



Cabinet

Tuesday, 12 September 2023

Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan: Strategic Distribution and Logistics Preferred Approach

Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor R Upton

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. Broxtowe Borough, Gedling Borough, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe Borough Councils are preparing the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP), which will set out new policies and proposals to secure sustainable growth. When adopted the Strategic Plan will, for Rushcliffe, replace the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy that was adopted in 2014.
- 1.2. In January 2023, the councils undertook a 'Preferred Approach' consultation focusing on the Strategic Plan's Vision, Strategy and the approach to housing and employment need. The councils are now seeking approval to undertake an additional consultation for a period of six weeks focusing on a Preferred Approach to strategic distribution and logistics.
- 1.3. In Rushcliffe, provision for distribution and logistics is proposed as part of the employment allocation of the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site. Elsewhere in the Plan area, it is proposed that the Former Bennerley Coal Disposal Point in Broxtowe is allocated for distribution and logistics.
- 1.4. If approved by Cabinet, and there is equivalent approval by Broxtowe Borough, Gedling Borough and Nottingham City Councils, the Strategic Distribution and Logistics Preferred Approach document (Appendix 1) will be published and consulted on for a minimum of six weeks. The responses received will then be considered as part of preparing the final (publication) draft of the Strategic Plan.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) approves the Greater Nottingham Strategic Distribution and Logistics Preferred Approach, in so far as it relates to Rushcliffe Borough, for public consultation; and
- b) delegates authority to the Director for Development and Economic Growth to approve any minor changes required to the Preferred Approach document and the evidence base prior to consultation.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

To enable preparation of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan to progress further and to identify the preferred approach in respect of strategic distribution and logistics for the purpose of public consultation prior to finalising the final (publication) draft of the Strategic Plan.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. The GNSP's Preferred Approach, which was published for consultation in January 2023, focussed on a proposed strategy and vision, an approach to housing and employment provision and proposed strategic allocations. It did not include an approach in respect of strategic distribution and logistics, which was to follow.
- 4.2. The technical work to identify a preferred approach for strategic distribution and logistics has since continued and has now been concluded, with full details set out in the Strategic Distribution and Logistics Background Paper (Appendix 2).

Evidence of need

- 4.3. As part of preparing the GNSP, the councils commissioned consultants to carry out an employment land study (available as a background paper). The study included a specific recommendation to give further consideration to assess the need for major logistics facilities.
- 4.4. Ashfield District, Broxtowe Borough, Erewash Borough, Gedling Borough, Mansfield District, Newark and Sherwood District, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe Borough Councils commissioned consultants to undertake a Logistics Study to assess the specific needs for strategic distribution and logistics facilities (available as a background paper).
- 4.5. The Study assessed the quantitative need for additional strategic distribution floorspace and also set out more specific criteria for locating strategic distribution and logistics sites. It was undertaken from a "policy off" perspective, meaning that constraints such as the Green Belt or issues determining sustainability (historic and natural environment constraints and socio-economic factors) were not considered in the ability of the area to accommodate future logistics requirements. The Study did not involve assessing the capacity of the road network or individual junctions, which will be addressed through future transport assessment work. The amount of space estimated as being required is not viewed as a target but as guidance to the extent to which need may be met once account is taken of policy and environmental constraints.
- 4.6. The Study concluded that there was a residual need for 137 to 155 hectares of land, equivalent to "two to three large strategic logistic parks" across the study area. It should be noted that the study area relates to a larger area than covered by the Strategic Plan and includes Ashfield, Mansfield and Newark and Sherwood.

- 4.7. The Background Paper (Appendix 2) has updated the supply of distribution and logistics developments with planning permission (commitments) and those without permission but are likely to come forward, for example within existing and local plans ('pipeline sites'). This update and the removal of sites that are delivering general employment development (avoiding the double counting of sites as both distribution and general employment) has resulted in an identified residual remaining need for distribution and logistics of between 131 and 147 hectares across the wider study area.
- 4.8. The Logistics Study identified Areas of Opportunity where new strategic logistic sites should be located. These are broad areas which: have good connections to the strategic road network; are appropriately located relative to the markets to be served; are located where there is a known under-provision of strategic sites; and are accessible to labour and located close to areas of employment need.
- 4.9. The following Areas of Opportunity are identified as:
- Area adjacent to M1 Junction 28 and 27 (Sutton in Ashfield, Alfreton, Kirkby-in-Ashfield and towards Hucknall);
 - Area adjacent to M1 Junction 26 (Langley Mill, Eastwood and Kimberley);
 - Area adjacent to M1 Junction 25;
 - Area adjacent to A453; and
 - Area surrounding Newark (along A1 and A46).
- 4.10. The study recommended that sites should be sufficiently large and flexible in configuration with a minimum size of 25 hectares being recommended although sites of 50 hectares or more are preferred.

Assessment of potential sites

- 4.11. A "call for sites" exercise was undertaken in Autumn 2022, which sought sites over 25 hectares in size and within the Areas of Opportunity. Following which, and including sites already known about, ten sites were identified within Rushcliffe for further consideration. Further details for which are set out in the Background Paper (Appendix 2).
- 4.12. A two-stage assessment was then undertaken. The first stage considered whether the sites were of a sufficient size, were in proximity to the Areas of Opportunity and had good connections to the highway network. Sites which met the criteria were considered as 'reasonable alternatives' and were subject to more detailed assessments following a set of criteria. The criteria were selected to assess whether the sites have the potential to deliver sustainable development, including whether development on the site could potentially utilise low carbon measures, whether the site could enable the transfer of freight onto the rail network, whether the site is located close to centres of population and potential employees and consideration of other policy designations such as Green Belt, heritage, ecology and flooding. The detailed assessments are contained within the Background Paper (Appendix 2). The sites have also been subject to assessments as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process

(Appendix 3). Both of these documents, together with a main consultation document, will form part of the consultation. An Equalities Impact Assessment relating to Rushcliffe has also been completed (Appendix 4).

- 4.13. A total of two sites were considered to be reasonable alternatives within Rushcliffe and seven within Broxtowe. The two within Rushcliffe were the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site (site reference RBC-L01) and the 'Nottingham Gateway' site (site reference RBC-L02) which is adjacent to the A453 and immediately south of the Fairham development site.

Preferred sites

- 4.14. Following assessment of the reasonable alternatives, it is proposed that the following sites are allocated for strategic distribution and logistics:
- Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site (part) for up to 180,000 square metres of distribution and logistics development; and
 - Former Bennerley Coal Disposal Point within Broxtowe Borough.
- 4.15. The Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site (total area around 265 hectares) is considered suitable for a certain level of distribution and logistics development and is a preferable location to alternatives for the reasons set out in the Background Paper (Appendix 2).
- 4.16. The site already has planning consent for 810,000 square metres of employment and related development (following adoption of the site's Local Development Order), including up to 180,000 square metres of storage and distribution (which it is estimated would occupy around 36 hectares of the site). The site is already identified as a proposed employment allocation within the first Preferred Approach, which was published in January 2023. It is proposed that the site's allocation, for all employment uses, should accord with the LDO.
- 4.17. The Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station and Former Bennerley Coal Disposal Point sites combined will deliver around 104 hectares of strategic distribution and logistics development, making a significant contribution to meeting assessed needs within the Logistics Study area.
- 4.18. The 'Nottingham Gateway' site, which was the other "reasonable alternative" within Rushcliffe, is not considered suitable for distribution and logistics development for the reasons set out in the Background Paper (Appendix 2).

Meeting the overall need

- 4.19. The Logistics Study recommends providing for approximately 425 hectares of strategic distribution and logistics facilities within the study area which, in addition to the GNSP area, includes Ashfield, Erewash, Mansfield and Newark and Sherwood. The extent of this area emphasises the flexibility of strategic distribution and the contributions (although not quantified) that development beyond the study area (most notably along the M1 and A1) will make to the study area's need.

- 4.20. There is a considerable amount of 'committed' and potential 'pipeline' supply already identified by the councils across the Nottingham Core and Outer HMAs. A significant quantity of which will be delivered within the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan area. Taking into account this supply, a residual need of between 131 and 147 hectares has been identified.
- 4.21. The estimate of need is considered to be guidance and not a target as all the councils must balance meeting demand for strategic distribution and logistics against planning policy and environmental constraints, principally the importance of protecting the Green Belt.
- 4.22. The various operational criteria and planning policy constraints have been taken into account to identify the two preferred sites, which broadly meet the relevant criteria. This provision, combined with the identified 'commitments' and potential 'pipeline' supply across the entire study area (including within neighbouring authorities) would provide for significant growth in the delivery of strategic distribution and logistics facilities in the Logistics Study area and an increased market share of the wider strategic distribution market.

Next steps

- 4.23. Subject to approval by all four of the councils, the aim is to consult in late September/early October 2023. Following the consultation, the responses received will be considered as part of preparing the final (publication) draft of the Strategic Plan.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local plans to promote a sustainable pattern of development that, alongside other requirements, seeks to meet the development needs of their area.
- 5.2 In respect of the Strategic Distribution and Logistics Preferred Approach, all reasonable alternatives have been assessed through the site selection and sustainability appraisal work undertaken as part of plan preparation.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to review the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy would eventually result in the Borough not having an up-to-date Development Plan. The absence of which would increase the risk of speculative unplanned development in Rushcliffe and could weaken the Council's ability to effectively deal with all planning applications.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

At present, the workload required preparing the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan, in terms of the Borough Council working jointly with partner councils, will be undertaken utilising existing Planning Policy resources. Any additional

resources that might be required as the review progresses will need to be considered as part of the Council's budget review processes.

7.2 Legal Implications

It is a statutory requirement, as set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, 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.

7.3 Equalities Implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared (Appendix 4), and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

7.4 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	The Strategic Plan will be underpinned by policies and proposals that aim to maintain the quality of life for both existing and new Rushcliffe residents.
Efficient Services	The provision of efficient services includes ongoing appraisal and alignment of resources to growth aspirations. The Strategic Plan will include policies and proposals to achieve development that is supported by adequate infrastructure, which includes not just transport and physical infrastructure such as flood risk management measures, but also health, education, and cultural facilities.
Sustainable Growth	Sustainable growth includes ensuring the Council's priorities are reflected in wider plans at a local, regional, and national level to ensure we can maximise the opportunities for Rushcliffe of developments such as HS2 and the expansion of East Midlands Airport whilst also providing support needed at some of our key sites including Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station. The Strategic Plan will play a vital role in achieving these aims.
The Environment	The Strategic Plan will establish a strategic framework for ensuring that new development respects and, where possible, enhances Rushcliffe's environment.

9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

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- b) delegates authority to the Director for Development and Economic Growth to approve any minor changes required to the Preferred Approach document and the evidence base prior to consultation.

<p>For more information contact:</p>	<p>Richard Mapletoft Planning Policy Manager 0115 914 8457 rmapletoft@rushcliffe.gov.uk</p>
<p>Background papers available for Inspection:</p>	<p>Nottingham Core HMA and Nottingham Outer HMA Employment Land Needs Study, May 2021: https://www.gnplan.org.uk/media/3332934/employment-land-needs-study-may-21.pdf</p> <p>Nottinghamshire Core & Outer HMA Logistics Study, August 2023: https://www.gnplan.org.uk/media/3375066/nottinghamshire-logistics-study-august-2022.pdf</p> <p>Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan – Preferred Approach consultation document, January 2023: https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/media/cexnioz1/gnsp-preferred-approach.pdf</p> <p>Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan – Growth Options consultation document, July 2020: https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/media/t2jn1dpe/greater-nottingham-strategic-plan-growth-options.pdf</p>
<p>List of appendices:</p>	<p>Appendix 1: Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan: Strategic Distribution and Logistics Preferred Approach</p> <p>Appendix 2: Strategic Distribution and Logistics Background Paper</p> <p>Appendix 3: Strategic Distribution and Logistics Preferred Approach: Sustainability Appraisal</p> <p>Appendix 4: Rushcliffe Borough Council: Equalities Impact Assessment for Strategic Distribution and Logistics Preferred Approach</p>