

## Local Plan Statement: Cllr Nigel Ayre

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- Thank you Inspector and good morning everyone. For those who do not know me, my name is Cllr Nigel Ayre and I am the Executive Member responsible for the development of the Local Plan at City of York Council.
- Firstly, on behalf of City of York Council, I would like to begin by welcoming the Inspectors, Simon Berkeley and Andrew McCormack, and members of the public here for attending for this public examination.
- I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Programme Officer, Carole Crookes, for her management of the examination process and for carrying out the work behind the scenes to facilitate these hearings.
- National planning policy places Local Plans at the heart of the planning system and it is essential that they are in place and kept up to date. The Local Plan will be used a key mechanism for the Council to deliver its priorities set out in in the Council Plan, from delivering housing, to promoting health & wellbeing and ensuring our city develops sustainably in light of the climate emergency.
- As many of you will already know, since 1999, this is the furthest stage the York Local Plan has reached and everyone who has been involved in the development of the Local Plan should be proud that the Plan, which has been designed and consulted on by the residents of York, is to be considered by a planning inspector this week.
- The journey which the Council has taken to reach this stage has been a long one. The City of York has not had a Local Plan since the 1950s and therefore, it is crucial that York has a new Local Plan in place as soon as possible. The journey has also not been easy, and there have been tough decisions made at all levels, in cooperation with a wide range of authorities, local bodies, and residents.
- The York Local Plan is a positive strategy. One which will successfully secure the delivery of sustainable community facilities, facilitate economic growth in the city, and crucially, build the homes that York needs – all whilst maintaining the special and historic character of the city.
- York is a special place to live, and many residents feel strongly connected to this wonderful city. The geography of our city means that it is also a diverse city and the Local Plan has been designed to be flexible enough to adapt to these differences.

- It is important to underline; this plan will deliver over 20,000 homes over the next 20 years, with up to 4000 more affordable homes to be included. This will also lead to the creation of around 650 new jobs per year.
- Evidence from the Council's advisors, GL Hearn, show that the Local Plan robustly meet the City's needs, after having taken into account new data on projected population growth and predicted demographic changes in York.
- In the updated report, GL Hearn has calculated an updated 'Objectively Assessed Housing Need' figure of 790 dwellings per annum. This confirms to the Council that the 867 houses per annum proposed in the submitted Local Plan can be shown to robustly meet future demand.
- However, the role of the plan is to balance the need for housing and employment growth with protecting York's unique natural and built environment. This is a key part of the site identification process and underpins the work undertaken to support the Local Plan.
- In order to maximise the amount of open land protected, this plan has prioritized development on brownfield land. By allocating land to accommodate new development for the next 20 years, the Local Plan can set permanent Green Belt Boundaries for the city, something that has never been formally set before.
- In setting permanent Green Belt Boundaries elements of the open countryside, which protect and preserve York's setting and special character, will be protected by ensuring that inappropriate development is not permitted in the Green Belt.
- I fundamentally believe that the York Local Plan is 'sound' and this is because it achieves a balance that is right for our City.
- The preparation of this plan has taken an enormous of work from a professional and dedicated team of council officers, many of whom live in the city and care about the city's future, and I would like to thank the team for their efforts.
- Finally, the Council is keen to adopt the Local Plan and begin to implement policies that will benefit the city and achieve our aspirations: to build more homes, create a sustainable city, foster new communities and ensure the special character of York remains established for many years to come.
- We therefore welcome the examination in public and look forward to the constructive discussions ahead to assist the Inspectors.