

# Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership

## Joint Strategic Economic Committee

1 December 2015

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### Planning Policy Update

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide an update to the Committee on progress with joint working including the need for a joint study to determine the scale and location of growth at Swindon in the light of the joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Functional Economic Market Assessment (FEMA) for Wiltshire and Swindon.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1. As reported to the Committee in September 2015, although both Local Plans (Wiltshire Core Strategy and Swindon Borough Core Strategy) have recently been adopted for the period to 2026 they will need early review to extend the plan period to at least 15 years in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The SHMA and FEMA will inform the housing and economic needs beyond 2026 and provide evidence to inform the review of these Plans.
- 2.2. At the last Committee, discussion also took place regarding the current Joint Working Party to consider whether it should be updated or if more suitable or efficient governance arrangements were possible to support joint working of both authorities. No conclusions were made.

#### 3. Joint Working

- 3.1. The SHMA/FEMA project is moving forward and the Councils' consultant, Opinion Research Services, is working towards producing draft HMA and FEMA boundaries. The methodology for defining the boundaries and the draft boundaries themselves will be prepared for initial discussion with neighbouring planning authorities in the New Year consistent with the Duty to Cooperate.
- 3.2. In terms of Councillor's engagement in taking the project forward, it is proposed that the project team comprising Wiltshire and Swindon Officers in planning, housing and economic development report to a Senior Officer/Councillor Working Group comprising three Councillors from each authority and that group reports to the Joint Strategic Economic Committee.
- 3.3. For each authority, it is proposed that the relevant Cabinet portfolio holders are represented on the Group. This is proposed as a more efficient form of working appropriate to the Project than the extant Joint Working Party. Meetings can be arranged consistent with milestones within the project, with the initial meeting held in December/January 2016 to include the following:
  - Project timelines and reporting arrangements;

- Establishment of stakeholder group consistent with best practice comprising developers, major land owners and registered Social (or their representatives), and consideration of the need for wider community engagement;
- Form and nature of consultation; and
- Update on project outputs.

#### 4. Swindon Growth Study

- 4.1. In rolling the Plan periods forward there will be the need to plan for, and therefore to consider the potential for additional growth in the Swindon area. This will need to be done through the preparation of a joint study to inform plan making, which has successfully been undertaken to inform previous strategic planning documents
- 4.2. In 2004, at the request of the then South West Regional Assembly, a joint study was undertaken to determine the future growth of Swindon over the period to 2026. This became known as the Swindon Joint Study and was published in 2005. Whilst initially this was to inform the draft Regional Strategy, much of this work was subsequently used for informing the respective plans for Swindon and Wiltshire, particularly the identification of the area to the east of the A419 as a major urban extension to Swindon.
- 4.3. It is proposed that a similar exercise is carried out to inform the review of the development plan for Wiltshire and Swindon, providing guidance on the long term development of Swindon. Together, Swindon Borough and Wiltshire Councils will lead and deliver the technical work for a new study focused on Swindon. However, there will be the need to engage with other Local Authorities and public bodies, such as the Environment Agency and Highways England also.
- 4.4. Joint Studies take time to prepare and work will need to be commenced alongside the development of the SHMA and FEMA project. It is proposed that the methodology, timetable consultation and governance arrangements for a joint study are also considered by the Officer/Member group proposed in paragraph 3.2 with a report to JSEC in due course.

#### 5. Recommendation

**To:**

- (i) Note the content of the paper;**
- (ii) Agree that a Senior Officer/Councillor Working Group be established comprising three Councillors (relevant Cabinet portfolio holders) from each authority to support the preparation of the 'Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Functional Economic Market Assessment' and other joint evidence base studies to inform the review of the Councils' Local Plans; and**
- (iii) Agree that the Senior Officer/Councillor Working Group, as identified in (ii), reports to the Joint Strategic Economic Committee.**

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