



Report to the Partnership for South Hampshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 11 October 2021
Report of: Claire Upton-Brown, Chair, PfSH Planning Officers Group
Subject: STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND 2021 – REVISIONS AND UPDATE

SUMMARY

This report sets out proposed updates and revisions to the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG), first formally agreed in September 2020, to enable it to be signed as a formal SoCG by the PfSH authorities.

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

- a) NOTE the contents of this report;
- b) NOTE that Joint Committee will be asked to approve the content of the Statement of Common Ground, that will lead to the production of a PfSH Joint Strategy; and
- c) pass any comments to the Joint Committee for consideration.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Joint Committee agreed a draft framework for the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) at its meeting in October 2019. The Joint Committee subsequently agreed a formal SoCG in September 2020. The SoCG sets out the key strategic cross-boundary planning issues and the programme of work that will lead to a new Joint Strategy, replacing the PfSH Spatial Position Statement 2016.

PROGRESS MADE ON STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

2. Stantec and ITP were appointed in June 2020 to undertake the potential Strategic Development Opportunity Area (SDOA) comparative assessments and transport impact assessments and modelling. The work is well underway, with the transport impact assessment, sustainability appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment of individual potential SDOAs, leading to the identification of three alternative development strategies. The three alternative strategies are now being further assessed through transport modelling, sustainability appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment.
3. Unfortunately, the timetable for this part of the Study has been delayed due to issues concerning the use of the Solent Sub-Regional Transport Model. The most lengthy delay was caused by the need to update the model baseline from 2015 to 2019, but it was considered that the benefit of ensuring the model is up to date, and the evidence base robust, outweighed the delay this would cause.
4. Stantec were also appointed to carry out the Economic, Employment and Commercial Needs (including logistics) Study. This Study was completed earlier this year, reported to the Joint Committee in March, and is now published on the PfSH website.
5. Progress has been made with the 'Green Infrastructure needs and consideration of mechanisms on how to achieve Green Belt designation' workstream. Following the agreement of a tender brief for the evidence base study, procurement is underway and expected to be complete in mid-November

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

6. The government issued a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021. The changes do not have consequences for the work being undertaken under the PfSH SoCG. However, members' attention is drawn to amended paragraph 22 which now states:

Strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption, to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, such as those arising from major improvements in infrastructure. Where larger scale developments such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns form part of the strategy for the area, policies should be set within a vision

that looks further ahead (at least 30 years), to take into account the likely timescale for delivery.

7. Transitional arrangements apply for local plans that had reached Regulation 19 (pre-submission) stage at the time of publication of the new NPPF. The government has indicated that it intends to issue further guidance in the form of Planning Practice Guidance, although at the time of writing this has yet to be published.

REVISIONS AND UPDATES TO THE STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

8. The main changes to the SoCG 2020 are set out below:
 - Updates to the timetable for completion of the evidence base workstreams.
 - To reflect the completion and publication of the Economic, Employment & Commercial Needs (including logistics) Study.
 - Inclusion of employment land/floorspace need/supply information.
 - Updates to references to: HCC strategic natural environment and infrastructure work; Greenprint and nutrients/water quality.
 - Updates to reflect progress on the Fareham Local Plan.
 - Updating the housing need and housing supply information to reflect the recently published affordability ratios, 35% standard method uplift for Southampton and estimated supply from 2021 to 2036.
 - Changes to the membership of the Joint Committee (signatories).

Timetable

9. As referenced above, the timetable has been delayed due to delays in being able to undertake the transport modelling work. It is now anticipated that the final report on comparative assessment of the SDOAs will be presented to Joint Committee in Q3 2022.

Publication of the Economic, Employment and Commercial Needs (including logistics) Study

10. The completion of the Study is a significant milestone in the work set out under the SoCG. This means that this workstream can be deleted from the SoCG. The updated SoCG includes qualification on how the study should be used (including the interconnected nature of the FEMA) (para 3.10). The SoCG now includes information on the need for and supply of employment land/floorspace, including information on need from the Study and supply provided by the constituent Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). It concludes that there is no general employment land/floorspace issue to address at the sub-regional level given that there is currently sufficient land allocated within South Hampshire (para 3.45).

Updates to housing need and supply information

11. The constituent LPAs have updated their housing need calculations according to the standard method by applying the latest affordability ratios that were published earlier this year. The housing need figure for Southampton has

increased due to the need to apply a 35% uplift to the twenty largest cities in England.

12. The constituent LPAs have also updated their housing supply figures to take account of completions up to April 2021 and making any necessary adjustments to the amount of supply beyond this date.
13. The outcome of using the latest housing need and supply figures is that the current level of unmet need is some 13,000 dwellings up to 2036 (compared to 10,750 in the 2020 SoCG. There are a range of different factors that drive an increase or decrease in unmet need. These are summarised as follows:

Increase to unmet need

- Southampton's housing need increasing as a result of being subject to the 35% uplift.
- New Forest housing need increasing as local plan housing need cap considered inappropriate to project forward to 2036.
- Decreases in supply in most LPAs.

Decrease to unmet need

- Annual need projected forward for 15 years rather than 16 years.
- Increase in supply in Fareham due to publication of reg 19 Local Plan with housing allocations.
- Increase in supply in Southampton due to a revised Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA).

NEXT STEPS

14. Subject to the Joint Committee agreeing the recommendation to approve the content of the SoCG, each individual Local Planning Authority and the County Council can then sign the document (subject to their own governance or delegation arrangements) and it can be published on the website. This will ensure that an up to date SoCG is available to help Local Planning Authorities in demonstrating constructive and positive cooperation on strategic matters at local plan examinations.
15. At its meeting in September 2020 the Joint Committee received a summary of proposals that were included in the Planning White Paper in relation to strategic planning and agreed that PfSH should respond to the consultation. Whilst the government had proposed an ambitious timetable to introduce new legislation for producing local plans - and a new standard method for assessing housing need, it is clear that the government now intends to revisit the original proposals and that a new white paper will need to be prepared. It should be noted that the purpose of the new planning system was to ensure delivery of 300,000 homes a year nationally and it is therefore unlikely that any new system will see a reduction in the scale of development and the unmet housing need to be planned for in South Hampshire.

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Background Papers:

None

Reference Papers:

[Economic, Employment and Commercial Needs \(including logistics\) Study](#)

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