

WEST SUSSEX & GREATER BRIGHTON STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD

Title: Future direction and role of the Strategic Planning Board

Paper prepared on behalf of the officer group supporting the Strategic Planning Board

Purpose: The intention of this paper is to clarify the role and function of the Board in the delivery of strategic planning for the board area.

1. At the last meeting of the Board, members considered a report produced by GL Hearn that reviewed the geographic extent of both the Housing Market Area and the Functional Economic Market Area. This report highlighted that there were three identifiable functional areas operating within the current Strategic Planning Board area, with some overlap between functional areas within the Board area but also stretching beyond it (see box below).
2. Therefore in high level planning terms it made sense that all the authorities covered by the 'Western' And 'Coastal' functional areas together with those authorities in the West Sussex part of the 'Inland' functional area come together to discuss the 'larger than local' issues with the objective of finding common solutions. However, it is also important to recognise that the 'Inland' functional area also includes authorities in Surrey and therefore the 'Gatwick Diamond Strategic Planning Board' will take the lead on work for this area. However, it is important that representatives of this Board engage extensively and proactively with representative of the Gatwick Diamond Strategic Planning Board to co-ordinate work programmes.

West Sussex & Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board		Gatwick Diamond Strategic Planning Board
Western	Coastal	Inland
Chichester Part of Arun Part of SDNPA Part of WSCC	Arun Worthing Adur Brighton & Hove Lewes Part of Mid Sussex Part of Horsham Part of SDNPA Part of WSCC & ESCC	Horsham Mid Sussex Crawley Part of WSCC Part of SDNPA ----- Various Surrey Councils

3. To this end, Crawley Borough Council (CBC) has initially agreed to join the Board with the status of an as an observer similar to ESCC. It is hoped that in due course they become a full Board member.
4. Thus, having established that from a strategic planning perspective all of the relevant authorities are involved it is important that the Board (and the constituent authorities) determine firstly what the future role and function of

the Board should be going forward and secondly how might this be successfully implemented.

5. Members may recall that last year the Board considered a discussion paper prepared by an external consultant on the future of strategic planning in the Board area. The decision at that time was to postpone consideration of the paper until the question of the geographical coverage of the Board had been addressed and the Housing White Paper had been released. With the first issue having now been resolved, and the White Paper having now been released, it is now considered time to reconsider the discussion paper.
6. The Housing White Paper expresses the Government's view that Local Plans will need to be kept up to date and to that end should be reviewed every 5 years. The paper also advises that the Government would like to see more and better joint working where planning issues go beyond individual authorities, building on the existing duty to co-operate. This comment would on face value seem to support the concept of strategic planning. However, instead the paper suggests that in future each local planning authority will be required to maintain a set of key strategic policies, with flexibility over whether these are in a plan produced by an individual authority, in a joint local plan produced by a group of authorities, or in a spatial development strategy produced by a combined authority.
7. It is noted that areas not subject to combined authority status will not have the ability to produce spatial development strategies. However, that might change once the responses to the paper are considered. What has been suggested is that in a strengthening of the Duty to Cooperate, authorities are required to produce a Statement of Common Ground setting out how authorities intend to work together to meet housing requirements that cut across authority boundaries. Producing such a document will be an opportunity for the constituent authorities of the Board to demonstrate their willingness to work collaboratively on strategic planning matters.
8. For the Board area, a combined authority approaches remain in development, for the Greater Brighton area¹. The outcome for this initiative plus the supporting activity developing economic strategies, investment prospectuses, and infrastructure delivery programmes across the whole area will also inform the strategic planning of the Board area.
9. All of the above, plus the acquired learning from individual Local Plan examinations is providing a context for the Board to inform its consideration of how it wishes to develop in order to effectively meet the challenges ahead.
10. The purpose of the paper is therefore to consider how the authorities that make up the Board can positively tackle the need for improved cross boundary working to address the many 'larger than local issues' that we collectively face. It is important to stress that this is not just a question of

¹ Work on a different combined authority approach for a large part of the Board area is currently suspended.

housing supply and delivery, but also about delivering an improved economy and the required infrastructure to support all forms of growth, whilst at the same time protecting the environment.

11. The Board has championed the creation of a Local Strategic Statement (LSS) to set out our collective high level objectives and spatial priorities. The original award winning document has recently been updated to reflect not only the passage of time and changing priorities but also the growth in the Board membership (and thus area). However, LSS2 remains very much a document which brings together the respective work of individual areas. For example it does not set out any mechanisms for addressing the under provision of housing in certain areas when measured against the Objectively Assessed Needs of individual authorities. This is a significant risk for all the authorities in the Board area for either the soundness of the plans they are working on or any reviews which are undertaken.
12. The challenge for the future is to create an approach which allows all the authorities in the Board to work collectively on developing a new high level plan which will seek to address the 'larger than local' issues that are currently holding back the potential of the sub region. From this new strategic plan (referred to as LSS3) each individual authority would be able to prepare their own plans to not only address their own local issues but also set out how they intend to address the cross boundary issues set out in the LSS3.
13. It is recognised that some authorities may find the concept of working across the three Housing Market Areas a very challenging principle to accept because of a concern that they might be faced with taking on additional growth beyond their own needs. However, it is important that the authorities have a forum to enable them to work together collaboratively to address the high level pressures that we all face and to ensure that we can work together in a consensual manner. The LSS3 will facilitate this discussion to reassure authorities that every authority has done everything it can to meet their own housing needs within their own administrative area in the first instance. It will then enable discussions to take place, around joint evidence, to consider how the unmet need remaining within an authority can be met elsewhere.
14. Being part of the Board allows all the authorities to help shape the key decisions of the Board. The alternative is to withdraw or fragment into the separate HMA areas. However, such approaches also has risks, notably that the very notion of taking such an approach could be misinterpreted in respect of the authorities' willingness to work together and the danger of losing influence over the future. Current Local Plan Examinations have highlighted the need for a mechanism to be in place to review and seek to deliver unmet housing need within the identified housing market areas across the area.
15. One of the many challenges in successfully achieving a collective approach to strategic planning this is that not all authorities are working to a common timeline with some having had their plans adopted, whilst others are due to be examined in 2017 and 2018, whilst others have yet to reach that stage. For any collective approach to work it is vital that all accept that the Board needs

to work with a dual focus. Firstly, all need to commit towards working on the joint commissioning of evidence to deliver the required outputs and more importantly joint solutions in the form of a new strategic plan (LSS3) and secondly, all need to assist, and recognise that individual authorities will need to progress the completion of their current plans or any reviews that have commenced. The alignment of plans to a common time horizon is an outcome which will take time to achieve and therefore the creation of LSS3 will inevitably be an evolutionary process.

16. The Government view is that all Local Plans should be reviewed every 5 years and therefore it is suggested that the conclusions drawn to support the preparation of a LSS3 also be also expressed in 5 year time horizons.
17. The diagram attached as Appendix A shows the intended lifetime of each of the current adopted or emerging plans. Some authorities have already commenced their reviews. Therefore, whilst it is recommended that the Board should focus the core of its work on the 20 year period beyond 2030 covering the period up to 2050 it must be recognised that there may be implications arising from the work which impacts upon the period up to 2030. This may be of assistance for any authorities with a shortfall in their OAN who are undertaking a review of their plan.
18. To illustrate how a LSS3 might help address larger than local issues between 2030 and 2050, consideration could be given for example to, in consultation with the NHS, the location of any expanded or new acute health provision, informed by decisions around the likely distribution of any housing growth for the period. Whilst, planning for health provision does happen at a local scale within individual areas there is currently no systematic approach to addressing the 'larger than local' issues such as acute hospital provision.
19. To inform the creation of a LSS3, work will need to be commissioned to understand and answer the following:
 - i. A baseline of current growth proposals and an understanding of any shortfall in housing, employment and infrastructure provision;
 - ii. The capacity of the Board area to absorb further growth in this period
 - iii. Undertake a rigorous assessment of every potential site within each authority to meet existing and future needs;
 - iv. The likely required level of growth between 2030 and 2050 having regard to any under provision of need up to 2030;
 - v. The strategic options available to deliver additional growth;
 - vi. The investment necessary (in infrastructure) to ensure the successful delivery of appropriate growth.
20. In undertaking the work to resolve points i – iv above this work could be undertaken separately within each of the identified Housing Market Areas. However, if this were to be done it would only be a robust analysis if the work was undertaken using an agreed methodology and a consistent approach so that the overall conclusions could be used to inform a future LSS3 across the wider Board area. Inevitably there will be a tension where different authorities

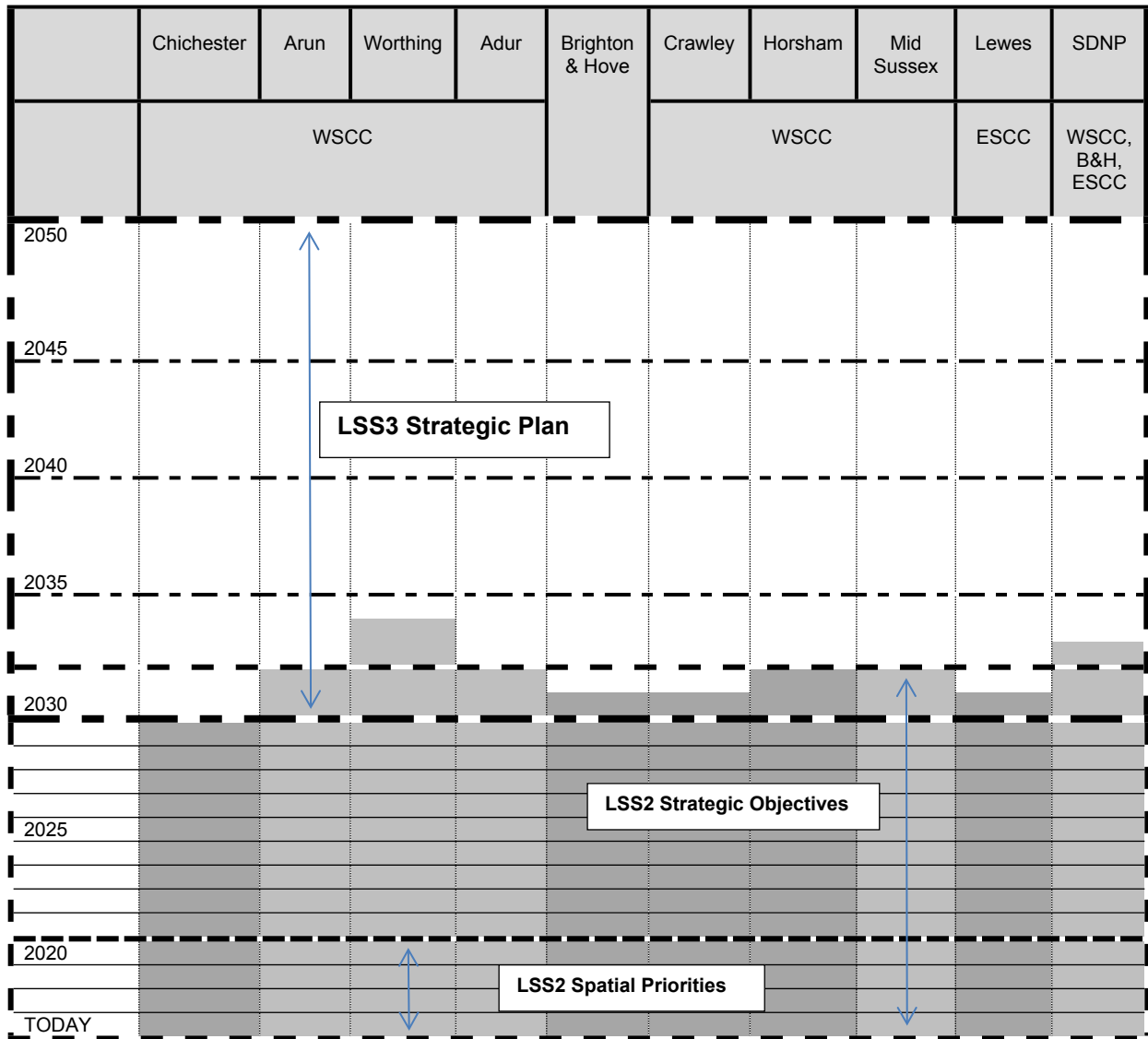
have reached different points in the Local Plan preparation cycle. Compromise will be needed from all parties for joint working to be effective. Those who are at an early stage will need to be prepared to take the initiative in developing and seeking agreement on the use of common methodologies for other to use.

21. If the principle of such an approach is agreed then the Board needs to determine what governance arrangements would best suit the intended approach and how the work of the Board will be funded.
22. With the continuing uncertainty regarding the Government's approach to strategic planning it is considered that the most appropriate way forward for the present is to maintain the 'status quo', with the Board making recommendations to the constituent authorities to consider. To assist the Leaders and Chairman of the SDNPA together with the Chief Executives of each authority to understand how these important strategic issues are being addressed by the Board it is also recommended that they receive a quarterly report from the Board.
23. At present the work of the Board is supported by officers from the constituent authorities and some funding has been provided by the same authorities to support individual commissions of work. However, officers are unable to sustain that level of support in the long term and dedicated support is needed to deliver the required outcomes. Furthermore, the current budget reserves are limited (approximately £55k) and could not fund any future work of significance. Therefore, the Board ideally needs to consider both the funding of an 'Advisor' and the resourcing of a fund to commission technical work as and when required.
24. If each constituent member was to commit to the sum of £15k per annum for an initial 3-year period, this would be sufficient to fund both the advisor (including on-costs) and commission an initial programme of technical work. This approach would also allow the administrative burden of running the Board to transfer from the Coastal West Sussex Partnership to the role of the Board's advisor.
25. It is recognised that Council budgets are under significant financial pressure at present. However, such costs could be funded from the recent approval given to each authority to increase their planning fees by 20% or in the case of the West Sussex Councils from the Business Rates Pool. In any event, the cost of committing to this approach cumulatively is likely to be less than that each authority would incur undertaking the same work individually.
26. It is important that the Board makes a firm recommendation on this matter at the meeting in order to inform the budget setting process for 2018/19. Any expenditure would not be incurred until April 2018.

Recommendations

- A) That the Board agrees to robustly and creatively explore options for meeting the unmet needs across the Board area, starting by leaving 'no stone unturned' within the respective administrative boundary for the period up to 2030 and for these options to inform Local Plan reviews
- B) That the Board agrees to prepare a Local Strategic Statement 3 covering the period 2030 to 2050 with an appropriate level of stakeholder participation to ensure that all those with an interest in LSS3 have an opportunity to engage in the development of the strategy
- C) That the Board agrees to commission work to provide an evidence base for the preparation of a Local Strategic Statement 3 which covers the following,
- A baseline of current growth proposals and an understanding of any shortfall in housing, employment and infrastructure provision;
 - A common methodology for determining the 'no stone unturned' approach to identifying possible locations to meet any unmet need.
 - The capacity of the Board area to absorb further growth in this period;
 - The likely required level of growth between 2030 and 2050;
 - The strategic options available to deliver additional growth;
 - The investment necessary (in infrastructure) to ensure the successful delivery of appropriate growth.
- D) That the Board agrees to continue with the current governance arrangements and provide Leaders/Chairman and Chief Executives with a quarterly report.
- E) The Board supports the appointment of an 'Advisor' to the Board from April 2018 for a three-year period subject to funding being agreed and for a constituent member to be the employing body.
- F) That the Board agrees to request each full member of the Board to contribute the sum of £15,000 per annum for three years support the cost of employing the Board's Advisor and to fund the commissioning of technical work.
- G) The Board reviews the Terms of Reference to ensure that they remain fit for purpose having regard to the proposed changes.
- H) Representative of the Board engage with representative of the Gatwick Diamond Strategic Planning Board to co-ordinate work programmes.
- I) That the Board agrees the responses to the recommendations to the report prepared by Catriona Riddell Associates as set out in Appendix B below.

Appendix A



Note: Shading relates to current Local Plan timescales. Dark grey signifies the plan has been adopted, light grey signifies the anticipated end date.

Catriona Riddell Associates Report Recommendations

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that the status of LSS3 continues to be non-statutory but that mechanisms are put in place to ensure that there is a high level of confidence that the strategic priorities will be collectively developed, supported and delivered. The recommended mechanisms include:

- Strong governance and working arrangements to ensure that LSS3 has the highest level of commitment and ownership from local authorities, and that key partners have a much more integral role in its development and implementation.
- A robust strategic evidence base to develop the spatial options and ensure that LSS3 provides a framework capable of supporting local plans through their examination testing process.
- An appropriate level of stakeholder and public participation to ensure that all those with an interest in LSS3 have an opportunity to engage in the development of the strategy.

The underlying sentiments behind this recommendation are noted. However, it is recommended that the work required and steps undertaken to produce a LSS3 should be based on the future possibility that the document might be a statutory document.

Recommendation 2

There are two, potentially significant, factors in the form and content of LSS3 that remain unknown; the outcome of the Expert Panel's recommendations and of the devolution negotiations. It is therefore further recommended that a risk management assessment is embedded into the work of LSS3 to ensure that it can adapt to changing circumstances as it evolves.

Agreed.

Recommendation 3

A new governance structure is put in place to support work on LSS3 ensuring that there is clear corporate commitment and ownership to help build consensus around the long term spatial strategy and strategic priorities. This should be supported by strong officer working arrangements, including a project board comprising members of the Strategic Leadership from each authority and a project sponsor. A suggested structure is set out in the diagram below.

The covering report recommends retaining the current governance arrangements pending clarity on the Government's position on Strategic Planning. However, to ensure that Leaders and Chief Executives are suitably informed about the work of the Board and its progress on addressing strategic planning issues it is recommended that they receive a quarterly report. The board would welcome an opportunity for a representative of the Board to be able to make an annual presentation to both the West Sussex Leaders Group and the Greater Brighton Economic Board.

Recommendation 4

A project manager and project assistant should be appointed as soon as possible either through an internal secondment(s) or through a competitive tender / external appointment process.

At this time, it is proposed to only recommend the creation of a Board Advisor post from April 2018 for a 3-year period. In due course the Board can consider the need for possible secondments to support the work of the Board.

Recommendation 5

A workshop for Leaders, Chief Executives and the SPB should be arranged as soon as practically possible (after the April 18th meeting) to outline the SPB's recommendations for taking forward work on LSS3 and agree the governance arrangements.

At the time the report was initially considered in 2016 there didn't appear to be a significant desire to hold such a workshop. It is considered that this position hasn't changed.

Recommendation 6

Local authority membership should be reviewed as part of the new governance and working arrangements to ensure all the relevant authorities are involved. Specifically, East Sussex County Council should be invited to participate in the LSS3 process.

Agreed. Both East Sussex CC and Crawley BC currently have observer status.

Recommendation 7

A budget is agreed to cover the full LSS3 expenses including evidence base and external support. This should be procured at the start of the process and reviewed every 6 months to ensure that adequate resources are available to cover the costs on a shared basis.

Agreed

Recommendation 8

A full review of evidence should be undertaken at the start of the process to identify what is already available, where the gaps are and potential opportunities to work in partnership to develop new evidence.

Agreed

Recommendation 9

A project plan and timetable should be prepared as soon as possible following a decision on LSS3. This should reflect the urgent need to move forward with LSS3 but also recognises the need to get all the right arrangements in place to ensure the process is owned and effective, and the need to have a robust evidence base in place.

Agreed