

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 17 October 2019

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Physical Environment

SUBJECT: Liverpool City Region Spatial Planning Statement of Common Ground.

WARDS: All

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This report seeks Executive Board approval for the Liverpool City Region Spatial Planning Statement of Common Ground, the Cheshire East Statement of Common Ground and arrangements for future approval of such documents

2. RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) The Liverpool City Region Spatial Planning Statement of Common Ground is approved and agreement be given to sign the final document;**
- 2) Operational Director, Policy, Planning & Transportation be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for the Physical Environment to agree minor wording changes to the LCR Statement of Common Ground if proposed by the other Liverpool City Region local authorities or the Combined Authority during the approval process; and**
- 3) Operational Director, Policy, Planning & Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Physical Environment, be authorised to approve further Statements of Common Ground, or revisions to those previously endorsed with appropriate bodies.**

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1. Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) were introduced in the 2018 update to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). SoCG are to be produced and kept up to date by strategic policy making authorities, such as Local Planning Authorities, to set out an agreed record of 'strategic matters' between authorities together with details of how these matters have been / are to be addressed. SoCG's do not take away or diminish the planning powers of the local planning authority. They provide the primary evidence of compliance with the duty to co-operate. It documents where effective co-operation is and is not happening

throughout the plan-making process, and is a way of demonstrating at examination that plans are deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working across local authority boundaries. In the case of local planning authorities, it also forms part of the evidence required to demonstrate that they have complied with the duty to co-operate.

- 3.2. As these are new documents requiring formal endorsement on behalf of the Council, they are not directly covered either by the constitution or by schemes of delegation. This report is seeking endorsement of the first two such documents prepared with / presented by neighbouring authorities together with approval for subsequent documents and updates to be authorised by the Operational Director Planning, Policy and Transport in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Physical Environment

4. Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority Spatial Development Strategy SoCG (2019)

- 4.1. The LCR Statement (Appendix A) informs the forthcoming Spatial Development Strategy for the Liverpool City Region, which is a requirement of the City Region Devolution Deal (i.e. to be developed by the Combined Authority in collaboration with the six local authorities by 2020). It also forms a useful resource for local authorities progressing their Local Plans. The LCR SoCG has now been adopted by all of the other 5 LPA's within the Combined Authority (Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Knowsley and Wirral) and the associate member West Lancashire.
- 4.2. The Statement of Common Ground covers the six Liverpool City Region local authorities, together with West Lancashire. While West Lancashire is not a formal member of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, it joined as an Associate member in 2014. From a spatial planning perspective, its inclusion represents the most practical geography for the statement to cover, building on a range of existing evidence around functional housing and economic market areas, as well as established working arrangements in the City Region.
- 4.3. The practical work of preparing the final statement has been co-ordinated by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authorities Lead officer for Spatial Planning, involving relevant officers from each of the local authorities involved. It further builds upon a range of previous collaborated activities across the City Region, including the 2016 Statement of Co-operation on Local Planning and the 2018 PAS Pilot Statement of Common Ground.
- 4.4. The seven local authorities, along with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority will be the principal signatories of the Statement of Common Ground and hence are required to approve the Statement. The draft Statement of Common Ground requires formal approval from each authority. At the City Region level, it is scheduled to be considered for approval at the Housing and Spatial Planning Advisory Board (26/09/19) and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (04/10/19).

- 4.5. The Statement of Common Ground will be a live document, meaning that it is intended that the document should be reviewed and updated regularly.

CONTENT

- 4.6. The Statement of Common Ground covers a wide range of strategic planning matters including housing, employment, green belt, retail, transport, digital inclusion, utilities, renewables, health and wellbeing, environment, green infrastructure, waste and minerals. A summary of Halton's key issues for the subjects can be found below:

Housing

- 4.7. The Housing section sets out the position arising from the evidence with respect to housing numbers. For Halton, it included the Proposed Draft Publication figure of 466 which was consulted on as part of the Council's first consultation on its proposed Delivery and Allocations Plan from January-February 2018. Together with housing targets derived from different approaches from the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment study (net 326 dwellings per annum). However, since the publication of the Liverpool City Region Statement of Common Ground Halton Council have published their latest consultation on the Proposed Submission DALP with a figure of 350 per annum.
- 4.8. The Statement of Common Ground sets out the authorities agreement that all housing needs can be met within the City Region, and that there is no unmet need that is to be distributed between authorities. Halton will continue to meet its own housing need.

Employment

- 4.9. The Statement of Common Ground identifies employment land issues across the Liverpool City Region for the need for strategic B8 sites. The Liverpool City Region will work collaboratively to identify the minimum proportions of the need for Strategic B8 uses which should be accommodated within each local authority. Halton has identified strategic employment allocations in the latest Proposed Submission Version of the DALP.

Green Belt

- 4.10. This section of the Statement of Common Ground commits the authorities to involve each other when considering the case for potential localised changes to the green belt. If authorities collectively decide that a strategic review is needed, the rationale and approach will be set out in a future statement. Halton will adopt a business as usual approach and continue to engage with neighbouring authorities on their Local Plan preparations.

Retail

- 4.11. This section states that the authorities agree that retail centres will be promoted within the context of a hierarchy of centres, maintaining this approach through co-operation in plan making and decisions on planning

applications. Again, this continues the status quo for Halton, the Council will consult neighbouring authorities as appropriate on Halton's own town and district centre proposals and respond in turn to consultations from neighbouring districts.

Transport: Rail

- 4.12. The Liverpool City Region authorities agree to work collaboratively, including in their respective Local Plans as appropriate, to support delivery of key initiatives set out in the Transport for North Strategic Plan including Northern Powerhouse Rail. The Liverpool City Region authorities will continue to develop a number of other large-scale cross boundary schemes with city region-wide impact.

Transport: Roads

- 4.13. The Liverpool City Region agrees to work collaboratively with other relevant bodies to identify and address required improvements to the Strategic Road Network and Major Road Network.
- 4.14. The Liverpool City Region partners have agreed a Liverpool City Region Route Network to support new housing and employment development across the Liverpool City Region and unlock growth.

Transport: Cycling and Walking

- 4.15. The Liverpool City Region authorities agree to work collaboratively to implement the Liverpool City Region Rights of Way improvement Plan and the Liverpool City Region Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan when finalised.

Transport: Port

- 4.16. The Liverpool City Region authorities support measures to support the growth of Port Liverpool and its aspirations set out in the Port Masterplan through investment in infrastructure, education, training and skills and the environment. Although Halton is some distance away and there is no impact on the Borough, the Liverpool City Region authorities will continue to work together to address capacity issues on the A5036 Dunning's Bridge Road and junction bottlenecks along the A580.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport

- 4.17. The LCR authorities acknowledge the strategic importance of Liverpool John Lennon Airport and its important contribution to the local economy, and will support the Airport through investment in infrastructure improvements, including the Eastern Access Transport Corridor, education, training and skills.

Digital Inclusion

- 4.18. The Statement of Common Ground sets out an agreement that the City Region must develop its own plans to accelerate investment and deployment in shared infrastructure in order to support business

development, public sector transformation, and its improved digital connectivity for both residents and businesses. Much of this aligns with Halton's approach as set out in the Proposed Submission of the DALP, but there is further understanding needed of the planning implications of digital infrastructure roll-out.

Utilities

- 4.19. The Liverpool City Region authorities will identify the improvements to utilise infrastructure needed to support City Region schemes, and will set out working arrangements to deal with cross-boundary issues. This will require further engagement with utility providers at a strategic level.

Renewables

- 4.20. The local authorities within the Liverpool City Region commit to collaborative working on new evidence for renewable energy, including wind power, and developing the business case for the Mersey Tidal Power project. This is a relatively new area of co-operation and it will be important to understand any implications, opportunities and risks for Halton.

Health and Wellbeing

- 4.21. The Liverpool City Region local authorities will continue to work with partners in order to improve health, wellbeing and quality of life. The authorities will continue to work with Clinical Commissioning Groups, hospital and health trusts regarding health needs, future housing and other development and the estate management programmes of these trusts.

Environment and Green Infrastructure

- 4.22. There is a consensus between the Liverpool City Region Local Authorities to continue to work with a range of partners to protect, enhance and where possible extend the strategic natural assets of the City Region. This is extended to working towards a co-ordinated interim policy approach for mitigating impacts of the Liverpool City Region coast, pending the completion of the Recreation Mitigation Strategy.
- 4.23. The Liverpool City Region local authorities will also continue to work in partnership with regards to the strategic management of flood risk across river catchments and in relation to other sources of flooding where appropriate.
- 4.24. The Liverpool City Region local authorities and other partners will work together to address cross-boundary air quality issues and to deliver mitigation and measures to deliver air quality improvements across the City Region.

Minerals and Waste

- 4.25. This Minerals and Waste section of the SoCG sets out the agreement that the Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (adopted 2013) continues

to provide a suitable vision for the management of waste up to 2037. It also commits the authorities to maintain their commitment to the Managed Aggregate supply system, including continuing to consult with a work with relevant organisations and partner agencies.

Cheshire East Council ~ Halton Borough Council SoCG (2019)

- 4.26. Cheshire East has approached Halton to be a signatory to its' Statement of Common Ground (Appendix B).
- 4.27. Halton does not share a boundary with Cheshire East Council. Given the physical separation of the two authorities and the distance between primary service centres or major employment locations officers in the two authorities are content that there are no current 'strategic issues'.
- 4.28. Halton has previously worked with Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington on commissioning Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessments. We anticipate that this arrangement may continue going forward.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. None. Statements of Common Ground are intended to document joint working and areas of agreement / disagreement. They are a tool to ensure co-ordinated policy actions on strategic (Cross-boundary) issues.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Healthy Halton

The Statement of Common Ground identifies key issues across the Liverpool City Region focused on health and wellbeing and the collaborative approach the local authorities will take working together to address the identified issues

6.2 Halton's Urban Renewal

The Liverpool City Region local authorities work together to ensure that throughout the Combined Authority there will be sufficient employment and housing allocations to meet the identified needs without relying on other local authorities to meet identified needs.

6.3 Children and Young People in Halton

There are no implications for Children and Young People in Halton rising from this report.

6.4 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The Statement of Common Ground identifies cross boundary issues and is in agreement the education training and skills are supported. The local authorities are in agreement that they will work collaboratively to identify

the minimum proportions of the need for Strategic B8 uses which should be accommodated within each local authority.

6.5 Safer Halton

There are no implications for a Safer Halton rising from this report.

7. RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1. The Statement of Common Ground has been produced collaboratively by the local authorities within the Liverpool City Region, it is important to ensure that the document meets the Government's imposed legal requirements as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework 2019. This will be documented as supporting information to demonstrate compliance.
- 7.2. Risks include changes to Government policy, regulations and legislation, however the request for delegated authority to accept changes as and when this occurs will reduce risk.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 There are no specific equality and diversity issues relating to this report.

9. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012	Municipal Building, Widnes	Alasdair Cross
National Planning Policy Framework (2019)	Municipal Building, Widnes	Alasdair Cross
Proposed Submission DALP (2019)	Municipal Building, Widnes	Alasdair Cross