

Report To: **Cabinet**

Date of Meeting: **23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018**

Lead Member / Officer: **Cllr. Brian Jones, Lead Member for Highways, Planning and Sustainable Travel**

Report Author: **Angela Loftus, Strategic Planning & Housing Manager**

Title: **Proposal to establish a Strategic Planning Group**

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## 1. **What is the report about?**

- 1.1 The report outlines proposals to replace the Local Development Plan Steering Group with a new Strategic Planning Group. The intention is to set up a new group to provide corporate leadership and guidance in taking forward the replacement Local Development Plan through to formal adoption, and to focus on the delivery of the LDP strategy and policies. The Local Development Plan Members Steering Group was established in 2006 and its role and membership was subsequently revised in June 2013. The Group provided input and discussion on emerging LDP policies and helped to inform the development of the suite of supplementary planning guidance and development briefs to sit alongside the adopted LDP. However, concerns have been raised by Members and officers that the Steering Group has had a lack of 'ownership' by Members and has suffered from a lack of continuity in terms of Members attendance at meetings.
- 1.2 It is now proposed that the LDP Members Steering Group should be replaced with a more focussed Strategic Planning Group, establishing a more business-like approach.

## 2. **What is the reason for making this report?**

To seek Cabinet approval of proposals to establish a Strategic Planning Group to replace the LDP Members Steering Group. The aim of the new Group would be to provide a clear lead on the development of a replacement LDP to ensure alignment with the Corporate Plan and input on planning proposals with strategic implications.

## 3. **What are the Recommendations?**

That Cabinet approve the establishment of the group, draft Terms of Reference and membership of the Strategic Planning Group (attached as **Appendix 1**).

## 4. **Report details**

- 4.1 The role and purpose of the Strategic Planning Group is set out in the draft Terms of Reference attached. In summary, its key roles will be to:
- Lead the delivery of the replacement LDP and champion the replacement LDP both through its development and following its adoption
  - Support the on-going implementation of the adopted LDP Strategy

- Oversee the revision of the suite of Supplementary Planning Guidance required to ensure that policies are implemented and community benefits achieved.
- Discuss and review major development proposals with wider strategic implications, to consider alignment with both the Corporate Plan priorities and the LDP Strategy.

The Group will have a non-executive, non-decision making role but will report back and make recommendations to Planning Committee, Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate.

- 4.2 The draft Terms of Reference attached as Appendix 1 sets out the proposed role and purpose of the Group together with arrangements for membership.
- 4.3 Membership of the Group will comprise 8 Members, to include the relevant Lead Member with responsibility for the LDP, the Chair of Planning Committee together with 1 member from each Member Area Group. Members will have responsibility for reporting back regularly to and providing input from their Member Area Group. Members will also be expected to provide input from and report back to their political group. The Group will be chaired by relevant Lead Member with responsibility for the LDP (currently the Lead Member for Highways, Planning and Sustainable Travel).
- 4.4 Agendas and papers for Group meetings, together with notes of meetings will be available to all Councillors. Regular workshops and briefing sessions will be held on a six-monthly basis for all Councillors to ensure ongoing involvement of the wider membership. There will also be opportunities for informal briefings with local members and LDP update reports will be included as an item on Member Area Group meeting agendas, when required. Key stages in the development of the LDP will be reported to Cabinet and/or Council as required by the relevant Regulations.

**5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The replacement LDP will have a direct role to play in achieving the priorities of 'Housing: Everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs' and 'Young People: A place where younger people will want to live and work and have the skills to do so' through the policies and proposals within it, influencing development on the ground. The main role of the Strategic Planning Group will be overseeing the development of the replacement LDP, enabling the provision of housing, employment, community facilities and environmental protection throughout the County.

**6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

There would be no additional direct cost implications resulting from agreeing the Terms of Reference and membership of the Strategic Planning Group.

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

A Well-being Impact Assessment has not been carried out because the report does not seek a decision on a Council policy, strategy or programme.

**8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

None at this stage.

**9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

There would be no additional direct cost implications resulting from agreeing the Terms of Reference and membership of the Strategic Planning Group. However if any additional costs arise these will need to be contained within existing revenue budgets of the service.

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

If the proposed arrangements for the establishment of the Strategic Planning Group are not agreed there is a risk of not providing the clear Member leadership required to deliver the replacement LDP and to develop the associated guidance required.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

Local Government Act 2000, Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and associated regulations and guidance.