

**Agenda Item No:** 9.4 **Report No:** 54/16

**Report Title:** Refresh of the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Local Strategic Statement

**Report To:** Cabinet **Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Tom Jones – Lead Member for Planning

**Ward(s) Affected:** All

**Report By:** Director of Business Strategy and Development

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**Purpose of Report:** To seek endorsement of the refreshed version of the Local Strategic Statement prepared by the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board.

**Officers Recommendation(s):**

- 1 To endorse the refreshed version of the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton – Local Strategic Statement, as attached in appendix 1.**

**Reasons for Recommendation**

- 1 To ensure that the key strategic planning issues and priorities for the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton region are clearly up to date and are articulated and presented to key stakeholders and partners who can assist with the delivery of these priorities.

- 1 Background**

- 1.1 As a result of the Localism Act, the regional tier of the planning system was removed. This level of planning was used to co-ordinate strategic development and infrastructure needs/priorities across wide areas, often covering a number of local planning authorities. As a replacement to regional planning, local planning authorities are

required to work together to address strategic planning issues through the Duty to Co-operate<sup>1</sup>.

- 1.2 In early 2014, the District Council formally became a member of the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board. One of the key aims of this Board is to assist the local planning authorities in meeting the Duty to Co-operate when preparing their respective Development Plans. The Board is comprised of representatives from the authorities of Chichester, Arun, Adur Worthing, Brighton and Hove, Lewes, West Sussex and the South Downs National Park. More recently, both Mid Sussex and Horsham have also become members of the Board. Membership of the Board is comprised of these authorities as it is considered that they all share a number of common strategic planning issues (e.g. common Housing Market Areas).
- 1.3 During 2013 and 2014, a Local Strategic Statement (LSS) was prepared for the area covered by the Planning Board. Primarily the LSS was developed for two reasons. The first of these reasons was to aid all the planning authorities in undertaking effective strategic planning and meeting the Duty to Co-operate. The LSS was able to identify the strategic planning priorities and issues for the Planning Board area and set out how the authorities are collectively addressing these. The second reason for developing the LSS was that it would provide an overarching statement reflecting the ambitions of local authorities and their partners around sustainable growth. In turn, this would help establish a clear set of priorities for funding opportunities. In particular, this would include the identification of key infrastructure needs that will help unlock sustainable growth in the area.
- 1.4 The 2014 version of the LSS was endorsed by Cabinet in January 2014. Later on that year, the work of the Planning Board and the production of the LSS was recognised through the award of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) winner of 'Innovative planning practice in plan-making'.
- 1.5 Within the 2014 LSS there was a commitment to 'refresh' the document after two years. This refresh has now taken place and the LSS has been updated to reflect the change in strategic area covered (it now includes Mid Sussex and Horsham), the progress of Local Plans in the area and the implementation of the Greater Brighton City Deal. The LSS refresh was informed by key stakeholder workshops and was considered and approved by the Planning Board on the 18<sup>th</sup> January. For the LSS to have some 'weight' it now needs to be endorsed by all the authorities individually.

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraphs 178 and 179 of the National Planning Policy Framework set out the requirements for the Duty to Co-operate. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

## **2 Key changes to the Local Strategic Statement**

2.1 The refreshed LSS is appended to this report (Appendix 1). Key changes to the 2014 version, which are of particular relevance to Lewes District, are;

- A specific spatial priority for Newhaven. The LSS sets out a number of spatial priorities for particular sites/locations/areas within the Planning Board area. The 2014 version had a priority for the Greater Brighton City Region and a network of Growth Hubs, which included Newhaven. Given the potential of Newhaven to deliver significant employment growth that will not only benefit Lewes District but the wider region, and the recent Enterprise Zone announcement, it was considered by the Board that the town merited its own Spatial Priority. This is included within the refreshed LSS as Spatial Priority 8.

- A specific spatial priority for Rural Sussex. The previous version of the LSS was considered by the Planning Board to be quite urban focused. It was felt that the role the rural parts of the area play, particularly in terms the economy, and a number of the key challenges these areas face in the future (e.g. affordable housing delivery, connectivity, etc) should be specifically recognised in the LSS.

- Reconfirmation of the objective to narrow the gap between the planned housing provision and the assessed level of housing need. In particular, this will focus on longer-term (post 2025) housing needs of the sub-region. This will inform a full review of the LSS.

2.2 The refreshed LSS has also taken into consideration background evidence papers that have been prepared on the subjects of the economy, the housing market and the transport system<sup>2</sup>. These papers served a dual purpose of informing the refreshed LSS and the work and priorities of the Greater Brighton Economic Board.

## **3 The future role of the Strategic Planning Board in strategic planning**

3.1 It is becoming clear, both through Government announcements and policy and through outcomes from examinations into development plans, that going forward more will be expected of local planning authorities in discharging the Duty to Cooperate. In the case of the Planning Board area, undoubtedly the key issue that local planning authorities need to consider in discharging the Duty to Cooperate is the issue of meeting housing needs. This is due to the significant gap between the projected housing need of the area and the level of housing growth that authorities are able to currently plan for in a sustainable manner.

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<sup>2</sup> All 3 background papers can be reviewed at: <http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=855&MId=5735&Ver=4>

- 3.2 The authorities within the Planning Board area consider that once the 'refreshed' version of the LSS is agreed then work should commence on a full review of the LSS. This review will need to consider the issue of meeting longer term housing needs and influence reviews of the strategic level development plan policies of the individual local planning authorities. Such a commitment is referred to in the Lewes District Joint Core Strategy. Spatial Policy 1 states, *"a review of Spatial Policies 1 and 2 will be undertaken by the District Council and National Park Authority on completion of cross-authority working to consider longer-term options for strategic development both within the Sussex Coast Housing Market Area and in adjoining areas if any of these options are demonstrated to be deliverable within Lewes District."*
- 3.3 It might be the case that the reviewed version of the LSS is afforded formal development plan status itself<sup>3</sup>, although this is open for discussion amongst all the authorities on the Planning Board. In this regard, in April the Planning Board will consider a report that will set out the likely scope, timescales for production and format/status of the reviewed LSS. This will be reported back to Cabinet in due course.

#### **4 Financial Appraisal**

- 4.1 No direct costs will be incurred as a result of implementing the recommendations of this report. The District Council makes a financial contribution towards the work of the Strategic Planning Board and this will be reviewed in the next financial year.

#### **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Through Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as inserted by Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011, the Duty to Co-operate is a legal duty on local planning authorities to cooperate with other prescribed bodies on strategic planning matters. Developing and implementing the refreshed LSS will aid the District Council to meet the legal requirements of the Duty to Cooperate.

#### **6 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 I have completed a risk assessment. The following risks will arise if the recommendations are not implemented, and I propose to mitigate these risks in the following ways:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
That the District Council is unable to demonstrate that it has complied with the Duty to Co-operate and therefore its policy documents, such as the	That the recommendations of this report are approved, which provide the framework for helping the District Council meet the legal and

<sup>3</sup> The current version of the LSS does not have development plan status. By having such status means that the LSS will be utilised in the consideration of planning applications in the district.

<p>Core Strategy and Site Allocations document, are considered unsound by a Planning Inspector who conducts the Examination. This increases the time that the district does not have an up-to-date development plan in place. Such a course of action will also run the risk of a significant cost for appointing an Inspector for additional examinations.</p>	<p>soundness tests for the Duty to Co-operate.</p>
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**7 Equality Screening**

7.1 The original LSS was subject to an equalities initial screening. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact assessment was not required. This position has not considered to change with the refreshed version of the LSS.

**Background Papers**

Report to Cabinet 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014 (agenda item 9.4) – Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Local Strategic Statement - <http://lewes.cmis.uk.com/cmis5/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/505/Meeting/496/Committee/183/Default.aspx>

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton – Local Strategic Statement (Updated January 2016)