
Report to: Cabinet **Date of Meeting:** 6 October 2016

Subject: Adoption of the Liverpool City Region Statement of Cooperation on Local Planning **Wards Affected:** (All Wards);

Report of: Head of Regeneration and Housing

Is this a Key Decision? Yes **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** Yes

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

To seek approval of the Liverpool City Region Statement of Cooperation on Local Planning which has been approved by the Combined Authority and now needs to be approved by the constituent local authorities.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet approves the Liverpool City Region Statement of Cooperation on Local Planning to guide consultation on Development Plan documents, including the Sefton Local Plan and any reviews thereof, produced at the Liverpool City Region and Sefton levels.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	x		
2	Jobs and Prosperity	x		
3	Environmental Sustainability	x		
4	Health and Well-Being	x		
5	Children and Young People	x		
6	Creating Safe Communities	x		
7	Creating Inclusive Communities	x		
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	x		

Reasons for the Recommendation:

Minute 33 of the Combined Authority (15th July 2016) resolved that:

- (i) the content of and actions arising from the Liverpool City Region Statement of Cooperation on Local Planning be approved; and
- (ii) the Liverpool City Region Statement of Cooperation be presented to each Constituent Council (including West Lancashire which is an associate member of the Liverpool City Region) for adoption.

This report enables Sefton Council to comply with these recommendations.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The alternative is not to agree to adopt the Statement of Cooperation. However, we would then fail to meet this statutory Duty to Cooperate requirement, both in relation to any Liverpool City Region-wide plans prepared in the future and those prepared by Sefton. There would not be a Liverpool City Region-wide approach to cooperating on strategic issues, and there could also be an impact on our losing out on economies of scale in relation to consultation and procurement where appropriate.

It has been already been adopted by West Lancashire and St Helens and is due to be considered by Halton in October. It is not known when the other Liverpool City Region authorities will adopt the Statement.

Section 2 of the report sets out the implications for Sefton, in terms of both sub-regional work and work on the Local Plan.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

None directly, although costs may be incurred as individual Local Planning documents are produced. This will be addressed through the Local Plans budget.

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial
There will be some costs generated by the preparation of Local Planning documents. However, it is hoped these can be met from existing budgets
Legal
Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate and to consult on the preparation of Development Plan documents is a statutory requirement. The Duty to Cooperate in

relation to planning of sustainable development arises under Section 33a of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Human Resources

These will be met form within the Planning resource.

Equality

- | | | |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | No Equality Implication | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Equality Implications identified and mitigated | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Equality Implication identified and risk remains | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

This is good practice which can be accommodated from within the existing Planning resource.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Resources has been consulted (FD4318/16) and notes the report indicates no direct financial implications for the Council with any costs being met from existing budget. The Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD3601/16) has been consulted and has no comments on the report.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

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Background Papers:

None

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Liverpool City Region Housing and Spatial Planning Board and the Combined Authority approved the Liverpool City Region Statement of Cooperation in July 2016 (Minute 33) and resolved that the Statement (which is attached as Appendix 1) is presented to each constituent Council for adoption. Consequently Cabinet is requested to adopt the Statement.
- 1.2 The Statement of Cooperation had also been by all 6 City Region Councils as well as West Lancashire Borough Council, which is an associate member of the Liverpool City Region. The Statement of Cooperation was required to progress the Single Spatial Framework and would also be used by the constituent Local Planning Authorities when they prepare Local Plans and by the constituent Local Authorities and West Lancashire Borough Council to ensure alignment and uniformity of approach.
- 1.3 The Statement aims to fulfil this duty by demonstrating what cooperation is currently being undertaken for the various strategic thematic topics affecting the Liverpool City Region. It will also provide an approved mechanism for future and ongoing strategic planning, and identify areas of joint working that will be required in the period 2016 to 2021.
- 1.4 The document includes a number of key themes:
 - Housing
 - Economic Development (including SuperPort)
 - Transport (including SuperPort)
 - Utilities Infrastructure
 - Community Infrastructure
 - Environment
 - Retail, Leisure and Tourism
- 1.5 For each theme, the current position in the Liverpool City Region is described and the key cross boundary strategic issues identified. Each chapter also identifies future approaches to working and provides a closing summary of key actions (including their timescales and who is undertaking them) and who the key prescribed and other bodies for the topic area would be. Chapter 10 provides a brief summary of the existing key documents which are shaping the City Region.
- 1.6 An Action Plan for Continued Joint and Strategic working is set out in Appendix 1 of the Statement. It identifies the many forms of ongoing liaison, with a key action being the preparation of a LCR Strategic Housing and Employment Market Assessment (SHELMA) to determine future housing and employment need within the City Region, including the impact of SuperPort, beyond the current round of Local Plans being prepared. In Sefton, this will determine whether an immediate review of the Local Plan is required.
- 1.7 The Statement of Cooperation is seen as an important element of strategic planning which will assist future joint working to shape both individual plan-making but also the future shaping of the City Region.

- 1.8 The Statement of Cooperation also addresses the LCR Devolution Agreement signed in November 2015. The development of a Liverpool City Region Single Strategic Spatial Framework is intended to support the delivery of strategic housing and employment sites across the region. However, it acknowledges that the preparation of the Strategic Spatial Framework must not delay the development of any authority's Local Plans.
- 1.9 It will initially aid the process of preparing the Strategic Spatial Framework by identifying where joint work is required for Local Plans that can also feed into the Single Spatial Framework. It is envisaged that following further refinement of the scope of the Single Spatial Framework, actions for cooperation on strategic matters (evidence base, liaison with external bodies, joint policy formulation, etc) will emerge, and that the Statement of Cooperation will be updated to include these.

2. Implications for Sefton

Future housing and employment land requirements

- 2.1 Sefton's Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN) was established during the adjourned Local Plan examination earlier this year as being 576 dwellings a year. The subsequent publication of the 2014-based household projections by the Department for Communities and Local Government in July has led the Local Plan Inspector to conclude that the resultant modest decrease in the requirement should not necessitate further changes being made to the Local Plan's housing requirement. The consultation on his views ended on 17th August, and the Inspector will confirm our OAN in his final report which we are due to receive in late November. This will also confirm which sites are allocated for housing and employment in the Local Plan.
- 2.2 The seven LCR authorities are have commissioned GL Hearn to prepare a Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA). This is due to be completed in the autumn. This will influence emerging LCR Housing Strategy, the Single Spatial Framework and future Local Plans prepared in the region in terms of housing numbers and employment land. It will also assess the impact of the SuperPort and the need for large sites suitable for logistics following the development of the Seaforth River Terminal at Liverpool2.
- 2.3 If a need for more housing or employment land is identified for Sefton, this will trigger an immediate review of the Local Plan, which should be submitted for examination within 2 years of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan.
- 2.4 A number of strategic cross boundary issues have been identified:
- Closer cooperation is required to prepare future iterations of Local Plans across the LCR in order to ensure the delivery of sufficient new housing to meet the needs and aspirations of the LCR overall.
 - The supply of land suitable for housing that is not within the Green Belt is limited and may not be sufficient to meet the collective needs across the LCR. Several LCR authorities, including Sefton, have already reviewed, or are in the process of reviewing, their Local Plan boundaries.

- Whilst there is an identified need for Traveller provision across the LCR which has not been met, Sefton has identified sufficient sites in its emerging Local Plan to meet its requirements as set out in the existing LCR study.
- The LCR Spatial Investment Plan 2014 – 2017 found that there was a rapidly declining supply of available and good quality land for industrial and employment uses across the region. However, in the Sefton Local Plan's Inspector's initial findings, received in February, the Inspector concluded that Sefton did not require all three of the Green Belt employment sites included in the Local Plan, and reduced our employment land requirement pending the completion of the SHELMA.
- SuperPort, the name given to a cluster of projects, investment and activity across and beyond the City Region, to develop a multimodal freight hub. This need is not addressed in the emerging Sefton Local Plan. However, there is a commitment in the Plan that we will carry out an immediate review of the Local Plan if the SHELMA identifies a need for port-related logistics development which has to be located in Sefton.

Transport

- 2.5 Transport infrastructure and networks are key enablers of economic growth. The Combined Authority has produced 'A Transport Plan for Growth' to aid the preparation of Local Transport Plans across the City Region.
- 2.6 The expansion of the Port of Liverpool and the opening of the Seaforth River Terminal (Liverpool2) this summer will enable some of the world's largest container ships to be accommodated. The City Region is working with the Government and Highways England to identify appropriate solutions to increasing highway capacity to and from the Port. Strategic rail improvements are likely to impact more on Liverpool or Sefton, while improved road access is likely to have the greatest impact on Sefton and Knowsley. Depending on when any routes are identified in Sefton (an upgrading of the A5036 or through the Rimrose Valley), these will have to be included in a future review of the Local Plan.
- 2.7 The report also refers to other strategic elements which will help to improve local, regional and national connectivity. These include the Burscough Curves (which will enhance rail connectivity from Southport) and motorway junction improvements (eg the provision of the 'missing' slip roads on the south side of Junction 1 on the M58).

Utilities

- 2.8 Currently, there are no unresolved issues identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that accompanies the emerging Sefton Local Plan. However, in the future there may be more pressure for strategic infrastructure such as wind farms, solar farms and tidal schemes which may affect Sefton.
- 2.9 The Duty to Cooperate also identifies an issue regarding the distribution of electricity in eastern Southport.

- 2.10 It is anticipated, as existing evidence begins to age, that there will be more scope to review the evidence on a sub-regional or City Region basis, where appropriate.

Community Infrastructure

- 2.11 This includes education, health, emergency services, prison and probation services, social care. The geographies for providing each varies for each service. All authorities must recognise and respond to the additional pressure put on these facilities as a result of new development. These may have cross-boundary implications.
- 2.12 Two of the four priority areas in the LCR Growth Deal relate directly to cross-boundary strategic community infrastructure. These are:
- Skills and education to enable economic growth, through education and apprenticeships related to topics such as the SuperPort / logistics, the visitor economy, low carbon and financial and professional services, all of which are found in Sefton, and
 - The visitor economy – facilities are required across the City Region to support the revival of Liverpool as a world class business and leisure destination, as well as within the local area. However, the role of Southport is not acknowledged.

Environment

- 2.13 The Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) is jointly funded and plays a key role in joint commissioning and joint evidence base work for biodiversity and nature conservation, waste, minerals, contaminated land, renewable energy and the historic environment.
- 2.14 Other key issues affecting the sub-region include flood risk, and the proximity of development areas to European Natura 2000 nature conservation sites and their supporting habitats. In response to the latter, the Merseyside authorities have prepared an Ecological Framework to help address these issues. This is part of the background evidence which has informed the Sefton Local Plan.
- 2.15 Future joint working affecting Sefton could include the development of a joint LCR sustainable drainage (SuDS) Supplementary Planning Document, the development of a Coast Management Strategy, as well as continuing cooperation on flood risk matters, mitigation to protect nature conservation sites, as well as monitoring the adopted joint Waste Local Plan.

Retail, leisure and tourism

- 2.16 Southport is identified as a second tier retail centre (below Liverpool city centre), whilst Bootle is identified as a town centre serving north Liverpool and south Sefton. A key issue for the City Region includes the need to maintain the vitality and viability of these and other centres to meet localised shopping needs.
- 2.17 Aintree racecourse, the Sefton coastline and golf tourism are some of the main leisure and tourism attractions in the City region cited in the report. The visitor economy is one of the key growth sectors in the City Region. However, the

Statement of Cooperation assumes that the on-going review of retail and leisure provision will be undertaken on an individual authority basis as part of the review and preparation of individual Local Plans.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 Local Authorities need to engage with their neighbours on two levels: firstly through providing regular updates to the relevant LCR officer groups (including joint evidence base work and commissioning), and secondly, they need to engage with their neighbours through focussed one to one meetings and discussions on cross boundary strategic issues. This tends to be in the form of meetings between individual or small groups of neighbouring Local Authorities to discuss specific issues relating to the preparation of each Authority's Local Plan which may impact on adjoining areas.
- 3.2 Where agreement cannot be reached, the outstanding matters will be escalated to the District Planning Officers' group for the Heads of Planning to resolve where possible. If there are still outstanding matters, a joint statement identifying outstanding issues will be prepared which can be tabled at any relevant Local Plan examination.