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**Report to:** West Yorkshire Combined Authority

**Date:** 4 September 2020

**Subject:** **Statement of Common Ground**

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**Director:** Alan Reiss, Director Policy, Strategy and Communications

**Author:** Alison Gillespie, Policy Manager, Planning Coordination

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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	N/A

## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek endorsement of the revised Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) by the Combined Authority.

## 2. Information

- 2.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) set out in the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019) that all local planning authorities are required to produce, maintain and update a SoCG.
- 2.2 MHCLG requires that a SoCG has to be produced to support more effective joint working where planning issues need to be addressed by more than one local planning authority. The objectives of the policy are to:
- a) Increase certainty and transparency, earlier on in the plan-making process, on where effective co-operation is and is not happening;
  - b) encourage all local planning authorities, regardless of their stage in plan-making, to co-operate effectively and seek agreement on strategic cross-boundary matters, including planning for the wider area's housing need; and

c) Help local planning authorities demonstrate evidence of co-operation by setting clearer and more consistent expectations as to how co-operation in plan-making should be approached and documented.

### **Version 1 of the Statement of Common Ground (2018)**

- 2.3 On 31 August 2018 Heads of Planning approved the initial Leeds City Region SoCG, following participation in a pilot to prepare a Statement. It was agreed that the SoCG would be taken through individual local authority approval processes. The SoCG was subsequently endorsed by LCR Directors of Development on 7 September 2018, Place Panel on 24 October 2018 and Combined Authority on 13 December 2018. The initial SoCG has attained individual local approval by all LCR constituent authorities with the exception of City of York and Craven who were unable to take the document forward for approval at that time due to the stage in the Local Plan preparation process. These timing issues have now been resolved in the preparation of this updated version of the Statement.

### **Revision of the Statement of Common Ground (2020)**

- 2.4 In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF and national planning practice guidance the SoCG commits to being kept under review and maintained to reflect the most up-to-date and readily available information.
- 2.5 The Combined Authority, in collaboration with City Region Heads of Planning Group has prepared an updated draft of the SoCG, a final version of which was agreed at their meeting on the 7 Feb 2020. A summary of key changes to the updated SoCG include:
- Matter 20 under the 'Transport' section has been amended to make reference to *'planning for an integrated mass transit system for West Yorkshire'*
  - Addition of a 'Climate Change' section detailing the agreement of work to be undertaken by the Partner Councils towards tackling the climate emergency
  - Addition of a 'Health and Well-being' section referencing the ability of plan making to contribute towards the delivery of healthy places
  - Addition of an 'Education' section agreeing to the sufficient provision for education needs arising from new development
- 2.6 The document was considered by Directors of Development on the 6 March 2020 and endorsed by Place Panel on 28 July 2020. The SoCG has been signed by all LCR Partner Councils (in most cases by the member that holds the portfolio for planning). As all signatures have now been provided by participating authorities it is recommended the Statement be signed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Once signed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority this will allow the Statement to be taken through individual local authority approval processes, as required and depending on local schemes of delegation.

- 2.7 On 6 August 2020, the Government published a White Paper entitled *Planning for the future*, which makes a range of proposals to reform the planning system in England. Given that these are only proposals, they do not affect the recommendation to approve the Statement of Common Ground. Further reports on implications of the Government's planning proposals will be brought to a future meeting of the Combined Authority.

### **3. Clean Growth Implications**

- 3.1 There are no clean growth implications directly arising from this report.

### **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 4.1 There are no inclusive growth implications directly arising from this report.

### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. The Statement of Common Ground has been developed internally by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Policy and Strategy team in partnership with all Leeds City Region Local Planning Authorities.

### **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

### **7. Staffing Implications**

- 7.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

### **8. External Consultees**

- 7.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

### **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 That the Combined Authority endorses the revised Statement of Common Ground (2020) as appended to this report.

### **10. Background Documents**

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

### **11. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Statement of Common Ground (2020)