

South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan – Governance Structure

FINAL - Agreed by the JSP Strategic Planning Members Group on the 17th December 2019

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This governance structure is intended to ensure a joint and cohesive approach to the development of the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) across the partnership Council's. The structure is designed to cover the period of the JSP plan-making process, but will be regularly reviewed as the programme progresses through this continuum, to enable adaptation at key stages of the process. For example, a joint committee may be formed at some stage in the process, with defined decision-making abilities if considered appropriate.
- 1.2 It is intended that the governance structure will complement, not supersede, decision making structures operated by the councils individually or jointly, for example Local Plan Committees.
- 1.3 The Governance structure for the JSP is contained in the structure chart in Figure 1 including the Member and Officer Groups, roles and membership. This structure also includes the relationship between the JSP governance and the Hertfordshire Growth Board.

Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB)

- 1.4 The Hertfordshire Growth Board will have no statutory or approvals role in the preparation of the JSP. However, it will be important that the HGB is kept up to date on the progress of the JSP. Briefing of the HGB will be undertaken by the Chair of the SPMG, working with the JSP Director where appropriate.

Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG)

- 1.5 The Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG) will set the direction for the JSP, scrutinise the plan preparation, act as advocates for the JSP within their respective authorities and agree to recommend approval of the JSP for formal consultation, submission for examination and later adoption to their respective Councils. Political membership of this group will be either Leader or Portfolio Holder (as appropriate for each Council). It will be important that the political representatives of this group have the authority to make key decisions relation to the preparation of the JSP. The SPMG will also work with the Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG) to review the evidence and the draft plan, provide feedback to their respective authorities on any JSP related issues and to the SPOG. The SMPG will be tasked to approve the overall budget and sign off annual accounts. Initially, the SPMG will meet every twelve weeks.

Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG)

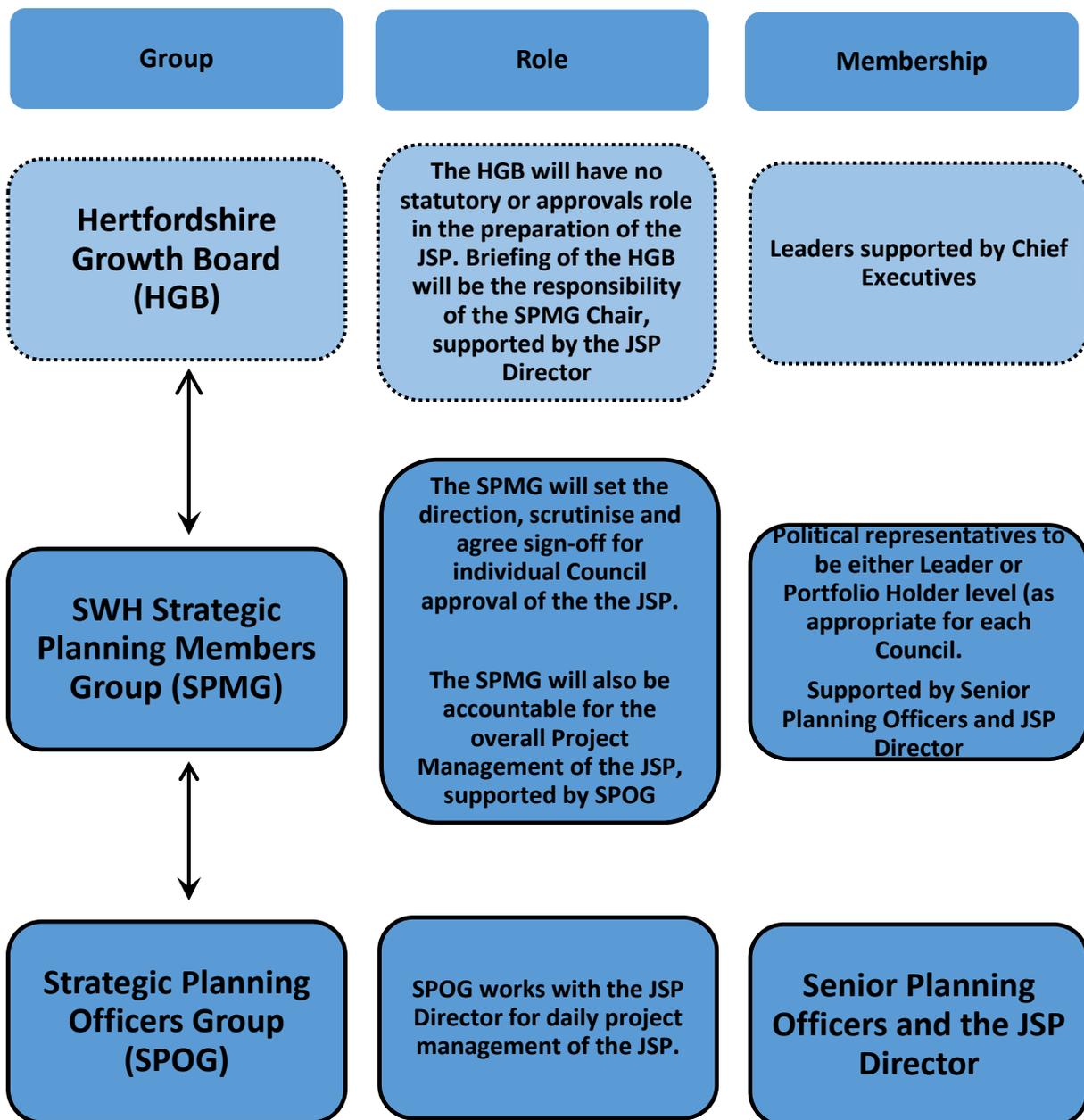
- 1.6 The Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG) will work with the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Director to produce the JSP and associated Delivery Plan. Comprising a lead officer for strategic planning from each of the partner local authorities, this group will steer the delivery of the projects, share approaches and learning across the various projects, and liaise closely with members via the proposed Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG). A key responsibility for the SPOG will be developing and monitoring a project plan, budget and risk register for the JSP in order that there is a clear route map and opportunities to review progress through the planning process. Meetings will take place monthly to develop approaches for the JSP, to review the work

undertaken and ensure that the project is being delivered in accordance with the agreed delivery timescales.

1.7 As required, officers from other council departments such as communications officers and external advisers will occasionally be asked to attend meetings of SPMG and/or SPOG to provide specialist advice on plan related and plan delivery matters. Task and finish' groups will be used to develop specific policy areas, to be identified by the SPMG.

1.8 The figure below illustrates the governance structure and relationship between the groups. Membership & terms of reference for the groups are set out in the following sections.

Fig 1: Proposed SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan Governance Structure



2.0 Terms of Reference and Membership of the Groups

2.1 Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG)

Key purpose:

The SPMG will be a Member led cross-authority group that will provide overall direction for the JSP while scrutinising the work of the SPOG. This executive group will represent and make key decisions on behalf of the primary partner organisations in accordance with organisational constitutions, which will effectively enable the programme to move forward. The SPMG will act as advocates for the JSP within their respective authorities, agree to recommend approval of the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan for consultation, submission for examination and later adoption to their respective Councils. The members of the SPMG will allow for the delegation of authority to those officers appointed to represent the programme at the SPOG level. This group is the ultimate level of governance and high level risks and issues should be escalated here for appropriate resolution if mitigation is not possible at the SPOG level. The political members of the group will liaise closely with the Leaders of the partner Councils and will brief the Hertfordshire Growth Board where necessary.

The Leader from the South West Herts Leaders Group tasked with leading the 'Development' workstream will Chair this group, working with the JSP Director.

Core membership:

- Leaders or Planning Portfolio Holders (as appropriate) at St Albans C&D Council, Hertsmere BC, Three Rivers DC, Watford BC, Dacorum BC and Hertfordshire CC
- JSP Director
- Heads of Service
- Other parties on an 'invitation only' basis

Terms of Reference:

- At least every 12 weeks or as required.
- Provide a strategic direction and progress of the JSP
- Agree to recommend approval of the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan for submission for examination and later adoption to their respective Councils
- Inform and manage the SPOG led approach to the development of a robust JSP; to assist the statutory plan-making process.
- Review the evidence and the draft plan, provide feedback to their respective authorities and to the SPOG.
- Ensure the appropriate resources and working mechanisms are in place to deliver a co-ordinated cross-boundary JSP.
- Resolve any blockages and issues should they occur, if they cannot be resolved by SPOG
- Provide strategic direction on potential external funding opportunities
- Provide strategic management of the JSP Director

2.2 Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG)

Key purpose:

The SPOG will be a project team reflecting the approach to strategic cross-boundary strategic planning that has been agreed between the local authorities under a MoU. The purpose of this cross-authority group is to define and enable the delivery of all cross-boundary activity, overseeing programme progress from a strategic and operational perspective, including the formation of relevant Task and Finish groups. It will approve and recommend what key decisions need to be made by the SPMG. Key risks and issues will be escalated to this level in the first instance by the JSP Director. The Group will have delegated authority from the SPMG in respect of the programme's budgetary management. A key role of the group will be to ensure that all partners are providing appropriate input to the plan-making, investment and evidence gathering input needed to prepare the JSP.

The JSP Director, will chair this group.

Core membership:

- JSP Director
- St Albans C&D Council – Spatial Planning Manager
- Hertsmere BC – Planning Strategy Manager
- Three Rivers DC – Head of Planning Policy and Projects
- Watford BC – Head of Planning Policy
- Dacorum BC – Assistant Director, Planning, Development and Regeneration
- Hertfordshire CC – Head of Spatial Planning and Economy
- Other parties on an 'invitation only' basis

Terms of Reference:

- Meets every two to four weeks or as required.
- Develop and review the programme plan for the JSP and sets up Task & Finish Groups as appropriate to undertake specific defined workstreams;
- manages and progresses development of an appropriate evidence base on a series of themes and topics to inform the plan-making process for the JSP Report on progress on implementation of the project plan to the SPMG
- Review evidence base for the Local Plan process and update as necessary
- Agree the scope of work needed, prepare and approve briefs for commissioning of consultants to prepare the evidence work that may be required to inform the JSP;
- Act as key interface group for consultants appointed to prepare evidence base, informing and monitoring progress of commissions.
- Prepare papers for consideration by the SPMG as requested.
- Manage engagement and consultation with wider groups & interested parties in relation to the JSP
- Identify and progress potential funding opportunities to support delivery of the JSP