

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Asset Management

Submission of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan for Examination

1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks approval from Cabinet to recommend to Full Council that the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for Public Examination. The Strategic Plan is in accordance with all of the Council's corporate priorities, particularly providing a good quality home for everyone. Detail is contained within the report as to the reasons for this item being exempt from the call-in process.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to Council:

- 1. The Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan and accompanying Submission documents be submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination.**
- 2. To confirm that the Council considers that the revised Publication version of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (March 2025) has substantially the same effect on its area as the November 2024 Publication version (which included Gedling Borough Council as a partnering authority).**
- 3. To grant delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any necessary minor editing amendments to the Submission draft Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan if required.**
- 4. To request the Planning Examination Inspector(s) to consider the proposed modifications, including supporting the creation of a DH Lawrence County Park north of Eastwood, and recommend any modifications which are necessary to make the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan sound, under section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).**
- 5. The updated Local Development Scheme (with effect from December 2025) be adopted.**

3. Detail

This report seeks a recommendation from Cabinet to Full Council to submit the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination. The Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan is a statutory development plan document and part of the Council's Policy Framework and comprises strategic planning policies and strategic site allocations. The Plan has been prepared with Nottingham City and Rushcliffe Borough Councils; separate approvals are simultaneously being sought for the partner authorities. All documentation associated with this report can be viewed at:

<https://www.gnplan.org.uk/examination-library/>

The submission of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan requires approval from Full Council. A call-in period would prevent this approval being sought. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with the Constitution, has given permission for the item to be excluded from call in based on the reasons stated. A notice was published on 26 November 2025.

Planning legislation requires the Council to have an up-to-date Local Plan. In Broxtowe, the Local Plan currently comprises:

- The Part 1 Local Plan: The Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategies (adopted September 2014), prepared with Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe Borough Councils which contains strategic planning policies and strategic site allocations.
- The Part 2 Local Plan (adopted October 2019) which contains specific development management planning policies and site allocations.

The Part 1 Local Plan is now considerably out-of-date and Broxtowe and the partnering authorities (Nottingham City and Rushcliffe Borough Councils) have been working on preparing a replacement Plan. This will be known as the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP).

Prior to its adoption, the GNSP is required to go through a number of formal and informal consultation stages. Submission represents the final formal stage of preparation when the GNSP is examined by an Independent Inspector who will consider the 'soundness' of the plan.

This stage follows extensive consultations on the 'Growth Options' and 'Preferred Approach' versions of the GNSP and a further two consultations on Regulation 19 'Publication' versions of the Plan. The first Publication version of the GNSP was consulted on in November/December 2024 and the second Revised Publication version of the GNSP was consulted on in March/April 2025. A Revised Publication version of the GNSP was required to take into account Planning Reform and National Planning Policy Framework changes and the withdrawal of Gedling Borough Council from the process. All of the consultation responses received have been used to inform and shape the GNSP as it has

evolved. A summary of the consultation responses received and how the councils have addressed them are set out in the Report of Consultation.

For the purposes of this report, the Submission document, including other key documents, can be found at this location:

<https://www.gnplan.org.uk/examination-library/>

Key documents include:

- The Submission version of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan
- The Schedule of suggested Main Modifications
- The Sustainability Appraisal Report and accompanying appendices.
- The Submission Policies Map Document showing where the adoption of the GNSP results in changes to the adopted Policies Map.
- The Report of Consultation.

All other supporting evidence documents are available at:

www.gnplan.org.uk/evidence-base

The Sustainability Appraisal is a legal requirement of plan preparation. The Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan Sustainability Appraisal Report has been prepared to fulfil the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and the requirements of the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive transposed in the UK by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

The Council also has a requirement to set out how it will effectively engage with communities during plan preparation in the Statement of Community Involvement. When assessing the plan's legal compliance, the examining inspector will consider whether it has been consulted on in line with the Statement of Community Involvement's objectives. The consultation statements are also viewable on the evidence base.

Withdrawal of Gedling Borough Council from the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan

It should be noted that the Submission version of the GNSP, which the Council is asked to approve, no longer includes Gedling Borough Council as a partnering authority for the GNSP. Due to the Planning Reform changes which have been introduced by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, and the consequent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and housing requirements, Gedling decided to withdraw from the GNSP in February 2025 to prepare their own Local Plan to allow them flexibility to fulfil their increased housing requirement.

The Planning Reform changes that have been introduced change the way that Local Plans are prepared. Accompanying changes to national planning policy and the way that housing requirements are calculated for local authority areas

have also changed, both of these factors have had a significant bearing on the amount of housing required. In recognition of this level of change, Government has introduced transitional arrangements which allow Local Plans being prepared prior to Planning Reform to proceed. The GNSP will proceed in accordance with these transitional arrangements.

The Revised Publication version of the GNSP released in March 2025 therefore covered Broxtowe Borough, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe Borough only. This version removed unnecessary references and policies for Gedling Borough, and updated housing figures for Broxtowe and Rushcliffe Boroughs to comply with the amended transitional arrangements included in the 2024 NPPF.

Gedling's withdrawal from the GNSP means Section 28 (6)-(7) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 applies to the remaining Plan-making authorities, as does Regulation 32 of the Town and Country Planning Local Plan Regulations 2012 (as amended). Together these enable a joint plan to continue to progress in the event of one of the authorities withdrawing, provided that the plan has "substantially the same effect" on the remaining authorities as the original joint plan.

Broxtowe Borough, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe Borough Councils consider that core objectives, policies, and outcomes of the GNSP on their areas are largely unchanged despite the withdrawal of Gedling Borough Council. The remaining Councils have assessed the impact of Gedling's withdrawal on the overall strategy, policies, and allocations within the plan and conclude:

- The overall strategy of the GNSP is unchanged from the previous version of the GNSP;
- The Policies have been subject to minimal change; and
- There are no changes to the allocations between the two Publication versions of the GNSP.

In looking at the changes required to the Publication version of the GNSP, it was concluded that the changes to policies principally involved deleting references to Gedling Borough and the deletion of Gedling Borough site specific policies. There were also a small number of non-material amendments to improve grammar or correct typographical errors made. More detail is set out at **Appendix 2**.

On this basis, Broxtowe Borough Council, Nottingham City Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council consider that the Revised version of the Publication GNSP (issued in March 2025) had substantially the same effect on their areas as the first version of the Publication GNSP (issued in November 2024).

Submission of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan and next steps

Cabinet approved consultation on the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan Publication Version in March 2025. Nottingham City and Rushcliffe Borough Councils have already obtained approval from their respective Full Councils to submit the Strategic Plan for examination.

In respect of Broxtowe, the Strategic Plan proposes an annual housing target of 497 homes per year. Whilst this is a high target compared to historic completions, it is below the Government's updated housing requirement for Broxtowe of 621 homes per year. This is as the Strategic Plan is proceeding under 'transitional arrangements' with a housing target within 80% of the updated requirements. If the Council did not proceed with the Strategic Plan, the higher housing target would have to form the basis of a new Local Plan.

The large majority of Broxtowe's housing target is to be provided within or adjoining the main built up area. Three housing allocations are included within the Strategic Plan:

- Boots (existing allocation being carried forward);
- Field Farm (existing allocation being carried forward); and
- Toton and Chetwynd Barracks (2,700 homes in the Plan period).

Boots and Field Farm are existing allocations and are being 'carried forward' in the Strategic Plan to ensure there are policies in place should any revised planning applications be submitted. Toton and Chetwynd Barracks are existing allocations in the Part 2 Local Plan. The allocations have been combined to form a single allocation to reflect the need to ensure a coordinated approach to infrastructure delivery and to reflect the single Supplementary Planning Document which covers the site. An additional parcel of land to the north of the tram line is proposed to be removed from the Green Belt and added to the allocation to facilitate the delivery of key transport infrastructure. The Strategic Plan sets out "exceptional circumstances" required to justify this further Green Belt release.

The Strategic Plan proposes to allocate sites at the former Bennerley Coal Disposal Point on 61 hectares of land and on part of the former Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station Site on 36.4 hectares (Rushcliffe Borough). These sites benefit from potential rail connections and are partly brownfield. The Bennerley allocation includes the requirement to deliver a country park as part of the development and sets out exceptional circumstances required to justify Green Belt release. The two strategic allocations for large scale distribution and logistics will lead to a significant uplift in terms of the Plan Area's contribution to meeting regional needs for this specialist distribution and logistics sector.

There are a range of policies covering topics such as climate change, town centres, blue and green infrastructure and heritage.

The last consultation on the GNSP took place between March and April 2025 on the Revised Publication version. During this time, statutory bodies, individuals and interested parties were able to make representations on the GNSP.

The representations received, and the Councils' responses, have been compiled and will be submitted to the Secretary of State and considered by an independent Planning Inspector appointed by the government as part of a Public Examination. A summary of the main issues raised, and the Councils' responses to them, can be found in the Report of Consultation.

Following on from this, the Councils are proposing a number of changes to the GNSP by way of suggested Main Modifications. It will be for the Inspector to decide whether these suggested Main Modifications are required, and it is likely that the Inspector will require further Main Modifications should the plan be otherwise found sound. Accordingly, no consultation has yet taken place on these suggested Main Modifications. If accepted by the Inspector, consultation will follow.

The suggested Main Modifications comprise typographical changes to aid clarity to the text of the GNSP and changes to some policy wording based on consultee comments including from the Environment Agency and Historic England.

Once all of the councils have approved the formal Submission of the GNSP, submission will take place as soon as practicable, starting the independent examination process. An independent Planning Inspector will then be appointed by the Secretary of State to consider the representations that have been made and to test the GNSP's overall soundness and legal compliance.

At submission, the Councils will notify the Inspector that they wish to request modifications under section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), to allow the Inspector to recommend any changes to the GNSP to make it sound, rather than simply test whether it is sound or not. Part of this process will involve the Inspector holding round table hearing sessions to discuss specific issues. He/she may invite further supporting evidence from the councils and respondents as necessary. Participation in the hearing sessions will be at the discretion of the Inspector.

The Council may need to make further minor editing changes to ensure consistency and accuracy prior to Submission. In addition, during the course of the independent examination, it is also likely that the Inspector will recommend or ask the Council to suggest further Main Modifications which they consider are necessary to make the GNSP sound. These changes would need to be consulted on before the GNSP can be formally approved for adoption by Full Council. The Councils will submit a list of suggested modifications based on responses to the consultation responses and other updated work. This includes additional specific reference to the creation of a DH Lawrence Country Park north of Eastwood within Policy 16: Blue and Green Infrastructure, Parks and Open Space.

Following the receipt of any consultation comments, the Inspector will publish a report which will set out whether or not the GNSP is sound. If the Plan is sound, it can then be formally approved for adoption by Full Council.

To reflect the updated timescales, the Local Development Scheme has been updated. The Government also requires all local authorities to submit an updated Local Development Scheme. Therefore, approval is sought to adopt the updated Local Development Scheme.

Alternative Options

An alternative option would be to prepare a Broxtowe specific Local Plan. However, this would increase the period of having an out of date plan and policies which would make the Council vulnerable to speculative planning applications as applications would be determined in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and its default presumption in favour of sustainable development. It would also mean that Broxtowe would have to meet a significantly higher housing target and undertake significant work on evidence documents, without the benefit of joint working and sharing costs. The Council would also have to prepare the Local Plan under the new 'Local Plan system', with only very limited details currently available in respect of what this involves.

4. Key Decision

This report is a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 as it will be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the Council's area.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable. Previous stages of the plan have been subject to significant consultation and previous Cabinet decisions.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Interim Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer were as follows:

The adoption of planning strategies and delivery of the outcomes will always have the potential to impact on the Council's operations and its Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

The cost of the Examination have been included in existing budgets. Any significant budget implications that might be required as the review progresses, over and above virement limits, would require approval by Cabinet.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services were as follows:

It is a statutory requirement, as set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended, including by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023), for the Council to have a local plan. Under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 local plans must also be reviewed at least once every five years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community.

8. Human Resources Implications

Not applicable.

9. Union Comments

Not applicable.

10. Climate Change Implications

The Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan includes a specific policy relating to climate change (Policy 1) which seeks to set carbon standards for new development and identifies the key role that land use planning has in relation to Councils meeting their local carbon targets. The policy also includes measures to mitigate the impact of climate change, for adaptation to meet the challenges of climate change and to build resilience to cope with the impacts of climate change.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the Strategic Plan and forms part of the evidence base.

13. Background Papers

Nil.