



Office of the Chief Executive

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Steve Evison  
Deputy Director of Local Plans  
Department for Communities & Local Government  
Planning Directorate  
5 St Philips Place  
Colmore Row  
Birmingham  
B3 2PW

6<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Dear Steve,

### **City of York Local Plan**

I am writing to express our full commitment to producing a sound plan for the City of York as expeditiously as possible and to explain changes to our proposed programme in light of recent announcements by the MOD.

At the Council Executive on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 a Preferred Sites document was approved for consultation alongside a revised Local Development Scheme. Following this decision consultation was undertaken for a period of eight weeks from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016 to Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016; over two thousand responses were received. It was our intention to use the outcomes from this process to inform a Publication Draft Local Plan to be released for consultation in early 2017.

However, on the 7<sup>th</sup> November the Ministry of Defence (MOD) announced that they would be disposing of a number of military sites across the country as part of their Strategy – A Better Defence Estate (MOD, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016). Previous dialogue with the MOD in relation to their land interests in York has been inconclusive about potential asset disposal; effectively highlighting the potential of sites for redevelopment or the intensification for military use. This was reflected in the Defence Infrastructure Organisations (DIO) response to the Preferred Sites Consultation.

The announcement made on 7<sup>th</sup> November by the MOD effectively confirms the disposal of the three York sites:

- Imphal Barracks (estimated date of disposal 2031);
- Queen Elizabeth Barracks (estimated date of disposal 2021); and
- Towthorpe Lines (estimated date of disposal 2021).

Subsequent to the announcement Officers have met with the MOD to further understand the position. Based on this meeting and on the response received through the Preferred Sites Consultation officers believe that the MOD preference would be for re-development of the sites for residential uses with the MOD indicating that the potential residential capacity across all three could be around 1695 dwellings. In addition to the issue of the loss of employment land there are a number of physical constraints that would need careful consideration as part of the Local Plan process alongside viability and deliverability. Officers are currently undertaking the necessary work to evaluate whether the MOD sites represent reasonable alternatives. This may lead to a requirement for further consultation before progressing to the Publication Stage.

It is our intention to minimise delay to the Local Plan process as much as possible. It is anticipated that the additional work described including any potential consultation could extend the Local Plan Timetable by around six months and could require a reconsideration of some of the key milestones. Given that legislation states that a local planning authority must only submit a plan for examination which it considers to be sound and given the context of the MOD land releases; we hope that you can support the proposed changes to the timeframe for the delivery of the Local Plan.

We would be very happy to meet with yourself or your representatives to discuss this matter further. Should you wish to arrange a meeting, please do not hesitate to contact either Neil Ferris, Corporate Director of Economy & Place or Martin Grainger, Head of Strategic Planning. We are also happy to explore support from PAS, DCLG and PINs where possible and appropriate.

Yours sincerely



**Mary Weastell**  
Chief Executive

Copy to: Rebecca Pointon, Team Leader – Local Plans.

Neil Ferris, Corporate Director of Economy & Place – City of York Council.

Michael Slater, Assistant Director, Planning & Public Protection – City of York Council.

Martin Grainger, Head of Strategic Planning – City of York Council.