
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 (SUBSTITUTE)
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].

Local Development Framework Working Group

6th April 2009

LDF Core Strategy - Spatial Strategy for Consultation

Briefing Note

Summary

Members of the LDF Working Group will be considering a draft Spatial Strategy for York at tonight's meeting. This briefing note explains the key principles behind our approach:

- maximizing urban potential;
- minimizing the need for greenfield land; and
- avoiding areas of highest green belt value in order to protect the historic character and setting of York.

It then considers the statutory nature of the RSS and LDF and highlights the importance of achieving a 'sound plan', based on firm evidence, which is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy. It summarises the 'gap in provision' in meeting RSS requirements, from our evidence base to date. It then considers the alternative ways of 'bridging' that gap. It concludes that the taking of some land out of the draft green belt will be necessary if our Spatial Strategy and Core Strategy is to be found sound.

The Spatial Strategy – a key element of the LDF Core Strategy

The Spatial Strategy will be a key element of the LDF Core Strategy, a key document in York's LDF, to which all other documents must conform. The LDF and the adopted RSS together will form part of the Statutory Development Plan for York. The Core Strategy will be subject to public consultation in May when the issue of how we plan for our future development needs can be considered by the residents of York and other key interested parties.

The Key principles behind our approach

Work on the Spatial Strategy has been based on a number of key principles:

- focusing development on the York urban area (in accordance with RSS);
- maximising use of brownfield land;
- achieving higher densities;
- providing the right mix and type of housing;
- avoiding the areas of highest green belt value (a primary constraint)
- avoiding areas of flooding and nature conservation interest (primary constraints).

The Report before you tonight sets out a proposed Spatial Strategy for meeting future development needs set by RSS but in a way that protects the historic character and setting of York. It identifies areas of search for potential future urban extensions based on the extensive evidence base and avoiding the primary constraints identified above. These urban extensions will not be needed until 2021 at the earliest and much later if windfalls come forward at past rates.

The Regional Spatial Strategy and 'General Conformity'

The statutory Development Plan for York will be made up of the Regional Spatial Strategy (formally adopted in 2008) and the Local Development Framework (when adopted in 2010). The adopted RSS has set a housing requirement for York of 640 units per year from 2004 to 2008 and 850 units per year to 2026. These are minimum targets that must be achieved in

the LDF. The LDF to be proved sound after independent public examination will need to show that it is in 'general conformity' with the adopted RSS. RSS is currently under review but that is in the context of seeking even higher levels of housing growth. Whilst the Council responded to consultation by stating that now was fundamentally the wrong time to review RSS, no decision has been taken to abort this process. The RSS Review public examination is scheduled to take place in early 2010 if the review process continues. Guidance is clear that we must work to the current adopted RSS.

As it stands, the York LDF will need to be in "general conformity" with the adopted RSS. The housing figures in the Spatial Strategy Paper are based on the housing requirements in the current RSS. If the RSS Review continues there is a good possibility that local authorities will be asked to take even higher levels of housing growth, given that the latest 2006 based population and household projections show even higher levels of growth than the 2004 based projections on which the currently adopted RSS was based.

Meeting York's housing requirements - the gap in provision

The report to the LDFWG on the SHLAA identified a gap in provision in the order of 6,500 units to 2030 taking all known sites in the SHLAA into account. The SHLAA report made it clear that York has a draft Green Belt. Only the general extent (the outer boundaries) have been formally set in any statutory plan. The inner Green Belt boundary for York has not been formally set to date - that is the role of the York LDF. We made it clear in the report that any decisions on housing sites in the draft Green Belt would have to be made using a plan-led approach through the Core Strategy and the subsequent Allocations plan.

Bridging the gap

We have considered all opportunities for 'bridging the gap':

- **including 'windfalls' in the plan** - we have reviewed all the guidance, taken advice from the Planning Inspectorate, and considered how other authorities have approached this. Our clear view is that to include windfalls in the plan before 2025 would lead to an 'unsound' plan. Including them after 2025 is a risk and may be challenged but we at least think there is an argument to make given York's plan needs to run longer in order to set a long term green belt boundary.
- **raising densities** - our calculations are based on reasonably high density assumptions including 30% of supply being made up by flatted development (based on the HMA recommendations) and density assumptions for housing in the suburban areas being 40 dwellings per hectare (based on Derwenthorpe and Germany Beck densities). To bridge the gap just using higher densities would require all our sites to be 100% flatted development. This is clearly not a realistic option given our clear evidence base requiring a mix of house types and government policy on providing family homes (as set out in PPS3).
- **Seeking a lower housing requirement after 2026** - the current RSS only runs to 2026. To plan to 2030 for York we have projected forward the RSS requirement of 850 homes per year. The housing figure for York in the RSS already represents a policy of relative restraint – the 850 homes being less than the average number of new households (1050) projected in York each year (from 2026- 2030) in the 2004 based household projections. The 2006 based household projections on which the RSS Review will be guided are even higher. It is the clear officer view that such an argument could not be sustained.

Conclusion

The officer view is that the gap cannot be bridged and that land for potential future urban extensions needs to be identified. The Spatial Strategy we are presenting tonight meets the city's development needs whilst protecting the historic character and setting of the city. It achieves this by maximising our urban potential (the majority of our provision will be on brownfield land but will still achieve the ratio of houses to flats set out in the Strategic Housing

Market Assessment), and avoiding areas of highest green Belt value. The Spatial Strategy we are proposing has sought to minimise the need for greenfield land take.

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Our ref 40433/MW/JM/508539v1
Your ref

Dear Rachel

York: Draft York SHLAA

Further to our recent telephone conversation, we write on behalf of Barratt Homes to comment on the outcome of the LDF Working Group meeting on the 09th March 2009, where the draft SHLAA was considered. In particular our comments relate to the decision to seek amendments to the draft SHLAA to remove reference to 'Sites within the Draft Green Belt' as being potentially suitable for housing development (subject to conformity with the emerging Core Strategy and following a detailed evaluation of the Green Belt value).

It should be noted that minutes of the 09th March Working Group meeting are not currently available. However, we understand that the above represents a fair summary of the outcome of the meeting, in respect of 'Sites within the Draft Green Belt'.

We are aware that a further LDF Working Group meeting is to take place on 06th April 2009, during which the 'Approach to the Spatial Strategy' paper will be considered. Given that the SHLAA will form a key part of the evidence base for the emerging Core Strategy document and the need for the Core Strategy to provide a strategic framework to guide housing and other development for the emerging LDF period, Barratt Homes requests that the following comments are reported to the LDF Working Group at its forthcoming meeting.

It should be noted that these representations seek only to provide comment on the correct approach to 'Sites within the Draft Green Belt'. More detailed comments on the draft SHLAA and the emerging spatial strategy will be made by Barratt Homes in due course.

Need for 'Sites within the Draft Green Belt'

The following assesses the housing land supply position in York against housing requirements. It demonstrates that there is a shortfall in identified supply and that 'Sites within the Draft Green Belt' will be required in order to meet housing requirements over the emerging LDF period.

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Housing Requirement

The RSS housing requirement for York is 640 net additional dwellings per annum (dpa) for the period 2004-2008 and 850 dpa for the period 2008-2026. The emerging LDF period will extend beyond the RSS end date to 2030. The following housing requirement table assumes that the RSS rate of 850 dpa will extend to 2030. This results in a total requirement of 21,260 units for the LDF period (as identified below).

Period	Housing Requirement
2004-2008	2560
2008-2026	15300
2026-2030	3400
Total (For Emerging LDF Period)	21,260

Housing Supply

The draft SHLAA calculates the total housing supply position in York for the emerging LDF period (i.e. until 2030), based on net completions since 2004 (i.e. the base date of the RSS); outstanding planning permissions (discounted at 5% to allow for non-implementation on unallocated sites); and, potential housing sites in the SHLAA (including housing allocations without planning permission). This is set out in the following table:-

Source of Supply	No. of Dwellings
Net Completions (2004-2008)	3387
Net Dwellings with Outstanding Planning Permission	4431
Potential Housing Sites in SHLAA (excluding 'unknown' sites and 'Sites within the Draft Green Belt')*	6866
Total Supply	14,684

The above supply position assumes that all of the commitments and SHLAA sites will come forward in line with the Council's expectations and is based on a number of assumptions relating to the yield from sites and timescales for their delivery. The position also assumes just a 5% allowance for the non-implementation of planning permissions on unallocated sites (with no allowance for the non implementation of permissions on allocated sites). Barratt Homes has concerns about some



of these assumptions, which will be set out in full in further detailed representations on the draft SHLAA.

Notwithstanding the above, the draft SHLAA does not identify a sufficient supply of housing land to meet requirements. Based on the Council's own calculations, there is a shortfall in supply of 6576 units.

The draft SHLAA does identify additional land as being potentially suitable for housing development, but which is currently not included within the housing supply calculations (i.e. the 'Unknown Sites' and 'Sites within the Draft Green Belt'). It should be noted however, that the potential supply possible from the 'Unknown Sites' is only 1938 units. Even in the unlikely event that all of these came forward for development, there is still a significant shortfall of housing land. The only other sites identified as being potentially suitable for housing development, following the Council's assessments during the SHLAA preparation process, are those within the draft Green Belt. It therefore follows that some of this land will be required to meet requirements and to allow for the genuine consideration of site selection options through the LDF process.

Compliance with the Spatial Strategy

The RSS (2008) [Policy YH4] makes clear that the regional and sub regional towns and cities, such as York, are the prime focus for housing (and other) growth and development in the region. The RSS [Policy YH9] also specifically supports the local review of Green Belt boundaries to meet identifiable development needs, where locations in existing regional and sub regional towns and cities are not available and where alternative sites would be less sustainable.

The boundaries to the York Green Belt are not currently designated in the development plan. It is a specific requirement of the RSS to define realistic Green Belt boundaries around York, through the emerging LDF, to establish long term development limits that safeguard the special character and setting of the city. The RSS [Policy YH9C] clearly states that:-

"The boundaries must take account of the levels of growth set out in this RSS and must endure beyond the Plan period".

The findings of the draft SHLAA confirm that development requirements for York can not be accommodated within the existing urban area. As such, sustainable extensions to the urban area will be required. In the context of the above, the approach in the draft SHLAA to identify sustainable sites within the draft Green Belt of York as being suitable for development, subject to compliance with the emerging Core Strategy is fully compliant with the provisions of RSS. It will also be essential that the emerging Core Strategy is flexible and provides a strategic framework to support the identification of suitable, sustainable sites within the draft Green Belt in order to meet development requirements for York.

Conclusion



In conclusion, it is clear that potentially suitable housing sites in the draft Green Belt around York will be required to meet development requirements over the emerging LDF period. As such, the approach in the draft SHLAA (i.e. to identify sustainable draft belt sites as being suitable, subject to compliance with the emerging Core Strategy) is wholly appropriate and is supported by Barratt Homes. It is also essential that the emerging Core Strategy supports the definition of a realistic Green Belt boundary that takes full account of development requirements and provides a strategic framework to support the identification of suitable, sustainable sites within the draft Green Belt.

We would be obliged if the above representations could be reported to the LDF Working Group at its forthcoming meeting on 06th April 2009.

Please contact us if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

John MacKenzie
Associate Director