



York Civic Trust

Fairfax House, Castlegate, York, YO1 9RN

Tel: 01904 655543

Inquiry into York's draft Local Plan: Phase 2 Written statement in connection with Matter 8 4th March 2022

This statement in relation to Matter 8 is submitted by York Civic Trust. The Civic Trust is a membership organisation representing some 1300 individuals. Our vision is 'promoting heritage, shaping tomorrow'. Our Mission is to: protect and contemporise York's unique heritage; champion our environment and its sustainability; encourage the city's economic development in line with its character, and engage with all sectors of the community.

This statement has been prepared by Professor Anthony May OBE FREng CEng FICE. Professor May, who chairs our Environment Committee, is Emeritus Professor of Transport Engineering at the University of Leeds. He is an expert on urban transport policy, and has advised the World Bank, the OECD, the International Transport Forum, the European Commission, several national governments, the Houses of Parliament and several UK cities. Professor May will appear at the Inquiry to answer any questions on this submission.

York Civic Trust is committed to helping to secure a Local Plan, based broadly on the current draft. We are concerned, however, that there are weaknesses in the way in which the Plan has been formulated, and aspects of its resulting content, which render it unsound. We have endeavoured throughout the process to work with the City of York Council to secure improvements which overcome these deficiencies. In autumn 2021 we offered to prepare a Statement of Common Ground with the Council, so that our proposals for enhancement could be seen in the context of our strong support for the overall approach. The Council has very recently agreed to do so, but too late for input to Phase 2 of the Inquiry. We hope that our observations can be interpreted in that light.

The Inspectors ask us to:

- explain which particular part of the Plan is unsound;
- explain why it is unsound, having regard to the Framework;
- explain how the Plan can be made sound; and
- explain the precise change/wording that is being sought.

Patron H.R.H The Duchess of Kent

President Andrew Scott CBE CEng FMA • *Chair* Stephen Lusty • *Chief Executive and Company Secretary* Andrew Morrison

Email: info@yorkcivictrust.co.uk

www.yorkcivictrust.co.uk

We have endeavoured to do this, though where we have concerns over the process of plan-making, we are clearly unable to answer the last of these. Our explanations for the last two are shown underlined at the end of the relevant sections of our submission.

Question 8.1 Neither the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, nor the associated Regulations, set out specific requirements or targets for local plans in relation to climate change. In light of this, do the Government's wider climate change commitments have any bearing on the legal requirements for, or soundness of, the Plan? If so, what changes are required to make the Plan legally compliant and/or sound and why are they necessary?

Section 11 of the draft Local Plan deals with climate change. At the time that it was written, the relevant legislation was the Climate Change Act, 2008 which specified that the UK should achieve an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. At a local level, the Council had outlined its commitment to achieving carbon reduction targets of 40% by 2020 and 80% by 2050, within the Climate Change Framework for York (2010). Policies CC1, CC2 and CC3 dealt with renewable and low carbon energy, sustainable development and district heating, and we were satisfied that these were appropriate in the context.

However, as the Inspectors indicate, the situation has changed markedly since the draft Local Plan was published. In March 2019 the City of York Council declared a climate emergency with a commitment to York being a Net Zero city by 2030. Its definition of Net Zero includes Scope 1 and 2 emissions (those that result from within the city) but excludes Scope 3 emissions (for example from goods entering the city, manufacturing new vehicles or building new infrastructure). In June 2019, the government issued a statutory order amending the target in the Climate Change Act, which committed the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100 per cent of 1990 levels by 2050. These requirements are enshrined in law through the series of five year carbon budgets. It appears to us that the Council is now required to ensure that its Local Plan is compatible with these targets.

Analysis by the Council indicates that its commitment in 2019 requires carbon emissions to be reduced by 70% between 2019 and 2030. The Council estimates that buildings accounted for 61.9% of carbon emissions in 2018, and transport 27.9%. Between them these account for roundly 90% of all emissions, so it is clearly essential that the draft Local Plan is reviewed in this context.

We have not made an analysis of the needs of buildings, though we are aware that much more needs to be done to improve the carbon efficiency of heritage buildings. But we have carried out a detailed analysis for transport, based on work by West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport for the North, as part of our recently published Transport Strategy for York.

Our analysis shows that, by 2030, no more than half the required reduction in transport's carbon emissions will result from a switch to electric vehicles. The rest will need to come from changes in behaviour. We estimate that by 2027 the amount of travel (in person-km) will need to fall by around 10% from 2019 levels. For those journeys which are made, car use will need to fall by around 20%. This will need to come from transfer to walking, cycling

and public transport, which will need to increase by 25%, 80% and 30% respectively above 2019 levels.

The 2019 Transport Topic Paper provides no assessment of impacts on carbon emissions, the amount of travel or modal shares, but its prediction of a 55% increase in congestion suggests that its anticipated outcome results in a significant increase in carbon emissions from transport. As we noted in our submission on Matter 1, the analysis in the Transport Topic Paper failed to identify or assess the remedial measures needed to avoid such congestion.

Had the Council carried out such an assessment of remedial measures it would have been able to demonstrate that a pattern of development could be achieved which would, in the words of para 17 of NPPF12, "*actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable*". Moreover, such an assessment would have indicated the extent to which the combination of spatial strategy and transport strategy could achieve the targets for reduction in carbon emissions from transport implicit in the Government's and the Council's carbon policies.

It is not possible as yet to amend the Local Plan to reflect these points, but there is still time to do so before such matters are considered in detail in Phase 4 of the Inquiry. We strongly recommend that the Inspectors accept that, in this regard, the draft Local Plan is as yet not justified, and ask the Council to carry out the necessary further analysis, so that it can be considered in Phase 4 of the Inquiry.

