

Evidence Base commissioning

Jointly commissioned evidence base

Name	Rationale	Aims	Timescales
Green Belt Assessment	York's Green Belt extends beyond the boundary of CYC into areas of North Yorkshire Council. The new study will assess the whole of York's Green Belt for the first time, against the NPPF Green Belt policies, specifically defining the extent of 'grey belt' land. The commission also incorporates an update to York's existing Historic Character and Setting evidence, extending this beyond York's authority boundary into NYC. A review of the South and West Yorkshire Green Belt is also included, relevant to NYC only.	The key aims of the GB Assessment are to: • Update the Green Belt evidence in line with the requirements of the NPPF; • Assist with development management decisions for applications in the Green Belt; and • To inform the spatial strategy's within new Local Plans for CYC and NYC.	Consultants AECOM have been appointed for this work. A methodology and project timeline is in the process of being agreed. Draft reports are expected Spring 2027.
Infrastructure studies • Infrastructure Capacity Study (ICS) and Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) • Growth Potential Study (GPS)	National planning policy requires Local Plans to plan positively for growth and ensure that the infrastructure needed to support development can be delivered. Undertaking the work jointly across the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Area with the combined authority, North Yorkshire, North York Moors National Park and Yorkshire Dales National Park will provide a shared and consistent evidence base and help align Local Plans and wider strategic planning across administrative boundaries. This is particularly important given increasing	The ICS will establish a consistent understanding of infrastructure capacity across the area and assess the implications of different spatial growth options (to be supplied by each authority). The subsequent IDPs will identify the infrastructure needed to deliver the preferred Local Plan strategies, including when it is required, how it could be funded and how it could be delivered.	The tender process for this work is completed with the consultant to be confirmed shortly.

	housing requirements and the need to ensure that future growth is coordinated with infrastructure provision, environmental constraints and climate change objectives.	The Growth Potential Study will provide a strategic, evidence-led assessment of where, when and to what scale housing and employment growth could potentially be accommodated across York and North Yorkshire over the short, medium and long term. It will provide evidence to inform, rather than determine, decisions about the location and scale of future growth through the statutory plan-making process.	
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	A new Level 1 SFRA has been jointly commissioned to provide a catchment wide understanding to strategic flood risk assessment.	This will aid and better reflect flood risk management taking place across the authorities and identifying consistent policy solutions to manage flood risk into the future.	Consultants JBA have been appointed for this work with initial outcomes expected in early 2027.

City of York Council Commissioned Evidence Base

Name	Rationale	Aims	Timescales
Local Housing Needs Assessment	The last Local Housing Needs Assessment was produce in 2022. Since then the NPPF has updated the starting point for a housing target, setting our a new standard method and expanded the remit for which groups of people we must plan for.	To provide up-to-date evidence of need for all types and tenures of housing aligned to requirements of the NPPF 2026. To be a robust evidence for both plan-making and	The specification is currently out for tender closing in late October. Projected timelines include initial findings before the end of the

	This evidence will form an important consideration for the Council's statutory planning and housing duties as well as informing emerging Housing Strategy. This will become a material consideration in advance to support policy H3 'Balancing the housing market in the adopted Local Plan (2025).	decisions against the adopted Local Plan.	year and a final report in March 2027.
Supported Housing Needs Assessment	In order to comply with our statutory duty¹, local authorities must publish a strategy that assesses the current availability of supported housing within each district, and project the likely need for supported housing during the 5 years from the date the strategy is published. The needs assessment will provide the core evidence base for the Strategy.	This evidence will meet the statutory guidance expectations to understand current supply, unmet need and future demand of supported housing needs across York. The evidence will be used to inform collaboration across housing, health and social care.	Procurement and tendering for consultancy support for this work is starting in October 2026. It is anticipated that the first strategy will be published by the 31 March 2027.
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)	The latest Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment was undertaken in 2022 and was updated in 2024 to take account of a change in definition to Gypsies and Travellers. The NPPF has updated the requirements for needs assessment and delivery and consequently this evidence needs to be refreshed with consideration of how we are meeting the identified need.	To identify the number and type of accommodation required for Gypsies and Travellers in York.	Procurement to commence by end of 2026 with reporting by Summer 2027

¹ The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023

Economic Needs Assessment	There have been significant changes to York's economy and a number of new strategies that have come into effect since the previous economic forecasting to inform the adopted Local Plan. The evidence therefore needs refreshing for inclusion into the new Local Plan to consider the ambitions of the Council's Economic Strategy 2022–2032, the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Local Growth Plan 2025-2035, National Industrial Strategy and national planning policy and guidance .	This study will seek to understand the challenges facing York's economy and future opportunities for economic growth. It will provide a forward looking, unconstrained assessment that establishes a clear understanding of York's future economic profile, needs, and growth potential from present to 2045. It will provide opportunities to strengthen York's economy, support sustainable productivity growth and improve economic resilience with a robust framework to inform future planning policy and investment decisions.	A specification has been prepared and will shortly be going out for tender.
Employment Land Review	An Employment Land Review will follow the conclusion of need assessment to identify how and where the required employment floorspace can be delivered. Existing employment sites will be assessed for their scope to intensify and accommodate additional employment floorspace, and additional sites will be identified if necessary following assessment of sites identified through the 'call for sites'.	To utilise the economic forecasting to quantify the amount of future employment floorspace required and locational principals to consider for its location.	A specification has been prepared and will shortly be going out for tender.
Main Town Centres Study	The proposed Main Town Centres Needs, Capacity and Accommodation Study will provide the evidence needed to support a positive and flexible strategy for York's city,	The study will: Assess future needs and opportunities for retail and other main town centre uses.	Procurement to commence by end of 2026 with reporting by Summer 2027

	district and local centres over the new Local Plan period. Rather than relying on a traditional retail floorspace assessment, the study will consider the full range of main town centre uses, changing patterns of demand and the opportunities for centres to adapt, diversify and intensify. It will assess future needs alongside existing and potential supply, including vacant premises, development opportunities and committed schemes, to identify whether and where additional provision is required. This approach reflects national policy which requires Local Plans to consider the full range of needs and opportunities for town centres and to identify suitable locations to accommodate anticipated development.	• Review the role, function, vitality and viability of York's city, district and local centres, including their hierarchy and boundaries. • Assess existing and potential capacity, including vacancies, commitments and opportunities for redevelopment and intensification. • Identify how needs can be accommodated and where there are gaps in provision or opportunities for diversification and regeneration. • Recommend appropriate Local Plan policies	
Visitor Accommodation Needs and Supply Study	York's visitor economy creates demand for a wide range of accommodation, while changing visitor preferences and the growth of short-term holiday lets have implications for the city's housing stock, communities and traditional accommodation sector. An up-to-date accommodation study will provide evidence to understand current provision and future needs, ensuring that the new Local Plan supports a successful and sustainable visitor economy while balancing housing, amenity, heritage and place-making considerations.	The study will: • Assess existing supply and demand for visitor accommodation across York, including hotels, serviced accommodation and short-term holiday lets. • Identify future accommodation needs, considering visitor trends, changing markets, seasonality and different types of visitor.	

		• Assess short-term holiday lets, including their scale, distribution and relationship with housing supply and local communities. • Identify gaps in provision, including the type, quality and location of accommodation needed to support York's future visitor economy. • Inform Local Plan policy, including where new visitor accommodation should be encouraged and how competing visitor economy, housing and place-making objectives should be balanced. • Establish monitoring indicators to enable changes in accommodation supply and demand to be tracked over the Local Plan period.	
Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.	A Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy is needed to provide a coordinated, long-term approach to protecting, enhancing and connecting York's network of green spaces, waterways, habitats and other natural assets. The strategy will bring together existing Council priorities and environmental initiatives within a single spatial framework, helping to ensure that	This strategy will provide an overarching framework for Green and Blue Infrastructure, coordinating the current cross-council approach and identifying opportunities for the future. It will integrate biodiversity recovery, climate resilience, landscape enhancement, flood management,	Projected timelines for this strategy are for commencement in November, with a draft prepared by Spring 2027.

	future growth delivers benefits for biodiversity, climate resilience, flood management, health and wellbeing, active travel and access to nature. It will also provide an important evidence and delivery framework for the new Local Plan and approved Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), identifying opportunities to strengthen ecological connectivity, address gaps in provision and secure multifunctional green and blue infrastructure through new development and wider investment	open space provision, health and wellbeing, urban forestry, natural capital and sustainable growth objectives into a single coordinated corporate approach. The strategy will establish the evidence base, governance arrangements, partnership framework and delivery mechanisms required to embed Green and Blue Infrastructure across Council functions and investment decisions.	
Strensall Common Visitor Survey	An updated Strensall Common Visitor Survey is required to build on previous assessments and the policy included within the adopted Local Plan. This will need to take into account decisions made since the previous survey and is a key evidence to inform the Habitat Regulation Assessment.	To identify the level of recreational behaviour and its impact on Strensall Common SAC. To also review the current policy in the adopted plan and identify suitable mitigation / policy for inclusion in the new Local Plan to manage any negative effects.	Procurement to commence by end of 2026 with reporting by Summer 2027
Environmental Outcomes Reports (Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA))	The Government is introducing Environmental Outcomes Reports (EORs) as a new approach to environmental assessment, including for Local Plans. EORs will ultimately replace the current Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)/ Sustainability Appraisal (SA) system and are intended to provide a clearer, more proportionate and outcomes-focused assessment of the environmental implications of plans. Rather than concentrating	Environmental assessment will need to inform the development and testing of reasonable spatial, policy and site options, identify likely significant environmental effects and appropriate mitigation, and establish arrangements for monitoring. Given the timing of the new Local Plan alongside the Government's EOR reforms, the Council will need to ensure that its	Procurement to commence by end of 2026 with reporting by Summer 2027

	principally on documenting environmental effects, the new approach will assess how a plan contributes towards nationally defined environmental outcomes, supported by standardised indicators, evidence and monitoring. The Government intends to introduce the new system by the end of 2027, but the detailed regulations, environmental outcomes and guidance have not yet been finalised. Until the new arrangements are implemented, existing environmental assessment legislation and guidance continue to apply. In lieu of the requirements being released we will be commissioning Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to ensure we can meet the provisions for Gateway 1 of the Local Plan preparation process.	environmental evidence and assessment is capable of meeting the requirements applying at each stage of plan preparation and, if necessary, can transition to the new EOR framework without unnecessary duplication of work.	
Habitat Regulation Assessment	Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a statutory assessment required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) to ensure that the Local Plan will not adversely affect internationally important protected habitat sites. The Council, as the competent authority, must consider whether the plan, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have significant effects on a protected site. Where significant effects cannot be excluded, an Appropriate	The HRA will consider the proposed local plan approach against potential impacts to European designated nature conservation sites relevant to the plan area (inside and outside of the authority boundary, including • Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), designated for habitats and species of European importance.	Procurement to commence by end of 2026 with reporting by Summer 2027

	Assessment must be undertaken to assess the implications for the site's conservation objectives, applying a precautionary approach. The Local Plan can only proceed where the Council can establish that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the protected site, unless the strict legal tests for exceptional circumstances are met. HRA therefore needs to inform the development of the Local Plan, including the consideration of spatial options, site allocations and appropriate mitigation, rather than being undertaken only at the end of the plan-making process.	• Special Protection Areas (SPAs), designated principally for important populations of wild birds. • Ramsar sites, wetlands of international importance, which are treated consistently with European sites for planning purposes. • Potential SPAs (pSPAs) and possible SACs (pSACs) where relevant, reflecting national planning policy protection for sites in the designation process. • Sites identified or required as compensatory measures for adverse effects on the above protected sites.	
Viability Assessment	This is required to demonstrate that the cumulative impact of the Plan's policies and development requirements will not undermine the delivery of the development needed over the plan period. National guidance establishes that viability should be considered primarily at the plan-making stage, enabling affordable housing, infrastructure and other policy requirements to be tested together and set at levels that are realistic and deliverable. The assessment should therefore provide a proportionate	Provide a proportionate, plan-wide assessment that helps the Council strike an appropriate balance between maximising delivery of the Plan's affordable housing, infrastructure, environmental and place-making objectives and ensuring that the overall development strategy remains deliverable. The commission will:	Following Gateway 2 to inform the preparation of the Local Plan. Broad timescale: 2027- 2029

	understanding of the economics of different types and locations of development across York, test the combined effect of proposed Local Plan requirements and inform choices where competing policy objectives place demands on development value. Undertaking viability testing alongside preparation of the Plan will help ensure that policies are deliverable, provide greater certainty for developers and landowners, and reduce the need for viability issues to be revisited on individual planning applications. National guidance also emphasises that policy development should be iterative and informed by engagement with developers, landowners and infrastructure and affordable housing providers.	• Establish an appropriate viability baseline for development across York, • Test representative development typologies and key strategic sites to understand their ability to accommodate the requirements of the emerging Local Plan. • Assess the cumulative impact of Local Plan policies, • Inform affordable housing requirements • Inform infrastructure and developer contribution requirements, including the relationship between Section 106 obligations and any other relevant development costs or contributions. • Test emerging policy options and standards.	
Transport Modelling	Transport modelling and assessment is required to understand the implications of the scale and distribution of growth proposed through the new Local Plan and to ensure that land use and transport planning are considered together. The evidence should help the Council understand how different spatial and development options affect travel demand and the operation of the transport	The work will assess the transport implications of different spatial options and the cumulative effects of proposed development; understand impacts across walking, cycling, public transport and highway networks; identify constraints and opportunities; and test the infrastructure, sustainable	Leading into and following Gateway 2 to inform the preparation of the Local Plan. Broad timescale: 2027- 2029

	network, and identify the measures needed to enable sustainable growth. This evidence will support a vision-led and multimodal approach, considering walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport alongside highway impacts, and provide evidence to inform site selection, infrastructure requirements, mitigation and investment priorities. This integrated approach is consistent with the current national planning framework and with Government guidance for Local Transport Plans, which emphasises that transport, housing, economic activity and access to services need to be planned together. This will also take into account ongoing work for the Movement and Place Strategy.	transport and demand-management measures required to support growth. It will inform site selection, infrastructure requirements, phasing and delivery, and provide robust evidence to support the Local Plan through consultation and examination.	
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