



**AGENDA ITEM:
SUMMARY**

Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	27 March 2018
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Joint Strategic Plan for South West Hertfordshire
Contact:	Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration James Doe, Assistant Director (Planning, Development and Regeneration) Laura Wood, Team Leader (Strategic Planning)
Purpose of report:	To seek support from Members to proceed with the preparation of a South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan and for governance arrangements to be put in place to enable this work to move forwards.
Recommendations:	That Cabinet recommend Council to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to work with the other South West Herts Authorities (Three Rivers, Watford, Hertsmere and St. Albans Councils) to prepare a Joint Strategic Plan. 2. Agree to progress a Memorandum of Understanding as the framework for governing future joint working arrangements and for the final terms of this Memorandum of Understanding to be delegated to the Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration, in consultation with the Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, for agreement. 3. Agree to Officers progressing work on the joint plan and to note that this will be reported to Cabinet and Council for approval at key stages. 4. Note the arrangements for the appointment of staff to be jointly managed between the five Local Authorities and to delegate to the Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration in consultation with the

	<p>Corporate Director Finance and Operations and the Assistant Director Performance, Policy and Innovation to make the necessary arrangements and agreement with the other Local Authorities for recruitment, appointment, joint management and sharing of costs and liabilities.</p> <p>5. Note the support of Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire LEP for this process.</p> <p>6. Agree the recruitment arrangements for an urban design officer, shared with St Albans City and District Council, to provide specialist advice.</p>
<p>Corporate objectives:</p>	<p>The Joint Strategic Plan would set the context for the Council's own Local Plan and together both documents would help support all 5 corporate objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Safe and clean environment:</i> e.g. contains policies relating to the design and layout of new development that promote security and safe access; • <i>Community Capacity:</i> e.g. provide a framework for communities to prepare area-specific guidance such as Neighbourhood Plans, Town / Village Plans etc; • <i>Affordable housing:</i> e.g. sets the Borough's overall housing target and the proportion of new homes that must be affordable; • <i>Dacorum delivers:</i> e.g. provides a clear framework upon which planning decisions can be made; and • <i>Regeneration:</i> e.g. sets the planning framework for key regeneration projects, such as Hemel Hempstead town centre and the Maylands Business Park.
<p>Implications:</p>	<p><u>Financial</u> Having an up-to-date and comprehensive planning framework helps reduce the incidence of planning appeals (and hence costs associated with these). It is also the most effective way of ensuring the optimum level of developer contributions and critically, external funding for infrastructure and in mitigation of development impacts can be achieved.</p> <p>It is estimated that the combined cost across South West Herts for a joint plan would be approximately £400,000 over a three year period. A joint bid to the MHCLG Planning Delivery Fund has been successful in securing £242,000 covering the period to the end of the 2018/2019 financial year. This will provide additional resources including two temporary specialists to help take the JSP forward. Additional funding and support opportunities are also being explored through the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) to help support a series of workshops with Members to develop a clear vision for the SW Herts area, which will set a clear framework for the JSP.</p> <p>It is considered that the initial costs can be absorbed within the</p>

existing local plan budget, equating to around £6,000 per authority. Autumn 2018 would provide the opportunity to review these budgets, as the progress of both the Local and Joint Strategic Plans will be clearer in terms of agreed timescales and cost of preparation.

In 2019/20 and 2020/21 it is anticipated that a further £150,000 would be required across the two years to cover public consultations, legal and consultancy advice and the examination of the JSP. This would equate to c£15,000 per annum per authority. Ideally we would want to keep the two specialist officers in post during 2019/20 and this would result in the need to seek additional grant funding, or to split additional costs arising between the five participating authorities. This would equate to a maximum additional cost of £29,000 per authority. The posts would only be extended if a successful bid for grant is received or that the five councils all agree to commit to the funding. For Dacorum it is intended that the funding be drawn from the Local Development Framework budget.

A second funding bid to MHCLG, submitted jointly with St Albans was also successful. This was for to provide funding for additional urban design expertise to help support masterplanning work for key development sites and to provide a design guidance document for the Borough. The grant for 2017/18 and 2018/19 is £135,792 for salary and research and publication costs. There are no additional costs associated with this post that would need to be covered through other budgetary sources.

Value for Money

Where possible, technical work that supports plan-making is already carried out across the five authorities to ensure value for money. The creation of a formal joint planning partnership will help maximise existing resources across the authorities and put the Council in a stronger position to benefit from external funding opportunities.

The joint planning work will sit above the preparation of statutory Local Plans which are to be prepared in any event by the five Councils. Experience from elsewhere in the country shows that the strategic planning document that would be prepared can be kept to a high level and therefore costs minimised.

Having a joint plan will provide the South West Herts authorities with a platform for improving their ability to secure external funding for key infrastructure.

Legal

Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 gives the power for two or more local planning authorities to agree to prepare one or more joint development documents.

	<p>It is expected that some specialist external legal support will be required to support the JSP process on an ad-hoc basis, as occurs for the Council's own plan-making processes. This advice has historically been provided by Robert Jameson of Attwaters Jameson and Hill, who has also provided support to Three Rivers and Hertsmere Councils. Subject to agreement with the other participating authorities, and compliance with procurement standing orders, it is suggested that this arrangement continues.</p> <p><u>Staff</u></p> <p>The recent successful funding bid provides funding for two additional members of staff to lead key aspects of the JSP process. Subject to agreement with the other Councils, Dacorum Borough Council could act as host authority for 'pay and rations' for the new appointments, but they would work operationally across SW Herts.</p> <p>In this event, these Officers will work alongside staff in the Planning, Development and Regeneration service, and equivalent Officers from the other participating authorities.</p> <p>Whilst this arrangement has been agreed on an in principle basis, a specific agreement will be needed across all five Councils about the sharing of costs for the appointments, and any redundancy costs should these arise. Recommendation 4 of this report refers to this.</p> <p>A 'knowledge bank' will be shared across the five authorities to support the delivery of the SW Herts Joint Plan and provide resource resilience.</p> <p>Having the shared use of a specialist urban design officer will add to the skills and expertise available to the Council, but as externally financed, can be recruited at nil cost to the Council. They will be split their time between St Albans and Dacorum Councils, with precise working arrangements to be confirmed as part of the recruitment process.</p> <p><u>Land</u></p> <p>No direct implications as a result of this report. However it is envisaged that the JSP itself will set the scale and distribution of growth across SW Herts, and indicate the location of key strategic sites. Precise site boundaries of strategic sites and the allocation of smaller development areas will fall to individual Local Plans.</p>
Risk implications:	<p>A full risk assessment for the JSP process will be included within the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG). However an initial assessment has indicated the following key risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary risk is if one of the partners to break away from the arrangement. To reduce the risk of this occurring, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would establish the

	<p>governance and ambitions for the new plan. A draft of this document is attached for information as Annex A to this report. It would also increase the likelihood of that authority, in particular, failing to meet the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate and the possibility of the Secretary of State intervening in the Local Plan process. The preparation of the MOU would be followed by the authorities agreeing a Statement of Common Ground which would identify the key cross boundary issues. This SoCG is expected to be a new statutory requirement, to be introduced by the new NPPF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource availability and changes in staffing would be a risk to the plan’s preparation as resources would need to be committed from all participating authorities. To address this, a skills bank would be prepared and the two specialist JSP Officers would be expected to work with Officers of all other member authorities on the joint plan as appropriate. • The risk of programme slippage significantly increases when multiple parties are involved. To address this, a governance structure will be included in the Memorandum of Understanding. A standard project planning approach will be put in place across the participating authorities. <p>Despite these risks, as the main report sets out, the risk of not progressing joint working are advised to be higher than the risks outlined above, in terms of enabling a ‘sound’ development plan to be adopted for the area.</p>
<p>Equalities implications:</p>	<p>An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as the plan progresses, alongside a health impact assessment and a sustainability appraisal. As part of this work there will be a consideration of the impact of the plan on Human Rights including an assessment of how proposals would outweigh any detriment to them.</p>
<p>Health and safety implications:</p>	<p>No implications as a result of this report.</p>
<p>Sustainability implications:</p>	<p>Like all statutory planning document, the JSP would need to be subject to detailed sustainability appraisal (incorporating strategic environmental assessment) throughout its development. Sustainability Appraisals covers social, economic and environmental considerations, including equalities and health and safety issues. It is expected that this work will be carried out by independent specialist consultants as is currently the case for Dacorum’s own plan.</p>
<p>Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer comments:</p>	<p><u>Monitoring Officer</u></p> <p>The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be the key document to agree the governance arrangements to take the plan forward but officers will need to ensure that it does not fetter the Council’s own decision making processes.</p> <p>The Statement of Common Ground will set the framework and agree key principles and priorities for the Joint Strategic Plan</p>

	<p>and therefore this should be approved by Cabinet and Council.</p> <p><u>Section 151 Officer</u></p> <p>The Service will need to ensure that the financial risks to the Council of appointing shared staff are adequately mitigated. This will require a robust MoU that provides for the equitable sharing of potential redundancy costs and agreement on the way forward in the event that no funding is allocated by MHCLG beyond that already awarded. This process will need to involve both the Legal and Finance teams.</p>
Consultees:	<p>The principle of preparing a JSP for SW Herts area has been discussed at recent a Member / Chief Officer workshop, attended by Dacorum's Leader, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, Chief Executive and other relevant Officers. There was equivalent Member and senior Officer attendance from the other SW Herts authorities and the Council Council. This workshop was facilitated with Catriona Riddell from the Planning Officer's Society who is an expert in this field of planning, and liaises closely with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on strategic planning matters. A copy of the workshop report is appended as Annex 2 to this report.</p> <p>Formal consultation on key stages of the JSP would be governed by a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), with the need for Member endorsement as per the Council's constitution. Legal advice is currently being sought to determine if this should be a separate SCI solely for the JSP, or if it is more appropriate for each authority to add reference to consultation arrangements for the JSP into their existing SCIs.</p> <p>Dacorum's current Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in July 2015.</p>
Background papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West of England Joint Spatial Plan (2017) https://www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk/consult.ti/JSPPublication/consultationHome • Fixing the Broken Housing Market (2017) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market • Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places: Consultation Proposals (2017) https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>SCI Statement of Community Involvement</p> <p>LDS Local Development Scheme</p> <p>NPPF National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance</p> <p>JSP Joint Strategic Plan</p> <p>SoCG Statement of Common Ground</p> <p>MOU Memorandum of Understanding</p> <p>MHCLG Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local</p>

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BACKGROUND

1. Summary

1.1 Delivering more homes to meet growing need has become a key issue for Government. Recent Government announcements indicate that the Duty to Co-operate is going to be strengthened in favour of more formalised joint strategic planning among local authorities. At a Leader, Portfolio Holder and Chief Executive meeting in January 2018 the principle of supporting the preparation of a SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan was agreed. This report outlines the issues, benefits and implications of preparing such a plan and seeks authority to progress such a plan including the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding as the next step in the process, to be followed by a Statement of Common Ground.

2. Context

2.1 South West Hertfordshire faces significant strategic challenges in accommodating the required new homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure over the next fifteen years and beyond. The five local authorities which make up this area – Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers, St Albans and Watford – continue to experience an acute shortage of new and affordable housing and beyond existing built up areas, are almost entirely designated as Green Belt land.

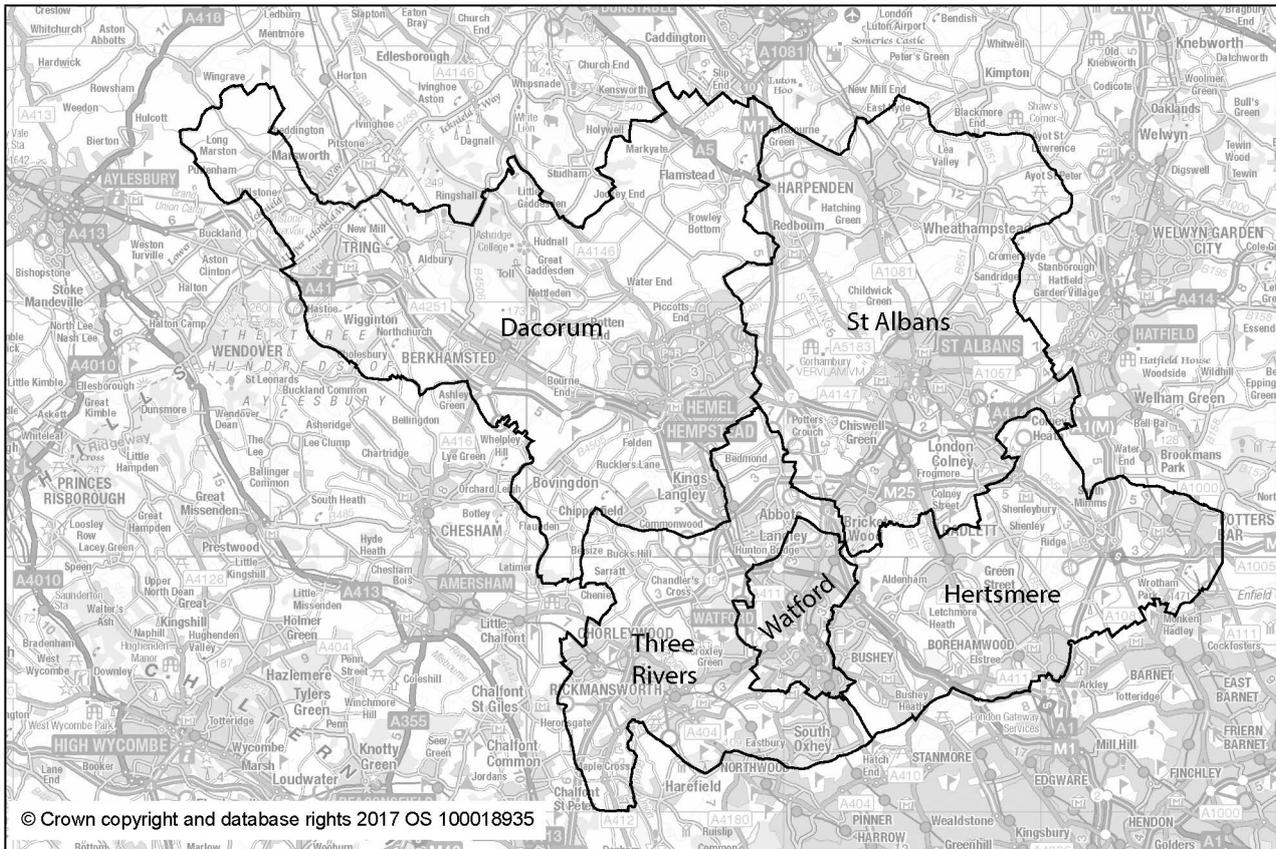
2.2 In recent years it has become increasingly evident that the scale of growth Government is expecting local authorities to deliver is of such a scale that it cannot be delivered sustainably by individual local authorities working in isolation. Neighbouring authorities are therefore increasingly being encouraged to work together to provide the high quality homes, jobs and infrastructure where people want to live their lives. The opportunity to agree new arrangements for strategic planning across the area is particularly timely as all five SW Herts authorities are now at a similar stage in the plan making process.

2.3 Following a meeting on the 23 January 2018 attended by Leaders, Portfolio Holders and Senior Officers from Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers, Watford Councils and Hertfordshire County Council, it was agreed to progress work towards a joint strategic plan for South West Herts (see Annex A for Workshop Report). As such an undertaking is of such a strategic scale, this report seeks support from Members to proceed with the preparation of a South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan and for governance arrangements to be put in place to enable this work to move forwards.

2.4 Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers and Watford Councils have been working together as an informal planning group since 2014, when a Strategic Housing Market Assessment and an Economy Study were jointly commissioned to inform the Local Plan reviews. Further joint technical work, including a Retail and Leisure Study and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, is underway. Since November 2017, St Albans Council has formal Member agreement to move forward with joint work on this SW Herts geography (see Figure 1 below).

2.5 All five authorities have already been working as a group with Hertfordshire County Council on transport matters, including the SW Herts Growth and Transport Plan.

Fig.1 South West Hertfordshire Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area



3. The Duty to Co-operate

- 3.1 The duty to cooperate was created in the Localism Act 2011. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.
- 3.2 Whilst the duty to cooperate is not a duty to agree local planning authorities are required to make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination.
- 3.3 Local planning authorities must demonstrate how they have complied with the duty at the independent examination of their Local Plans. If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate that it has complied with the duty then the Local Plan will not be able to proceed further in examination. This has already been a stumbling block at examination for a number of local plans in recent years including Castle Point in Essex and St Albans.
- 3.4 In February 2017 the Housing White Paper: 'Fixing our broken housing market' proposed a new spatial local plan based on effective joint working as part of the new Housing Delivery Test. To strengthen the duty to co-operate, a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) would also be required. The clear expectation from Government is that these would be prepared on Housing Market Area geographies i.e. involving the authorities shown in Figure 1 above.

- 3.5 The Government's "Right Homes in Right Places" published in September 2017 proposes two new tests of soundness for local plans including:
- a) plans should be prepared based on a strategy informed by agreements over the wider area, and
 - b) plans should be based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities, which are evidenced in the statement of common ground.
- 3.6 With the Government driving for a step change in housing delivery these proposals are highly likely to be implemented in 2018 with the publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), recently received as a consultation draft. These new soundness tests will effectively mean that local planning authorities will need to change the way they work together on strategic and cross boundary matters for their plans to be found 'sound'.
- 3.7 At the same time the Government is offering resources to local authorities to support wider area based plans. A SW Herts bid for £242,000 has been approved by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to support the development of a joint plan. It is understood that further funding opportunities will be announced for the 2019/20 period in due course.

4. Examples of Joint Planning

- 4.1 Following the demise of the old county structure plans and the regional spatial strategies, it has become evident that many key planning and infrastructure issues extend beyond individual borough and district boundaries. Consequently there are a number of cases where authorities are working together on strategic planning matters. Some partnerships of local authorities have taken a non-statutory approach to preparing infrastructure frameworks and plans. Areas that have been doing this include West Sussex and Greater Brighton and South Essex. Such plans are useful for bringing infrastructure providers together and helping co-ordinate growth. However as they are non-statutory they only have of limited weight when guiding the preparation of individual Local Plans and strategic development proposals. As a result of this limitation, a number of authorities are now working together to prepare statutory Spatial / Strategic Plans. Examples include Greater Exeter, Oxfordshire and Greater Manchester.
- 4.2 The closest example of what is being considered for SW Herts is a statutory document akin to the emerging West of England Joint Spatial Plan which covers Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire. The emerging plan contains 7 high level policies and 12 area policies which sets the broad direction and strategic approach for development across the whole area. This is then supported by detailed policies in each authority's local plan. These two levels of plans are being prepared in tandem.

5. Role of Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

- 5.1 Both the County and the LEP have an important role in helping to deliver a new joint plan; the County from its perspective as a major service provider, funding partner and land owner and the LEP as a key business and funding partner. County Councils are identified as participants in the Duty to Co-operate. LEPs have a less formal requirement but it is generally considered best practice to work closely with the LEP. As a result both organizations would be invited to be signatures of the MOU and SoCG. However the joint plan would only need to be approved by district and borough authorities.

6. Benefits

6.1 Preparing a statutory joint plan has a number of significant benefits:

1. It provides a more effective way of place shaping, by providing a bigger canvas to direct development to the right areas that deliver growth and that are, or can be, supported by the right infrastructure.
2. It brings with it increased funding opportunities and secures wider support from Government and other agencies such as Homes England (formerly Homes and Communities Agency) and the LEP. Joint plans are increasingly favoured by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (i.e. Housing Infrastructure Fund and Planning Delivery Fund). There is also greater potential for a bespoke housing deal to deliver strategic infrastructure where significant growth is proposed.
3. A joint plan can help local authorities to manage their housing delivery more effectively. Currently the Government is proposing to allow 5 year housing land supply and the new Housing Delivery Test to be managed across strategic areas where there is a joint plan in place. This could be particularly useful where very complex and large scale developments are being progressed with significantly longer lead-in times i.e. houses can typically be delivered faster than an apartment scheme.
4. Joint planning can provide a more robust and coherent basis for negotiating with others. In the SW Herts case, by working together we would be in a stronger position when dealing with the Greater London Authority to ensure that there are greater mutual benefits arising from London's growth, and to the north, how we work with the Cambridge- Milton Keynes-Oxford Growth corridor where one million new homes are proposed and being supported by Government.
5. By having a joint plan in place it would address the duty to co-operate and help to deliver technically sound and legally compliant local plans.

7. Costs

7.1 As set out under the financial implications section above, there will be some costs associated with production of the Joint Strategic Plan. However, at this stage no additional Council funding is being requested, as the expected commitment can be met from the Local Development Framework budget for 2018/19 and 2019/20. The nature of the MHCLG grant recently received is such that any unspent elements can roll forward to the next financial year, for example to account for a delay in recruitment time and the possibility that one or both of the postholders would operate only 3 or 4 days per week thus stretching the budget. There may be additional opportunities to bid for funding for subsequent years however success cannot be guaranteed.

7.2 The reports being considered by the other Councils' Cabinet / Executive all note that there will be the need for all five authorities to share future costs should grant funding not be repeated. This issue will be discussed further between all parties and text included in an appendix to the draft MOU setting out how this process will be managed. This process will also need to be formalised by the JSP Board that will include Leaders and Chief Officers.

7.3 In addition to some financial support, there will also be an element of additional costs in terms of staff time required to support the Officer working group for the JSP. However, increased joint working also means that in effect a substantial 'knowledge

bank' will be shared across the five authorities to support the delivery of the JSP and provide resource resilience.

8. Retention of Sovereignty

- 8.1 A new joint strategic plan would need to be agreed individually by all authorities. Members would be consulted as the plan progressed at each stage through a series of workshops and broader consultation events. Each authority would continue to maintain its own Local Development Scheme, setting out arrangements for both the preparation of its own Local Plan documents, as well as the agreed timescales for the Joint Strategic Plan. Both the Submission and Adoption joint plan documents would need to be approved by each Council. In addition to the joint plan, each authority will progress their own local plans to address local issues and provide site allocations.
- 8.2 Whilst an adopted joint plan would form part of the development plan for the district/borough, local Development Management committees would retain sovereignty when it came to determining planning applications in their area.

9. Next Steps

- 9.1 The first step to embark on a South West Herts Joint Plan is for all the authorities to agree a Memorandum of Understanding. The next step will be to progress a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG). This document will identify the relevant cross-boundary strategic priorities and will also be expected to set out how growth will be distributed across the area and what key supporting infrastructure will be required. The five South West Herts authorities and Hertfordshire County Council will be the signatories. During the time the Statement of Common Ground is being drafted, a new timetable for the plan's preparation will be drafted and officers will be working to progress the evidence to support the new plan.

10. Additional Urban Design Capacity

- 10.1 To help support the delivery of high quality new development, money has also successfully been secured through an MHCLG (Planning Delivery Fund) bid for design and masterplanning expertise. This money will fund a new Officer post – to be shared with St Albans Council. This Officer's principal role will be to assist with future masterplanning of key development sites and oversee production of new design guidance. Whilst direct recruitment on a 1 year contract will be explored, the role is likely to be filled through the use of an agency or specialist consultant. This contract will be reviewed at the end of the 1 year period, and a decision taken at that time if this post needs to be continued on a jointly funded basis, and budget options reviewed as appropriate at that time.

11 Annexes to this report

- 11.1 The following documents are annexed to this report:

- Annex 1 – Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Annex 2 – Member Workshop Report 'Planning Strategically in South West Hertfordshire – Next steps' February 2018.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING
IN SOUTH WEST HERTFORDSHIRE**

January 2018

STRATEGIC PLANNING IN SOUTH WEST HERTFORDSHIRE

Memorandum of Understanding

between

Dacorum Borough Council

Hertsmere Borough Council

St Albans District Council

Three Rivers District Council

Watford Borough Council

Hertfordshire County Council

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sets out how cooperation between the five local planning authorities in South West Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire County Council will be managed in respect of strategic planning issues.

The Localism Act 2011 places a Duty to Cooperate on local planning authorities and county councils¹ (amongst other public sector organisations), requiring them to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of plans where this involves strategic matters. Local planning authorities will be tested in relation to legal compliance with the Duty at examination, as well as whether strategic cooperation has resulted in a 'sound' and robust approach to delivering strategic objectives.

The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017² requires local planning authorities to "identify the strategic priorities for the development and use of land in the authorities' area and set out policies to address those priorities in the development plan documents, taken as a whole. This clause was included to allow greater flexibility in the way that local planning authorities prepare local planning documents, and specifically to support the preparation of 'strategic' local plans, whether prepared individually or jointly with neighbouring authorities. However, several recent announcements from Government on proposed planning reforms indicates

¹ Localism Act 2011, Section 110.

² Neighbourhood Planning Act Part 1, Section 8

strongly that the Government's preferred approach is for strategic priorities to be managed on a joint basis across housing market areas through the use of joint spatial plans.

Building on the existing strong foundations of cooperation developed through the Duty to Cooperate, the Local Authorities have agreed to move to a more formal approach to strategic planning. This will be developed through a 'portfolio' of plans, with a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) setting out strategic spatial and infrastructure priorities that are considered to be of mutual benefit, prepared alongside a suite of Local Plans to manage delivery within each of the local planning areas.

Work on the JSP will be steered within the governance structure of the Joint Member and Officer Board (JMOB) to ensure that it aligns with other strategic priorities. Although the JSP will be prepared on the basis of collaboration, formal decisions on the JSP at key stages in its preparation (identified in each local planning authorities' Local Development Scheme) will be taken by the individual local planning authorities which will continue to retain the statutory local planning duty (as set out in the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and the 2017 Neighbourhood Planning Act).

A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) will be prepared by the Authorities, setting out the process and timetable for the plan, what local delivery plans will be needed (and how current local plans will be managed through the transition process), governance and working arrangements, and the key evidence needed to support the JSP. Although the focus will be strategic development (housing and economic development) and infrastructure, other strategic priorities may be included where they are required to support delivery of the long term shared vision for South West Hertfordshire. The Statement will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and updated as and when needed. This will form key evidence to support the JSP and individual Local Plans and should therefore be made available on each of the partner authority's websites.

In preparing the JSP, all partners agree to:

- Engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in relation to strategic planning matters under the Duty to Cooperate (or equivalent processes);
- Ensure a broad and consistent approach to strategic planning and development issues in South West Hertfordshire;
- Support better alignment between strategic planning, infrastructure and investment priorities in South West Hertfordshire;
- Adhere to the governance structure set out in this document and ensure that activities are delivered, actions are taken and communications are made as required;
- Be accountable for ensuring that the role and responsibilities as agreed in the Statement of Common Ground are adhered to;

- Be open and communicate about concerns, issues and opportunities in respect of collaboration and joint working;
- Act in a timely manner, recognising the time critical nature of consultations, technical projects and plan preparation;
- Adhere to statutory requirements. Comply with applicable laws and standards, data protection and freedom of information requirements;
- Encourage, develop and share best practice in strategic planning matters;
- Ensure adequate resources and staffing are in place to undertake effective collaboration and joint working (resources to be agreed by the South West Hertfordshire Authorities through the Statement of Common Ground).

Area Covered

For the purposes of this MoU the geographic area of South West Hertfordshire applies to the administrative areas of Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans District Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council.

Status

This MoU cannot override the statutory duties and powers of the parties and is not enforceable by law. However, the parties agree to the principles set out in this MoU.

This MoU is not a development plan, nor a legally binding document, but will be used in the consideration of how the local authorities have jointly approached strategic planning issues and legal compliance with the Duty to Cooperate.

This MoU may be supported by other documentation, and other subject specific MoUs, which set out in more detail how the parties will work together to tackle more detailed matters with respect to strategic planning in South West Hertfordshire.

It is accepted that an individual party or group of parties that are signatories to this MoU may also be signatories to other MoUs between themselves, or with other parties outside South West Hertfordshire in respect of the Duty to Cooperate.

Key outputs of this MoU are:

- A Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) setting out strategic spatial and infrastructure priorities across South West Hertfordshire;
- A Delivery Strategy setting out how the strategic policy framework of the JSP will be delivered, accompanied by a risk assessment and risk management plan;
- A Statement of Common Ground setting out how a JSP will be delivered, what the evidence base is, including identification of various development needs;
- A JSP monitoring process to chart and monitor delivery of the JSP.

Governance, Roles and Responsibilities

Preparation of the Joint Spatial Plan and associated Delivery Strategy will be steered under the governance arrangements of a Joint Member and Officer Board (JMOB). Formal decisions on the JSP at key stages (to be set out in individual Local Development Schemes) will be taken by individual Local Planning Authorities on the advice and recommendations of JMOB. The JMOB will comprise the Leader and the Chief Executive (or equivalent) from each of the District/Borough authorities and the Portfolio Holder and Lead Planning Officer from Hertfordshire County Council.

A Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG) will be accountable for the overall project management of the JSP, supported by a Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG). **The SPMG will comprise political representatives from each of the partners (to be appointed by individual authorities) with appropriate authority to direct progress with the SoCG and JSP.** The SPOG will comprise the Heads of Service (or equivalent) from each of the partner authorities, and the lead officer for strategic planning.

'Task and finish' groups will be used to develop specific policy areas, to be identified by the SPMG as and when needed.

Terms of Reference for all groups will be established, setting out the roles, responsibilities and administration. These will be agreed by all partners and reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant.

Local authorities should ensure that adequate resources are provided in order to undertake the joint work programme as set out in the Statement of Common Ground. Additional resources may be provided by other relevant bodies, as agreed to undertake specified tasks under the work programme.

Review of the MoU

This MoU is effective from the date it is signed by the Chief Executive and Leaders of all parties. It will be reviewed as and when indicated through the Statement of Common Ground.

Table of Signatories

Signature	Role	Authority	Date
	Leader of Council		
	Chief Executive		

DRAFT

Planning Strategically in South West Hertfordshire – Next steps

February 2018

Planning Strategically in South West Hertfordshire – Next steps

1 Introduction and national context

- 1.1 The South West Hertfordshire Authorities of Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers and Watford, together with Hertfordshire County Council have agreed to work on a more formal basis to address strategic planning priorities across the Housing Market Area (HMA). Lead councillors and officers from the partner authorities held a workshop on the 23 January 2018 (see Annex 1 for a summary note of workshop discussions) to agree how to progress this work, following an initial officer workshop on the 28 November 2017. This paper summarise the context for joint planning, and sets out recommended next steps.
- 1.2 Since the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies in 2010, local planning authorities (LPAs) have relied on the Duty to Cooperate to manage strategic priorities across HMAs, particularly housing provision and distribution. However, this has not proved to be an effective mechanism and has resulted in a number of failures at local plan examinations. The Government recognises the Duty's weaknesses and is therefore proposing some new mechanisms to strengthen approaches to strategic planning. These were set out in various consultation documents published during 2017 (see Annex 2) but are expected to be confirmed in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹. The following paragraphs summarise the key planks of the Government's new anticipated approach to strategic planning.

Joint 'strategic' plans

- 1.3 An increasing number of LPAs are moving towards this approach as it is considered as the most effective mechanism for properly addressing strategic issues. The path towards joint plans has been helped by the Government's proposal to move back to a portfolio approach to local planning, with strategic plans, preferably prepared on a joint basis, addressing a small number of key policies, supported by more locally focused plans (see Annex 3). The concept of 'strategic' local plans was initially set out in last February's Housing White Paper and was formally introduced in May 2017 through the Neighbourhood Planning Act. This requires all local authorities to identify their strategic priorities and set out policies in their development plan documents (taken as a whole) to address these. The new approach allows a more flexible way of plan-making with the aim being that the more challenging strategic issues are dealt with in the first stage strategic plan.
- 1.4 So far three groups of authorities are pioneering joint strategic plans (West of England, Greater Exeter and Oxfordshire Authorities) but a number of others are exploring this as an option. Although the Government is not likely to impose joint plans as a model for strategic planning across the country, it is clear that its 'carrot and stick' approach is making this increasingly difficult to avoid. The Secretary of State has also made it clear that he fully intends to use new powers to direct LPAs to prepare joint plans where there

¹ A revised version of NPPF (and associated Planning Policy Guidance) is due to be published in draft in March 2018 with the final version expected in the summer 2018.

have been failures to progress plans within HMAs. This is one of the mechanisms for local plan intervention open to the Government.

Statement of Common Ground

- 1.5 The revised NPPF will introduce a new requirement for all LPAs to prepare a Statement of Common Ground (SCG) setting out how strategic planning matters have been managed over HMAs. These will form an important part of the Duty to Cooperate evidence and will be tested at local plan examinations. Those authorities that are preparing a joint strategic plan are using this new mechanism as the ‘pre-commencement’ document, setting out overall strategy, working arrangements and key issues. A template for a SCG is set out in Annex 4.

New ‘tests of soundness’

- 1.6 Local plans will be assessed against two new tests of soundness at examination, aimed at ensuring strategic planning matters across HMAs have been properly addressed. These will be used to ensure that there is not only a proactive and positive approach to strategic planning matters across HMAs (as currently required by the Duty to Cooperate), but that there is a clear (and agreed) approach to how these will be delivered in all relevant local plans or through a joint plan. The new tests are expected to be confirmed in the revised NPPF but, as currently proposed, would require plans to be:

- a) prepared based on a strategy informed by agreements over the wider area, and
- b) based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities, which are evidenced in the statement of common ground.

- 1.7 The new tests will set a high bar to cross for all LPAs, particularly where local plans are being prepared on different timetables and there are complex strategic issues, with no overall agreed strategy for addressing these. This is clearly an incentive to prepare joint plans to provide a coherent strategic framework across HMAs and deliver a quicker local planning process.

2 Taking forward a Joint Spatial Plan in South West Hertfordshire

- 2.1 All six of the partner authorities recognised at the workshop that there were potentially significant advantages from preparing a statutory joint plan for the area. The key benefits are set out in the table below.

A joint strategic plan for South West Hertfordshire will:

- provide a more effective long-term approach to place-shaping, with a larger spatial canvas offering more options for directing development to the right areas where growth can be supported by the right infrastructure, whilst retaining individual LPA decision-making (on the JSP).
- facilitate a ‘strategy-led’ rather than a purely ‘numbers-led’ planning framework to deliver growth, which better articulates the role of SW Herts in the context of the Metropolitan Green Belt and its relationship with London and the Oxfordshire-Cambridge Growth

corridor.

- increase funding opportunities and secure wider support from Government, with a strong emphasis on joint plans in all DCLG bidding processes (e.g. Housing Infrastructure Fund, Joint Working Fund).
- ensure that key strategic matters common across the HMA (e.g. future role of the Green Belt, infrastructure delivery, development viability, housing mix and type) are addressed more effectively and on a consistent basis.
- help deliver a technically sound and legally compliant planning framework for SWH through examination (i.e. meet the Duty to Cooperate and new 'tests of soundness').
- demonstrate to Government that there is serious intent to move forward positively and quickly with local plans, ensuring that SWH Authorities remain in control in response to the local plan intervention threat faced by St Albans, which may result in a Secretary of State direction to prepare a joint plan with adjoining areas.
- articulate an agreed position in terms of growth to Government and the potential ability to negotiate 'freedoms and flexibilities' with regard to things such as the 5 year land supply and infrastructure funding (as per Oxfordshire).
- more efficient and effective use of resources, skills and expertise

2.2 All the LPAs are at a similar, early stage in reviewing their local plans for the first time. There is therefore a perfect opportunity to move to a joint plan without compromising individual local plans. The proposed new SCG provides a useful opportunity for the councils to manage this transition and develop a robust response to the challenging strategic issues the area faces in the short, medium and long term. The following paragraphs therefore set out the key actions needed to take this work forward.

Secure formal agreement from all partners to develop a joint spatial plan

2.3 In order to progress work on developing a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South West Hertfordshire, all partners will have to secure formal agreement and provisional governance and working arrangements.

Recommendation 1: All SW Hertfordshire Authorities secure initial agreement from their relevant committee / cabinet to progress a JSP as part of a new portfolio approach to local plan-making [timescale: by the end of March 2018].

Recommendation 2: A Memorandum of Understanding should be prepared and signed by all partner authorities [timescale: by the end of March 2018].

Recommendation 3: A pre-commencement document² should be prepared, setting out the overall approach to developing the JSP (governance and working arrangements, project management, resources, budget), the plan's scope and timetable, and a risk

² The West of England Authorities prepared a pre-commencement document as part of the work on the JSP (<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/so-welep-uploads2/files/JSPS/JSPS%20PCD%20v12.pdf>) but the proposed new requirement for a statement of common ground to be prepared will fulfil this purpose in future.

assessment and management plan. The Statement of Common Ground should be used as the template for the pre-commencement document to avoid duplication.

[timescale: SCG agreed by June 2018 with all Local Development Schemes updated to reflect the new planning arrangements]

Overall vision and strategy for South West Hertfordshire

- 2.4 A key part of the plan-making process will be ensuring that all partners agree a shared long-term vision for the area, with key spatial, economic and infrastructure priorities. Although over time the detailed aspects of delivering the vision may change, the overall strategy will stay the same, therefore it is important that this is developed and owned by all involved, and at the highest level.

Recommendation 4: All South West Hertfordshire LPAs and the County Council develop a long term (2050) vision, setting out strategic spatial, economic and infrastructure priorities to inform the JSP but also wider strategies that are being prepared on a Hertfordshire basis e.g. Local Industrial Strategy, Local Transport Plan (and other infrastructure plans). To explore potential for support from Est of England Local Government Association (EELGA). [timescale: by June 2018]

Governance and working arrangements

- 2.5 The JSP will be prepared on a joint basis but the decision-making process will be through the individual LPAs. To manage the risks associated with this, a robust governance structure will need to be established, which a clear role for the leadership from each authority.

Recommendation 5: A Member-led Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG) should be established to provide political leadership for preparation of the JSP. The composition of the SPMG, and its links to other relevant groups (e.g. the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership) should be agreed in the MoU, and set out in more detail in terms of reference. [timescale: governance structure, MoU and ToR agreed by end of February 2018]

- 2.6 Although preparation of a joint plan will bring benefits from sharing resources and skills across the HMA, there will continue to be considerable constraints that will have to be managed if the JSP is to be delivered as a priority. Additional resources will have to be procured, for example, a project manager and project support, but the authorities should also develop an internal training and development programme to help fill any gaps.

Recommendation 6: That the lead officers from each of the partner authorities form a Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG) to support the SPMG. Terms of reference should be prepared to ensure the role and responsibilities of the project board are clear, including any specific workstream responsibilities. [timescale: end of February 2018]

Recommendation 7: The SPOG should appoint a project manager and other project support as soon as is practically possible to keep momentum going on the plan-preparation. A draft job description is contained on Annex 5. [timescale: end of March 2018]

Communications and engagement

2.7 Given the complexities and sensitivities related to preparing a joint plan, it will be important to ensure that any communications and engagement with stakeholders is properly managed.

Recommendation 8: A communications strategy should be prepared as part of the pre-commencement stage, setting out how the formal consultation processes will be managed alongside wider engagement on the plan. Engagement with the following key groups should be included:

- The wider local authority membership, helping to secure cross-party ownership and therefore reducing any risks associated with potential changes arising from elections or in leadership. Suggested mechanisms include establishing a member forum with a small number of cross-party representatives as a sounding board at key stages of the process, and regular member updates and workshops.
- Strategic stakeholders to ensure buy-in from stakeholders as the plan develops, particularly where they are statutory bodies (statutory consultees) or have a role in delivering the plan.
- Local MPs, ensuring that they understand why the JSP is being prepared and the what the long term approach to developing a coherent and robust strategy is.
- Government departments, particularly where there is a need to ensure additional funding to deliver the JSP. An initial meeting with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government should take place at the early stages of plan preparation. Neighbouring authorities, particularly those areas adjacent to the JSP area.

Catrina Riddell, POS Enterprises Consultant

21 February 2018

Annex 1: Notes from workshop held 23 January 2018

Key Issues and Agreed Actions:

Discussion (1)- What does 'joint planning' mean for SW Herts?

Key issue was whether authorities choose to (a) continue with a 'business as usual approach i.e. using the new Statement of Common Ground (SCG) to set the context for the five individual Local Plan (LPs), or (b) whether to use this SCG to progress a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) which would articulate these key strategic issues in a statutory planning document, with individual LPs sitting below.

The initial position of each authority was as follows:

- WBC accepted the logic of preparing a JSP, but there needed to be clearer articulation of the advantages of this.
- HBC were in favour of a JSP as could see benefits in terms of helping secure additional infrastructure funding etc. Some concerns regarding Green Belt issues and how the issues of housing numbers would be resolved were raised.
- DBC agreed that it was essential to have some form of joint planning process to help address concerns regarding infrastructure provision etc. However, there were some concerns regarding how the housing numbers issue became easier with the involvement of 5 authorities without becoming a game of 'pass the parcel.'
- HCC considered the decision to be in the hands of the 5 local authorities, but noted there was an emerging recognition that as a service provider they needed to work with smaller groupings of local authorities to address the challenges posed with regard to growth and infrastructure provision.
- TRDC noted that no single authority could deal with the challenges the area faces alone. Due to the nature of the area, development in one location directly impacted a wider area – irrespective of administrative boundaries. A JSP also gave the opportunity to better address issues such as infrastructure delivery and the mix of housing across the area. There were some concerns regarding the loss of individual political control, but these were outweighed by the benefits a JSP would bring.
- SADC agreed with TRDC in terms of the challenges faced within the SW Herts area. The position for SADC was however complicated by the fact that they had to respond to the Government intervention letter. However, they supported the principle of a JSP.

After further discussion it was agreed by all that that there were benefits of working together on a JSP in terms of:

- Planning strategically for the area, but maintaining local decision-making processes.
- Addressing common issues such as the future role of the Green Belt, infrastructure delivery, development viability, affordable housing and housing mix.
- Articulating an agreed position in terms of growth to Government and the potential ability to negotiate 'freedoms and flexibilities' with regard to things such as the 5 year land supply and infrastructure funding (as per Oxfordshire).
- Improved chances of securing infrastructure funding.
- Developing a 'strategy-led' rather than a purely 'numbers-led' plan, which delivers growth, but better articulates the role of SW Herts in the context of the Metropolitan Green Belt and its relationship with London and the Oxfordshire-Cambridge Growth corridor.

- Developing a shared commitment to how growth is planned, delivered and explained to stakeholders.
- The ability to consider the role of key strategic sites and the ability of these to deliver better infrastructure improvements than a large number of smaller sites.
- Ensuring plans can be found 'sound' and comply with the anticipated new tests of soundness (even if they initially take slightly longer to prepare than currently envisaged).
- Overcome the challenge of mixed messages from Government on issues such as Green Belt and housing delivery.
- The ability to set out a clear vision for the wider area and plan strategically on a long term basis i.e. potentially up to 2050, with individual Local Plans providing the short / medium term detail.

Following discussion, the agreed position of all six authorities was as follows:

1. Agree to the principle of progressing a JSP, but noted that time needed to be set aside urgently to work out the details of how this would work in practice.
2. The aim should be to have an initial SCG in place by June 2018 to set a clear process to take the JSP forward.

Discussion (2) – what is needed to initiate work on a joint strategic plan?

It was noted that Government would expect to see prompt evidence of a commitment to a JSP. This commitment had the potential to support SADC in their response to their intervention letter (due by the end of January 2018).

Next steps were agreed as follows:

1. Set up a meeting with Government asap (at the appropriate level; suggest Steve Evison). (WBC to lead)
2. Discuss with the EELGA what they may be able to offer in terms of supporting the JSP process going forwards (DBC to lead).
3. Draft a MOU to set establish a clear commitment to moving forwards and how this would need to be resourced in terms of both finances and staff (SADC to lead).
4. The above MOU to form the basis of a report to relevant Committees, for their endorsement of the process moving forward. Agreement to be confirmed by all parties by the end of February/March 2018.
5. If one authority proves unable to commit to this MOU at this time, the other authorities will proceed with the JSP process.
6. To set up a meeting with local MPs (appropriate timing to be discussed) to ensure they are fully briefed and ideally on-board with the SW Herts process.
7. Carry out an initial audit of skills and resources to see where there are gaps that need to be filled on a SW Herts basis, to enable a JSP to progress successfully.
8. CR to provide examples of MOUs and JSP timetables for consideration.
9. A Communications Strategy to be agreed, to include a draft press release for circulation asap, to ensure all authorities take a consistent approach to announcing decisions on the JSP and the benefits of joint working. Key messages to be as set out under Discussion (1) above. (DBC to lead).
10. Formal Member and Officer groups to be established to take discussions forward. Member representation to be either at leader or Portfolio Holder level (as appropriate for each Council), but the representative must have the authority to make key decisions relating to work on the SoCG / JSP. Meetings to be held on a regular basis to ensure

matters progress to timetable. Officer meeting confirmed for 21st February, but discussions on MOU to progress in advance of this.

Workshop Attendees:

DACORUM (DBC)

Cllr Andrew Derek Williams, Leader
Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder – Planning & Regeneration
Sally Marshall, Chief Executive
Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director – Housing & Regeneration
James Doe, Assistant Director – Planning, Development & Regeneration
Chris Taylor, Group Manager – Strategic Planning & Regeneration
Nathalie Bateman, Team Leader – Strategic Growth and Infrastructure
Laura Wood, Team Leader – Strategic Planning

HERTSMERE (HBC)

Cllr Harvey Cohen, Portfolio Holder – Planning and Localism
Christine Lyons, Head of Planning & Economic Development
Mark Silverman, Policy & Transport Manager

ST ALBANS (SADC)

Cllr Alec Campbell, Leader
Cllr Mary Maynard, Planning Portfolio Holder
Amanda Foley, Chief Executive
Tracy Harvey, Head of Planning & Building Control
Chris Briggs, Spatial Planning Manager

THREE RIVERS (TRDC)

Cllr Sara Bedford, Leader
Steven Halls, Chief Executive
Geof Muggeridge, Director of Community & Environmental Services
Claire May, Head of Planning Policy & Projects
Marko Kalik, Senior Planning Officer

WATFORD (WBC)

Mayor Dorothy Thornhill, Mayor & Portfolio Holder – Strategic Partnerships
Cllr Iain Sharpe, Portfolio Holder – Regeneration & Development
Nick Fenwick, Deputy Managing Director
Ian Dunsford, Head of Planning Policy

Hertfordshire CC (HCC)

Cllr Derrick Ashley, Chair of Environment, Planning & Transport Cabinet Panel
Jon Tiley, Head of Spatial Planning & Economy

Hertfordshire LEP (LEP)

Apologies received

POS Enterprises

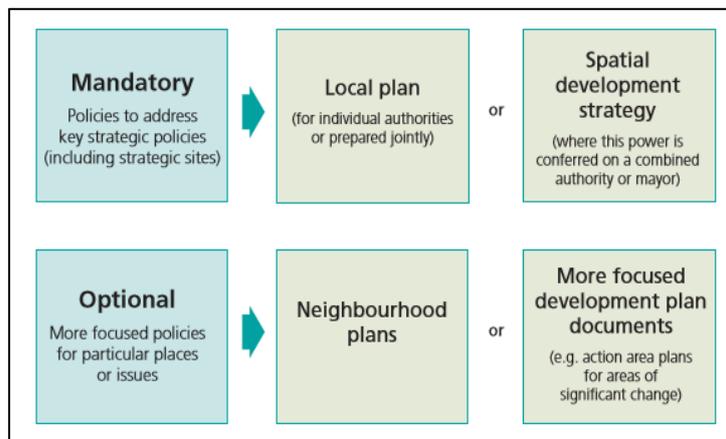
Catriona Riddell – Facilitator

Annex 2: The national context for joint local plans

- Housing White Paper** (February 2017): Proposed new style ‘strategic’ local plans to be introduced; effectiveness of joint working to be taken into account in new Housing Delivery Test; all local planning authorities required to prepare a statement of common ground (SCG) setting out how they have worked together and how they have resolved strategic matters within the HMA, particularly on infrastructure and housing provision.

“...we would like to see more and more local authorities working together to produce a strategic plan over a wider area on the functional economic geography that is right for their part of the world...”

[Gavin Barwell, Minister for Housing and Planning]



<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-white-paper>

- Neighbourhood Planning Act** (May 2017): Local authorities are required to identify their strategic priorities with policies set out in their development plan documents (taken as a whole) to address these. Provisions also included in the Act to allow the Secretary of State to direct the preparation of a joint local plan where this would “*facilitate the more effective planning of the development and use of land in the area*”.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/20/part/1/crossheading/local-development-documents/enacted>

- Housing Infrastructure Fund** (July 2017): New £2.3b fund launched to support infrastructure delivery, with emphasis given to joint planning as a priority factor in the bidding process.

“We want to fund those schemes that take a strategic approach, with strong local leadership and joint working to achieve higher levels of housing growth....”

[HIF prospectus]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-infrastructure-fund>

- Right homes in the right places** consultation document (September 2017): Set out further details of HWP implementation including, new housing needs methodology; details and timetable for preparation of Statement of Common Ground, with pilot authorities invited; More incentives offered to local authorities progressing joint local plans in relation

to the HDT and 5 year land supply calculations; new ‘tests of soundness’ introduced for local plans to demonstrate effective strategic planning across HMAs.

“...today we’re also publishing a requirement for a “statement of common ground”, a new framework that will make cross-boundary co-operation more transparent and more straightforward.”

[Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals>

- **Secretary of State local plan intervention** (November 2017): SoS announces the Government’s intention to intervene in plan-making in 15 local authorities (including St Albans). Key factors to be taken into account in final decisions (expected early 2018) are local plan progress and the extent of joint working.

“My decisions on interventions will also be informed by the wider planning context in each area (specifically the extent to which authorities are working cooperatively to put strategic plans in place)”

[Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government]

- **Autumn Budget** (November 2017): As part of the Budget, the Government announced that the Oxfordshire Authorities would be preparing a joint local plan to support a new Housing Deal; that a new ‘strategic infrastructure tariff’ was being considered for combined authority areas and areas with joint local plans; and provisions of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 to allow the SoS to direct the preparation of joint plans to be implemented immediately (one of the mechanisms for government intervention).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-budget-2017>

- **Industrial Strategy White Paper** (December 2017): White paper setting out how Government intends to implement its Industrial Strategy and the important role ‘place’ and infrastructure should play in supporting growth, with an emphasis on local authority collaboration. LEPs and CAs to be responsible for preparing local industrial strategies. Although the focus is on rebalancing Britain more housing deals are on offer in areas of high demand and two key growth areas in the South were confirmed (Oxford-Milton Keynes- Cambridge Corridor and in the Thames Estuary).

“We want to support greater collaboration between councils, a more strategic approach to planning housing and infrastructure, more innovation and high-quality design in new homes and creating the right conditions for new private investment.”

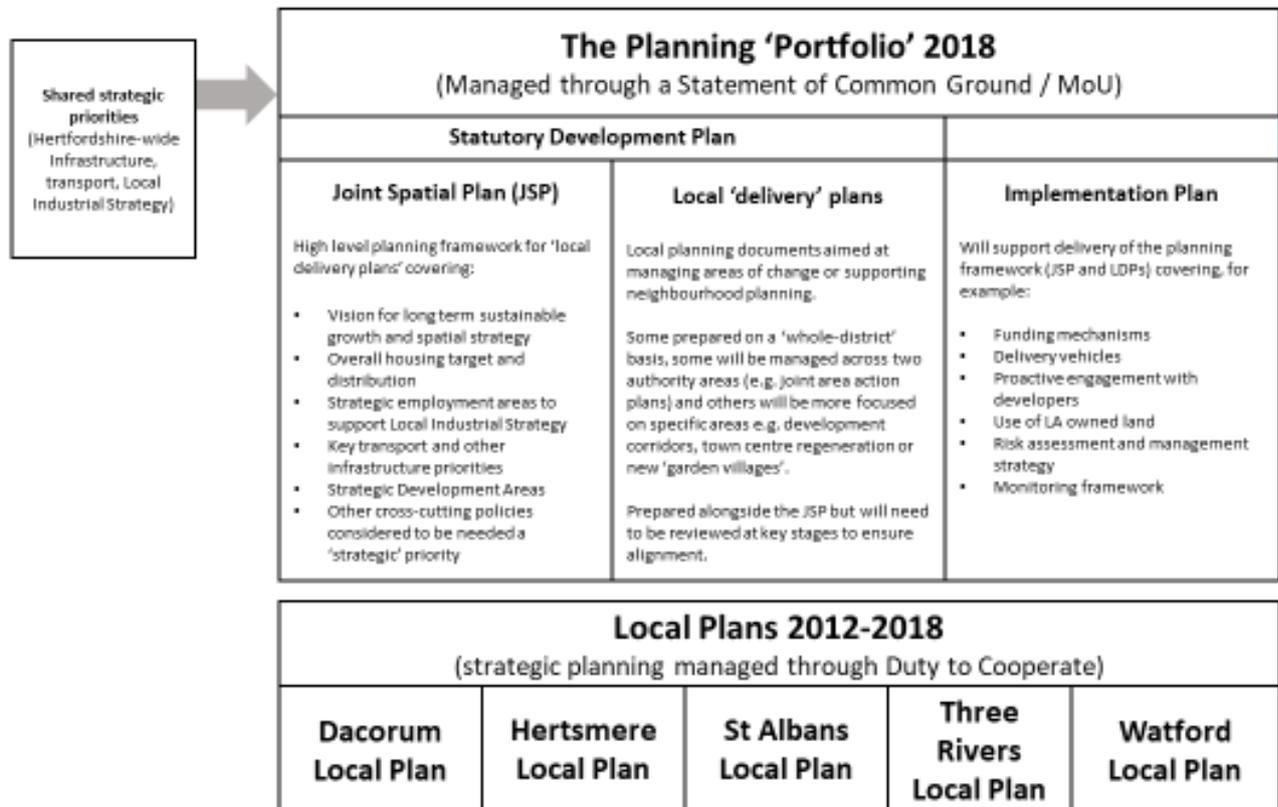
[Industrial Strategy White Paper]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/industrial-strategy>

- **Joint planning capacity fund** (December 2017): The new fund, initially announced in the HWP, was launched to support those local authorities progressing (or moving towards) a joint local plan. The fund will cover the period 2017/18 to 2018/19 initially and aims to encourage *“more and better joint working, across local authority boundaries, ensuring that there are the skills and capacity where they are needed to plan strategically for housing growth, and to manage delivery of new homes and infrastructure”*.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-delivery-fund-prospectus>

Annex 3: A new portfolio approach to local planning



Annex 4: Statement of Common Ground – suggested template

Part 1: Strategic context:

- geographical extent and wider relationships;
- overall ambitions and strategic priorities i.e. those that affect the sum of all parts;
- key metrics e.g. housing need, past delivery, expected GVA growth;
- main delivery mechanisms i.e. single joint plan/ single LPs.

Part 2: Policy Scope and evidence base:

- key strategic matters to be addressed e.g. overall housing *target* and *anticipated* distribution as this may change as plans/plan develops; strategic infrastructure priorities; strategic employment opportunities; other e.g. GI strategy, G&T
- Main evidence-base to be used

Part 3: Decision-making & project management:

- What are the governance and working arrangements (resources)?
- Who are the key partners and are they signed up to the overall objective?
- How will strategic stakeholders/ Stat cons be involved?
- What are key timescales/ milestones and at what point are key decisions likely to be made?

Part 4: Risk assessment and management:

- Need to link to HDT/ HIF.
- Highlight key risks to delivering shared objectives and how these will be managed e.g. infrastructure not delivered, housing not delivered at anticipated rate, changing political priorities - locally or nationally, changing resources.
- Others with a key role in delivery - mechanisms to ensure delivery (e.g. MoUs, deals with government).
- Risks in terms of resources and any skills gaps, and how these will be managed.

Part 5: Monitoring and Review:

- Key indicators and milestones
- Monitoring of DtC (as currently done through AMR)
- Triggers fore review of SCG (as highlighted through risk assessment)

Annexes

- Details of MoUs, deals, other agreements
- DtC activity table

Annex 5: JSP Project Manager – draft job description

SOUTH WEST HERTFORDSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN: PROJECT MANAGER

DRAFT JOB DESCRIPTION

February 2018

Post Title:	South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan Project Manager (time period of appointment tbc)
Accountable Body:	South West Hertfordshire Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG) -add annex explaining governance
Post No:	TBC
Grade/ Salary:	£45k-£60k plus car allowance to be added (plus London Fringe allowance?)
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive [from one of the SWH Authorities]

Job Summary:

To manage the development of a cross-authority, statutory spatial plan (Joint Strategic Plan) for South West Hertfordshire, covering the geographical area of Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers and Watford, taking account of existing and emerging local development strategies for the area, and national policy and statutory plan-making requirements.

The post holder will work with the five Local Planning Authorities within and Hertfordshire County Council, as well as strategic stakeholders identified by the Authorities as key in delivering the JSP.

The post holder will be directly accountable to the lead officer [to be identified] with responsibility for steering the JSP, working closely with the South West Hertfordshire Joint Member and Officer Board (JMOB).

Responsibilities:

Working with the six partner authorities, the post holder will have a key role in supporting the implementation of the shared vision through preparation of a statutory joint plan (Joint Strategic Plan). The work programme for the plan will be steered by the Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG), reporting to a Joint Member and Officer Board (JMOB).. Specific responsibilities of the post holder will be:

- To ensure that the Joint Strategic Plan is delivered to the agreed timetable and meets all statutory process requirements (including Duty to Cooperate), keeping momentum going throughout the process.

- To lead on co-ordination and procurement of the evidence base needed to support the development of the plan, including liaison with the local planning authorities in relation to their individual local development plans
- To keep the plan's risk assessment and management plan current, with regular reviews and updates, highlighting any significant changes to the JSP Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG) and Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG) immediately.
- To manage the plan's communication's strategy (internal and external), working closely with the lead officers from each authority [to be agreed].
- To work with strategic stakeholders, including neighbouring authorities, key partner agencies and relevant Central Government departments, representing the views of the authorities and ensuring the plan is deliverable.
- To act as a 'champion' for the joint planning work, helping to raise its profile both within a South West Hertfordshire context and externally, as 'good practice'.
- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to allow monitoring and performance assessments, and that all work reaches required high levels of quality.
- To manage the plan's budget in accordance with the requirements of Statement of Common Ground and work programme.

Note:

This Job Description is not a definitive list of tasks - it is designed to give an overall view of the job, and not to indicate what the sole requirements are. It is envisaged that you will use your own initiative, and develop you own style to achieve the desired aims.

Reasonable adjustment will be made to working arrangements to accommodate a person with a disability who otherwise would be prevented from undertaking the work.

Person Specification

To be added but should include the following

- political awareness (working with Members and Officers at a senior level)
- good communications skills (presenting complex technical issues, adjusting presentation to different audiences)
- good understanding of statutory plan-making process (do they need to be a qualified planner?)
- Ability to manage complex projects, delivering to timetable but remaining flexible and responsive to necessary changes over time.

Annexes to be added