
MEETING	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP
DATE	6 APRIL 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS STEVE GALLOWAY (CHAIR), POTTER (VICE-CHAIR), AYRE, D'AGORNE, MERRETT, MOORE, REID, SIMPSON-LAING, WATT AND MORLEY (AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR CLLR R WATSON)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR R WATSON

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

30. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

31. LDF CORE STRATEGY – SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR CONSULTATION

Members considered a report that set out the proposed spatial strategy for the Local Development Framework (LDF). The role of the Spatial Strategy will be to direct the future location of development at a strategic level, forming a key part of the Core Strategy. All subsequent LDF documents will need to be in conformity with the spatial strategy once adopted.

The report asked Members to approve the proposed spatial strategy for inclusion in the Core strategy Preferred Options document and provided Members with two options:

Option 1: To approve the approach outlined in the report for inclusion in the Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation document.

Option 2: To seek amendment to the approach outlined in the report prior to inclusion in the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation document.

An Officer Briefing Note on the LDF Core Strategy – Spatial Strategy Consultation and a letter from Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners were passed to Members and attendees at the meeting and are appended to these Minutes.

The Director of City Strategy introduced the report and referred to the Officer Briefing Note. He stated that York had never had an agreed Green Belt Boundary and that the LDF Core strategy would set this. He spoke of the need for a sound plan that: included clear evidence, that was robust and credible, that was in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), and that was deliverable and flexible. He stressed that the plan was not just about numbers, but about quality and type and that Officers believed that the approach was sound. He added that an unsound plan could cause delay and incur costs, and that the authority could be instructed to begin the process again. He noted that York had already been warned by Government Office and needed to move expeditiously on this.

The Principal Development Officer presented the report and referred to maps, which had been displayed at the meeting for Members, outlining the various proposed sites. He stated that the report was complicated, but at the core was guided by a sustainable settlement hierarchy. He said that officers had looked at villages and settlements around York and at those that were the most suitable, at the main urban areas which were most suitable and below that the smaller villages. He referred Members to areas 3a and 3b as potential flood zones, which should, as a precautionary principle, be ruled out. He referred to the historic character of York and the river corridor and views. He also spoke of the green infrastructure and the work being done with Natural England to map the green infrastructure and nature conservation areas of key constraints.

He stressed that the RSS spoke of expanding the main urban areas before expanding the villages. He explained about the potential areas of research within the Ring Road and that there was a need to use land at reasonable densities and to build in flexibility when looking at potential land in excess of what was needed.

The main question, he stated was: If urban extension was needed, where would this be and why would the site be chosen?

The Officer referred to the Employment Land Review previously brought to Members and stated that there was sufficient land until 2029 for Offices and Research and Development. For industrial and storage and distribution however, in addition to the existing supply, site C Hull Road and Site I North Minster Business Park were proposed, but that choices were to be made.

For housing, Officers had considered the potential urban extensions in terms of landscape quality, urban quality and transport. Transport favoured sites on the East and more capacity was predicted in this area of the city. Sites for housing had been prioritised at Monks Cross, and adjacent to Metcalfe Lane. Officers were not advocating all this land, but that a shortfall of 6000 houses was shown up by 2030 according to the RSS target. It was explained that if allowances were taken off for a windfall element after 2025 this left a shortfall of 4500 houses with a need for 135 hectares of land at a reasonable density. It was noted that the land in areas A and B would give up to about 200 hectares.

The Head of City Development spoke of the importance of a community strategy with a successful urban economy, cohesive and strong communities with sustainable growth and viability, with the built-in need to protect the historic character of the city and to minimise the use of Green Belt land.

Members then discussed and raised various concerns and questions about the LDF Core Strategy – Spatial Strategy to which Officers responded.

- **Minutes.** Concern was expressed that the Minutes of the previous two meetings were not included with the agenda papers and that the Minutes needed to go out promptly. Officers explained that the Minutes were still to be cleared.
- **Transport.** Members highlighted that transport, highways and traffic were key issues and questioned why there was no report on transport. It was noted that traffic congestion was an issue at Clifton Moor and Monks Cross and that transport was difficult on Osbaldwick Road and the bottom part of Stockton Lane. It was also noted that in the report, page 12, paragraph 27 that options D, E and F were constrained by highway capacity. Officers responded that Halcrow (traffic consultants) had provided a high-level study and had customised the transport model to understand the road network in 2030 and had been asked to investigate various scenarios. Halcrow had looked at travel patterns from the 2001 census. Officers explained that the land use model connected to the traffic model had given broad indications and that this then provided the high level commentary reported to Members in the report. This indicated that the outer Ring Road had a significant impact. It was felt that sites on the east provided a more sustainable transport solution. This model had also taken account of the expected shift away from cars. Officers reported that the next stage was to show a deliverable and more detailed transport modelling. Officers confirmed that a report on transport would be ready to be brought before Members in six to eight weeks.
- **RSS.** Some Members expressed concerns about the basic assumptions in the RSS, including windfalls, which they felt should be challenged. It was also felt that it was difficult to provide for the unknowable in terms of housing and employment needs. Other Members were concerned that challenging the RSS could, with a growing population in York, create future housing problems. Officers stated that they had to conform to the RSS figures and the future projected trends to 2026 and 2030 that were part of a robust approach to the LDF. Officers stated that windfalls could not be included before 2025, and that beyond then it might be challengeable, but would ensure that the advice from Members would be brought to the Executive.
- **Foss Basin.** Concerns were expressed that there was difficulty in what could be done with the Foss Basin and that more information was needed.
- **Copmanthorpe bus services.** It was noted that the report inaccurately reported that there was no evening bus service, when there was an evening service.

- **Germany Beck and Heslington East.** Officers confirmed that Halcrow's work had taken these two sites into account.
- **Village sustainability matrix**, page 27 and 28 of the agenda and **Skelton**. It was confirmed that there was only one football pitch and no changing facilities. Officers confirmed that the report drew on the evidence base PMP work.
- **Green Belt and the area east of Skelton** on page 30. Officers confirmed that Skelton was surrounded on three sides by areas identified as important in terms of the historic character and setting of York. A Member expressed concern about coalescence with Haxby.
- **Green Corridors.** Members also raised concerns with reference to page 5 paragraph 10 and felt all Green Corridors served an important Green Belt function and were concerned with reference to Area B along the Hull Road. Officers confirmed that these green strays/wedges were part of the historic strays and corridors.
- **Open Space Strategy and link with Green corridors.** Officers confirmed that this large piece of work would be brought back to Members when ready and in the next two months.
- **4500 houses needed and question of low density.** Officers confirmed that 30% of the gross site area on sites over 5 hectares were not for development but for infrastructure and also for open spaces. Also that consideration was given to the Housing Market Assessment, which indicated that provision should be 70% for houses and 30% for flats. Officers also confirmed that in terms of density, best practice examples would be used with Derwenthorpe and Germany Beck taken as examples and that it was important to create sustainable communities.
- **Ring Road delineation and boundary.** With regard to site B, a Member suggested that Stockton Lane and the Bad Bargain Lane turn from the road to the bridal way should be taken out and that there were delineations well within the Ring Road. Officers confirmed that the Ring Road was more of a barrier.
- **Transmission lines, page 41.** Officers confirmed that from the work done by ECUS, University of Sheffield, it was felt that transmission lines and pylons gave the landscape an industrialised appearance.
- **Buffer zones around nature conservation sites.** A Member felt that these needed to be taken into account.
- **Constraints.** A question was asked about whether the judgement of the coalescence was based on 2001/2 work or had this been updated? Concerns were also expressed about Murton, particularly if site C was approved. The Member argued for constraints to avoid coalescence. Officers confirmed that they had used the original work and factored in Officer knowledge, but that further work would be undertaken on this.
- **The sustainability of small villages to the south.** Officers confirmed that the thrust was for strategic level development concentrating on the main urban areas first.
- **Derwenthorpe and concerns that Area B** might have detrimental impact in bringing this area forward. Officers confirmed that these details would be picked up at the next stage.

- **Public consultation and the question of Green Belt.** Officers confirmed that public consultation was very important.
- **Possible Deferral of Core Strategy until the transport evidence was available for Members.** Officers confirmed that deferral would put back the process. Officers also confirmed that this was a preferred options document and not a final one and that other reports were to follow. Officers agreed to make the transport information available alongside the other consultation documents.
- **Consultation.** Officers confirmed that the consultation process would involve advertising city-wide using the Council's newspaper, Ward Committees, Parish Councils, and that they would write to the people on the LDF database. It was also confirmed by officers that the consultation process and timetable would be agreed with the Executive and the Shadow Executive. A suggestion was made about the possible use of supermarkets.
- **Current recession.** Concerns were expressed about this and York's future development.
- **York North West.** Concerns were expressed that if green field sites were identified outside the Ring Road, where would the authority stand in relation to the development position? Officers confirmed that the authority had significantly strong powers to ensure that brown field sites were considered first and that this could be controlled through planning and that planning applications could be refused if they did not meet planning policy.

RESOLVED:

That the LDF Working Group recommends that the Executive

1. Place on record its concerns that the current officer report implies possible development of land that was currently regarded as draft Green Belt.
2. Consider further the spatial strategy produced by officers with a view to approving, for the purposes of public consultation, a core strategy which provides choices for residents in respect of the numbers of homes to be provided in the city in the light of the current recession, the assumptions to be made about windfall sites during the whole of the plan period and the densities which should be assumed in - at least - the latter period of the plan.
3. Requests that Officers make the strongest possible representations, to the Regional Planning Board that the housing and employment growth assumptions for the City - featured in the current RSS - should, in the light of the current recession, be lowered when the RSS is revised and reissued.
4. That representations be made to the Government to allow an assumption that housing windfall sites should be included in LDF policies.

Note: *Cllrs Simpson-Laing, Merrett and Potter voted against these recommendations and asked that their opposition be recorded.*

REASON:

To progress the Local Development Framework Core Strategy to its next stage of development.

Cllr S F Galloway, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.35 pm and finished at 6.15 pm].