

Meeting	Local Plan Working Group
Date	17 December 2014
Present	Councillors Merrett (Chair), Ayre, Barnes, D'Agorne, Funnell, Horton, Reid, Simpson-Laing, Steward, Warters and Watt (Vice-Chair)

13. **Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, members were asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interests they may have in the business on the agenda.

Councillor Watt declared a personal interest as a Member of the Skelton Village Action Group, part of the Action Group Alliances.

Councillor Warters asked the Chair to clarify his role following the recent changes to Cabinet. The Chair confirmed that Local Plan issues would now fall under the Leader and that it was his intention to carry on as Chair of the Local Plan Working Group.

Councillor D'Agorne declared a personal interest as a non-voting Member of the York Environment Forum

Councillor Merrett also declared a personal interest as a York Environment Forum Member.

14. **Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the last Local Plan Working Group held on 11th September 2014 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

15. **Public Participation**

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

There had been the following registrations to speak on agenda item 4:

Tony Fisher had registered to speak on behalf of York Local Plan Action Group Alliance. He advised that he had been asked by the Group to assess the housing need based on the reports by Arup and Oxford Economics and disagreed with the treatment of the University figures. He argued that the Universities expansions had not continued at the same rate post 2010 and that as a result the projected figures produced by Arup and Oxford Economics were inflated. He offered an alternative figure of 674 properties per annum based on an alternative approach to household formation rates.

Allan Charlesworth had registered to speak on behalf of the Earswick Action Group and York Action Group Alliance (full details of speech attached to the online agenda for this meeting). He referred to three 'what ifs' that the Action Group considered should be addressed. He argued that firstly what if housing figures had not been bolstered to satisfy policy wishes, what if the practice of calling for development sites had not been employed and what if the sequential test had been properly applied to assess the potential for brownfield land first and the inclusion of windfall sites.

Edie Jones had registered to speak on behalf of Poppleton Parish Council. She advised that Poppleton and a number of other villages around York are desirable places to live due to being good places to both raise a family and retire with a sense of community and cohesiveness. In relation to proposed future housing development in the Local Plan she asked that Officers consider the benefits of complete settlements with a range of facilities and housing types rather than one size fits all designs.

Daniel Russell had registered to speak on behalf of the Rufforth and Knapton Action Group. He queried the assessment of gypsy and traveller needs in the Local Plan particularly in relation to those members of the community who had ceased to travel. Mr Russell also queried the suitability of sites in the Green

Belt, that sites should be strictly limited in open countryside and then there should be a re-assessment of all sites in the Green Belt. such sites were suitable in the Green Belt.

Phillip Crowe spoke on behalf of the York Environment Forum. He referred to a document emailed to members which contained details of some proposals put forward by the forum. He referred to the target density figures contained in policy H2 and suggested that these needed to be revisited in terms looking at the impact of using brownfield sites more effectively by considering higher density development.. He urged Members and Officers to look at the Environment Forum proposals seriously as they believe it is a viable way forward.

16. City of York Local Plan Housing Options.

Members considered a report which updated them on the progress of the Local Plan following a resolution to Council on 9th October 2014.

In response to the registered speakers who had raised a number of points about land supply, the Chair advised that the report before Members looked at housing demand figures and that supply related issues such as the inclusion of windfalls, brownfield land and density would be dealt with at a later stage.

The Director of City and Environmental Services spoke to remind Members of some key points as follows:

- The Council has a statutory requirement to produce a plan compliant with policy. York is not independent of national requirements and must have a statutory plan compliant with policy regardless of the views of individuals. Remarks and debates made by Ministers do not constitute policy and as such can not be taken into account by Officers.
- The plan was not intended to be a detailed specification document for each site. The plan aims to be a series of policies to guide Members of Planning Committee.
- There are technical and inspection risks relating to the housing trajectory. The Council will present the plan to the inspector and deliverability is a key facet. Politically the

Council will not be able to produce a plan which all Councillors agree on that will also pass the inspection.

- There is a perception that brownfield sites are not being brought forward but progress on the Hungate, British Sugar and York Central sites contradict this view.

The Head of Planning and Environmental Management spoke to advise that the report before Members was concerned with the requirements placed upon the Council through national guidance in relation to the housing requirements for York. If an agreement on housing numbers was reached then a further report on housing supply related issues would need to be brought back to the Local Plan Working Group at a future meeting.

Members then received a detailed presentation by Chris Tunnell from Arup. The presentation slides are attached to the online agenda for this meeting for information.

Members then asked a number of questions on the presentation as follows:

- In relation to the summary of options table on page 19 of the agenda, the 838 demographic baseline figure had been used consistently. It was queried if this figure could be changeable. It was confirmed that the 838 figure is Arup's professional judgement of the demographic baseline for York and should not be changed.
- It was queried whether the economic impact figures take into account recessions. It was confirmed that the Oxford Economics forecast does take into account long term projections.
- If a backlog figure must be included - was it possible to calculate the backlog using the 2011 Interim Household Projection figure for York of 638 dwellings per annum rather than the 838 dwellings per annum figure.
- In response to queries about the necessity of including a backlog figure it was confirmed that to date, Arup were unaware of any local authorities who had not taken into account backlog
- Members queried the impact of student accommodation and whether any work had been completed to look at how many students stay in York and move into the community. It was confirmed that the impact of students was an area

which remains unclear and that further work could be undertaken by Arup on this issue and reported back to a future meeting of the LPWG.

- The impact of migration on the figures. Arup confirmed that these figures were based on the national population and household projections.
- The impact of 18-34 year olds living with parents for longer and the impact this has on household formation rates

Members then entered debate and made the following comments:

- Some members felt that the motion at Council had required more significant work than just another look at the housing figures and considered that that Option 2 was a reasonable approach to enable officers to carry out further more detailed work, incorporating the issues raised by Members on students, migration and economic pressures.
- The information presented to Members by Arup had only illustrated further that more work is required.
- Other Members felt that a figure needed to be settled on to progress the plan.
- Green Belt issues were still a concern to some members.
- Other Members argued that as Arup are experts in their field, their advice should be taken on board and used to agree a figure.

Councillor Steward moved and Councillor Reid seconded Option 2 and asked Officers to undertake further technical work on migration, household size, the demographic baseline figure, economic growth assumptions and the impact of the University upon York. When put to the vote this motion was lost.

Councillor Merrett moved and Councillor Simpson Laing seconded Option 1 of the report to agree one of the four options considered sound against the evidence base.

Members then referred to the Summary of Options figures contained in table 3 of the report and voted on Option 2 (947). When put to the vote this was lost.

Members then voted on Option 5 (926). This motion was carried 6 votes to 5.

Resolved: That Members agreed Option 5 (926 dwellings per annum).

Reason: So that an NPPF compliant Local Plan can be progressed.

Cllr D, Merrett Chair
[The Meeting Started At 5.30 pm And Finished At 8.00 pm].