

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 20 th March 2018
Report Subject	Invitation to Prepare a Strategic Development Plan
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning and Environment)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs has written to all Local Authorities in North Wales inviting them for their views on the preparation of a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for the region. The same letter has been sent to South East, Mid and West Wales Local Authorities on the basis that each of those regions have either existing, or emerging, City Deal or Growth Deal proposals. The letter is attached at **Appendix 1**. Cabinet needs to consider its response to the invitation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet endorses the proposed response to the Cabinet Secretary as set out in Appendix 2 .
---	--

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL
1.01	The ability to produce Strategic Development Plans was introduced with Planning Wales (Act) 2015 though their content and geographical coverage were not specified. In the early stages of the Act's development it was noted that consideration should be given towards the preparation of a land use plan for the region, covering the "A55 Corridor".
1.02	Previously, when commenting on the proposal of the Planning Act, this Council has accepted there are benefits to the production of "Regional Plan".
1.03	Now the Cabinet Secretary is looking to progress SDPs and has recently written to all LAs promoting their consideration of the regions producing a Strategic Development Plan (SDP). In that letter, the Minister stresses the advantages of SDP production.
1.04	SDPs allow larger than local issues such as housing, employment and infrastructure which cut across a number of LPA boundaries to be considered in an integrated and comprehensive way.
1.05	SDPs have the potential to reduce complexity and repetition currently contained in LDPs and make more effective use of resources.
1.06	The ability to pool resources, reduce preparation costs, undertake more joint technical work, utilise existing skills and expertise and rationalise issues crossing administrative boundaries should not be lost.
1.07	SDPs are also necessary to provide a robust framework for the delivery of the land use implications of existing and emerging City Deal and Growth Deal proposals.
1.08	<p>She goes on to state that:</p> <p><i>"My vision for the development plan system is to achieve the most expedient way of maintaining LDP coverage through the production of Joint LDPs, while encouraging and facilitating a strategic approach through SDPs to deal with issues of regional importance. This is not about setting up parallel or competing plans, rather a streamlined suite of plans that complement and integrate as one".</i></p>
1.09	The production of an SDP for North Wales does align with the desires of the North Wales Growth Board and would ultimately provide a formal Development Plan to assist in the delivery of those desires. The governance structures are in place with the (Shadow) North Wales Growth Board which could provide direction for the SDP's production.
1.10	However, the move towards the production of an SDP raises two particular issues for Flintshire in relation to resourcing and the potential impact on the production of our Local Development Plan.

1.11	The Cabinet Secretary's letter makes no mention of how, or indeed <i>who</i> , would produce the SDP. It is a fair assumption at this stage that the Plan would be produced collaboratively by the region's Local Planning Authorities and there would be limited (if any) further resource provided at a regional or national level.
1.12	This assumption therefore raises the second issue and that is the implication of diverting existing Local Authority staffing resource into the production of the SDP. It is Flintshire's desire to get our Local Development Plan adopted as soon as we can and our priority must be in using all available and necessary staff over the next two years to move the LDP to adoption. The desire for Local Development Plan coverage for all of Wales is also a priority of Welsh Government, so diverting existing staff towards SDP production could undermine both local and national ambitions.
1.13	The Cabinet Secretary's letter then touches on how an SDP would relate to LDPs referring to the future production of joint LDPs to replace existing arrangements. We are aware that Local Planning Authorities who are reviewing their existing LDPs (including Denbighshire and Conwy) have been written to asking them to consider the production of a future joint LDP. Welsh Government have the powers to stop production of an LDP and could force Authorities into the production of a joint LDP. Though not a current issue for Flintshire, cognisance has to be taken of this when looking at the future shape of how planning services are delivered within the region. That is a discussion which needs to take place urgently within our Council and then with our neighbouring Authorities and Welsh Government.
1.14	In the meantime, it is necessary to provide a response to the Cabinet Secretary's letter of 13 th December. A draft response which will be sent from Flintshire's Cabinet and is attached at Appendix 2 for endorsement.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None at this stage. However, should an SDP be progressed without additional resource being made available it could have serious implications of the delivery of the Local Development Plan.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Discussions have been undertaken with the North Wales Heads of Planning Group and the Project Management Group of the North Wales Growth Board.
3.02	There is also potential that the North Wales Growth Board may want to respond as a single entity.
3.03	The invitation has been the subject of discussion at Planning Strategy Group on 22 nd February 2017. That Group endorsed the response in Appendix 2.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None at this stage.
5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Letter from Cabinet Secretary dated 13 th December 2017 Appendix 2 – Draft response to the Cabinet Secretary
6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Andrew Farrow. Chief Officer (Planning and Environment) Telephone: 01352 703201 E-mail: andrew.farrow@flintshire.gov.uk
7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Strategic Development Plan - a statutory development plan which will allow larger than local issues such as housing, employment and infrastructure, which cut across a number of Local Planning Authority boundaries, to be considered in an integrated and comprehensive way across a region.