

Meeting	Local Plan Working Group
Date	10 September 2024
Present	Councillors B Burton (Chair), Ayre (Vice-Chair), Coles, Fenton, D Myers (from 5:32 pm), Orrell, Pavlovic, Ravilious, Smalley, Steward, Vassie, Wann, Baxter, Merrett (until 8:04pm), K Taylor, Steels-Walshaw and Hook (substitute for Cllr Fisher)
Apologies	Councillor Fisher
Officers in Attendance	Alison Cooke, Head of Strategic Planning Policy Becky Eades, Head of Planning and Development Services, Alison Stockdale, Principal Strategic Planning Policy Officer Claire Foale, Interim Director of City Development

1. **Declarations of Interest (5:31pm)**

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, or other registerable interests, they might have in respect of business on the agenda, if they have not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests.

During the meeting, Cllr Merrett declared an interest in that he had objected to the Local Plan on behalf of various organisations and would leave the meeting when this subject was discussed.

2. **Minutes (5:32pm)**

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 6 March 2023 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

3. Public Participation (5:33pm)

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak at the meeting under the council's Public Participation Scheme.

Gwen Swinburn raised concerns regarding the Supplementary Planning Documents particularly with short-term lets noting that this was the biggest issue facing housing availability in the city. She also highlighted her concerns with the National Planning Policy Framework and noted that flats and rooms in student blocks should not be counted as homes to enable an honest and realistic accounting of homes built.

Flick Williams raised accessibility concerns across the city and highlighted why City of York Council should further consider a Supplementary Planning Document on accessibility. She rejected paragraph 10 of the report and welcomed a commitment to require M42 and M43 units from housing developers.

4. Prioritising Supplementary Planning Documents (5:40pm)

Members considered a report that updated them on the existing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) agreed for production and recommended the prioritisation for production of further SPDs with an understanding of their likely contents, resources, and timescales. It also sought approval to proceed with an altered list of SPDs and advised on where additional guidance would be beneficial in preference to an SPD.

The report also considered the ePetition received in March 2024 regarding reviewing the thresholds set out in the Controlling the Concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD.

The Head of Strategic Planning Policy, the Head of Planning and Development Services, the Principal Strategic Planning Policy Officer and the Interim Director of City Development presented the report and provided an update noting that:

- Executive had previously agreed to prioritise the production of three SPDs which were Affordable Housing, Climate Change and Green Infrastructure. The Healthy Places and the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople SPDs had also been identified as high priority.

- The production of SPDs would help enable policy delivery by effectively supporting the implementation of Local Plan policies, where necessary. The content of SPDs would enable the council to define how applicants can meet the policy requirements in a consistent manner and would be a valuable tool for ensuring policies were applied to decisions on planning applications consistently.
- SPDs were likely to be beneficial to council services/technical officers who currently provided detailed advice to applicants in relation to how to deliver and achieve policy expectations set out in the Local Plan. In future, the SPD could be signposted and should deal with the key issues that were most consistently asked about leading to efficiency.
- There were complimentary subject areas which were not covered directly by policy in the Local Plan or did not require an SPD but would benefit from clear guidance to be a material consideration in the planning process. This guidance may sign post to existing information where helpful and in some cases confirm how the council intends to apply policy at a national level.

During a detailed discussion, Members considered the scope of the SPDs highlighted within the report and Annex C and the SPDs compatibility to the council's core commitments and priorities. In answer to questions raised, officers noted:

- A specific Accessibility SPD was not required as this would be reflected across all SPDs and was already a key priority area throughout the planning application and building regulations process.
- Officers would consider the motions approved at Full Council regarding equality for disabled people and access for all and would continue to consult with the York Access Forum to develop checklists for design considerations. This guidance would complement the accessibility content in the Housing SPD, with a greater focus on the design of public realm and non-residential developments.
- Each SPD production would align to achieve the council's four core commitments for Equalities and Human Rights, Affordability, Climate Change and Health. Table 1 at paragraph 19 of the report indicated which core commitments each SPD would significantly address and officers agreed to consider reviewing the table to ensure accessibility was more visible across all SPDs.

- Officers continued to collaborate with colleagues to progress the SPDs as well as with city partners and communities to deliver the priorities, but the technical requirements and expertise resource required to prepare and support the SPDs required evaluating.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy would be submitted for examination once the Local Plan had been adopted, which would allow another mechanism for securing development contributions.
- The most progressed SPD was Climate Change and Housing would be brought to committee later next year for consideration.
- Further to the Government's response to consultation of short-term lets, which needed to be enacted through legislation and may influence a future policy direction, the consideration of short-term housing lets could be included in the Housing SPD if timescales allowed.
- Through the Local Plan examination, it was acknowledged that there was a new Special Area of Conservation policy directly for Strensall Common due to the harm that would be caused in relation to recreational pressure in accordance with the uplift of increased development in the localised area.
- The Climate Change SPD would deal with the delivery of sustainable, renewable, and low carbon energy sourced construction designs of new developments, which were part of the three climate change policies within the Local Plan.

During debate, the priority level of the Transport SPD was discussed, and it was also suggested that officers considered boat dwellers within the appropriate SPD and ensure verges were included within the Green Infrastructure SPD.

Following further debate around available resources to timely deliver the ongoing production of the SPDs, short-term housing lets, and ensuring the social model of disability would be explicitly reflected throughout all the SPDs, it was

Resolved:

- (i) That the recommendations highlighted within the report be recommended to Executive subject to amending recommendation (x) to include that short-term housing lets be considered in the Housing SPD if timescales

aligned following guidance from central government in terms of legislative requirements for short-term housing lets.

- (ii) That Executive also be recommended to consider:
- approaching the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority for potential funding to support delivery of the SPDs, to address resourcing challenges and expedite delivery.
 - an additional recommendation to ensure all SPDs explicitly acknowledged the Social Model of Disability and to also consider Table 1, Indicative compatibility to Council Plan Core Commitments and priorities, to ensure accessibility was more visible across all the categories.
 - referencing and detailing houseboats in the Housing SPD.
 - the Transport SPD as a high priority.

Reason: To progress a suite of SPDs to support the policies set out in the new City of York Local Plan to ensure policy was clear and applied consistently.

An adjournment took place between 7:00 pm and 7:06 pm

5. Urgent Business (7:06pm)

The Chair confirmed that a report on the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework Consultation had been considered under urgent business due to the imminent deadline of 24 September 2024 to provide the council's response to the consultation.

The Head of Strategic Planning Policy provided a presentation, attached as an agenda supplement to the published agenda, to the committee that highlighted the consultation process and the policy objectives as well as providing an overview on how the framework would plan for homes, deliver developments, deliver affordable homes and well-designed places, and support infrastructure, transport, green energy and environment planning. The application fees and the public sector equality duty arrangements were also addressed, and it was noted that:

- Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) were vital to deliver the government's

commitments to achieve economic growth and build 1.5 million new homes.

- The housing requirement target for City of York Council was 1251 but an additional buffer of 20% could be added if the council did not meet the housing delivery test, which would increase the target to 1501.
- Brownfield land would be prioritised first for development then greenfield and then green belt. New golden rules for public benefit would also be incorporated alongside further green belt release and would include:
 - at least 50% affordable housing, where viable;
 - necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure;
 - provision of new, or improvements to existing, local green spaces that were accessible to the public.
- For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, grey belt was defined as land in the green belt comprising previously developed land and any other parcels and/or areas of green belt land that make a limited contribution to the five green belt purposes.

Members were also informed that the proposals:

- encouraged a mixture of tenures on development sites, including affordable housing and social rented homes, which was required to be evidenced by local need.
- included a new element of meeting the needs of looked after children but omitted any standards for accessible homes or changes for other specialist provision, and this had been raised as a concern.
- removed the word 'beauty' from the design policy.
- encouraged the importance of facilitating new, expanded, or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering proposals for development.
- requested feedback on providing a greater direction and clarity on the promotion of health.
- supported a 'vision-led' approach to transport planning which focused on the outcomes desired and planning for achieving them.
- provided increased support for renewable energy schemes, and the restrictions on onshore wind had been removed.
- provided significant support for energy efficiency and climate change.

- considered the ability for local authorities to set their own charging schedules and included raising planning application fees to an estimated £528 for a householder application.

During discussion, Members provided feedback for officers to consider in the council's response to the consultation, which included:

- Supporting the increased planning application fees.
- Accelerating the timescales for planning developers to develop sites and the infrastructure required alongside delivery of housing.
- Supporting the proposals to tackle the housing crisis.
- The significant change to transport polices required additional detail to support how they would be operationalised to have any meaningful impact.
- That the housing trajectory target be considered, as it could be challenging to meet local affordable housing targets.
- Short-term lets required addressing and a mixture of tenure homes were required to support the cycle of life.
- To preserve the green belt and to protect the nature and climate value, Ecosystem services should also be incorporated into the Green Belt Purposes.
- Large developments must be self-sustaining and have the facility to support a community and include green and shared open spaces that provided accessible facilities for all ages.
- A clear steer from government was required to support and deliver the infrastructure around the golden rules, and how the subjective language used throughout the framework would meet the definition expectations.
- The eight-week consultation period over the summer months was not good consultation practice.
- York's unique historic character and setting should be considered to enable the configuration of communities and homes that truly reflected local need.
- That the importance of Neighbourhood Plans be recognised and that further clarification around Neighbourhood Plans be required, particularly how they would interact with proposed policy approaches.

Officers discussed the affordability housing ratio figures and confirmed they were attending a suite of national workshops run

by the Planning Advisory Service and the Ministry for Housing and Communities Local Government and feedback on these sessions could be issued to committee members.

Officers then provided a brief update on the Local Plan examination and confirmed that the council had recently held a statutory consultation on amendments and modifications to policy H5 which related to Gypsy and Traveller provision. Officers had received 37 responses which had been reported back to the Inspectors and officers would submit the consultation statement shortly. This was anticipated to be the last matter to be considered by the Planning Inspectorate as part of the examination process and the Inspectors had acknowledged that following these modifications, the Plan as a whole would be sound. Officers hoped to receive a final report from the Inspectors in due course.

Officers were thanked for their update, and it was

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the NPFF consultation be noted and the above feedback be considered in the council's response to the consultation.
- (ii) That the update on the Local Plan be noted.

Reasons:

- (i) To inform a council response to the Government's consultation on Proposed Modifications to the National Planning Policy Framework by the deadline of 24 September 2024.
- (ii) To keep the committee updated.

Cllr B Burton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 8.07 pm].