

# County Councils & Strategic Planning: A review of current & emerging practice



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**Catriona Riddell Associates, for the County Councils Network**

## **Contributors**

The project team that produced this report was led by Catriona Riddell, Director of Catriona Riddell Associates and author of the report, alongside James Maker, Ian Burbidge and Peter French from CCN.

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## **Acknowledgements**

CCN is extremely grateful to all of its member councils who have contributed their time feeding back to the survey that informed this report.

This report aims to reflect the work of a wide range of local authorities, and not every detail contained within it will reflect the opinions of all the contributors to the report. It should, however, reflect the spirit of constructive collaboration and considered debate.

# CCN

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

The County Councils Network (CCN) is a network of 36 county councils and unitary authorities that serve county areas. CCN is a cross-party organisation, expressing the views of member councils to the wider Local Government Association and to central government departments.



Catriona Riddell Associates (CRA) is a consultancy offering expert support to local authorities on local planning. CRA supports local authorities and partners, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, on a wide range of planning issues but specialises in strategic planning and the Duty to Cooperate. Its Director, Catriona Riddell, is a chartered town planner with substantial experience working at a senior level on the development and implementation of planning policy at local, regional and national levels. Catriona is also the Planning Officer Society's Strategic Planning Specialist.

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# Foreword



**I am delighted to be presenting this report to our member councils, central government and stakeholders. The planning system is a vital component in shaping the places our residents live and work. It determines where new homes should be located, where people work and where they spend their leisure time. It also identifies the physical and social infrastructure required to support new and existing communities and ensure that the places we create are high quality.**

However, as it stands, the system is too fragmented to deliver the real change that is needed to deliver the homes this country needs. Whilst the planning system is delivering sufficient permissions to meet housing need (with delivery being the major issue), currently there remains a lack of strategic cross-boundary planning to ensure place-shaping at scale.

With the significance of the growth agenda across the country, it is now more important than ever to properly join up housing and infrastructure, to ensure that we build communities and not just homes; after all they are two pieces of the same jigsaw. Changes also need to be made to secure new funding mechanisms to ensure that we can provide infrastructure to match both housing and economic growth.

This should not be interpreted as a county council power-grab. We absolutely recognise the value of local plans, and for decision making to be taken at planning authority level. What this is about is setting a platform for strategic planning across larger geographies and across boundaries ensuring that places and people are joined up and supported by high quality infrastructure. The Duty to Cooperate has failed to achieve this, and we do not believe the Statement of Common Ground will achieve it. It is therefore time to put more robust mechanics in place.

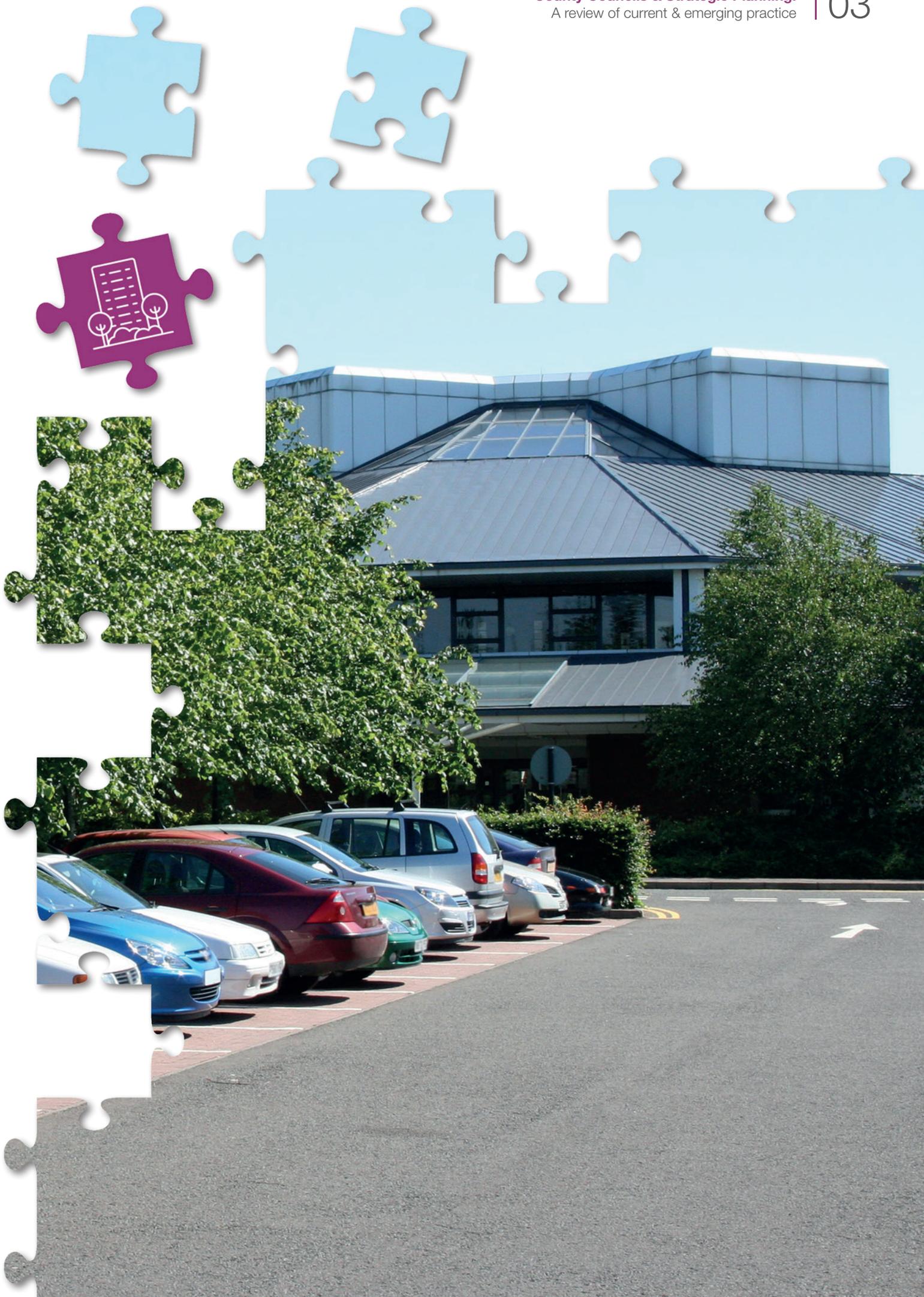
The recommendations set out in this report would, we believe, be able to tackle the significant planning and infrastructure challenges we face and help to deliver the homes the country needs. Recommendations 1 and 2, which suggests aligning spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities more effectively through statutory joint arrangements would require legislative change but would provide the strongest outcomes. Recommendations 3 – 6 would require minor changes to existing policy but would ensure counties are seen as essential partners to place making.

Reforms such as this to the planning system enable counties to act as strategic authorities for their area. It is these larger strategic-level authorities, covering bigger geographical areas, that are better placed to take decisions at scale across the full range of council services; including economic development, housing, planning and transport, health and care and children's services, in conjunction with partners. We look forward to continued engagement with the government on the common devolution framework in order to make this a reality.

As district and county councillors, we are elected to represent our areas, and we strive to make them better places to work and live. Crucially, we need to work together to do what is right for our areas. Aligning housing and infrastructure will ensure that we build sustainable communities, and not simply just new homes.

This report sets out intelligent and practical ways to build this vision into reality.

**Cllr Paul Carter**  
CCN Chairman



## Executive summary

**Since the demise of structure plans in 2004, county councils have had a significantly reduced role in their planning functions. Following abolition of regional planning in 2010, all statutory planning functions were transferred to district and borough councils in two-tier areas, apart from minerals and waste planning, with strategic planning matters relying on the voluntary mechanism provided through the Duty to Cooperate.**

It is widely recognised that the Duty to Cooperate has largely failed to deliver effective strategic planning and has been a major blockage on local plan preparation. As a consequence, housing delivery, particularly around the larger cities and in the South East, has failed to keep up with demand. This has also led to a disjointed approach to spatial planning and setting strategic infrastructure and economic priorities in many two-tier areas, with county councils involvement in local planning limited to parochial local matters and specialist support.

The lack of cohesion between spatial and infrastructure planning has had a particular impact on the ability of local authorities to maximise infrastructure funding opportunities, whether through local infrastructure funding (e.g. CIL and Section 106) or government/LEP funds awarded on a competitive basis.

The Government is currently addressing some of the failures of the existing system through an extensive programme of planning reforms to help deliver 300,000 new homes each year. Although a more effective response to strategic planning is at the heart of the reforms, it is still mainly based on voluntary cooperation through the Duty to Cooperate, albeit with a more robust testing mechanism for local plan examinations.

Some local authorities have decided that reliance on the Duty to Cooperate will not be sufficient to develop a robust approach to strategic planning matters and are therefore preparing either non-statutory strategic planning frameworks or statutory plans on a joint basis. In both models, and in the emerging Mayoral Combined Authority spatial development strategies, strategic infrastructure delivery is a key component, therefore the role of county councils, where these are being progressed in two-tier areas, is considered vital. However, with increasing financial pressures for many county councils and no statutory remit, capacity to support planning is varied and in some cases, very limited.

This review considers what is needed to support strategic planning and what the role of county councils should be in two-tier areas, looking at what the prerequisites for effective strategic planning are and experience across the country. It concludes that, whilst the Government's reforms should improve the current situation, it does not properly address the need to better align spatial, economic and infrastructure priorities across strategic areas. There are also challenges around strategic planning capacity and expertise, and the need for more robust shared governance arrangements in two-tier areas. The conclusion is that there is scope to build on the current government reforms and introduce a more formal approach to strategic spatial and infrastructure planning and enhance the role of county councils in two-tier areas.

# Introduction

**The County Councils Network (CCN) is considering how county councils could and should be involved in strategic planning to facilitate sustainable economic growth and boost housing supply, and to ensure better alignment between long term spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities in order to deliver quality places.<sup>1</sup>**

This review assesses current and emerging strategic planning practice in England where county councils are involved under the current legislative and national policy framework. It also considers what changes would be needed to enhance the effectiveness of strategic planning, and what the role of county councils should be in future. The review's focus is on strategic planning activities and therefore does not explicitly cover minerals and waste planning which remains a statutory responsibility of county councils in two-tier areas.

Most of the information presented in this review is based on the author's own knowledge and experience from working within the strategic planning sector, and from responses to a questionnaire from county councils in March 2018.

At the time of the review, the Government was in the process of reforming the planning system with the emphasis on boosting the supply of housing to 300,000 new homes per annum. Improving the effectiveness of strategic planning is a key part of the Government's overall approach to housing delivery and its strategy for supporting economic growth. In March 2018, a draft revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published for consultation alongside a revision to National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).<sup>2</sup> The review is therefore aimed at informing both CCN's response to the government's proposed reforms in the short term and its longer-term approach to supporting effective strategic planning.



# Strategic planning context

## Strategic planning 2004-2016

County councils have a long and established history leading on strategic planning in England. Between 1968 and 2004, counties (and latterly unitary authorities) had a statutory responsibility for preparing structure plans which provided the framework within which local plans were prepared. Structure plans set out the overarching spatial strategy for the county, the housing allocation for each district, and strategic economic, environmental and infrastructure priorities which required a common policy approach across the county. Structure plans generally covered county geography, even where there were unitary authorities involved, with strong partnerships between the different strategic planning authorities.<sup>4</sup>

In 2004, the Labour Government abolished structure plans, replacing them with regional spatial strategies (RSS). Responsibility for preparing RSS was given to designated 'regional planning bodies' (RPBs), although county councils retained a statutory advisory role in terms of preparation of sub-regional policies, monitoring and implementation.<sup>5</sup> Counties continued to be responsible for minerals and waste local plans, given the highly specialist nature of this role.

RSS were to be short-lived, however, as a result of the Coalition Government's 2011 Localism Act. This abolished the statutory strategic planning tier (RPBs) and RSS leaving a strategic policy vacuum. It was replaced with the 'Duty to Cooperate' which requires voluntary cooperation between LPAs and county councils, where relevant, to address strategic planning matters.<sup>6</sup>

As a (perhaps unintended) consequence, for the first time since the 1960s, county councils had no statutory strategic planning functions. The only exception to this was in

the Midlands where some local authorities had already embarked on the preparation of Joint Core Strategies to implement sub-regional policies in the RSS. Responsibility for plan-making was transferred to a statutory joint planning committee which had to include the relevant county council as a full voting member where the area is part of a two-tier local government structure. The legislation that allowed for this remains in place today (See figures 4 and 5).

Since 2011, the Duty to Cooperate has largely failed as an effective strategic planning mechanism, especially in relation to addressing cross-boundary housing provision and strategic infrastructure priorities. It has been particularly challenging around London which continues to have a statutory strategic planning structure and a unique planning system.<sup>7</sup> Although the Duty applies to county councils, they generally have only been involved in local plans at the behest of the district and boroughs as LPAs, advising on the infrastructure impact of proposed development in local plans. The Government's attempts to clarify and strengthen the Duty through the NPPF in 2012 and subsequently the NPPG, has helped some LPAs to meet the legal requirements of the Duty but many still failed to get 'sound' plans through the Examination process. The fact that the Duty is not considered as a 'duty to agree' has hindered progress in many areas where challenges around meeting housing needs have remained unresolved.

By 2016, the new Conservative Government acknowledged that the failures of strategic planning (largely due to the ineffectiveness of the Duty to Cooperate) were having a significant impact on local plan preparation and consequently, on housing delivery.

In February of that year, a government Technical Consultation highlighted ***“the advantages of strong strategic plan-making across local planning authority boundaries, in particular in addressing housing need across housing market areas”***.<sup>8</sup> The consultation document also acknowledged for the first time that new communities were likely to be needed and paved the way for much stronger government-led advocacy of ‘Garden Towns and Villages’.

In March of the same year the government appointed Local Plan Expert Group’s review of the planning system also concluded that the lack of effective strategic planning was a major blockage in local plan progress and in housing delivery, particularly in the South East and other areas of high housing demand.<sup>9</sup> Several recommendations were made to improve this and give the

Duty to Cooperate ‘more teeth’, many of which have been taken forward in some way through the later planning reforms.

At the same time, a number of local authorities recognised that the failure in strategic planning was in part due to the detachment between spatial and strategic infrastructure planning, which was not helped by the changing role of county councils in two-tier areas. As a result, a new generation of non-statutory planning and infrastructure frameworks started to emerge to help delivery of local plans. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Memorandum of Understanding (see below and Case Study 1 in Annex 1) and the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Local Strategic Statement were two of the first bespoke models to appear.<sup>10</sup>

## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Memorandum of Cooperation



**Following the abolition of regional planning in 2010 and building on a long legacy of joint working, the LPAs and the County Council agreed to prepare a non-statutory strategic planning framework – the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Memorandum of Cooperation.**

The aim was to help coordinate growth across the sub-region and align local plans with strategic infrastructure priorities. It also provided important evidence for LPAs that the Duty to Cooperate had been addressed. The Memorandum sets out the vision and objectives for the long-term development of the area, an overview of the evidence for future levels of growth, and the broad spatial approach that will help realise the vision and the area’s growth needs. This is now being used to inform the Mayoral Combined Authority’s new (non-statutory) Strategic Spatial Framework.

**For more details, see case study 1 in Annex 1**

Strategic planning was also being re-invented through the Devolution agenda, with the Government keen to ensure that it was included as a key role of the emerging new mayoral combined authorities, reflecting the model in London. However, this largely failed outside the Northern City Regions due to the requirement at the time for elected mayors, but also because of concerns that this would lead to the reinvention of the recently abolished regional planning arrangements, with decision-making being taken away from democratically accountable local authorities.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the failure of the devolution agenda to be implemented widely across county areas, the process has highlighted the potential significant benefits from closer cooperation on strategic planning, particularly in relation to infrastructure delivery, with the ever-decreasing availability of public funding and planning resources/expertise. At the same time, many LPAs were being faced with increases in local plan housing targets as a result of the NPPF's emphasis on meeting 'objectively assessed needs', and recognised that their current spatial strategies were not going to be sufficient. Authorities in these areas knew that they had to address these challenges collectively across strategic planning areas and tiers of local government. As a result, new spatial strategies focusing growth along strategic transport corridors and in new communities of various sizes started to emerge. There remained little appetite to move back to a statutory approach to strategic planning, however, largely due to concerns about loss of sovereignty for districts in two-tier areas.

Infrastructure-led spatial strategies were also beginning to be the favoured approach by Government in setting national investment priorities. A key plank of the Northern Powerhouse was to open up growth opportunities as a result of HS2, and the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) was moving beyond its original infrastructure focussed remit to promoting growth corridors, the first being

the Oxford, Milton-Keynes and Cambridge Corridor.<sup>12</sup> This would signal a return to closer integration between strategic transport and spatial priorities.

### Strategic planning context: 2017 onwards

By 2017, the new Government had set an ambitious target of delivering 300,000 new homes each year before the next election (scheduled for 2022) and a key part of the overall strategy was to speed up local plan-making and address the failures in strategic planning. The Housing White Paper, published in February 2017, therefore heralded a new, tougher approach to local plans, using both 'carrots and sticks' to encourage LPAs to work together on a more formal basis.<sup>13</sup> The proposals were taken forward in more detail throughout 2017, particularly in the consultation document *Planning for the right homes in the right places* (see figure 2). The proposed planning reforms were then consolidated in the draft revised NPPF and NPPG, published for consultation in March 2018.

The incentives on offer include more funding for infrastructure and for plan-making, with the extent of joint working being a major factor in the funds allocated. Certain 'freedoms and flexibilities' from planning policy and legislation are also on offer to those councils who are willing to go above and beyond their own needs to boost housing supply.<sup>14</sup> The Oxfordshire Authorities were the first to take advantage of this through their recently agreed Housing and Growth Deal with Government (see opposite and Case Study 5 in Annex 1).

Whilst government incentives to work together are significant, the 'sticks' available are potentially greater. Throughout 2017, the Secretary of State made it clear that he was willing to take a much harder line on LPAs that are not preparing their local plans quick enough, and that he would intervene where necessary.<sup>15</sup>

## The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal



Since 2014, the five Oxfordshire LPAs and the County Council have been working together to develop a non-statutory strategic planning and infrastructure framework which would enable pro-active, co-ordinated decisions on both housing and business growth, and a comprehensive understanding of the infrastructure implications of both.

This would be underpinned by a strategic infrastructure study to map and prioritise Oxfordshire's infrastructure requirements to 2040 and beyond. By 2017, the Government had highlighted the importance of the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor nationally and the need to support long term sustainable growth in Oxfordshire. A Housing and Growth Deal was therefore agreed between the Authorities and Government in November 2017 securing £230m of investment in transport and affordable housing, and with 100,000 new homes to be delivered by 2031 through the preparation of a Joint (statutory) strategic spatial plan.

**For more details, see case study 5 in Annex 1**

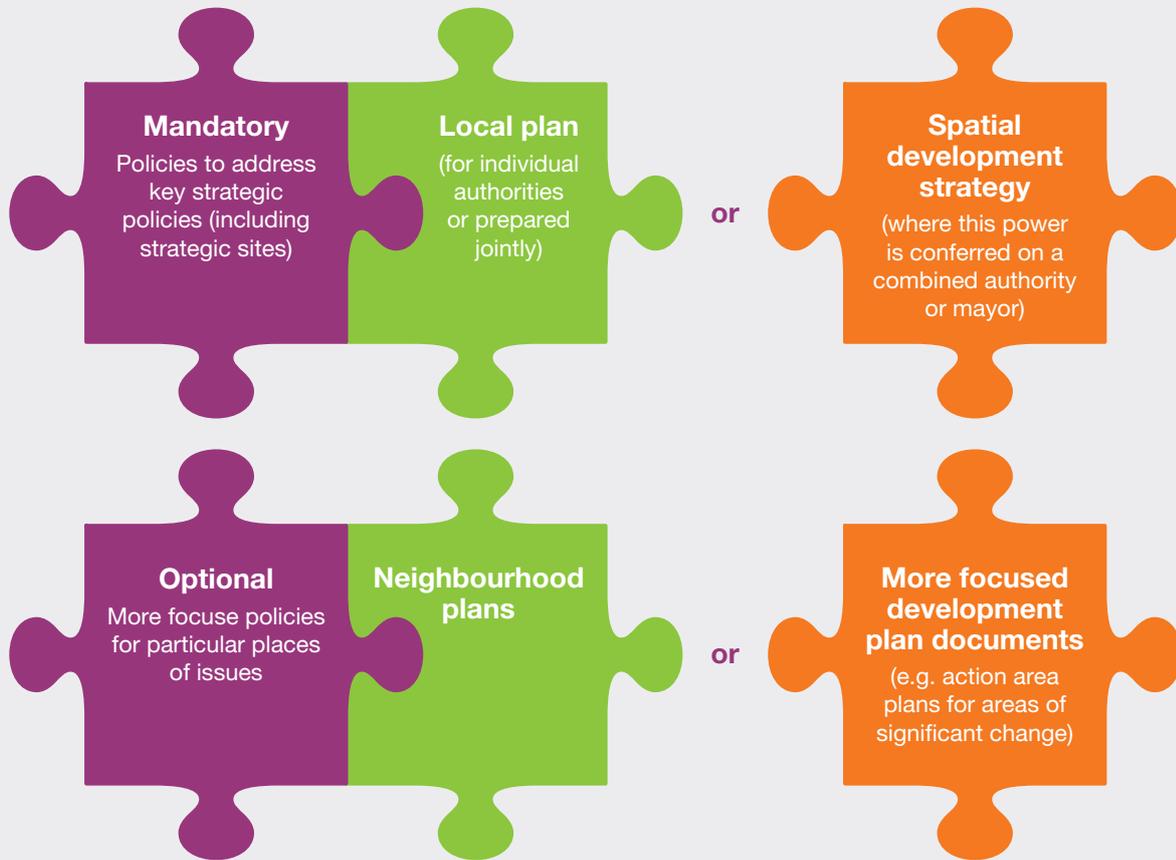
Additional intervention measures to those already available were set out in the 2017 Neighbourhood Planning Act. This includes handing responsibility for preparation of a local plan to the relevant county council where the Secretary of State ***“thinks that a lower-tier planning authority are failing or omitting to do anything it is necessary for them to do in connection with the preparation, revision or adoption of a development plan document”***. The Act also introduced the ability for the Secretary of State to direct two or more local planning authorities to prepare a joint plan, where this would ***“facilitate the more effective planning of the development and use of land in the area of one or more of the local planning authorities in question”***.

To complement the ‘carrots and sticks’, the Housing White Paper set out a new approach to plan-making with the focus on strategic planning priorities and using plan-making tools available in a more flexible and responsive way. This approach was confirmed in the draft revised NPPF which requires LPAs, as a minimum, to prepare a

plan which addresses the strategic priorities for their area, either as a joint or individual plan, or through a spatial development strategy prepared by a mayoral combined authority (MCA).

Two new mechanisms to ensure that the Duty to Cooperate is seen as a ‘duty to agree’ are also being introduced. The revised (draft) NPPF sets out a requirement for all local authorities (including county councils) to agree a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) covering the strategic planning priorities and how these will be addressed through local plans in the area. The SoCG is to form the main evidence to support compliance with the Duty to Cooperate and will be used in the proposed new examination ‘tests of soundness’ for local plans. These require plans to ***“be informed by agreements with other authorities” and “based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground”***.

**Figure 1:** Proposed new planning framework (Housing White Paper 2017)



In all the Government’s proposed planning reforms there is an implicit recognition that the current system of relying on the Duty to Cooperate to deliver effective strategic planning is not working. There is also a recognition that strategic infrastructure priorities must have a greater role in influencing planning strategies. Alongside the planning reforms therefore, boosting housing supply is a key factor in government transport investment priorities, as evidenced in the Housing Infrastructure Fund and where the bids for Forward Funding for strategic schemes have been led by upper tier authorities. Government agency Highways England and the newly established Sub-National Transport Bodies, within which county councils will play a major role in two-tier areas<sup>16</sup>, will also have to demonstrate the ‘housing value’ of any investment priorities.

Changes to ensure that the benefits of developer contributions to secure strategic infrastructure are maximised are also under consideration by the Government. Currently county councils, who have the main infrastructure responsibilities, benefit very little from either Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding (or New Homes Bonus<sup>17</sup> as the charging authorities (i.e. the LPAs) have no statutory duty to pass on any of their CIL receipts to counties in two-tier areas. Although the guidance states that LPAs must consult and collaborate with Counties in setting their levy and should work closely with them in setting priorities for how the levy is spent, in practice this generally does not happen. One of the few exceptions is the Greater Norwich Growth Board (see opposite and Case Study 4 in Annex 1) where all infrastructure funding, including most CIL receipts are pooled in a shared infrastructure fund.

In 2016, the government commissioned CIL Review Team recognised the tensions in some two-tier areas where county councils feel that they should have more certainty over CIL contributions to provide county infrastructure but districts, as the charging authority, have different priorities.<sup>18</sup> This was considered partly due to the lack of effective engagement from counties on infrastructure priorities, providing the LPAs with evidence of what they need and why (i.e. worked up projects with costings and timings for potential delivery). There was also a view that some counties have not been as transparent in the past in the way infrastructure funding has been spent and would therefore not be able to account specifically for CIL receipts. However, this appears to be a legacy from the transparency issue around S106 funding which have since been addressed through the introduction of county council Monitoring Officers.

The CIL Review Team also discovered that CIL covered only between 5-20% of infrastructure costs to support growth, particularly as take-up is still relatively low across parts of the country. The Government is therefore proposing changes to improve infrastructure planning and

funding through proposed changes to CIL, the introduction of a new Housing Infrastructure Fund<sup>19</sup> and increased emphasis in the NPPF on coordination and prioritisation of local and strategic infrastructure to support development. The Government is also proposing to introduce a new Strategic Infrastructure Tariff (SIT) to support delivery of cross boundary strategic transport and other infrastructure. However, as currently proposed, only MCAs and S29 Joint Committees will be able to levy any funding through this route.<sup>20</sup> Forward funding of infrastructure to ensure that this is in place in advance of new development, remains a significant gap in the Government's overall approach, however.

Delivery of strategic infrastructure also forms a key plank of the Government's approach to driving economic growth, as set out in the Local Industrial Strategy White Paper.<sup>21</sup> This recognises that growth needs to be managed on a strategic scale, a point reinforced by the Localis response to the Industrial Strategy which proposes a minimum spatial scale for managing growth and infrastructure which in many areas, should be on a county geography.<sup>22</sup>

## The Greater Norwich Growth Board



**The Greater Norwich Growth Board was established to manage the delivery of the Joint Core Strategy, which is now being taken forward through a joint local plan.**

The Board comprises the LPAs, Norfolk County Council and the New Anglia LEP. Key roles include agreeing the infrastructure projects that are considered a priority for delivering the planned growth set out in the joint plan and in the City Deal. All the CIL (apart from admin and the local community element) is collected through a single funding pot to be spent on an agreed programme administered by the Board. The County Council acts as 'banker' for the funding. The Board also has agreements in place to fund longer term, expensive infrastructure schemes. This ensures a coordinate approach to setting infrastructure priorities and delivery, and places the authorities in a strong position to bid for additional funding to support infrastructure investment.

**For more details, see case study 4 in Annex 1**

**Figure 2:** Government announcements on strategic planning 2017–18



**Housing White Paper** (February 2017): Proposed new style ‘strategic’ local plans to be introduced; effectiveness of joint working to be taken into account in new Housing Delivery Test; all local planning authorities required to prepare a statement of common ground (SCG) setting out how they have worked together and how they have resolved strategic matters within the HMA, particularly on infrastructure and housing provision.

**“...we would like to see more and more local authorities working together to produce a strategic plan over a wider area on the functional economic geography that is right for their part of the world...”**

**Gavin Barwell,**  
Minister for Housing and Planning

**Neighbourhood Planning Act** (May 2017): Local authorities are required to identify their strategic priorities with policies set out in their development plan documents (taken as a whole) to address these. Provisions also included in the Act to allow the Secretary of State to direct the preparation of a joint local plan where this would *“facilitate the more effective planning of the development and use of land in the area”*.

**Housing Infrastructure Fund** (July 2017): New £2.3b fund launched to support infrastructure delivery, with emphasis given to joint planning as a priority factor in the bidding process.

**“We want to fund those schemes that take a strategic approach, with strong local leadership and joint working to achieve higher levels of housing growth...”**

**Planning for the right homes in the right places** consultation document (September 2017): Sets out further details of HWP implementation including, new housing needs methodology; details and timetable for preparation of Statement of Common Ground, with pilot authorities invited; More incentives offered to local authorities progressing joint local plans in relation to the HDT and 5 year land supply calculations; new ‘tests of soundness’ introduced for local plans to demonstrate effective strategic planning across HMAs.

**“...today we’re also publishing a requirement for a “statement of common ground”, a new framework that will make cross-boundary cooperation more transparent and more straightforward.”**

**Sajid Javid,**  
Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government

### Secretary of State local plan intervention

(November 2017): SoS announces the Government's intention to intervene in plan-making in 15 local authorities. Key factors to be taken into account in final decisions (expected early 2018) are local plan progress and the extent of joint working.

**"My decisions on interventions will also be informed by the wider planning context in each area (specifically the extent to which authorities are working cooperatively to put strategic plans in place)."**

### Sajid Javid,

Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government

### Industrial Strategy White Paper

(December 2017): White paper setting out how Government intends to implement its Industrial Strategy and the important role 'place' and infrastructure should play in supporting growth, with an emphasis on local authority collaboration. LEPs and CAs to be responsible for preparing local industrial strategies. Although the focus is on rebalancing Britain more housing deals are on offer in areas of high demand and two key growth areas in the South were confirmed (Oxford-Milton Keynes- Cambridge Corridor and in the Thames Estuary).

**"We want to support greater collaboration between councils, a more strategic approach to planning housing and infrastructure, more innovation and high-quality design in new homes and creating the right conditions for new private investment."**

Industrial Strategy White Paper

### Planning Delivery Fund (December 2017):

The new fund, initially announced in the HWP, was launched to support those local authorities progressing (or moving towards) a joint local plan. The fund covers the period 2017/18 to 2018/19 initially and aims to encourage **"more and better joint working, across local authority boundaries, ensuring that there are the skills and capacity where they are needed to plan strategically for housing growth, and to manage delivery of new homes and infrastructure"**.

### Revised NPPF and NPPG published for consultation (March 2018):

The new framework and guidance consolidated the earlier proposals and emphasises the role of strategic plans and the need to better align long term strategic spatial, economic and infrastructure priorities through the local plan process.

# A strategic planning system fit for the 21st century

**There is now widespread recognition that scale matters if the long-term growth prospects of the United Kingdom are to be realised, and that spatial distribution and housing delivery are going to be increasingly dependent on infrastructure, particularly transport investment priorities.**

In doing so, it must also acknowledge that all tiers of local government have an important role to play and reliance on local plans will not be enough. This section of the report therefore considers current practice in strategic planning in more detail and how this can be more effective, including the role county councils could and should play to support this.

## The Drivers of collaboration

The previous section of this report sets out the background and context for the current strategic planning arrangements across England which have been developed on an ad-hoc basis since the abolition of regional planning, with varying degrees of involvement from county councils in two-tier areas. The key drivers for the increasing momentum behind this can be summarised as follows:

- To provide more opportunities for effective place-shaping and deliver sound and legally compliant planning frameworks.** A bigger canvas to direct development is needed, recognising that the incremental approach to growth based largely on opportunities within existing urban areas, will not deliver the step change in housing delivery required by Government. In many areas the catalyst for more effective collaboration has been a failure in the Duty to Cooperate and/or failures to get sound local plans in place across the Housing Market Area.
- A recognition that long term spatial priorities must be fully aligned with infrastructure and economic priorities,** and that the current ‘planning by number’ approach advocated through the NPPF, with LPAs (and arguably Government) prioritising housing delivery over other essential place-shaping components, will not deliver sustainable growth.
- The decreasing availability of public infrastructure funding** which is leading to a more coordinated and focused approach to investment and supporting growth, with priority given to strategic solutions, for example, transport growth corridors and new communities.
- Opportunities to maximise investment and funding across sub-regional areas,** particularly through devolution and growth deals, and government infrastructure and capacity funding. This is becoming increasingly important given the Government’s use of housing delivery as the measurement of success for its investment programmes.
- Challenges around the long term sustainable growth of cities,** particularly where the administrative boundaries are tightly bound and there is a need therefore, to rely on the support of neighbouring areas. The political sensitivities of Green Belt around cities adds another layer of complexity to the challenges.
- Delivery of immediate and potentially significant cost savings** as a result of a combined plan-making process (e.g. examinations; public consultation and stakeholder engagement; evidence-base) and a more efficient and effective use of staff resources and expertise.

The common themes in all of these are maximising funding opportunities; a move towards infrastructure-led growth; and a need to refocus on 'place', with infrastructure and economic needs properly addressed alongside housing, all of which require the involvement of county councils in two-tier areas.

### The existing role of county councils in strategic planning

The need for more effective strategic planning arrangements is now a key plank of the Government's overall approach to boosting growth and housing delivery. The preferred models are either spatial development strategies prepared by MCAs, or joint strategic plans prepared on a statutory basis.

Whilst most local authorities have been reluctant to move towards a statutory joint planning arrangement, it is clear from the 'carrots and sticks' tactics of the Government, that it will be increasingly difficult to avoid this. Momentum is therefore beginning to build behind the preparation of statutory (S28) joint

plans (beyond the established core strategies in the Midlands), with five groups of authorities currently progressing new style joint strategic plans and a number of others considering this as a potential option.<sup>23</sup> In most cases, these involve a much larger geographical area than the original joint core strategies. In Oxfordshire's case, a Joint Strategic Spatial Plan is being prepared for the whole county.

The new proposed model of joint strategic plans allows local authorities to focus on a small number of key strategic policy areas and consequently, deliver plans on a quicker timetable than a full, detailed local plan. However, in all cases where county councils are involved, although the counties have an equal role in the preparation of the plans, decision-making ultimately rests with the districts and unitary authorities as the LPA. This will remain the case unless the governance arrangements move to a statutory (S29) joint committee where the relevant county council has an equal voting right, as with some of the earlier joint planning committees in the Midlands (see figures 4 and 5).

## The Greater Exeter Joint Strategic Plan



**The LPAs of Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon, Teignbridge and Devon County Council have established a Greater Exeter Growth and Development Board to lead on, amongst other things, preparation of a joint Strategic Plan (JSP).**

This will address key strategic issues, such as housing and employment needs on a functional basis and provide a more co-ordinated approach to funding and investment, particularly in relation to infrastructure and large-scale developments that are linked to a clear strategy for housing and economic growth. Work on the JSP is led by a joint Members' group which includes the County Council, and is supported by a joint team of officers which includes planning and transport officers from the County Council. The County also provides additional specialist support for the plan and hosts the budget for the JSP. Currently formal decision-making is made by the individual LPAs but discussions are ongoing with regards to additional, more embedded decision-making.

**For more details, see case study 2 in Annex 1**

**Figure 3:** The strategic planning spectrum

This map shows the varying strategic planning activity across county areas in England. Full details can be found in Annex 2

#### Strategic planning managed through Duty to Cooperate and Statement of Common Ground.

Authorities within this category tend to have good relationships with the individual district authorities that sit under them. They rely on local plans to deliver strategic priorities and there is no decision-making role for the county council.

**Cumbria, North Yorkshire, Warwickshire**

#### Strategic planning managed through Duty to Cooperate and Statement of Common Ground, but with non-statutory strategic planning and infrastructure frameworks.

These authorities rely on local plans to deliver strategic priorities, but have prepared non-statutory strategic planning frameworks to influence and guide decision making. There is no decision-making role for the county council.

**Cambridgeshire, East Sussex, Kent, Leicestershire, Somerset, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, West Sussex**

#### Statutory joint strategic plans, aligned strategies and Mayoral Combined Authority Spatial Development Strategies.

The most involved approach, these authorities work with their district councils to take an integrated approach to strategic infrastructure requirements. All authorities – county and district – are involved in plan-preparation. Some are also involved in decision-making, where they are part of Section 29 joint planning committee.

**Devon, Essex, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire**





### Other support roles

The county councils that responded to the questionnaire highlighted that they provide additional support services to the district and boroughs in a number of ways beyond the traditional 'Duty to Cooperate' role (Please see separate document on the CCN website titled 'Summary of county council planning support for local planning'). Most of these are offered as a free service, but there is an increasing move towards charging for the additional services either through service level agreements or through a consultancy offer. The services provided can be categorised as follows:

- **Local plan support:** e.g. Duty to Cooperate – advice on local infrastructure and highways implications
- **Specialist Advice:** e.g. demography, flood risk, conservation
- **Consultancy service:** e.g. transport planning, direct support for local plans

As local authority resources are squeezed, these non-statutory specialist roles are likely to be placed under increasing pressure unless the counties can continue to offer these on a paid-for basis. New consultancy models are therefore emerging, with Essex County Council's Place Services the most advanced (see below, and Case 3 in Annex 1).

### Strategic planning and the role of county councils: key issues for CCN

It is evident that in order to facilitate a step-change in housing delivery, a more robust and effective approach to strategic planning is needed. This must ensure that all components of sustainable growth are addressed in an integrated and aligned way, with the place-shaping role local plans play managed alongside the setting and delivery of strategic infrastructure and economic priorities. Whilst the Government's proposed new statement of common ground may help, the requirements on LPAs are vague and limited. For example, there is currently no requirement to set out what the shared ambition to support growth is across strategic planning areas, with clear strategic infrastructure priorities and implications of the Local Industrial Strategy properly reflected. The draft NPPF does require these to be addressed in local plans but not at a strategic level where it makes sense.

It is also clear from the strategic planning approaches being taken across England, that an incremental approach to growth with a focus only on existing urban areas is no longer feasible, both because of the scale of housing needed but also because of the need to make more efficient use of infrastructure funding.

## Essex County Council: Place Services Consultancy



**Essex County Council's Place Services consultancy provides specialist support on a commercial basis on a range of natural, built and historic environment projects to the public sector.**

Place Services was initially set up in 2012 following a reorganisation to provide specialist support to the Essex Authorities and became a fully traded service of the County Council in 2014. Since then, the consultancy has provided support to other local authorities outside Essex and has expanded its offer to cover more general planning support. The multi-disciplinary team currently comprises Planners, Urban Designers, Landscape Architects, Historic Environment Advisors, Ecologists, Arboriculturists, Conservation and Community Engagement Specialists.

**For more details, see case study 3 in Annex 1**

A strategic solution to growth with a more focused approach to infrastructure investment offers the potential to maximise the benefits from development at scale. This is likely to be a particular issue around the major cities.

Although things may change through local government reorganisation, with larger unitary local authorities emerging, many parts of England will continue to have a two-tier structure with a disjointed approach to addressing strategic place-shaping priorities. There is therefore a need to set out what the minimum requirements should be to deliver an effective and efficient strategic planning system which is capable of supporting long term growth. Based on past and current experience, these are considered to be:

- **A statutory requirement to integrate strategic spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities.** While this can be delivered through the new model of joint strategic plans being developed in some areas or the MCA spatial development strategies, there needs to be an alternative model on offer where neither of these are likely to be an option.
- **A statutory requirement to plan for long term strategic infrastructure needs.** This will be particularly important given the increasing number of local authorities that are developing infrastructure-led spatial strategies and the reducing availability of public funding. Again, this should be achieved through joint strategic plans and MCA spatial development strategies but in the absence of either of these, there needs to be a suitable mechanism that provides sufficient investor confidence and a clear framework for supporting development. A statutory requirement for setting out strategic infrastructure priorities would also provide an important mechanism for aligning and influencing the priorities of emerging sub-national transport bodies and Highways England.
- **More robust place-based governance structures** which includes all tiers of local government, not just the LPAs. Currently, in two tier areas where joint planning is not being managed through a S29 committee or MCA, county councils are only involved in place-shaping as statutory consultees and through the Duty to Cooperate. Given their significant role in providing and facilitating the delivery of transport and other infrastructure, as Lead Local Flood Authority and in public health, it is vital that they are considered an equal partner in decisions around 'place'. Local government restructuring is unlikely to be a politically acceptable solution for many local authorities and even if it was, it would not be delivered quickly, therefore an interim solution would be needed.
- **A more joined up approach to raising and using infrastructure funding,** including developer contributions. Currently LPAs are responsible for most of CIL and NHB, and LEPs (in most cases) are responsible for various infrastructure funding pots to support economic growth. Yet it is county councils and unitary authorities that are responsible for local transport plans and transport investment plans. A more co-ordinated (and transparent) approach to setting infrastructure priorities, particularly in the first 10 years of a plan, will ensure that the various funding pots are being used in the most effective and efficient way. Robust governance arrangements are likely to be needed to support place-based growth and ensure fiscal accountability.
- **A multi-skilled resource to develop and deliver place-based plans** with an integrated approach to spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities. Strategic planning capacity has been significantly depleted since the demise of structure plans. Many counties still retain some capacity and expertise, but this has not been seen as a priority in an environment of ever-decreasing resources when there is no statutory strategic plan-making role to play, as highlighted in the recent Planning Magazine survey.<sup>24</sup>

Strategic planning skills are wider than traditional planning skills, providing an important ringmaster role. Planning resources within local authorities, particularly around the main cities, are also facing increasing competition from the private sector. A wide range of skills is needed to deliver effective place-based plans, which includes the need to have good negotiators given the culture of deal-making embraced by the current Government.

Of the current models of strategic planning set out in Figure 3, only statutory S28 Joint Strategic Plans and MCA Strategic Development Strategies offer the minimum requirements for effective strategic planning, although joint plans are potentially weak on governance unless a S29 joint committee is established.

If the Government is determined to facilitate a step-change in housing delivery, more joint strategic plans, larger unitary authorities and more MCAs will be needed under the current legislative and policy provision. However, these may not always be an option therefore an alternative model is needed. There are two models that should be considered, both of which would require changes to either policy (through the NPPF) or legislation but would not require a full restructuring of the plan-making system. The options are not mutually exclusive; an ideal outcome would be a requirement for both, but this would depend on how willing Government is to make further legislative changes. Option 1 is the minimum that is needed for transformational change and to ensure that the SCG process adds real value.

### Option 1

#### **A more robust approach to the Statement of Common Ground**

using it to set out a long-term approach to 'place' with a requirement to include a shared spatial, infrastructure and economic strategy. This would then have to be agreed by all local authorities, including the county councils in two-tier areas. This would also have to be binding on all LPs within the defined strategic planning area. Local authorities that have already produced non-statutory strategic planning and/or infrastructure frameworks with a clear spatial strategy are well placed to use this option, but the final NPPF would have to take a firmer line on the requirements of SCG to enforce this.

### Option 2

#### **Introduce a statutory requirement for sub-regional infrastructure frameworks**

setting out long term strategic transport and other infrastructure priorities. These would be used to shape spatial priorities in local plans and influence investment priorities of Government and government bodies (e.g. Highways England Route Investment Strategies), as well as sub-national transport bodies. Ideally, these would have a clear short, medium and long term delivery programme, with funding (including CIL) managed on a shared and co-ordinated basis. They would also have to reflect the priorities of local industrial strategies and for this reason, they are more likely to be effective if done on the same geography. This may mean that in some cases the LEP boundary is amended to reflect the same geography as that used to plan strategic infrastructure. In most areas this will already be the case, with LEP boundaries contiguous with county or MCA boundaries, but in some parts of the country where large LEPs cover a number of counties, this may need to be amended.



In both options the governance structure would have to be sufficiently robust to manage the integration of strategic infrastructure, spatial and economic priorities. This could, for example be on a similar model to the Oxfordshire or Greater Norwich Growth Boards, or the Planning and Infrastructure Partnerships in Hertfordshire and Surrey. However, if the frameworks were to be used to levy the proposed new Strategic Infrastructure Tariff (SIT) or manage shared infrastructure funding (e.g pooled CIL receipts), governance structures will have to provide sufficient fiscal accountability.

The Government is currently proposing that the new SIT is restricted to S29 Joint Committees or MCAs. Access to this potentially important new infrastructure funding source could therefore be very limited given that the establishment of any new MCAs or S29 committees will require legislation and there is unlikely to be any

additional capacity during the next two to three years with the focus on Brexit. Furthermore, S29 joint committees cannot include both counties and unitary authorities therefore most city regions (outside the Metropolitan areas and those with MCAs) will not be able to access SIT. This includes Greater Exeter (Case Study 2) and South Essex (Case Study 3) where joint strategic plans are being progressed.

It is vital therefore that the Government either makes it easier to establish S29 joint committees, with all local authority partners involved (i.e both counties and UAs where relevant) or allows other governance options for SIT. For example, Upper Tier authorities could be the accountable body for the funding where a statutory joint plan is being progressed, as in the case of Greater Norwich, with added weight given through a Joint Committee under Section 101, as in Oxfordshire (see Case Study 5).

#### Figure 4: 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act



**Section 28 of the Act allows two or more local planning authorities (districts and unitary authorities) to prepare joint local development documents (LDDs).**

This is the model currently being used by those authorities preparing Joint Strategic Plans (see Case Studies 2, 3 and 5). Although the relevant County Council in two-tier areas can be part of the plan-preparation process (if invited by the LPAs), they cannot be part of the formal decision-making as this remains the responsibility of the individual LPAs.

Section 29 of the Act allows for the decision-making on joint local development documents to be conferred on a joint committee through an order of the Secretary of State. This is the model that has been used up until now by most LPAs preparing (S28) Joint Core Strategies. Decision-making on the joint plan is the responsibility of the joint committee and not the individual LPAs. In two-tier areas county councils are a formal partner in the joint committee and therefore have equal decision-making responsibilities to the LPAs. However, a S29 committee cannot be used in areas where both unitary authorities and county councils are involved in a joint plan for the same area.

**Figure 5:** 1972 Local Government Act



**Section 101 of the Act allows local authorities to discharge specific functions through a joint committee and are widely used by local authorities for a range of planning functions.**

For example, a joint S101 committee is used for development management decisions in Cambridge (see Case Study 1) and to manage strategic growth priorities in Oxfordshire (see Case Study 5). Although this legislation can be used to support preparation of a joint plan (as in Oxfordshire), it cannot be used for decision-making on a joint plan, which has to be undertaken either by an individual LPA or through a S29 joint committee.

Sufficient resources would also have to be ensured to prepare and implement the infrastructure frameworks, regardless of whether done on a statutory basis or not. Many county councils do not have dedicated strategic planning capacity and are unlikely to change this unless it was a statutory requirement with some form of funding attached. The Government's Planning Delivery Fund has a dedicated fund for joint working but this is likely to be focused on supporting the preparation of joint evidence and process, rather than rebuilding essential strategic planning capacity.

The lack of planning resources generally across local authorities and challenges around public sector recruitment and retention are issues that has been raised by local authorities themselves, the development industry and national planning bodies, such as the Planning Officers' Society (POS), the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). It was also highlighted by the Local Plan Expert Group as a factor impacting on local plan and housing delivery. County Councils like Essex are helping to address this by providing dedicated consultancy support that can respond quickly to short term capacity gaps, providing experienced

planners that already work in the area and therefore understand the local planning issues and the people involved.

Other models being used, including joint teams may also help build capacity but a dedicated approach to rebuilding strategic planning expertise to fulfil the essential 'ringmaster' role is needed. The Government should therefore be encouraged to work with CCN and other partners (not just planning) to explore how this can be achieved both in terms of funding and skills. This could, for example, include better use of existing funding, for example New Homes Bonus, to support shared strategic planning capacity, or investing in a dedicated capacity and skills development programme through the Planning Advisory Service, working closely with the CCN and other stakeholders.

# Conclusions and recommendations

**The Government acknowledges that the current strategic planning system, based on the voluntary mechanisms provided by the Duty to Cooperate, is insufficient to deliver comprehensive coverage of local plans and support the delivery of the 300,000 new homes needed each year.**

Whilst the current proposals to ensure a more robust approach to strategic planning through the statement of common ground and proposed new examination 'test of soundness' are to be welcomed, this is unlikely to be sufficient to address the significant planning and infrastructure challenges, particularly around the larger cities. The following further reforms to the current and proposed new approach to strategic planning are therefore recommended.

## Recommendation 1

A place-based approach to strategic planning should be taken, aligning spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities more effectively through statutory joint arrangements. This should be in the form of:

- a. Statutory joint strategic plans; or
- b. Statutory MCA strategic development strategies; or
- c. Statutory strategic infrastructure frameworks within which individual local plans can be prepared.

A statement of common ground should be used to set out what option is being used and how it will be developed, with the role of all partners clearly indicated and supported by a Memorandum of Understanding, signed by all parties.

## Recommendation 2

Joint governance with all local authorities included as equal partners should be a requirement of (a) to (c) to manage the strategic planning arrangements and shared infrastructure funding and priorities. For (a) and (c) this should take the form of a S101 or (where possible) a S29 committee.

## Recommendation 3

If option (c) is rejected by the Government, a more robust approach to the statement of common ground is recommended. This should, at a minimum, set out an agreed coherent spatial strategy across local authority boundaries, with a clear distribution of growth and strategic infrastructure priorities. It should also be made more explicit that county councils in two-tier areas are an equal party to the agreed strategy and that the statement is not simply a local planning tool. Formal joint governance arrangements should be established to agree the strategic infrastructure priorities needed to deliver the spatial strategy and to manage shared infrastructure funding. These should be through a S101 joint committee which involves both the LPAs and the relevant county council.

## Recommendation 4

Further changes to the statutory joint arrangements currently allowed under Section 29 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act should be considered by Government to allow both county councils and unitary authorities to be equal partners in a S29 committee where a S28 joint plan is being prepared. The Government should also set aside a small amount of Parliamentary time to make the necessary amendments to the 2004 Act and to allow for the establishment of new S29 committees.

### Recommendation 5

The Government should widen the range of governance options for the proposed new Strategic Infrastructure Tariff, including allowing Upper Tier Authorities to be the accountable body for the tariff, using S101 joint committees to manage shared funding priorities where there is an agreed spatial strategy across a strategic area (i.e. through a joint strategic plan or statement of common ground) or a statutory strategic infrastructure framework (as proposed in Recommendation 1).

### Recommendation 6

The county council role in planning, regardless of whether on a statutory basis or not, should be acknowledged by Government in any funding decisions to support local plan-making. The Government should also explore additional opportunities to build the essential strategic planning capacity and skills needed to deliver effective strategic planning.



# Annex 1:

## Strategic planning case studies

(see Annex 2 for weblinks to additional information)

### Case Study 1: Cambridgeshire County Council



**The Cambridgeshire Authorities and Peterborough City Council have a long-established history of working together on strategic planning, from the 2003 Structure Plan through to the current Mayoral Combined Authority arrangements. As part of the legacy, there is an acceptance that growth is necessary, as long as this is planned growth.**

#### **Memorandum of Cooperation and Strategic Spatial Framework**

In response to the removal of the statutory strategic (regional strategies and structure plans) in 2010, the constituent local authorities prepared the non-statutory Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Memorandum of Cooperation to support the development of a coherent and comprehensive growth strategy across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Recognising the primary role that individual local authorities have in addressing the duty to cooperate through their statutory Local Plans, the overarching aim of the Memorandum is to provide additional evidence that the duty has been addressed. It does this by demonstrating that the emerging district-level development strategies, which takes development beyond the time horizon and spatial strategy set out in the 2003 Structure Plan, contribute to an area-wide strategic vision, objectives and spatial strategy, and by addressing strategic spatial planning issues across the area.

The Memorandum sets out the vision and objectives for the long-term development of the area, an overview of the evidence for future levels of growth, and the broad spatial approach that will help realise the vision and the area's growth needs.

In 2017, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mayoral Combined Authority was established which has responsibility for preparing a long term non-statutory Strategic Spatial Framework for strategic planning and infrastructure, as well as the first joint Local Transport Plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. In order to provide a framework for local plans as soon as possible and to manage the transition effectively, Part 1 of the SSF will be completed by February 2018 and will reflect existing local plan strategies and Memorandum of Understanding, and Part 2 will set out the development context to 2050 (draft by end 2018).

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SSF is being prepared by the Combined Authority with input from the constituent local authorities, including the County Council. Under its constitution, the unanimous consent of the all the constituent authorities on the Combined Authority is required to adopt the SSF.

In order to facilitate the planning of major development areas on the fringes of the City of Cambridge the planning authorities of Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council have a Joint (Section 101) Development Control Committee which determines planning applications in defined areas over which the joint Committee has jurisdiction.



### Further information

#### **Cambridgeshire & Peterborough MoC**

[www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/ldf/localplan2031/may2013dpssc/part1/Appendix%20N%20Memorandum%20of%20Co-operation.pdf](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/ldf/localplan2031/may2013dpssc/part1/Appendix%20N%20Memorandum%20of%20Co-operation.pdf)

#### **Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority SSF**

<http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/meetings/combined-authority-board-28-march-2017/?date=2018-03-28>

#### **Cambridge Joint Development Control Committee**

[www.scambs.gov.uk/content/joint-planning-arrangements](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/joint-planning-arrangements)

## Case Study 2: Devon County Council



**Devon County Council is actively involved in strategic planning across the county, supporting the development of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan, the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan and the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. In all three decisions are made by each Local Planning Authority, with the County Council as a statutory consultee but officers and Members are involved in working groups and steering groups.**

### Greater Exeter Strategic Plan

The Authorities of Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon, Teignbridge and Devon County Council have agreed to set up a Greater Exeter Growth and Development Board to lead on, amongst other things, effective collaboration between the local authorities on economic development, strategic planning and promoting growth. There are existing informal voluntary arrangements to support the growth agenda help to oversee strategic decisions, given the need to incentivise growth within a context of changing local government financing. The County Council is a full and active member of this process.

A key part of delivering the growth ambitions of the authorities is preparation of a joint Strategic Plan which aims to:

- address key strategic issues, such as housing and employment needs, more effectively on a functional basis;
- ensure that sound and legally compliant plans are in place as soon as possible;
- provide a more co-ordinated approach to help secure government funding and investment, particularly in relation to infrastructure and large-scale developments that are linked to a clear strategy for housing and economic growth.

- Provide an opportunity to use budgets efficiently; there is already some joint evidence but the joint plan will take this further with pooling of resources for commissioning and preparing evidence.
- Better use of skills and expertise within each of the authorities.

Work on the plan is currently led by a Member Steering Group comprising Cabinet and Executive Members from each of the authorities, including the County Council, although decision-making rests with the individual local planning authorities. Discussions are ongoing with regards to additional, more embedded decision-making.

Plan preparation is undertaken by a joint team of officers, hosted by Exeter City Council. The County Council provides planning and transportation staff into the joint team and hosts the budget, but also provides further expert input to the project (e.g. education, minerals/waste, demographics, landscape, ecology, historic environment etc).



### Further information

**Greater Exeter JSP**  
[www.gesp.org.uk/](http://www.gesp.org.uk/)



## Case Study 3: Essex County Council



**Essex County Council has taken a proactive approach to supporting strategic planning across the county, working primarily in three sub-regional areas – North Essex, South Essex and West Essex. In 2017, the Council strengthened its strategic planning capacity in recognition of the sheer scale of work emerging from the 12 districts and to support the wider growth agenda. The Council is actively engaged in the strategic planning-making process in North Essex and South Essex, with activity in West Essex focused on supporting the delivery of the garden communities.**

The County Council has also established its own consultancy to support planning more generally. Place Services, which operates on a commercial basis, provides a range of services (which includes local plan support) to all 14 LPAs within Greater Essex (12 Districts and 2 UAs), and within the wider East of England area. All the LPA's have an service level agreement in place for variable services on a 'pick and mix' basis.

### North Essex Garden Communities

The North Essex Garden Communities Project is a strategic partnership between Colchester Borough Council, Braintree District Council, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council to look at a new approach to long-term housing growth. This will support the creation of three pioneering new Garden Communities across North Essex, along with transformational and timely new infrastructure and considerable local economic growth opportunities. The new communities are being taken forward through a Joint Part 1 Local Plan which is being developed by the local planning authorities and the County Council.

The County Council, together with the three District Councils, has formed the North Essex Garden Communities (NEGC) company in which all partners have made a financial investment, both revenue and capital funding, with the intent for further investment in what will be a Local Development Corporation with the objective of intervening in the market to deliver the Garden Communities. The Council supports the NEGC with representations on the NEGC Board and the supporting officer structure that feeds through to this.

### South Essex 2050 Ambition

The Leaders and Chief Executives of South Essex – Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock and Essex County Council – have agreed to develop a place-based growth ambition (South Essex 2050) that would underpin long term (2050) strategic spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities across the sub-region. This is aimed at ensuring that the local authorities remain in control of South Essex as a place, putting them in a strong position to shape and influence wider plans and

strategies, and Government and other investment priorities. The seven authorities have formed the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) to steer implementation of the SE2050 work programme and have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding to underpin collaboration.

The spatial aspects are being taken forward through a South Essex Joint

Strategic Plan (JSP). This will provide a high level statutory framework which is able to identify and articulate the scale and strategic locations for growth (housing and employment) and the strategic infrastructure priorities. The JSP is being prepared jointly by all authorities through ASELA, although final decisions will be made by each individual authority.



### Further information

#### North Essex Garden Communities

[www.tendringdc.gov.uk/planning/local-plans-and-policies/north-essex-garden-communities](http://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/planning/local-plans-and-policies/north-essex-garden-communities)

[www.essex.gov.uk/News/Documents/Garden\\_Communities.pdf](http://www.essex.gov.uk/News/Documents/Garden_Communities.pdf)

#### Association of South Essex Local Authorities/ Joint Strategic Plan

[www.southend.gov.uk/info/100004/about\\_the\\_council/818/the\\_association\\_of\\_south\\_essex\\_local\\_authorities/1](http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/100004/about_the_council/818/the_association_of_south_essex_local_authorities/1)

[www.southend.gov.uk/news/article/1353/south\\_essex\\_councils\\_unite\\_for\\_new\\_homes\\_jobs\\_and\\_infrastructure](http://www.southend.gov.uk/news/article/1353/south_essex_councils_unite_for_new_homes_jobs_and_infrastructure)

## Case Study 4: Norfolk County Council



The Norfolk Authorities have a long established relationship on strategic planning, working together to plan the growth of Greater Norwich through the Joint Core Strategy and now the emerging replacement Greater Norwich Local Plan. More recently, the authorities, through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Forum, have prepared a county-wide Strategic Planning Framework, supported by a 10 year Infrastructure Delivery Plan, setting out shared priorities across the county.

### The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2017)

In common with other non-statutory frameworks, the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework aims to:

- Set out shared objectives and strategic priorities to improve outcomes for Norfolk and inform the preparation of future Local Plans (to 2036);
- Demonstrate compliance with the duty to cooperate.
- Find efficiencies in the planning system through working towards the establishment of a shared evidence base;
- Influence subsequent high level plans (such as the Strategic Economic Plan); and
- Maximise the opportunities to secure external funding to deliver against agreed objectives.

The Norfolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out the county-wide high level strategic infrastructure priorities for the next 10 years to support both the spatial priorities set out in the Strategic Planning Framework and the LEP's growth plan.

The County Council worked closely with the local planning authorities as well as other infrastructure providers, including government agencies to ensure a co-ordinated approach to planning for infrastructure.

### The Greater Norwich Growth Board and Local Infrastructure Fund

A Greater Norwich partnership including Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council and Norfolk County Council has existed in various forms since 2006. The Greater Norwich Growth Board was established to manage the delivery of the Joint Core Strategy and City Deal and comprises the local authorities and the New Anglia LEP. Key roles of the Board are to agree the infrastructure projects that are considered a priority for delivering the planned growth set out in the joint plan and in the City Deal, and to manage the Local Investment Fund LIF). The LIF helps developers fund essential infrastructure to unlock developments that may otherwise have been delayed, opening up strategic sites for housing or employment development. A number of funding streams contribute to

the LIF, including all CIL income apart from the admin and local community elements. Decisions on delivery and pooled funding support for the strategic infrastructure programme are endorsed by each Council and made by the Growth Board through setting the Growth Programme. The Growth Programme identifies schemes to be prioritised for delivery and to be funded either wholly or

in part from the fund. The County Council has the fiscal accountability for the fund.

Having a clear long term spatial framework within which infrastructure priorities are set, together with clear strategic priorities with developed business cases, has put the authorities in a strong position to bid for additional funding, as and when the opportunity arises.



### Further information

#### **Norfolk Strategic Planning Forum**

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/norfolk-strategic-planning-member-forum](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/norfolk-strategic-planning-member-forum)

#### **Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework**

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/strategic-member-forum/latest-endorsed-version-of-the-norfolk-strategic-planning-framework.pdf?la=en](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/strategic-member-forum/latest-endorsed-version-of-the-norfolk-strategic-planning-framework.pdf?la=en)

#### **Norfolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan**

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/business/norfolk-infrastructure-delivery-plan-2017-2027.pdf](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/business/norfolk-infrastructure-delivery-plan-2017-2027.pdf)

#### **Greater Norwich Growth Board/ Joint LP**

[www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/](http://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/)

## Case Study 5: Oxfordshire County Council



**The Oxfordshire Authorities have been working together for a number of years on developing a shared approach to supporting growth and ensuring the long-term prosperity of the county through strategic infrastructure provision. The Oxfordshire Growth Board is a (Sec 101) joint committee established to facilitate joint working on economic development, strategic planning and growth. The County Council is a proactive member of the Board and acts as the accountable body (for local government purposes). The Board comprises the six local authorities (the County Council, Oxford City Council and the Districts of Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire) and coopted non-voting strategic stakeholders, including the LEP and representatives of the Universities.**

The Board oversees the delivery of projects that the councils of Oxfordshire are seeking to deliver collaboratively, such as the growth deals agreed with Government. Its key functions are to:

- facilitate and enable collaboration between local authorities on economic development, strategic planning and growth.
- deliver cross-boundary programmes of work including government deals, the Strategic Economic Plan and Local Transport Board programmes.
- advise on matters of collective interest, seek agreement on local priorities, influence relevant local, regional and national bodies, and bid for the allocation of resources to support the above purposes.

In 2014, the Board agreed to develop an overarching spatial plan for growth throughout the county which would enable pro-active, co-ordinated decisions on both housing and business growth, and a comprehensive understanding of the infrastructure implications of both.

This was also to address the issues of Oxford City's housing shortfall which had been identified in the joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and would have to be met within the neighbouring areas. This would be a non-statutory framework which would be used to inform the individual local plans and other county-wide plans and strategies, and would be underpinned by a strategic infrastructure study identify to map and prioritise Oxfordshire's infrastructure requirements to 2040 and beyond.

By 2016, the Government had identified the need for a more co-ordinated approach to growth along the Oxford-Milton Keynes – Cambridge Corridor and asked the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) to explore options for this. The NIC's final report was published in November 2017 and proposes that 1 million new homes should be provided by 2050, with opportunities for well-connected new communities along the corridor, completion of the new East-West Rail line connecting Oxford and

Cambridge by 2030 and accelerating the development and construction of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway. The NIC report was endorsed by the Government in the November 2017 Budget.

Given the significant role Oxfordshire is to play nationally, and the need to have a more robust and aligned approach to

strategic planning, economic growth and infrastructure delivery, the local authorities have agreed a Housing and Growth Deal with Government securing £230m of investment in transport and affordable housing, and with 100,000 new homes to be delivered by 2031. The Authorities have agreed to prepare a Joint (statutory) strategic spatial plan to deliver this.



### Further information

#### **Oxfordshire Growth Board**

[www.oxford.gov.uk/oxfordshiregrowthboard](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/oxfordshiregrowthboard)

<http://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CIId=460&Year=0>

## Case Study 6: Surrey County Council



**The Surrey Strategy Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP) was formed in 2014 to develop a planning and investment framework for Surrey. This includes a Memorandum of Understanding on how councils will work together on strategic planning; the preparation of a non-statutory Local Strategic Statement (LSS) for Surrey and an investment framework to coordinate infrastructure funding and delivery. To date, the MoU has been signed by all Surrey Leaders, and the Interim LSS has been agreed and the Surrey Infrastructure Study recently refreshed. The latter key evidence base was commissioned and led by county officers.**

The County Council has played a lead and proactive role in the SPIP at officer level given the prominence of infrastructure in supporting growth across the county, their lead role in supporting the two Local Enterprise Partnerships that cover the county (Coast to Capital and Enterprise M3), and the strategic planning expertise that is still maintained by the County Council.

The County Council, together with three East Surrey districts, is also party to the non-statutory Gatwick Diamond Local Strategic Statement (LSS) and is a key partner in the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group which is working towards preparing a Joint Strategic Planning Framework for the Heathrow sub-region.

A wider conversation between all Surrey local authorities to take forward the county-wide framework that has been

prepared is now being facilitated by the 'Surrey Future' partnership initiative in which the County Council plays a leading role. This is to ensure that Surrey is in a strong position to respond proactively to the London Plan, Heathrow's growth, the local industrial strategies being prepared by the two LEPs, to secure infrastructure investment and to provide a more robust approach to strategic planning in support of the local plans being prepared. A strategic infrastructure framework for the county and sub-areas is envisaged as part of the work programme going forward.

The County Council has provided a vital ringmaster role in supporting the county-wide infrastructure and spatial framework, and has provided essential strategic planning expertise and capacity, despite the fact it has no statutory role and its participation in the strategic arrangements is voluntary.



### Further information

#### **Surrey Future/ LSS**

[www.surreycc.gov.uk/environment-housing-and-planning/development-in-surrey/surrey-future](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/environment-housing-and-planning/development-in-surrey/surrey-future)

#### **Gatwick Diamond LSS**

[www.horsham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/planning-policy/gatwick-diamond](http://www.horsham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/planning-policy/gatwick-diamond)





## Annex 2: Summary of county council strategic planning activity as at April 2018

### Buckinghamshire

#### Strategic planning role\*

- Active strategic infrastructure planning role through several national infrastructure (NSIP) consultations and the proposed Oxford to Cambridge growth corridor, 3 simultaneous Local Plan consultations (including MoUs) and active engagement in their Infrastructure Delivery Plans.
- Lead role in development of a co-ordinated strategic infrastructure programme (non-statutory), spatial planning principles and assessment of strategic infrastructure priorities with key stakeholders.
- Member of England's Economic Heartland (EEH) Strategic Alliance on transport planning.
- Member of sub-regional Heathrow Strategic Planning Group.
- Partner in the Aylesbury Garden Town project delivering 15,000 new homes.

#### Governance & working arrangements

- Strategic planning and infrastructure work led through Corporate Management Team and supported by a corporate working group.
- Select Committee inquiry on growth and the preparedness of the County Council.
- Partner in the Bucks Planning Group of Cabinet leads across the District and County and the Bucks Planning Policy Officers' Group.
- Partner in the EEH Strategic Alliance – BCC Leader is Chairman.
- Partner in the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group and Leaders' Board.
- Partner in the Bucks Thames Valley LEP.
- Aylesbury Garden Town project team and Partners Board.

#### Additional information

##### Economic Heartland (EEH) Strategic Alliance

[www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/strategic-leadership.aspx](http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/strategic-leadership.aspx)

##### Aylesbury Garden Town

[www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/environment/planning/aylesbury-garden-town/](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/environment/planning/aylesbury-garden-town/)

##### Bucks Strategic Infrastructure Projects

[www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/environment/strategic-planning/infrastructure-mapping/major-infrastructure-projects/](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/environment/strategic-planning/infrastructure-mapping/major-infrastructure-projects/)

## Cambridgeshire (see also Case Study 1 in Annex 1)

### Strategic planning role\*

- Jointly preparing a non-statutory Strategic Spatial Framework (SSF) within which Local Plans will be prepared.
- Part 1 of the SSF based on earlier Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) which provides the (non-statutory) framework for current round of Local Plans. Part 2 will set the longer-term framework.

### Governance & working arrangements

- SSF being prepared by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Mayoral Combined Authority.
- Unanimous support for SSF required from all LAs including the County Council.

### Additional information

#### Cambridgeshire & Peterborough MoC

[www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/ldf/localplan2031/may2013dpssc/part1/Appendix%20N%20Memorandum%20of%20Co-operation.pdf](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/ldf/localplan2031/may2013dpssc/part1/Appendix%20N%20Memorandum%20of%20Co-operation.pdf)

## Cumbria

### Strategic planning role\*

- No formal strategic planning mechanisms but County Council helps to co-ordinates strategic economic and planning matters through the LEP as chair of Technical Officers Group.

### Governance & working arrangements

### Additional information

#### Cumbria LEP

[www.thecumbrialep.co.uk](http://www.thecumbrialep.co.uk)

## Derbyshire

### Strategic planning role\*

- Involved in Greater Derby aligned Core Strategies/ Local plans. LPAs are now focussing on Part 2 Plans and in early discussions about how to undertake the review.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Joint Advisory Board of members and officers

## Devon (see also Case Study 2 in Annex 1)

### Strategic planning role\*

- Supports the preparation of three statutory joint plans to varying degrees – two full joint local plans (Plymouth and South West Devon & North Devon and Torridge) and one joint strategic plan (Greater Exeter).

### Governance & working arrangements

- The County Council has statutory consultee status as decisions on joint plans are made by the individual LPAs.
- County Council Members involved to varying degrees in preparation and officers are embedded in joint work for two of the plans.
- County Council hosts the budget for the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.

### Additional information

#### Plymouth and South West Devon LP

[www.plymouth.gov.uk/planningandbuildingcontrol/plymouthandsouthwestdevonjointlocalplan](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/planningandbuildingcontrol/plymouthandsouthwestdevonjointlocalplan)

#### North Devon and Torridge LP

[www.torridge.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.torridge.gov.uk/localplan)

#### Greater Exeter JSP

[www.gesp.org.uk/](http://www.gesp.org.uk/)

## Dorset

### Strategic planning role\*

- Partner in the Dorset Strategic Planning Forum (SPF) which is a non-executive committee covering the geographical area of Dorset's LEP. The SPF contains 2 Cabinet members from all participating authorities plus non-voting representatives (one each) for the LEP and Dorset LNP.
- The SPF oversees cross-boundary planning issues which relate to the statutory duty to cooperate and is supported by an officer forum. Current work priorities for the SPF and supporting officer group include the new/emerging requirement to prepare Statements of Common Ground, a Dorset-wide gypsy and traveller Local Plan and links with other strategic priorities including key infrastructure.

### Governance & working arrangements

- The SPF is based on non-statutory collaboration. Two County Council Members attend the SPF and have voting rights. Full executive powers still reside with the sovereign authorities so agreement on cross-boundary decisions requiring sovereign decisions would come before the County Council (normally Cabinet) and likewise for other partner authorities. The council has officer / technical input into the work of the SPF – for example collaborating in the preparation of a Dorset-wide issues paper and an emerging Statement of Common Ground.
- The chairman of the officer support group (Strategic Planning Policy Managers Forum) also attends the Places and Prosperity Group which links the work of the SPF with the wider governance structure of LA chief executives/ leaders (including those for County Council) and the Dorset LEP Board (County Council is a Board Member).
- Cross-boundary matters requiring County Council agreement (such as any commitments concerning minerals and waste or infrastructure matters including education and highways) would come before Cabinet.

### Additional information

#### Dorset Strategic Planning Forum

<http://dorset.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s2274/Background%20Report.pdf>

## East Sussex

### Strategic planning role\*

- Involved in the West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board which has responsibility for co-ordinating strategic planning matters across the sub-region through a non-statutory Local Strategic Statement.
- Member of East Sussex Strategic Planning Members Group which shares information, good practice common approaches to LP policy.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Observer status in the West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board.

### Additional information

#### West Sussex & Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board

<https://coastalwestsussex.org.uk/about-us/cws-strategic-planning-board/>

## Essex (see also Case Study 3 in Annex 1)

### Strategic planning role\*

- Key support role in North Essex aligned strategies and equal partner in approach to delivery of the three garden communities.
- Partner in the preparation of the statutory South Essex Joint Strategic Plan.
- Also supports delivery of three aligned Local Plans and the proposed Garden Community in West Essex.

### Governance & working arrangements

- The County Council, together with the 3 District Councils, has formed the North Essex Garden Communities (NEGC) company in which all partners have made a financial investment, with the intent for further investment in what will be a Local Development Corporation.
- ECC supports the NEGC with member representation on the NEGC Board and the supporting officer structure.
- Equal partner in the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) which is developing the statutory Joint Strategic Plan, managed by MoU, although currently decision-making will be through individual LPAs.
- West Essex is supported through a members Cooperative Board and Garden Towns Board.

### Additional information

#### North Essex Garden Communities

[www.tendringdc.gov.uk/planning/local-plans-and-policies/north-essex-garden-communities](http://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/planning/local-plans-and-policies/north-essex-garden-communities)  
[www.essex.gov.uk/News/Documents/Garden\\_Communities.pdf](http://www.essex.gov.uk/News/Documents/Garden_Communities.pdf)

#### Association of South Essex Local Authorities/Joint Strategic Plan

[www.southend.gov.uk/info/100004/about\\_the\\_council/818/the\\_association\\_of\\_south\\_essex\\_local\\_authorities/1](http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/100004/about_the_council/818/the_association_of_south_essex_local_authorities/1)  
[www.southend.gov.uk/news/article/1353/south\\_essex\\_councils\\_unite\\_for\\_new\\_homes\\_jobs\\_and\\_infrastructure](http://www.southend.gov.uk/news/article/1353/south_essex_councils_unite_for_new_homes_jobs_and_infrastructure)

## Hampshire

### Strategic planning role\*

- Prepare an annual non-statutory Hampshire Strategic Infrastructure Statement – used as evidence in LPs.
- Memorandum of understanding – sets out a broad framework to help guide Hampshire County Council and local planning authorities (district, borough and city councils) in determining priorities for the planning, funding and delivery of infrastructure.
- Lead Authority taking forward a successful expression of interest to the Housing Infrastructure Fund.
- South Hampshire Authorities and Hampshire County Council are members of the Partnership for South Hampshire (PUSH). A PUSH Spatial Position Statement was completed in 2016 and is supported by wide ranging evidence. It sets out the overall need for development to 2034 and proposes development targets for each Council. It helps Councils meet their duty to cooperate with each other.

### Governance & working arrangements

- The PUSH Joint Committee was established when the partnership arrangements between each of the partner Local Authorities was formalised through a Joint Agreement under Local Government Acts. The Joint Committee is the decision-making body for PUSH. The membership consists of the Leaders or their nominated representative of twelve councils, supported by their Chief Executives and the PUSH Executive Director.

### Additional information

#### Hants Strategic Infrastructure Statement

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/planning-strategic/HampshireStrategicInfrastructureStatement2017.pdf>

#### MoU re Infrastructure funding

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/planning-strategic/MoUreinfrastructrefundingV4.doc>

#### PUSH Spatial Position Statement

[www.push.gov.uk/work/planning-and-infrastructure/push\\_spatial\\_position\\_statement.htm](http://www.push.gov.uk/work/planning-and-infrastructure/push_spatial_position_statement.htm)

## Hertfordshire

### Strategic planning role\*

- Partner in preparation of the statutory South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan.
- Other Herts LPAs currently considering options for future joint planning arrangements.
- Partner in the (non-statutory) Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership (HIPP) – scope and terms of reference currently being reviewed.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Although the County Council will be a partner in the preparation of the JSP and signatory to the MoU, formal decision-making will be through individual LPAs.
- The County Council manages HIPP on behalf of LAs.

### Additional information

#### South West Herts JSP

[www.stalbans.gov.uk/planning/Planningpolicy/swhjisp.aspx](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/planning/Planningpolicy/swhjisp.aspx)

#### Hertfordshire Infrastructure & Planning Partnership

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/planning-in-hertfordshire/planning-in-hertfordshire.aspx](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/planning-in-hertfordshire/planning-in-hertfordshire.aspx)

## Kent

### Strategic planning role\*

- Worked collaboratively with all Kent Districts & Medway UA to prepare a (non-statutory) strategic growth & infrastructure framework – used as key evidence in LPs.
- Coordination of strategic economic and growth matters through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and member of the Accountability Board approving all major funding decisions.
- Management of the Local Growth Fund programme and delivery of Local Growth Fund schemes (direct or in partnership with a third party) including, for example, strategic transport infrastructure.
- Supports delivery of Ebbsfleet Garden City and Otterpool Park Garden. Member of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation Board, and Planning Committee.
- Lead Authority taking forward a successful expression of interest to the Housing Infrastructure Fund through to the co-development phase, in partnership with Swale Borough Council.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Although the County Council will be a partner in the preparation of the JSP and signatory to the MoU, formal decision-making will be through individual LPAs.
- The County Council manages HIPP on behalf of LAs.

### Additional information

#### Kent & Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework

[www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/growth-and-infrastructure-framework-gif](http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/growth-and-infrastructure-framework-gif)

## Lancashire

### Strategic planning role\*

- Working collaboratively with Central Lancashire LPAs on City Deal infrastructure to support local plans.
- Continuing to work towards a 'combined authority' which would include a strategic planning role.
- Working with Transport for the North.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Combined authority (District/County) work in its early infancy.
- Sitting on working groups with those LPAs actively preparing local plans, as part of the Duty to Cooperate.

## Leicestershire

### Strategic planning role\*

- Work with Leicester UA and Leicestershire Districts to develop a non-statutory Strategic Growth Plan which provides a framework for local plans and long term growth and reflects the infr.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Preparation of the SGP steered by a Members Advisory Group (MAG) which is supported by an officer group (Strategic Planning Group) and a Project Manager acting on behalf of all authorities. The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership is an observer on MAG.

### Additional information

#### Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan

[www.llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk/](http://www.llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk/)

## Lincolnshire

### Strategic planning role\*

- Partner in two statutory joint local plans (Central Lincolnshire and SE Lincolnshire).

### Governance & working arrangements

- S29 statutory joint committees for joint local plans – LCC has equal voting right to Districts.
- Both committees supported by dedicated planning team with support from LCC and LPAs.

### Additional information

#### Central Lincolnshire LP

[www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/central-lincolnshire/local-plan/](http://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/central-lincolnshire/local-plan/)

#### SE Lincolnshire LP

[www.southeastlincslocalplan.org/](http://www.southeastlincslocalplan.org/)

## Norfolk (see also Case Study 4 in Annex 1)

### Strategic planning role\*

- Partner in Greater Norwich Core Strategy and its replacement Greater Norwich LP, and in the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB).
- Have recently prepared a non-statutory Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework with the districts and the Norfolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Decision-making on Greater Norwich Core Strategy and its replacement Greater Norwich LP made by individual LPAs but partner in its delivery through the GNGB.
- Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum oversees duty to cooperate issues including the production of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework.

### Additional information

#### Norfolk Strategic Planning Forum

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/norfolk-strategic-planning-member-forum](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/norfolk-strategic-planning-member-forum)

#### Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/strategic-member-forum/latest-endorsed-version-of-the-norfolk-strategic-planning-framework.pdf?la=en](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/strategic-member-forum/latest-endorsed-version-of-the-norfolk-strategic-planning-framework.pdf?la=en)

#### Norfolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/business/norfolk-infrastructure-delivery-plan-2017-2027.pdf](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/business/norfolk-infrastructure-delivery-plan-2017-2027.pdf)

#### Greater Norwich Growth Board/ Joint LP

[www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/](http://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/)

## Northamptonshire

### Strategic planning role\*

- Partner in the North Northants Joint Planning Committee but no longer contributes financially.
- Was partner in West Northants Joint Planning Committee but this was recently disbanded (SoS Order revoked in Jan 2018 at the request of the local authorities). To be replaced by non-statutory joint arrangements.
- The County Council is to be a member of the Central Area Growth Board for the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Full voting partner in the S29 North Northants Joint Planning Committee.
- Will be a partner in the replacement non-statutory joint arrangements for West Northants but will not contribute financially.
- O-C Central Area Growth Board is a Joint Committee under Sections 101(5) and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 but with no planning powers.

### Additional information

#### North Northamptonshire

[www.nnjpu.org.uk/](http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/)

#### West Northamptonshire

[www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/connect.ti/website](http://www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/connect.ti/website)

#### O-C Central Area Growth Board ToR

<file:///C:/Users/Admin/Documents/CRA%20Ltd/CRA%20Projects/Strategic%20Planning/South%20Essex/Joint%20Planning%20Work/ToR%20for%20O-C%20Central%20Area%20Growth%20Board.pdf>

## North Yorkshire

### Strategic planning role\*

- Strategic planning contribution through Member and officer groups.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Sub-regional partnership governance structures at officer and political levels dealing with a range of planning and growth-related agendas.

## Nottinghamshire

### Strategic planning role\*

- Partner in the preparation of the Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategies.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Decision-making in GN Aligned CS made by individual LPAs.
- Member of the Joint Planning Advisory Board (and supporting officer groups) which provides overall steering of the work of the Greater Nottingham authorities.
- Partners make funding contributions which support the ongoing work.

### Additional information

#### Nottingham Aligned Core Strategies

[www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/gnpoint/](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/gnpoint/)

## Oxfordshire (see also Case Study 5 in Annex 1)

### Strategic planning role\*

- Partner in statutory Joint Strategic Spatial Plan (JSSP) being prepared as part of Oxfordshire Growth Deal.
- Continue to lead of strategic infrastructure planning (OxIS) and delivery.

### Governance & working arrangements

- JSSP being developed through Oxfordshire Growth Board (formal joint committee) which includes OCC but ultimate decision-making on JSSP rests with individual LPAs.

### Additional information

#### Oxfordshire Growth Board

[www.oxford.gov.uk/oxfordshiregrowthboard](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/oxfordshiregrowthboard)

[mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CIId=460&Year=0](http://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CIId=460&Year=0)

## Somerset

### Strategic planning role\*

- Partner in collaboration with Districts (and others) to develop a non-statutory Growth Plan aimed at attracting and guiding investment to overcome barriers to growth and maximise opportunities for sustainable growth.
- The contents on Growth Plan are based upon adopted Local Plans (District & County Council) and their supporting evidence base.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Non-statutory collaboration.
- County Council has the lead role in developing the partnership between the Somerset Local Authorities, business representative organisations and other key stakeholders for the Growth Plan.

### Additional information

#### Somerset Growth Plan

[www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/plans/somerset-growth-plan/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/plans/somerset-growth-plan/)

## Staffordshire

### Strategic planning role\*

- Part of the Constellation Partnership which is preparing a non-statutory growth strategy, which seeks to identify opportunities to deliver enhanced growth on the back of investment in HS2 and then in turn inform the preparation of local plans and/or reviews.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Constellation Partnership is a partnership of two LEPs and seven local authorities including the County Council.

### Additional information

#### Constellation Partnership

[www.constellationpartnership.co.uk/](http://www.constellationpartnership.co.uk/)

## Suffolk

### Strategic planning role\*

- Partners in preparation of a non-statutory Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Framework (SPIF) to guide long term growth and strategic infrastructure investment.

### Governance & working arrangements

- SPIF managed through Suffolk Growth Board (Leaders/CXs) which steers the work within the wider growth agenda. The SPIF has been prepared by consultants with project management provided through PM, a Member group (Planning Portfolio-Holders) and officer project team.
- Members of the Ipswich Strategic Planning Board, an informal duty to cooperate grouping consisting of four district/boroughs and the SCC to manage the growth of Ipswich.

## Surrey (see also Case Study 6 in Annex 1)

### Strategic planning role\*

- An MoU sets out how councils will work together on strategic planning.
- A non-statutory (interim) Surrey Local Strategic Statement (LSS) has been prepared by Surrey Strategy Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP) and work towards an investment framework is ongoing.
- SCC is also a partner in the non-statutory Gatwick Diamond Local Strategic Statement and on the emerging Joint Strategic Planning Framework for Heathrow Sub-region.

### Governance & working arrangements

- The SPIP was formed in 2014 to develop the planning and investment framework for Surrey and has responsibility for the LSS.
- The Gatwick Diamond and Heathrow Strategic Planning Groups are non-statutory partnership.

### Additional information

#### Surrey Future/ LSS

[www.surreycc.gov.uk/environment-housing-and-planning/development-in-surrey/surrey-future](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/environment-housing-and-planning/development-in-surrey/surrey-future)

#### Gatwick Diamond LSS

[www.horsham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/planning-policy/gatwick-diamond](http://www.horsham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/planning-policy/gatwick-diamond)

## Warwickshire

### Strategic planning role\*

- Equal partner in a Warwickshire wide Duty to Cooperate Group and signatory to two MOUs on housing and employment land.

### Governance & working arrangements

## West Sussex

### Strategic planning role\*

- West Sussex and Greater Brighton Local Strategic Statement and Memorandum of Understanding.
- Gatwick Diamond Local Strategic Statement and Memorandum of Understanding.

### Governance & working arrangements

- Full partner in the (non-statutory) West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board (portfolio holders) supported by a Planning Officers Group.
- Full partner in the (non-statutory) Gatwick Diamond Member Board (portfolio holders) supported by a Planning Officer Group.

### Additional information

#### West Sussex & Greater Brighton LSS

<https://coastalwestsussex.org.uk/about-us/cws-strategic-planning-board/>

#### Gatwick Diamond LSS

[www.horsham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/planning-policy/gatwick-diamond](http://www.horsham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/planning-policy/gatwick-diamond)

## Worcesterhire

### Strategic planning role\*

- No formal arrangements, although part of the Duty to Cooperate.

### Governance & working arrangements

\*This does not include statutory minerals and waste planning role

## Annex 3: About Catriona Riddell, Director of Catriona Riddell & Associates Ltd

**Catriona Riddell, the Director of Catriona Riddell & Associates Ltd, is a chartered town planner with substantial experience working on the development and implementation of planning policy. Since her company was established in 2011, Catriona has supported local authorities and partners, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, on a wide range of planning issues but specialises in strategic planning and the Duty to Cooperate.**

Some of her most recent and current projects include:

**South Essex Authorities:** Since 2016 Catriona has been advising the local authorities on their strategic planning activity including the Joint Spatial Plan.

**South West Hertfordshire Authorities:** Since 2017 Catriona has been advising the local authorities on their Joint Strategic Plan.

**Berkshire Authorities:** In 2017 Catriona worked with the authorities to explore options for working more collaboratively together on strategic planning and other related services.

**West Sussex and Greater Brighton Authorities:** Between 2012 and 2016 Catriona supported the work of the Strategic Planning Board and was the lead author of the Local Strategic Statement. The work of Board was recognised with an RTPI Award in 2014 and is a PAS Case Study.

**Suffolk Authorities:** Between 2015 and 2017 Catriona supported the authorities in the preparation of a new Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Framework.

**Kent Authorities:** In 2015 Catriona acted as Project Manager for the Kent Authorities on a major project to analyse the infrastructure needs and costs of supporting development in local plans – the Kent and Medway Growth & Infrastructure Framework.

**Supporting local authorities develop new strategic planning arrangements and frameworks to guide local plan priorities:**

This involved facilitation of officer, councillor and stakeholder workshops, reviews of governance and working arrangements and providing technical advice on strategic planning priorities. Recent examples include Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Authorities and Combined Authority (2016 and 2017); Leicestershire Authorities (2015 and 2017); Hertfordshire Authorities (2014); Oxfordshire Authorities (2014 and 2017); Surrey Authorities (2013).

**PAS Duty to Cooperate support:** Catriona co-wrote all the support information on the PAS website (2014) and has provided training to a number of authorities on the Duty to Cooperate through PAS.

**Local Plan Reviews:** Undertaking technical reviews of emerging local plans, in terms of evidence base, policies and process.

**Working with LEPs:** As well as working directly with local authorities on strategic planning, Catriona has worked with LEPs to help them deliver the strategic planning priorities set out in their Growth Plans and Growth Deals (e.g. Coast to Capital and South East LEPs).

**Strategic Planning Specialist for the Planning Officers' Society (POS):** In this capacity Catriona works with Government and others on strategic planning matters and recently has been advising MHCLG on joint planning arrangements.

Previously Catriona was Director of Planning at the South East England Regional Assembly where she was responsible for the Regional Strategy (The South East Plan). This role involved working closely with all local authorities in the region and at a national level with other regions and government officials. Prior to this, Catriona worked for Surrey County Council and, as Head of Strategic Planning, was responsible for the last ever Surrey Structure Plan. In both these roles Catriona led her teams to win two national RTPI Awards and a South East RTPI Award.

Catriona also has extensive public speaking experience and is invited to speak at numerous conferences as an expert on strategic planning. She is a Trustee of the Town and Country Planning Association and an External Examiner for University of Liverpool (Department of Geography and Planning).

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## References

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/economic-growth-housing-infrastructure/>
  - <sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-revised-national-planning-policy-framework>
  - <sup>3</sup> Structure plans were usually prepared within a Government set regional framework at this time, for example Regional Planning Guidance from the mid-1980s onwards.
  - <sup>4</sup> For example, the six Berkshire UAs prepared a structure plan on a 'Berkshire' geography, the Kent and Medway Structure Plan was prepared jointly by Kent County Council and Medway UA.
  - <sup>5</sup> Regional Planning Bodies (Regional Assemblies) were legally constituted advisory bodies comprising two thirds local authorities and one third strategic stakeholders. RPBs had statutory responsibility for preparing RSS although decision-making was the responsibility of Central Government, discharged through the Government Offices. County councils and unitary authorities retained a statutory responsibility to support preparation of sub-regional policies and monitoring – (Part 1) 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act – [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/pdfs/ukpga\\_20040005\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/pdfs/ukpga_20040005_en.pdf).
  - <sup>6</sup> Part 6 (Chapter 1) of the 2011 Localism Act sets out the requirements for LPAs to cooperate on a voluntary basis to address strategic planning matters, particularly overall housing provision and distribution over housing market areas – <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/part/6/chapter/1/enacted>
  - <sup>7</sup> Post 2011 London remained the only part of England with a statutory regional tier of planning exercised through the London Plan which provides the planning framework for the London Boroughs' local plans. The Mayor of London is responsible for the London Plan – <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning>
  - <sup>8</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/507019/160310\\_planning\\_consultation.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/507019/160310_planning_consultation.pdf)
  - <sup>9</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/508345/Local-plans-report-to-governement.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508345/Local-plans-report-to-governement.pdf)
  - <sup>10</sup> <https://coastalwestsussex.org.uk/about-us/cws-strategic-planning-board/>
  - <sup>11</sup> Only one Mayoral Combined Authority was established in a two-tier local authority area outside the Northern City Regions– Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – but this does not currently have statutory responsibility for strategic plan-making.
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- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.nic.org.uk/our-work/growth-corridor/>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-white-paper>
- <sup>14</sup> Sec 154 of the Housing and Planning Act allows LPAs to request 'Planning Freedoms and Flexibilities' from specific planning provisions in order to facilitate an increase in housing – <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/22/section/154/enacted>
- <sup>15</sup> The Secretary of State (Sajid Javid at the time) announced his intention to intervene in 15 local plans in November 2017, with further action taken against three authorities announced in March 2018.
- <sup>16</sup> The 2016 Cities and Devolution Act allows for Sub-National Transport Bodies to be established <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/1/crossheading/subnational-transport-bodies/enacted>
- <sup>17</sup> 20% of NHB is awarded to the upper tier authorities (outside London) as a starting point for local negotiation, although in reality this rarely happens – <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05724/SN05724.pdf>
- <sup>18</sup> The CIL Review Team (2016) – [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/589637/CIL\\_REPORT\\_2016.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/589637/CIL_REPORT_2016.pdf)
- <sup>19</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/625531/DCLG\\_Introduction\\_to\\_Housing\\_Infrastructure\\_PRINT.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625531/DCLG_Introduction_to_Housing_Infrastructure_PRINT.pdf)
- <sup>20</sup> The proposals for Strategic Infrastructure Tariff (SIT) are set out in paragraphs 87-89 of the consultation document on CIL reforms – [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/691182/Developer\\_Contributions\\_Consultation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/691182/Developer_Contributions_Consultation.pdf)
- <sup>21</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-building-a-britain-fit-for-the-future>
- <sup>22</sup> [http://www.localis.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/A4\\_IndustrialStrategy\\_Maps.jpg](http://www.localis.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/A4_IndustrialStrategy_Maps.jpg)
- <sup>23</sup> Joint 'strategic' plans are currently being prepared in Greater Exeter, Oxfordshire, South Essex, South West Hertfordshire and West of England
- <sup>24</sup> <https://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1458856/return-county-plan-making>
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## Notes





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