

## **COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 12 MAY 2026**

### **ITEM 9 - QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

#### **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR R SUTTON TO THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

'The government ran a formal public consultation from February 12th to March 26th 2026 on proposed Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) areas covering the whole of England. The period was just short of and, coincidentally, in parallel with the quite separate public consultation on the three LGR proposals for Leicestershire.

How were elected members and residents of North West Leicestershire informed of their right to contribute to the separate and unconnected SDS area consultation on whether Leicestershire-wide continues to be the most appropriate and effective geography for spatial planning to 2050 and beyond, or whether a wider East Midlands area might better facilitate growth and development. [Note: the Council website and local media carried full details of the LGR consultation]'

#### **REPOSENSE FROM THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO COUNCILLOR R SUTTON**

With regards to the Government Consultation on "Areas for producing spatial development strategies" the government website "Consultation on SDS geographies" reads:

*"Please note that this is not a formal consultation and is instead intended to inform discussions with the sector, to determine whether and how to take these proposals forward."*

As with all Government consultations, however, it is a matter for the Government to ensure that its consultations are publicised. The Council's constitution delegates responses to government consultations, formal or otherwise, to officers in liaison with the relevant cabinet member. In this case that was the Leader of the Council.

As members will be aware, there has been a long-standing agreement that Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) is a sensible geography for a strategic authority as expressed in the LGR North, South, City submission which was considered by the Council's Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. On that understanding when Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council were invited by government to express an interest in developing a Spatial Development Strategy and a Foundation Strategic Authority (FSA) the Leicestershire district council leaders at their meeting on 18 March agreed to support Leicestershire County Council and Rutland County Council expressing an interest in establishing an FSA on the LLR footprint.

Once confirmed, strategic planning authorities will not be able to commence work formally on an SDS until the legislation is commenced, which is currently expected to be summer 2026.

Whichever final boundaries are used to prepare SDSs, there will always be some issues, development needs, infrastructure or specific projects which cross them. It will be essential that strategic planning authorities engage and cooperate effectively across those boundaries. This is required by the National Planning Policy Framework and can be expected to be tested at the examination of an SDS.

Once further information on strategic planning authorities is available, members will be updated further.