

# **This is our chance to start shaping a better world. Please comment on Leicester and Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Growth Plan consultation.**

**The consultation closes on 10<sup>th</sup> May. Please comment before then.**

Leicester and Leicestershire County Council have published their Strategic Growth Plan (SGP), setting out how they intend to meet government requirements for growth & housing in the county up to 2050. It will be used by all the councils in Leicester and Leicestershire to develop their local plans and so is extremely important. We have several very major concerns about the SGP, which is neither people nor environmentally friendly and which will shape housing, transport, jobs and our environmental impact for the next 30 years.

Please take a little time to reply to this consultation. It doesn't matter how brief or simple your submission is, it will still be counted so long as it is in your own words. If we don't say anything it will be assumed that Leicester and Leicestershire people support this plan.

**You can comment on the Strategic Growth Plan in the following ways, but please use your own words however short and simple:**

#### **Email**

strategic.growthplan@leics.gov.uk Put "Submission to SGP" in the subject line.

#### **Use the online questionnaire**

<http://www.llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk/the-plan/stage-two/how-to-comment/>  
Don't feel you have to answer the questions as they are put – they do make it harder to object. Just put your own comments wherever feels right.

#### **Write to**

Jo Miller, Leicestershire County Council, Chief Executives Dep't, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire, LE3 8RA

**Deadline: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

This briefing from the End of the Road LE3 campaign, is designed to help you comment on the SGP. It's based on our reading of many hundreds of pages of underlying evidence provided on the consultation website, and our thoughts on it. If you want to read the evidence for yourself, we recommend the HEDNA executive summary for the housing and economics side of things and the Strategic assessment of transport impacts as a starting point. For further information or if you'd like to see copies of our submission, email [zinazelter@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:zinazelter@yahoo.co.uk).

We also recommend the following as useful:

- The CPRE report "Impact of road projects in England" on the traffic and economic effects of road building. <http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/4542-the-impact-of-road-projects-in-england>
- The London Mayor's transport strategy, as an example of a city starting to do transport differently. <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayors-transport-strategy-2018.pdf>
- The CPRE report "Set up to fail: why housing targets based on flawed numbers threaten our countryside". <https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/housing/item/4158-set-up-to-fail-why-housing-targets-based-on-flawed-numbers-threaten-our-countryside>

## **Our concerns include the following:**

- **The plan is based on a predict and provide model. It assumes our current living, work and travel patterns will remain the same and that we will not move towards a more sustainable way of living. In doing so, it makes us less able to change in the face of climate change.**

Given that by 2050 climate change will be far more evident than it is now, and that the UK is committed to massive cuts in greenhouse gas emissions by then, both government policy and our everyday living will have to have become much more sustainable by the end of this plan. We need to start supporting this change – for example by planning for denser cities and towns with affordable high-quality carbon neutral housing and good public transport systems.

This plan does the opposite. Instead it:

1. Encourages car use by choosing out of town development plus new and bigger roads over in city and town development. This is damaging for people, the environment and communities alike.
2. Facilitates the development of the national and local economy in ways which damage people and the environment. For example, road and air freighting, giving more opportunities to small numbers of large

housing developers to cherry pick and build expensive high carbon houses which leave people dependant on car use. This will exacerbate climate change, not reduce it.

3. Says very little about carbon neutral housing or renewable energy development. Instead it suggests the building of new small gas power stations.
- **There is repeated reference to increased traffic pressure associated with a growing population, and the only proposed solution seems to be building new roads.**

Building more dispersed housing across the countryside is at the centre of this plan and will force still more people to depend on their cars to travel greater distances thus creating even more traffic pressure.

Why not invest in sustainability by utilising existing brownfield or derelict sites within towns and the city, mixing carbon zero-carbon domestic and commercial properties so that they remain more compact and our fields remain green? This would enable people to choose not to use their cars, especially in combination with real investment in cheap reliable public transport, car-pooling, cycling infrastructure and other forms of demand management. Our public transport could be transformed with a fraction of the money it would take to build the proposed new roads.

- **There is a huge need for affordable housing in Leicester and Leicestershire, which the plans simply do not adequately address. Handing planning opportunities to build in the countryside to developers who then use legal loopholes to avoid their social housing obligations is not a solution.**

This SGP says that at least 52% of the housing need within Leicester and Leicestershire is for social and affordable housing, and 80% of that is for social and affordable rented homes.

The plan's attempt to address this is to make huge areas of countryside available to developers to build large blocks of new houses on, in the hope that they will include some social housing within this (which they are theoretically required to do). Given that a substantial part of the lack of social housing across Leicester, Leicestershire and the UK is due to those same developers avoiding building social housing - because it is less profitable to build than more expensive homes - this is obviously not going to work.

Instead of estates of two story traditional homes with gardens and garages in the countryside, which is not where the need lies, lets promote affordable urban housing, eg by supporting people to take lodgers, investing in flats and community housing designed for the people who need them (elderly, students, single occupancy) and supporting those with large houses they no longer need to downsize, freeing up homes for families.

- **The economic driver for the SGP seems to be primarily warehouse storage and road freight (referred to as logistics) with a goal of making Leicestershire a hub for the UK. Is this really the future we want to make?**

The road-based logistics industry contributes substantially to climate change, pays its workers very little and contributes very little to our communities. The average logistics firm in Leicestershire pays £13,000pa to its warehouse operatives. This is not a living wage. Is it really the type of economic growth we want the County to be prioritising? The SGP does also propose rail links for freight, but in a context which also promotes road freight. Why not promote green house building, renewable energy production and freighting using rail alone and work with companies to shift their patterns and needs away from road use.

We need to prioritise and support businesses which pay their workers good wages and are sustainable, instead of relying on road use for profit. It is clear from the HEDNA evidence that such employers do exist and could be encouraged. Instead of accepting poor jobs, Leicester could be promoting the green economy by planning and building for carbon-neutral housing and renewable energy generation.

- **This SGP could be a fantastic opportunity for Leicester and Leicestershire to start changing patterns which the years have shown don't work and to start looking for new ways to approach old problems. At the moment, it's a lost opportunity.**

This is the county's chance to:

- Choose economic growth which will benefit the people of Leicester and Leicestershire and the environment by boosting low carbon housing and alternative energy not assuming all growth is good.
- Prioritise housing for people who need it and to design the county in a way that works for everyone.
- Move away from car use and towards active and public transport.
- Look after and care for our green spaces, countryside and people and to build low carbon housing with integral renewable energy systems.

**This is going to become the norm in the UK in the next 30 years as government policy changes to reduce our carbon emissions and tackle climate change. So let's get going!**