

YORK NORTHWEST AREA ACTION PLAN

Summary

1. This report briefly sets out the progress on the Issues and Options stage of the Area Action Plan (AAP), with the main part of the report focusing on the Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal for the York Northwest Area Action Plan. The report outlines the consultation responses received on this and suggested alterations arising from the comments made. Member's views are sought on the amended document attached in Appendix 1.

Background

2. In March last year Members agreed to the preparation of an Area Action Plan for York Central. Work commenced on this and on 31st July Members considered a report incorporating 3 documents, a draft Scoping Report for a Sustainability Appraisal, a draft structure for the Issues and Options report and a draft consultation strategy. The draft Scoping Report was circulated to the statutory environmental bodies, together with various other authorities, in July and August last year.
3. In a report to Executive on 12th September Members agreed that issues arising from the closure of the British Sugar site should be included in the emerging context for York Central. The work for the Issues and Options stage of York Central would be transferred into the preparation of the York Northwest Area Action Plan. This included the draft Scoping Report produced in July.
4. At a meeting of the Executive on 27th February Members agreed to a timetable for the preparation of an Area Action Plan for York Northwest. Members also noted the consultation reports and consultation strategy prepared as part of the York Central work. It was agreed that the consultation strategy work would be carried through to inform the public consultation on York Northwest.

Issues and Options

5. A draft Issues and Options document is currently being prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, the planning consultants engaged to work on this. Funding for this is being provided by Yorkshire Forward. It is the intention to present this for discussion by the LDF Working Group in July this year. A Consultation Draft Issues and Options report will then be prepared and submitted for approval to a meeting of the Council's Executive at the end of

September. It is anticipated that the document would then be presented to Members of the Executive in late September for approval to go out to public consultation in the autumn.

Scoping Report for York Central Area Action Plan

6. The draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for York Central produced in the summer last year followed the format and methodology used for the Scoping Report for the Core Strategy. This followed government guidance for the preparation of these documents whereby scoping reports can be produced to provide the framework for several Local Development Documents. Specific references were included for the York Central area with 28 additional sub objectives and indicators included.
7. The statutory environmental bodies, the Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency were consulted for the formal 5 week period. Additional organisations were also consulted, including adjoining local authorities, following the list of consultees contacted for the Core Strategy Scoping report. The report was also made available on the Councils York Central web site for wider public comment.

Consultation Responses on York Central Scoping Report

8. In general the main environmental bodies were in agreement with the sustainability issues, objectives and indicators put forward. Specific additional references were put forward on various issues, eg documents to be included and indicators for green infrastructure provision. A summary of all comments made and a response with recommended change to the document is outlined in Appendix 2. Comments were also received from consultants EDAW on behalf of the landowner group and from interested residents. The comments made at the LDF Working Group in July with an officer response and suggested amendments relating to these are also summarised in Appendix 3

Scoping Report for York Northwest

9. The York Central Scoping Report, as amended following the consultation, has been incorporated into the wider Scoping report for the York Northwest Area. This includes an updated baseline section and incorporates specific references to York Central and British Sugar where available. The Plan review section is also updated to incorporate any new published documents. Section 7 on the Ecological footprint has been amended to include the recently acquired Resource and Energy Analysis Programme (REAP) as the method to be used to model the future ecofootprint implications arising from different policy scenarios. This will allow assessment of the options within the Issues and Options document in terms of their positive, neutral or negative impact. It is important to note however that this 'tool' effectively looks at the relationship between consumption and availability of natural resources. Wider environmental, social and economic issues also need to be considered in reaching any judgements on potential impacts, as the programme does not cover all impacts on these issues, eg effects of pollution or loss of biodiversity.

Consultation

10. The report was circulated to the formal statutory environmental bodies, English Heritage, Environment Agency and Natural England during April and May for a 5 week consultation period. The Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 6 adjoining local authorities, York Environment Forum, Yorkshire Forward and the residents who expressed an interest in the York Central report were also consulted. The report was also made available on the York Northwest web site for wider public comment.

Consultation Responses on York Northwest Scoping Report

11. The 3 environmental bodies all gave comments on the draft Scoping report. A summary of these comments and a response with recommended change to the document is attached in Appendix 4. Comments were also received from Yorkshire Forward and Rapleys (on behalf of Associated British Foods). These are also included in Appendix 4 with a suggested response.
12. In summary English Heritage considered the report identified “the majority of relevant plans and programmes...put forward a suitable set of Objectives and Indicators and established an appropriate Baseline against which to assess the Plans proposals”. The Environment Agency had various specific points about flooding and contamination to be included in the report and suggested alterations to the sub objectives. Natural England advised that overall, “the Scoping report is generally fit for purpose, closely following current government advice on structure, content and approach...The report and its appendices are clearly set out and understandable”.
13. In response to comments received from the Environmental Protection Unit the sections on contamination have been widened to include noise and vibration issues, the environmental issues in Figure 7 have been amended to include noise/odour and lighting and additional tensions have also been added to Section 8.

Options

There are two options available in respect of this report

Option 1: To proceed with the revised Scoping Report outlined in Appendix 1.

14. Agreement to the general content and methodology of the Scoping report will allow work to progress on the Sustainability Appraisal for the Issues and Options. A Sustainability Report will be prepared to give views on the relative sustainability of each option and will help to inform decisions on which options are taken forward to the preferred option stage.

Option 2: To request amendments are made to the Scoping Report

15. Significant changes to the document will necessitate more work in producing the final version of the Scoping Report. Presentation of the Issues and Options document and the Sustainability Appraisal of this to Members may be delayed depending on the level of issues to be considered.

Analysis

16. The comments received from the main environmental bodies were generally supportive of the content and methodology used in the Scoping Report. Where possible comments have been taken forward in the revised document. As the sustainability appraisal process is progressed and further guidance becomes available the report will be revised. However, at the current time, it is considered to be the best guidance for the consideration of the main sustainability issues of developing this area.

Corporate Priorities

17. 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

18. Implications are as listed below:
 - **Financial** The Scoping report was prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners as part of the contract for the Issues and Options work. This part of the work is being funded by Yorkshire Forward. The cost of this work is agreed at £47,733.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** None
 - **Equalities** None
 - **Legal** None
 - **Crime and Disorder** None
 - **Information Technology (IT)** None
 - **Property** None
 - **Other** None

Risk Management

19. The Issues and Options work is currently progressing. The delays in the baseline study work being produced have impacted on the ability to produce the baseline evidence for the Issues and Options document. This risk was identified in the report to Members in February this year. On the basis that the studies will be available within the next month, it is anticipated that a draft Issues and Options document will be brought forward to Members for comment in July this year.

Conclusion

20. The Scoping report will provide a detailed framework for the preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal to be undertaken. Although a full appraisal is not required by government guidance for this stage it is considered important that the sustainability impacts arising from the options being considered are known and considered by Members at this stage in the process.

Recommendations

21. Members are asked to recommend the Executive to:

- 1) Note the comments received in relation to the York Central Scoping Report

Reason: To ensure the feedback received from all stakeholders is taken into account in the report produced.

- 2) Note the changes made in relation to the feedback received and detailed in Appendices 2 and 3.

Reason: To ensure the feedback received from all stakeholders is taken into account in the report produced.

- 3) Note the content and responses received on the Scoping report for the York Northwest Area Action Plan and agree the suggested changes to this in the revised document.

Reason: To ensure the methodology used to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal is appropriate and relates to the circumstances of York Northwest.

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Report Approved



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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial – Patrick Looker, Finance Manager, City Strategy (tel: 551633)

All

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

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Report to LDF Working Group 31 July 2006
Report to Executive, 27th February 2007

Appendices

Appendix 1: York Northwest Area Action Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Appendix 2: Summary of comments and responses on consultation: York Central Scoping Report

Appendix 3: Summary of comments received by the LDF Working Group on 31st July 2006

Appendix 4: Summary of comments and responses to consultation: York Northwest Scoping Report