

YORK NORTHWEST AREA ACTION PLAN

Progress Report, incorporating Issues and Options Consultation Summary

Summary

1. This report reviews progress to date on the York Northwest Area Action Plan, and gives an overview of comments and headline results arising from consultation on the Issues and Options Report between November 2007 and January 2008. Members are asked to note the progress to date and the use of the consultation findings to inform the preparation of the Preferred Options. Members are further asked to agree the approach and programme for the preparation of the Preferred Options, which are also set out in this report.

Background

2. The Area Action Plan (AAP) for York Northwest will be one of a suite of Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Framework. The AAP will be used to guide and control the development of this major area of change. The timetable for preparation of the AAP was agreed at a meeting of the Executive on 27 February 2007 and has been incorporated into the Local Development Scheme (LDS).
3. At a meeting of the Executive on 25th September 2007 Members agreed the content of the Issues and Options report, the preparation of associated documents and for public consultation to take place.

Progress Report

Progress to Date

4. Good progress has been made on the initial Issues and Options stage of producing the Area Action Plan. Programme milestones identified in the Local Development Scheme have been met, with issues and options consultation carried out between November 2007 and January 2008.
5. A range of evidence base documents, including both city wide studies and specific York Northwest studies have informed the preparation of the Area Action Plan to date. Outstanding evidence base studies are now also well

advanced; it is anticipated that the councils Retail Capacity Study will be reported to members in June, the PPG17 Open Space Study in July, and the Employment Land Review in September 2008. Other work, including transport modelling, specific retail work and a specific York Northwest Open Space Study is also being progressed. Viability assessment work will be required on the emerging Preferred Options to ensure deliverability considerations are addressed.

6. Transport modelling will look at the infrastructure required to accommodate general growth in the city and the additional infrastructure needed to deliver development of York Northwest. The work will inform the development of a tool to allocate costs of infrastructure to different stakeholders and mechanisms for securing funding. The Council is also progressing a number of transport initiatives which will inform the transportation requirements and funding for the Area Action Plan, including, Access York (park and ride and outer ring road projects), new growth point infrastructure bid, cycling city status, tram train and the Hopgrove roundabout.

Stakeholder Activity

7. York Central stakeholders are making progress in a number of areas in anticipation of seeking approval from their various boards to enable the site to be marketed. It is hoped that a developer will be appointed in advance of the Councils Preferred Options consultation, which will enable developer involvement in the plan making process as early as possible. Preferred Options Consultation is scheduled in the Local Development Scheme for January 2009.
8. Associated British Foods have appointed contractors who are due to commence demolition on the site on 6th May. The Councils Countryside and Landscape Officers, alongside consultants appointed by Associated British Foods, will ensure that the works are carried out in a way that does not compromise onsite ecological interests. It is anticipated that demolition works will be completed before the end of this year. A team of consultants, headed by Rapleys Planning Consultants, are carrying out background study work to inform the development of the site.

Forthcoming Work

9. The Local Development Scheme allocates the period between February and December 2008 for "consideration of representations on Issues and Options and preparation of Preferred Options document" in respect of the York Northwest Area Action Plan. This report summarises the first stage of the Preferred Options work. A detailed three stage program of information analysis, development of conceptual options and Preferred Options report has been produced to structure work over the coming year. Greater detail on this program is given at paragraph 39.

Issues and Options Consultation

Consultation Plan

10. The consultation was carried out in accordance with a plan and timetable agreed with Members. The plan, set out at Appendix 1, took into account the views expressed by the public on a pilot consultation strategy for York Central in 2006. Given the wide range of interests involved in the project at local, city wide and sub-regional/regional level, a variety of consultation methods and techniques were used. Consultation on the Issues and Options Report took place between 5th November 2007 and 14th January 2008

Consultation Information

11. A range of information was produced and tailored to reflect the needs of the different consultation events and diverse interests in the area. A leaflet was prepared to raise awareness of the consultation and to tell people how they could get further information. A summary report was used to give a short overview of the matters raised in the full Issues and Options report. A short questionnaire was attached to the leaflet, and a more detailed public comment form was distributed with all copies of the full and summary report (Appendix 12). A Background and Frequently Asked Questions leaflet was also produced to provide a guide to the planning process. Presentational material was also produced for the workshops and exhibitions.
12. All documents and details of the consultation were outlined on the York Northwest website and an on-line survey was available for comments to be submitted. In addition, a full set of documents was also made available at all libraries and at the Guildhall/ St Leonard's Place planning reception.

Consultation Events and Response

13. A considerable level of interest was shown in the consultation, and a wide range of comments have been made. The analysis section of this report provides an overarching summary of the headline points from the various consultation events (see Appendix 3). Summary reports of individual consultation events and responses are available on the Councils web site and on request (Appendices 6–11).
14. A total of 470 individuals and organisations were sent consultation documents, including specific consultation bodies and individuals and organisations with a direct interest in the area. 294 responses were received, including 245 responses to the questionnaire and leaflet. A plan giving a detailed breakdown of community responses is attached at Appendix 2.
15. Around 365 people participated in workshop, public exhibition and focus group events. A further 53 residents attended the presentation at Holgate ward committee meeting and 37 residents attended the Acomb ward committee meeting.

1) Workshops: Transport, business and commerce, and design/environment workshops were externally facilitated by an independent public engagement company, Icarus. A further workshop was held for the York Central Task Group

and was facilitated by the council. 101 representatives with a specialist knowledge, or interest, in the topic for the session attended the workshops. Individual reports for each workshop were prepared and circulated to all attendees and are available on request. Icarus also prepared a report summarising the findings of the 3 consultation workshops, which is available on request. An overarching report summarising the findings of all the workshops is available on request (Appendix 9).

2) Public Exhibitions: Four public exhibitions were held – one in a city centre location, and three others at locations accessible to existing communities living near the York Central and British Sugar sites. The exhibitions were advertised at each of the three local ward committees, on the leaflet, in the local press and on the Council's web site. Around 230 people attended the exhibitions. Future involvement by young people in the consultation process was raised as an issue.

iii) Focus Group: A focus group of residents of York was facilitated by Icarus, an independent public engagement company. Ten people were recruited through the Talkabout Panel, which is a representative panel of 2000 residents who live within the city and make comments on a wide range of issues. A report setting out the views of the focus group is available on request (Appendix 10).

iv) Presentations: Presentations were made to the Environment Forum, the Inclusive York Forum and the York Central Steering Board. Responses from the Environment Forum and partners to the York Central Steering Board, Yorkshire Forward and CBRE (representing Network Rail/National Museum of Science and Industry) are included in the Summary of written representations (Appendix 8). A report setting out the views of the Inclusive York Forum, a forum of hard to reach groups, is available on request (Appendix 11).

Analysis

16. The Issues and Options report is structured around the key areas of vision and development objectives, sustainable community, employment, housing, social infrastructure, transport, culture and tourism, open space and built sporting facilities, urban design and delivery. The design of the questionnaire/public comment form and all the events were structured around finding out views on the key theme areas. In addition, the views on the boundary for the York Northwest area were also sought.
17. This section of the report gives an overview of the headline points arising from all the various consultation events and representations received in relation to each of these areas. Further detail can be found in the overarching summary report, attached in Appendix 3. Due to the significant quantity and detail of feedback given, for the purposes of this report, summary reports of individual consultation events and responses have been prepared and are available on request (and on the Council's web site), in Appendices 6–11. The full range of comments will be used to inform the preparation of the Preferred Options for York Northwest.

Boundary

18. Various sites were suggested for inclusion in the Area Action Plan boundary. These include the Royal Mail sorting office, the Monkhill Confectionary (Craven) site, the Acomb Water Treatment Works, part of Clifton Ings and various other open spaces around British Sugar, including Poppleton Lane Allotments, the Civil Service Sports ground and the current Manor Field Sports Ground. A plan of the proposed additional sites and rationale for inclusion, is attached at Appendix 5. It is anticipated that a report will be brought to members later this summer for comment on the possible Area Action Plan boundary.

Vision and Objectives

19. There was overall positive support for the draft vision with between 64% and 79% of people supporting the statement. Between 10-13% of people objected to one or more aspects of the draft vision. Particular support was registered for the themes of sustainability, integration, innovation, quality, vitality (liveliness) and quality of life. Several specific issues were considered to be under-represented, and were recommended to be included in the vision, including vitality (liveliness), provision of green transport provision, representation of leisure and retail activities and the importance of York's historic character. Viability was also mentioned at the stakeholder workshops, but not by public consultees. There were several requests for the vision to be simplified and to reflect the specific purpose of the individual sites.
20. The objectives were prioritised in the public feedback and at the workshops. Two of the highest objectives from both were for 'integration with the city/surrounding area' and 'meeting housing needs'. The public response also gave high priority to the provision of 'high quality health, education, retail and community facilities', whilst the need to provide 'exemplar high quality development in terms of building design and spaces' was given high priority by the workshop participants. It is anticipated that a report will be brought to members later this summer for comment on the possible Area Action Plan vision and objectives. The full quantitative feedback received is outlined in Appendix 4.

Creating a Sustainable Community

21. Creating sustainable communities is an overriding theme for the development; key issues are highlighted in this section of the report and in each theme area.
22. Overall, a broad level of agreement was expressed over issues presented on creating a sustainable community, though some reservations were expressed on most issues, and in particular on flood mitigation, design/housing and contamination. All participants were in full agreement that York's unique characteristics should be protected. Some objections were raised to the principle of focusing development on transport nodes. Specific suggestions were made in the workshops for ecological/open space provision, environmental issues, transport and design. The Focus Group called for sustainable design and transport solutions, drawing on best practice. Representations supported the concept of a sustainable community as a key overriding principle in developing the area, although it was felt that there should be greater detail in terms of specific standards and facilities.

Employment

23. High levels of agreement were expressed at workshops on the issues of employment need, and quality and integration of employment uses. A need was identified in all events to relate the type of business to the particular circumstances of York. Thus linkages between office uses and business tourism were made, high tech business employing university graduates were promoted and small-scale manufacturing responding to particular 'niche' markets in the City were all mentioned.
24. The particular characteristics of the two sites were also emphasised at the workshop events with strong support for offices/research and development uses at York Central and general/small scale engineering at British Sugar. There was significant support for a Central Business District at York Central. Warehousing received only moderate support at British Sugar and was not supported at York Central. The need for training and recognition that jobs were needed for those with low skill levels was also made at both the Focus Group and Inclusive York Forum.

Housing

25. In general, a broad range of housing types, sizes and densities were supported. Comments on the options suggested that the densities were too prescriptive. High quality open space and linkages to public transport and services were considered important, particularly for higher densities. Whilst opinion on the density options varied between events/representations received, Option 2 (concentrating high densities around transport nodes) was given a higher level of support. Concerns about flood risk areas were highlighted at workshops, the Focus Group and in the representations received.
26. Broadly speaking feedback supported a housing mix in accordance with the Housing Market Assessment as well as higher proportions of housing. Provision of a higher proportion of flats was only supported by a small minority, although York Central was felt to be better suited to accommodate flats than British Sugar. Specialist housing types, for example, sheltered housing, 'extra-care' and 'social' housing were promoted by the Inclusive York Forum. At the workshop events the concept of exemplar housing for both energy and water conservation was put forward with highly sustainable housing design.

Social Infrastructure

27. The provision of a range of community, health and education facilities were supported as promoting vitality within the site, as well as providing employment. At the workshop events it was felt that provision should reflect the different areas of the sites with the scale of facilities relating to location. York Central was seen to relate to the City Centre, with British Sugar to the local community.
28. Provision of comparison retailing around the station received a mixed response (with some high levels of objection) with concern over town centre viability and necessity for provision but support for the sustainable location and connections with the NRM/train station. Support for the different options of scale/location of centres was also mixed with some supporting a district centre at British Sugar,

others small scale facilities throughout the sites. There was, however, significant support for local centres in the public leaflet response. Provision of the following facilities were supported, a health centre, indoor sports centre, community hall, youth centre, library, swimming pool, social club and live music venue. Specialist facilities were supported by the Inclusive York Forum. All Saints Secondary School, Gillygate Surgery and Lidgett Grove Scout Group, registered interest in relocating within the area.

Culture and Tourism

29. The inclusion of additional high quality cultural facilities in the vicinity of the station/NRM was widely supported. Improved attractions, infrastructure and accommodation were also held to be important in the representations received. The provision of high quality open space linked to these facilities was seen to be a key point with opportunities for a new 'place' for tourists and others to be provided. High quality hotels/conferencing facilities were also considered to be important to the role of York in the business/tourism sectors. The location of such facilities in the vicinity of the station were widely supported in the representations and workshop events, but received a more mixed response in the public comments. Generally however people disagreed with the location of a hotel at the British Sugar site.
30. There was general agreement for the provision of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge link to the city. Access/ integration with the city centre was identified as being of critical importance in the workshop events. Opportunities were also highlighted for riverside improvements and a 'riverside' corridor.

Transport and Accessibility

31. There was wide support for increasing the priority of public transport, cyclists and pedestrians over car use. Representations stressed the need for a full detailed transport study, which would consider York Northwest within the surrounding wider highway network. Comments made by the Focus Group highlighted effective traffic management as critical to reducing congestion.
32. The provision of park and ride facilities was widely supported, with linkages to a rail halt/local interchange. A linking bridge over the River Ouse was also considered fundamental to the integration of the area with the city centre. Provision of a local interchange on British Sugar was supported, particularly if linked to any tram train halt and local centre. Provision of new, linked pedestrian cycle routes within the green infrastructure networks was also supported to promote more walking and cycling.
33. The provision of tram train was strongly supported, although it was recognised that this would be a medium to long-term project. It was noted that whilst provision should be made in any plans for a safeguarded route through the area, the feasibility of tram train was still being investigated and it may not come forward.
34. The quantitative analysis of responses to the access options (workshop events) generally indicates more agreement with pedestrian and cycle access options than the vehicular/public transport options given, which had objections to all but

the Water End and the tram train options. Difficulties in many of the options have been highlighted in the comments given in the feedback received.

Open Space and Built Sporting Facilities

35. Generally, public realm/green infrastructure was seen to be very important to the development of the area and should be maximised. The retention of existing facilities and open spaces on, or near, the sites (eg. the Ings flood plain) were also considered key aspects of any new development. The integration of spaces, accessibility, availability and affordability for all age groups and for people with disabilities were also mentioned in many of the representations/events. The importance of the Railway Institute facilities and the need to protect/relocate these within the area was also highlighted. Other suggested facilities included a swimming pool, community centres and a concert hall. The public feedback on the types of open space facilities showed a higher preference for natural/semi natural green space, green corridors, parks and play areas, although generally there was a high level of support for all facilities. The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust offered management expertise for ecological and greenspaces in exchange for workspace within a development.
36. The siting of a stadium within the area received a mixed response. Whilst the opportunity to locate a city-wide facility in a sustainable location next to the station was recognised, difficulties in terms of deliverability, maintenance, traffic congestion, viability and poor use of brownfield land were also noted. Possible tensions with the facilities provided by the Railway Institute and the Central Business District were also raised. In terms of the location of a stadium within York Northwest, feedback from the workshops supported provision adjacent to the rail station, whilst the public comments were more supportive of a facility linked to a new district centre on British Sugar.

Urban Design

37. High quality, innovation and excellence in design were generally considered to be essential in the feedback received. The need to respond to the existing character of areas with bespoke design was supported. The Focus Group identified the opportunity for development to be ecologically pioneering, contemporary and daring, which would contrast with the historic city context. Building height was highlighted as an important issue, together with the potential creation for new views across the city. Building future requirements into the design of buildings and spaces was also mentioned with reference to climate change and 'exemplar' low carbon living and working to be taken into account.

Delivery

38. There was relatively little comment/feedback on this section, although this is probably because no options were put forward. The representations received did highlight issues of phasing and the delivery of social and environmental infrastructure.

Next Steps – Preferred Options

39. Work has started to prepare the second next stage of the Area Action Plan, the Preferred Options. This work will be carried out in-house with consultant support as required. It is anticipated that the preparation of the Preferred Options will take place in three phases: information analysis; development of conceptual options; and preparation of Preferred Options report. It is anticipated that a report will be brought to Members outlining progress on the emerging options this summer, for their consideration and comment.

Information Analysis

40. The first phase will include work to develop a mechanism for identifying and apportioning transport infrastructure that is required to deliver the development. Work will also be undertaken to update baseline information and prepare spatial plans which will outline constraints and opportunities. The vision for the area and objectives of the AAP will be reviewed and amended as appropriate. The analysis and testing of the Options contained within the Issues and Options report, will include development and application of criteria to evaluate the options. These criteria will include sustainability appraisal and consultation feedback. This will enable conclusions to be reached on whether to reject options or continue work on them to a conceptual stage. This work will be incorporated into a background report to the Preferred Options Report.

Develop Conceptual Options

41. It is intended to produce conceptual options on the broad directions for size/scale and location of uses within the area. These will take into account the work carried out in paragraph 40 above and will include work to establish a boundary for the area. An analysis of costs of developing the area eg. contamination, transport and service infrastructure will be undertaken. This will inform high level viability testing of emerging conceptual options. This will necessitate close liaison with York Central and ABF consultant teams. Sustainability appraisals of the options will also inform this stage of work on an iterative basis.

Preferred Options Report

42. The conceptual options will be analysed and refined to inform the Preferred Options. It is anticipated that the Preferred Options will comprise a limited number of comprehensive spatial strategy options. These will include broad land use locations with policy directions. This work will be accompanied by a sustainability appraisal to assess the implications of the proposals put forward. This work will form the basis for a further period of public consultation to allow public feedback on the developing options.
43. It is apparent from the guidance emerging on Area Action Plans that to be 'sound' it must be clear what the plan will deliver, the feasibility of this, by whom it will be delivered and the timescales for this. The Preferred Options will therefore be subject to high-level viability testing to ensure the deliverability of options being developed.

Options

44. There are no options relating to this report.

Corporate Priorities

45. The York Northwest area provides large brownfield development opportunities adjacent to the city centre. Development of this area will help to protect and enhance York's existing built and green environment and provides an opportunity for a flagship sustainable development. The regeneration of this area will support the following corporate priorities,
- Increase the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport
 - Improve the quality and availability of decent affordable homes in the City
 - Improve the contribution that Science City York makes to economic prosperity

Implications

46. Implications are as listed below:
- **Financial** None.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** None
 - **Equalities** None
 - **Legal** None
 - **Crime and Disorder** None
 - **Information Technology (IT)** None
 - **Property** None
 - **Other** None

Risk Management

47. In compliance with the Councils risk management strategy, there are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Recommendations

48. Members are asked to:
- 1) Note the comments received on the Issues and Options documents and support their consideration in informing the Preferred Options stage for the Area Action Plan.

Reason: To ensure that the Area Action Plan can be progressed to the next stage of work, in accordance with the Local Development Scheme.
 - 2) Note the progress made to date on production of the Area Action Plan and agree the approach for the development of the Preferred Options stage of work.

Reason: To ensure that Members views are included in the generation of Preferred Options put forward.

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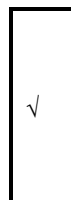
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Report Approved



Date 30/04/08

Specialist Implications Officer(s): None

All

Wards Affected: Holgate, Micklegate, Acomb and Rural West York

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Report to Executive 25 September 2007
Report to LDF Working Group 24 July 2007
Report to Executive, 27 February 2007

Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultation Plan
Appendix 2: Consultation Response Analysis
Appendix 3: Overarching Summary
Appendix 4: Summary of Vision and Objectives
Appendix 5: Summary of Comments on Boundary
Appendix 6: Summary of Report of Public Comments Forms (available on website)
Appendix 7: Written Representations: Index of Consultees (available on website)
Appendix 8: Summary of Written Representations (available on website)
Appendix 9: Summary of Report of Workshop Events (available on website)
Appendix 10: Focus Group Report (available on website)
Appendix 11: Inclusive York Forum Summary (available on website)
Appendix 12: Copies of Public Comment Form/Leaflet/Poster (available on website)