

Advice from Joint Local Planning Advisory Group, 1st October 2019, regarding Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues & Options

Background

The first Joint Local Planning Advisory Group met on 1st October. The focus of the meeting was to discuss the proposed Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues & Options draft text and proposed consultation activities. Recommendations from JLPAG are to be communicated to each council's separate democratic processes for discussion and formal agreement of the consultation documents.

Recommendations to JLPAG members included:

1. Note the Lessons Learned and Good Practice review (Appendix A)
2. Note the Statement of Consultation (Appendix B); and
3. Recommend to the respective council's decision-making processes that they should agree to consult on the Local Plan Issues & Options report text (at Appendix E) and supporting documents (at Appendices A, B, F, G and H).

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Having considered the papers, the recommendations from the JLPAG to the respective council's decision-making processes are as follows:

- Further work is required on the text of the Issues and Options document and on the questions included within it
- A further iteration of the document should be subject to additional appropriate scrutiny, ahead of the public consultation
- Consultation on the Local Plan Issues & Options stage should begin in the new year, January 2020.

These three points are expanded upon below.

Discussion informing JLPAG advice

Detailed points raised in the JLPAG discussion resulting in the above advice included the following:

Further work is required on the text of the document

- Structure of the document – this needs reviewing, taking into consideration its web and print forms, in order to attract and maintain the attention of readers
- Big themes – potential conflicts between these themes needs spelling out more clearly

- Growth – there should be explicit explanation of why no growth is not an option, given existing council commitments and government policy requirements.
- Spatial choices – these should be explained more fully
- Language – this should be reviewed to ensure it is more engaging and less technical

Further work is required on the questions included within the document

- Questions - should be framed consistently, allowing open responses on each issue
- Quantitative prioritising questions - for all themes these should be brought together as prioritisation of themes (top priority/high priority/low priority) is a relative issue
- Question 19 regarding spatial choices should be reviewed to allow those responding to provide answers involving a blend of options or percentage preference

A further iteration of the document should be subject to further appropriate scrutiny, ahead of consultation

- Given the scale of changes required it was considered that there was not sufficient time ahead of the publication of papers for the programmed Cambridge Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee on 14 October for any changes to be made arising from JLPAG's discussion. Therefore, this meeting should be postponed to allow the Cambridge scrutiny committee to consider an evolved version of the document. The timing of the meeting would be in early November, therefore coinciding with the South Cambridgeshire Cabinet on 6 November.
- In addition to this, if further changes are required to the documents after these respective meetings, these could be discussed with the JLPAG with any changes confirmed through out of cycle Executive Decisions.

Consultation on the Issues & Options should begin in the new year

- The Christmas period should not be part of the consultation period as it would disrupt consultation communications.
- The consultation should start early in January 2020
- The consultation period should include a reasonable amount of time within the university term, as many members of the Cambridge community work to this calendar.

Background papers

Joint Local Planning Advisory Group papers, 1st October 2019

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=492&MIId=3762&Ver=4>