

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Local Development Framework: York City Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to request that the Members of the LDF Working Group recommend to the Council's Executive that they approve the emerging York City Centre Area Action Plan (AAP), subject to the recommendations of the Group, for consultation (the Issues and Options document is attached at Annex A and Summary of Issues and Options document at Annex B). The intention, subject to Members' approval, is for the Issues and Options for the City Centre Area Action Plan DPD to be published for public consultation in July.

Background

2. As Members will recall, the purpose of the City Centre Area Action Plan is to provide a vision and identify key issues for the city centre over the next 20 years. It is the first time a review of the city centre has pulled all the various issues together under one comprehensive plan and, when it progresses to adoption, it will provide the basis for projects to deliver new development opportunities and public realm enhancement, and control inappropriate development.
3. Work began on the AAP in September 2007. A report was presented to LDF Working Group on 18 December 2007 in order to describe progress on the AAP, to obtain guidance on the direction of the issues and options document. The Working Group approved the recommendation that Officers produce a draft Issues and Options report for public consultation, based on key issues relevant to the city centre and potential Action Areas, and that this be reported back to the Group. Member comments have been taken into account in drafting the document.
4. In producing the draft Issues and Options document, the City Development team have involved Officers from across the Council. Officer Workshops were held on 11 October 2007 and 10 March 2008, which allowed Officers to state their own aspirations and ideas for the city centre, and gave them the opportunity to explain how these fitted within wider strategies of CYC. These

workshops have been backed up by regular meetings with small groups and individuals and regular reporting and feedback of Officer comments.

5. It was agreed that the draft should be positive about the advantages of the city centre and the opportunities that exist to enhance it further. It includes facts and background information (spatial portrait) as well as context maps to illustrate the big issues for the city centre.
6. The plan revolves around three 'key themes' – economic vitality, historic environment and community life. These are highlighted as the key functions of the city centre and contributors to its success. A vision for each key theme is set out at the start of the document followed by more detailed explanation of the issues. A series of questions for people to consider are posed along with options to deal with the issues. The Plan also includes context maps and numerous photographs and illustrations to help demonstrate the assets and opportunities in the city centre.
7. Key Theme 1 Economic Vitality considers all aspects of the city centre economy and contains options for improving its diversity and prosperity. It considers how we might develop the economy over the next 20 years through retail, tourism, the evening economy, offices, as well as explaining the role of the universities, and access and transport issues.
8. Key Theme 2 Historic Environment contains options for ensuring successful management of the Historic Core Conservation Area, good design and an improved public realm. It covers issues such as managing the historic environment, improving public spaces and pedestrian routes, future options for Newgate Market, possible changes to the footstreets and opportunities for greening the city centre.
9. Key Theme 3 Community Life includes issues and options to increase the number of community services and facilities, enhance cultural and evening activities, and improve equality and access to housing.
10. The Issues and Options consultation is the first opportunity to receive public comment, and it has been the intention from early on to make the plan interesting to the reader through use of good graphics - an aspect that Members endorsed when ideas were first presented to the LDF Working Group in December 2007. This has now taken shape - through relevant photos, maps and vision sketches, as well as colour coding of themes and issues.
11. The draft AAP includes a section with five proposed 'Opportunity Areas'. All of the areas are based on existing Council objectives and the AAP emphasises that they have the potential to go a long way towards delivering key elements of the vision for the city centre. The five areas include:
 - Castle Piccadilly – a retail-led mixed use development, with opportunities to create a first class public realm and enhance the

Foss riverside, based on the 2006 Planning Brief and Allocations DPD.

- The Cultural Quarter – enhancements to the Minster-NRM corridor, based on the ongoing work of Learning, Culture and Children’s Services and York @ Large.
- Gateway Streets – enhancement of ‘peripheral’ streets based on the ongoing work of Economic Development Unit.
- City Spaces – public realm enhancement of key streets and spaces based on cross Directorate work on the ‘Songlines’ Lottery fund bid and taking into account aspirations set out in the Council’s Community Strategy.
- Riversides – enhancing this key asset, with particular focus on the area between Ouse and Lendal bridges to realise the long-term objective to create a walkway on the south bank.

12. Summary character statements for each of the character areas within the conservation area are included as an appendix to the Issues and Options document. These have been produced by BDP Architects. Public comment can then be fed into the preparation of the full Appraisal document. This approach has been agreed with English Heritage.
13. A Summary Issues & Options is included (Annex B to this report) for easy reference, and a short publicity leaflet and press release will also be produced at the time of public consultation.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

14. When producing LDFs local authorities are required to consider, at each stage of production, the impacts that their proposals are likely to have on sustainable development. This is done through undertaking a joint strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal of the document in accordance with EU Directives and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
15. A Scoping Report has been completed and a Sustainability Statement will be produced to accompany the City Centre AAP Issues and Options once this document has been approved by Members. This will provide an overview of sustainability matters raised at the Issues and Options stage, and will provide a reference for those wishing to comment on the Issues and Options by highlighting the economic, social and environmental implications for sustainable development of the proposed development options.

Consultation

16. A draft of the document has been consulted on widely within the Council and the comments received have been fully considered and incorporated into this Issues and Options report.

17. The proposed external consultation will comply with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and will run for a minimum of six weeks. This will include press releases, information on the Council's website and distribution of the document to public buildings and to relevant parties. The Council's City Development team will attend meetings of interested groups - including the Retail Forum, Property Forum and Conservation Area Advisory Panel and will hold stakeholder workshops as appropriate. A Consultation Strategy is being produced which will set out the precise consultation methodology to be used, and this will be agreed by the Director of City Strategy in consultation with the Executive Member and Shadow Executive Member for City Strategy.

Options

18. Members have the following options to consider in relation to the City Centre Area Action Plan DPD Issues and Options Document, including the Summary document :

Option 1: To approve the document, subject to the recommendations of the LDF Working Group, for consultation purposes;

Option 2: To seek amendments to the document through recommendations of the Executive; or

Option 3: To defer the document and request further work from Officers.

Analysis

19. It is important that the City Centre Area Action Plan DPD is progressed broadly in accordance with the timetable set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme. As the Issues and Options stage of the Area Action Plan DPD is the beginning of a process which is timetabled to take three years to complete, it is important to meet the LDS in order to avoid delays later in the process.
20. The outcome of this Issues and Options report will feed into the next stage of the City Centre Area Action Plan and, therefore, any delay to this document will impact on the timetable.

Corporate Priorities

21. The City Centre Area Action Plan DPD accords with the following corporate priorities to:
 - Reduce the environmental impact of council activities and encourage, empower and promote others to do the same
 - Improve the economic prosperity of the people of York with a focus on minimising income differentials

- Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces
- 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 health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest.

Implications

22. The following implications have been assessed:

- **Financial** - The cost of preparing the City Centre Area Action Plan DPD will be met through current budgets provided for the LDF. Apart from a few vision sketches, no external plan planning consultancy or design team has been used in the production of this draft AAP, and expenditure has been wholly contained within the City Development Team budget.
- **Human Resources (HR)** - None
- **Equalities** - None
- **Legal** - None
- **Crime and Disorder** - None
- **Information Technology (IT)** - None
- **Property** – The AAP identifies Opportunity Areas for discussion based on development and enhancement, including land and buildings in the Council's ownership.
- **Other** - None

Risk Management

23. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Recommendations

24. That Members recommend the Executive to:

- i) approve the Draft Issues and Options document and Summary of Issues and Options for public consultation, subject to any changes recommended at the LDF Working Group;

Reason: So that the City Centre Area Action Plan DPD can be progressed to its next stage of development as highlighted in the Council's Local Development Scheme.

- ii) delegate to the Director of City Strategy in consultation with the Executive Member and Shadow Executive Member for City Strategy the making of any incidental changes to both the draft document and Summary of Issues and Options document that are necessary as a result of the recommendations of the LDF Working Group.

Reason: So that changes recommended as a result of discussions at this meeting can be made and the report can progress through to the Executive.

- iii) delegate to the Director of City Strategy in consultation with the Executive Member and Shadow Executive Member for City Strategy the approval of the Sustainability Statement to accompany the Issues and Options document consultation.

Reason: So that the report and accompanying document can progress through to the Executive.

- iv) delegate to the Director of City Strategy in consultation with the Executive Member and Shadow Executive Member for City Strategy the approval of a Consultation Strategy and promotional material.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed methods of consultation are satisfactory to members.

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Report Approved **Date** 20/05/08

Specialist Implication Officers: None

Wards Affected: Guildhall, Fishergate, Micklegate and Heworth **All**

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes (due to their size these are only available on the Council website or on request):

Annex A: City Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options
Annex B: City Centre Area Action Plan Summary of Issues and Options