

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

MEETING	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP
DATE	3 MARCH 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS STEVE GALLOWAY (CHAIR), POTTER (VICE-CHAIR), AYRE, D'AGORNE, MERRETT, MOORE, REID, SIMPSON-LAING, R WATSON AND WATT

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Merrett declared a Personal Non-Prejudicial Interest in Item 4 on the Agenda, Employment Land Review – Evidence Base, as he works in Hudson House in York.

23. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Working Group held on 6 January be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to part (ii) of the resolution to Minute 21 being amended to read “That Members’ comments on the City Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options Report – Consultation Summary *be taken into account.*”

24. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council’s Public Participation Scheme.

25. EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW - EVIDENCE BASE

Members considered the Employment Land Review - Evidence Base report, which advised them on the Preparation of the Employment Land Review (ELR) commissioned as a key part of the evidence base to support the Local Development Framework (LDF). The Report had been prepared by the Council consultants Entec with advice from Lawrence Hannah LLP. The study was based on the stage 1 Employment Land Review produced for the Council by SQW (Segal Quince Wicksteed), reported to members in 2007.

The Principal Development Officer introduced the report, which reviewed the current main employment areas in York and provided future potential sites. The Officer stated that it must be noted that Entec were not suggesting future allocations, but had provided a list of assessed sites ranked 1-92 with the top ranked 19 sites for possible B1(a) office use, B1(b), B1(c), B2 and B8 uses.. The land yielded from these 19 sites could provide a starting point for further work.

Officers highlighted the re-development opportunities at the Foss Basin and that the authority would do further work on this. A new office district in York Central was discussed with potential floorspace of 87,000 –100,000 square metres.

Officers explained that Members were not asked to endorse particular sites, but to agree that the information provided would be used to inform the consideration of potential approaches to the Core Strategy and other LDF documents.

Comments and questions were then raised by Members to which Officers responded.

- In distinguishing the **office-type sites** Members asked if it had been the intention of officers to identify Premier or Standard sites. Officers responded that according to Entec the market would decide. However, Entec had said that it was very important to identify sites for different use classes and make sure the sites were available. Entec had predicted a growth in the storage and distribution sector, especially with more Internet sales and distribution, and saw small-scale high quality businesses developing from this. However, it was felt that one needed to be very cautious in designating categories as this might stifle potential development.
- **Ranking.** Officers confirmed that the ranking in the report was considered a starting point for Members to make decisions. Of the 19 sites shortlisted, Officers felt that this provided sufficient choice for allocation to begin with.
- Members were surprised that the **Huntington site 64** was still included. Officers confirmed that Members had earlier given approval for this site and this had been called in by the Secretary of State. The Inspectors report had found no justification in the short term, but this site formed part of the choices that Members could make.
- Questions were asked about the **Clifton Moor** site and its potential. Officers highlighted the success of the Eco Business Centre, despite the views of the consultant and felt that this site, with the right conditions, was not a closed door.
- With regard to the **Clifton Moor** site, Members asked whether Entec had visited all the sites, as members had been disappointed with the description of Clifton Moor in the report on pages 73 and 74. It was felt by Members that a lot of the information was not correct and that Entec needed to be challenged on this. Officers responded that this would be noted and factored into future work. In addition, with regard to the Clifton Moor site, Members commented on the problems of getting in and out of the site. Officers responded that in their report, Entec had given the perspective of local developers. Members also felt that the site had re-development potential. Officers noted that the site did not have land left available for development. Generally, Members felt disappointed that no further development was being considered for Clifton Moor. *It was noted by Members that higher-density development might be*

possible but this needed decent public transport and a reduction in parking to tackle some of the congestion issues. [Amended at meeting on 20 April 2009]

- Members expressed concerns about the **current economic situation** and the timing of the report. Officers responded that national economic figures used had assumed normal market conditions, however, no one knew how long the recession would last or how deep it would be. Officers also confirmed that they did not want to under-allocate land and would liaise with Yorkshire Forward, key landowners and developers to make sure that the proposals were realistic.
- *Questions were raised about why **St Leonard's** was ranked so high when considered unsuitable as an office and the inclusion of Hudson House given recent consents.* Officers also responded that the consultants had looked at all sites and weighted them towards location criteria, including sites such as Hudson House and St. Leonard's, but did not provide a view on the capacity. *[Amended at meeting on 20 April 2009]*
- Concern was expressed about the deliverability of York Central however officers stated that, with regard to the York Central site, it was important not to discount the site's potential.
- Members also asked whether when evaluating plots on the Ring Road, Clifton Moor and North West Business Park whether this had been **car-centric**. Officers responded that Entec had basically taken a car-centric approach, but that this was not necessarily the role that the authority would take and that wider aspirations would be factored in.
- Members asked about the **square footage** with regard to the York Central location. Officers responded that the consultants' calculations were based on an 80% building footprint and 5 storeys.
- **Floorspace requirements.** Members questioned whether the proposed floorspace ratio per job could be sustained. Officers stated that this had not been raised as an issue, but could be looked at in more detail as the plan is developed. Concerns were expressed about how this report linked with other papers on floorspace requirements. Officers responded that they were trying to be consistent with other reports. It was noted by a Member that originally the floorspace ratio recommendation had been 1 job per 21 square metres, but that this had been reduced and then increased to 18 square metres and questioned why this had been done. *Concern was also expressed about whether this reflected the trend for people being packed more densely into offices.* Officers responded that this was Entec's view. Officers also confirmed that the issue of density would be kept under review and tested. *[Amended at meeting on 20 April 2009]*
- **York Central.** Members asked if there were specific issues with regard to high development costs. Officer responded that York Central provided the opportunity for city centre office space and that the people spoken to had indicated that they wanted to be in the city centre.
- **Research and Development sites.** Members noted that it was important to note that it could be restrictive if all R&D sites were on

one single university site. Officers responded that the reason for recommending the Heslington East site was that it had 25 hectares and provided an opportunity to allow for off-trend growth.

- **Foss Islands.** *Members asked about the regeneration of the site and whether further development could squeeze out existing types of employment, which was important to people in the area.* Members also commented that some areas of the Foss Islands site could be more innovative, whilst protecting opportunities for work and existing businesses. It was also noted by Members that the link road needed work to be done on it. Officers stated that there were low-density jobs in the area and close to the city centre. It was also noted that on the larger Foss Island site there were different parts with different functions and that some areas could be improved, particularly Layerthorpe. Officers responded that they would report back to Members on this. *[Amended at meeting on 20 April 2009]*
- Members queried why the **old ABB works site** was not shown as an employment site. Officers confirmed that this site was occupied and an existing employment site.

The next stage

Officer stated that following the meeting of the LDF Working Group they would take on board the comments from Members, look at the sustainable locations, consult with Yorkshire Forward and move to a shortlist of sites, which would be likely to be provided in September 2009. Officers also confirmed that this would then feed into the Core Strategy for York.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Members endorse, subject to the inclusion of comments and recommendations from the LDF Working Group, the proposed Employment Land Review, included as Annex B to the report, for publication as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base.

Reason: So that the Employment Land Review can be used as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base.

- (ii) Delegate to the Director of City Strategy, in consultation with the Executive Member *and Shadow Executive Member* for City Strategy, the making of any other necessary changes arising from the recommendations of the LDF Working Group, prior to its publication as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base. *[Amended at meeting on 20 April 2009]*

Reason: So that any recommended changes can be incorporated into the Employment Land Review.

Cllr S F Galloway, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.35 pm and finished at 5.35 pm].