

# POS Enterprises

## **Planning Strategically in South West Hertfordshire – Next steps**

February 2018

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## 1 Introduction and national context

- 1.1 The South West Hertfordshire Authorities of Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers and Watford, together with Hertfordshire County Council have agreed to work on a more formal basis to address strategic planning priorities across the Housing Market Area (HMA). Lead councillors and officers from the partner authorities held a workshop on the 23 January 2018 (see Annex 1 for a summary note of workshop discussions) to agree how to progress this work, following an initial officer workshop on the 28 November 2017. This paper summarise the context for joint planning, and sets out recommended next steps.
- 1.2 Since the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies in 2010, local planning authorities (LPAs) have relied on the Duty to Cooperate to manage strategic priorities across HMAs, particularly housing provision and distribution. However, this has not proved to be an effective mechanism and has resulted in a number of failures at local plan examinations. The Government recognises the Duty's weaknesses and is therefore proposing some new mechanisms to strengthen approaches to strategic planning. These were set out in various consultation documents published during 2017 (see Annex 2) but are expected to be confirmed in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>1</sup>. The following paragraphs summarise the key planks of the Government's new anticipated approach to strategic planning.

### ***Joint 'strategic' plans***

- 1.3 An increasing number of LPAs are moving towards this approach as it is considered as the most effective mechanism for properly addressing strategic issues. The path towards joint plans has been helped by the Government's proposal to move back to a portfolio approach to local planning, with strategic plans, preferably prepared on a joint basis, addressing a small number of key policies, supported by more locally focused plans (see Annex 3). The concept of 'strategic' local plans was initially set out in last February's Housing White Paper and was formally introduced in May 2017 through the Neighbourhood Planning Act. This requires all local authorities to identify their strategic priorities and set out policies in their development plan documents (taken as a whole) to address these. The new approach allows a more flexible way of plan-making with the aim being that the more challenging strategic issues are dealt with in the first stage strategic plan.
- 1.4 So far three groups of authorities are pioneering joint strategic plans (West of England, Greater Exeter and Oxfordshire Authorities) but a number of others are exploring this as an option. Although the Government is not likely to impose joint plans as a model for strategic planning across the country, it is clear that its 'carrot and stick' approach is making this increasingly difficult to avoid. The Secretary of State has also made it clear that he fully intends to use new powers to direct LPAs to prepare joint plans where there

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<sup>1</sup> A revised version of NPPF (and associated Planning Policy Guidance) is due to be published in draft in March 2018 with the final version expected in the summer 2018.

have been failures to progress plans within HMAs. This is one of the mechanisms for local plan intervention open to the Government.

### **Statement of Common Ground**

- 1.5 The revised NPPF will introduce a new requirement for all LPAs to prepare a Statement of Common Ground (SCG) setting out how strategic planning matters have been managed over HMAs. These will form an important part of the Duty to Cooperate evidence and will be tested at local plan examinations. Those authorities that are preparing a joint strategic plan are using this new mechanism as the ‘pre-commencement’ document, setting out overall strategy, working arrangements and key issues. A template for a SCG is set out in Annex 4.

### **New ‘tests of soundness’**

- 1.6 Local plans will be assessed against two new tests of soundness at examination, aimed at ensuring strategic planning matters across HMAs have been properly addressed. These will be used to ensure that there is not only a proactive and positive approach to strategic planning matters across HMAs (as currently required by the Duty to Cooperate), but that there is a clear (and agreed) approach to how these will be delivered in all relevant local plans or through a joint plan. The new tests are expected to be confirmed in the revised NPPF but, as currently proposed, would require plans to be:

- a) prepared based on a strategy informed by agreements over the wider area, and
- b) based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities, which are evidenced in the statement of common ground.

- 1.7 The new tests will set a high bar to cross for all LPAs, particularly where local plans are being prepared on different timetables and there are complex strategic issues, with no overall agreed strategy for addressing these. This is clearly an incentive to prepare joint plans to provide a coherent strategic framework across HMAs and deliver a quicker local planning process.

## **2 Taking forward a Joint Spatial Plan in South West Hertfordshire**

- 2.1 All six of the partner authorities recognised at the workshop that there were potentially significant advantages from preparing a statutory joint plan for the area. The key benefits are set out in the table below.

### **A joint strategic plan for South West Hertfordshire will:**

- provide a more effective long-term approach to place-shaping, with a larger spatial canvas offering more options for directing development to the right areas where growth can be supported by the right infrastructure, whilst retaining individual LPA decision-making (on the JSP).
- facilitate a ‘strategy-led’ rather than a purely ‘numbers-led’ planning framework to deliver growth, which better articulates the role of SW Herts in the context of the Metropolitan Green Belt and its relationship with London and the Oxfordshire-Cambridge Growth

corridor.

- increase funding opportunities and secure wider support from Government, with a strong emphasis on joint plans in all DCLG bidding processes (e.g. Housing Infrastructure Fund, Joint Working Fund).
- ensure that key strategic matters common across the HMA (e.g. future role of the Green Belt, infrastructure delivery, development viability, housing mix and type) are addressed more effectively and on a consistent basis.
- help deliver a technically sound and legally compliant planning framework for SWH through examination (i.e. meet the Duty to Cooperate and new 'tests of soundness').
- demonstrate to Government that there is serious intent to move forward positively and quickly with local plans, ensuring that SWH Authorities remain in control in response to the local plan intervention threat faced by St Albans, which may result in a Secretary of State direction to prepare a joint plan with adjoining areas.
- articulate an agreed position in terms of growth to Government and the potential ability to negotiate 'freedoms and flexibilities' with regard to things such as the 5 year land supply and infrastructure funding (as per Oxfordshire).
- more efficient and effective use of resources, skills and expertise

2.2 All the LPAs are at a similar, early stage in reviewing their local plans for the first time. There is therefore a perfect opportunity to move to a joint plan without compromising individual local plans. The proposed new SCG provides a useful opportunity for the councils to manage this transition and develop a robust response to the challenging strategic issues the area faces in the short, medium and long term. The following paragraphs therefore set out the key actions needed to take this work forward.

***Secure formal agreement from all partners to develop a joint spatial plan***

2.3 In order to progress work on developing a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South West Hertfordshire, all partners will have to secure formal agreement and provisional governance and working arrangements.

**Recommendation 1:** All SW Hertfordshire Authorities secure initial agreement from their relevant committee / cabinet to progress a JSP as part of a new portfolio approach to local plan-making [timescale: by the end of March 2018].

**Recommendation 2:** A Memorandum of Understanding should be prepared and signed by all partner authorities [timescale: by the end of March 2018].

**Recommendation 3:** A pre-commencement document<sup>2</sup> should be prepared, setting out the overall approach to developing the JSP (governance and working arrangements, project management, resources, budget), the plan's scope and timetable, and a risk

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<sup>2</sup> The West of England Authorities prepared a pre-commencement document as part of the work on the JSP (<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/so-welep-uploads2/files/JSPS/JSPS%20PCD%20v12.pdf>) but the proposed new requirement for a statement of common ground to be prepared will fulfil this purpose in future.

assessment and management plan. The Statement of Common Ground should be used as the template for the pre-commencement document to avoid duplication.

[timescale: SCG agreed by June 2018 with all Local Development Schemes updated to reflect the new planning arrangements]

### ***Overall vision and strategy for South West Hertfordshire***

- 2.4 A key part of the plan-making process will be ensuring that all partners agree a shared long-term vision for the area, with key spatial, economic and infrastructure priorities. Although over time the detailed aspects of delivering the vision may change, the overall strategy will stay the same, therefore it is important that this is developed and owned by all involved, and at the highest level.

**Recommendation 4:** All South West Hertfordshire LPAs and the County Council develop a long term (2050) vision, setting out strategic spatial, economic and infrastructure priorities to inform the JSP but also wider strategies that are being prepared on a Hertfordshire basis e.g. Local Industrial Strategy, Local Transport Plan (and other infrastructure plans). To explore potential for support from East of England Local Government Association (EELGA). [timescale: by June 2018]

### ***Governance and working arrangements***

- 2.5 The JSP will be prepared on a joint basis but the decision-making process will be through the individual LPAs. To manage the risks associated with this, a robust governance structure will need to be established, which a clear role for the leadership from each authority.

**Recommendation 5:** A Member-led Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG) should be established to provide political leadership for preparation of the JSP. The composition of the SPMG, and its links to other relevant groups (e.g. the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership) should be agreed in the MoU, and set out in more detail in terms of reference. [timescale: governance structure, MoU and ToR agreed by end of February 2018]

- 2.6 Although preparation of a joint plan will bring benefits from sharing resources and skills across the HMA, there will continue to be considerable constraints that will have to be managed if the JSP is to be delivered as a priority. Additional resources will have to be procured, for example, a project manager and project support, but the authorities should also develop an internal training and development programme to help fill any gaps.

**Recommendation 6:** That the lead officers from each of the partner authorities form a Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG) to support the SPMG. Terms of reference should be prepared to ensure the role and responsibilities of the project board are clear, including any specific workstream responsibilities. [timescale: end of February 2018]

**Recommendation 7:** The SPOG should appoint a project manager and other project support as soon as is practically possible to keep momentum going on the plan-preparation. A draft job description is contained on Annex 5. [timescale: end of March 2018]

### ***Communications and engagement***

- 2.7 Given the complexities and sensitivities related to preparing a joint plan, it will be important to ensure that any communications and engagement with stakeholders is properly managed.

**Recommendation 8:** A communications strategy should be prepared as part of the pre-commencement stage, setting out how the formal consultation processes will be managed alongside wider engagement on the plan. Engagement with the following key groups should be included:

- The wider local authority membership, helping to secure cross-party ownership and therefore reducing any risks associated with potential changes arising from elections or in leadership. Suggested mechanisms include establishing a member forum with a small number of cross-party representatives as a sounding board at key stages of the process, and regular member updates and workshops.
- Strategic stakeholders to ensure buy-in from stakeholders as the plan develops, particularly where they are statutory bodies (statutory consultees) or have a role in delivering the plan.
- Local MPs, ensuring that they understand why the JSP is being prepared and the what the long term approach to developing a coherent and robust strategy is.
- Government departments, particularly where there is a need to ensure additional funding to deliver the JSP. An initial meeting with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government should take place at the early stages of plan preparation. Neighbouring authorities, particularly those areas adjacent to the JSP area.

Catrina Riddell, POS Enterprises Consultant

21 February 2018

## Annex 1: Notes from workshop held 23 January 2018

### Key Issues and Agreed Actions:

#### Discussion (1)- What does 'joint planning' mean for SW Herts?

Key issue was whether authorities choose to (a) continue with a 'business as usual approach i.e. using the new Statement of Common Ground (SCG) to set the context for the five individual Local Plan (LPs), or (b) whether to use this SCG to progress a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) which would articulate these key strategic issues in a statutory planning document, with individual LPs sitting below.

The initial position of each authority was as follows:

- WBC accepted the logic of preparing a JSP, but there needed to be clearer articulation of the advantages of this.
- HBC were in favour of a JSP as could see benefits in terms of helping secure additional infrastructure funding etc. Some concerns regarding Green Belt issues and how the issues of housing numbers would be resolved were raised.
- DBC agreed that it was essential to have some form of joint planning process to help address concerns regarding infrastructure provision etc. However, there were some concerns regarding how the housing numbers issue became easier with the involvement of 5 authorities without becoming a game of 'pass the parcel.'
- HCC considered the decision to be in the hands of the 5 local authorities, but noted there was an emerging recognition that as a service provider they needed to work with smaller groupings of local authorities to address the challenges posed with regard to growth and infrastructure provision.
- TRDC noted that no single authority could deal with the challenges the area faces alone. Due to the nature of the area, development in one location directly impacted a wider area – irrespective of administrative boundaries. A JSP also gave the opportunity to better address issues such as infrastructure delivery and the mix of housing across the area. There were some concerns regarding the loss of individual political control, but these were outweighed by the benefits a JSP would bring.
- SADC agreed with TRDC in terms of the challenges faced within the SW Herts area. The position for SADC was however complicated by the fact that they had to respond to the Government intervention letter. However, they supported the principle of a JSP.

After further discussion it was agreed by all that that there were benefits of working together on a JSP in terms of:

- Planning strategically for the area, but maintaining local decision-making processes.
- Addressing common issues such as the future role of the Green Belt, infrastructure delivery, development viability, affordable housing and housing mix.
- Articulating an agreed position in terms of growth to Government and the potential ability to negotiate 'freedoms and flexibilities' with regard to things such as the 5 year land supply and infrastructure funding (as per Oxfordshire).
- Improved chances of securing infrastructure funding.
- Developing a 'strategy-led' rather than a purely 'numbers-led' plan, which delivers growth, but better articulates the role of SW Herts in the context of the Metropolitan Green Belt and its relationship with London and the Oxfordshire-Cambridge Growth corridor.

- Developing a shared commitment to how growth is planned, delivered and explained to stakeholders.
- The ability to consider the role of key strategic sites and the ability of these to deliver better infrastructure improvements than a large number of smaller sites.
- Ensuring plans can be found 'sound' and comply with the anticipated new tests of soundness (even if they initially take slightly longer to prepare than currently envisaged).
- Overcome the challenge of mixed messages from Government on issues such as Green Belt and housing delivery.
- The ability to set out a clear vision for the wider area and plan strategically on a long term basis i.e. potentially up to 2050, with individual Local Plans providing the short / medium term detail.

Following discussion, the agreed position of all six authorities was as follows:

1. Agree to the principle of progressing a JSP, but noted that time needed to be set aside urgently to work out the details of how this would work in practice.
2. The aim should be to have an initial SCG in place by June 2018 to set a clear process to take the JSP forward.

**Discussion (2) – what is needed to initiate work on a joint strategic plan?**

It was noted that Government would expect to see prompt evidence of a commitment to a JSP. This commitment had the potential to support SADC in their response to their intervention letter (due by the end of January 2018).

Next steps were agreed as follows:

1. Set up a meeting with Government asap (at the appropriate level; suggest Steve Evison). (WBC to lead)
2. Discuss with the EELGA what they may be able to offer in terms of supporting the JSP process going forwards (DBC to lead).
3. Draft a MOU to set establish a clear commitment to moving forwards and how this would need to be resourced in terms of both finances and staff (SADC to lead).
4. The above MOU to form the basis of a report to relevant Committees, for their endorsement of the process moving forward. Agreement to be confirmed by all parties by the end of February/March 2018.
5. If one authority proves unable to commit to this MOU at this time, the other authorities will proceed with the JSP process.
6. To set up a meeting with local MPs (appropriate timing to be discussed) to ensure they are fully briefed and ideally on-board with the SW Herts process.
7. Carry out an initial audit of skills and resources to see where there are gaps that need to be filled on a SW Herts basis, to enable a JSP to progress successfully.
8. CR to provide examples of MOUs and JSP timetables for consideration.
9. A Communications Strategy to be agreed, to include a draft press release for circulation asap, to ensure all authorities take a consistent approach to announcing decisions on the JSP and the benefits of joint working. Key messages to be as set out under Discussion (1) above. (DBC to lead).
10. Formal Member and Officer groups to be established to take discussions forward. Member representation to be either at leader or Portfolio Holder level (as appropriate for each Council), but the representative must have the authority to make key decisions relating to work on the SoCG / JSP. Meetings to be held on a regular basis to ensure



matters progress to timetable. Officer meeting confirmed for 21<sup>st</sup> February, but discussions on MOU to progress in advance of this.

### **Workshop Attendees:**

#### **DACORUM (DBC)**

Cllr Andrew Derek Williams, Leader  
Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder – Planning & Regeneration  
Sally Marshall, Chief Executive  
Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director – Housing & Regeneration  
James Doe, Assistant Director – Planning, Development & Regeneration  
Chris Taylor, Group Manager – Strategic Planning & Regeneration  
Nathalie Bateman, Team Leader – Strategic Growth and Infrastructure  
Laura Wood, Team Leader – Strategic Planning

#### **HERTSMERE (HBC)**

Cllr Harvey Cohen, Portfolio Holder – Planning and Localism  
Christine Lyons, Head of Planning & Economic Development  
Mark Silverman, Policy & Transport Manager

#### **ST ALBANS (SADC)**

Cllr Alec Campbell, Leader  
Cllr Mary Maynard, Planning Portfolio Holder  
Amanda Foley, Chief Executive  
Tracy Harvey, Head of Planning & Building Control  
Chris Briggs, Spatial Planning Manager

#### **THREE RIVERS (TRDC)**

Cllr Sara Bedford, Leader  
Steven Halls, Chief Executive  
Geof Muggeridge, Director of Community & Environmental Services  
Claire May, Head of Planning Policy & Projects  
Marko Kalik, Senior Planning Officer

#### **WATFORD (WBC)**

Mayor Dorothy Thornhill, Mayor & Portfolio Holder – Strategic Partnerships  
Cllr Iain Sharpe, Portfolio Holder – Regeneration & Development  
Nick Fenwick, Deputy Managing Director  
Ian Dunsford, Head of Planning Policy

#### **Hertfordshire CC (HCC)**

Cllr Derrick Ashley, Chair of Environment, Planning & Transport Cabinet Panel  
Jon Tiley, Head of Spatial Planning & Economy

#### **Hertfordshire LEP (LEP)**

Apologies received

#### **POS Enterprises**

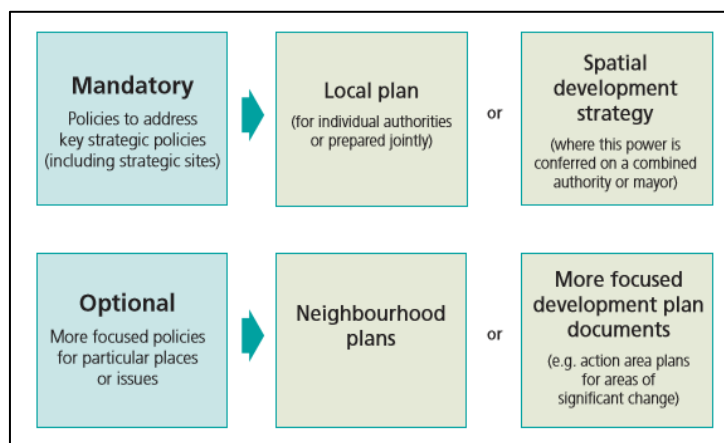
Catriona Riddell – Facilitator

## Annex 2: The national context for joint local plans

- **Housing White Paper** (February 2017): Proposed new style ‘strategic’ local plans to be introduced; effectiveness of joint working to be taken into account in new Housing Delivery Test; all local planning authorities required to prepare a statement of common ground (SCG) setting out how they have worked together and how they have resolved strategic matters within the HMA, particularly on infrastructure and housing provision.

*“...we would like to see more and more local authorities working together to produce a strategic plan over a wider area on the functional economic geography that is right for their part of the world...”*

[Gavin Barwell, Minister for Housing and Planning]



<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-white-paper>

- **Neighbourhood Planning Act** (May 2017): Local authorities are required to identify their strategic priorities with policies set out in their development plan documents (taken as a whole) to address these. Provisions also included in the Act to allow the Secretary of State to direct the preparation of a joint local plan where this would “*facilitate the more effective planning of the development and use of land in the area*”.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/20/part/1/crossheading/local-development-documents/enacted>

- **Housing Infrastructure Fund** (July 2017): New £2.3b fund launched to support infrastructure delivery, with emphasis given to joint planning as a priority factor in the bidding process.

*“We want to fund those schemes that take a strategic approach, with strong local leadership and joint working to achieve higher levels of housing growth....”*

[HIF prospectus]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-infrastructure-fund>

- **Right homes in the right places** consultation document (September 2017): Set out further details of HWP implementation including, new housing needs methodology; details and timetable for preparation of Statement of Common Ground, with pilot authorities invited; More incentives offered to local authorities progressing joint local plans in relation

to the HDT and 5 year land supply calculations; new ‘tests of soundness’ introduced for local plans to demonstrate effective strategic planning across HMAs.

*“...today we’re also publishing a requirement for a “statement of common ground”, a new framework that will make cross-boundary co-operation more transparent and more straightforward.”*

[Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals>

- **Secretary of State local plan intervention** (November 2017): SoS announces the Government’s intention to intervene in plan-making in 15 local authorities (including St Albans). Key factors to be taken into account in final decisions (expected early 2018) are local plan progress and the extent of joint working.

*“My decisions on interventions will also be informed by the wider planning context in each area (specifically the extent to which authorities are working cooperatively to put strategic plans in place)”*

[Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government]

- **Autumn Budget** (November 2017): As part of the Budget, the Government announced that the Oxfordshire Authorities would be preparing a joint local plan to support a new Housing Deal; that a new ‘strategic infrastructure tariff’ was being considered for combined authority areas and areas with joint local plans; and provisions of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 to allow the SoS to direct the preparation of joint plans to be implemented immediately (one of the mechanisms for government intervention).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-budget-2017>

- **Industrial Strategy White Paper** (December 2017): White paper setting out how Government intends to implement its Industrial Strategy and the important role ‘place’ and infrastructure should play in supporting growth, with an emphasis on local authority collaboration. LEPs and CAs to be responsible for preparing local industrial strategies. Although the focus is on rebalancing Britain more housing deals are on offer in areas of high demand and two key growth areas in the South were confirmed (Oxford-Milton Keynes- Cambridge Corridor and in the Thames Estuary).

*“We want to support greater collaboration between councils, a more strategic approach to planning housing and infrastructure, more innovation and high-quality design in new homes and creating the right conditions for new private investment.”*

[Industrial Strategy White Paper]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/industrial-strategy>

- **Joint planning capacity fund** (December 2017): The new fund, initially announced in the HWP, was launched to support those local authorities progressing (or moving towards) a joint local plan. The fund will cover the period 2017/18 to 2018/19 initially and aims to encourage *“more and better joint working, across local authority boundaries, ensuring that there are the skills and capacity where they are needed to plan strategically for housing growth, and to manage delivery of new homes and infrastructure”*.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-delivery-fund-prospectus>

## Annex 3: A new portfolio approach to local planning



## Annex 4: Statement of Common Ground – suggested template

### Part 1: Strategic context:

- geographical extent and wider relationships;
- overall ambitions and strategic priorities i.e. those that affect the sum of all parts;
- key metrics e.g. housing need, past delivery, expected GVA growth;
- main delivery mechanisms i.e. single joint plan/ single LPs.

### Part 2: Policy Scope and evidence base:

- key strategic matters to be addressed e.g. overall housing *target* and *anticipated* distribution as this may change as plans/plan develops; strategic infrastructure priorities; strategic employment opportunities; other e.g. GI strategy, G&T
- Main evidence-base to be used

### Part 3: Decision-making & project management:

- What are the governance and working arrangements (resources)?
- Who are the key partners and are they signed up to the overall objective?
- How will strategic stakeholders/ Stat cons be involved?
- What are key timescales/ milestones and at what point are key decisions likely to be made?

### Part 4: Risk assessment and management:

- Need to link to HDT/ HIF.
- Highlight key risks to delivering shared objectives and how these will be managed e.g. infrastructure not delivered, housing not delivered at anticipated rate, changing political priorities - locally or nationally, changing resources.
- Others with a key role in delivery - mechanisms to ensure delivery (e.g. MoUs, deals with government).
- Risks in terms of resources and any skills gaps, and how these will be managed.

### Part 5: Monitoring and Review:

- Key indicators and milestones
- Monitoring of DtC (as currently done through AMR)
- Triggers fore review of SCG (as highlighted through risk assessment)

### Annexes

- Details of MoUs, deals, other agreements
- DtC activity table

## Annex 5: JSP Project Manager – draft job description

### SOUTH WEST HERTFORDSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN: PROJECT MANAGER

#### DRAFT JOB DESCRIPTION

February 2018

Post Title:	South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan Project Manager (time period of appointment tbc)
Accountable Body:	South West Hertfordshire Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG) -add annex explaining governance
Post No:	TBC
Grade/ Salary:	£45k-£60k plus car allowance to be added (plus London Fringe allowance?)
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive [from one of the SWH Authorities]

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#### Job Summary:

To manage the development of a cross-authority, statutory spatial plan (Joint Strategic Plan) for South West Hertfordshire, covering the geographical area of Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers and Watford, taking account of existing and emerging local development strategies for the area, and national policy and statutory plan-making requirements.

The post holder will work with the five Local Planning Authorities within and Hertfordshire County Council, as well as strategic stakeholders identified by the Authorities as key in delivering the JSP.

The post holder will be directly accountable to the lead officer [to be identified] with responsibility for steering the JSP, working closely with the South West Hertfordshire Joint Member and Officer Board (JMOB).

#### Responsibilities:

Working with the six partner authorities, the post holder will have a key role in supporting the implementation of the shared vision through preparation of a statutory joint plan (Joint Strategic Plan). The work programme for the plan will be steered by the Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG), reporting to a Joint Member and Officer Board (JMOB).. Specific responsibilities of the post holder will be:

- To ensure that the Joint Strategic Plan is delivered to the agreed timetable and meets all statutory process requirements (including Duty to Cooperate), keeping momentum going throughout the process.

- To lead on co-ordination and procurement of the evidence base needed to support the development of the plan, including liaison with the local planning authorities in relation to their individual local development plans
- To keep the plan's risk assessment and management plan current, with regular reviews and updates, highlighting any significant changes to the JSP Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG) and Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG) immediately.
- To manage the plan's communication's strategy (internal and external), working closely with the lead officers from each authority [to be agreed].
- To work with strategic stakeholders, including neighbouring authorities, key partner agencies and relevant Central Government departments, representing the views of the authorities and ensuring the plan is deliverable.
- To act as a 'champion' for the joint planning work, helping to raise its profile both within a South West Hertfordshire context and externally, as 'good practice'.
- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to allow monitoring and performance assessments, and that all work reaches required high levels of quality.
- To manage the plan's budget in accordance with the requirements of Statement of Common Ground and work programme.

**Note:**

This Job Description is not a definitive list of tasks - it is designed to give an overall view of the job, and not to indicate what the sole requirements are. It is envisaged that you will use your own initiative, and develop you own style to achieve the desired aims.

Reasonable adjustment will be made to working arrangements to accommodate a person with a disability who otherwise would be prevented from undertaking the work.

**Person Specification**

To be added but should include the following

- political awareness (working with Members and Officers at a senior level)
- good communications skills (presenting complex technical issues, adjusting presentation to different audiences)
- good understanding of statutory plan-making process (do they need to be a qualified planner?)
- Ability to manage complex projects, delivering to timetable but remaining flexible and responsive to necessary changes over time.

**Annexes to be added**