

## **YORK NORTHWEST AREA ACTION PLAN**

### **Progress Report towards a Preferred Option**

#### **Summary**

1. This report outlines the progress of work on the York Northwest Area Action Plan and other planning and transport work being carried out. It outlines a revised vision, objectives and emerging spatial relationship, which has been developed from the work at the Issues and Options stage. A draft document plan for the Preferred Option Report is also outlined to indicate the structure of the report to be prepared. Members are asked to note the progress to date. Members are also asked to comment on the vision and objectives, the emerging options to be taken forward, the emerging spatial relationships and spatial themes.

#### **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 25<sup>th</sup> September 2007 Members agreed an Issues and Options Report on which public consultation took place between November 2007 and January 2008. At the meeting of this group on 13<sup>th</sup> May this year Members noted the comments received on the Issues and Options documents and agreed these would inform the next stage of work. A 3 stage program of work for the development of the Preferred Options was also agreed.

#### **Progress Report**

##### Evidence Base

4. A significant range of evidence base documents have been produced to inform LDF documents, including the Core Strategy and the York Northwest Area Action Plan. Recently the city-wide Retail Study prepared by GVA Grimley was received and endorsed by Members on 3<sup>rd</sup> June. Work on the second stage of the Employment Land Review by consultants Entec is on programme and it is

expected that this will be presented to Members in September this year. This report will include a section specifically on York Central and a Central Business District. It will also inform the type and quantum of employment land to be provided at York Northwest and is an important study informing the work on the preferred option. The city-wide Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study is also nearing completion and a report on this is expected to be brought to Members of the LDF Working Group in the near future. A specific York Northwest Open Space Study which will give a more detailed analysis of open space provision for York Northwest is being prepared. This will be finalised once the city-wide approach is agreed.

5. Progress is also being made in relation to the Council's transport model and a transport strategy. Officers have been working with the development partners to progress this. A joint collaborative transport group comprising representatives of the Council, York Central Task Group, Associated British Foods and transport consultants Halcrow and Faber Maunsell has been set up. The first meeting was held on 10<sup>th</sup> June. The aim is to prepare a Transport Strategy which clearly sets out transport principles for development. This will provide a framework within which all the different parties can work and identify timescales in which new infrastructure needs to be provided. A transport apportionment tool is also being developed to identify developer costs for the package of infrastructure required. The work is being led by the Council and undertaken by the Council's transport framework consultants, Halcrow.
6. A feasibility study for Tram-train has been produced by consultants Arups. Commissioning partners (including the Council) are meeting later this summer to agree the next steps. Other transport initiatives (including the Access York Major Scheme bid and Cycling Demonstration Town Status) are also being progressed which could assist in the funding and delivery of the Area Action Plan.

#### Regional Spatial Strategy

7. The Regional Spatial Strategy was formally adopted in May this year and is part of the statutory development plan for York. York Northwest is recognised as a 'regionally significant investment priority' for the Leeds City Region and the York sub area within the policies of the RSS.

#### Local Development Framework

8. The Issues and Options document for the Allocations DPD has recently been the subject of public consultation. Representations have been received for the inclusion of a number of sites within or in close proximity to the York Northwest area as potential land allocations. The following sites have been suggested for residential development
  - Former civil service sports ground
  - West View Close (adjacent to the civil service sports ground)
  - Cemex site
  - Keyland site, Carlisle Street
  - Thrall site
9. Consideration will therefore need to be given as to whether they will fall within the AAP boundary. Work on the boundary is therefore, being progressed and will also need to take into account transport links/access points into the area.

10. The Issues and Options report for the City Centre Area Action Plan was agreed by Executive on 17<sup>th</sup> June, subject to the recommendations of Members of this Group, for public consultation to commence in July.

#### Specific Consultees

11. Ongoing meetings have been held with specific consultees, including the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water and Public Utilities to ensure their involvement at all stages of the process so that any matters are considered and addressed as work progresses. Additionally meetings are to take place with the Primary Health Care Trust, English Heritage, Natural England, Sport England and the Highways Agency. Internal meetings have also been held with Education.

#### Stakeholder Activity

12. York Central landowners, Network Rail, the National Museum of Science and Industry and the Regional Development Agency, Yorkshire Forward, have been seeking approval from their various boards to enable the site to be marketed. It is hoped that a developer will be appointed early next year. To enable the York Central site to be marketed the landowners and their consultants have been developing their own development framework and appraisal work which will be incorporated in the marketing information to be released shortly.
13. Work is progressing to demolish the British Sugar factory with these works due to be completed by the end of the year. Masterplanning work is being progressed by consultants working on behalf of Associated British Foods (the parent body of British Sugar) and regular liaison meetings with the consultants are now taking place to ensure communication with the delivery parties.

### **Preferred Option Work**

14. As outlined in the report to Members on 13<sup>th</sup> May, progress has been made on the 3 main areas of work, information analysis, development of conceptual options and preparation of the Preferred Option report.

#### **Vision**

15. A draft vision was prepared for the Issues and Options report for public comment:

“To create an exemplar sustainable community, providing innovative contemporary design of the highest quality- a development which is fully integrated with the city and the wider region, where people want to live and work and business will thrive”

16. Whilst there was a reasonably high level of support for this draft vision feedback suggested that it should be refined and simplified and should reflect the specific purpose of the sites within the area. Support was registered for the themes of quality, sustainability, integration, innovation, vitality and quality of life. It is proposed that these six themes are taken forward in the revised vision set out in paragraph 19 below.

17. Guidance on the content of plans has recently been issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (Spatial Plans in Practice) and by the Planning Advisory Service (Plan Manual). The guidance outlines several key components for a Vision, including, being positive, realistic and inspirational, distinctive and capturing the distinctiveness of place. It is suggested that the Vision should also bring together the spatial aspects of other relevant visions.
18. In preparing the revised Vision for York Northwest the research outlined in a workshop event 'The Importance of Vision' (2008) has also been considered. This emphasised the importance of graphic images to convey a more powerful and lasting impression than words.
19. Taking into account the above the following revised Vision is suggested. It is suggested that the vision is part of an overall package of aspirations for the YNW area which includes strategic objectives and spatial objectives which are outlined in paragraphs 21 and 22 below.

"York Northwest in 2026 will be

...a distinctive place of outstanding quality...

... well connected with the city and wider region...

...contributing to the economic prosperity of the city....

...a vital and innovative addition to York..

..fostering new sustainable communities and enhancing quality of life"

20. The aim is to present the Vision in a visual and colourful interpretation of the aspirations for the area and to involve the community in developing this through a community arts project. The vision would be given more specific context in the explanatory text within the document.

### **Objectives**

21. A total of 13 objectives for the AAP were put forward in the Issues and Options report. The public consultation feedback outlined to Members in May identified that the objectives would need to be refined for this next stage of the plan to differentiate between the higher level strategic objectives and the specific site related objectives. In taking this forward three overarching strategic objectives have been developed within the context of the Vision:

#### Strategic Objectives

1. To create new sustainable and inclusive communities.
2. To ensure the new communities and development are fully integrated with existing communities.
3. To maximise a unique opportunity to contribute to the overall economic prosperity of the city.

22. In addition to the above, a number of spatial objectives have also been developed to reflect a more focused approach:

### Spatial Objectives

1. To create new vibrant mixed neighbourhoods which assist in meeting the housing needs of York.
  2. To create a mixed use urban quarter providing a complimentary range of uses to the City Centre, including a central business district, retail, leisure and residential uses, focussed around high quality public realm.
  3. To create culture and leisure facilities which complement and expand York's regional, national, and international cultural offer.
  4. To create connections with the City which prioritise sustainable modes of transport, including a new public transport interchange.
  5. To create a new employment area which provides for future employment needs whilst maximising proximity to strategic transport infrastructure.
23. Members are asked to consider the above vision, strategic and spatial objectives for the Area Action Plan which, if agreed, will be taken forward and outlined in the Preferred Options for the Core Strategy.

### **Option Evaluation**

24. The information analysis stage includes evaluation of the options contained within the Issues and Options report to enable judgements to be made on which options should be taken forward and analysed further. There is a need to show a clear trail of assessment in the weighing of options put forward (Planning Inspectorate 2007). To evaluate the options a set of criteria has been produced. These relate to the test of soundness outlined in Planning Policy Statement 12. The criteria used and the methodology for this is attached in Appendix 1. The full assessment of all options will be included as a background report to the Preferred Option Report.
25. There are 58 options in the Issues and Options Report, of which 34 options relate to transport. Full evaluation of the transport options will only be possible once the transport modelling/testing phase of the evidence work is completed. The evaluation work outlined in this report therefore considers the work to date on the other 24 options. One additional option for an alternative location for a new transport interchange at the Royal Mail site emerged from the Issues and Options consultation and will also be subject to evaluation.

### *Sustainability Appraisal*

26. Whilst not a statutory requirement at this stage, a high level Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been undertaken for each option, assessing them against the 24 objectives approved by members in the SA scoping report. A summary of this appraisal is attached in Appendix 2. The main points arising from the appraisal have been considered as part of the evaluation criteria outlined

above. A full technical SA will accompany the preferred options document and will consider, amongst other issues, the cumulative impacts of options, whether these impacts are short medium or long term, and potential mitigation measures.

27. It should be recognised that the evaluation process, including the SA appraisal work, outlined above is work in progress and will not be completed until all evidence base work, including financial appraisal work has been carried out. From the evaluation work carried out to date a number of options have emerged as best meeting the assessment criteria, as listed below. The other options have not as yet been rejected and conclusions will only be drawn once all the information for assessment is in place. Other options may therefore come forward as a result of this process and additionally ones which represent a refinement of existing options.
28. Suggested options to date to be carried forward:
  - E1: B1 (offices) use at York Central
  - E6: B8 (storage and distribution) use at British Sugar
  - H2: Higher density housing included within a mix of uses, close to public transport interchanges, with medium density housing further from these facilities.
  - H3: Housing mix in accordance with HMA
  - S3: 2 Local Centres
  - S5: Comparison retailing at York Central
  - C1: Cultural quarter at NRM linked to museum gardens/Minster
  - C3: 4/5\* hotel at York Central
  - C5: Pedestrian/cycle bridge across the river
29. It is proposed that work on these options are progressed within the next stage, conceptual options. An example of an evaluation assessment on one of the above options is attached within Appendix 1.

### **Emerging Spatial Relationships**

30. The strategic and spatial objectives outlined above together with the work undertaken on the information analysis have been translated into an emerging spatial arrangement plan within the York Northwest area. This is outlined in Appendix 3 as 'Emerging Spatial Relationships' for consideration by Members. As yet this plan does not include the main transport infrastructure links which will be incorporated as work progresses. In addition, work on a green infrastructure strategy for the area which integrates with existing green networks is also being progressed and will also need to be included in developing the plan further. The arrangement presented may need to be refined as work goes forward for example to take into account further sustainability and transport appraisal work, timescales and viability assessment, including phasing.

31. The spatial arrangement comprises a number of sub areas which relate to the spatial objectives. The objective for the particular area indicated would be the primary role of the sub area, although a mix of uses would be likely to be promoted. From these objectives draft detailed policies would be developed to outline the range of uses acceptable and the development parameters sought.
32. Site specific circumstances have been used to guide the arrangement of objectives within the area. The mixed use urban quarter is shown adjacent to the station area/city centre to reflect national guidance on the location of the uses likely to comprise this area. The cultural and leisure facilities are centred around the existing NRM facilities in close proximity to the station/city, to maximise connections with sustainable transport connections and the existing cultural facilities in the city centre. The new employment area is shown to be adjacent to existing commercial uses to the north of the area. The remaining areas are identified for mixed neighbourhoods which would integrate with the existing surrounding residential areas.
33. The next stage of work will be to establish the scale and quantum of development appropriate for each sub area. This will involve testing of scenarios through the transport model and a viability assessment. The intention is to engage specialist consultants to carry out the viability assessment work. It is likely that a number of scenarios will need to be tested.

### **Preferred Option development**

34. Scoping of other emerging Area Action Plan documents has been undertaken to establish emerging best practice in plan preparation, including Plymouth, Redbridge, Hambleton, Doncaster and Chelmsford. It is clear that the format and style of documents varies considerably. The draft document plan for the Preferred Options of York Northwest, attached in Appendix 4, is therefore individual to this Area Action Plan.
35. It is clear from the scoping work that there needs to be a clear correlation between the Community Strategy, Core Strategy and the Area Action Plan. The diagram at Appendix 5 illustrates the linkages with the Themes/Ambitions within the Community Strategy and the suggested Area Action Plan Spatial Objectives/Themes.
36. The draft document plan (attached in Appendix 4) outlines the anticipated format and content of the document. It is suggested that broadly, the plan will be in two parts: firstly, following spatial themes which will be overarching throughout the area; and secondly, developing a spatial strategy to give spatial direction to the development of the area. This links in with the emerging spatial arrangement work outlined in the previous section of this report. A diagram to summarise the relationship between the documents and objectives is set out in Appendix 6.
37. A more spatial thematic approach is followed in the proposed Preferred Options document than had previously been taken in the Issues and Options document. This reflects the latest guidance on the format and structure of plans set out in

guidance and follows advice from the Government Office. The suggested spatial themes and topic areas to be covered are,

**Economic Prosperity:** Employment; Tourism; Retail (comparison) and Skills/Training.

**Creative and Inclusive Communities:** Housing; Culture; Open Space and Built Sporting Facilities; Social Infrastructure (including Education and Health and convenience Retailing)

**Movement and Connections:** Transport/Accessibility and Green Infrastructure

**Quality Environment:** Historic City; Urban Design; Air Quality; Flooding; Resources

38. Detailed policies would be outlined for both the spatial themes and the spatial strategy sub areas. The spatial theme policies will be effective throughout the Area Action Plan area.
39. The delivery and Implementation sections of the Preferred Options document will be developed in the light of the viability work undertaken and the partnership approach being progressed.

## **Options**

40. There are two options available in respect of this report

Option 1: To proceed with the work on the basis of the vision, objectives, themes, suggested options and spatial relationship outlined above.

41. The approach outlined in this report is based on analysis of options to date, government guidance/ national planning policy, informal advice from the Government Office and lessons learnt from other emerging and adopted Area Action Plans. It is considered to be the best approach in taking the work forward and achieving a sound plan at Public Examination. Agreement to the recommendations outlined will allow work to progress on the Preferred Option stage of the process.

Option 2: To request an alternative approach in progressing towards submission of the Area Action Plan.

42. An alternative approach may prejudice the requirements necessary to the production of a sound Area Action Plan in conforming to the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and any further work may result in delays to the timetable for the Area Action Plan agreed in the Local Development Scheme.

## **Next Steps**

43. If the matters outlined in this report are agreed by Members work will be progressed on developing a Preferred Option with associated background work including viability testing, transport work and sustainability appraisal. It is



anticipated that a report will be brought back to Members in November/December this year with a draft Preferred option report for public consultation. As requested by Members in May a draft Consultation Strategy will be developed and presented to Members in October this year for comment prior to consultation commencing early next year.

## **Corporate Priorities**

44. 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**

45. 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**

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

## **Recommendations**

47. Members are asked to:

- 1) Note the progress on the Area Action Plan to date

Reason: To ensure that the Area Action Plan can be progressed, in accordance with the Local Development Scheme.

- 2) Comment on the vision, objectives, spatial relationship/thematic approach and options to be progressed in the development of the Preferred Option stage of work.

Reason: To ensure that Members views are included in the production of the Preferred Option.

## Contact Details

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Bill Woolley  
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### Report Approved

Date

2.7.08

**Specialist Implications Officer(s):** None

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

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### Background Papers:

Report to LDF Working Group 13<sup>th</sup> May 2008

Report to Executive, 27 February 2007

### Appendices

Appendix 1: Evaluation Methodology and Assessment of Options

Appendix 2: Sustainability Appraisal Summary Report

Appendix 3: Spatial Relationship Plan

Appendix 4: Draft Document Plan

Appendix 5: Overarching Strategies Diagram

Appendix 6: Document Structure