

HERTFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

2 December 2013

Report Author – Jon Tiley – Hertfordshire County Council

Local Strategic Statement and Spatial Plan - Update

1. Summary

This report updates HIPP on the progress that has been made since the last meeting on the Local Strategic Statement.

2. Background

2.1 At the last meeting of HIPP progress on the Local Strategic Statement for the County was considered. It was agreed that the work so far completed, and in particular the three plans setting out constraints and committed and emerging development proposals and policies, should be referred on to the County Leaders Group for use in the discussions with the LEP on the Growth Plan.

2.2 In addition the following recommendations were agreed:-

a) The material included in the key plans is amended to reflect the discussions at HIPP;

b) simple written descriptions be prepared of what the plans are and the sort of key issues they raise about planning and growth in the county for discussion at the next meeting of HIPP;

c) the work programme for HIPP in terms of Duty to Co-operate issues which are sparked by the exercise so far are refined; and

d) A more focussed attempt be made to set a timetable and assessment of resources needed to deal with those matters.

A HIPP workshop session is held to discuss the options for this work and in particular how to move forward on housing issues across the county.

2.3 Item 9 on the Agenda has set out the proposed arrangements for the HIPP workshop on housing issues and from this will flow a list of the key issues about housing and growth in the county that HIPP wishes to examine further. Similarly a revised work programme for HIPP and HPG will flow from that workshop.

- 2.4 On the remaining matters, work has been progressed on the statement to accompany the LSS Plans and a draft is attached at Appendix A. As agreed this is a simple written statement to accompany the plans, explain why they have been produced and to set out what they comprise. It also has the agreed HIPP Memorandum of Understanding attached as an Appendix.
- 2.5 In addition, two revised plans are also attached for noting – a revised Environmental and Policy Constraints Map, which now has additional information on Flood Zones and Green Belt designations beyond the county boundary, and a revised Local Strategic Statement Plan, which has picked up a number of detailed changes proposed by individual Districts. A third plan – which will focus on Transport constraints in the county, is still being worked on, as part of the work being conducted to inform the LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Work on the Local Strategic Statement will continue for the foreseeable future. In particular it is recognised that the LSS Plan will be amended as Local Plans emerge and are adopted and the strategic policy context for development in the county is further developed e.g. once the LEP’s SEP has been completed. However, this work has already proved useful in terms of articulating planning issues to the LEP and demonstrating to other parties that HIPP is endeavouring to progress work on the Duty to Cooperate.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 HIPP is asked to note the progress on the Local Strategic Statement Plans and agree the written statement.

Appendix A

Local Strategic Statement for Hertfordshire – First Stage

Introduction

Following the introduction of the Duty to Cooperate in the Localism Act 2011, the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership (HIPP), a partnership of the 11 planning authorities in the county, have reviewed how to most effectively meet the requirements of the new Duty.

In May 2013, HIPP agreed a Memorandum of Understanding (see Appendix 1) which set out a commitment to joint working on planning matters and also agreed to a proposal to create a Local Strategic Statement for the County (LSS).

This document and the attached plans comprise stage 1 of the LSS for Hertfordshire.

Purpose and Content of the Local Strategic Statement

The intention for the Local Strategic Statement is to provide a broad strategic direction for Hertfordshire without imposing top-down targets on the scale or location of new development and create a document that recognises the unique characteristics and different priorities of each constituent district and area.

The LSS will combine a top-down and bottom-up approach. The top down approach will involve recognising those broad sub regional aims and infrastructure where there is broad agreement across Hertfordshire. From the bottom-up the LSS will build on the individual district and borough core strategies/local plans or emerging plans, meshing them together and then reviewing both approaches with a view to developing the overall spatial plan for the county.

The Local Strategic Statement will highlight areas of broad agreement and will also establish a programme that prioritises those areas where agreement and further joint working is required to enable HIPP members to address duty to co-operate requirements.

As a first step in this process a series of constraints maps have been created, to highlight some of the key planning challenges faced in the County. The constraints maps currently focus on existing Environmental and Policy constraints, and Transport constraints.

In addition, a first draft of an LSS proposals map has been created. This map is comprised of a number of elements including:-

- major housing, employment, and mixed use development proposals contained in adopted and emerging local plans;
- the key major transport schemes for the period 2015 to 2019 as agreed by the Local Transport Body;
- the key strategic proposals of the Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan;
- a spatial representation of the Local Enterprise Partnership's key economic assets and opportunities in the county as defined in the LEP's Growth Strategy – Perfectly Placed for Business

This is recognised as being the first stage of the LSS. It has been produced as starting point in the development of an LSS for Hertfordshire but also to be available to provide a spatial planning starting point for the preparation of the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, which must be submitted to Government by the end of March 2014.

Looking forward, to be fully effective it is recognised that the LSS will need to be a more comprehensive document which directly addresses some of the more challenging planning issues in the county. This will include developing a strategic planning vision and objectives for the county; setting out overarching policy approaches on sustainability, climate change, the economy, housing, and transport, the natural and built environment, and delivery and infrastructure.

It is also recognised that given the spatial characteristics of Hertfordshire, that different geographies will be appropriate for dealing with different issues, and this will need to be reflected in the LSS. This will also need to address issues which cross the borders of the county.

Conclusion

The attached plans represent the starting point for the development of an LSS for Hertfordshire. HIPP will now go on to agree a programme of work to address the key spatial planning issues in the county in order to fulfil the Duty to Cooperate and to provide an effective spatial planning context for the Strategic Economic Plan of the LEP.

APPENDIX 1

HERTFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Hertfordshire Infrastructure & Planning Partnership (HIPP)

This memorandum of understanding has been developed by the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership that comprises all local authorities in Hertfordshire, namely:

- Broxbourne Borough Council
- Dacorum Borough Council
- East Hertfordshire District Council
- Hertsmere Borough Council
- North Hertfordshire District Council
- St Albans City & District Council
- Stevenage Borough Council
- Three Rivers District Council
- Watford Borough Council
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Hertfordshire County Council

HIPP & Supporting Officer Structure

HIPP meets approximately six times a year and is comprised of senior Councillors, usually the Planning Portfolio Holders, from Hertfordshire's District and Borough Councils and the County Council. It is supported by an officer group, the Hertfordshire Planning Group (HPG), which is made up of the Heads of Planning of each local authority. HPG acts as the implementation arm of HIPP and is in turn supported by a number of sub groups, task and finish groups and associated partnerships. These include HPG Development Plans, HPG Development Management, Hertfordshire Economic Development Group (HEDOG), the Landscape & Green Infrastructure Group, the Strategic Green infrastructure Group and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Reference Group.

Purpose

This memorandum of understanding seeks to establish a framework for co-operation between the eleven local authorities that comprise the Hertfordshire Infrastructure & Planning Partnership (HIPP) and for the partnership to engage with other relevant organisations, both within Hertfordshire and beyond the county boundary. It particularly relates to strategic planning and infrastructure issues and consequently enables the partnership to agree joint approaches to common issues that impact on more than one local authority district. The framework also reflects how HIPP will work together with other appropriate bodies including Hertfordshire Forward, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Local Transport Body for Hertfordshire, the Local Nature Partnership, the Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils, Infrastructure providers and organisations based beyond the Hertfordshire boundary. The memorandum reflects the principles of localism and the duty to co-operate as enshrined in Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011.

This memorandum of understanding also seeks to establish a process to raise awareness of possible areas of conflict at an early stage. It is one of a series of documents and initiatives that establishes a direction of travel to ensure more effective and collaborative strategic planning across Hertfordshire. It is the cumulative effect of this joint and collaborative work that is intended to assist HIPP members in meeting their duty to co-operate obligations.

Status of this Document

This memorandum of understanding is a statement of intent that seeks to support effective co-operative working amongst the Hertfordshire local authorities. It is not intended to be legally binding and recognises that there will not always be full agreement on strategic planning and infrastructure issues across the HIPP authorities.

Objectives

This Memorandum has the following broad objectives:

- To provide a framework through which HIPP members will commit to engaging constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis both with each other and other public bodies and private sector interests including the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Hertfordshire Forward, Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP), the Local Transport Body for Hertfordshire (LTB), the Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils (HAPTC) and Infrastructure providers on matters relating to strategic planning, strategic infrastructure and other activities that prepare the way for sustainable development;

- To provide a means by which HIPP can collectively and individually engage with the Greater London Authority and neighbouring counties and sub regional groupings on matters relating to sustainable development;
- Whilst recognising that individual HIPP Members have a duty to continue to act in the best interests of their localities and constituents provide the opportunity to work collaboratively across local boundaries on issues of broader strategic importance;
- To facilitate the achievement of a broad, co-ordinated but consistent approach to strategic spatial planning, development and strategic infrastructure issues across Hertfordshire that recognises the differing characteristics, constraints and environmental considerations that exist across the County but that seeks to address the needs of business and local communities;
- To provide an opportunity for individual HIPP members to work jointly to meet development requirements that cannot wholly be met within their own areas;
- To enable a sharing of information and views and, where appropriate, to facilitate joint working on strategic issues which affect more than one local authority area;
- To ensure that the local planning, development and infrastructure policies prepared by each local authority are, where appropriate, informed by the views of other local authorities in Hertfordshire;
- To ensure that decisions on major planning applications, which have effects across more than one local authority area, are informed by the views of other Hertfordshire local authorities; and
- Provide a forum for HIPP members to discuss, debate and resolve potential areas of conflict at the earliest possible opportunity.

Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Issues

HIPP will jointly:

- Work to develop and maintain a Local Strategic Statement that provides a broad strategic direction for Hertfordshire without imposing top-down targets on the scale or location of new development and that recognises the unique characteristics and different priorities of each constituent district and area;
- Identify areas for inter-authority co-operation on strategic issues, including the preparation of joint local development documents;

- Seek to co-ordinate land use planning functions and align adopted local plans, including the use of local development orders, across local authorities within the HIPP and LEP area;
- Adopt a flexible approach to joint work, recognising that the County may not always be the appropriate geography for all partnership activity;
- Develop and implement a programme of joint research aimed at producing a robust evidence base and for jointly addressing strategic planning and development issues, particularly, but not exclusively, those referred to in the National Planning Policy Framework (para 156);
- Prepare and jointly seek funding for a strategic infrastructure investment programme to meet the existing needs of Hertfordshire and address the future social, economic and environmental requirements of growth; and
- Maintain effective liaison with the LEP, Hertfordshire Forward, LNP, LTB and other public and private sector interests as appropriate.

Each Member of HIPP will also notify the Chairman of HIPP, and where appropriate report to a meeting of HIPP, any issue that in their view could potentially have an adverse impact on partnership working or the effective operation of this memorandum of understanding.

Policy Documents

Each member of HIPP will:

- Through the Chair of the Hertfordshire Planning Group Development Plans Officer Group (HPGDP) notify all HIPP local authorities at each consultation stage in the preparation of its local development documents or, in the case of the County Council, its local transport plan, or other relevant policy documents, and any documents associated with them;
- Through the Chair of HPGDP notify all HIPP local authorities of consultation on any other policy document which, in its view, would have a significant impact on strategic planning or development within Hertfordshire; and
- If requested, meet with and discuss any issues raised by one or more of the other HIPP local authorities and take into account any views expressed on those issues.

Development Management

Each member of HIPP will:

- Through their representative on the Hertfordshire Planning Group Development Management Group (HPGDM) notify all HIPP local authorities of any major planning applications, from within its area or on which it is consulted by a local authority from outside its area, which would, in its view, have a significant impact on the strategic planning and development of Hertfordshire; and
- Take into account any views expressed in determining the application.

Monitoring

The operation and implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding will be managed and monitored through the HIPP Work Programme and will be reviewed on at least an annual basis through the HIPP Annual Review. Updates and amendments to be document will be issued as appropriate.