

Local Development Framework Working Group

6th April 2009

Report of the Director of City Strategy

LDF Core Strategy – Spatial Strategy For Consultation

Summary

1. This report sets out a 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.
2. Members are asked to approve the proposed spatial strategy outlined in this report for inclusion in the Core Strategy Preferred Options document. This document will be the subject of public consultation which will be reported to Members to inform decisions on the future development of the Core Strategy.
3. Background information on the proposed approach is provided by the 'Approach to the Spatial Strategy' Topic Paper (attached as Annex A) which should be considered in conjunction with this report.

Background

4. The LDF Core Strategy is the key tool for delivering effective, strategic planning and provides the context for all subsequent LDF documents. To do this it is important that it delivers the spatial / physical elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy and it is in conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber(RSS) which constitutes part of the "statutory development plan" for the authority. It must do this in a way that provides an effective strategy for managing change and responding to York's specific planning issues. This includes responding to the future need for housing and employment land in a way that respects York's unique natural and historic environment. These factors are outlined further below.

Sustainable Community Strategy – York A City Making History

5. National Guidance highlights the role of the LDF in delivering the spatial or land use elements of an area's Sustainable Community Strategy. The Sustainable Community Strategy for York includes the seven, strategic ambitions outlined below. It is of key importance that they are reflected in the Core Strategy vision and spatial strategy.

The Sustainable Community Strategy - strategic ambitions:

- *we will use York's distinctiveness as a way to improve the city further by enhancing its physical and cultural qualities as a basis for community and economic development;*
- *we will keep York's employment levels high and economy buoyant by supporting local employers, developing a diverse economy and balanced employment structure;*
- *we will maintain community cohesion and develop strong, supportive and durable communities;*
- *we will endeavor to balance physical growth and environmental sustainability with responsible choices in respect of climatic and environmental challenges;*
- *we will assert our role as an important regional city;*
- *we will use York's brand and position to promote the city within the global network; and*
- *we will encourage partnerships within the city and beyond that benefit everyone and achieve mutual advantage.*

6. In response to the strategic ambitions outlined the LDF Core Strategy will aim to deliver a spatial strategy which addresses the following:
- the preservation and enhancement of the City's unique **historic character and setting**;
 - York's continued **economic success and prosperity**, including strengthening York's role as a sub-regional shopping and entertainment centre;
 - the development of strong supportive and durable communities through the creation of **sustainable neighbourhoods** that meet the housing needs of the city;
 - York's aspiration to become a **leading environmentally friendly city** contributing to a reduction in York's Eco-footprint;

- the need to ensure that new development is not subject to, nor contributes to, inappropriate levels of **flood risk** from the Rivers Ouse, Foss and Derwent and other sources;
- the promotion of **high quality design and architecture** throughout the whole of the built environment;
- the City's **transport** issues both in terms of the wider environmental impacts, but also the issues of congestion, accessibility, safety and air quality; and
- the need to protect and improving the **countryside and the diversity of wildlife and habitats** in the York area, including international, national, and locally recognised areas of nature conservation value, the historic strays and river corridors.

Natural and Built Environment

7. York has a unique natural and built environment and it is important that this is recognised and protected in planning for the future.
8. York is characterised by a compact urban area surrounded by several small settlements. The compactness of the main urban area is a key feature of the city. The close relationship of the City to its surrounding villages is also an intrinsic element of York's character. This relationship is not simply about the distance between the settlements but also their size. Much of the open countryside around York is currently defined as 'draft' Green Belt. This is because detailed Green Belt boundaries have never being formally adopted through the planning process.
9. The city has an outstanding historical heritage with its history providing a complex mosaic of buildings and streets unique in character. The importance of York is highlighted by the City's status as only one of five historical centres in England designated as an Area of Archaeological Importance. Its wealth of historic buildings include: York Minster, England's largest (surviving) medieval church and the largest Gothic Cathedral in Northern Europe; around 1800 listed structures (of which 241 are Grade I and II*); and 22 scheduled monuments including the City Walls, Clifford's Tower and St Mary's Abbey. The historic character of York extends beyond the built up areas; RSS recognises that the primary purpose of York's Green belt is to preserve the City's historic character and setting.
10. Another key aspect of York's character is it's unique Green Infrastructure. This includes the green wedges that extend from the open countryside into the heart of the main urban area. These wedges comprise the historic 'strays' and surrounding land and the Ouse 'Ings'. The 'strays' are the residue of areas of common land on which the Freemen of York had the right from time immemorial to graze their cattle. York's Green Infrastructure also includes eight Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) two of which (Strensall Common and Derwent

ings) are also of international importance along with locally important sites for nature conservation and recreational open space.

Housing

11. The current Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) housing requirement for York is 640 homes per annum for the period April 2004 - March 2008 and from April 2008 - March 2026, 850 new homes should be built each year. Beyond the end date of the current RSS (2026), an annual rate of 850 homes per year has been projected forward until the end date of the plan (2030)¹. The overall requirement for York from April 2004 to 2030 is 21,260 dwellings. Between 2004 and 2008 3,387 number of dwellings have been completed and a further 4,431 properties currently have consent or are part complete. This means that the spatial strategy must direct the location of an additional 13,442 homes by 2030.
12. The RSS has an important role in providing a strategic policy context for local policies. It is essential that there is 'general conformity' between the RSS and the LDF, to ensure that the two strands of the development plan are mutually supportive. In practice this would prevent deviating from the prescribed housing figures which could only be substantially challenged with a review of RSS (or any successor plan). It should also be noted that the housing figure included in RSS is effectively a policy of restraint as it is lower than both the 2004 and 2006 household projections for the authority area.

Employment

13. The Employment Land Review (2009) indicated that the total number of jobs in York in 2006 was 90,418 and that this would increase to 116,018 total jobs by 2029. This means that York will have a total job growth between 2006 – 2029 of 25,600. The projection of the annual job growth to 2029 was forecast as 1,113. This figure was substantially lower than that included in adopted RSS. In the case of employment land, however, RSS allows for the use of local employment studies to modify its projections. Table 1 below translates the forecast levels of employment growth identified in the Employment Land Review into floorspace and a land requirement for key employment sectors.

Table 1 : Jobs Change, Employment and Estimated Land Requirements

Use Class	Jobs Change (2006-2029)	Land Requirement (ha)
Offices (B1 (a))	+9,881	+15.10
Research and Development (B1 (b))	+306	+1.21
Light Industry (B1(c)) General Industry (B2)	- 886	0
Storage and Distribution (B8)	+2,450	+33.29
Total	+11,751	+49.6

¹ The Council must produce a plan that runs until at least 2030 to meet the requirement of government guidance on setting permanent Green Belt boundaries (a key role of the LDF).

It is important that the spatial strategy proactively plans for the location of these jobs taking full account of both market and sustainability considerations.

Sustainable Communities

14. It should be noted that the spatial strategy isn't about simply planning for additional homes or jobs, but about creating sustainable communities. These are places where people want to live and work, that are safe and inclusive, well planned and built, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all. To achieve this it is essential that we get the right development, in the right place, at the right time.

Options

15. Members have two options relating to the proposed spatial strategy set out below.

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

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

Analysis of Options

16. As highlighted the Spatial Strategy is an essential component of the LDF Core Strategy. It is necessary to ensure that the overall vision of the plan is delivered in a sustainable way responding to key planning issues. The strategy must be clearly defined, providing a proactive, positive approach to planning for the future. It must be deliverable through subsequent development plan documents for which it provides an overarching framework.
17. The proposed spatial strategy included within this document reflects national and regional guidance, York's Sustainable Community Strategy and locally produced evidence base, whilst responding to the city's future development needs. It should be noted, however, it has been produced for the purposes of public consultation the result of which will be reported in full to Members. Delaying its approval will delay the Core Strategy and there would be a significant risk that this would delay further stages of the LDF. This is due to the role of the Core Strategy in providing an overall planning policy framework for the Local Development Framework.
18. Following Preferred Options a Submission draft Core Strategy will be produced later in 2009, which subject to Member approval and following consultation, will be independently examined by the Planning Inspectorate whose recommendations will be binding on the authority. It is clearly important that the currently emerging plan will be able to stand up to this scrutiny. Government

guidance indicates that plans need to be 'justified', 'effective' and 'consistent with national policy'. The 'justified' requirement covers the need for a robust evidence base and consideration of reasonable alternatives (the guidance is clear that such alternatives must be realistic). The 'effective' requirement means that documents must be deliverable, flexible and able to be monitored. In addition, to these tests the plan must be in general conformity with the RSS; be the subject of a sustainability appraisal; have regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy; and be produced in compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement. Failure to meet any of these requirements is likely to lead to a plan being found 'unsound'. This would necessitate repeating earlier stages of plan preparation.

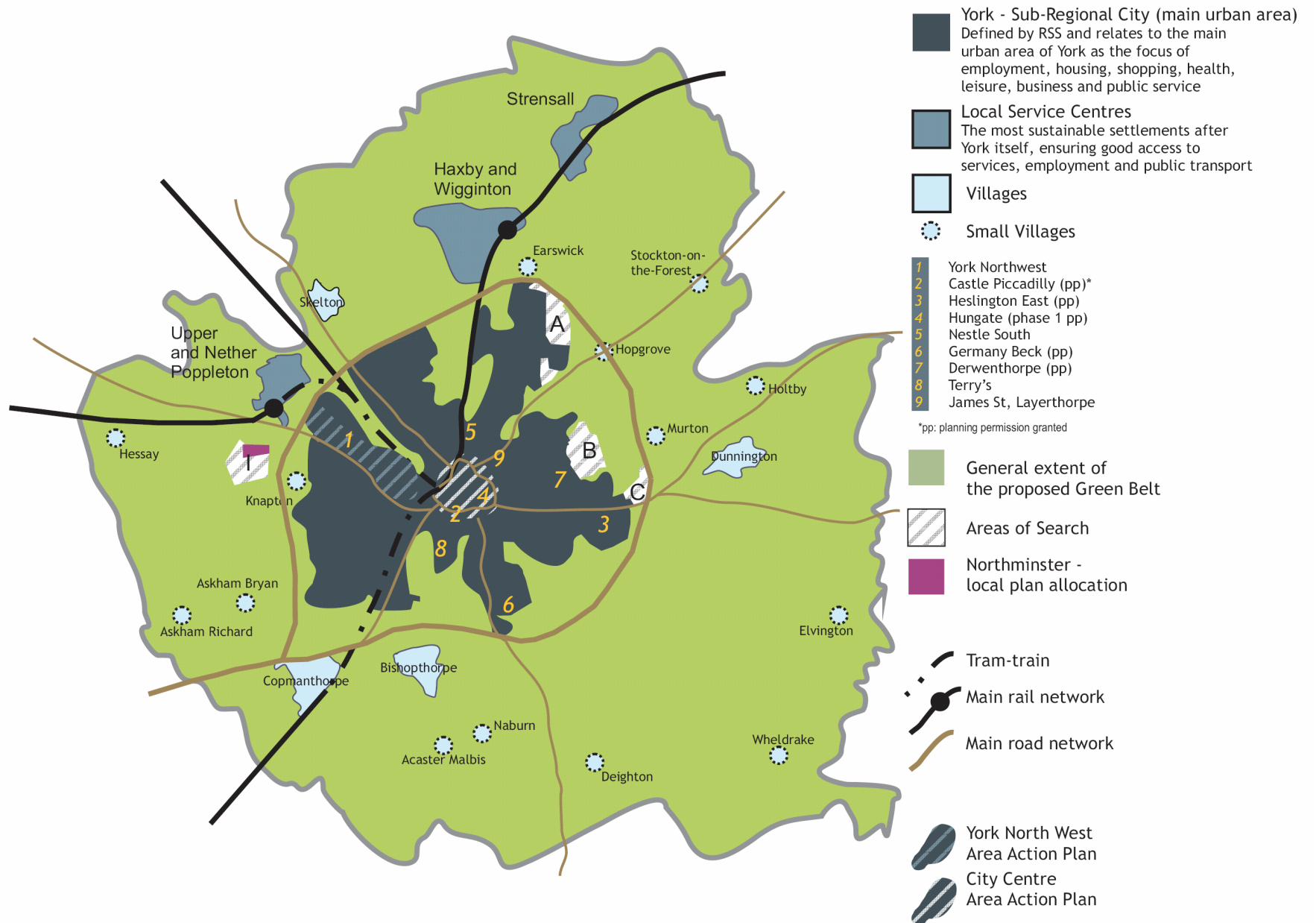
19. It should be noted that given the lack of an up to date, adopted development plan York is under considerable pressure to advance its LDF.

Proposed Spatial Strategy

20. In line with national and regional planning guidance and following the consideration of the local derived evidence base an approach to directing the future location of development has been developed based on three sequential components (see Topic Paper 1 for further background information):
 - (i) firstly, prioritising development within York's main urban area;
 - (ii) secondly, brownfield or infill development within the most sustainable larger villages; and
 - (iii) thirdly, extensions to the main urban area.

Each of these components are considered in more detail below taking account of the findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, the Employment Land Review, and other evidence base work relating to constraints. The proposed approach is also shown spatially in figure 1.

Figure 1



(i) Development within the main urban area

21. In meeting the authority's future development needs the spatial strategy prioritises development within the main urban area of York (York is defined as a Sub Regional City in RSS) recognising this as offering the most sustainable location. This includes utilizing the opportunities provided by the following major development opportunities and sites (see in figure 1):

- (1) York Northwest
- (2) Castle Piccadilly
- (3) Heslington East
- (4) Hungate
- (5) Nestlé South
- (6) Germany Beck
- (7) Derwenthorpe
- (8) Terry's
- (9) Layerthorpe area

Central to this approach is the need to ensure that the considerable potential offered by the York Northwest area in meeting the City's economic, housing and retail needs is fully realised.

(ii) Development within Local Service Centres and Villages

22. Following the main urban area the larger villages and settlements are considered the next most sustainable locations for development. The villages and settlements around York have been the subject of a piece of work to consider their relative sustainability and place them in a settlement hierarchy (see Topic Paper 1 for details). Using this work it is considered that settlements defined as Local Service Centres and Villages should be prioritised when considering locations for development.

- **'Local Service Centres'**: Haxby and Wigginton; Strensall; and Upper and Nether Poppleton.

It is considered that these locations should have limited development, in proportion to their size, to support economic diversification and to meet the needs for both market and affordable housing. Haxby is also identified as a District Centre with a key role in delivering retail and other services.

- **'Villages'** : Bishopthorpe; Copmanthorpe; Skelton and Dunnington.

These locations are considered appropriate for small-scale redevelopment, infill or expansion which helps support the viability of some of the existing facilities or addresses local needs, such as for affordable housing. Other

settlements are defined as 'Small Villages' and will be restricted to redevelopment and infill only.

23. In addition, industrial and distribution employment uses located on freestanding sites in the open countryside or adjacent to villages, where there are existing employment uses and they are well served by sustainable modes of transport could potentially be considered appropriate to accommodate additional employment growth.

(iii) Extensions to the Main Urban Area

24. If sufficient land to meet York's future development needs cannot be found within the main urban area and the most sustainable villages, then consideration should be given to potential urban extensions. This is in conformity with the approach included with-in published RSS. In addition to reflect the locally derived LDF evidence base any expansion of the main urban area must be subject to the following:

- preserving the historic character and setting of York;
- the appropriate management of flood risk to ensure that new development is not subject to, or contributes to, inappropriate levels of flood risk from the Rivers Ouse, Foss and Derwent; and
- protection of areas with nature conservation value.

25. As detailed in Topic paper 1, this would lead to six potential areas of search where the main urban area could be extended. Each was considered in more detail from the point of view of the following factors:

- implications for the transport network;
- sustainability;
- landscape character;
- agricultural land classification;
- open space; and
- further flood risk considerations.

26. This led the areas of search to be prioritised in terms of their potential for future urban extensions in the following order:

- (A) Monk Cross
- (B) East of Metcalfe Lane
- (C) North of Hull Road
- (D) South of Moor Lane
- (E) West of Chapelfields
- (F) Northfields / Wheatlands

27. In general terms, however, opportunities to expand York's urban areas to the west (options D, E & F) are constrained by highway capacity issues. It would be necessary to overcome this problem before considering these options. If this was not possible and additional land was required over and above that identified in A, B and C, consideration would need to be given to the expansion of the Local Service Centres of Haxby & Wiggington and Strensall.
28. When considering the potential of urban extensions to provide additional development land the role of the Outer Ring Road needs to be considered. The A64 trunk road together with the A1237 effectively encircles York providing a physical barrier between land adjacent to the built up edge of York and that which forms part of the wider Green Belt. Only land within the Ring Road is considered suitable for an urban extensions. Land outside the ring road, being physically separate from York, was not felt to offer the same linkages/character, and would not therefore benefit from similar sustainability benefits. In addition a key characteristic of York is the relative compactness of its main urban area. Restricting development to within the outer ring road will ensure that this is maintained.
29. As indicated above, the expansion of the main urban area would only be considered suitable should it not be possible to find sufficient land for future employment and housing needs within the existing built up areas. The Employment Land Review (ELR) and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) reported to previous LDF Working Groups provide up to date information on the current supply of development land.
30. The ELR review indicates that the City's future needs for employment land could be met within the main urban area, and other identified sites. This included both the existing allocation and safeguarded land at Northminster Business Park for general industrial and storage and distribution (Location 'I' in figure 1). If Members wished to continue with these allocations it shouldn't be necessary to identify further land for employment. The ELR however also highlights land to the North of Hull Road, currently within the draft Green Belt as a good location for industry, storage and distribution. The land shown as urban extension 'C' on figure 1 isn't the exact location of the land considered in the ELR, but in broad terms would offer the same economic benefits whilst also reflecting local environmental constraints. This land performed considerably better than the existing safeguarded land around Northminster in the ELR assessment and could provide up to 30 hectares of land. It would be beneficial to leave these options open for the purpose of consultation and further detailed technical analysis. This would include the consideration of transport and landscape issues.
31. In terms of housing, the SHLAA incorporates a range of sites within the main urban area and most sustainable villages. These will provide sufficient land to meet York's housing need up to at least 2021/2022, but there will be an overall shortfall of 6,606 dwellings up to 2030. Sites included within the SHLAA that are

currently part of the draft Green Belt will be assessed through the application of this Spatial Strategy once approved. In the past York's housing supply has included a high number of windfalls (housing delivered on sites not identified in any development plan). Government guidance makes it clear that local authorities, in planning for housing land, should not plan for a set level of windfalls, except in the most exceptional of circumstances. Whilst acknowledging that Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) should identify most available sites for the short and medium term, clearly given the timescale of the LDF (to 2030), it would be reasonable to make an allowance for windfalls towards the latter end of the plan. Based on previous rates it is estimated that this source could provide around 2175 homes between 2025/26 and 2030. This leaves an overall requirement to provide sufficient land to accommodate 4431 homes. Using the same housing mix, density and allowance for infrastructure and open space used in the SHLAA this would equate to approximately 135 hectares of land.

32. A key element of the LDF is its role in maintaining community cohesion and helping the development of strong, supportive and durable communities. To do this York's LDF will promote the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods. Many of the City's existing neighbourhoods already provide attractive living environments with good access to local facilities and open space. It is important that this is maintained through the LDF and where there are gaps in provision these issues are addressed. In addition when considering potential urban extensions it is important to provide sufficient land to ensure a high quality environment that will foster the creation of new sustainable communities. The approach taken in the SHLAA to housing mix, density and allowance for infrastructure and open space factors in these considerations.
33. Taking account of the ring road as an absolute limit for urban extensions land at Monks Cross (location A) and East Metcalfe Lane (location B) could provide up to 210 hectares of land. This represents approximately 1.1% of the land currently within York's draft Green Belt and 8% of the draft Green Belt land currently included within the outer ring road. The figure of 210 hectares is clearly substantially more than the currently identified need of 134 hectares. It is important however that sufficient land is excluded from the Green Belt to meet York's future development needs building in flexibility. This need has been highlighted by the Government Office during previous stages of consultation and is part of national guidance. Without it the plan is unlikely to be found 'sound' following a public inquiry. Flexibility is essentially to allow for the following:
 - potential increases in the number of houses allocated to the City of York though the Regional Spatial Strategy or its successor document the Integrated Regional Strategy;
 - lower rates of delivery on key sites; and
 - lack of certainty about the future deliverability of windfalls.

34. The potential effect of each of these in terms of the amount of land required for housing is shown in table 2 below. It should be noted that these factors aren't mutually exclusive. Again the approach taken in the SHLAA to housing mix, density and allowance for infrastructure and open space is used. The scenarios illustrate the relative sensitivity surrounding the need for housing land identified.

Table 2: Flexibility Scenarios

	Increase in the amount of land needed for housing over and above the 134 hectares currently identified.
RSS – an increase of 9% from 2008. (This reflects one of the options under consideration as a part of the ongoing RSS review.)	51 hectares
The exclusion of windfalls from the housing figures after 15 years. (This would be dependent on the advice of GoYH)	64.2 hectares
A lower rates of delivery on key sites of 10%.	18 hectares

35. Despite the fact that windfalls are only included in the figures at the end of the plan period they are still likely to continue to come forward. If this proves to be the case, windfall sites will keep 'pushing back' the planned supply of housing land. It is anticipated that potential urban extensions will not be required until 2021/22 at the earliest. If a significant amount of land came forward in the main urban area in the form of windfalls before 2021/22 this would have the effect of delaying the need for this land. It should be noted that the urban extensions will only be brought forward if required through a review of the relevant planning document. This would be subject to public consultation and approval by Members.

Next Steps

36. If the proposed strategy in this paper is approved by Members it will form a key component of the LDF Core Strategy – Preferred Options document. This will be reported to Member's in full and subject to their recommendations and approval will be issued for public consultation in late spring.

Corporate Priorities

37. The option outlined above accords with the following Corporate Strategy Priorities:

- Increase the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport
- Improve the actual & perceived condition and appearance of city's streets, housing estates & publicly accessible spaces
- Improve the quality and availability of decent, affordable homes in the city

Implications

38. The following implications have been assessed.

- **Financial** – *None*.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – *None*.
- **Equalities** - *None*
- **Legal** - *None*
- **Crime and Disorder** - *None*
- **Information Technology (IT)** - *None*
- **Property** - *None*
- **Other** – *None*

Risk Management

39. There are no identified risks in this proposal

Recommendations

40. That Members recommend the Executive to:

(i) approve, subject to the recommendations of this Working Group, the proposed spatial strategy detailed in this report for inclusion in the LDF Core Strategy for the purpose of public consultation.

Reason: So that the Local Development Framework Core Strategy can be progressed to its next stage of development.

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**Report
Approved**



Date 26th March
2009

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

N/A

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annex A: Topic Paper 1: 'Approach to the Spatial Strategy'