis on speeding up the preparation of Local Plans. Anticipating this circumstance, however, the HMA authorities reached agreement in summer 2016 on appropriate trigger mechanisms that could be inserted into all Local Plans coming forward in this way.
5. The wording for two trigger mechanisms has been agreed collaboratively by the HMA authorities and, in summary, together provide for an early, full or partial, review of a Local Plan should the OAN, or any subsequent redistribution of development, result in a significant change (upwards or downwards) in the amount of growth requiring to

be provided for by additional allocation in a given authority. The agreement is based on the principle that the trigger mechanisms would be applied on a consistent basis across the HMA and would ensure that all Local Plans, submitted in advance of the HEDNA and any strategic growth plan process to distribute unmet needs would contain the necessary flexibility to respond to any significant change that might arise following submission of a Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate.

6. In this respect, the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities recognise the desire of North West Leicestershire District Council to submit its Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate as soon as possible and are content for the Local Plan to include the agreed trigger mechanisms. Both North West Leicestershire District Council and the other HMA authorities will continue to work collaboratively on cross-boundary matters.

Note:

It should be noted that nothing contained in this statement should be taken to prejudice the duly made representations by individual authorities on the North West Leicestershire Local Plan.

Signed by:

.....	OBO Blaby District Council
.....	OBO Charnwood Borough Council
.....	OBO Harborough District Council
.....	OBO Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
.....	OBO Leicester City Council
.....	OBO Leicestershire County Council
.....	OBO Melton Borough Council
.....	OBO North West Leicestershire District Council
.....	OBO Oadby & Wigston Borough Council