



WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL



South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Planning Members Group

10am, 31st March 2021
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

NOTES OF MEETING

Attendees

Cllr Chris White	St Albans City & District Council (Chair)
Cllr Jamie Day	St Albans City & District Council
Cllr Iain Sharpe	Watford Borough Council
Cllr Alan Anderson	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Sarah Nelmes	Three Rivers District Council
Chris Outtersides (CO)	South West Herts JSP Programme
Claire Hamilton (CH)	Dacorum Borough Council
James Doe (JD)	Dacorum Borough Council
Ross Whear (RW)	Hertsmere Borough Council
Claire May (CM)	Three Rivers District Council
Lauren McCullagh (LM)	Three Rivers District Council
Chris Briggs (CB)	St Albans City & District Council
Ben Martin (BM)	Watford Borough Council
Jon Tiley (JT)	Hertfordshire County Council

Item	Notes & Actions	Action Owner
1	<p>Welcome, introductions and apologies</p> <p>Apologies were noted from Cllr Harvey Cohen (Hertsmere Borough Council).</p> <p>Cllr Anderson advised that he will now be representing DBC from now on following Cllr Sutton's passing.</p>	
2	<p>Strategic Planning Update</p> <p>CO noted that a dedicated JSP submission to the Planning White Paper had been submitted to MHCLG in late 2020. This had been made on behalf of the SPMG and signed by Cllr White as Chair.</p> <p>Following that submission, CO, along with officers, had met with officials from MHCLG to discuss how strategic planning could play a more prominent role in any reform of the Local Plan reform. Specific concerns had been raised with MHCLG about the lack of any support</p>	

	<p>for strategic planning in general, as well as the Local Plan Examination process and whether it was fit for purpose to support strategic plans.</p> <p>As a result of this engagement, CO confirmed that MHCLG had been receptive to working with South West Herts officers to 'test' possible strategic planning options as part of the White Paper review. CO confirmed that he will keep Members apprised of any future discussions with MHCLG.</p> <p>CO also confirmed that the North, East and Central Hertfordshire authorities were in the early stages of looking at a non-statutory JSP. This will initially involve a growth locations study.</p> <p>Cllr White confirmed that the Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB) were in regular and positive dialogue with MHCLG about potential sources of funding.</p> <p>Cllr White also confirmed that the HGB meetings were now being held in public following its constitution as a formal Committee in late 2020.</p> <p>Cllr Nelmes and JD both confirmed that they had written to MHCLG about housing numbers within their respective authorities. Responses received to both letters emphasised Government's current position on meeting housing numbers and need as a minimum.</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO to keep SPMG updated on any discussions with MHCLG 	CO
3	<p>JSP Work Programme and Key Milestones for 2021/22</p> <p>CO introduced the item noting that the 21/22 work programme represented a 'step change' in progress on the JSP. CO also noted that a lot of good work had been done preparing the groundwork for the JSP over the past couple of years, but it was now time to accelerate the work programme.</p> <p>To support this approach, CO explained that there were four key deliverables in the 21/22 work programme, these being a Statement of Common Ground, a JSP Visioning programme, a Statement of Community Involvement and a Regulation 18 consultation.</p> <p>CO acknowledged that this was an ambitious work programme, but will give the momentum the JSP requires to move forward and will help to secure buy in from the partner authorities, and also the community.</p> <p>CO explained that the key project for 21/22 will be the Statement of Common Ground. A final draft of this document will be presented to the SPMG at its next meeting in June. Following this, the SCG will then need to be taken through the partner authorities' approvals processes during late summer/early autumn.</p> <p>It is then proposed to undertake a JSP visioning exercise. This will focus on establishing a vision and set of objectives for the JSP, and will involve Members across all the partner authorities, as well as the</p>	

	<p>public and business community. This will then lead to the first formal 'Reg 18' consultation on the JSP, tentatively programmed for early 2022.</p> <p>Given the ambitious nature of the programme, CO explained that additional resources will be needed to support the work. The paper therefore requests approval for two full time members of staff to work on the JSP programme. Both staff members will be recruited by Dacorum Borough Council and will be initially secured on two year contracts. CO confirmed that both opportunities will be offered as secondments as well as being advertised externally. In addition to this dedicated resource, CO is also requesting officer time from each authority for half a day every two weeks.</p> <p>Cllr Sharpe supported the recommendations of the paper confirming that it was important that the programme now increased its momentum moving forward, in order that South West Hertfordshire could get 'ahead of the game' in relation to potential infrastructure funding to support long term growth opportunities. Cllr Sharpe also noted that he did not believe that there was any alternative to the JSP in the long term.</p> <p>Cllr Anderson also expressed his support for the 21/22 work programme and recommendations, stressing that it was important to continue to emphasise the importance of infrastructure provision as a key driver for the JSP. Cllr Anderson also noted that it was important that the JSP kept to the timetable as set out.</p> <p>Following further discussion, the SPMG UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to:</p> <p>4.1 Approve the JSP programme for 2021/22 and the key milestones as set out in the paper;</p> <p>4.2 Approve the recruitment of two full time officers to support the JSP programme on two-year contracts; and</p> <p>4.3 Agree a contribution to the JSP programme of one senior officer from each of the partner authorities for half a day every two weeks from the beginning of May 2021.</p>	
4	<p>JSP Budget</p> <p>CO introduced the JSP budget confirming that this had been agreed by the Dacorum Borough Council finance team, as budget holder for the programme.</p> <p>CO also confirmed that the current JSP budget was healthy, primarily due to the ongoing contributions from each of the partner authorities, the MHCLG capacity funding for 19/20, as well as delays to the programme during the latter part of 2020 due to the pandemic.</p> <p>As a result, CO confirmed that the JSP budget will carry over approximately £740k from 20/21 into 21/22.</p> <p>Moving forward, the budget currently anticipates carrying over at least £300k into 22/23, noting that this relies on the current level of contributions from each of the partner authorities continuing in 21/22.</p>	

	<p>CO also confirmed that oversight and maintenance of the budget (and Risk Register) will lie with the newly formed JSP Steering Group moving forward. CO also confirmed that both will still be brought to the SPMG for approval.</p> <p>Following further discussion, the SPMG UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to:</p> <p>4.1 NOTE the JSP budget</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>JSP Risk Register</p> <p>CO introduced the revised Risk Register, confirming that there had been one material change to risk 9 – relating to funding for the JSP.</p> <p>CO explained that this risk was previously reported to the SPMG as being amber following mitigation; the mitigation largely focussing on the potential for additional capacity funding for the JSP arising from the proposed Hertfordshire Growth Board driven ‘deal’ with Government at that time. However, since the Register was last reported, these discussions have changed focus such that the potential for capacity funding to support the preparation of the JSP is no longer a key tenet of any ‘deal’ with Government.</p> <p>Following discussion, the Risk Register was noted.</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No actions 	
<p>6</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>Cllr Sharpe and Cllr White both noted that it was important that all partner authorities were represented at future SPMG meetings. This will be especially important given the 21/22 work programme and the increased profile of the JSP.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed that authorities should be able to nominate alternative Members to attend the SPMG meeting, if necessary.</p> <p>Cllr White also confirmed that, given the increase in JSP related activity, it will be important for the SPMG to meet more regularly. In terms of the next meeting, it was agreed to hold this at the end of June, and after the elections.</p> <p>In terms of agenda items for the June meeting, CO advised that this will include the draft Statement of Common Ground, the draft Statement of Community Involvement, and a programme to support the JSP visioning work.</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO to liaise with all authorities to ensure that alternative Member representatives for the SPMG meetings are in place; • CO to coordinate the next SPMG meeting for the end of June 2021. 	<p>CO</p> <p>CO</p>