

Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Joint Strategic Economic Committee

30 September 2015

Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Functional Economic Market Assessment for Wiltshire and Swindon

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Committee on progress with the preparation of a new joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Functional Economic Market Assessment (FEMA) for Wiltshire and Swindon.

2. Background

- 2.1 As supported by the JSEC Committee in April 2015 and building on previous successful joint working arrangements, Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council are currently working together on the preparation of a joint SHMA and FEMA for Wiltshire and Swindon.
- 2.2 Although both Local Plans have recently been adopted they will need early review to extend the plan period to at least 15 years in line with the recommendations of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This was a key consideration in determining the soundness of both the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Swindon Borough Local Plan.
- 2.3 The SHMA and FEMA are essential to determine the housing and economic development need for the local authority areas beyond 2026 and will provide key evidence to support the forthcoming review of the respective local plans.

3. Project Update

- 2.4 The Councils have now appointed Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake the SHMA/FEMA. ORS have extensive experience in this area of work, including for the West of England and Somerset local authorities.
- 2.5 The project inception meeting was held on 15 September 2015. At the meeting the target date of April 2016 for the receipt of the final reports was confirmed to be achievable, although it was acknowledged that engagement with stakeholders could influence the delivery of the project.
- 2.6 Local Planning Authorities are legally required¹ to cooperate throughout the plan making process. This requirement extends to all adjoining authorities and public bodies and will be fully integrated into the project to ensure that the evidence can be

¹ Referred to the Duty to Cooperate, as set out in the Localism Act 2011

considered sound at Local Plan Examination. The involvement of members from Swindon and Wiltshire will be essential. The Committee may wish to consider whether the arrangement for the current Joint Working Party should be updated to ensure there is an appropriate body to provide member input into the project.

- 2.7 Other stakeholders, such as developers, will also be invited to engage with the project to ensure that the evidence is robust.

4. Next steps

- 2.8 The consultants will be gathering information to inform the delineation of the housing market areas (HMAs) and functional economic market areas (FEMAs). It is anticipated that draft HMA/FEMAs will be identified before the end of this year, at which point consultation with stakeholders will be undertaken.
- 2.9 It is recommended that officers report back to JSEC once the initial evidence gathering and identification of the HMAs has been undertaken by the consultants and prior to stakeholder consultation taking place. This stage will require detailed consideration of the extent that Wiltshire and Swindon will need to work with adjacent planning authorities under the duty to cooperate.

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