



Economy and Place Directorate
Forward Planning Team
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Date: 19 November 2021

Dear Mr Berkeley and Mr McCormack

Examination of the City of York Local Plan – Next Steps

Thank you for your letter of 25 October 2021 setting out next steps and an indicative timetable to address the matters and issues that you presently consider will be likely to be the subject of Phase 2, 3 and 4 hearings. As requested, a copy of your letter was placed on the Examination webpage, on 26 October.

The Council is fully committed to continuing the Examination and shares your ambition for the process to be as effective and efficient as possible. We are content to work to the indicative timetable and proposed phases, subject to the comments that we set out below.

Since the Council submitted the Infrastructure Delivery Plan [SD128] in May 2018, there has been significant progress in relation to infrastructure delivery and funding and as such, we welcome your request for an updated Gantt Chart showing infrastructure delivery. We are keen to provide this to you together with a comprehensive update in relation to progress and future requirements for infrastructure and delivery. On this basis, we are currently preparing an update to the IDP, which we trust will be helpful to you for the forthcoming discussions. We will make this available as soon as we are able together with the requested Gantt Chart. We will ensure that this chart allows for a clear comparison between anticipated delivery of housing and employment development and the provision of the infrastructure that is required to support that growth.

We are also in the process of updating the housing trajectory to the latest baseline as per your request. The baseline for this will be adjusted to 1st April 2021. We will send this to you by w/c 6 December 2021.

Returning to the timetable for the hearing sessions, we have the following comments:

- (i) We note that Phase 2 is due to start in February 2022. Given the number of strategic issues it will cover, and to allow for the holiday period over Christmas and New Year, we consider it would be realistic to plan for the hearings in this Phase to commence late in February and continue into March. We note that housing need, spatial strategy and Green Belt issues were considered over two weeks of hearings in Phase 1, so it would be prudent to allow for a more extended timetable for Phase 2, given the wider range of issues it will address.
- (ii) Phase 2 presently includes consideration of “Spatial Strategy: Site Selection Process – Strategic Housing Sites; and Non-Strategic Housing Sites”. We would be grateful for clarification on how you anticipate strategic sites would best be addressed. We note that infrastructure and delivery matters are also covered in Phase 2, whereas detailed Green Belt boundaries are to be covered in Phase 3. We expect that discussion of strategic sites is likely to be linked to consideration of Green Belt boundaries as well as other matters, including infrastructure. On this basis, we consider that it would be preferable to have a discrete part of the programme set aside to address strategic sites and which takes place at an early stage in Phase 3, commencing in April. This would also allow any matters or questions that are relevant to the strategic sites and arise from the earlier hearings to be addressed before the strategic sites are discussed. We do not consider that this should detract from the consideration of the overarching Local Plan spatial strategy (as was the case in the Phase 1 hearings), or infrastructure matters generally in Phase 2;
- (iii) We further invite the Inspectors to confirm that Phase 4 hearings will commence in June rather than May/June as indicated in the indicative timetable. After a number of weeks of hearings, it would assist to commence the final stage of hearings slightly later in order to allow sufficient time for preparation of Phase 4.

We are grateful for your confirmation that we can proceed on the basis of ‘hybrid’ hearing sessions with both face-to-face and virtual sessions. We are intending to secure a suitable venue for the Examination shortly and will ensure that the requirements for the hybrid and face-to-face sessions are met and approved by the Programme Officer to ensure their suitability. We note that virtual sessions are expected to follow in person sessions, rather than being hybrid in the sense that those participating virtually join hearings that are taking place in person at the same time. This may lengthen the time taken during each phase and raises the possibility

of duplication of issues and discussion (as compared to Teams participation during the in-person sessions). To aid forward planning, therefore, we would be grateful for an indication of the number of anticipated hearing days for each phase and anticipated maximum capacity for face-to-face hearing sessions. Additionally, we would appreciate the opportunity to comment on the next iteration of the timetable, including the phased timing of MIQs. It would be helpful if the timetable included appropriate short breaks between (and within) each phase of hearings. We expect that this would assist all parties to respond to staged MIQs and prepare as effectively as possible to assist you at the hearings.

We look forward to hearing you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Ferris', written in a cursive style.

Neil Ferris
Corporate Director for Place