

Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor R Upton

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The first purpose of this report is to consider proposed main and other modifications to the draft Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP). These are proposed where changes are considered appropriate to address issues raised by consultees who submitted representations to the draft GNSP. The main modifications would be suggested to the Planning Inspector(s) examining the draft Plan to help ensure the Plan can be found sound, subject to their inclusion.
- 1.2. The second purpose is to consider justification text prepared to demonstrate that the revised Publication Draft GNSP, published in March 2025, has 'substantially the same effect' on the remaining authorities as the Publication Draft GNSP published in November 2024. This is a legal requirement that must be satisfied.
- 1.3. Once adopted, the Strategic Plan will replace the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (adopted in 2014) for Rushcliffe Borough.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) agrees that the Director – Development and Economic Growth be authorised to request that the Planning Inspector(s) examining the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP) recommends any main modifications to the GNSP, if necessary, in order for the Plan to be legally compliant and found sound;
- b) approves the suggested Main Modifications and Other Modifications to the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (Appendix 2);
- c) delegates authority to the Director – Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing to propose and consult on necessary modifications to the GNSP during its examination stage;

- d) approves the 'substantially the same effect' compliance statement for the GNSP (Appendix 3); and
- e) approves the revised Local Development Scheme (Appendix 4).

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP) must be examined by a Planning Inspector (or Inspectors) appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government before it can be adopted as part of the statutory development plan.
- 3.2. Modifications are proposed where considered appropriate to address issues raised by consultees who submitted representations to the draft GNSP. These would be suggested to the Planning Inspector(s) during the Plan's examination. The suggestion of main modifications should increase the likelihood that the Inspector(s) will conclude the Plan is sound, subject to the inclusion of the modifications.
- 3.3. To satisfy the relevant legal requirement by demonstrating that the revised Publication Draft GNSP, published in March 2025, has 'substantially the same effect' on the remaining authorities as the Publication Draft GNSP which was published in November 2024.
- 3.4. To ensure that the Rushcliffe Local Development Scheme is up to date at the point it is submitted for public examination.
- 3.5. Failure to review and replace the 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.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. On 6 March 2025, Full Council approved the revised Regulation 19 Publication Draft of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP) and the revised Policies Map Changes document. It was agreed that they should be published for a six-week public representation period and, following this, the revised Publication Draft GNSP, revised Policies Map Changes document, all supporting documents and all representations received be submitted for public examination.
- 4.2. The representation period ran from 12 March 2025 to 25 April 2025. During this time, statutory bodies, members of the public and interested parties were invited to make representations on the draft GNSP.
- 4.3. All representations received, together with the Councils' responses, have been compiled and will form part of the submission for public examination. A summary of the main issues raised, and the Councils' responses to them, can be found in Section 4 of the Report of Consultation (Appendix 1).

- 4.4. The Publication Draft GNSP, Policies Map Changes document, all supporting documents and all representations are expected to be submitted for public examination in late December 2025. This will begin the examination process by an independent Planning Inspector(s), who will consider the representations and test the draft Plan's soundness and legal compliance.

Suggested Main and Other Modifications

- 4.5. At submission, the Councils intend to notify the Inspector(s) that they wish to request modifications under Section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). This will allow the Inspector(s) to recommend changes to make the draft GNSP sound, rather than simply testing whether it is sound. As part of this process, the Inspector(s) will hold round-table hearing sessions to discuss specific issues and may invite further supporting evidence from the Councils and respondents as necessary.
- 4.6. Accordingly, revisions to the draft GNSP as 'main modifications' and 'other modifications' are proposed (at Appendix 2). These are intended to address issues raised by consultees during the draft GNSP representation period where changes are considered appropriate. In summary, the suggested modifications primarily aim to improve clarity within policies and supporting text. Specifically for Rushcliffe, modifications are proposed to Policy 32 (Strategic Allocation: Former Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station) and its supporting text. Following comments from National Grid Electricity Transmission, an additional policy criterion is included to ensure that the effective operation of existing electricity supply infrastructure on the site is not adversely affected. Additionally, following comments from East Midlands Freeport, supporting text is proposed to set out exceptional circumstances for releasing the site from the Green Belt, which are currently only referenced in background documents.
- 4.7. These suggested modifications do not form part of the draft GNSP which will be submitted for examination. It will be for the Inspector(s) to determine whether main modifications are required. The Inspector(s) may request revisions to the proposed modifications or suggest additional changes to enable the GNSP to be found sound.
- 4.8. As the modifications may change during the examination, no consultation has yet taken place. Consultation would occur later in the examination process once a final set of proposed modifications has been agreed. The Inspector(s) will consider any consultation responses before finalising and publishing their report, which will confirm whether the GNSP, incorporating any main modifications, is sound. If found sound, the Plan will then be ready for adoption by Full Council.
- 4.9. The suggested main and other modifications were considered by the LDF Group on 26 November 2025. The Group supported the modifications and their submission to Cabinet for approval.

Withdrawal of Gedling Borough Council from the GNSP

- 4.10. As reported to Full Council on 6 March 2025, Gedling Borough Council is no longer part of the partnership preparing the GNSP. The revised Publication Draft GNSP published in March 2025 therefore covers Broxtowe Borough, Nottingham City, and Rushcliffe Borough only. This version removed unnecessary references and policies relating to Gedling and updated housing figures for Broxtowe and Rushcliffe to comply with the amended transitional arrangements in the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 4.11. Gedling's withdrawal means that Sections 28(6) and (7) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 apply to the remaining plan-making authorities, as does Regulation 32 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) Regulations 2012 (as amended). These provisions allow a joint plan to continue where one authority withdraws, provided the plan has 'substantially the same effect' on the remaining authorities as the original joint plan.
- 4.12. It is considered that the core objectives, policies, and outcomes of the revised draft GNSP on the Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe areas are largely unchanged despite the withdrawal of Gedling Borough Council. The remaining Councils have assessed the impact of Gedling's withdrawal and conclude:
- the overall strategy of the GNSP is unchanged from the previous Publication version of the draft GNSP (November 2024);
 - the policies have undergone minimal change; and
 - there are no changes to site allocations between the two Publication versions of the GNSP.
- 4.13. Changes to the Publication Draft GNSP primarily involved deleting references to Gedling and removing Gedling-specific policies. A small number of non-material amendments were also made to improve grammar and correct typographical errors. Further detail is provided in the 'substantially the same effect' compliance statement at Appendix 3.
- 4.14. On this basis, the revised Publication Draft GNSP (published 12 March 2025) is considered to have substantially the same effect on the remaining authorities as the first Publication Draft (published November 2024) and Cabinet is asked to confirm this opinion.
- 4.15. The 'substantially the same effect' compliance statement was considered by the LDF Group on 26 November 2025. The Group supported statement and its submission to Cabinet for approval.

Timetable

- 4.16. The revised timetable for the Strategic Plan's preparation is:
- Publication (Regulation 19) of revised draft GNSP – 12 March 2025
 - Submission for public examination – December 2025
 - Examination, including public hearings – January 2026

- Receipt of Inspector's Report – November 2026
- Adoption – December 2026

4.17. This revised timetable has been included within a draft update to the Rushcliffe Local Development Scheme (Appendix 4).

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

5.1. The Councils could choose not to notify the Inspector(s) that they wish to request modifications under Section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). However, this option is rejected because it would prevent the Inspector(s) from recommending changes to make the draft GNSP sound, increasing the risk of the Plan being found unsound.

5.2. The Council must demonstrate that the revised Publication Draft GNSP, published in March 2025, has 'substantially the same effect' on the remaining authorities as the Publication Draft GNSP published in November 2024. This is a legal requirement that cannot be avoided.

5.3. The option of not updating the Local Development Scheme (LDS) is an unrealistic option because Local Planning Authorities are legally required to keep their LDS up-to-date and made available.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

6.1. Failure to review and replace the 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.

6.2. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) allows the Government to set deadlines for submitting development plans under the current system. Any delay to the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan timetable would risk the plan missing set deadlines and not being able to progress as it is.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

At present, the workload required in undertaking preparation of the GNSP, 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 (as amended, including by the Levelling-up and

Regeneration Act 2023), for the Council to have an up to date 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. Further information on new regulations relating to the local plan preparation process are expected during 2025.

7.3. Equalities Implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan and its outcomes have been used to inform the Plan's policies and proposals.

7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

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

7.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

Local plans can introduce a requirement for greater than 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on an area-wide basis or for specific allocations for development if justified. Planning practice guidance sets out that justification would need to be based on evidence including as to local need for a higher percentage, local opportunities for a higher percentage and any impacts on viability for development. The draft GNSP includes the proposal to increase the requirement for biodiversity net gain to a minimum of 20% within Rushcliffe Borough. Consideration will need to be given to how the policy will be implemented.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	The Strategic Plan establishes a strategic framework for ensuring that new development respects and, where possible, enhances Rushcliffe's environment.
Quality of Life	The Strategic Plan is 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.
Sustainable Growth	The Government views the primary purpose of the planning system as contributing to the achievement of development, including the provision of new homes, new commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. The Strategic Plan will play a vital role in achieving sustainable growth locally.

9. Recommendation

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For more information contact:	Richard Mapletoft Planning Policy Manager 0115 914 8457 rmapletoft@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Publication Draft Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan, November 2024: https://www.gnplan.org.uk/media/qfihjw32/gnsp-reg-19-publication-draft-digital.pdf2. Policies Map Changes, November 2024: https://www.gnplan.org.uk/media/phoisl4/gnsp-proposals-map-changes-september-2024.pdf3. Revised Publication Draft Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan, March 2025: https://www.gnplan.org.uk/media/dsrndti2/gnsp-publication-draft-march-2025.pdf4. Policies Map Changes, March 2025: https://www.gnplan.org.uk/media/qxlkbxjk/gnsp-policies-map-changes-march-2025.pdf
List of appendices:	Appendix 1: Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan Statement of Consultation Regulation 22(1)(c), November 2025

	<p>Appendix 2: Suggested Main Modifications and Other Modifications to the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan, November 2025</p> <p>Appendix 3: Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan - Regulation 32 of the Town and Country Planning Local Plan Regulations ("substantially the same effect") compliance</p> <p>Appendix 4: Revised Local Development Scheme 2025</p>
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