

Councillor Paula Widdowson
Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change
City of York Council

20 April 2022

Dear Cllr Norman,

Re: invitation to attend E&P scrutiny

Following my email on the 31 March and voice mails and text messages on the 13 April, I am writing to confirm that I will unfortunately not be able to attend the Economy and Place scrutiny meeting on the 26 April. This is due to attending a full day conference in London in my Executive Member capacity, focusing on sustainable investment and case studies that have delivered real change within councils across the UK.

Whilst I will not be able to attend the meeting, I wanted to take the chance to give my view on York Central net zero ambitions, which you are welcome to share with all members of the scrutiny committee for their information. You will find this information below, however, I will not focus on the technical aspects of the delivery of the wider York Central project, which I believe scrutiny committee members have been updated on recently.

My ambition for York Central is that it will, over time, become net zero and it will also be one of the most sustainable, beautiful and integrated places to live within York.

The outline planning consent and the York Central Design Guide, approved by planning committee, set the broad parameters of the scheme. This included key sustainable interventions to reduce car dominance and create new active travel opportunities, enhanced public transport links, green open spaces, sustainable urban drainage, residential and commercial buildings to high energy efficiency standards with BREEAM Excellent expected for all commercial buildings, a utilities strategy for the residential elements to use solely electricity. These are the baseline requirements/minimum standards and the Council continues to exert influence upon the primary land owners to increase their ambition for zero carbon development on York Central. Any future homes built by CYC will be to the Passivhaus standards of our Housing Delivery Programme.

The York Central partners, Homes England, are already committing heavily to our Housing Delivery Programme because of its environmental and social credentials and have indicated this will be their approach in the development of the York Central site.

These key standards, along with a location that is adjacent to the railway, well connected to the bus route and sustainable modes of transport, such as bicycles and e-scooters, will also support our transport decarbonisation ambitions. Together with the ongoing greening of city's electricity supply and the energy efficiency build quality of the homes and commercial spaces, this will support the ambition for the new development to be sustainable.

More broadly, the existing national, local and regional sustainability and carbon neutrality policy frameworks will be imbedded the development of the site. Investments made to further this major project from partners and the Council has these ambitious policy frameworks at their heart. The possibility of investing the Domestic Rates and Business Rates income generated from the site will also further major regional carbon reduction projects, such as Climate resilience from upland river catchment, Upland Peat restoration, Bio Economy projects, Carbon capture schemes

The Council's Climate, Transport and Economy strategies, which are currently being developed, will further enhance and support these plans and the wider York Central development.

The York Central Strategic Board also continues to consider the net zero ambitions for the project and have expressed keen interest in the issue of climate change and zero carbon. I therefore hope that this will gain increased focus as reserved matters applications for further infrastructure such as the park and for commercial and residential developments are brought forward.

I hope this answers some of the central questions regarding the sustainability of the project, please accept my apologies for being unavailable to attend the meeting. I would be happy to answer any further questions that councillors might have on the subject and attend a future meeting if it was deemed to be necessary.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Paula Widdowson

Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change