

ANNEX 1

York Northwest, Eco-town Status Briefing Note. 01.10.2008

Housing Numbers

Preliminary work undertaken to date has revealed a developable area of around **75 hectares**. From this, a broad estimate of **4325 dwellings** has been derived, consisting of 3000 units on York Central and 1325 units on British Sugar. More detailed analysis work is currently underway as part of the Preferred Options stage of the Area Action Plan and this figure may be revised in the next few weeks.

New Growth Point

York Northwest was included as one of 8 sites within different Local Authority areas, collectively making up the Leeds City Region new growth point (NGP) bid. York Northwest was one of the four **principal growth point locations** in the bid. As part of the bid, the following development scenario was outlined:

- 4325 dwellings as above - this comprised around 15% of the NGP's estimated housing delivery
- Mix of commercial and employment uses
- New central business district

The NGP bid outlined **infrastructure costs of £150m** associated with York Northwest, predominantly related to accessing the sites (dealing with operational rail uses and grade separations) and delivering an exemplar public transport solution. It is not possible to establish the funding gap associated with these costs at this point, in advance of a detailed development scenario emerging through Preferred Options.

Although the Leeds City Region growth point bid has now had government approval, York Northwest was one of four growth point sites not taken forward. The reduced combined growth point will now deliver 12,000 homes rather than an original 29,500.

York Northwest - Eco-Town Credentials

Sustainability has been embedded in the York Northwest project throughout its development. This has received strong backing both politically and in public and stakeholder consultation, and is reflected in key decisions made, with for example eco-footprinting embedded in policy formation, and the AAP's strategic objective to "create new sustainable and inclusive communities, which achieve the highest standards of sustainability throughout the development"

The following three points are key advantages that York Northwest offers in terms of sustainability and eco-town principals:

Location of Sites

These key **brownfield** regeneration sites are strategically well placed the city, with York Central immediately behind the rail station, and British Sugar in the suburban periphery. Their location maximises opportunities for implementing an **exemplar sustainable transport solution**, with rapid rail services throughout the country, and huge opportunities to integrate communities within this walkable city. Funding has been secured through major scheme bid to build on the Councils successful Park & Ride schemes and provide new park & ride facilities for the development. A multi-modal public transport interchange will be an integral element of any redevelopment at York Central. In addition, following the outcome of trials in South Yorkshire, Network Rail and the Council are keen to utilise rail infrastructure to provide a tram-train link with frequent services between York Harrogate and Leeds, including stops in both York Central and British Sugar. Being in a city location, would allow **integration between new and existing communities** to be maximised through promoting walking and cycling links, and through provision of services to serve both. In addition **place-making** will be facilitated by this interaction between new and existing built fabric and open spaces.

Size of sites

York Northwest offers a **comprehensive development opportunity of unprecedented scale** for York. The scale of the project enables the planning of mixed communities to meet a broad range of Yorks **housing needs** including a requirement for **50% of homes to be affordable** in a variety of contexts from high density urban living, to suburban family homes incorporating building for life standards and creative solutions to sheltered housing needs. The scale of the project also means that **meaningful levels of community provision** can be made in terms of education, healthcare, social facilities etc, whilst best utilising existing facilities in the general area. For example, York Northwest could facilitate the rationalisation of education needs within this sector of the city, making comprehensive new provision to replace outmoded and over-capacity facilities whilst meeting the needs of the new populations. The scale of the sites also mean that they are likely to meet a **wide range of the cities development needs**, including employment, retail, culture, tourism and leisure, as well as housing. This will lead to sustainable mixed use development that reduces the need to travel.

Mature project

Work assessing development potential has been ongoing on York Northwest for many years, and recently key milestones have been achieved in both progressing the Area Action Plan and working towards development of the site, with York Central stakeholders currently in the process of securing a development partner. The maturity of the project has resulted in a **long term**

commitment from both the Council and stakeholders, including the regional development agency, working closely together, to enable the areas development. In addition to a robust relationship between the Council and stakeholders, this partnership working has promoted the project to one of **regional significance**, included as a regional investment priority in the RSS. A **strong commitment to sustainable principals** has also been embedded in the projects from inception: As well as signing up to a vision and objectives for the area with strong emphasis on sustainability, key aspects of the project relating to sustainability include:

- Use of a specific model developed for York Northwest to give project specific **REAP based outputs** to influence policy decision making
- Use of **Sustainability Appraisal** throughout option generation and appraisal, including at non-statutory stages.
- Strong links between the development and cities **green infrastructure** networks through ongoing policy dialogue in production of York Northwest AAP and supplementary planning document of green infrastructure.
- Ensuring **mixed-use communities**, including a range of employment opportunities in close proximity to residential areas.
- Embedding **sustainable transport solutions** with walking and cycling at the top of a modal hierarchy, and reducing car-based travel, with a significantly lower modal split than city wide.
- Incorporating renewable energy systems and sustainable urban drainage as part of a **holistic approach to ensuring sustainable building design and reducing CO² emissions** across the site.