



CABINET – 24 JUNE 2022

CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN (2021 TO 2037) - HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION MATTERS

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

Purpose of the Report

1. In September 2021, the Cabinet considered a report on the Submission Draft Charnwood Local Plan, which, inter-alia, set out officer advice that the County Council should take an in principle supportive approach to the draft Plan on a conditional basis. This included key conditions in respect of highways and transportation matters.
2. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet as to progress made with fulfilling those key highways and transportation matters and confirm the County Council's position as the Local Highway Authority (LHA) ahead of the Plan's Examination in Public (EiP), which is scheduled to begin on 28 June 2022.
3. Discussions are on-going at officer level and additional information is awaited. A supplementary report setting out the County Council's position is currently being prepared and this will be circulated to members and published on the County Council's website as soon as it is available.

Recommendation

4. The Cabinet is asked to note this report and considered further recommendations which will be set out in the supplementary report.

Reason for Recommendation

5. Adoption of the new Plan will replace the existing Charnwood Core Strategy 2011 to 2028 (adopted 2015) and the Saved Policies of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 1991 to 2006 (adopted 2004). The Plan will provide Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) with a plan-led development strategy to 2037. Given the location of Charnwood close to the City of Leicester and close functional connectivity to communities living and working in Blaby, North West Leicestershire, Melton and Hinckley and Bosworth, the content of the emerging Local Plan is particularly important to this area and the wider Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (LLHMA).

6. The EiP is scheduled to start on 28 June and run over three (non-consecutive) weeks. LHA officers will be attending hearing sessions, either in support of CBC or in the Authority's own right, and it is therefore important that the LHA's position is clearly established prior to this.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

7. The EiP Inspectors (unusually there are two in this case instead of just the normal one) have issued a list of questions and set a deadline of 6 June for CBC – and any other parties who might wish to – to submit their responses. This was the same deadline for any parties wishing to submit a Hearing Statement. The LHA has submitted its own Statements, the detail of which will be included in the supplementary report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. In September 2021, the Cabinet considered a report setting out the County Council's proposed response to the Pre-Submission Charnwood Local Plan. That report included detail of the policy framework within which the Plan sits, and also relevant previous decisions made by the Cabinet.
9. That report also set out that the County Council should adopt an 'in principle' supportive approach to the draft Local Plan, based on a commitment by CBC to complete further work between then and the EiP and to certain other conditions, including in respect of highways and transportation matters.
10. In May 2022, the Cabinet noted with concern the increasing pressures on the Capital Programme relating to infrastructure required to support housing and economic growth in the delivery of planned growth. The report set out some of the elements required to manage the financial risk to the County Council.

Resource Implications

11. The Council's four-year capital programme is £515 million and expected to increase further if the A5111 (North West Leicestershire) funding bid is successful. The existing programme has required borrowing to increase from £265m to £410m, which adds to challenge of balancing the budget.
12. Financial challenges are being exacerbated by the high inflation environment that currently being experienced. The drivers of inflation are having a particularly profound impact upon construction schemes. Restrictions on capital expenditure will be required to mitigate unavoidable cost increases.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

13. A copy of this report and the supplementary report will be circulated to all members.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

14. There are no equality and human rights implications arising from the report. CBC is working with the County Council and with other partners in the LLHMA to provide for the homes and jobs required in the future.

Environmental Implications

15. The County Council will continue to work closely with CBC and other partners to minimise the impact of the planned growth on the environmental assets of Leicester and Leicestershire.
16. The impact upon the environment is a key consideration in all planning decisions made within the context of an approved or emerging Local Plan, and the County Council will seek to ensure that opportunities are taken to enhance the environment through biodiversity net gain and sustainable forms of development.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

17. The County Council works closely with the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Planning Partnership, which includes Leicester City Council, the seven district councils in Leicestershire and the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership. A strengthening of partnership working is sought to deal with the transport challenges which require a strategy-led approach with multiple partners, both in Charnwood and the wider area.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 17th September 2021: Response to the Charnwood Borough Council Pre-Submission Charnwood Local Plan (2021-2037) Consultation
<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6446&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet 29th March 2022: Environment and Transport Department's 2022/23 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme
<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6774&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet 27th May 2022: Provisional Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/22
<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6744&Ver=4>

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