

South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan – Governance Structure

February 2021 Refresh

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 Councils. 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.
- 1.2 It is intended that the governance structure will complement, not supersede, decision making structures operated by the councils individually or jointly.
- 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 as the JSP and Local Plans are key instruments in the delivery of the aspirations of the Growth Board and its membership. 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. The SPMG will be supported by the Steering Group/Director (SG) in delivering these functions. Political membership of the SPMG will continue to 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 in relation to the preparation of the JSP. The SPMG will also work with the Steering Group (SG) to review the evidence and the draft plan, provide feedback to their respective authorities on any JSP related issues and to the SPOG. The SPMG will be tasked to approve the overall budget and sign off annual accounts. The SPMG will continue to meet quarterly

JSP Steering Group (SG)

- 1.6 The Steering Group will define the scope of the JSP programme, take a strategic view of relevant cross-boundary issues and provide strategic direction and scrutinise the JSP Director and SPOG as they take forward the agreed projects and work programmes. It will be responsible for commissioning papers and reports to be considered by the Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG), considering recommendations from the SPMG and making recommendations to the SPMG. The core membership of the Steering Group will be focussed on the corporate director level from the main partner authorities, with a lead Chief Officer from within the districts.
- 1.7 To enable the Steering Group to function appropriately to meet the challenges of this programme, briefings will be arranged by the JSP Director for the Steering Group members in advance of the formal meetings – the purpose of these briefings will be to explore in more detail the agenda items on the forthcoming meeting agenda with relevant advisors.

1.8 The Steering Group will meet every eight weeks.

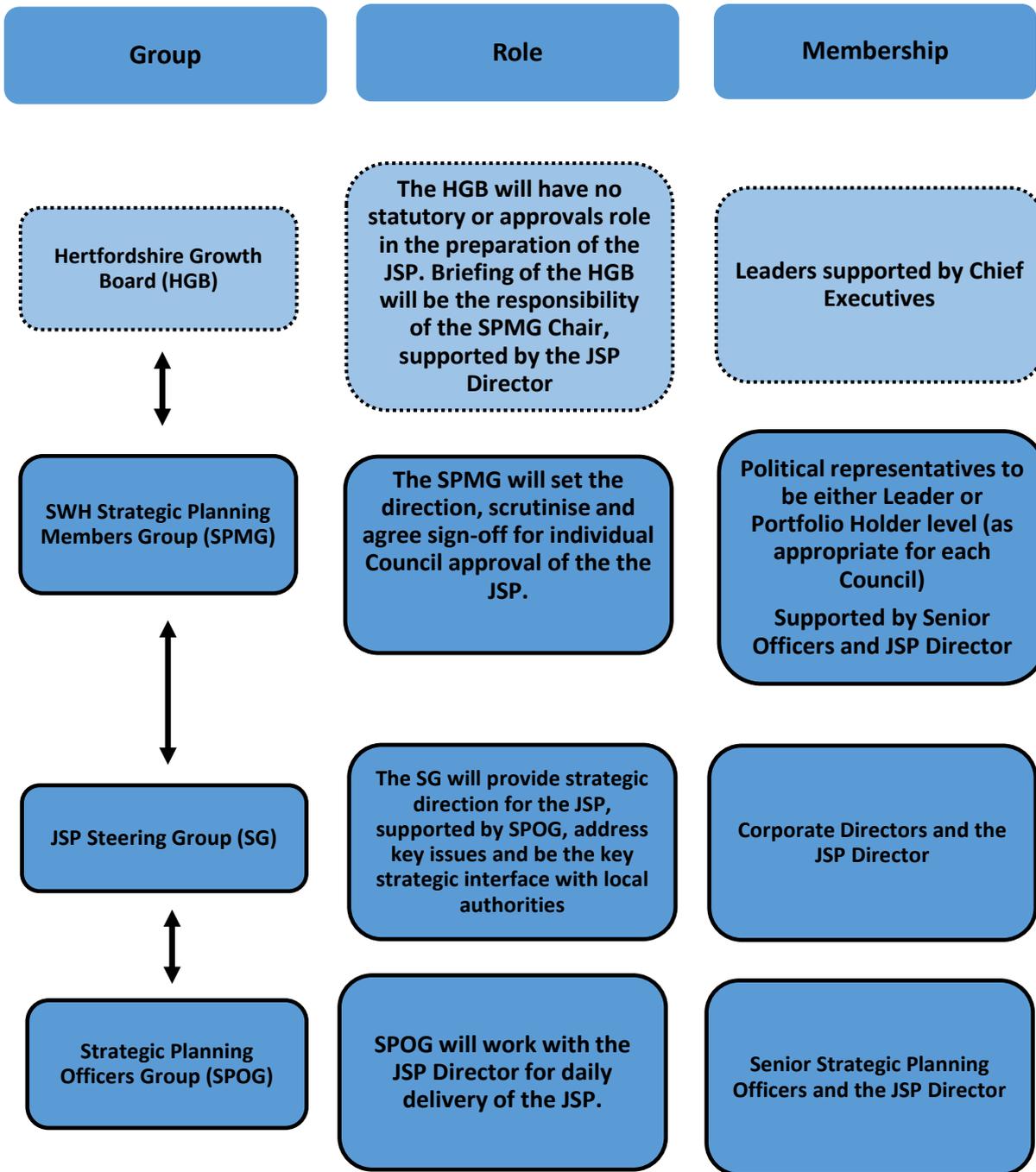
Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG)

1.9 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 deliver the projects, share approaches and learning across the various projects, A key responsibility for the SPOG in conjunction with the Project Director will be developing 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 initially take place monthly, with the frequency increasing to weekly to service key milestones, to develop approaches for the JSP, review the work undertaken and ensure that the project is being delivered in accordance with the agreed delivery timescales.

1.10 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.

1.11 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 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. 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

The SPMG will be chaired by a Leader from one of the partner authorities. That Leader will also be responsible for briefing the HGB on the process of the JSP, assisted by 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
- Steering Group members
- Other parties on an 'invitation only' basis

Terms of Reference:

- Meet at least every quarterly or as required.
- Provide a strategic direction to 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

2.2 JSP Steering Group

Key purpose:

The Steering Group will provide strategic oversight of the JSP programme project, take a strategic view of relevant cross-boundary issues and provide strategic direction to the JSP Director and SPOG for taking forward the projects and work programmes related to them. It will be responsible for agreeing to the commissioning of papers and reports and making recommendations to the SPMG. The core membership of the Steering Group will be focussed on the corporate director level from the main partner authorities, and a lead officer from the Chief Executive group of SW Herts authorities.

To enable the Steering Group to function appropriately to meet the challenges of this programme, in person briefings will be arranged by the JSP Director for the Steering Group members in advance of the formal meetings – the purpose of these briefings will be to explore in more detail the agenda items on the forthcoming meeting agenda with relevant advisors.

Terms of Reference:

Decisions

- Agree the scope of the programme at relevant stages
- Monitor progress of the JSP programme
- Make recommendations to the SPMG in respect of delivery issues related to the JSP programme
- Resolve any blockages and issues should they occur, and hold to account the delivery of the programme of SPOG/full time members of staff
- Maintain a budget for the programme and keep it under review
- Maintain a risk register for the programme and keep it under review
- Ensure the appropriate resources and working mechanisms are in place to deliver a co-ordinated cross-boundary approach to the JSP
- Sign off on any joint consultancy commissions drafted to support the JSP
- Ensure an appropriate project governance structure and is in place to meet the challenges and needs of the programme
- Ensure that due diligence and appropriate decision making channels are exercised in relation to decisions required for delivery of the JSP
- Provide direction on external communications related to the programme

Administrative

- The Chairperson of the Steering Group will be appointed on a revolving twelve monthly basis
- The Steering Group will meet every eight weeks or more frequently if necessary.
- The agenda and supporting papers for each meeting will be circulated five working days prior to the meeting
- Prior to each Steering Group meeting (and if requested), the JSP Director will arrange an in person briefing for core Steering Group members and appropriate advisors in respect of agenda items if required
- It will approve and recommend what key decisions need to be made by the SPMG.

Core membership:

- Watford BC – Group Head of Place Shaping
- Hertsmere – Executive Director
- Dacorum – Chief Executive
- Three Rivers – Director of Community & Environmental Resources
- St Albans – Head of Planning & Building Control
- HCC – Director of Environment & Infrastructure
- Hertfordshire Growth Board Director
- Advisors on an 'invitation only' basis

2.3 Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG)

Key purpose:

The SPOG will support the full time staff and consultants to deliver the JSP, 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. 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 and Building Control
- 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 more often as required to support key milestones
- 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/SPOG 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