

Draft Statement of Common Ground to support Progression of Local Plans in Leicester and Leicestershire

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The authorities agree there is a long track record of effective joint working on strategic matters across Leicester and Leicestershire. The authorities have continuously engaged with each other on the strategic matters set out in this statement and throughout the preparation of Local Plans across the area.
- 1.2 The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire [Stage 3- The Final Plan -Strategic Growth Plan LCC \(llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk\)](https://llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk) sets out a spatial vision for the area and positions Leicester as the ‘central city’ at its heart. Leicester has grown through its administrative boundary, and shaping further sustainable growth and expansion to meet Government housing need requirements in full is a key objective of the Plan.
- 1.3 Establishing certainty around how the City’s unmet need can be effectively planned for is fundamental for all partner local Plans to be able to progress. The 2022 Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing and Employment Land needs [Updated-SoCG-FINAL.pdf \(llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk\)](https://llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk) is a unique and groundbreaking agreement which forms the basis upon which the City Council and other emerging Local Plans are being developed.
- 1.4 Adoption of the City Council’s Local Plan is critical to provide the certainty in respect of unmet need which other plans need in order to be developed and delivered.
- 1.5 The purpose of this Statement of Common Ground seeks to acknowledge and support the shorter-term plan period for Leicester City Council’s plan Examination to expedite a sound basis for the future planning of Leicester and Leicestershire as soon as possible.

2. Background / context

- 2.1 The City acknowledges that by adoption, Leicester’s local plan will not cover the expected 15 year period for strategic policies as set out within the NPPF.
- 2.2 However, all partners acknowledge the importance of getting local plans adopted to facilitate sustainable growth as soon as possible, as well as to meet the Government’s current June 2025 deadline expectations of progressing Local Plans. In particular, clarity on the City position is needed to allow authorities to proceed under the emerging transitional arrangements in respect of changes to the NPPF.

- 2.3 It is also acknowledged that there have been significant mitigating circumstances leading to the reduced Plan period as submitted including delays to consultation related to the covid-19 pandemic, needing to respond to major changes to government legislation and guidance including agreeing a partnership response to the 35% uplift to housing need announced just after the conclusion of the City Council's Regulation 18 Consultation, the introduction of new Policy requirements through the Environment Act in respect of Biodiversity Net Gain and in addition the most recent delay to the programmed Examination caused by the calling of a General Election.
- 2.4 To address the issue of the short plan period and to expedite the progression of other local plans within the HMA, Leicester City Council will commit to an immediate review of its plan following its adoption.
- 2.5 Failure to capture the unmet need position would compromise plan making through delayed Local Plan adoption in Leicester and Leicestershire with consequential impacts on housing delivery and wasted resources in terms of the advanced evidence and plan preparation work undertaken across the housing market area.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 In view of the above, the partners agree that City Council's plan period is appropriate in the circumstances, which will allow for plans and housing delivery to be expedited notwithstanding the NPPF encouragement for a longer plan period.