

Preface to 10th September 2015 North Yorkshire and York Spatial Planning and Transport Board (SP&T) Agenda Item 4

9 December 2019

Since the submission of Agenda Item 4 to the North Yorkshire and York Spatial Planning and Transport Board on 10th September 2015, the YNYER Spatial Plan referred to in paragraph 3.6 has evolved into the York, North Yorkshire, the East Riding and Hull (YNYERH) Spatial Framework

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROVISION OF HOUSING IN THE YORK HOUSING MARKET AREA

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The City of York Council's new administration has asked for the practicalities of meeting some of York's objectively assessed need for housing (OAHN) beyond the local authority boundary to be further appraised. This report sets out how this appraisal could be carried out and the implications for Plan making in the local authorities involved.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The City of York Local Plan has been discussed at the Board on a number of occasions most recently in a report of 7th July 2014 in respect of the Further Sites Consultation. Since that time the Plan's progress through the statutory stages was paused in October 2014 following a Council resolution. This resolution asked for further work to be carried out on the evidence that underpins the objectively assessed need for housing (OANH). This work is now drawing to a conclusion having considered the implications of the 2012 DCLG Household projections published in Feb 2015 and new economic forecasts. Once concluded, the work will then inform the housing land supply requirements.
- 2.2 The NPPF asks that authorities assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. In the case of York there is evidence which shows that the housing market area extends into adjoining local authority areas. Furthermore the NPPF sets out the Government's expectations of Local Authorities in respect of the duty to cooperate and says that authorities should work collaboratively to ensure proper coordination between authorities on strategic priorities. In the case of York the shared housing market could be regarded as such a strategic priority.

2.3 The City of York Council's new administration is concerned about the impact of meeting York's OAHN on other policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) including protecting the green belt. If the impact is such that it significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits of meeting the OANH¹ then reasonable alternatives will need to be pursued. This would include meeting some of the OANH outside the York Local Plan area. The analysis below sets out a process for considering this.

3.0 Analysis

3.1 The Duty to Cooperate, as introduced to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 by the Localism Act 2011, and the NPPF provide the legal and policy context for this work. As set out above, the NPPF refers to planning for housing across both Plan and housing market geographies. In York's case there is a clear difference between the two, with the latter extending beyond the Plan area into all adjoining authority areas, as evidenced through local migration patterns and commuting flows. This difference clearly makes planning for housing a strategic priority² in respect of the Duty to Cooperate; and as such, it could provide a rationale for considering meeting some of York's need for housing in adjoining districts but within the York Housing Market area. However, such an approach should be tested to determine how sustainable it is when compared with meeting the need within the York UA area.

3.2 The NPPF along with experience elsewhere shows that there are three possible approaches to such cross boundary planning:

- Preparing a joint Plan (Lincoln is an example of this); or
- aligning neighbouring Plans in both strategy and plan making timetable (Nottingham is an example of this); or
- agreeing an informal joint strategy which would then be incorporated into individual Plans (the approach taken in Cambridge and Peterborough).

3.3 Based on the experience elsewhere and comparing that with the circumstances in York and its neighbours, the Cambridge and Peterborough approach appears the most practical option. Such an

¹ NPPF paragraph 14 test

² As defined in paragraph 178 of NPPF

approach would involve working with authorities across the York housing market area to develop an informal strategy that would address the determining of the scale and distribution of housing provision across the market area. The established LGNY Y Partnership Governance Structures can provide the framework within which the matter can be considered. However, all authorities in the York Housing Market area would need to agree that an informal joint strategy is an appropriate mechanism, agree to the work being done and support the preparation of the informal joint strategy.

- 3.4 To develop such an informal strategy is a considerable undertaking. Technical work will be needed to determine the extent and boundaries of the York housing market. Bespoke household projections would then be required for the housing market area along with work to determine the choices available for allocating development across the whole area. This work will be able to draw on the existing evidence base from each authority. The exploration of patterns and distribution of development could be broad brush and focus on large site opportunities. The whole process would then need to be subject to Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) to demonstrate that all reasonable alternatives have been considered, and will require public consultation.
- 3.5 Given the work outlined and the importance of testing it through consultation it is expected to take around 9-18 months to complete the task. The exact timescale would depend on the resources allocated and the scale of the response to consultation.
- 3.6 The York North Yorkshire and East Riding (YNYER) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is working on a Spatial Plan that seeks to co-ordinate plans and planning/investment decisions across the LEP area. At present this work is based on a drawing together of the current local circumstances rather than seeking to promote a different approach. However, any work on the scale and distribution of development in the York Housing Market area will need to have regard to the wider context of the LEP spatial plan, and vice versa.
- 3.7 The preparation of an informal strategy for the York Housing Market area will have implications for Local Plan preparation in all the authorities which fall within the area. At this stage it is not possible to set out these implications in any detail. However, it is fair to say

that the decisions made in the strategy on the scale and patterns of development may well require authorities to review their current Local Plan in part or completely. This could have significant implications, depending on where an authority is in the plan making cycle. For example, in York the accommodation of significant amounts of housing in adjoining authorities would be regarded as a different spatial strategy to that currently being applied. Such a change may well require a return to the preferred options stage in the Local Plan to test what would be a very different strategy for accommodating development.

- 3.8 The resource implications of the work will be significant in respect of both staff and finance. The existing 'pool' of local plan staff within the local authorities falling within the York housing market area could be drawn on for some of the work. However, some specialist 'external' help will need to be bought in, for example, in preparing the household growth projection(s) across the area. This will need to be the subject of detailed further project planning should this approach go forward.

4.0 Next Steps

4.1 To progress this work the next steps would be to:

- (i) Prepare an informal joint strategy for the York Housing Market Area;
- (ii) Produce a detailed project plan looking at associated costs linked to this approval including considering a mechanism for sharing the funding for external specialist advice (e.g. pro-rata population based contribution; and
- (iii) Produce a further report setting out a detailed work plan with costs and key milestones

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The views and comments of the Board are sought on the proposals included within this report.