

**Birmingham Development Plan
DUTY TO CO-OPERATE STATEMENT**

APPENDIX 18

Worcestershire County Council - Package of documentation relating to the Duty to Co-operate

Contents

Documents are reproduced in the order set out below. There is no page numbering of this appendix.

- Action Note of meeting held 01/04/14
- Birmingham City Council letter to Worcestershire County Council on Birmingham's Future Growth Requirements dated 29/07/13

DRAFT

Birmingham Development Plan – Duty to Co-operate

Action Notes of Meeting held:

1400, Tuesday 1 April 2014, County Hall, Worcester

Present:

Emily Barker – Worcestershire County Council (EB)

Nick Dean – Worcestershire County Council (ND)

Karen Hanchett - Worcestershire County Council (KH)

Phil Edwards – Birmingham City Council (PE)

David Carter – Birmingham City Council (DC)

Discussion

DC explained the background to and purpose of the meeting. He explained that the WMPOG had initially suggested a DtC checklist and agreement to record discussions and the level of agreement and difference around two years ago. This had been taken up by Stafford BC on their Local Plan and a similar activity had taken place in Leeds.

In devising the criteria these other examples had been drawn upon as had the requirements in the NPPF. The draft document was not fixed and if Worcestershire CC wanted any changes or additions to the criteria then this would not be an issue. DC also explained how the first paragraph under each criteria set out the City Council's position and it was likely that most discussion would focus on the second paragraph.

The section at the end of the document was to enable a record of all relevant correspondence, groups and meetings held to be recorded.

ND noted that WCC were working on their Minerals Local Plan and would need to undertake a comparable exercise. It was suggested and agreed that the DtC document might be altered so that it cover both plans.

The criteria in the document were then discussed in-turn. The criteria and wording were agreed subject to the following changes being agreed:

Under item b) EB referred to potential cross-boundary issues on the provision of education. It was agreed that this could usefully be noted in the document possibly under item h). EB to consider. KH raised the matter of infrastructure to meet any possible increase in housing provision that might emerge as a consequence of the emerging Birmingham shortfall. It was agreed that in this event there would need to be further analysis and consideration at the appropriate juncture.

Under item d) the addition of a reference to the strategic employment sites work was noted and agreed. ND also noted the importance that waste recycling facilities should be acceptable uses on employment land. DC agreed this was not an issue and, for example, the proposals for the Tyseley area which is one of Birmingham's Core Employment areas are rooted in in this industry.

On item g) it was agreed that WCC would keep a watching brief on the discussions that BCC was holding with the Highways Agency, Staffordshire County Council and Warwickshire County Council but at this stage did not participate in them. This is because the large-scale development proposed at Longbridge has already been considered through discussions on the Longbridge AAP and the focus of the ongoing covers, in particular, the large-scale development proposed in Sutton Coldfield. KH agreed to consider if an addition to para 2) might be required to refer to rail enhancements.

Under item h) EB agreed to add a note re cross boundary education issues and to consider if further references to green infrastructure issues might be needed.

Under item j) a number of matters were discussed:

- ND suggested and it was agreed that that the word “equivalent” should be inserted before “self sufficiency”.
- ND explained that WCC’s approach to Minerals was that the historically agreed apportionment to 2016 would be adhered to and following this the future provision would be based on rolling forward the previous ten years production. This was consistent with the NPPF. ND agreed to add a note to ensure that the document also covered the work on their Minerals Local Plan.
- ND also referred to the RAWP and the need to identify a new chair of the group, suggesting that BCC might be well-placed to take on this role.
- DC explained the issues identified by Staffordshire County Council re potential sand and gravel in Sutton Coldfield. ND indicated that WCC did not consider it necessary or appropriate to make such representations. ND also noted that elsewhere the issue of safeguarding had been dealt with by means of a separate DPD.
- In the light of the recent floods EB agreed to consider adding a note to cover possible cross-boundary matters. While the conurbation drains through to the Tame/Trent it was noted there had been issues with canal overflow.

It was agreed that DC would provide an amended version of the document adding the detail on correspondence etc. This would be sent to EB to co-ordinate for checking and amendment and subsequent signature by both authorities.

In the event that the City Council were to make changes to the BDP prior to submission then the opportunity would be given to enable the DtC document to be updated as appropriate.



John Hobb
Director of Business, Economy and Community
Worcestershire County Council
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

Date: 29.07.13

Dear John,

Birmingham's Future Growth Requirements

As you will be aware, over the past year the City Council has been engaged in a dialogue with neighbouring Councils in relation to the challenge that Birmingham faces in meeting its future requirements for new housing.

I believe that we have made significant progress over the past 12 months in developing an approach which will enable this challenge to be addressed in a planned way.

You will recall that at the end of last year the City Council undertook a further round of consultation on options for increasing the supply of land for housing and employment development within the city boundary, including a consideration of green belt options. This consultation generated a substantial number of comments, and we have subsequently commissioned additional technical work in response to this.

This work is now nearing completion, and the next step in the process will be the publication of the pre-submission version of the Birmingham Development Plan. We expect to secure Council authorisation for this in the autumn.

We are, of course, already taking into account any comments that your Council made at earlier stages in the process – but I would like to provide you with a further opportunity to raise with us any issues that you feel that we need to take into consideration in finalising the Plan. In this respect I am conscious that our focus over the past 12 months has been very much on the housing challenge, and that there may be other issues of importance that we also need to consider.

In particular, I would welcome your confirmation that there are no issues in relation to minerals, waste management and transportation that you feel we should be addressing.

I would, of course, be happy to meet with you to discuss any issues or concerns that you may have.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Waheed Nazir', written in a cursive style.

Waheed Nazir
Director of Planning & Regeneration

**Birmingham Development Plan
DUTY TO CO-OPERATE STATEMENT**

APPENDIX 19

Wyre Forest - Package of documentation relating to the Duty to Co-operate

Contents

Documents are reproduced in the order set out below. There is no page numbering of this appendix.

- Signed Duty to Co-operate Agreement between Birmingham City Council and Wyre Forest District Council, May 2014
- Action Note from meeting held on 20/02/14
- WFDC letter to BCC on Birmingham's Future Growth Requirements dated 10/09/13.
- BCC letter to RBC on Birmingham's Future Growth Requirements dated 29/07/13
- BCC letter to WFBC on Birmingham's Future Growth requirements dated 18/01/13
- BCC letter to RBC on Birmingham's Future Growth requirements dated 08/08/12

BIRMINGHAM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Duty to Co-operate

Local Planning Authorities and other bodies party to this agreement/ understanding:
A. Birmingham City Council (BCC) B. Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC)

Development Plan Document(s) covered by this agreement / understanding:
Birmingham Development Plan

Stage in the process forming part of this agreement:
Pre-Submission* *NB: In the event of any changes to the plan prior to submission and/or as part of modifications proposed during the Examination process then updated versions of this document may be prepared.

Checklist criteria <small>NB: this is a starting point, list to be mutually agreed between the parties to this agreement.</small> Checklist discussed and agreed: Yes/ No	Summary status <small>E.g.: Full or partial agreement, / Shared understanding on area(s) of disagreement, or/ Not applicable</small> <small>Delete as appropriate</small>	1. Summary of the approach in the plan 2. Summary of agreed position and any outstanding concerns or other comments <small>NB: Refer to attachments and appendices if required</small>
a) Overall approach incl. relationship to urban and rural renaissance	Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not Applicable	<p>1. The vision, strategic objectives and approach set out in the BDP envisages that by 2031 Birmingham will be renowned as an enterprising, innovative and green city that has delivered sustainable growth meeting the needs of its population and strengthening its global competitiveness.</p> <p>Following around half a century of decline in the latter half of the C20 the city's population is expected to grow rapidly extending and building on the success of the strategy for urban renaissance that has been the hallmark of planning in the city since the 1980's.</p> <p>2. Following abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy the City Council has worked and continues to work with adjoining authorities in the GBSLEP and West Midlands Metropolitan Area and beyond not only to ensure the continuing success of urban renaissance but also, through the GBSLEP</p>

		<p>Strategic Spatial framework Plan, the Strategic Policy Framework for the West Midlands Metropolitan Area and local plans, to ensure that there remains an appropriate balance between growth and development to meet needs in both urban and rural areas. There are no outstanding issues in relation to the strategy set out in the BDP between the parties signatory to this document.</p>
<p>b) Estimation of housing requirements and the level and distribution of housing provision</p>	<p>Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not-Applicable</p>	<p>1. The Birmingham SHMA which underpins the BDP estimates a housing requirement of c80,000 net new dwellings in the period up to 2031. The 2012 SHLAA's best estimate of likely capacity without incursion into Green Belt (except at the site of the former Yardley Sewage Works) and including an allowance for c700 on land at Longbridge within Bromsgrove District is c45,000 dwellings, including allowance for windfalls. The Pre-submission version of the BDP proposes that 51,100 net new dwellings - should be provided including the removal of land from the Green Belt to increase capacity within Birmingham leaving a balance to be found outside the city's boundary of c29,000 dwellings.</p> <p>2. The major issues concern the scale of the housing requirement, the extent to which capacity exists or can be identified within Birmingham's boundary and then the scale and distribution of any resultant shortfall. The BDP sets out Birmingham City Council's position in respect of these matters and it is envisaged by the parties signatory to this document that the satisfactory resolution of these issues will be achieved through (1) completion of the GBSLEP Strategic Housing Needs Study (2) Distribution of the overall housing need and the resultant 'overspill' housing through the Second Iteration of the GBSLEP Strategic Spatial Framework Plan and through arrangements negotiated with other authorities beyond the GBSLEP as justified by the evidence and (3) Subsequent accommodation of the 'overspill' growth in the review of Local Plans in adjoining areas. This approach is accepted by the parties signatory to this document.</p>
<p>c) Appropriate provision made for migration</p>	<p>Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not-Applicable</p>	<p>1. The Birmingham SHMA takes account of migration in establishing the overall housing requirement and, broadly speaking, the effects of migration trends are then taken</p>

		<p>into account in the estimation of housing requirements in adjoining areas through the preparation of local plans.</p> <p>2. The identification of a housing shortfall or 'overspill' requirement refers to potential additional housing over and above that included in population and household projections that is needed outside Birmingham's boundary in order that housing needs can be met. The process for resolution of this matter is as set out in b)2 above. This approach is accepted by the parties signatory to this document.</p>
d) Level and distribution of employment land provision	Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not-Applicable	<p>1. The BDP identifies a serious emerging shortfall of land to accommodate future employment growth and investment. The plan addresses this issue by protecting the city's core employment areas from competing uses so they offer a continuing supply of recycled land supplemented by the release of a major new employment site (80ha) at Peddimore. Proposals for six economic zones are primarily focussed within the existing employment areas and include two Regional Investment Sites. The possible longer-term need for further strategic employments sites is to be addressed by the GBSLEP Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth and associated technical work with adjoining LEPs.</p> <p>2. This approach is accepted by the parties signatory to this document.</p>
e) Hierarchy of centres and the level and distribution of retail provision	Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not-Applicable	<p>1. The BDP defines a retail hierarchy of centres in Birmingham. The approach in the BDP is to make provision for a net increase of 270,000 m² in comparison retail floorspace concentrated in the City Centre, Sutton Coldfield town centre and three District Growth Points. Growth elsewhere will be small scale.</p> <p>2. This approach is accepted by the parties signatory to this document.</p>
f) Level and distribution of office provision	Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not-Applicable	<p>1. The approach in the BDP is to encourage 745,000 m² gross of new office development in the network of centres primarily focussed in the city centre including a substantial proportion of the new office floorspace expected to be provided within the Enterprise</p>

		<p>Zone,</p> <p>2. This approach is accepted by the parties signatory to this document.</p>
<p>g) Appropriate provision made for public and private transport including Park & Ride and commuting patterns</p>	<p>Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not-Applicable</p>	<p>1. The BDP incorporates a range of transport polices and proposals across all modes. These are consistent with the extant Local Transport Plan and emerging Birmingham Mobility Action Plan (BMAP). There are proposals to improve networks both within and beyond the boundary which will impact, for example, on modal choice for commuters. Major development proposals close to the city boundary have impacts that can extend across the administrative boundary. Close cross-boundary co-operation on transportation matters continues through both West Midlands Shadow ITA and the associated Local Transport Boards (LTB).</p> <p>2. There is no desire to increase the levels of in-commuting across the city boundary so there is an expectation that there will be a broad balance between the levels of housing and employment growth taking place in areas beyond the city boundary which is a matter to be addressed in the relevant local plans. This approach is accepted by the parties signatory to this document.</p>
<p>h) Consistency of planning policy and proposals across common boundaries such as transport links and green infrastructure</p>	<p>Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not Applicable</p>	<p>1. There is no common boundary between Wyre Forest and Birmingham.</p> <p>2.</p>
<p>i) Green Belt matters</p>	<p>Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not-Applicable</p>	<p>1. Significant changes to the Green Belt are proposed in association with major development proposals at Langley and Peddimore to the north-east of Birmingham and at the site of the former Yardley sewage works. The changes to the Green Belt boundary have been made in such a way as to identify new boundaries that will endure in the long-term and allow for development to be accommodated that will not undermine the essential purposes or integrity of the wider West Midlands Green Belt. The City Council acknowledge that additional land which is currently designated as Green Belt</p>

		<p>in adjoining areas may need to be identified for development – as a consequence of the process to determine the level and distribution of future growth set out under b)2 above - but the responsibility for those proposals, should they arise, will lie with the respective local planning authority (working collaboratively with other relevant authorities) to be determined through a review of the relevant local plan(s).</p> <p>2. This approach is accepted by the parties signatory to this document.</p>
<p>j) Minerals, waste and water resources including flooding</p>	<p>Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not Applicable</p>	<p>1. As a major city Birmingham is reliant on minerals predominantly produced in adjoining shire areas to help facilitate its growth and development. The City Council recognises that it can reduce the demand for mineral extraction through effective recycling and reuse of building materials and aggregates. Similarly the City Council recognises that its 'footprint' can be reduced through self-sufficiency and vigorous adoption of the waste hierarchy. The City Council is an active member of both the West Midlands Aggregates Working Party (AWP) and the Regional Technical Advisory Body (RTAB) covering waste. Both groupings help ensure discharge of the DtC. In respect of water resources and flooding the City Council is fully aware of its responsibilities and will vigorously pursue the principles of sustainable drainage to reduce the risks of flooding both within the city and beyond its boundaries.</p> <p>2. This approach is accepted by the parties signatory to this document.</p>
<p>k) Air quality matters</p>	<p>Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not Applicable</p>	<p>1. The City Council is committed to the improvement of air quality for its residents and those in surrounding areas. It is, and will remain an active participant in initiatives to address these matters jointly with adjoining authorities and other agencies subject to the nature of actions being consistent with the city's aspirations for growth. Detailed policies on air quality and noise matters will be set out in a separate Development Management DPD.</p> <p>2. This approach is accepted by the parties signatory to this document.</p>

I) Any other matters that might reasonably be identified under the Duty to Co-operate	Agreed/ Shared Understanding/ Not Applicable	1. No other matters identified. 2.
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Log of meetings, reports and other records to substantiate the collaborative working:

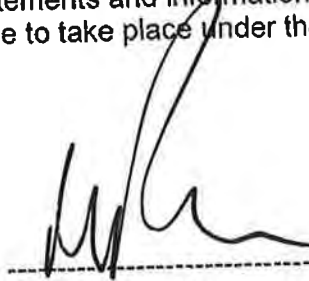
	Details:
Meetings	Meetings on the Birmingham Development Plan held on 04/10/12 and 20/02/14.
Groups	Regular meetings: (1) GBSLEP Planning Sub-Group (2) GBSLEP Spatial Planning Group (3) Development Management Group (4) West Midlands Planning Officers Group – Worcestershire LPAs connect to the group through the Worcestershire Planning Officers Group
Responses to consultation and correspondence	10/09/13 – WFDC letter to BCC on Birmingham's Future Growth Requirements. 29/07/13 – BCC letter to RBC on Birmingham's Future Growth Requirements 18/01/13 – BCC letter to WFBC on Birmingham's Future Growth requirements 08/08/12 – BCC letter to RBC on Birmingham's Future Growth requirements
Additional points	

We, the undersigned, agree that the above statements and information truly represent the joint working that has and will continue to take place under the 'Duty to Co-operate'.



Waheed Nazir
Director of Planning & Regeneration
Birmingham City Council*

Date: 8.08.14



Wyre Forest Council*

Date: 13/05/14

* Must be signed by either Council Leader or responsible Cabinet Member or responsible Chief Executive or Chief Officer only. For non-local authority organisations signatory should be at equivalent level.

DRAFT

Birmingham Development Plan – Duty to Co-operate

Action Notes of Meeting held:

0900, Thursday 21 February 2014, Birmingham City Council Offices, 1 Lancaster Circus

Present:

Rebecca Mayman – Wyre Forest DC

Maria Dunn – Bromsgrove BC

David Carter – Birmingham City Council

Discussion

DC explained the background to and purpose of the meeting. He explained that the WMPOG had initially suggested a DtC checklist and agreement to record discussions and the level of agreement and difference around two years ago. This had been taken up by Stafford BC on their Local Plan and a similar activity had taken place in Leeds.

In devising the criteria these other examples had been drawn upon as had the requirements in the NPPF. The draft document was not fixed and if Wyre Forest have any changes or additions to the criteria then this would not be an issue. DC also explained how the first paragraph under each criteria set out the City Council's position and it was likely that most discussion would focus on the second paragraph.

The section at the end of the document was to enable a record of all relevant correspondence, groups and meetings held to be recorded.

DC mentioned that at an earlier meeting with Emma Baker at Redditch he had agreed several changes which he would like to raise to establish if they would also be agreeable to Wyre Forest.

Each of the criteria were discussed in-turn. The criteria and wording were agreed subject to the following changes being agreed:

Under items a), b) and g) RM explained that while WFDC was fully supportive of the approach she felt it was necessary to add a note on the particular circumstances in Wyre Forest given its location in relation to Birmingham and the Black Country.

Under item h) it was agreed that this was not applicable since there were no common boundaries.

In relation to point i) it was agreed that Mike Dunphy would add a point of clarification drawn from their emerging response to the BDP consultation.

It was agreed that DC would provide an amended version of the document adding the detail on correspondence etc. This would be sent to BDC so additions could be made to points a), b) and g) for checking and subsequent signature by both authorities.

In the event that the City Council were to make changes to the BDP prior to submission then the opportunity would be given to enable the DtC document to be updated as appropriate.



Mr David Carter
Head of Planning and Growth Strategy
Birmingham City Council
Planning & Regeneration
PO Box 28
Birmingham B1 1TU

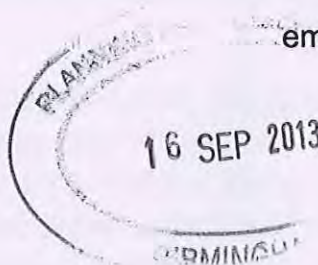
Mike Parker
Director – Economic Prosperity & Place

tel: 01562 732500

fax: 01562 732556

email: mike.parker@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

my ref: MP/JHL



10th September 2013

Dear Dave,

Birmingham's Future Growth Requirements

Thank you for your letter dated 29th July in which you attached a checklist of matters of potential common concern. We have taken some time to read over your October 2012 consultation document on the Development Plan and have noted the following issues under the points you raise.

- **Estimation of housing requirements and level and distribution of housing provision**

The consultation document refers to population projections of growth by 150,000 for Birmingham in the period to 2031. The number of households within the city will increase by around 80,000 to 2031. It is also noted that the City Council is assuming a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare within the suburbs for developments during the plan period. We would like to ask if you consider that this density assumption is achievable and whether it has been tested as there is a likelihood that developments within these areas may actually be delivered at lower densities therefore further impacting on the number of dwellings provided?

The apartment scheme sites that are considered to be undeliverable in the current economic climate due to viability issues could potentially be phased for later in the plan period, which may provide some additional capacity within the city centre during the lifetime of the plan.

- **Level and distribution of employment land provision**

We support the strong emphasis on ensuring that sites are available to support the City's economic growth. As a partner authority in the GBSLEP it is understood that BCC has undertaken an assessment of existing employment land on offer and that further land is needed to meet the needs of investors in growth sectors, particularly the prediction for significant growth in the advanced manufacturing sector. We note and

support the need for the plan to allocate a 50 hectare employment site to provide sufficient scale and quality to meet the needs of major occupiers.

The continued emphasis on the role of the universities, education establishments and other providers is strongly supported. Many of our residents access these services and their role in improving the skills base of the local population is very important to the GBSLEP partner authorities.

- **Appropriate provision for public and private transport including Park and Ride and commuting patterns.**

We support the Plan's intention to improve the rail network and the extension of light rapid transport to ensure intra city connections are efficient and effective. This is particularly important for our District, given that trains from Kidderminster now connect to Snow Hill rather than Birmingham New Street. Improved connections between New Street and Snow Hill will be extremely beneficial for rail passengers.

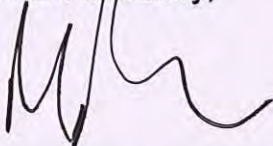
- **Green Belt Matters**

The 2012 consultation document identifies a number of options for Green Belt release; however, to our knowledge a preferred option has yet to be identified. In your letter you anticipate that the pre-submission version of the Birmingham Development Plan will gain Council approval in the autumn. We are concerned that although this will essentially be the plan that the Council intends to submit for examination it may well be the first opportunity stakeholders have to comment on the Preferred Option for potential green belt land release.

These comments are intended in a constructive manner and we hope that you will find them useful in the finalisation of your Publication Plan. We feel that it may be useful to hold a meeting following your plan's publication. However, through our participation in the GBSLEP Spatial Planning Group, we feel we have been able to gain a good understanding of the potential implications arising from Birmingham's future growth requirements as well as being able to put our views forward under the Duty to Co-operate.

If you require any further clarification on these comments please direct them to Rebecca Mayman, Planning Policy Manager, in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,



M. PARKER
Director – Economic Prosperity & Place

Economic Prosperity & Place Directorate
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster
DY11 7WF



Mike Parker
Director of Planning and Housing
Wyre Forest District Council
Duke House
Clensmore St
Kidderminster
Worcestershire
DY10 2 JX

Date: 29.07.13

Dear Mike,

Birmingham's Future Growth Requirements

It is now almost a year since I first wrote to you to draw attention to the challenge that Birmingham faces in meeting its future requirements for new housing.

I believe that we have made significant progress over the past 12 months in developing an approach which will enable this challenge to be addressed in a planned way, and I am grateful for your support in taking this forward

You will recall that at the end of last year the City Council undertook a further round of consultation on options for increasing the supply of land for housing and employment development within the city boundary, including a consideration of green belt options. This consultation generated a substantial number of comments, and we have subsequently commissioned additional technical work in response to this.

This work is now nearing completion, and the next step in the process will be the publication of the pre-submission version of the Birmingham Development Plan. We expect to secure Council authorisation for this in the autumn.

We are, of course, already taking into account any comments that your Council made at earlier stages in the process – but I would like to provide you with a further opportunity to raise with us any issues that you feel that we need to take into consideration in finalising the Plan. In this respect I am conscious that our focus over the past 12 months has been very much on the housing challenge, and that there may be other issues of importance that we also need to consider. I have attached a checklist of matters that may be of common concern and if there are any outstanding concerns I would be grateful if you could identify them.

As ever, we would be happy to meet with you to discuss any issues or concerns that you may have. If you would like to meet in the first instance please liaise with David Carter, Head of Planning and Growth Strategy (email: david.r.carter@birmingham.gov.uk tel: 0121 303 4041)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Waheed Nazir', written in a cursive style.

Waheed Nazir
Director of Planning & Regeneration



Birmingham City Council

Checklist of matters which you may be of common interest and which reasonably might be covered by the Duty to Co-operate.

1. Overall approach including the relationship to urban and rural renaissance
2. Estimation of housing requirements and the level and distribution of housing provision
3. Appropriate provision made for migration
4. Level and distribution of employment land provision
5. Level and distribution of office provision
6. Level and distribution of retail provision
7. Appropriate provision made for public and private transport including Park & Ride and commuting patterns
8. Consistency of planning policy and proposals across common boundaries such as transport links and green infrastructure
9. Green Belt matters
10. Minerals, waste and water resources including flooding
11. Air quality matters
12. Any other matters that might reasonably identified.

Mike Parker
Director of Planning and Housing
Wyre Forest District Council
Duke House
Clensmore St
Kidderminster
Worcestershire
DY10 2 JX

Date: 18 January 2013

Dear Mike,

Birmingham's Future Growth Requirements

I am writing following our recent correspondence and meeting in relation to the likely scale of future growth in Birmingham and how this might be taken forward under the new planning system.

As you will be aware, the recently completed Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Birmingham has concluded that there is likely to be a substantial shortfall in housing provision within the city up to 2031. We are currently completing a consultation on options for increasing the supply of land for development within the city boundary, including a consideration of green belt options – but it is clear that even if we adopt such an option, we will still be facing a significant shortfall.

I am grateful for your recognition of the need to address this challenge and for your support for the development of an agreed response through the collaborative work of the West Midlands Joint Committee and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership.

I would re-emphasise that in addressing this issue we do not wish to put in jeopardy local planning work which is already well-advanced and nearing completion but we do feel that it is necessary for us all to be demonstrating a clear commitment to undertake the joint work which will be required to enable a planned response to be put in place and to bring forward any consequent revisions to our development plans as soon as practicable thereafter.

We also recognise that authorities are in different positions in terms of their individual development planning work. Where Core Strategies have already been put in place, the issue will need to be picked up in future review processes.

Where plans are still in preparation we are looking for an explicit acknowledgement of the issue within the emerging plan. This should:

- Recognise that evidence is emerging that Birmingham will not be able to accommodate the whole of its new housing requirement for 2011 – 31 within its administrative boundary and that some provision will need to be made in adjoining areas to help meet Birmingham's needs.
- Include a commitment to work collaboratively with Birmingham and other authorities within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership and/or the West Midlands Joint Committee to establish objectively the level of long term growth through joint commissioning of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment and work to establish the scale and distribution of any emerging housing shortfall.
- Recognise that in the event that it is demonstrated that there is a need for further housing provision in your area this will be addressed through a review of the Development Plan.

In some cases the Council has already made representations on emerging plans to this effect.

I hope that we can continue to work collaboratively on these issues – and I am of course always happy to meet with you to discuss any issues arising in more detail.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Waheed Nazir', written in a cursive style.

Waheed Nazir
Director of Planning & Regeneration

08th August 2012

Mike Parker
Director of Planning and Housing
Wyre Forest District Council
Duke House
Clensmore St
Kidderminster
Worcestershire
DY10 2 JX

Dear Mike,

Birmingham's Future Growth Requirements

In December 2010, the City Council published a draft Core Strategy for consultation. The levels of housing and employment growth which this proposed drew on the Phase 2 Revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, and the technical work which underpinned this.

In the last 18 months much has changed:

- The Localism Act has confirmed the Government's intention to abolish the RSS.
- The National Planning Policy Framework requires Councils to plan to meet 'objectively assessed' needs for new housing and employment.
- The latest ONS population and household projections for Birmingham show higher levels of growth than those which informed the RSS Revision.
- Higher population growth and the impact of the recession highlight the need for more job creation.
- The first results of the 2011 Census have indicated that Birmingham's population in 2011 was about 40,000 higher than the mid-year estimates had suggested.

In the light of this, the City Council has embarked on a process of reviewing the growth levels that were included in the Draft Core Strategy and we hope to undertake further consultation on this towards the end of the year.

To help inform this process a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has been commissioned. This work is not yet finalised, but the key emerging conclusions were presented at a stakeholder workshop at the end of May which was attended by many authorities adjoining Birmingham. The message from the SHMA research is that Birmingham's housing requirement for the period 2011 – 31 is in the range of 80,000 to 105,000. This compares to the latest estimate of capacity within the urban area (from the City's 2011 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) of around 43,000.

Clearly this creates a significant challenge. We are considering a number of ways to increase capacity within the urban area – but it is already quite clear that there is no prospect that these will bring us even close to the lower end of the housing requirement range. The only remaining course will then be to consider green belt development options on the edge of the city. However the scope for such options within Birmingham is limited.

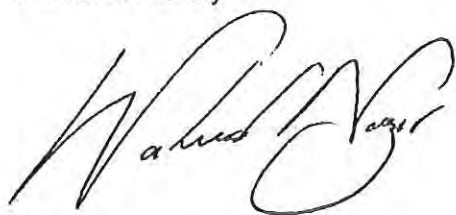
Our approach has always been to accommodate as much of Birmingham's housing growth as realistically possible within the city's boundary, and this remains our intention. However, it is increasingly clear that over the next twenty years it will not be realistic for us to provide for the full quantity of new housing that the SHMA indicates that we require.

In these circumstances it is likely that we will need to look to adjoining areas to accommodate some of Birmingham's requirement. I appreciate that this is a challenge, particularly in view of the advanced stage that many of us find ourselves in with our individual development plans.

I am therefore writing to you to propose that we meet to discuss these issues and resolve a way forward in addressing them. The existence of the West Midlands Joint Committee and the now established LEPs are valuable structures that emphasise the importance of joint working to meet shared priorities and pressures. However, due to the pressing nature of these issues I suggest that as Chief Planning Officers we arrange to meet to discuss the matters outlined above to set the context for these ongoing discussions.

I would be very pleased to host the meeting in Birmingham and if you could advise Pauline Grey my secretary of your availability from the beginning of September I will make the necessary arrangements.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Waheed Nazir', written in a cursive style.

Waheed Nazir
Director of Planning and Regeneration

**Birmingham Development Plan
DUTY TO CO-OPERATE STATEMENT**

APPENDIX 20

Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership - Package of Board reports and related documentation related to the Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth and other planning matters

Contents

Documents are reproduced in the order set out below. There is no page numbering of this appendix.

- Joint Strategic Housing Needs Study to inform the GBSLEP Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth, report to GBSLEP Board dated 17/07/13
- Emerging Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth: First Iteration, report to GBSLEP Board dated 26/06/13 [NB: the appendices are not included since the final published version of the SPRG is on the Core Documents list. Further documentation relating to the SPRG is available on the GBSLEP website]
- Strategic Spatial Framework Plan: Progress report and next Steps, report to GBSLEP Board dated 14/03/13
- Planning and the GBSLEP – An Update, report to GBSLEP Board dated 18/01/13
- Copy of GBSLEP Planning Charter launched at Planning Visioning Event held 14/02/2014
- Creating a business-friendly planning system in the LEP, report to GBSLEP Board dated 25/01/12.
- Towards a Spatial Framework Plan for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, report to GBSLEP Board dated 28/09/11.
- Creating a more business-friendly planning system within the LEP area, report to GBSLEP Board dated 28/09/11.
- Planning in the LEP, report to GBSLEP Board dated 20/07/11.

**GREATER BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL LEP
BOARD
17th July 2013**

**JOINT STRATEGIC HOUSING NEEDS STUDY TO INFORM THE GBSLEP SPATIAL PLAN
FOR RECOVERY AND GROWTH**

Recommendation(s)

1. That the attached brief for the Joint Strategic Housing Needs Study be agreed
2. That the work be funded by the GBSLEP through an allocation of up to £100,000 from the Growing Places Fund.
3. To note that the procurement process is being led by Solihull MBC acting on behalf of the nine commissioning authorities.

Background

1. At the meeting of the Board held on 17 June a first iteration of the strategic spatial plan for the GBSLEP was agreed as a basis for public consultation alongside further technical work including the proposed Strategic Housing Needs Study. The technical work will be run in parallel with the consultation exercise with the outcome from both streams being required to produce the next version of the spatial plan. The target for the completion of the spatial plan was established as the end of 2013 in the recently published Strategy for Growth. Agreement to funding of this housing needs study was deferred on 17 June to enable outstanding concerns on the study brief to be discussed. This report outlines the current position. The current draft of the brief is attached at Appendix 1.

2. The Strategic Housing Study is a crucial element of the work which will enable the spatial plan to be completed. As the impact of the Localism Act takes effect the importance of collaborative working on strategic matters under the 'Duty to Cooperate' is coming to the fore and the GBSLEP's spatial planning work will help enable all local planning authorities to produce sound and up-to-date development plans.

The Study Brief

3. It is important to stress that the Study Brief has been put together over the past few months involving discussions between all the local authority partners within the GBSLEP area and its working groups to which representatives of neighbouring LEP areas are invited. The broad nature of the proposed work has been explained in evidence given to Inspectors at public examinations into development plans in Coventry, Lichfield, Solihull and North Warwickshire. The intention to carry out the work as part of the spatial plan has been accepted by the Inspector into the Solihull Plan as a basis for enabling that Core Strategy to proceed.

4. Worcestershire authorities within and outwith the GBSLEP have raised some concerns about the proposed study (see letter at Appendix 2). The focus of the concern is around two issues (1) the examination of future options for growth as

part of stage 3 of the study and (2) the short timescale for reporting which could impact on plans under preparation in Bromsgrove/ Redditch and South Worcestershire.

5. In order to address these concerns a meeting was held on 9 July 2013 to which all Chief Executives and Chief Planning Officers were invited, including representatives from the South Worcestershire authorities. A note of that meeting is attached at Appendix 3. At the meeting two key changes to the brief were discussed and these are now covered in a further revision attached at Appendix 1. The first of these makes clear that the brief will continue to include stage 3 - which looks at the broad spatial options for dealing with housing growth - but that the detail of the specification should be refreshed following the completion of Stages 1 and 2. It is vital for Stage 3 of the study to be completed since without this and related work on sustainability appraisal it will not be possible to finalise a spatial plan for the GBSLEP, in line with the commitment given in the Strategy for Growth. Reviewing the results of Stages 1 and 2 and agreeing a way forward for Stage 3 will be important and allow all authorities including within the wider Worcestershire area to input their views/comments. The second change suggests a slight delay to the study timescale so that there is sufficient time for Bromsgrove to submit its local plan to the Secretary of State. This delay is regrettable since it means the end of year target for completion of the spatial plan will not be achieved, but this will still be possible within the current financial year.

6. In relation to Stage 3 of the brief in an email dated 13 July Ian Miller on behalf of the Worcestershire authorities has indicated, "while we were grateful for the discussion and the changes that had been made, our authorities were not in a position to support stage 3 of the brief".

Key Issue(s)

7. The Board is asked:

7.1 To support the revised brief as representing a reasonable compromise in relation to the matters raised by the Worcestershire authorities.

7.1 To be clear that the work is required to ensure that the housing sector can contribute to, and not act as a brake on the growth of the GBSLEP.

7.2 To clarify that there should be no further delay to the commissioning and reporting of the study including Stage 3.

7.4 To encourage the local planning authorities within the GBSLEP (and adjoining areas where appropriate) to support each other through collaborative working to help ensure local development plans proceed through public examination.

Conclusion

8. The strategic housing study is an integral component of the work on the GBSLEP Spatial Plan and the commissioning of this research is necessary and urgent to

Agenda item No 9

support the Strategy for Growth as well as helping to ensure that the housing needs of a growing population are met.

Prepared by: Craig Jordan, Lichfield District Council & Chair of the GBSLEP Planning Group and David Carter, Birmingham City Council and Chair of the GBSLEP Spatial Planning Sub-Group.

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Dave Carter Tel: 0121 303 4041 Email: david.r.carter@birmingham.gov.uk

Date Created: 15 July 2013

**GREATER BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL LEP
BOARD
26th June 2013**

EMERGING SPATIAL PLAN FOR RECOVERY AND GROWTH: FIRST ITERATION

Recommendation(s)

1. That the emerging Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth for the GBSLEP be agreed as a basis for publication for a period of consultation running until mid October 2013.
2. That the scope and detailed nature of consultation arrangements be agreed with the project champion and LEP Board member, Chris Webster.
3. That the board notes the broad scope of further technical research previously agreed and to be commissioned and carried out in parallel with the consultation.
4. That the Board notes the future programme of work to bring together the results of the consultation and further technical work in a first 'complete' version of the Spatial Plan for approval by the Board by the end of the year, in accordance with the commitment in the recently published Strategy for Growth.

Background

1. The last cycle of meetings received a report on the spatial plan covering (i) the Board's decision to embark on the preparation of a spatial plan and how this plan would dovetail with the 'Strategy for Growth' (ii) the intention is that the spatial plan should be concise and be produced through informal collaborative working (unlike the statutory Regional Spatial Strategies), to be refreshed on an annual basis and crucially respecting the sovereignty of the individual local authorities and, (iii) how, following the Localism Act the importance of collaborative working on strategic matters under the 'Duty to Cooperate' and how the GBSLEP's spatial planning work will be help enable local planning authorities to produce sound and up-to-date development plans.
2. On 25 April 2013 a Planning Summit was held at St Andrews in Birmingham to test the work that what emerging on the spatial plan which was attended by over 100 people. The form of the event comprised a series of exercises to test the ideas that had emerged from the work so far.

The Emerging Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth

3. The first iteration of the document (appended) represents a write-up of the emerging plan following all of the work up to and including feedback from the Planning Summit. At this stage it should be noted that some of the most controversial elements of the final plan – such as the level and distribution of growth – would be informed by the research and require the most difficult decisions to be made towards the end of the year. In that sense the plan represents 'work-in-

progress' but there is sufficient material on which to carry out more extensive consultation and engagement.

4. The intention is to produce a high level spatial plan which comprises three main elements and as the SPRG moves forward there will be iteration between each of the component parts and the plan at any point will only go so far as it is able.

- A. The Strategic Framework including Strategic Objectives and Strategic Policies
- B. The Spatial Diagram
- C. The Broad Scale and Distribution of Growth.

5. A key section of the plan – which is included as paragraph 18 in the attached draft – is a short section which encapsulates the key elements of the approach to the emerging plan. This is reproduced in the following Key Issues section below and it is suggested may be a good focus for a discussion with any agreed changes then being reflected by officers in the final published papers. It is proposed that consultation should start after the Board meeting with the detailed proposals being agreed on behalf of the Board by the project champion and LEP Board member, Chris Webster.

Key Issue(s)

6. The following is suggested as reflecting the key elements upon which the spatial plan is based:

6.1 The starting point is the delivery of the approach and priorities as set out in the GBSLEP Strategy for Growth.

6.2 The environment and community needs to be seen as integral assets for sustainable growth not bolt-ons or luxuries.

6.3 It will facilitate and accommodate the objectively assessed requirements of both the growing and diversifying economy and population within the GBSLEP area or, exceptionally, by agreement in neighbouring areas.

6.4 It will look ahead over at least a twenty year time period.

6.5 Improving the quality of life (for all) is a key ingredient for the spatial strategy with strong social and environmental justice issues reflecting the continuing importance of targeting investment into areas of greatest need as well as responding to the market across the GBSLEP:

- The conurbation should meet an increasing share of the development needs it generates continuing the record of achievement in urban renaissance.
- The specific needs of rural areas will be addressed.

6.5 To identify sustainable locations beyond the conurbation to accommodate development requirements which cannot be met within it and use this as an opportunity to provide more balanced communities.

6.6 The benefits of Birmingham's improving international standing will be exploited to the benefit of the GBSLEP and adjoining areas.

6.7 Building on and celebrating the diversity of both its population and the places that make up the GBSLEP to realise the potential of everyone and everywhere.

6.8 To maximise the use of existing infrastructure and harness the economic, social and environmental benefits of new infrastructure, particularly transport but also, for example, green infrastructure and major developments that may have wide impacts.

6.9 A commitment to prioritising the recycling of land for development wherever practicable but also to recognise that in some circumstances new development will require sites that require a review of green belt boundaries.

6.10 To include measures to adapt to the inevitable causes and consequences of climate change and the need to improve the environment through, for example improvements to air quality and renewable energy and promote a settlement pattern which limits carbon and other emissions and supports use of public transport and active travel.

6.11 The limitation of the spatial plan only to those matters where a common perspective is necessary and desirable leading to a framework which will set a context for but not pre-determine the decision-making of each individual authority.

6.12 An annual refresh will ensure the plan stays up-to-date and relevant and delivers a stream of investment opportunities.

6.13 Finally, to work with adjoining LEPs and local authorities to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner and to encourage economic growth in the wider West Midlands.

Conclusion

7. Collaborative and partnership working over the past 15 months have resulted in advanced proposals for a spatial plan for the GBSLEP. Subject to Board approval this can move into a consultation phase alongside the commissioning of further research. The spatial planning work of the GBSLEP is more advanced and represents a collaborative, streamlined approach to strategic planning which is innovative, will encourage and enable the growth of the economy alongside wider improvements to enhance the quality of life and at the same respect subsidiarity and the sovereignty over decision-making at District-level.

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Date Created: 19 June 2013

GREATER BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL LEP BOARD MEETING

14th March 2013

STRATEGIC SPATIAL FRAMEWORK PLAN: PROGRESS REPORT AND NEXT STEPS

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Board note the progress and programme of future work on the development of the Strategic Spatial Framework Plan for the GBSLEP.
2. To note the broad scope of further technical research required to be commissioned and carried out during the spring and summer of 2013. To note that a submission will be made to the Growing Places Fund.

What is the Spatial Plan?

1. The Board's initial decision to embark on the preparation of a Strategic Spatial Framework Plan (SSFP) for the GBSLEP was taken in late 2011. The intention was to produce a spatial plan that would dovetail with the LEP's Economic Strategy although, by definition, it would be more comprehensive in scope particularly on social and environmental matters. The GBSLEP's approach has proved to be forward thinking since it pre-empted the Chancellor's Autumn Statement announcement on the need for LEPs to produce strategic plans and also sits well Lord Heseltine's Greater Birmingham Project.
2. The intention is that the SSFP should be concise (c12 pages plus illustrations) and be produced through informal collaborative working (unlike the statutory Regional Spatial Strategies), be refreshed on an annual basis and respect the sovereignty of the individual local authorities.
3. Following the enactment of the Localism Act 2011 it is becoming increasingly apparent that the 'Duty to Cooperate' has reinforced the importance of collaborative planning on strategically important matters and how the GBSLEP is an ideal vehicle for helping respond to this, thus helping local planning authorities to produce sound and up-to-date development plans.

What has happened so far?

4. The work on the SSFP started in earnest in February 2012 with the launch of the Planning Charter and the initial mapping of development plans across the LEP at a Visioning event. There was a very favourable reaction to this initial event which led to four additional themed events being held in various locations in September 2012. These events sought active participation from participants in a further series of Scenario Testing workshops which were held between December 2012 and January of this year. These workshops asked (a) where current plans and actions were taking us, (b) where we wanted to

get to and, (c) What might we need to do in order to achieve our aspirations. These workshops identified a number of 'Drivers of Change' and 'Lessons Learned' and generated some very interesting ideas for taking matters forward under the scenario discussions (examples, of this work, are set out in the appendices 1 to 3 of this report). A separate page on the GBSLEP website has been established to act as a focus for SSFP-related activities and repository of background material.

Towards a Draft Spatial Plan

5. The next key stage is a Summit which is being arranged for 25 April. The purpose of this event will be to share the emerging thinking from the scenario testing phase and to start to point towards the content of a SSFP. The intention will be to present the ideas both conceptually and spatially so that, taken together, they provide an easy to understand and concise illustration of the preferred approach. The plan cannot be completed, however, since it has become clear that further technical evidence is required in several key areas. These are:

- a) Strategic Housing Market Assessment – a high level analysis to provide a robust analysis to inform the future level and distribution of growth across the GBSLEP. In relation to the latter point it is anticipated the study would identify sustainable options for the accommodation of the growth.
- b) The LEP will ensure that there is a choice of investment locations and sites for new economic development. This will be informed by a studies of; (i) the market attractiveness of existing sites, supply chain needs and strategic employment sites including comparative analysis to demonstrate that the GBSLEP 'offer' stands up to that elsewhere in the UK and overseas, (ii) prospects for the office market in the LEP both to be completed during 2013,
- c) In addition, there will be a need to ensure that the GBSLEP's work does not fall foul of the Government and EU's environmental regulations. It is important the need for this is identified and any work consequent upon it kept to a minimum.

6. Following the Summit it is the intention that the first version of the Draft SSFP should be written up for Board approval after which a period of consultation would take place over the summer months.

Finalising the Spatial Plan

7. Building on the results of the consultation and drawing on the research results a revised SSFP – effectively the first refresh – would be prepared for Board approval at the end of 2013.

Key Issue(s)

8. The SSFP will be complementary to but have a much wider remit than the Strategy for Growth and will provide the long-term steer for individual local authority development plans. Some of the key issues it will address include:

- Helping define the level and distribution of housing and employment growth across the GBSLEP.

- Ensuring that there is a portfolio of sites and buildings to meet the aspirations of the Strategy for Growth.
- Helping bind the economic priorities in the Strategy for Growth with Social and environmental factors – including delivering sustainable growth.
- To act as a process for both identifying and enabling the projects that will deliver growth as time moves on.
- Helping define the relationships and interaction with adjoining LEP areas.
- Others?

9. While significant progress on the SSFP has been made over the past 12 months a significant acceleration and intensification of the work is required but it needs to be recognised that this comes at a cost. Since the purpose of the plan will be to generate growth it is proposed that a limited programme of focussed research is commissioned using funds (up to £250,000) from the Growing Places Fund.

Policy Development/linkages with Existing LEP Strategy or Key Priorities

10. This report has been clear to emphasise the importance of the linkage and interaction between the SSFP and the emerging Strategy for Growth. The proposed annual refresh cycle proposed for the SSFP will help ensure it remains up-to-date, relevant and helping play a critical role in project development across the LEP area.

Conclusion

11. This report has summarised the progress made so far and the direction of further work including a period of consultation and the commissioning of key technical work. The Board is asked to note that a submission will be made to the Growing Places Fund.

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Date Created: 7th March 2013

Appendix 1 – Drivers of Change

As part of the Scenario Testing workshops held in December 2012/ January 2013 participants were asked to identify the key Drivers of Change they felt the SSFP needed to address. The large number of drivers were then prioritised at a meeting bringing together the outcomes. This appendix lists the outcomes of that process. The intention is that a similar, larger scale exercise should be conducted by participants at the April Summit.

Economy & Growth

- Industrial restructuring and resilience of business
- Education and skills at all levels
- Development viability
- Sites and supply of premises
- Public sector funding crisis
- Globalisation – rise of Chinese, Indian and S. American economies
- Skills and work practices (now seen as +ve)
- Access to finance

Homes & Communities

- Population growth and change – from existing population (eg age and diversity)
- Population change from inward migration
- More housing to meet requirements
- Housing as a driver of the economy
- Must address the needs of low value areas and avoid cycle of decline
- Social inclusion/exclusion

Connectivity & Infrastructure

- Desire to be an 'international area'. An international West Midlands (ie its not just Bham in this context) driven by HS2, BHX expansion, JLR, JCB etc
- Connectivity within the LEP and to places outside (Black Country, Coventry Warwickshire and beyond.
- Infrastructure – age and quality
- Capacity and attractiveness of public transport
- Superfast Broadband
- Rising costs of travel

Sustainable Living and the Environment

- Perceived Image and Place identity
- Biodiversity and landscape
- Intensification of land /resources
- Design quality
- Building sustainable communities
- Integrated landscape planning and ecosystem services.
- Sense of place

- Climate change – opportunities

Others

- Planning better infrastructure to support development
- Need to think big to achieve ambitions
- GBLEP Board has big ambitions - positive planning to support this
- Need a shared vision to work to
- Downturn represents a game changer – planning needs to respond to this
- Need to experiment more – be radical
- Austerity Breeds innovation

Appendix 2 – Lessons Learned

A second theme of the Scenario Testing workshops held in December 2012/ January 2013 took place in several groups where 'Lessons Learned' were identified. The large number of matters were then prioritised at a meeting bringing together the outcomes. This appendix lists the outcomes of that process. The intention is that a similar, larger scale exercise should be conducted by participants at the April Summit.

- One size or concept does not fit all. Avoid over-reliance on a single aspect, location or type of development
- Having places where people want to live
- Urban – urban fringe – rural: all interlocking and inter-dependant
- Not an island – must interact with neighbouring LEP areas
- Housing and employment are inter-related
- Uncertainty = low investment
- Ensure there is political and business buy-in
- Better join up between governance structures required
- Education is a major influence
- Build enhance and nurture what we have rather than overly rely on inward investment
- Build on a network of companies large and small
- Plan for growth and avoid stagnation
- Availability of land for development key

Appendix 3 – Scenario Testing

To illustrate the types of discussions and ideas emerging here is an example of the issues identified from part of the scenario testing discussion on Sustainable Living and the Environment. This has been chosen to illustrate the need for the SSFP to look far wider than the Strategy for Growth on the one hand but also to stress the importance relationship to the economy on the other. The top right-hand quadrant was generally recognised as the 'place we want to be' while the bottom-left quadrant seen as the place to avoid.

More comprehensive notes on the scenario testing phase are on the GBSLEP website and notes of all the discussions will be made available in due course.

Sustainable Living & the Environment Portraits: Examples

GROWING ECONOMY

- Role of innovation in changing society. A major technological breakthrough could provide unlimited energy
- Build on our LEP expertise with low carbon technologies with key role of research to build new energy sources
- New woods and forests as drivers of economic growth and quality of life
- Improved number of eco house developments
- SMART grid and SMART growth in operation
- Local heating

- Other innovations considered
- Technology solution with more robotics reduced work days more leisure time
- Environmental solution such as algae power.
- Idea of banning cars using a driverless highly efficient hiring scheme
- Seemed to be a problem of maintaining competitiveness in light of a major technological breakthrough

VULNERABLE

ADAPTATION

INNOVATION

- Stagnation characterises the scenario
- Decentralisation but within clusters of population
- Wholesale abandonment of some areas.
- Vulnerable to fluctuations in prices of energy and food
- Social unrest with polarisation o
- Disinvestment in area lack of new investment due to poor perception of place.
- High vacancy rates
- Limited construction activity but likely to be short term speculative ventures.
- Transient mobile communities.
- Cheaper land prices results in cheaper housing
- Depopulation
- Poverty traps
- Re-building of fringe countryside and green belt some conservation gains but also losses . .
- Decrease in diversity.

DECLINING ECONOMY

GREATER BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL LEP
BOARD MEETING
18TH JANUARY 2013
PLANNING AND THE GBSLEP – AN UPDATE

Recommendation(s)

that the LEP Board:

- a) **notes the progress made in implementing the Planning Charter and associated pledges regarding a business-friendly planning system**
- b) **notes the intentions with regards to preparing and publicising a high level Spatial Framework and an agreed set of LEP-wide development management policies and procedures**
- c) **notes the resource requirements associated with the above and supports the use of LEP resources including from the package provided by Government via the recent Autumn Statement.**

1. Background

- 1.1 In response to concerns about the role of the planning in the context of economic growth and prosperity, the GBSLEP in early 2011 established a Planning Sub-Group to look into the matter. The Group duly reported back to the Board on the results of its work. The view of the Group was that overall within the LEP area planning was and is not a barrier to growth but represents a means of making decisions on the development and use of land which in cases can be controversial. Notwithstanding this there was a recognition that planning needed to be more business-friendly in its operation and in terms of policy be fully aligned with national growth objectives.
- 1.2 The outcome of the work was the production of a Planning Charter including a set of pledges and an associated Action Plan promoting a positive planning process within the LEP and one which could be seen to be pro-sustainable development. The Charter was approved in January 2012 by the LEP Board and duly commended to the constituent Local Planning Authorities, business organisations and other bodies with an interest in planning and development. On behalf of the LEP Board the Planning Sub-Group was asked to assist in implementing the Charter and monitor the outcomes.
- 1.3 Appended to this report as an Annex, is a report which considers the progress made in the last 12 months since the Charter was approved. The report looks at how planning is viewed in a national and local context having regard to business and the economy, it details planning performance as regards Plan preparation and development management practice and importantly it indicates how via the LEP progress has been made in bringing forward a high level Spatial Framework and improvements to the way development management operates across the 9 LPA's. The report shows that local plan preparation is well advanced, planning application and appeal performance continues to be good judged against national standards and close working between LPA's, the business community and statutory agencies is helping to deliver improvements in planning processes.

2. Key Issue(s)

- 2.1 The Coalition Government's overarching objective is to grow the economy of the United Kingdom. Promoting sustainable development is an essential part of the Government's strategy toward achieving this goal, meeting identified needs and providing a stimulus for further growth at a national and local level.
- 2.2 Assessing future development needs & providing the appropriate policy and decision-making frameworks for facilitating justifiable sustainable development is the role of the planning system. To ensure that development needs are indeed met and individual areas and the country as a whole do not suffer economic, social or environmental disbenefits the Coalition Government is keen to make sure planning is functioning properly. Planning should not be a barrier to growth.
- 2.3 Within the GBSLEP it is essential that the planning system works to the benefit of its residents and local businesses. It should serve to identify opportunities for sustainable growth creating the right conditions for jobs and wealth creation in an environment that people want to live and work in.

3. Policy Development/linkages with Existing LEP Strategy or Key Priorities

- 3.1 Through the preparation of a high level Spatial Framework and development management practices guided by appropriate planning policy, the planning system within the LEP can play its part in delivering the economic, social and environmental objectives set out in the LEP Economic Strategy.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The appended report details the progress made in implementing the Planning Charter, associated pledges and Enhancement Plan since these were agreed by the LEP Board in January 2012. It shows the importance of having in place a planning system which through its operation can help to identify future development and infrastructure needs across the LEP area and assist in bringing these forward in support of the LEP's growth ambitions.

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Date Created: 4th January 2013

Annex 1

Planning Update/progress report

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 As the Board will be aware the role of planning in the context of economic growth has been and continues to be a topic of national and local debate. As well as being of interest to individual homeowners, businesses and communities locally, planning stimulates much high-level debate and this has certainly been the case in relation to the function of planning within the GBSLEP. There have been some very polarised views formed on the subject. Planning is seen by commentators as either a barrier to growth and a hindrance or an essential process in understanding and delivering the means by which growth can take place.
- 1.2 What planning seeks to do is balance competing demands for land and influence through statutory plan making and decision making how such land and property is used. In a country like that of England which compared with many other countries is small in scale and with significant competing demands from many different uses/users a process of deciding how land is utilised has been essential. The UK Planning System has been in operation for 65 years and whilst successive governments have sought to address matters to do with its operation, the principles behind it remain the same and are generally well accepted.
- 1.3 Echoing a similar call around other LEP's, in response to the claims that planning was holding back necessary development important to bring about growth and prosperity in the LEP area, a GBSLEP Planning Sub-Group (PSG) was formed in early 2011 with the task of assessing what those barriers were and suggesting recommendations on how improvements could be made.
- 1.4 Reports from the PSG were subsequently prepared and considered by the LEP Board. These highlighted overall that the planning system generally was performing well and certainly was not as bad as being portrayed, either nationally or locally. Its merits were that it provided a well known and accepted basis for making difficult decisions about what is a finite resource. At the same time it was acknowledged that in its operation planning could be a hurdle even when policy supported proposed development.
- 1.5 Generally then the work of the PSG found that what anyone wants from the planning system is:
 - for it to be accessible
 - to provide for certainty and clarity
 - facilitate a decision making process that is streamlined and responds to the needs of the customer
 - include processes that are cost-effective
- 1.6 In responding to the research and evidence the PSG identified specific areas for improvement which were duly incorporated into a Planning Charter, a set of pledges and an Action/Enhancement Plan and agreed by the Board in early 2012. The Charter and related pledges are attached at **Appendix A**.

- 1.7 The Charter, pledges and Implementation Plan focus on how planning can work to the benefit of the LEP and support the LEP's growth ambitions. They are intended to address those areas where rightly or wrongly users of the planning system feel that planning undermines growth or because of the processes in place it acts as an obstacle. However, what it also does is identify and promote the positive aspects of planning which are often downplayed or even completely overlooked.
- 1.8 In the rest of this report progress on implementing the Charter and its associated pledges is considered. At the end of the paper the importance of planning in delivering positive change and helping to achieve the LEP's specific ambitions is highlighted as well as issues about resource requirements.

2. Work Streams

General Approach – stakeholder engagement

- 2.1 In February 2012, the GBS LEP Planning Visioning Conference successfully launched the GBS LEP Planning Charter to over 200 delegates representing wide ranging interests from the business community, third sector and public organisations.
- 2.2 Setting a challenge to bring the Charter to life, the PSG was tasked by the LEP Board to establish a collaborative approach towards creating a consistent LEP business friendly planning system as well as developing and delivering bold solutions across the spatial planning and development management spectrum.
- 2.3 In this context, the PSG is focused on:
- implementing the GBS LEP Planning Charter
 - deepening and broadening business, public and third sector involvement
 - raising the profile of the LEP's planning, development and growth ambitions
 - delivering significant planning and development opportunities which help deliver a successful LEP Economic Strategy
- 2.4 The PSG approach to delivering the Charter strongly integrates stakeholder engagement through the facilitation of inclusive debates, interactive workshops, collaborative problem solving and building a growing consensus around specific projects and initiatives which will produce tangible solutions. It is estimated that this series of inclusive and collective activity since February 2012 has engaged approximately 300 people and organisations using locations around the GBS LEP area to enhance its reach. A table is attached at **Appendix B** which outlines the process followed and work undertaken to date.
- 2.5 As a consequence of strong stakeholder involvement, not only has the PSG broadened the LEP's community of planning and development knowledge, expertise and experience towards its Charter commitments, but it has also deepened and extended the reach of the LEP board into the wider business community and membership networks alongside third and public sector interests. This has served to promote the emerging LEP Economic Strategy. The PSG and its various engagement events/opportunities has also provided valuable face to face discussions for the GBS LEP and its activities while simultaneously using social media channels and the GBS LEP website.
- 2.6 The knowledge, time and efforts contributed by individuals and partner organisations in the PSG have been validated by the better quality outcomes of collective debates and joint ownership of the emerging actions and projects needed to implement the Charter. This approach has demonstrated the importance and success of this style of engagement. While this represents a good solid start, there is still much to do by the PSG over the next few years to continue securing effective business engagement with the public sector in shaping and delivering results.

Planning Policies and Plans

Local Plans

- 2.7 National planning as advocated by Government is required to support sustainable growth. Plans and policies should recognise the importance of employment and wealth creation and what this can do to bring about prosperity nationally and locally. In 2012 the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which, reflecting some of the concerns generally about planning, was intended to be a concise and clearly understandable statement of policy that should drive local policy and decision-making. Importantly, the Government via the NPPF sought to make sure that development judged to be important economically would be supported.
- 2.8 These messages of the need for sustainable growth and the supporting infrastructure that goes alongside it the NPPF stated, should be expressed in statutory Local Plans. Plans provide the necessary certainty demanded by those who engage with or are affected by the planning system. They also allow for the various actors and considerations to be taken into account and thus enable development of the right type, in the right place and at the right time to come forward. In this sense planning is an essential part of the development sector in that it helps to identify needs and wants and facilitates the actors and processes required to deliver on these.
- 2.9 Local Planning Authorities within the LEP area have been preparing their Local Plans and assessing policies in the light of the NPPF. One of the key tasks of the PSG has been to review the progress of Local Plan preparation across the LEP and consider emerging policy ensuring that it is compatible with the overall tenor of the NPPF but also local ambitions within the LEP. Attached at **Appendix C** is a table showing the status of Local Plans in the LEP area. The overall picture is a positive one showing that progress has been made over the last 12 months in bringing forward Local Plans.

Strategic Planning Issues and the new Duty to Cooperate

- 2.10 Alongside the individual Local Plans, the need for an awareness of strategic planning matters relevant to the LEP area and a means of capturing and addressing these as the LEP moves forward has been recognised. The development of the LEP Economic Strategy has highlighted the existence of a number of key LEP-wide drivers/factors which need to be considered in any growth strategy as have other issues which require an integrated strategic approach.
- 2.11 On coming into power the Coalition Government quickly sought to dismantle the formal strategic planning framework arguing that it was bureaucratic and undemocratic. There was no need for Regional Spatial Strategies or Regional Economic Strategies imposing top down policies or targets which often did not have the support of the areas where the policies were intended to apply. The Government did however acknowledge that strategically important issues ie. those impacting upon more than one area would remain relevant and would require authorities and agencies to work together to identify these and address them through suitable policy frameworks. In this respect the Localism Act 2011 introduced a statutory duty to cooperate on the part of Local Planning Authorities and prescribed agencies in addressing strategic planning matters. Included within the list are Local Enterprise Partnerships who LPA's have 'to have regard to' in preparing their plans. The regular liaison that is taking place between the LPAs in the GBSLEP is proving important in demonstrating compliance with the duty to cooperate and helping identify and facilitate discussion on the relevant issues.

Strategic Spatial Framework Plan

- 2.12 Within the GBSLEP area there are a number of important strategic issues relevant to planning and the development and use of land. The future scale and distribution of housing including meeting Birmingham's housing requirements, the infrastructure to support new and enlarged communities, the demand for and provision of employment opportunities including major employment sites, transport infrastructure and services, energy and water resources etc. Some but not all of these matters are currently being addressed by cooperation between the constituent local planning authorities but the view is that a truly strategic approach needs to be taken as the LEP moves forward.
- 2.13 The LEP Board at that same time as agreeing the Charter endorsed the preparation of a Spatial Policy Framework. This would be a high level, strategic but non-statutory document focused on expressing the spatial implications of the emerging LEP Economic Strategy. Work on developing the Framework is on-going and has evolved from a launch event held in February 2012 at Arup's Solihull Offices where invited attendees learnt about the strategic planning issues facing the LEP. Since then a Spatial Planning Group has been formed (part of the LEP PSG) to take the work forward and in September 2012 a series of engagement events were held across the LEP. The events focused on key themes – urban structure and settlement patterns, the economy, connectivity, quality of life – and allowed informed debate to take place about the key problems and opportunities facing the LEP. The outcomes of the events are now feeding into the work of 5 theme groups¹ comprising LEP partners and other interested parties who have asked to engage with the process of formulating the Spatial Framework. In early 2013 it is planned to hold a conference to publicise the work of the groups and to assist in drawing together a draft version of the Spatial Framework for consideration by the LEP Board prior to public consultation.
- 2.14 The importance of understanding the key overarching planning issues relevant to the LEP area and the appropriateness of preparing a policy Framework such as that described was recently borne out by statements included in the Government's Autumn Statement. In this, George Osborne highlighted the need for LEP's to think and act strategically and called for the preparation of 'Strategic Plans' aligning local growth objectives with national priorities and coordinating public and private investment. The LEP's emerging Spatial Framework sitting alongside and linked to the Economic Strategy would do just that.
- 2.15 Once the SSFP has been prepared it will be subject to an annual review process to ensure it remains up-to-date. Since it will cover the broad scale and distribution of growth across the LEP area it will be an important document which will inform the future updating and review of individual development plans.

Development Management

- 2.16 In addition to plan making and an area of significant interest to many users of the planning system in the LEP is that of development management processes and procedures – the process of submitting and determining planning applications/obtaining consents.
- 2.17 A number of key performance indicators are commonly referred to to judge development management practice in local authorities eg. the time that LPA's take to turn around planning applications, the percentage of applications approved as opposed to refused and the extent to which LPA's decisions are upheld/overturned on appeal. In earlier reports to the LEP Board it was shown that compared with national standards and averages, the 9 LPA's within the GBSLEP performed to a very high level judged against the aforementioned KPI's. Over the last 12 months local planning authorities have generally maintained this overall level of performance.

¹ The respective themes are Urban Structure and Settlement Patterns, Housing, Connectivity, Economy & Growth, Sustainable Living & Quality of Life.

- 2.18 The Enhancement Plan approved by the LEP Board sought to address a number of areas of relevance to development management and these have subsequently manifested themselves in a series of interlinked work streams involving representatives of the 9 local authorities, statutory consultees/agencies, agents and developers.
- 2.19 The key foci for the Development Management Sub-Group has been on:
- identifying policies and processes across the LEP where revised and consistent approaches could be adopted
 - disseminating good practice
 - developing improved dialogues with key agencies who input into the Planning System and agreeing areas for improvement in practice
 - enhancing information provision and means of communication on planning matters
- 2.20 In respect of the above the following specific areas/issue have been looked at – pre-application advice and charging, validation of planning applications, the use of S106, the discharge of conditions, the use of customer feedback to improve service delivery and member training. The Sub-Group has reached consensus on a number of areas where a consistent, business-friendly approach can be adopted across the 9 constituent local planning authorities. In addition and as part of the work, dialogue has taken place with key statutory consultees to see how they can play their part in improving the system offered to business and other users of the planning system. The results of this work will be publicised shortly.

Planning and links to the GBSLEP Economic Strategy and national growth strategies

- 2.21 The LEP is presently in the process of preparing an Economic Strategy which when approved will set out clear ambitions for the LEP. The Strategy will be based on developing the 3 key pillars of people, place and business and aim to ensure that through coordinated and joined up actions prosperity and enhanced quality of life is brought to those who live and work within the LEP.
- 2.22 A positive and properly functioning planning system should be an essential element of the implementation of the LEP Economic Strategy. Planning will be particularly important when it comes to developing and taking forward plans around the Place agenda including major regeneration and investment ambitions linked to for example the M42 gateway, enterprise zone/belt, key employment and housing sites and related road, rail infrastructure etc. It will also be crucial when considering the implications for the LEP area of planned key national infrastructure such as High Speed 2 and initiatives arising out of the Heselstine Review highlighting the importance of putting in place the building blocks upon which prosperity depends. It is vital therefore that planning is not just simply seen as a process but a necessary ingredient of the delivery mechanisms which are identified to take the Strategy forward and national policy toward economic development and growth.

3. Going Forward

- 3.1 To ensure that the planning system can fulfill the functions outlined above, it is important that support is forthcoming from the LEP and its partners for planning in the GBSLEP area. Support is required in different ways – at the local, operational level this should be seen in the form of for example commitment from local authorities to promote and foster sustainable growth via their planning and economic development roles, statutory consultees acknowledging their role in developing and delivering suitable proposals and private businesses working with authorities and having regard to agreed policy frameworks and procedures when formulating schemes.

- 3.2 In terms of the LEP as has been noted in this report the key focus is on taking forward a high level strategic spatial plan for the GBSLEP and developing an integrated and consistent set of development management policies and procedures applicable across the LEP area. All of this requires resources.
- 3.3 In taking the various work streams forward the PSG has been dependent upon significant resource inputs from LEP partners. This has been greatly appreciated and helped to progress both the Spatial Framework and development management pieces of work to the point reached to date. However, going forward it is recognised that additional resources will be required in particular to produce a Framework which is truly meaningful and sets out clearly what the LEP area requires by way of major infrastructure and investment. Attached at **Appendix D** is a work programme showing the nature of work that is required and the associated resource demands.
- 3.4 The need to support LEP's and their ambitions was acknowledged by the Chancellor in his Autumn Statement when he announced that additional funding will be available to enhance the capacity within LEP's to bring forward their plans. It is hoped that additional resources can be secured through this route to deliver the Spatial Framework that the LEP Board seeks to have in place as well as draw down additional resource to assist in implementing the development management improvements described in this report.

4. Concluding remarks

- 4.1 Since the LEP Planning Sub group was formed key legislation has been passed by Parliament and Government has published policy guidance in each case acknowledging the importance of planning in achieving economic growth. Whilst planning itself does not bring growth, through identifying the long and shorter term needs of an area in terms of housing, jobs, shops, offices, transport requirements etc, the system defines the kinds of investment that are required and helps facilitate this.
- 4.2 Rather than being a hindrance it is clear that a well organised, supported and properly resourced planning system can contribute toward a prosperous economy and help deliver a wide number of benefits to an area, its people and business. As the LEP develops planning will have a key role to play in enhancing the quality of life of those living and working in the GBSLEP.

Appendix A

LEP Approved Planning Charter and Pledges

PLANNING CHARTER

- The LEP is 'Open for Business'.
- The LEP recognises and respects what makes this area special and attractive to both the workforce and investment.
- Planners within the LEP will enable appropriate development rather than control it. Proactive and supportive of business and investment, at the heart of planning decisions will be quality, sustainability and an honest dialogue.
- Creative in our approach to delivering development we will work tirelessly with partners, stakeholders and customers to achieve a better quality environment within which investment will flourish.
- Flexible but consistent, the planning regime within the LEP will determine local priorities for delivering the type and level of investment that will underpin economic growth in the area.
- LEP planners will work with developers to seek to agree the strategic acceptability of development first and deal with the detail second.
- The creation of new and the strengthening of existing partnerships, working across public and private development sectors, will facilitate a better understanding of each other's planning expectations and overcome common misconceptions of each other.
- Greater engagement between local authorities, local communities and the business community will ensure that the benefits of development are fully articulated and understood.
- Development decisions will be transparent, inclusive and delivered on time.
- Policy frameworks will be up to date, accessible and supportive of business activity and economic investment that delivers against the LEP and local priorities.
- LEP Local Authorities will make use of a variety of mechanisms to secure funding for local authority planning services, infrastructure and community and business support.

CHARTER PLEDGES

1. Culture & Behaviours

Through the actions and behaviours of members and officers, local authorities will positively embrace the GBS LEP growth agenda whilst continuing to maintain the distinctiveness of their local areas.

2. Partnerships

LEP partners will work collaboratively to promote high quality sustainable growth and development within the GBS LEP area.

3. Information, Support & Guidance

Simple, clear and accessible guidance on planning within the GBS LEP area will be made available to business as will support and guidance to assist in taking forward proposals.

4. Development Management

GBS LEP area local authorities will provide cost effective and timely pre-application advice.

Businesses should discuss their proposals at an early stage and where appropriate engage with local communities in informing potential proposals

GBS LEP area local authorities will co-ordinate the way in which applications are validated through the use of a single GBS LEP validation checklist

5. Decision making

GBS LEP area local authorities will engage their elected members and other stakeholders in early discussions on development proposals to minimise the prospects of unexpected decisions by planning committees.

6. Policy

GBS LEP area local authorities will work together to deliver a strategic planning framework that promotes growth and assists in the delivery of the GBS LEP Economic Strategy.

7. Performance

GBS LEP area local authority performance will significantly exceed national standards.

Via customer feedback GBS LEP area authorities will monitor and review performance on a regular basis to ensure that the planning system is operating in the interests of the GBS LEP area.

APPENDIX B

Planning and Development Stakeholder Engagement

Timeline 2012/13	Stakeholder Interaction	Outputs/Outcomes
February 2012	Spatial Visioning Conference and strategic interactive workshops	Established new constituency of businesses, third sector and public sector organisations to engage with LEP Planning
February 2012	Launch of the GBS LEP Planning Charter to Visioning Conference Audience and via website	Set the GBS LEP Planning Intentions out to the wider LEP interests
March to August 2012	<p>Planning Sub Group:</p> <p>Meeting key stakeholders for individual, in-depth discussions</p> <p>Scoping out Charter actions from Visioning Conference and discussions feedback</p> <p>Designing series of autumn interactive Spatial Framework and Development Management events with diverse speakers/perspectives</p>	<p>Exploring strategic planning and development issues across the GBS LEP area in greater depth</p> <p>Being responsive to the debate and insights received following the Visioning Conference</p> <p>Extending the database of LEP Planning and development contacts to engage in the autumn series via workshops, website and social media</p>
September 2012	<p><u>4 Interactive Spatial debates held as follows:</u></p> <p>Living within our Means and Growth</p> <p>Growing Population, Urban Structure, Settlement Patterns and Growth</p> <p>Future of Transport and Growth</p> <p>Economy and Growth</p>	5 Spatial Themes agree for more detailed scenario testing:

Timeline 2012/13	Stakeholder Interaction	Outputs/Outcomes
October/November 2012	<p><u>3 Interactive Targeted Development Management Workshops as follows:</u> DM and Agencies' Summit DM and Developers' Forum DM Charter into Action – Shared intelligence and Practice Exchange</p>	Individual and collective discussions with participants confirmed priorities for DM work in 2013
September 2012 to Dec 2012	<p>Wider individual and collective discussions with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Shaping Board Consultation • Transport Sub Group • Business Support Group (Regulators) • Statutory Agencies - Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, Woodland Trust, Highways Agency, Staffordshire and Worcestershire Highway Authorities 	Planning Sub Group meeting wider interests to promote the SF and DM work as well as establish and co-ordinate mutual connections and synergies with parallel working groups
December 2012– Jan 2013	<p>SF Group formed 5 Spatial Scenario Testing Groups to scope out and challenge the emerging LEP Spatial Framework around the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaping the Economy • Homes and Communities • Urban Structure • Connectivity • Sustainable Living and Quality of Life <p>DM Group identified more detailed work around DM components of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-application advice • Validation processes • Application processing (performance, approval rates, appeal success rates) • Customer feedback • Member Shared Learning Exchange • Officer Shared Learning Exchange 	<p>SF groups forming the scenarios for the Draft Spatial Framework Consultation at the March Conference 2013</p> <p>DM Group scoping out specific project work for development</p>

Appendix C

Local Plan Status

Authority	In preparation	Adopted
Birmingham	Birmingham Development Plan – currently out for consultation on growth options	
Bromsgrove	District Plan – consultation on cross-boundary growth options with Redditch commencing February 2013; Bromsgrove Town Centre Area Action Plan to be prepared	
Cannock Chase	Local Plan Strategy – pre-publication work, publication set for Jan 2013	
East Staffordshire	Local Plan – pre-submission publication planned for Spring/Summer 2013	
Lichfield	Local Plan: Strategy – currently consulting on revised sustainability appraisal prior to formal submission in Spring 2013; Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan in preparation	
Redditch	Borough of Redditch Local Plan No 4 – consultation on cross-boundary growth with Bromsgrove and other plan policies commencing February 2013	
Solihull	Local Plan submitted and awaiting Examination in January 2013	
Tamworth	Local Plan – submitted and awaiting examination in March 2013	
Wyre Forest	Site Allocation and Policies Local Plan & Kidderminster Area Action Local Plan – both submitted and awaiting Examination commencing late January 2013	Core Strategy – adopted Dec 2010

Appendix D

2013 PSG Work Programme including resource requirements

Charter Principles	Short Term Pledges & Activities 2012	Ambition/Targets 2013	Added Value to LEP	Resources
1 Culture and Behaviour	Commence Shared Learning, Intelligence & Practice Exchange across GBS LEP with LPA's, business and third sector communities	Hold Shared Learning Summits with LPA Elected Members & Officers: 1. Draft Spatial Framework & delivery 2. DM Projects to transform & establish consistent LEP culture	Reinforcing LEP planning experience contributes to GBS LEP "Open for Business" culture	Independent facilitation, professional expertise contributions and presentations by private sector, local authorities, statutory agencies; Resources required to host/facilitate summits in 2013
2 Partnerships	Spatial Visioning Conference & Planning Charter launch (February); 4 strategic spatial & 3 DM Interactive Workshops (September & October); 5 Spatial Theme Groups (November +); all scoped, planned, delivered & monitored by partnership of reps from businesses, authority/public bodies & third sector on Planning Sub Group and its widening constituency of interests Continuous collaborative working through the Planning Sub-Group/wider stakeholders fulfils Duty to Co-operate	Planning Conference to launch Draft Strategic Spatial Framework Plan Consultation – March 2013 & Development Management Initiatives with growing partner interests (to connect to simultaneous launch of GBS LEP Economic Strategy) Partnership through PSG, 5 Spatial Theme Scenario Groups and 3 DM Groups to convert policy/practice into consistent LEP-wide delivery through specific projects Wider individual and collective discussions with Place Shaping Board, Transport Sub Group, Business Support Group (Regulators), Statutory Agencies - Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, Woodland Trust, Highways Agency, Staffordshire and Worcestershire Highway Authorities	Established new constituency of businesses, third sector and public sector organisations to engage and contribute towards LEP Planning Charter and LEP Economic Strategy Continuous partnership working strengthening & extending LEP business, third & public sector constituency while moving from policy to delivery Building interaction through website & social media	Visioning Conference hosted by private sector; Interactive Workshops hosted by Local Authorities; Independent facilitation, professional expertise contributions and presentations by private sector, local authorities, statutory agencies; Spatial/DM working groups hosted by business & authorities with ongoing professional contributions (November 2012 +)

3 Information, Support and Guidance	GBS LEP, Charter & all LPAs Web connections made; scoping activity for LEP-wide Spatial & DM change underway	GBS LEP & LPA websites to upload Draft Spatial Framework Consultation (March); Final Spatial Framework (May) DM Pre-App & Validation Guidance (September) Series of SF & DM signposts, advice, guidance, case studies to be created during 2013.	Consolidating the face to face collaborative partnership working and communication channels extending the GBS LEP reach Use website/social media channels in parallel Overcome perceptions that planning is barrier to economic growth & support Businesses	Professional expertise contributions by private sector, local authorities, statutory agencies with GBS LEP PR Team. Resources required to prepare promotional advice/case studies/web/media based and project material
4 Development Management	GBS LEP, Charter & all LPA's scoping DM activities and priorities for LEP-wide DM change with Statutory Agencies, Developers Forum and public/private practitioners	DM Projects on Pre-application advice; Validation processes; Application processing (performance, approval rates, appeal success rates); CIL; Customer feedback; Member Shared Learning Exchange; Officer Shared Learning Exchange	Generate greater involvement of businesses, LPAs and third sector in GBS LEP in development opportunities; gather evidence to help market GBS LEP as "Open for Business" to improve business customer experience; gather evidence for GBS LEP to lobby Government on improvements to planning system	Professional expertise & contributions by private sector, local authorities, statutory agencies Resources required to commission consultants to support LPA's prepare/develop LEP wide processes with evidence & recommendations; to hold a twice-yearly Developers' Forum
5 Decision Making	GBS LEP, Charter & all LPAs scoping decision making processes with statutory agencies following Penfold Review	Shared Learning Exchange for Members and Officers to streamline decisions, new engagement with statutory bodies and ensure consistency of LEP-wide experience	To help market GBS LEP as "Open for Business" and simplify/improve business customer experience	Professional expertise & contributions by private sector, local authorities, statutory agencies

<p>6 Policy</p>	<p>LEP Strategic Spatial Framework Plan – interactive themed workshops, scenario testing groups</p>	<p>Draft Strategic Spatial Framework Plan Consultation – March 2013 Conference Production of initial draft SSFP following Board approval (May 2013)</p> <p>Consultation of the draft SSFP (June/July)</p> <p>Technical studies to inform the SSFP such as GBLEP-wide SHMA and green belt review (May to October 2013)</p> <p>Production of first review comprising: 2012/13 monitoring analysis (Sept 2013)</p> <p>Summary of consultation responses (Sept 2013)</p> <p>Revised SSFP for Board approval (Dec 2013)</p> <p>Subsequent Annual Review</p>	<p>Signals physical interpretation of LEP Economic Strategy; broadens LEP reach to wider business networks and communities; engages business interests from Draft consultation to Final SF as well as generating wider LEP involvement in future delivery and monitoring</p> <p>Converting policies into tangible delivery, prioritising growth opportunities which synergise SF and Economic Strategy</p> <p>Subsequent Annual Reviews to continually inform SSFP, Charter, GBS LEP Economic Strategy and LPA development plans</p>	<p>Professional expertise & contributions by private sector, local authorities, statutory agencies</p> <p>Resources required to commission work on Theme/Site Specific Delivery or individual development plan examinations & evidence preparation; hosting of Conference to launch Draft Spatial Framework</p> <p>Possible requirement for evidence/participation of the GBSLEP in development plan examination processes</p>
<p>7 Performance</p>	<p>GBS LEP, Charter & all LPAs scoping & analysing DM performance monitoring and experiences</p>	<p>Monitor/analyse business customer feedback on performance</p> <p>Instigate LEP-wide Annual Review</p>	<p>To help market GBS LEP as “Open for Business” and simplify/improve business customer experience</p>	<p>Professional expertise & contributions by private sector, local authorities, statutory agencies</p>

Contacts

Here you will find the telephone numbers for Planning Services in all the GBSLEP local authorities. You will also find the website details.

The services we deliver will be improved by both your involvement in plan and policy preparation and then by early engagement on specific development proposals.

<p>BIRMINGHAM</p> <p>For planning policy advice contact: David Carter (0121) 303 4041</p> <p>If you want to discuss making a Planning Application contact: (0121) 303 1115</p> <p>Website: www.birmingham.gov.uk</p>	<p>BROMSGROVE</p> <p>For planning policy advice contact: Mike Dunphy (01527) 881 325</p> <p>If you want to discuss making a Planning Application contact: Dale Birch (01527) 881 341</p> <p>Website: www.bromsgrove.gov.uk</p>	<p>CANNOCK CHASE</p> <p>For planning policy advice contact: John Heminsley (01543) 464 521</p> <p>If you want to discuss making a Planning Application contact: John Heminsley (01543) 464 521</p> <p>Website: www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk</p>
<p>EAST STAFFS</p> <p>For planning policy advice contact: Steve Harley (01283) 508 616</p> <p>If you want to discuss making a Planning Application contact: Joanne Roebuck (01283) 508 613</p> <p>Website: www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk</p>	<p>LICHFIELD</p> <p>For planning policy advice contact: Neil Cox (01543) 308 147</p> <p>If you want to discuss making a Planning Application contact: Claire Billings (01543) 308 171</p> <p>Website: www.lichfielddc.gov.uk</p>	<p>REDDITCH</p> <p>For planning policy advice contact: Emma Baker (01527) 64252 ext.3376</p> <p>If you want to discuss making a Planning Application contact: Ailith Rutt (01527) 64252 ext.3374</p> <p>Website: www.redditch.whub.org.uk</p>
<p>SOLIHULL</p> <p>For planning policy advice contact: Dave Simpson (0121) 704 6395</p> <p>If you want to discuss making a Planning Application contact: Gary Palmer (0121) 704 6372</p> <p>Website: www.solihull.gov.uk</p>	<p>TAMWORTH</p> <p>For planning policy advice contact: Jon Lord (01827) 709 279</p> <p>If you want to discuss making a Planning Application contact: John Gunn (01827) 709 288</p> <p>Website: www.tamworth.gov.uk</p>	<p>WYRE FOREST</p> <p>For planning policy advice contact: Rebecca Mayman (01562) 732 554</p> <p>If you want to discuss making a Planning Application contact: John Baggott (01562) 732 515</p> <p>Website: www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk</p>

LIMITATIONS

The information in this leaflet is for information only. It is important that you make contact with the relevant local planning authority and refer to the relevant planning policy documents before you make your investment decisions.

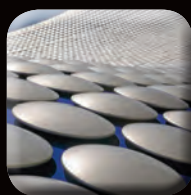
PLANNING GROUP

This leaflet has been prepared by the GBSLEP Planning Group. The group meets regularly and comprises a mix of public, private sector and non-governmental organisations.

In the first instance you may contact the group through its Chairman, Craig Jordan at Lichfield District Council. Telephone: (01543) 308 202.

GBSLEP SUPPORT CONTACT DETAILS

Telephone: (0121) 303 4369 E-mail: GBSLEP@birmingham.gov.uk Web: www.GBSLEP.com



Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP

Strategic Spatial Framework Plan and Planning Charter

February 2012



- Looking ahead, however, it is necessary to ensure that local development plans reflect the growth aspirations of the new LEP and to contribute to the future thinking the Board has identified a number of issues that need to be addressed. These are:
- (a) The broad scale and distribution of growth across the LEP area.
 - (b) Ensuring there is an appropriate balance of opportunity and need.
 - (c) Adequacy of provision of strategic employment sites.
 - (d) How might the economic prospects of some areas - such as Kidderminster - be enhanced by better accessibility to the strategic transport links.
 - (e) The approach towards Centres and Growth Corridors.
 - (f) In the context of a squeeze on public sector resources how might large-scale new developments be used to help fund infrastructure improvements.
 - (g) How can the LEP ensure that the success in regeneration and renaissance of the older urban areas continues into the future?
 - (h) Consideration of the potential quantum and prioritisation of public investment needed to enable growth, and how this might be sought.
 - (i) How can we ensure that the benefits of new development including employment opportunities are genuinely available to help those in greatest need?
 - (j) How can the benefits arising from High Speed 2 be maximised for the benefit of the LEP area and any potential adverse impacts be mitigated?

LOOKING AHEAD: THE KEY ISSUES

Plan	Housing Growth	Economic Development
BIRMINGHAM	246ha plus recycling and 2 RIS.	50,600.
BROMSGROVE	Core Strategy 2 consultation, January 2011.	6,000 to 7,000.
CANNOCK CHASE	Pre-publication draft Core Strategy, May 2010.	6,800.
EAST STAFFS	Core Strategy consultation on Strategic Options, Autumn 2011.	13,000.
LICHFIELD	The big planning debate leaflet, December 2010.	5,800.
REDDITCH	Revised preferred draft Core Strategy, January 2011.	3,200.
SOLIHULL	Core Strategy consultation draft.	11,000 (2006-2028), 38ha and 2 RIS.
TAMWORTH	Housing Policy consultation, February 2011.	2,900.
WYRE FOREST	Adopted Core Strategy, December 2010.	4,000.
GBSLEP	Various.	c100,000.
	680ha plus RIS and in centre office/retail.	

The initial STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PLAN overleaf combines the key elements from existing and emerging Core Strategies and Local Plans among all the GBSLEP local authorities. Many of these plans are in the course of preparation and the scales of development up to 2026 should be treated as indicative. Please contact the relevant local authority for the most up-to-date position.

Strategic Spatial Framework Plan

- The LEP recognises and respects what makes this area special and attractive to both the workforce and investment.
- The LEP is 'Open for Business'.
- The LEP will enable appropriate development rather than control it. Proactive and supportive of business and investment, at the heart of planning decisions will be quality, sustainability and an honest dialogue.
- Creative in our approach to delivering development we will work tirelessly with partners, stakeholders and customers to achieve a better quality environment within which investment will flourish.
- Flexible but consistent, the planning regime within the LEP will determine local priorities for delivering the type and level of investment that will underpin economic growth in the area.
- LEP planners will work with developers to seek to agree the strategic acceptability of development first and deal with the detail second.
- The creation of new and the strengthening of existing partnerships, working across public and private development sectors, will facilitate a better understanding of each other's planning expectations and overcome common misconceptions of each other.
- Greater engagement between local authorities, local communities and the business community will ensure that the benefits of development are fully articulated and understood.
- Development decisions will be transparent, inclusive and delivered on time.
- Policy frameworks will be up to date, accessible and supportive of business activity and economic investment that delivers against the LEP and local priorities.
- LEP Local Authorities will make use of a variety of mechanisms to secure funding for local authority planning services, infrastructure and community and business support.

Planning Charter

In addition to the Planning Charter this leaflet sets out early work on the production of a strategic spatial planning framework. Overleaf you will find the initial expression of the framework, brought together from ongoing work. In the longer run plans need to deliver growth and success. At this early stage we are looking for engagement and ideas. Can we get things done in different and more effective ways? That is the challenge and as you will see the Board has identified a number of important spatial issues which need to be considered. So whether your interest is in making a planning application or helping shape future development and investment please get involved and let us know what you think!

Introduction



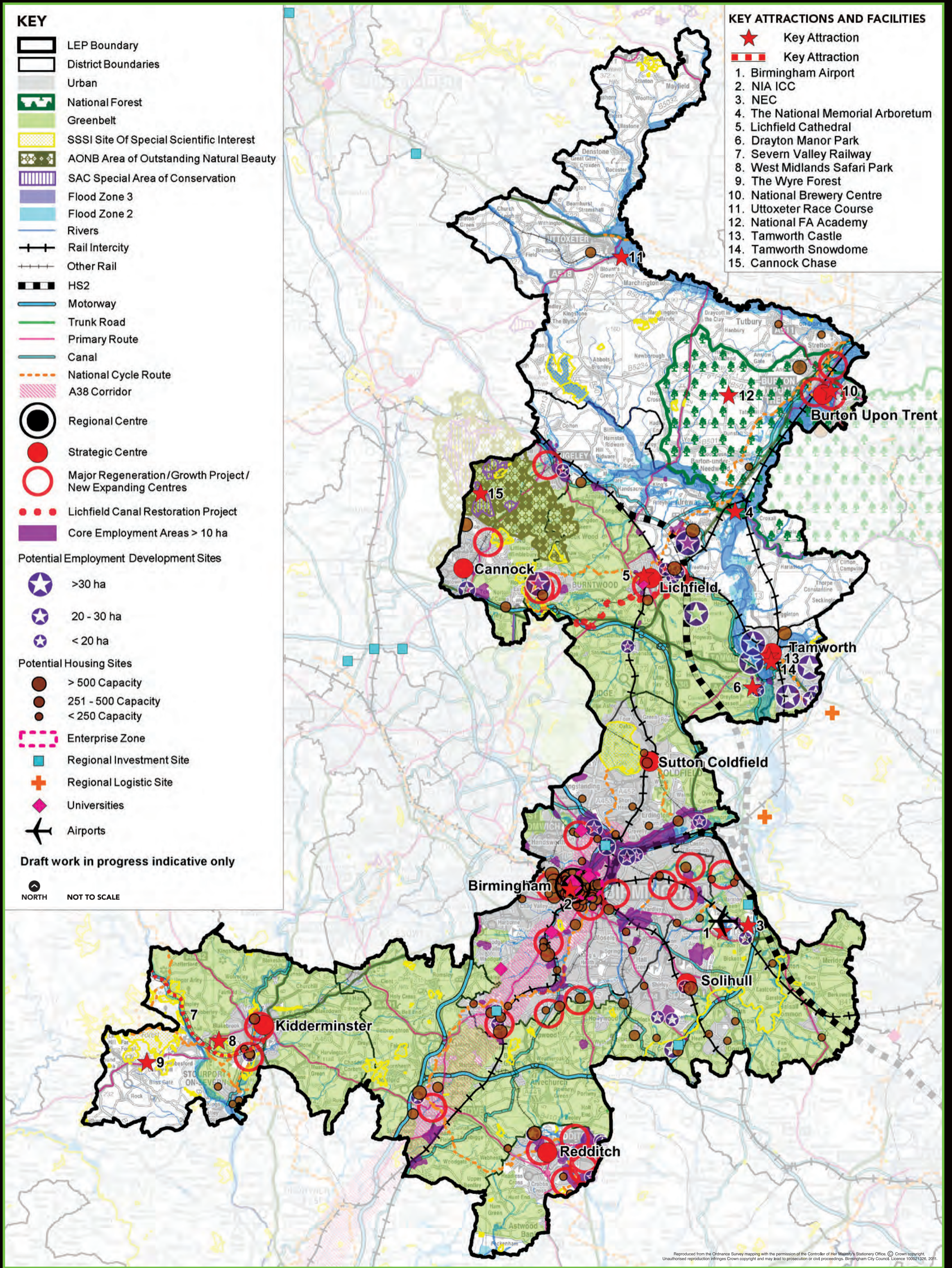
Chair of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP
Andy Street

Creating a business-friendly planning system within the LEP area is important to the competitiveness of the region and is a priority for the Board. Our Planning Charter sets out how we will support growth through the planning system. The Charter is supported by a series of pledges which show our commitment to providing an excellent service across Birmingham, Solihull, South Staffordshire and North Worcestershire.

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP aims to drive private sector growth and job creation. We are developing long term plans to improve our economic position and make it sustainable.

Foreword

Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Strategic Spatial Framework Plan



GREATER BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL LEP Board Meeting

25th January 2012

Creating a business-friendly planning system in the LEP

Recommendation(s)

1. That the LEP Board endorses the Planning Charter, Pledges, Short Term Actions and Implementation Plan contained in this report.
2. That the LEP Planning Sub-Group be tasked with overseeing the delivery of the short term actions and Implementation Plan and reporting back on progress to the LEP Board in accordance with the timescales prescribed.

Background

3. Reflecting local and national concerns as to the impact the planning system has on business and economic growth, the GBSLEP has sought to consider what changes could be made in the way planning operates in the LEP area to support new jobs and wealth creation.
4. A group made up of business interests and representatives from local government has been set up to assess the way planning functions and to make recommendations to the Board on improvements that could be made.
5. A report presented in July 2011 to the Board detailed the results of an exercise which looked at performance of local planning authorities (LPA's) in the LEP judged against nationally accepted standards and also reported on the views of business on planning obtained by a survey questionnaire and other forms of engagement. In terms of performance against standards in general LPA's were seen to be good at turning round planning applications in the shortest possible time, had very high approval rates as regards decisions made and on appeal were successful in defending refusals of permission. As regards the views of business those that responded to the questionnaire or fed comments back tended to focus on the areas of concern, these included delays in decision making on the part of LPA's, lack of clarity in the processes and procedures used, costs involved in engaging with the system. Such concerns mirror those raised nationally.
6. The July Board report identified key themes which needed to be looked at to inform any recommendations for improvements:
 - The **image of planning** is poor and the positive benefits of good planning are often overlooked
 - Business (and all users of the planning system) would benefit from having more easily accessible and simple to understand **information and advice** on the mechanics of planning
 - **Better communication** between the various parties involved in planning would aid considerably the process
 - Greater **knowledge and skills** on the part of members and officers in local planning authorities of business and the economic environment

within which proposals are coming forward and decisions being made would be helpful

- Better and more **Support and guidance** to assist business by planning and economic development professionals would make a significant difference

7. A subsequent report to the Board in September 2011 set out a proposed package of proposals which the Board was asked to endorse. These included:

- A planning protocol setting out the different roles and responsibilities for business, local government and the LEP/LEP Board in operating planning across the LEP area.
- An Implementation Plan or framework detailing a series of proposed actions linked to the different themes described in paragraph. 6 above
- A checklist identifying the key attributes which it was suggested would if met by a local planning authority, reflect a high-performing development management service.

The Board resolved to accept and endorse the Planning Protocol but felt that the Implementation Plan did not go far enough to deliver the necessary transformational change needed within the LEP area. The Board resolved that the LA Leaders be asked to consider the report and assess what actions could be brought forward which would constitute truly transformational change in planning in the LEP.

8. The LEP Leader's duly met on the 14th October 2011 and considered the request from the LEP Board. It was agreed that what was needed was a LEP-wide Planning Charter setting out standards against which all local planning authorities should be performing. Such a charter should challenge existing practices and levels of performance and in doing so seek to be truly transformational in its aims. The Chief Executive's Group was asked to oversee this work with a view to bringing the results back for deliberation prior to going to a future Board meeting.

9. On November 8th Chief Executives met and considered the results of some preliminary work of the Planning Sub-Group that had produced a draft Charter, a set of associated pledges and an Implementation Plan incorporating certain key short-term actions. Further to this meeting additional work was carried out again as before with significant input from the private sector. A revised Charter, pledges and Implementation Plan was drawn up and consulted upon. The business community has indicated that it is pleased with the proposals and considers that if taken forward will achieve the necessary uplift required to ensure that the planning system is capable of supporting the overall growth agenda in the LEP area.

Spatial Framework

10. The LEP Board has previously agreed to develop a Spatial Framework which will link in with and reflect the important strategic and spatially important matters arising out of the emerging LEP Economic Strategy. Work has been carried out by the Planning Sub-Group to identify current and potential future key spatial issues affecting the LEP area and reported these to the Board.

11. To assist in defining a Framework, the Board has agreed that a Visioning event should be held with key invited stakeholders to discuss the main issues and spatial drivers. A date for the Visioning event has now been agreed – 14th February (afternoon), to be held at Ove Arup and Partners Solihull offices. The details of the event and its format are currently being finalised and invitations sent out. This event will form the first stage in developing a Framework for the LEP area.
12. If agreed at the Board meeting, it is intended that the Planning Charter and associated pledges, short term actions and Implementation Plan will be formally launched at the Visioning event on the 14th February.

Key Issue(s)

13. Attached at Appendix 1, 2, 3 and 4 are respectively a Draft Planning Charter, a draft set of Pledges, a set of short term Actions and finally a suggested Implementation Plan. These documents are intended to define what the planning system should look like to business in the LEP and furthermore operate. They spell out the standards to be expected from local planning authorities and businesses when engaging around planning proposals and when formal decisions are required. The Implementation Plan specifies where and how it is thought enhancements can be made to the way the current system operates within the LEP and in addition a number of key short term priority actions are defined.

Policy Development/linkages with Existing LEP Strategy or Key Priorities

14. A more business-friendly planning system within the LEP will support delivery of the emerging Economic Strategy and ensure that the key priorities, around people and place, are fully taken into account by policy makers and decision takers involved directly or indirectly with planning.

Conclusion

15. The planning system is viewed by many people as a complex one. In part because of this it is also seen as a barrier to growth, a negative rather than a positive means of delivering necessary change. The contrary view is however that good planning can achieve and assist in providing for jobs, housing etc. With all systems it can be improved. The bureaucracy can be removed, processes can be streamlined, inappropriate costs can be taken out and more certainty can be introduced. Central Government is currently looking at what can be done at the national level. Locally, business and the various public sector agencies involved can consider how policies, procedures and processes can function better to support the growth agenda. In the LEP area the planning system as operated by the constituent local authorities measured against certain criteria performs well – these should however represent the minimum standards and if the LEP wishes to see truly transformational change then new locally set standards need to be set and innovative ways of achieving these found. The draft Planning Charter, Pledges and associated actions presented in this report it is respectfully suggested provide the basis of a framework for achieving the above objective.

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Date Created: 16th January 2012

Appendix 1

PLANNING CHARTER

- The LEP is 'Open for Business'.
- The LEP recognises and respects what makes this area special and attractive to both the workforce and investment.
- Planners within the LEP will enable appropriate development rather than control it. Proactive and supportive of business and investment, at the heart of planning decisions will be quality, sustainability and an honest dialogue.
- Creative in our approach to delivering development we will work tirelessly with partners, stakeholders and customers to achieve a better quality environment within which investment will flourish.
- Flexible but consistent, the planning regime within the LEP will determine local priorities for delivering the type and level of investment that will underpin economic growth in the area.
- LEP planners will work with developers to seek to agree the strategic acceptability of development first and deal with the detail second.
- The creation of new and the strengthening of existing partnerships, working across public and private development sectors, will facilitate a better understanding of each other's planning expectations and overcome common misconceptions of each other.
- Greater engagement between local authorities, local communities and the business community will ensure that the benefits of development are fully articulated and understood.
- Development decisions will be transparent, inclusive and delivered on time.
- Policy frameworks will be up to date, accessible and supportive of business activity and economic investment that delivers against the LEP and local priorities.
- LEP Local Authorities will make use of a variety of mechanisms to secure funding for local authority planning services, infrastructure and community and business support.

Appendix 2

CHARTER PLEDGES

1. Culture & Behaviours

Through the actions and behaviours of members and officers, local authorities will positively embrace the GBS LEP growth agenda whilst continuing to maintain the distinctiveness of their local areas.

2. Partnerships

LEP partners will work collaboratively to promote high quality sustainable growth and development within the GBS LEP area.

3. Information, Support & Guidance

Simple, clear and accessible guidance on planning within the GBS LEP area will be made available to business as will support and guidance to assist in taking forward proposals.

4. Development Management

GBS LEP area local authorities will provide cost effective and timely pre-application advice.

Businesses should discuss their proposals at an early stage and where appropriate engage with local communities in informing potential proposals

GBS LEP area local authorities will co-ordinate the way in which applications are validated through the use of a single GBS LEP validation checklist

5. Decision making

GBS LEP area local authorities will engage their elected members and other stakeholders in early discussions on development proposals to minimise the prospects of unexpected decisions by planning committees.

6. Policy

GBS LEP area local authorities will work together to deliver a strategic planning framework that promotes growth and assists in the delivery of the GBS LEP Economic Strategy.

7. Performance

GBS LEP area local authority performance will significantly exceed national standards.

Via customer feedback GBS LEP area authorities will monitor and review performance on a regular basis to ensure that the planning system is operating in the interests of the GBS LEP area.

Appendix 3

SHORT-TERM PLEDGE ACTION PLAN FOR COMPLETION BY JUNE 2012

1. Culture & Behaviours

The establishment and delivery of a training programme, for attendance by Local Authority officers, Members and private sector planners.

2. Partnerships

On behalf of LEP partners, lobbying of government on changes to the planning system to be coordinated by the GBS LEP planning sub group.

3. Information, Support and guidance

Advice on the planning system and processes to be made available on the GBS LEP website.

Links to GBS LEP website to be made available via individual LEP area local authority websites

4. Development management – pre-application

GBS LEP area local authorities to implement customer feedback sheets following pre-application advice

5. Development management – decision making

Agree new forms of engagement with statutory bodies/consultees to deliver improved decision making processes in accordance with the results and recommendations of the Penfold review.

6. Policy

Delivery of spatial planning conference in February 2012, agree work programme for delivery of Spatial Framework and schedule an autumn conference to review progress

7. Performance

Annual review of performance of Local Planning Authorities within the GBS LEP area by GBS LEP board

Appendix 4

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

<p>1. Culture & Behaviour</p> <p>Local Authorities will continue to maintain their own identity and at the same time work with the private sector to positively embrace the growth agenda to ensure that it is embedded in the culture of their organisations and behaviours of officers and members.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a training programme, for attendance by Local Authority officers, Members and private sector planners. 	<p>Short term action by June 2012.</p> <p>Attendance of planning officers at 2 seminars a year on relevant topics as part of CPD requirements.</p> <p>Brief elected Members on the growth agenda and implications for planning. By February 2012.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the way in which LEP local authority planning departments can engage with those involved in economic development to provide a cohesive approach to proposed new development. 	<p>Identify best practice across the LEP area by September 2012 and establish a consistent/improved approach to co-ordinated services by January 2013.</p>
<p>2. Partnerships</p> <p>LEP Local Authority planners will work collaboratively to promote the GBS LEP area and lobby for change.</p> <p>GBS LEP area Local authorities will work in partnership with the private sector to increase skills and capacity within planning teams.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint lobbying of Government to be coordinated by the GBS LEP planning sub group. 	<p>Short term action by June 2012. As and when consultation arises.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with our customers and stakeholders to achieve high quality sustainable development and to promote inward investment into the GBS LEP area. 	<p>Include planning officers in briefing sessions on local business matters. To be implemented by May 2012.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the sharing of knowledge and information between the GBS LEP, customers and local authorities 	<p>Use of LEP website as a portal for ongoing discussions. Set up group or affiliate with West</p>

<p>regarding their experiences of the planning system and seek continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Midlands RTPI group on LinkedIn to facilitate debate. March 2012.</p>
<p>3. Information, Support & Guidance</p> <p>Access to information will be improved and we will ensure that simple clear and accessible guidance on Planning within the GBS LEP area will be made available for business.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance on planning in the LEP on the GBSLEP website and put in place links to this website from LEP area local authority websites. • Ensure that all planning related information is current and user friendly. • Ensure that all enquiries are dealt with promptly by suitably qualified staff. • Ensure that various means of communication are made available to customers. • Engage with customers in positive manner and encourage discussion regarding development proposals. • Provide co-ordinated business support, inward investment and development management advice to our customers. 	<p>Short term action by June 2012.</p> <p>Review of existing information by April 2012. Review of best practice June planning sub group meeting. Implementation of a consistent approach by September 2012.</p> <p>By June 2012 All local authority partners to review current practice to ensure development enquiries from business customers are dealt with by professional staff.</p> <p>By June 2012 All local authority partners to review current practice to ensure a wider variety of communication channels are available.</p> <p>Local Authority websites to provide opportunities for written feedback on the quality of information provided and ideas for site development.</p> <p>Development of a customer feedback form by May 2012. Pilot and report back to planning sub group by August 2012. Implementation of approach by October 2012.</p> <p>Investigate ways to deliver co-ordinated business and planning advice to the business community by September 2012.</p>
<p>4. Development Management</p>	

<p>GBS LEP area local authorities will provide cost effective and timely pre-application advice.</p> <p>Businesses will be encouraged to discuss their proposals at an early stage and where appropriate engage with local communities in informing potential proposals.</p> <p>GBS LEP area local authorities will co-ordinate the way in which applications are validated through the use of a single GBS LEP validation checklist.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBS LEP area authorities to implement feedback sheets following pre-application advice. • Establish LEP wide customer engagement standards for determining planning applications including entering into Performance Agreements where appropriate. • Engage with Key stakeholders such as highways agency and environment agency early in the planning process, preferably at pre-application stage. • Adopt a development team approach to major proposals and ensure effective liaison with our customer at pre-application, planning application and post application stages. • Develop a single LEP-wide validation checklist 	<p>Short term action by June 2012.</p> <p>Review of existing standards and practices across the LEP Local Authorities and report to planning sub group October 2012. Implementation of a consistent approach by December 2012.</p> <p>Forms part of the short term action under Section 5: Decision Making.</p> <p>Review of existing approach and practices across the LEP Local Authorities and report to planning sub group October 2012. Implementation or delivery of new approach and practices by December 2012.</p> <p>Prepare by September 2012 an options paper for taking forward a single validation checklist.</p>
<p>5. Decision making</p> <p>GBS LEP area local authorities will engage their elected members and other stakeholders in early discussions on development proposals to eliminate the possibility of poor decision making at planning committees.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with statutory bodies to deliver improved decision making processes 	<p>Short term action by June 2012.</p>

<p>6. Policy</p> <p>GBS LEP area local authorities will work together to deliver a strategic planning framework that promotes growth and assists in the delivery of the GBS LEP Economic strategy.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of spatial planning conference in February 2012, agree a work programme for preparing a Spatial Plan, commence work on the Plan and schedule an autumn conference to review progress. • Review existing and emerging local planning guidance to ensure that proposals for delivering growth and sustainable development can be delivered. • Complete and approve an overarching spatial framework document for the GBS LEP area identifying key spatial issues and policy responses. 	<p>Short term actions by June 2012.</p> <p>Summer 2012.</p> <p>Summer 2013.</p>
<p>7. Performance</p> <p>GBS LEP area local authority performance will significantly exceed national standards.</p> <p>Via customer feedback GBS LEP area authorities will monitor and review performance on a regular basis to ensure the planning system is operating in the interests of the GBS LEP area.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of performance of Local Planning Authorities within the GBS LEP area by GBS LEP board. 	<p>Short term action by June 2012.</p> <p>Preparation of regular reports on the operation of planning processes and procedures to be considered by representatives of the constituent local authorities, a business forum and also submitted to the LEP Board. Format, content, reporting procedures and authors to be agreed by March 2012.</p>

GREATER BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL LEP BOARD MEETING

28th September 2011

Towards a Spatial Framework Plan for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP

1. Recommendation(s)

1. That the Board endorse, subject to finalisation, the publication of the initial expression of the Spatial Framework Plan for the LEP as set out in the Appendices.
2. That the Board endorses and commends to Leaders the broad scope of future work on the Spatial Framework Plan as identified in the key issues to be addressed as set out in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.8.
3. That the Board, subject to funding, endorses the holding of a visioning event as the first step in taking forward the preparation of a new Spatial Framework Plan for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (GB&SLEP).

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 20 July 2011 the Board agreed that a new high level Spatial Framework Plan should be prepared for the GB&SLEP.
- 2.2 The initial work has focussed on the following matters which are discussed in more detail in the remainder of the report:
 - (a) The preparation of a plan and short accompanying documentation drawing together existing plans for the LEP area
 - (b) The identification of an initial list of key strategic issues that should be addressed as we look forward, and
 - (c) Consideration of the next steps.
- 2.3 The Government has recently published its consultation draft National Planning Policy Framework. While this does not mention LEPs it does indicate that the Localism Bill's 'Duty to Co-operate' requires,
"local councils, county councils and other public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in the planning process. The duty will be a key element of our proposals for strategic working once

Regional Strategies are abolished.”

It is clear that joint working through the LEP will be an important mechanism to help ensure this duty is effectively met.

3. Key Issue(s)

Existing Plans

- 3.1 In order to establish a base position to inform discussion about future direction the Planning Group has attempted to draw together the existing expression of strategic level planning for the LEP area. The main source for this is the work that is underway in most authorities as they progress Core Strategies or Local Plans for their areas. Together these suggest that around 90,000 net new dwellings and around 900 hectares of employment land are planned for the period 2006 through to 2026. Some material is also drawn from the earlier work on the Regional Spatial Strategy which is due to be revoked in the near future and the work of the West Midlands Joint Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee. The mapping work is progressing well and summarised in Appendix 1 but it is proposed a more powerful GIS version be made available in due course. Work is continuing to finalise the detail and it is important to note that major transportation proposals have yet to be added.
- 3.2 Since the source work is largely based on ongoing work we have sought to map those elements which are established. The plan has not included emerging proposals that are known to be especially controversial from ongoing public consultations. So the Board are aware of these matters these include:
 - a) How cross-boundary housing provision should be handled. Including the level and distribution of housing development in and between Bromsgrove and Redditch.
 - b) The potential redevelopment and relocation of the North Worcestershire Golf Course in south Birmingham.
- 3.3 Having established this base position it is proposed that this plan should be kept up-to-date as the local authorities progress proposals in their areas.

Joint Monitoring

- 3.4 There has been long history of co-operation between local authorities in the West Midlands for many decades and a key legacy has been the maintenance of key database covering development issues. The most recent output of the joint monitoring setting out the data at both District and LEP levels have recently been released together with a short paper on employment land issues. These will help provide important context for ongoing work on the Spatial Framework Plan and can be provided to Board Members as background documentation on request. The joint monitoring has commenced for the current year but its longer-term future remains in doubt unless future funding can be secured.

Going forward: what do we mean by a Spatial Framework Plan?

3.3 The plan should have the following attributes:

- Be short, a target length of 12 pages with accompanying maps and illustrations
- Be easy to read
- Provide certainty over the levels and future direction of growth
- Look ahead at least 25 years – so we do not avoid making the difficult strategic decisions where these really need to be made
- Inspire our people
- Provide a proper balance between economic, social and environment objectives and aspirations, and
- Allow opportunities for everyone to have their say during its development.

3.4 The work will be non-statutory. We believe this to be a strength not a weakness since an agreed Strategic Framework Plan supported by all authorities across the LEP will have a strength of purpose that will encourage it to be adopted and reflected in the more detailed local planning that will need to take place.

3.5 It is important that the Strategic Framework Plan has a vision that endures but it is important that we reflect on its achievement on a regular basis. As a result we envisage there will be an annual process to review progress and to ask the question if any modification of the approach is required. This will be another key advantage of the non-statutory nature of the Framework.

Hot Issues to be addressed

3.6 As the Planning Group prepared this report it sought to identify what it felt to be the really important issues that needed to be addressed across the LEP area. There is clearly a need to integrate these to the ongoing work on the emerging economic strategy as well as discussions on strategic infrastructure.

3.7 The initial discussions have identified the following matters. As we move forward there will be a need to carry our further research and analysis so it is important they have the support of the Board. There may be other issues that the Board might wish to add. Some of the identified issues are controversial and, in due course, they will also need to be carefully considered by Leaders.

3.8 The draft list of issues is as follows.

(a) The broad scale and distribution of growth across the LEP area. This will be very important to demonstrate that the LEP is an area for growth and to give the area a competitive advantage.

Agenda item No 9(ii)

- (b) Ensuring there is an appropriate balance of opportunity and need. It is not simply a question of the creation of new jobs and wealth but in ensuring the benefits spread to all of our communities.
- (c) Adequacy of provision of strategic employment sites. Should the LEP carry forward the portfolio approach and strategic employment categories in the soon to be revoked Regional Spatial Strategy? Should the LEP be considering where the next generation of strategic employment sites should be located? Is it possible to ensure that the development opportunities match the types of investment the LEP is targeting?
- (d) How might the economic prospects of some areas – such as Kidderminster – be enhanced by better accessibility to the strategic transport links. Plans for the former Western Orbital have been dropped without any effective alternative being put in-place. For example would a new junction on the M5 motorway potentially help address this issue?
- (d) The approach towards Centres and Growth Corridors. In particular should the LEP take view on the need and potential for significant new or expanded centres and should a development corridor approach including and building on the existing A38 Technology Corridor and the development corridor approach adopted more generally in Birmingham be expanded to encourage economic growth and to encourage effective linkages between areas of growth and areas in need?
- (e) In the context of a squeeze on public sector resources how might large-scale new developments be used to help fund infrastructure improvements. In this context, should the Green Belt be seen as sacrosanct, or has the point been reached when a selective, but strategic, review might be necessary and appropriate? The area covered by Green Belt in the LEP area is c70,000 hectares equivalent to c40% of the LEP area. If a selective review of the Green Belt were to be carried out then for each 1% of coverage lost, development opportunities equivalent to around five times that offered by the redevelopment of Longbridge could be created. This sort of thinking – while controversial – could be the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to catalyse the transformational change in fortunes of the LEP area.
- (f) How can the LEP ensure that the success in regeneration and renaissance of the older urban areas continues into the future?
- (g) Consideration of the potential quantum and prioritisation of public investment needed to enable growth, and how this might be sought. The new Community Infrastructure Levy might provide an increasing stream of funding to help deliver infrastructure. Is there a case for this to be co-ordinated across the LEP to help fund strategic infrastructure and a co-ordinated approach to be taken on greenfield vs brownfield development opportunities?
- (h) How can we ensure that the benefits of new development including employment opportunities are genuinely available to help those in greatest need?
- (i) How can the benefits arising from HS2 be maximised for the benefit of the LEP area and any potential adverse impacts be mitigated?

Next Steps

- 3.20 Under the old planning system the Regional Spatial Strategies were characterised by extensive requirements for background work and rigid procedures covering their preparation. The aim with the Strategic Framework Plan is for a much faster and targeted approach.
- 3.21 As a first step it is suggested that there is a landmark visioning event at which a carefully selected audience (including representatives from the Board itself, the Planning Group and other invited participants from all sectors) should discuss the issues that have been identified in the preceding section and attempt to produce a broad strategic direction for the Board to consider. In the event that agreement is not possible then the outcome should be to identify the scope of any differences of view which the Board can then consider and come to a view. This could include the need for targeted additional work.
- 3.22 In terms of timescale it is suggested that the visioning event which could potentially be funded from the capacity fund should take place in December with initial feedback to the Board in early 2012. In the event that further work will be necessary – which is the likely outcome – then this should be commissioned, subject to identification of resources, with a view to completion by the end of May 2012. The intention should then be to propose the Draft Framework Plan before the Board in the summer of 2012. There should be regular progress reports on the workstreams throughout this period.

4. Conclusion

This report considers how work to establish a Strategic Framework Plan for the GB&SLEP might be progressed over the coming months together with an initial expression of existing plans for growth and development. The extent and speed of progress will depend on resources being made available to the LEP and its partners.

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Date Created: Version 4: 21.09.11

Appendix 1: Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP: Existing Spatial Framework Plan

NB: The information in this appendix is indicative and for illustrative purposes only. Investment decisions MUST be based on reference to the appropriate local planning authority and associated documentation.

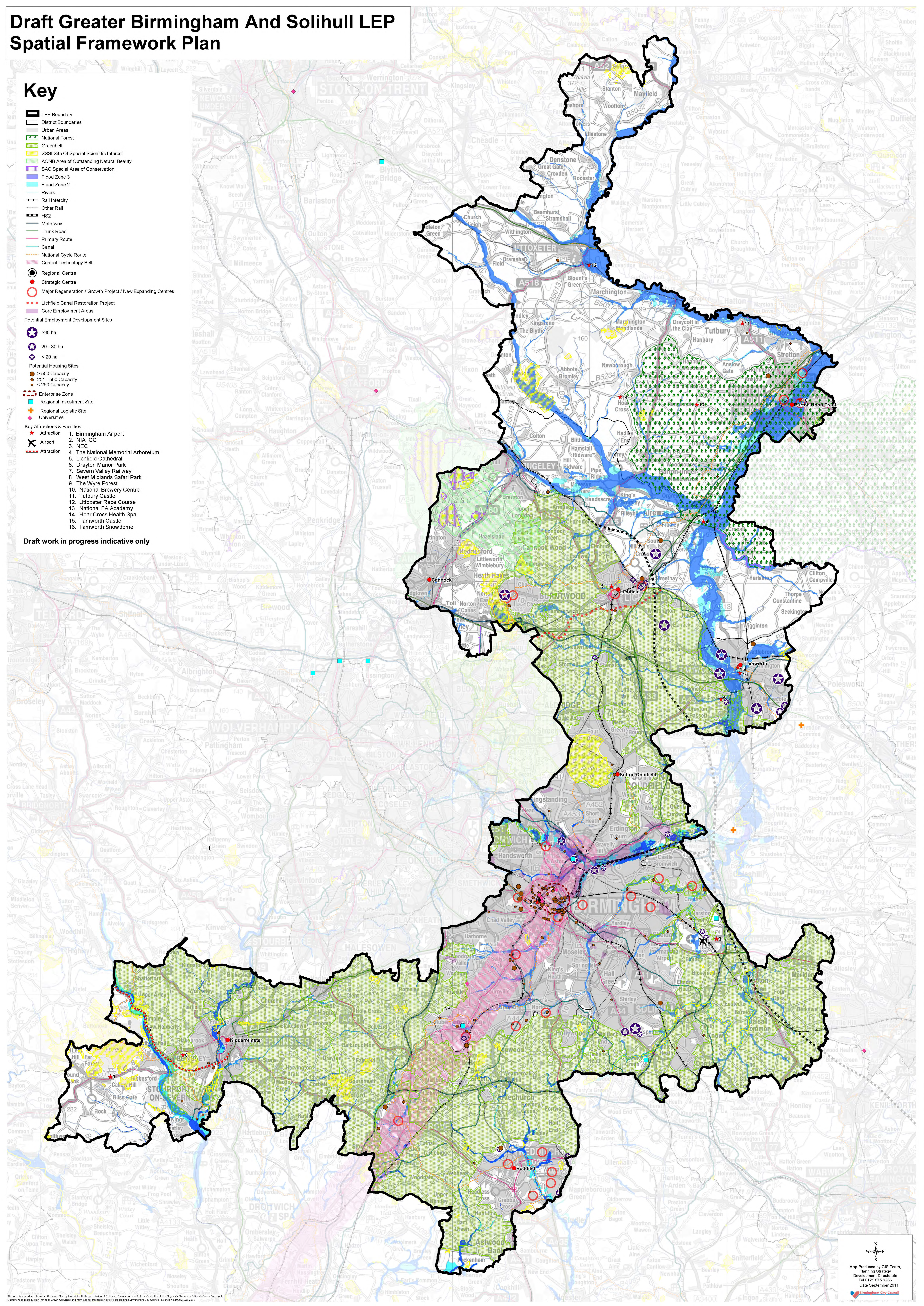
Please see the associated plan – a copy will be displayed at the meeting.

Draft Greater Birmingham And Solihull LEP Spatial Framework Plan

Key

- LEP Boundary
- District Boundaries
- Urban Areas
- National Forest
- Greenbelt
- SSSI Site of Special Scientific Interest
- AONB Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- SAC Special Area of Conservation
- Flood Zone 3
- Flood Zone 2
- Rivers
- Rail Intercity
- Other Rail
- HS2
- Motorway
- Trunk Road
- Primary Route
- Canal
- National Cycle Route
- Central Technology Belt
- Regional Centre
- Strategic Centre
- Major Regeneration / Growth Project / New Expanding Centres
- Lichfield Canal Restoration Project
- Core Employment Areas
- Potential Employment Development Sites**
- >30 ha
- 20 - 30 ha
- < 20 ha
- Potential Housing Sites**
- > 500 Capacity
- 251 - 500 Capacity
- < 250 Capacity
- Enterprise Zone
- Regional Investment Site
- Regional Logistic Site
- Universities
- Key Attractions & Facilities**
- 1. Birmingham Airport
- 2. NIA ICC
- 3. NEC
- 4. The National Memorial Arboretum
- 5. Lichfield Cathedral
- 6. Drayton Manor Park
- 7. Severn Valley Railway
- 8. West Midlands Safari Park
- 9. The Wyre Forest
- 10. National Brewery Centre
- 11. Tutbury Castle
- 12. Uttoxeter Race Course
- 13. National FA Academy
- 14. Hoar Cross Health Spa
- 15. Tamworth Castle
- 16. Tamworth Snowdome

Draft work in progress indicative only



GREATER BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL LEP BOARD MEETING

28th September 2011

Creating a more business-friendly planning system within the LEP area.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Board endorses the Planning Protocol set out at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 That the Board endorses the Implementation Plan set out at **Appendix 2** and agrees to this being taken forward as the basis for delivering enhanced planning services in the LEP area.
- 1.3 That the Board endorses the key attributes of a business-friendly development management service identified in **Appendix 3** and supports the development of targets for achievement in respect of these.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its 20th July meeting the Board received a report on how the planning system functions across the LEP area in terms of policy and practice. The report was produced in response to both national and local concerns that planning is a barrier to growth and for the LEP to deliver new jobs and wealth creation there was a need for the planning system to be more business-friendly.
- 2.2 Based on the findings detailed in the report, the LEP Board requested that proposals be brought back to it as to how planning could be improved to the benefit of the LEP area and in particular to aid business and growth.
- 2.3 Work on developing proposals has been duly undertaken by the LEP Planning Sub-Group made up of a range of public and private sector representatives involved in economic development, planning and property development.

3. Key Issue(s)

- 3.1 The Coalition Government's overarching objective is to grow the economy of the United Kingdom. Promoting sustainable development is an essential part of the Government's strategy toward achieving this goal, meeting identified needs and providing a stimulus for further growth at a national and local level.
- 3.2 Assessing future development needs & providing the appropriate policy and decision-making frameworks for facilitating justifiable sustainable development is the role of the planning system. To ensure that development needs are indeed met and individual areas and the country as a whole do not suffer economic, social or environmental disbenefits the Coalition Government is keen to make sure planning is functioning properly. Planning should not be a barrier to growth.

- 3.3 By its very nature planning often involves difficult decisions. It seeks to reconcile competing interests. Influenced by statute and national guidance policy makers and decision takers at local level have to weigh up arguments for and against development. A common criticism of the planning system is that it fails to fully acknowledge the importance of delivering essential economic growth. Furthermore as a system it is viewed as bureaucratic in its operation, costly to engage with and full of uncertainty.
- 3.4 In line with its stated aim the Government at national level is seeking to make more explicit the importance of delivering sustainable economic growth through the planning system. Since coming into power it has made various statements to this effect and most recently published a draft National Planning Policy Framework which amongst other things encourages local authorities to plan for housing and employment growth and be positively receptive to proposals from the development industry which deliver jobs and investment.
- 3.5 In publishing the draft National Planning Policy Framework the Government has also sought to address concerns over the complexity of the planning system. The draft PPF reduces down from over a 1000 existing pages of guidance to approximately 50 pages, removing much of the previous guidance and concentrating on key policy areas. At the same time, other Government initiatives are looking at where the system can be simplified and streamlined to make it easier to operate.

Planning and the GBSLEP

- 3.6 As reported to the Board in July, the evidence found by the Planning Sub-Group of how the planning system functions in the LEP area was overall very positive. Within the LEP local authorities are generally amenable to growth and as far as constrained by national policy and legislation keen to promote development in locations which would create jobs and the right conditions for wealth generation. Policies, procedures and practices appear to reflect the importance attached to the goal of achieving economic prosperity with performance judged against national standards seen to be good. However, there is room for improvement collectively across the LEP and it is recognised that more could and should be done to make the planning system 'fit for purpose' as regards contributing to an uplift in the fortunes of the economy.
- 3.7 In response to the demands laid down by the Board and taking into account the views of the business community the Planning Sub-Group has considered where efforts should be concentrated and what actions need to be taken to make the LEP area more business-friendly.
- 3.8 A key issue for the LEP is that of recognising, as does Government that planning should both support sustainable growth but also be seen to be a positive tool in delivering the same. The negative perception that planning holds back or prevents justified development needs to be put aside and a more positive stance adopted by all who either use the system or are affected by it. Good planning can help deliver on the overall goals of the LEP and as such should be fully embedded in the thinking, attitudes and behaviours of all partners.
- 3.9 For planning to be seen as a positive, then it is incumbent that the various actors involved understand their respective roles and contribute to making the system work. In this respect it is recommended to the Board that a protocol should be

agreed to achieve the above objective. Attached at Appendix 1 is a recommended protocol which under the LEP-wide ambition of promoting the LEP area as a place to do business in sets out some key principles for all partners to follow in engaging with planning together with separate commitments for the LEP Board, local planning authorities and business.

- 3.10 Sitting alongside the protocol is a proposed Implementation Plan which picks up the key areas of concern identified by the Planning Sub-Group in assessing the workings of the planning system in the LEP. The draft Plan is attached at Appendix 2. The purpose of the Implementation Plan is to ensure that a consistent and high quality level of service is being provided across the LEP area by local planning authorities and that in terms of both plan-making and dealing with planning proposals authorities work individually and collectively toward delivering sustainable development.
- 3.11 It will be noted that the Implementation Plan contains a series of actions, some which would require additional work to deliver the necessary improvements eg. a LEP-wide customer charter. If the Plan is agreed by the Board then these actions will be further developed and carried forward. Subsequent performance against the Plan, particularly in terms of development management, would be measured against prescribed key targets which it is considered would represent a step-change in service provision and suitably address the concerns raised by business. The attributes which it is considered should underpin a business-friendly development management service and which such targets would derive from are listed in Appendix 3.
- 3.12 It is considered that together the Protocol, Implementation Plan with identified actions and key performance targets would provide an appropriate framework for delivering an enhanced planning system within the LEP and as a package of suggested measures is recommended to the Board.

4. Policy Development/linkages with Existing LEP Strategy or Key Priorities

- 4.1 The proposed measures set out in the report above will, if agreed, assist in delivering on key components of the LEP's emerging Economic Strategy.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This report puts forward recommendations on how the planning system within the LEP area can operate in support of business assisting to deliver justifiable sustainable growth including providing for jobs and wealth creation.

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Date Created: 7th September 2011

Appendix 1

A Planning Protocol for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP – Doing business in the LEP

Overarching aim and key principles

The LEP area will be seen as a place for business and to do business in. Sustainable growth providing for new jobs and wealth creation will be actively encouraged and supported by the planning system.

Key principles:

All partners in the LEP area concerned to see sustainable economic growth with the associated social and environmental benefits will recognise the positive role of planning in delivering this.

All partners in the LEP area will promote the benefits of good planning and champion healthy relationships between the various actors involved in delivering on shared goals.

All partners will work together to support the role and function of planning and as far as is possible assist in ensuring that it performs to the highest standards being well resourced and responding to the needs of customers.

Commitments:

The LEP Board will:

- Based upon the LEP Economic Strategy, develop an overarching strategic spatial framework to inform detailed plans and policies.
- Champion the need for partnership working encouraging policy makers/decision takers and those in business to collaborate in taking forward plans and proposals of LEP-wide significance.
- Encourage local authority partners to embrace a 'can-do' culture within their organisations, to actively promote a growth agenda and embed this in terms of thinking and actions.
- Lobby on behalf of the LEP area for changes to legislation which would make the planning system more business-friendly.

Local Authorities within the LEP will:

General

- adopt a positive attitude to economic development within their individual areas and as organisations work in partnership with each other for the good of the LEP as a whole.
- Recognise the role and importance of proposals which support the LEP growth agenda for securing jobs and private sector investment in the LEP area.
- Seek to understand the needs of business and work with them to try to find agreeable solutions.
- where possible be flexible and positive in meeting customers needs.
- operate in an efficient and effective manner being responsive to the needs of business and in doing so ensuring that other key stakeholders in the planning process understand and appreciate the importance of their roles.

Specific

- Prepare and keep up-to-date local planning policy and ensure that this accords with the growth ambitions of the LEP where possible and appropriate having regard to the needs and roles of individual areas.
- Publicise policy and supporting information as it applies in respect of economic development issues, ensuring that it is accessible and simple and easy to understand.
- Working across disciplines and with external stakeholders, offer clear advice and guidance to business with respect to potential development schemes.
- Seek to fully appreciate and understand the case being made for development and the implications of planning decisions to be made.
- Process submitted valid planning applications in an efficient and timely manner - such that decisions are taken in the shortest time periods possible, and ensure the timescales and milestones are communicated clearly from the outset and throughout.
- Share best practice and collaborate where practical to do so to support collective growth ambitions.
- Monitor the planning and development services provided to customers and liaising with business and other stakeholders use feedback to make any required service changes.

Business within the LEP will:

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- assist in developing LEP responses to Government policy initiatives and support the general lobbying role of the LEP.
- work with local authorities and the LEP as a whole to identify and address key planning issues and barriers to growth and prosperity.
- via agreed channels, develop healthy and positive dialogues with local authorities and be open in providing timely and necessary technical information to assist the planning process.
- suitably acquaint themselves (or their appointed agents) with relevant national and local planning policy and objectives.
- bring forward proposals of a high quality and positively engage with authorities and local communities as part of any pre-submission work.

Appendix 2

Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP

Steps to a more business-friendly and productive planning system

Key areas:

- Role and Image of planning
- Policy frameworks
- Processes and procedures
- Information and communication
- Support and guidance
- Understanding and appreciating business
- Knowledge and skills

Role and Image of Planning

The image of planning, LPA's and elected members & planning officers can in itself be viewed as a barrier to business. Negative perceptions pervade with planning seen as regulating, managing and controlling. Whilst there are of course parameters and regulations planning is not about stopping development it is about promoting, supporting and realising good, sustainable development. This message needs to be articulated and then shown to be true via the actions undertaken by local authorities in the LEP area.

Issues	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning needs to be seen as a key tool in delivering on the LEP's growth agenda - The role of planning needs to be communicated better - Planning itself needs to embrace business and be supportive of sustainable growth - The planning system within the LEP needs to be properly resourced and supported - Where appropriate planning should be streamlined and made simpler to understand and engage with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The LEP Board to recognise the importance of good planning and promote the virtues of this across the public and private sectors - The positive effects of planning including examples of where planning has helped to deliver key infrastructure should be highlighted by the LEP Board. - The LEP Board should lobby for and on behalf of the LEP area highlighting where the planning system could be improved by changes to national policy and procedural guidance. - Local authorities should embrace the growth agenda and ensure that this is embedded in the culture of their organisations and behaviours of officers and members.

Policy and implementation

Appropriate planning policy is vital for delivering growth within the LEP area. It needs to reflect both national guidance and suitably express the ambitions set for the LEP in the Economic Strategy. Within the LEP there needs to be consistency in terms of policy direction and importantly interpretation of the same between different authorities.

Issues	Actions
Ensure policy is aligned with national guidance.	The LEP Board and local authorities to review existing and emerging local planning guidance including plans & proposals and ensure policy is compliant.
Ensure policy reflects Economic aspirations and goals of the LEP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The LEP Board to prepare an overarching spatial framework document identifying the key spatial issues for the LEP area. - Local authorities to review existing and emerging local planning guidance including plans & proposals in the light of delivering growth and sustainable development.

Planning processes and procedures

Many of the concerns about the planning system relate to the processes and procedures associated with the submission and assessment of planning applications. Business seeks processes and procedures that are simple to understand and engage with, involve minimal costs and produce decisions in the shortest possible time. Statute influences very much the shape and form of planning processes and procedures. The Coalition Government is looking at where and how legislation can be amended or abolished to streamline and simplify this for the benefit of all including business. Within the parameters of legislation and as far as is possible, at the local level local authorities should be seeking to adopt a quick, lean LEP-wide approach to determining proposals.

Issues	Actions
Planning processes and procedures for determining planning applications should be streamlined and where possible simplified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The LEP Board to consider and respond promptly to reviews of legislation and national guidance by Central Government - Establish LEP-wide customer engagement standards for determining planning applications. - Local authorities to share best practice and work collaboratively to ensure processes and procedures are functioning properly. - Key stakeholders such as the Highways Agency, Environment Agency etc, should be engaged early in the planning process and preferably at the pre-application stage. Their subsequent

	<p>consultation responses should be pro-active and received in good time to enable their implications to be assessed and any issues resolved at an early stage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular reports on the operation of planning processes and procedures to be prepared and considered by representatives of the constituent local authorities, a business forum and also submitted to the LEP Board.
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Information and communication

The planning system would operate more effectively if there was information available in an easy and accessible manner and better communication between key actors in the process. At the present time there is inconsistency across the LEP in terms of information provision and levels/types of communication between business, local authorities and other key stakeholders.

Issues	Actions
Lack of easily accessible information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A guide to the planning system for business should be produced and made available to LEP businesses and representative organisations. This should contain key information including the requirement or not for planning permission/Changes of Use etc. - Local Authorities should maintain up-to-date websites with dedicated planning pages incorporating full details of current applicable planning policy, simple guides to making a planning application, relevant information which could support a planning submission and contact details of officers. The websites should also provide opportunities for written feedback on the quality of information provided and ideas for site development.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local authorities should ensure that officers are available to speak to businesses or their agents at appropriate times. - Local authorities should respond to basic enquiries from businesses as quickly as possible using the telephone or e-mail to communicate.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular dialogue should take place between developers/applicants, business representatives and local authority officers to review policy and practice and agree areas for improvement. - Local authorities should ensure that emerging planning policy documents or changes to processes and procedures are fully detailed on their websites and that there is scope to respond to these via the website. - At the LEP level, channels of communication between the LEP Board and the business/development community should be opened up to share knowledge on planning issues and act as a conduit for views/comments on policy and practice locally and nationally.
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Support and Guidance

It is noted that business when engaging with the planning process often requires LPA's to explain policy and procedure, understand what the business is seeking and then assist where possible in taking matters forward. Even where business is using professional advisors the support of LPA officers in terms of identifying potential problems, liaising with agents and key consultees and offering up suggested improvements to proposals can be exceedingly helpful.

Issues	Actions
<p>Business would benefit from the support and guidance of LPA staff when engaging with the planning process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local authorities should actively encourage staff to engage with businesses and/or their advisers to discuss planning proposals. Officers should seek to explain policy and procedure and adopt an open and positive approach unless proposals would clearly conflict with national and/or local policy. - Where resources permit local authorities should explore the opportunity of having a dedicated planning advisor to respond to business-related queries - A development team approach should be adopted by local authorities bringing together key personnel including from external agencies who can comment and advise on issues and help facilitate ways of taking forward/improving

	proposals for development.
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Understanding and appreciation of business

A concern of business is that LPA's often do not fully understand the importance of business to their areas – particularly small and medium sized enterprises. This can manifest itself in a number of ways including in terms of attitudes toward growth and the way planning proposals are assessed and decisions made. A better understanding of local economies and the role that business plays in supporting employment and contributing towards wider investment opportunities for the benefit of a locality would be appropriate.

Issues	Actions
Lack of detailed knowledge of the local economy on the part of planning officers and elected members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve liaison between planning professionals and those involved in economic development including within local authorities. - Include planning officers in briefing sessions on local business matters. - promote across the LEP, business-led events to inform development practitioners of emerging trends.

Knowledge and Skills

Having the necessary skills and knowledge to determine the value and importance of business to a locality is essential for both members and officers of LPA's. This is particularly the case when assessing the merits of development schemes and judging them against policy. Decision-making on the part of LPA's is helped significantly by having good information, well- informed advice and an understanding of the context for schemes being submitted. This points to the need for members and officers of LPA's to have good working knowledge of issues such as development economics and viability and for planning officers to work closely with economic development colleagues to fully appreciate and accordingly assess proposals.

Issues	Actions
The need for continual training and development of planning officers and elected members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess across the LEP levels of knowledge and skills in areas such as development economics/viability, business growth etc - Encourage attendance of officers at seminars on relevant topics as part of CPD requirements - Share existing knowledge across the LEP and hold joint training sessions involving both public and private sectors - Brief elected members on the growth agenda and implications for planning

Appendix 3

Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP

Key attributes of a business-friendly development management service

- Provision of Web-based advice on policies and procedures and written in plain language
- Nominated contact for business in Development Management team
- Authoritative, timely and value for money advice at concept stage of development proposals
- Project specific/bespoke advice on information required to support development proposals
- Advice on and facilitation of contact with key stakeholders
- For major proposals, a Development team approach established to provide coordinated and effective liaison with developers at pre-application, planning application and post-application stages.
- Specified timetable for determination of planning applications with targets met unless variation mutually agreed.
- Advice on and signposting to bodies responsible for associated non-planning consent regimes.
- Local business forums to review efficiency, responsiveness and effectiveness of service
- Coordinated business support, inward investment and development management advice.

GREATER BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL LEP BOARD MEETING

20th July 2011

Planning in the LEP

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1. That the Board endorses the scope of initiatives to develop a more business-friendly planning service in local planning authorities across the LEP area as set out in paragraph 3.16.*
- 2. That the Board endorses the preparation of high level overarching Spatial Framework document to accompany the emerging economic strategy and provide a coherent context for district-level statutory plan-making.*

1. Background

- 2.1 In the Coalition Government's October 2010 White paper 'Local Growth: Realising every place's potential', great play was made of the role planning and the planning system can have in determining the prosperity of local areas. The paper recognised the benefits of good planning but also significantly argued that the system and its application by the key actors involved can and often does hold back growth. It was suggested that the system should be more supportive of economic development, less bureaucratic, more inclusive and simpler to understand.
- 2.2 At his party's Spring 2011 Conference the Prime Minister David Cameron highlighted the importance of freeing up enterprise and allowing growth to take place unhindered by bureaucracy and barriers that inhibit business development.
- 2.3 On becoming established as a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) the then Development Board of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP identified planning and its relationship with business and growth as a topic worthy of exploration and asked that this be looked into. A Sub-Group of the LEP was duly set up in early 2011 comprising representatives of business and local government. The Group was asked to consider how the planning system could be made more business-friendly. In addition the role of planning in delivering on the LEP's emerging Strategy was to be examined.
- 2.4 Since being commissioned the Planning Sub-Group has been collecting evidence of how the planning system operates within the LEP area, identifying the concerns of business and determining where and how planning can and should be improved.

3. Key Issue(s)

Planning as a positive: Promoting the LEP and delivering on economic goals

- 3.1 As stated in the Governments Growth White Paper planning can and must be seen as a positive not a negative. A means of determining how competing spatial interests can be accommodated for the overall good of an area and its people. Planning has a number of roles of importance to any LEP area including that of Greater Birmingham and Solihull:
- as a means of reflecting the aims and aspirations of a locality and translating this into suitable spatial plans and policies.
 - co-ordinating activities which are necessary for land use planning decisions to deliver real benefits
 - providing a focus for infrastructure planning, prioritisation and coordination of delivery: and facilitating progress through the regulatory systems
 - bringing together skills, knowledge, experience and investment for the collective good of an area and its residents/businesses
 - creating certainty for investors and developers
- 3.2 Through planning an areas needs and aspirations can both be articulated and realised. Rather than see planning as simply a system it can be viewed as a mechanism to highlight the positives of an area and its people and build upon these in a successful manner. It is also a way of addressing environmental, social and economic problems such that certain areas can be regenerated and re-borne. Planning can therefore lead as well as respond to market pressures as it looks forward, determining how a place should look and function in the future and what benefits this will bring. Planning can be made to work for an area through setting out the goals and the means by which these will be delivered. The economic success of the LEP in the longer run to a great extent will be ruled by how the overall objectives are translated into spatial plans, policies and initiatives and implemented through decision-making processes and procedures.
- 3.3 The Birmingham and Solihull LEP should therefore be looking to see how the planning system can work to the benefit of the area. What needs to be done to ensure that planning is indeed working?
- 3.4 At the commencement of its work the LEP Planning Sub-Group has sought to establish an understanding of how planning is operating within the LEP area based on evidence obtained from the business sector, those advising business and representatives of local planning authorities. It has done this by way of a survey questionnaire circulated to business enquiring as to its experience of planning and by directly approaching local planning authorities and asking for their views on dealing with businesses through the planning process (plan-making and/or planning application decision-making). In addition, statistical data has been obtained on the performance of individual LPA's to assist in the evaluation.
- 3.5 Although the evidence gathering and analysis of the same has yet to be fully concluded, the preliminary evaluation – which is included as Appendix 1 – suggests that most businesses experiences of the planning system are positive. It is recognised that making decisions on planning proposals can be

highly controversial and any system that produces 'winners and losers' is bound to come under scrutiny and be the subject of criticism as are the various actors involved and their respective roles. Notwithstanding the nature of some decisions and their impact on individual businesses however, the general feeling is that planning within the LEP is responsive to the needs of business, acknowledges the importance of economic growth and sees a role for addressing both short/medium term issues and those longer term.

Performance – some key statistics

- 3.6 The performance of local planning authorities is something that has been of keen interest to people for a long time and remains so. National Government has been particularly keen to raise the standards of performance in areas such as the speed of determination of planning applications to counter a common criticism. A review of local authorities within the LEP area shows that all of them perform to a high standard in this regard and well above the national targets (See Table 1 & 2 in Appendix 2).
- 3.7 In terms of decisions taken, nationally approximately 90% of all planning applications are approved. Looking at the performance of local authorities within the LEP generally this target is reached and in some cases surpassed (See Table 3 & 4 in Appendix 2).
- 3.8 Finally, a measure of the quality of decisions taken by local authorities is that of the number of appeals successfully defended against a challenge. In Tables 5 & 6 of Appendix 2 it can be seen that across the LEP area the rates here are high, suggesting that local authorities are making well-reasoned and justifiable decisions.

Positive approaches toward business growth including Good Practice

- 3.9 Within the LEP area there are many examples of approaches taken toward business proposals which highlights the importance local authorities place upon this type of activity. Although ultimately decisions taken will have to reflect a number of factors and ensure the final outcome is just, authorities appear keen to ensure that processes and procedures are made as easy as possible to follow and support where necessary is given to applicants and agents. Examples include:
- the provision of detailed information on websites or in leaflets/brochures to assist potential applicants/agents understand policy and procedure and access necessary supporting information.
 - The use of pre-application discussions to assess the merits of schemes and provide the basis for applications to subsequently come forward
 - The use of a Development team approach whereby key officers and stakeholders are brought together with applicants/agents to discuss proposals at an early stage and allow for their determination in as smooth a process as is possible.
 - In some cases authorities have put in place arrangements to prioritise or 'fast-track' commercial development proposals either on a permanent basis or dependent on the size/scale/importance to the area of individual proposed schemes.
- 3.10 As can be seen it would appear that the LEP is well-served by the planning system as is operated by the constituent local authorities. That is not to say

however that there are not issues which have been identified and which need to be looked at and addressed to ensure that barriers are removed to growth.

Issues and areas for improvement

- 3.11 Through the business survey and evidence collected from local planning authorities and practitioners working in the planning field for both the public and private sectors some common themes or key issues have emerged.
- Notwithstanding individual cases and areas, there seems to be across the LEP a general lack of understanding *including* on the part of business as to what the planning system is about and how it operates
 - The image of planning can in some areas be poor and either reflect local experiences or simply a wider more general belief system based on media-reporting
 - Business wants to access good quality information and seeks support and guidance from local planning authorities
 - Business wants to feel that local planning authorities are not dogmatic in their application of policy but responsive to the needs of business and commercially 'aware'
 - Some processes and procedures seem to add nothing to the outcome of decisions and actually introduce delay and additional costs to all
 - In some local planning authorities there is too much concern about management of the planning process and regulatory control – the actual outcomes and their implications are not considered
 - Business and areas within the LEP would benefit from better working relationships between LPA's and business – working towards finding suitable solutions to planning issues
- 3.12 The concerns listed above are not unique to the LEP but reflect very much those identified through similar exercises carried out elsewhere in the country. The neighbouring Black Country LEP for example is also looking at the relationship between planning and business and identified the same kinds of issues as those described above.
- 3.13 In some cases the issues raised are of interest for planning as a whole, highlighting matters relating to 'image', the merits of national (and European) legislation or the implications of the same on practices carried out at the local level. Other themes relate to the local policies and procedures adopted by local authorities in planning for their respective areas. These include having regard to the needs of their areas and the priority given to economic development if at all over other forms of development activity.
- 3.14 Where local planning authorities are subject to obligations under legislation and these obligations are seen as problematic, the scope for introducing a simplified/improved planning regime at a local LEP level is clearly limited. Perhaps the role here is for the LEP to act in a lobbying capacity making representations to Government. A recent example of this is in respect of the LEP's response to a consultation on proposed changes to legislation which would make it easier for employment land and premises to be re-used for residential dwelling purposes.
- 3.15 Where there is more scope for change and which would assist in addressing those issues highlighted in paragraph 3.11 above, is in relation to the policies

and practices introduced and adopted by local authorities reflecting their priorities, cultural behaviours and attitudes toward growth. As members of the LEP and keen to see sustainable economic growth then it would be expected that local authorities would be open to suggestions as to how improvements could be made which would help to overcome the issues flagged up by business and others who come into contact with the planning system locally.

Going Forward

3.16 As stated previously the Planning Sub-Group is still currently undertaking evidence gathering and is aiming to produce a full appraisal of how the planning system can be improved upon for the benefit of the LEP later in the year. However, it is clear in the work carried out to date that there are some emerging themes which point to the need for action. These are summarised below:

- **Image of Planning** – the image of planning, LPA's and elected members & planning officers can in itself be viewed as a barrier to business. Negative perceptions fuelled by reporting and statements of prominent organisations and individuals can lead to problems and mean from the outset working relationships between LPA's and the business community are strained. Given the nature of the planning system it is unlikely that planning as a profession/process will ever be in receipt of major plaudits in the business world. However, more balanced media reporting and better understanding on the part of business et al as to the constraints which the planning system operates and what it seeks to deliver on the part of wider society would help in promoting an improved image.
- **Information and communication** – many of the issues identified would appear to reflect a lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of business on matters surrounding policy and procedure which would be greatly helped by better provision of information and improved lines of communication between key actors involved in the planning process.
- **Support and guidance** – it is noted that business when engaging with the planning process often requires LPA's to explain policy and procedure, understand what the business is seeking and then assist where possible in taking matters forward. Even where business is using professional advisors the support of LPA officers in terms of identifying potential problems, liaising with agents and key consultees and offering up suggested improvements to proposals can be exceedingly helpful.
- **Understanding and appreciation of business** – a concern of business is that LPA's often do not fully understand the importance of business to their areas – particularly small and medium sized enterprises. This can manifest itself in a number of ways including in terms of attitudes toward growth and the way planning proposals are assessed and decisions made. A better understanding of local economies and the role that business plays in supporting employment and contributing towards wider investment opportunities for the benefit of a locality would be appropriate.
- **Knowledge and skills** – linked to the above, having the necessary skills and knowledge to determine the value and importance of business to a locality is essential for both members and officers of LPA's. This is particularly the case

when assessing the merits of development schemes and judging them against policy. Decision-making on the part of LPA's is helped significantly by having good information, well-informed advice and an understanding of the context for schemes being submitted. This points to the need for members and officers of LPA's to have good working knowledge of issues such as development economics and viability and for planning officers to work closely with economic development colleagues to fully appreciate and accordingly assess proposals.

- 3.17 The themes that are noted here are wide ranging and touch upon cultural behaviours and attitudes in the LEP and also the mechanics of the planning system and how it presents itself to business and other 'users'. What is important and is a vital consideration in looking at how planning can be made more business-friendly is that it is often the case that the planning policies, procedures and practices of an LPA will derive from the pervading culture and attitudes. A positive attitude toward growth will or should therefore be apparent in the policies of a LPA and the systems put in place to determine planning proposals. The next step for the Planning Sub-Group is to translate the themes described into a set of meaningful actions that can be put in place to improve the planning process for business. This work has commenced and will be reported back to the Board in due course.

A LEP Spatial Plan

- 3.18 At previous meetings of the Board the issue of a spatial planning framework has been raised, most recently at the 8th June meeting where members asked for a view on whether or not there was a case for preparing a Spatial Plan for the LEP. The Planning Sub-Group has considered the matter and drawn the following conclusions.
- 3.19 In seeking to prepare an Economic Strategy for the LEP area, the Board has signalled its clear intent to take forward an agenda based on growth. The emerging Strategy and the priorities contained within it will have a strong spatial dimension. It is important that these are articulated and furthermore the links identified between the strategy and the various plans, policies, programmes and actions which will actually deliver the objectives.
- 3.20 Each Local Planning Authority within the LEP is responsible for putting in place for their respective areas a statutory Local Development Framework (LDF). A requirement of any LDF is that it includes an overarching long term planning strategy and vision setting out spatial objectives and the means by which these will be delivered. These are commonly known as Core Strategies. Such Strategies supplemented with detailed policies and allocations of land, covering the level and nature of housing development, employment land provision, retail, commercial floorspace, transport issues, social and community infrastructure requirements etc are the basis upon which planning decisions are made by LPA's. However, the LDF is more than simply a tool for planning: LDF's are a reflection of the wider aims and ambitions of an area and bring together and link with a myriad of other plans and strategies. They also contribute towards a range of thematic goals of which the development and use of land and property are only one part, albeit a significant one eg. health, education. Importantly, therefore LDF's are a mechanism for considering key

issues of relevance to an area, determining priorities, setting out policy and detailing how goals are to be met.

- 3.21 Under the present Government's Localism agenda the importance of local authorities preparing and adopting LDF's and particularly Core Strategies has become paramount. With the proposed abolition of regional strategic planning frameworks in the form of Regional Spatial Strategies and a streamlining of national planning guidance issued by Government, the focus of attention as regards the future planning of an area is very much on Local Plans/LDF's.
- 3.22 Within the LEP area, Core Strategies are being developed and taken forward for adoption by the respective local authorities. A requirement of any LDF document including Core Strategies is that they are aligned with national policy where this is applicable, relevant regional/strategic policy & furthermore link with other key strategies including amongst others local Economic Strategies. National policy makes it clear that a role for all LDF's is to articulate the spatial requirements relating to an areas economic needs.
- 3.23 In essence then there is significant spatial policy either in place or emerging which will help shape and mould the future look of areas contained within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP's confines.
- 3.24 The formulation of LA Core Strategies within the LEP derived from or linked to national and still extant regional policy should provide some comfort to the LEP Board that issues of spatial and strategic significance are being addressed. The issue is how things are taken forward in the absence of future regional plan making or a 'strategic' plan making replacement.
- 3.25 With the proposed removal of regional plan making from the planning system it has been argued that there will be a policy vacuum in relation to Strategic Planning. The Government has recognised this risk and is proposing a strengthening of the Localism Bill to highlight the significance of local plan making and co-operative and collaborative working between authorities on wider strategic/cross boundary matters. In discussions in respect of the Localism Bill there have been suggestions made that LEP's should take on statutory strategic planning powers though it seems that this has not found favour in many professional and political circles and indeed the Government appears not to want to progress this. Notwithstanding this, there is scope for voluntary collaborative working and certain LEP's have sought to recognise the importance of considering spatial issues of strategic significance. Greater Manchester LEP for example is in the process of preparing a Spatial Framework for its area designed to express the spatial aspects of its Strategy.

' The GM Spatial Framework is not a fully comprehensive plan for Greater Manchester , but focuses on key agreed opportunities. The Framework will be a concise and selective guide to inform investment decisions by public and private sector partners, drawing from district core strategies and other local strategies and concentrating on issues and proposals which are important to the LEP as a whole.....' (Extract from the GM LEP Spatial Framework Draft Topic Paper 1 Introduction August 2010).

The GM Spatial Framework identifies the LEP's intended spatial outcomes eg. responding positively to the climate change agenda, optimising economic performance, creating more attractive places to live, improving health and well-being etc, and also its spatial priorities for example growing Manchester

as a strong and robust regional centre and developing key areas or sites within the LEP important for sport, culture, leisure, media.

- 3.26 It is suggested that as the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP develops and the Economic Strategy begins to take shape then an overarching collaborative framework similar to that being promoted by the Greater Manchester LEP might be appropriate. Such a framework could identify the key and genuinely strategic elements of the LEP and act to co-ordinate overall policy and investment decisions. Importantly, a framework approach could link crucial strategies such as those dealing with planning and transport amongst others. In the longer run it would provide a coherent framework within which the respective LEP authorities can work to ensure their plans and mutually reinforcing. At the same time the approach respects the 'sovereignty' of the constituent local authorities. As a first step the Planning Sub-group have agreed to prepare an initial plan which will draw together existing and emerging Core Strategies and help inform the LEP of the levels and distribution of growth currently envisaged. Once this and the Economic Strategy are available it will be possible to consider the next steps.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 To many observers the planning system is seen as being complex and difficult to understand, costly, slow in its operation and full of uncertainty. This report has sought to identify those barriers that genuinely appear to exist for business in engaging with the planning process and the scope of continuing work to ensure these matters are addressed. The report has also considered the case for taking forward a Spatial Plan or framework for the LEP to dovetail with the emerging Economic Strategy. The view here is that a high-level framework document which identifies key spatial priorities for delivery and investment & forms the basis for co-ordinating policies and actions within the LEP should be taken forward.

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Appendix 1

Planning Experience Survey Evaluation GBSLEP (preliminary evaluation as at 04 July 2011)

Using a free survey website, SurveyMonkey.com, a 'Planning Experience' Survey was created on 13th April 2011 on behalf of the GBSLEP Planning Sub Group. The survey attracted 48 respondents in total, answering 10 questions about their experience with the planning system.

Help was sort from all Partners of the GBSLEP by requesting that their Economic Development contacts facilitate responses to the survey. The survey was also promoted at various GBSLEP Business events taking place along with the Chamber of Commerce sending a link on the Daily Bullet to their members.

The notes below summarise the headline issues and further detail can be provided on request.

Overall, the **greatest sector responding to the survey were those businesses classifying themselves as 'Other'** (22 responses) followed by Professional Services (17 responses). The **majority of the responses across the survey were from small sized business i.e. those employing 0-10 employees (22 responses)**. Those that classed their business under other were asked to state which sector they believed their business to come under; the vast majority of these were classed as Planning consultants, Housing/Residential, Hotels, Building/construction and Health services along with Vets and the production of Surgical Instruments with a few miscellaneous sectors such as Safari Park, Museum and Airport.

In terms of when planning applications were made the majority i.e. **54.2% (26 responses) were made 1+ years ago**, 43.8% (21) of the respondents made their planning application between 0- 6 months ago, with 22.9% (11 responses) making their application 6 – 12 months ago.

The **applications were mainly made to Local Authorities in Birmingham (33.3% - 16 responses) and Solihull (27.1%)**, with the **main type of applications being made for minor applications for residential (22.9% - 11 responses)** and Other application/consent i.e. Change of use also being fairly high at (20.8% - 10 responses). **75% (36 responses) of the businesses had their applications successfully approved**, where as 12.5% (6 responses) have been refused, with a further 12.5% yet to be decided.

When respondents were asked about how they would rate the seven individual processes/services, the majority of the responses rated many of the processes as 'fairly good' (81 Responses across the individual services) and

'good' (68 responses across the individual services). "Fees charged" stood out with 44.2% (19 responses) rating it as "fairly good" also "Time taken to reach the decision" got a 29.5% (13 responses) rating at "Fairly Good". 39.5% (17 responses) of people rated "Submission of application form and additional information" as "Good".

There was also a rating of 27.3% (12 responses) for "officer engagement" service as 'excellent'. However the "Decision making Process" (27.2% - 11 responses) was rated as 'poor' by the majority.

77.3% (34 responses) found the planning application/appeals process easy to understand, the respondents that answered "No" stated reasons surrounding **the lack of understanding with pre-application advice**, or special circumstances. Most would have **found it beneficial if they could have spoken to someone who could have aided them with their application process**.

82.6% (34 responses) answered 'No' when asked if they had any issues/problems with their application, this shows a mainly positive response to the processes of planning applications. The respondents that stated they did have issues (8 responses), claimed that **councillors did not understand their officers and policies** (*"Planning officer had complete ignorance both of planning guidance and law"*) or they **received advice that they did not wish to hear** e.g. told not to bother applying for planning and told to relocate.

The term 'Development Plan', was understood by the majority of respondents with only 18.8% (9) not familiar with the term, the people who stated they understood this term were additionally asked whether they had taken part in the consultation, 16 out of the 29 people that responded stated that they had taken part; the remaining 13 did not.

Question 10 asked respondents to share any additional comments and/or contact details. 28 out of 48 responded, with few leaving contact details and the others generally expressing negative views on all aspects of the Planning Application.

The main points that need to be addressed are:

- **Poor communication** during the planning application process is something that needs to be looked at with 6 people expressing the need to talk to someone relevant for guidance but this does not seem to be allowed.
- The **lack of understanding from the elected councillors** is a big problem with 4 people advising that the councillors should be trained more to develop their understanding of their own policies.
- The general complaint is that respondents think that the **planning application process is too long, 8 people believe this**, with one person indicating: -
"The planning system needs a fast-track approval process so that

*businesses can make plans that match a fast changing marketplace where **delayed decisions on investment in space creation can cost contracts.***"

- There are a couple of respondents claiming that their **special circumstances were not taken into consideration during the planning process**, one respondent's comment stood out claiming *"They have failed to understand the special circumstances in our case namely, that the planning applications put forward are needed to comply with animal welfare regulations and hygiene legislation. If the permission is not granted then the business will not be able to abide by this legislation, have its licence revoked and ultimately cease trading."* and later stating **"It is completely unjustifiable"**.

Throughout the additional comments that respondents have supplied there is an air of annoyance and that changes need to be made in order for a more forward thinking, easier planning application process.

Appendix 2

LEP Local Authority Planning Performance data for 2009/10 and 2010/11

Performance measures

a) Planning Application determination rates for major, minor and other applications

National targets:

Majors – 60% applications determined within 13 weeks

Minors – 65% within 8 weeks

Others – 85% within 8 weeks

b) Approval rates – approval rate for all planning applications in relevant accounting year

c) Appeal rates – rate of success for LPA's on appeals in relevant year

Table 1 Speed of determination rates 2009-10 (%)

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Majors</i>	<i>Minors</i>	<i>Others</i>
Tamworth	80	92	97
Bromsgrove	83	87	91
Lichfield	79	96	98
East Staffordshire	88	96	98
Wyre Forest	68	78	86
Birmingham	72	73	84
Solihull	68	85	93
Cannock Chase	89	88	94
Redditch	100	95	98

Table 2 Speed of determination rates 2010-11 (%)

Authority	Majors	Minors	Others
Tamworth	70	87	93
Bromsgrove	69	89	93
Lichfield	85	94	98
East Staffordshire	79	90	97
Wyre Forest	68	76	85
Birmingham	69	74	85
Solihull	70	77	89
Cannock Chase	77	90	93
Redditch	76	100	95

Table 3 Approval rates (%) 2009/10

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Approval Rate</i>
Tamworth	91
Bromsgrove	84
Lichfield	90
East Staffordshire	86
Wyre Forest	80
Birmingham	84
Solihull	91
Cannock Chase	90
Redditch	79

Table 4 Approval rates (%) 2010/11

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Approval Rate</i>
Tamworth	92
Bromsgrove	80
Lichfield	90
East Staffordshire	90
Wyre Forest	77
Birmingham	87
Solihull	92
Cannock Chase	94
Redditch	81

Table 5 Appeal rates (%) 2009/10

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Rate of Success</i>
Tamworth	50
Bromsgrove	64
Lichfield	70
East Staffordshire	70
Wyre Forest	75
Birmingham	65
Solihull	65
Cannock Chase	47
Redditch	56

Table 6 Appeal rates (%) 2010/11

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Rate of success</i>
Tamworth	72
Bromsgrove	79
Lichfield	73
East Staffordshire	62
Wyre Forest	64
Birmingham	76
Solihull	65
Cannock Chase	60
Redditch	57

¹ See Footnote

Data has also been collected on the workloads of LPA's within the LEP. The table below shows the number of planning applications received and determined by respective authorities in the 3 years 2008/9 – 2010/11. In total for this period 36,713 planning applications were received and 34,056 determined.

Table 7 Total No. Applications received & determined 2008/9 – 2010/11

<i>Authority</i>	<i>PI Apps received 2008/9</i>	<i>PI Apps Determined 2008/9</i>	<i>PI Apps received 2009/10</i>	<i>PI Apps determined 2009/10</i>	<i>PI Apps Received 2010/11</i>	<i>PI Apps determined 2010/11</i>
Tamworth	566	479	487	401	523	439
Bromsgrove	874	926	847	861	1012	1106
Lichfield	927	933	905	819	938	893
East Staffs	874	995	1014	954	955	944
Wyre Forest	883	814	681	643	670	607
Birmingham	5912	5157	5737	4842	5407	5165
Solihull	1811	1740	1686	1593	1736	1551
Cannock	490	537	492	390	417	433
Redditch	314	319	275	256	280	259

Note: In some cases it will be noted that more applications were determined in certain years than received by a local authority. The explanation for this is that either applications were received just prior to year end and processed in the following year and/or that short-medium term backlogs were being addressed.

¹ For 2010/11 the national averages for speed of determining planning applications were 66% Majors, 75% Minors and 86% Others. For the same period the average approval rate for all applications was 86% and success on the part of LPA's following the lodging of appeals against decisions 67%.

