

Local Plan Opening Statement: Cllr Nigel Ayre

Phase 2 Hearings

May 2022

- 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 Paul Griffiths, 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.
- This has been an exceptionally challenging couple of years and I would like to thank the government inspectors and all those involved who've managed to progress this plan despite the difficult circumstances.
- We are confident that this is a robust and sound plan, and look forward to the next stage of the hearings.
- I still think that 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.
- 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 spatial strategy and site identification process and underpins the work undertaken to support the Local Plan.

6 May 2022

- York remains 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.
- I still fundamentally believe that the York Local Plan is 'sound' and this is because it achieves a balance that is right for our City.
- It is incredibly important that we continue to build on the progress to date on the Local Plan and work with the inspectors to take this plan forward to adoption.
- The ongoing work during the examination has taken an enormous amount 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.
- 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 second phase of this examination in public and look forward to the constructive discussions ahead to assist the Inspectors

Local Plan Opening Statement: Mr John Oxley MBE FSA

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- Thank you Inspectors and good morning everyone. I am John Oxley MBE FSA BA(hons). I am an independent archaeological consultant. Between 1989 and 2019 I was City Archaeologist, City of York Council. I was awarded an MBE in 2021 “for services to heritage”. I am a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.
- As Cllr Ayre has already stated, York is a special place to live, and many residents feel strongly connected to this wonderful city. Heritage is at the core of what makes York special and consequently underpins the Strategic Vision of the City of York Local Plan.
- People have subsisted, lived, worked and died in this part of the Vale of York for over 10000 years. Over this period, we, as humans, have transformed the landscape of this area so that York today has become the pre-eminent historic urban centre in northern England.
- For many centuries, York was the second city of England, at times centre of government. Developing around a strategic tidal river crossing, it was at the centre of a network of national and European communications and trading links since its establishment c71 CE by the Romans.
- For nearly 8000 years prior to the establishment of *Eboracum* in 71AD, the area that we now call the City of York developed from river valleys and forests exploited by hunter-gatherers into a complex rural landscape at the beginning of the first century AD. This landscape was a mosaic of small fields, clusters of roundhouses, common lands, and managed woodlands, rivers and watercourses all linked by a network of trackways. It was the setting for burial activities and construction of large-scale earthworks.

6 May 2022

- York becomes outstanding example of urban development originating with Roman occupation in north-western Europe, with its exceptional evidence of its Roman origins and of all successive periods up to the modern day.
- Evidence for these periods is preserved in the town plan, buildings, archaeological deposits and objects, and in documents and archives.
- Roman York, *Eboracum*, capital of Britannia Inferior, is evidenced by extensive above and below ground remains of the Roman fortress and colonia.
- In the 7th – 9th centuries, the Anglo-Saxon city, *Eoforwic*, became a centre of power, belief, trade and learning, home to Alcuin, the great European scholar.
- In the 9th-10th centuries, *Jorvik* was the centre of a Viking kingdom with occupation and trade evident in new streets, house plots, new forms of urban housing and exceptionally well-preserved organic artefacts.
- After 1066, Norman influence survives in two castles and near-complete circuit of defences. The medieval town's wealth and development is evident from the Minster and historic urban churches and their exceptional stained glass, and many outstanding timber-framed buildings. Significant post-Reformation development includes 18th century Georgian domestic, civic, and administrative architecture, the 19th century scientific institutions, and the railways.
- Since the mid-20th century, heritage has been effectively managed and conserved alongside residential regeneration and often sympathetic contemporary architecture.
- Since 71CE, York has assimilated peoples and cultures that have influenced York's urban development in a well-defined compact historic core.
- Extending beyond the historic core of the city are the areas of industrial development and housing that marked the expansion of the city on the 19th and 20th centuries. This topographic expansion has been defined by the historic

6 May 2022

Strays, green wedges whose origins lie in the centuries or millennia before the Norman Conquest.

- The heritage of the city is of outstanding universal value and meets the UNESCO criteria to be a World Heritage site. The city has resolved to apply in July this year to be placed on the new United Kingdom Tentative List of World Heritage Sites.
- These interactions with the environment and landscape and transformational episodes have been assessed and analysed and presented in the City of York Heritage Topic Paper Update (2013). The Heritage Topic Paper sets out six principle characteristics that have been used to test the impact of Local Plan proposals on the heritage of this special place. It places heritage at the core of the Local Plan Strategic Vision.
- Heritage, therefore, is key to the future development of this city, the quality of life of its residents, and to attracting businesses that will provide sustainable employment for York.