

Meeting	Local Plan Working Group
Date	15 April 2025
Present	Councillors B Burton (Chair), Ayre (Vice-Chair), Fenton, Fisher (to 6:41 pm), D Myers (to 6:40 pm), Orrell, Pavlovic, Steward, Vassie, Wann, Baxter, Merrett, K Taylor, Steels-Walshaw, Kent (Substitute) and Whitcroft (Substitute)
Apologies	Councillors Coles, Ravilious and Smalley
Officers Present	Alison Cooke, Head of Strategic Planning Policy Alison Stockdale, Principal Strategic Planning Policy Officer John Roberts, Strategic Planning Policy Officer

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#### **6. Apologies for Absence (5:31 pm)**

Apologies were received from Cllr Coles, who was substituted by Cllr Kent; from Cllr Ravilious, who was substituted by Cllr Whitcroft; and from Cllr Smalley.

#### **7. Declarations of Interest (5:31 pm)**

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, or other registerable interests, they might have in respect of business on the agenda, if they have not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests.

None were declared, although in the interests of transparency, Cllr Pavlovic noted in relation to agenda item 5 (Local Development Scheme) that planning policy fell within his portfolio area as Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities.

#### **8. Minutes (5:32 pm)**

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 10 September 2024 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

**9. Public Participation (5:32 pm)**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, but that the speaker was no longer able to attend.

**10. Local Development Scheme (5:32 pm)**

The Group considered a report presenting an interim Local Development Scheme (LDS) in line with the Council's obligations under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and setting out a planning work programme for the Council from March 2025.

Officers provided an overview, including a summary of the Government's response to a consultation on reforms to the planning system as set out in the addendum to the report, and in response to members' questions it was noted that:

- With reference to timescales for plan-making it was confirmed that the Council was technically in a five-year review period following adoption of the Local Plan in February; it was noted that plan-making would begin in late July 2026 to coincide with the introduction of the new housing Standard Method.
- It was confirmed that Neighbourhood Plans would retain significant weight and importance in the planning system; officers were working with Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums to ensure that policies remained up to date. Neighbourhood Plans should be reviewed from production date to ensure that they were up to date against with national planning policy. It was suggested that reviews should take place within the five-year period and noted that officers would support any that came forward. In terms of financial support for reviews, a grant could be provided early in the process, while national schemes were also available.
- For neighbourhoods with no Parish Council, it was confirmed engagement in plan-making could take place

through the formal establishment, following consultation, of Neighbourhood Forums. Several members emphasised the need to ensure support was available in the development of Neighbourhood Plans, and the Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities confirmed that he would discuss with officers ways to codify support for Neighbourhood Plans through Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums and update members.

- With reference to Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which were not among those being prioritised through the LDS, it was noted that officers would provide an update with an indicative timetable for their implementation; pending further Government announcement on plan-making.
- With reference to the Government's indication that reference to 'beautiful places' would be replaced with 'well-designed places' in the new plan-making system, it was noted that this was a less subjective criterion which could be measured more effectively, with no loss of quality being key. This should not mitigate against innovative design; new developments would be looked at on a case-by-case basis and the Climate Change SPD would set out more detail on encouraging innovation in delivering sustainability.
- In relation to capacity to deliver within the proposed timescale, it was noted that a decision had been taken to move forward with the SPDs and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), with the timetable staggered to make best use of resources.
- The Government was seeking to bring the shorten the timeframe for local plan examination to six months, with needs assessments being brought forward to before the examination part of the process; mini examinations would form part of the gateway process and consider any conflicts with needs assessment evidence.
- The Mayoral Combined Authority had a duty through the National Planning Policy Framework to produce a spatial development strategy covering York and North Yorkshire. There was a statutory duty to cooperate, and officers were in conversation with North Yorkshire Council and the Combined Authority around strategic conformity. Changes to consultation methods with statutory bodies were also anticipated.

- It was emphasised that this was an interim LDS, and further iterations would be brought to future meetings of the Group.

Resolved:

- i. To recommend that Executive approve the interim Local Development Scheme (Annex B).
- ii. To request that the Executive Member and officers consider ways to codify support for the production of local and neighbourhood Plans.

Reason: To ensure that the Council Complies with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011).

#### **11. Murton Neighbourhood Plan - Examiner's Report and Decision Statement (6:27 pm)**

Members considered a report setting out the Examiner's Report, including modifications, on the Murton Neighbourhood Plan. Officers provided an overview and in response to questions from the Group it was noted that:

- A public consultation on the Plan documents had taken place between 6 November 2024 and 10 January 2025 prior to the Examination.
- While the Examiner had made several modifications, he had emphasised that the Plan was a good example of a neighbourhood plan.
- The local referendum process was clarified, and it was noted that a simple majority was required to approve the Plan.
- The Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities thanked officers and Murton residents for their dedicated efforts through the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Resolved: To recommend that Executive:

- i. Agrees the Examiner's modifications set out at Annex C (Decision Statement) to the Submission Draft Murton Neighbourhood Plan (Annex A) and that subject to those modifications the

Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legislative requirements.

- ii. Agrees that the Submission Draft Murton Neighbourhood Plan as amended proceeds to a local referendum based on the neighbourhood area outlined in the Examiner's Report (Annex B).
- iii. Approves the Decision Statement attached at Annex C to be published on the City of York Council's website.

Reason: To allow the Neighbourhood Plan to progress in line with neighbourhood planning legislation.

## **12. Urgent Business (6:37 pm)**

The Chair indicated that he intended to consider the role of the Local Plan Working Group, particularly in relation to its engagement with the emerging SPDs, under Urgent Business as he had received correspondence from several members on this issue.

It was noted that:

- The Chair had already held conversations with officers and would be discussing the subject further with the Council Leader, and invited members to contact him with their suggestions as to the approach to be taken.
- The remit of the committee did not include approving or amending, but making recommendations to the Executive.
- Officers indicated that they intended to bring draft SPDs to the Group ahead of their consideration by the Executive, with a longer period between Local Plan Working Group and Executive meetings so that any contributions from the Group could be incorporated ahead of an Executive decision being taken.
- The SPD process provided an opportunity for clarity in long-term thinking and achieving Local Plan priorities, including around sustainable development. Examples from the London Borough of Richmond Council's approach to achieving zero-carbon standards in both major and smaller residential developments through contributions to a carbon-offsetting fund were highlighted, and it was

suggested that a similar approach could help ensure that all new developments in York contributed to reducing carbon emissions. It was noted that York's SPDs would have to clarify the Council's own Local Plan policies, and that officers would explore the examples suggested.

Resolved: That the Group consider the drafts of the emerging SPDs at an appropriate point in advance of Executive decisions.

Reason: To enable the Local Plan Working Group to contribute effectively to the SPD process.

Cllr B Burton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.44 pm].