
Report to: Place Panel

Date: 28 July 2020

Subject: **Statement of Common Ground**

Director(s): Alan Reiss, Director Policy, Strategy and Communications

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek endorsement of the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) and recommend that the West Yorkshire Combined Authority signs the document as appended to this report (Appendix 1).

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 LCR 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 Duty to Cooperate Group has prepared an updated draft of the SoCG a final version of which was agreed at a Heads of Planning meeting on the 7th Feb 2020. The document was also considered by Directors of Development on the 6th March 2020 and has now been signed by the relevant local authority member (in most cases the member that holds the portfolio for planning). The appended Statement contains all partner signatures. As all signatures have now been provided by participating authorities it is suggested 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.

3. Financial Implications

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

4. Legal Implications

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

5. Staffing Implications

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

6. External Consultees

- 6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 That the Panel endorses the revised Statement of Common Ground (2020) as appended and recommends that the Statement be signed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

8. Background Documents

None.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Statement of Common Ground (2020)