

Title of Report	CITY OF LEICESTER LOCAL PLAN 2020 to 2036 – DRAFT PLAN FOR CONSULTATION	
Presented by	Ian Nelson Planning Policy Team Manager	
Background Papers	City of Leicester Local Plan 2020 to 2036 – Draft Plan for Consultation (March 2020) The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan National Planning Policy Framework	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	None identified	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	The Council is a consultee and any comments it makes will need to be taken into account by Leicester City Council as part of the process for preparing a further iteration of the Local Plan. If necessary, the District Council's comments could be considered as part of the subsequent Local Plan Examination	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	None identified	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	The purpose of this report is to advise Members of comments submitted in response to consultations in respect of the draft Leicester Local Plan and to seek formal approval of these.	
Recommendations	THAT: (I) LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL BE THANKED FOR CONSULTING THIS COUNCIL ON ITS DRAFT LOCAL PLAN; AND (II) THE RECOMMENDATIONS AT PARAGRAPHS 2.3, 2.12, 2.19 AND 2.25 OF THIS REPORT BE AGREED AS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT CITY OF LEICESTER LOCAL PLAN.	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Leicester Core Strategy was adopted in June 2014 and covers the period up to 2026.
- 1.2 In accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Leicester City Council recently issued a Draft Local Plan for Consultation ('the Draft Plan') which sets out the vision and objectives for growth of the city between 2020 and 2036. It will eventually replace the adopted 2014 Core Strategy and the remaining saved local plan policies from the 2006 City of Leicester Local Plan. The

consultation document can be viewed at: <https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/sec/draft-local-plan/>.

- 1.3 The Draft Plan is accompanied by a new Local Development Scheme (October 2020), which anticipates consultation on the Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) between July and August 2021; submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State in November 2021; and adoption of the Plan in August 2022.
- 1.4 Most of the matters raised in the consultation are matters for local consideration. The following report concentrates upon those matters that are of strategic significance.
- 1.5 The Draft Plan consultation closed on 7 December 2020. As this was before a meeting of this committee, officers submitted comments following discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Infrastructure and Planning but on the understanding that they were subject to being agreed by this committee.

2.0 KEY MATTERS

Plan period

- 2.1 The proposed plan period is 2020 to 2036. However, Policy SL01, which sets out a strategy for the location of new development, calculates the city's housing need over the 2019 to 2036 period.

Comment

- 2.2 In order to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires strategic policies to look ahead at least 15 years from adoption (paragraph 22). Strategic policies include those relating to the amount of development to be provided for. The City Council's current timetable envisages Local Plan adoption in August 2022, meaning in NPPF terms it would not plan ahead for a sufficient time period. Furthermore, it does not allow for any unanticipated slippage in the programme. This is something that Leicester City Council will need to reflect upon and they may need to adapt the plan period accordingly.

Recommendation

- 2.3 That Leicester City Council be advised that: a) a longer plan period should be considered in order to be consistent with the NPPF and b) the plan period should be consistent across all areas of the plan.

Future development needs

Housing

- 2.4 Draft Policy SL01 states the city's housing need over the plan period is 29,104 dwellings (1,712 dwellings per annum). This is based upon a plan period of 2019 to 2036 (17 years) which, as noted above, is inconsistent with the 2020 to 2036 plan period stated elsewhere. The housing need figure has been calculated in accordance with the government's standard method, using the ONS 2014-based household projections as a baseline.
- 2.5 Chapter 5 of the Draft Plan provides more detail on how the need for new homes will be met. It concludes that a total of 21,362 homes can be delivered within the city boundary. This leaves an 'unmet need' of 7,742 homes to be met elsewhere in the Housing Market Area. The issue of how the unmet need will be distributed will form part of a Statement of Common Ground between the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities, which, in due course will also inform the North West Leicestershire Local Plan Substantive Review.

- 2.6 The table below (adapted from Table 1 of the Draft Plan) summarises how the city anticipates meeting its housing requirement.

Component	Dwellings
Housing Need 2019-36 (Standard Method 2019)	29,104 (1,712 dwellings per annum)
Commitments major developments detailed permissions and outlines	9,827
Small sites allowance/windfalls based on past rate	2,550 (150dpa based on past delivery rate)
Allocations identified in the draft plan	1,486
City centre capacity work	4,905
Strategic sites	2,594
Total capacity within the city	21,362
Remainder to be accommodated within the HMA	7,742

- 2.7 This anticipated supply includes the allocation of five strategic sites to deliver 2,594 new homes:

- Policy SL02: Western Park Golf Course (466 homes)
- Policy SL03: Land to the east of Ashton Green (660 homes)
- Policy SL04: Land north of the A46 Bypass (611 homes)
- Policy SL05: Land west of Anstey Lane (325 homes)
- Policy SL06: General Hospital Site (532 homes)

- 2.8 At Appendix 1 of the Draft Plan, a housing trajectory is included, which estimates when the 21,362 homes in the city boundary will be delivered. It is limited to the categories of 'Non-Central Development Area Sites', 'Windfall', 'Central Development Area' and 'Commitments'

Comment

- 2.9 Since the preparation of the Draft Plan, the government has published the 2018-based household projections and has consulted on proposed changes to the standard method. It is understood that if these changes were brought forward, the City Council's unmet need for housing would be substantially lower or may not exist.
- 2.10 Given the advice on 1 October 2020 from the government's Chief Planner to continue with the preparation of Local Plans (rather than await the outcome of any changes to the standard method), it is agreed that the stated housing need of 1,712 dwellings per annum is the most appropriate figure as it is consistent with the current methodology in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 2.11 With regards to the proposed supply within the city boundary:
- It is not entirely clear from the supporting information how sites have been selected for development and whether there are any sites which have been discounted at this stage;
 - The information included in the housing trajectory is somewhat limited and inconsistent with the categories at Table 1;
 - The windfall allowance of 150dpa has been determined using historic delivery rates, which is a reasonable approach. However, the City Council has acknowledged that this figure will need to be reviewed, having regard to matters such as the scope for new permitted development and changes of use; the implications of new draft Local Plan policies on tall buildings, density, space standards, conversion of houses to flats; and the potential future spatial distribution of windfall development.

- It is also noted that a windfall allowance is included within the first three years of the housing trajectory (where there is a risk of double counting committed extant planning permissions);
- When describing what will be provided at the strategic allocations, the number of dwellings is given as a precise figure (as opposed to a minimum or approximate figure).

Recommendations

2.12 The following actions are recommended:

- To acknowledge the housing need figure of 1,712 dwellings per annum as being the most appropriate figure at the present time;
- To acknowledge the unmet need figure of 7,742 dwellings but to advise that the City Council's stated capacity of 21,362 dwellings is likely to require further evidence and justification;
- To acknowledge that the issue of unmet need will be subject to further discussion and negotiation between the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities and will be documented in a forthcoming Statement of Common Ground.
- To highlight that further iterations of the Plan may need to be revised to account for a) any changes to the standard method that may be announced by the government and b) the most up-to-date baseline data;
- In order to demonstrate that the proposals are appropriate given the reasonable alternatives, to advise that the Regulation 19 consultation should provide greater detail on the site selection process (including assessments of any discounted sites);
- In order to demonstrate that the Plan is deliverable, to advise that future iterations of the housing trajectory should project the delivery of homes on a site-by-site basis. The City Council should ensure that the Plan is supported by a supply of specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period and specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan (as specified by NPPF paragraph 67);
- That the level of development currently proposed through windfall is acknowledged and the proposed review of this figure ahead of the Regulation 19 consultation is welcomed. The City Council will also need to be satisfied that it is not double counting extant permissions by including a windfall allowance in the first three years of its trajectory;
- To recommend that the projected number of dwellings in site allocation policies are more flexibly worded, e.g. 'a minimum of/around 466 homes' as opposed to a definitive figure.

Employment

2.13 Policy SL01 is underpinned by the City Council's 2017 Employment Land Study and identifies the following employment land requirements for Leicester up to 2031:

- 45,000 sqm of offices;
- 45ha of light/general industry and small-scale storage and distribution; and
- strategic distribution uses not provided within the city boundary.

2.14 The Draft Plan states that the delivery of offices needs to be the top priority for the City Centre. Elsewhere, it is proposed that light/general industry and small-scale storage and distribution is primarily directed to Western Park (20.5ha); Beaumont Park (8.8ha) and East of Ashton Green (4.9ha). The existing Ashton Green consent will deliver 5ha and two further small sites will deliver a combined total of 4.8ha. This totals 44ha.

2.16 Since Policy SL01 was drafted in March 2020, it is understood that the City Council (informed by further evidence base work) has an increased employment land need of 67ha and is therefore unable to accommodate 23ha of its employment land needs within the city boundaries (its 'unmet employment land need'). As with housing, the question of how the unmet need will be distributed elsewhere in the county will form part of a

Statement of Common Ground, which, in due course will also inform the North West Leicestershire Local Plan Substantive Review.

Comment

- 2.17 In light of the evidence base update, the implications of COVID-19 and recent changes to the Use Classes Order, it would be appropriate for the City Council to consider whether the Draft Plan and its evidence base should be revisited and redrafted with regards to employment land.
- 2.18 The City Council's employment land needs are anticipated to increase as a result of the latest Economic Development Needs Assessment. This will need to be confirmed, along with the City Council's unmet employment land need figure as part of the Regulation 19 Plan.

Recommendations

- 2.19 The following actions are recommended:
- To acknowledge the Draft Plan's current position on employment land, but that the Plan will need to be updated to reflect the most up-to-date evidence on employment need and should explicitly state the City Council's unmet employment land figure;
 - That the Draft Plan's position is likely to be impacted by COVID-19 and changes to the Use Classes Order, which will need to be factored into the Plan;
 - To acknowledge that the issue of unmet need will be subject to further discussion and negotiation between the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities and will be documented in a forthcoming Statement of Common Ground.

Gypsies and Travellers

- 2.20 The Leicester City and Leicestershire Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was published in May 2017 in order address the government's requirement for local authorities to set pitch and plot targets for permanent and transit accommodation needs (Planning Policy for Gypsy and Traveller Sites, 2015). Leicester City Council has prepared an Addendum Report (September 2019) to the 2017 GTAA in order to inform the Local Plan. This does not currently appear to be on the Council's evidence base webpage.
- 2.21 At paragraph 5.61, the Draft Plan expresses a need for seven permanent gypsy and traveller pitches (up to 2036), a minimum of 12 transit caravan spaces and two additional travelling showpeople plots (over 10 years). Compared to the 2017 GTAA the need for gypsy and traveller pitches has increased by one pitch and the need for travelling and showpeople plots has increased by two plots. The need for transit provision is the same as identified in the 2017 GTAA.
- 2.22 It is proposed that the need for seven gypsy and traveller pitches will be provided as part of the Western Park allocation (Policy SL02). Policy Ho12: Gypsy Traveller and Travelling Showpeople proposes a permissive, criteria-based policy which will be applied to all applications for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople sites, including temporary stopping places and transit sites.

Comment

- 2.23 It is agreed that a review of the GTAA was necessary so that the Local Plan is supported by an up-to-date evidence base.
- 2.24 Whilst a potential site is identified to accommodate the need for permanent pitches, no sites are identified to meet the needs of travelling showpeople or transit needs. In addition, it is not clear why the supporting text makes reference to a need for two

showpeople plots being required in the next 10 years, whereas Table 4 states a need for three plots up to 2036.

Recommendations

- 2.25 That the findings of the GTAA Addendum be noted, but with the request that the document should be made available to view on the City Council's website. In order to conform with the government's Planning Policy for Gypsy and Traveller Sites, the City Council should give consideration as to whether specific sites for transit and travelling showpeople should be identified, and if not provide a clear justification as to why a criteria based policy is appropriate. In addition, the Plan should provide more clarity on the required number of plots for travelling showpeople.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	None
Policy Considerations:	None
Safeguarding:	No issues identified
Equalities/Diversity:	No issues identified
Customer Impact:	No issues identified
Economic and Social Impact:	No issues identified
Environment and Climate Change:	The potential impact of proposed development upon parts of the district are highlighted in the report
Consultation/Community Engagement:	None
Risks:	The District Council is a consultee on the City of Leicester Draft Local Plan. It is important that the District Council engage in the process to ensure that any concerns are raised to protect the Council's interests.
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