REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY BOARD

DATE: 23RD October 2017

REPORT TITLE: DRAFT WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT SPATIAL PLAN

AUTHOR: LAURA AMBLER, WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY

Purpose of Report

1.1 To present the publication version of the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) to the Infrastructure Advisory Board for their views which will be reported to the Joint Committee when they consider the publication version JSP at their meeting on 30th October 2017.

1.2 An extraordinary meeting of the Infrastructure Advisory Board is being held in public on 23rd October after despatch of the papers to the Joint Committee on the 20th October, so that the Board has the opportunity to consider the publication version JSP.

1.3 The extraordinary Infrastructure Advisory Board meeting is being held in public to give Members of the public an additional opportunity to make statements to Members of the Advisory Board.

1.4 Whilst the Board are not a decision making body their views will be reported to the Joint Committee at their meeting on 30th October.

Issues for Consideration

Background

2.1 The West of England faces a significant strategic challenge; to accommodate and deliver much needed new homes and jobs properly supported by infrastructure, to create attractive places while maintaining the environmental assets and quality of life unique to our area.

2.2 The Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) will address these challenges in a coordinated approach, outlining the housing and employment requirement of the West of England for the period 2016-2036. The document will provide the joint framework to ensure that development requirements are brought forward consistently across the West of England authorities.

2.3 This coordination with regards to strategic planning matters is complemented by the approach to address strategic transport issues through the Joint Transport Study (JTS). The JTS has informed the JSP by outlining future strategic transport proposals for delivery up to 2036 that address current challenges on the network and inform future development proposals in this plan.
2.4 Preparation of the JSP has entailed consultation under regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, through the ‘Issues and Options’ and ‘Towards the Emerging Spatial Plan’ consultation stages. These consultation documents and supporting technical information are available for public viewing on www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk

2.5 The next consultation on the JSP will be on the Publication version of the JSP under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.

2.6 The proposed consultation period will be from the 22nd November 2017 to the 10th January 2018. If the plan is ready, subject to any minor modifications, the Plan will then be submitted to the Secretary of State under regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, in March 2018 for a proposed Examination in Public (EiP) mid-2018. Following the examination and consideration of the Inspector’s report, the plan will be adopted by the four Authorities. Once adopted, the JSP will become a statutory Development Plan Document and will guide the four Councils in the development of their Local Plans.

2.7 Members of the West of England Infrastructure Advisory Board, and its predecessor body the Planning Homes and Community Board, have previously received updates on the preparation of the draft plan and their views have helped to inform the Publication version JSP. Members of the West of England Scrutiny Committee received an update on the JSP and the key issues it will need to address at its meeting on 27th September which have also informed the Publication version draft JSP.
The Joint Spatial Plan:

2.8 The Publication version Joint Spatial Plan document and appropriate supporting documents will be published with papers to the Joint Committee on the 20th October 2017. Further technical documents will be produced and made available during the consultation stage to support this document.

Scope

2.9 The JSP is a strategic level Development Plan Document that will form the strategic policy context for individual Local Plans prepared by the four authorities. The JSP will be a statutory document and will therefore need to be prepared in accordance with statute, local plan regulations and national policy to ensure it is a ‘sound’ document supported by technical evidence.

The scope of the JSP, with its supporting evidence base, is focused on: identifying the number of new market and affordable homes and amount of employment land needed across the West of England from 2016-2036; identifying the most appropriate spatial strategy and strategic locations for growth; and, outlining the strategic transport and other infrastructure required to support sustainable growth.

Key Issues

3.1 Previous stages of the Plan’s preparation included public consultation on the key issues and challenges that should be addressed. The comments received have been considered and used to inform the Draft Plan’s critical issues and strategic priorities. Key issues of which the JSP has needed to address include:

- Identifying housing and employment need.
- Affordable housing delivery.
- Quality of homes and place and communities.
- Infrastructure to support growth.

3.2 In addressing these key issues, the draft Plan document outlines the following critical issues and strategic priorities:

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<th>Critical Issue</th>
<th>Strategic Priority</th>
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<tr>
<td>There is a critical need to substantially boost the housing supply, particularly affordable housing of which the need is acute across the Plan area.</td>
<td>1. To meet the sub-region’s identified housing needs, in a sustainable way. In particular to make a substantial step change in the supply of affordable housing across the plan area.</td>
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<td>Economic prosperity has brought substantial benefits to residents, communities &amp; the environment. However, prosperity has not been shared equally by all communities as there are pockets of deprivation within the sub region.</td>
<td>2. To pursue inclusive economic growth by accommodating the economic growth objectives of the LEP Strategic Economic Plan. Particularly to:</td>
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promote the growth of existing employment centres such as the Enterprise Zones and Enterprise Areas
ensure more inclusive growth and life chances for all, across the West of England, and improve accessibility to jobs.

The form and function of development in some parts of the West of England has resulted in significant pressure on infrastructure and settlement patterns which are over-reliant on the private car. This inhibits wealth creation and productivity and contributes to climate change and poor health.

3. To deliver a spatial strategy which:

focuses on three primary centres of Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare and recognises the complementary role of market towns to achieve sustainable growth.

ensures that new development is properly aligned with infrastructure and maximises opportunities for sustainable and active travel.

through a place making approach promotes places of density and scale with a range of facilities and which encourages health lifestyles and cultural wellbeing.

integrates high quality, multi-functional green infrastructure. Reduces greenhouse gas emissions and ensure resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The sub-region benefits from a world class environment. This brings substantial economic and community benefits and contributes significantly to the quality of life of residents, visitors and businesses.

4. To protect and enhance the sub-region’s diverse and high quality natural, built and historic environment and secure a net gain in biodiversity.

To prioritise development on brown field locations, optimise densities and retain the overall function of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt.

**Policy Framework**

3.3 The Policy framework in the JSP addresses the critical issues and strategic priorities. In summary the policy framework is as follows:

3.4 **Policy 1: Housing Requirement:**
The JSP sets out the housing need for the period of 2016-2036. The housing provision for the JSP includes a flexibility in supply to ensure the delivery of the housing need. A contingency supply is also identified for consideration as part of plan review should further capacity be required in the future. The mechanism to release any contingency is a plan review at the five year review period. The policy establishes the distribution between the unitary authority areas based on the spatial strategy (outlined within policy 2).
3.5 **Policy 2: Spatial Strategy:**
This policy sets out the spatial strategy and the justification underlying the choice of locations for identifying how the JSP housing and job requirements will be delivered across the West of England. The strategy is depicted on the Key Diagram. The Reasoned Justification to this Policy provides the basis by which the JSP has established the exceptional circumstances to some proposed amendments to the general extent of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt to sustainably accommodate the growth required over the plan period.

3.6 **Policy 3: Affordable Housing Target:** There is a critical need to deliver the affordable housing needs for the West of England. The Policy sets the Affordable Housing Target and the framework to boost the delivery of Affordable Housing across the West of England from 2016-2036.

3.7 **Policy 4: Employment land requirement:** This policy sets out the overall West of England jobs requirement and identifies key strategic employment locations including:
   a. Existing and strategic town centres
   b. Enterprise Zones and Areas
   c. Key strategic infrastructure employment locations
      Additional employment land (floor space and ha) provision will also be identified at strategic development locations.

3.8 **Policy 5: Place making principles:** This policy sets out the strategic principles to ensure the delivery of high quality and sustainable new development incorporating multi-functional place making principles. These principles will be taken forward and refined through Local Plans and supporting Supplementary Planning Documents/masterplans.

3.9 **Policy 6: Strategic Infrastructure:** The delivery of new homes through the JSP has an impact on the strategic infrastructure requirements for the West of England. The growth provided through the JSP will add to historic pressures on infrastructure namely transport. The JSP will ensure new development is properly aligned with infrastructure. This policy identifies the strategic infrastructure required to deliver the JSP growth elements. This will reflect the JSP Key Diagram and the supporting Infrastructure Delivery Programme.

3.10 **Policy 7: Strategic development locations (SDL):** This policy sets out the specific policy requirements for each of the proposed SDLs. These locations will not be allocated through the JSP it will be the role of the new Local Plans prepared by individual authorities to make the allocations for the SDLs and provide delivery guidance.

**Duty to Cooperate**

4.1 The 5 authorities of the West of England; Bath & Northeast Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council and the West of England Combined Authority are committed to work collaboratively through a plan-led approach. Engagement with neighbouring authorities has been ongoing. This is consistent with the Government’s core planning principles and the Duty to Cooperate (DtC). By preparing the JSP the 4 authorities are ensuring full compliance with the DtC.
Risk Management/Assessment

4.2 There are no direct risks arising from this report.

Public Sector Equality Duties

4.3 Feedback will continue to be sought from affected communities and statutory consultees to meet the authorities’ duties under the Equality Act 2010 as the Plan progresses through the statutory plan making process. An Equality Impact Assessment of the JSP will be submitted along with the Plan.

Economic Impact Assessment

4.4 The JSP seeks necessary infrastructure to support suitable economic growth. Should this infrastructure not be delivered in a timely way this will act as a significant constraint on the productivity of the local economy and constrain future growth.

Finance Implications

4.5 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The Examination in Public costs are included within existing project budget arrangements.

Legal Implications

4.6 The JSP including formal stages of public consultation is being prepared in accordance with statutory planning regulations.

Land/Property Implications

4.7 When adopted the JSP will provide the strategic planning policy framework to guide the management and use of land in the public interest. The JSP will set the overall quantum of housing development required up to 2036 and will identify broad locations where development will be supported to be brought forward through the authorities Local Plans. Under planning law the assessment of development proposals requiring planning consent will be considered having regard to the policies within the JSP as the Plan will be a statutory development plan document.

Human/Resource Implications

4.8 The JSP has an agreed resource to ensure timely delivery.

Advice given by: Louise Fradd Senior Responsible Owner for the Joint Spatial Plan and Development Director for Bath and North East Somerset Council.

Recommendation

4.9 Members to give their views on the draft JSP and for these to be reported to the Joint Committee.

Report Author: Laura Ambler, (Interim Head of Planning and Housing, WECA)
West of England Combined Authority Contact: Laura Ambler
Laura.Ambler@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

Background Papers: None