YORK CIVIC
TRUST WORKSHOP
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BRIEFING DOCUMENT

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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

RATIONALE

By 2050 York's population is expected to grow by around 20% (40,000 people) as new residents look for the good quality of life, a great environment, social and cultural assets the city offers. To meet City of York Council's ambitious target of a 'zero-carbon city' by 2030 and the national goal of zero-carbon by 2050 this requires a complete re-think about how we design our new neighbourhoods and their associated transport systems.

The pandemic has, arguably, speeded up some of the changes in the organisation of daily life and work that were already taking place. Many people have grown used to working more flexibly, especially at home. Greater use has been made of the local area for shopping and leisure. Use of online retailing, home delivery and other services has grown at a rapid rate. The Draft Local Plan, which is currently at the Inspection phase, sets out a planning vision for our City, and specifies areas for major development. These involve around 20-30 so-called strategic sites, scattered across the local authority area, and including larger developments at: York Central (2,500 dwellings), Osbaldwick, Land East of Metcalfe Lane (845 dwelling Garden Village), Clifton Gate, Land West of Wigginton Road (1,348 dwelling Garden Village) and Elvington, Land West of Elvington Lane (3,339 dwelling Garden Village)

We will use the major development sites at York Central, Clifton Gate and Elvington as case studies during the workshop (Draft Local Plan extracts are attached). Work is starting on a new Local Transport Plan, and the findings of this workshop will influence its recommendations. The Local Plan & Local Transport Plan need to address the nature and scale of the challenges set out above.

Planning and transport are inextricably linked. The location, scale and density of new development and the mixture of land uses, will set local transport needs and, in turn, impact on our ability to reach the zero-carbon target. Reducing the amount of travel and the use of private vehicles, encouraging the use of active travel modes and public transport, and maximising the benefits of new transport technologies will all contribute to the kind of comprehensive approach that will be necessary if we are to achieve this target.

This Workshop will explore how York can best accommodate this population growth in largely self-sustaining communities (to avoid their simply being dormitories), minimise the adverse environmental impacts, provide equality of access for a diverse population and promote a vibrant economy. The Workshop will be organised in two parts, the first dealing with the concept of sustainable communities, and what these might look like in the York context. The send part will focus on the implications for sustainable transport provision. We envisage that the first part will help the Trust prepare a policy statement for the Council, and identify other themes on which we might hold member workshops. The second will contribute directly to our work on the Local Transport Plan.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

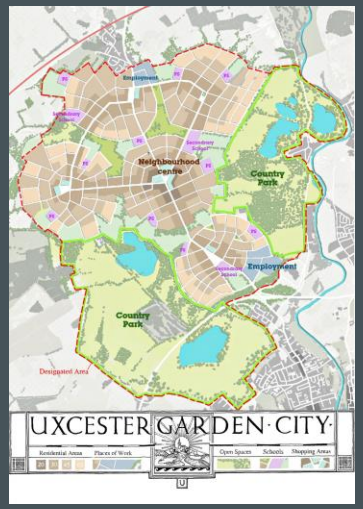
DEFINITION

A sustainable community can be defined as "a place where people want to live and work, now and in the future" *("Skills for Sustainable Communities"*, The Egan Review, 2004). A sustainable community is one that is planned, built, or modified to promote sustainable living. The word 'community' can be used to denote a neighbourhood or, in some circumstances, the whole city.

- "Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity." (Egan Review, ibid).

This definition acknowledges that a sustainable community is one where economic, environmental and social issues are interrelated and that these issues should be addressed together. This is known as the 'triple bottom line'. Absolute sustainability is probably unachievable.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS



ACCOMMODATING GROWTH

If we accept that population growth on the suggested scale is inevitable, the main question is how can we best accommodate it? Much of the discussion centres on three issues:

- Should new development be largely concentrated in significant settlements of sufficient scale to be genuinely self-sustaining, i.e. one or more large urban extensions, or should it be scattered about in smaller additions to existing built-up areas?
- Should new development be largely restricted to brownfield sites, or should it be on greenfield land – including part of the Green Belt, where necessary?
- What density of residential development is acceptable in different locations? Higher densities are commensurate with shorter travel distances and easier access to facilities but may not be conducive to 'family living'.

Some experts have argued that genuine sustainable development is only possible where a bold move is made to build large urban extensions. In *Uxcester garden city* (which was based on York), for example, it was argued that sustainable development would only be achieved with one or more new settlements of some 50,000 population each, linked to the existing urban core by high-frequency tram or bus services. The authors proposed that the new settlements should be located in the Green Belt within 10 kilometres of the urban core (equivalent to a 20-minute tram ride).

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Whereas the concept of the sustainable community is a relatively new one, the idea of planning for neighbourhoods has a long history.

The post-war New Towns movement embraced the concept of neighbourhoods. The legislation sought to promote an active community and neighbourhood life as opposed to the anonymity of the big city. The towns were designed round the principles of traffic separation and economic self-containment. Communities were to be socially mixed and balanced.

"The towns will be divided into neighbourhood units, each unit with its own shops, schools, open spaces, community halls and other amenities" (Lewis Silkin). Research showed that by the 1950s, already, "most young families living in a neighbourhood unit enjoyed patterns of mobility, sociability and leisure that far transcended the immediate locality" (H. and C. Rees) – reflecting the fact that as mobility and affluence increase, people tend to take a wider view of 'their neighbourhood'.

The Second Generation of New Towns were also based on neighbourhoods. Milton Keynes, for example, had residential areas with a variety of key services and facilities, notably schools, parks, pedestrian-only paths and shops. Each neighbourhood also had a meeting place/community hall.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

The main UK initiatives in later years have been towards:

- Higher densities of residential development
- Attempts to control the use of private vehicles
- The development of 'locally led garden cities'.

Many of the New Town neighbourhoods were planned round an easy access on foot to a primary school. It was assumed that a population of around 5,000 was required to support a primary school and perhaps 10,000 to support a secondary school.

30-40 so-called Garden Communities have been announced in recent years. Some of these are Garden Towns, involving a development of more than 10,000 homes, and are in effect extensions of existing towns such as Harlow, Basingstoke and Hemel Hempsted. The much larger number of Garden Villages are smaller settlements of between 1,500 and 10,000 homes and are scattered widely across the Country.

Most of these modern garden settlements are too small to generate the required range of social and recreational facilities, or to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Many so-called Garden Villages are little more than car-borne suburbs dressed up in green credentials.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Transport for New Homes publishes a helpful checklist of 10 factors that can determine whether a new housing development is sustainable. It underlines that planning and transport considerations are inextricably related.

The checklist is:

- The location avoids car dependency
- Walking, cycling and public transport to the wider area and key destinations are well planned
- Attractive and healthy place to be
- Density of homes (at least 35-50 dwellings per hectare, gross)
- Mix of uses
- Local facilities and employment
- Pavements and paths (attractive, safe, easy to use)
- Cycle routes and cycle storage (attractive, safe, direct)
- Public transport services at the development (frequent, unhindered and prioritised)
- Parking (controlled and communal).

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

THE '15-MINUTE CITY'

In recent years there has been a flurry of neighbourhood-based initiatives, both in the UK and around the world. Most recently, these have been a response to changing patterns of behaviour brought about as a result of environmental imperatives and the pandemic.

Professor Carlos Moreno (Sorbonne) raised the concept of "la ville du quart d'heure" - a city in which daily necessities could be accessed within 15 minutes on foot or bicycle. Work, home, shops, entertainment, education and healthcare should all be accessible "within the same time a commuter might once have waited on a railway platform". Moreno's ideas have been taken up by Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris.

The 15-minute city envisions multiple use of buildings throughout the day, eg a school used for other activities outside hours. Buildings used for living and working would help reduce the need to commute, thereby reducing unnecessary traffic. On the downside, this pattern of living could reduce the chances of unplanned and planned encounters, which are a vital part of life and work. As Moreno says, "We don't want to recreate a village. We want to create a better urban organisation." A key to success is the creation of attractive neighbourhoods with green spaces, markets and pop-up activities.

Melbourne has pioneered the 20-minute neighbourhood', based on an 800m walkable catchment and built the concept into its latest city plan. The goal is to reduce environmental impacts and improve health. There are six suggested principles (which will be measurable):

Be safe, accessible and well-connected for pedestrians and cyclists to optimise active transport; **Offer high-quality public realm and open spaces;** Provide services and destinations that support local living; **Facilitate access to quality public transport that connects people to jobs and higher-order services;** Deliver housing/population at densities that make local services and transport viable; **Facilitate thriving local economies.**

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

THE '15-MINUTE CITY'

Recent research by the Royal Town Planning Institute suggests that the practical implementation of 15-minute City principle might involve:

Living locally & having most daily needs within a 15-minute walk or cycle ride. **Services inc. schools, grocery shopping, places to work, socialise & exercise.** Reducing the need to travel and length of journeys. **Creating the conditions for healthier, happier communities.** Walking and cycling with priority over cars/parking by redesigned streets and public realm. **Removing physical and financial barriers to travel and encouraging equality of access.** Providing affordable, integrated public transport. **Shared mobility including car clubs (EV) ,e-bike and e-scooter rental**

The implications for neighbourhood centres are that there should be:

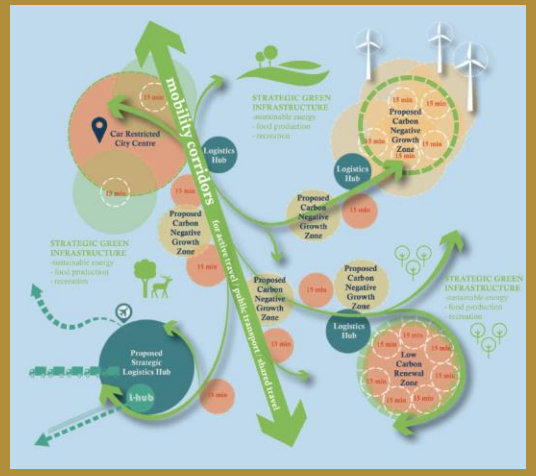
A mix of uses including homes and employment and leisure. **A public transport hub and interchange with cars/active transport means.** Adaptable and multi-purpose spaces. **Local markets, pop-up shops and flexible workspace plus traditional services such as schools, health and pubs.** Safe routes to walk and cycle. **Restricted access for cars and motorised freight; restricted parking enabling streets to be used for play and social activities.** Repurposing of road and parking space as green areas and encouraging biodiversity.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

QUESTIONS

- Is the concept of the 15-Minute City relevant to York & how might we apply it?
- What is the minimum size and optimum location for a new settlement to be largely self-sustaining & are the major sites proposed in the Draft Local Plan for York consistent with this?
- What essential features, services and facilities should a sustainable neighbourhood contain? ie what kind of mixed development should we seek?
- What are the planning and design implications of increased home working and flexible working?
- What is the appropriate residential density (dwellings per hectare) for these new developments? (for comparison, Hungate is around 100dph, Terry's is 62 d.p.h., Derwenthorpe 25 d.p.h. and Germany Beck around 27 d.p.h.)

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT



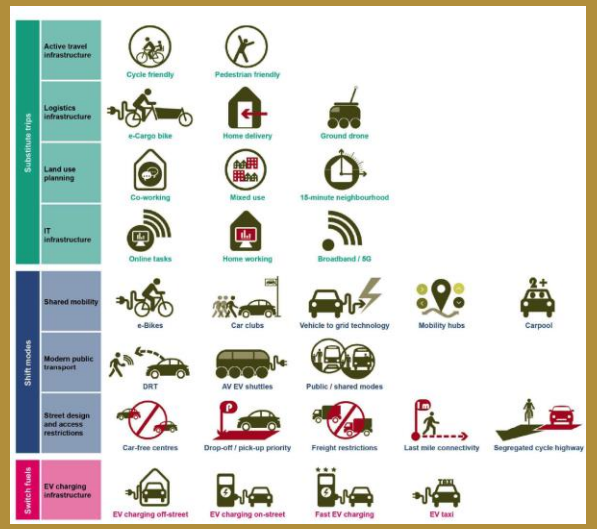
DEFINITION

In overall terms, sustainable transport means transport which minimises the adverse effects on society, the environment and climate. Conversely, sustainable transport systems may make a positive contribution to the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the communities they serve. Sustainable transport is integral to the development of sustainable communities.

Sustainable transport, sometimes known as 'green transport', is any form of transport that does not use, or rely on, dwindling natural resources. Instead, it relies on renewable or regenerated sources that are sustainable. In order to be fully sustainable, we should consider the lifetime impact of transport and transport infrastructure, ie design, construction, operation and maintenance.

Apart from the environmental performance, we should also consider social justice and equality of access and the question of affordability. Efficiency is also a consideration, particularly for public transport and freight. Sustainable transport should support the development of sustainable communities, economic vitality, liveability, health and well-being.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT



TRANSPORT AND NET-ZERO

Transport accounts for the second greatest portion of our carbon footprint after housing (mainly heating and ventilation systems). Some of the required reduction can be achieved by technological innovation, in particular, the adoption of low-emission and electric vehicles. Further reduction, however, will require major reductions in the amount of travel, and therefore a very significant change in the way we manage and organise our lives. Our own calculations suggest that travel by car will need to be reduced by 20% by 2027 and by 35% by 2037.

Discussions in the Citizens' Transport Forum have suggested a willingness by many York residents to adjust their travel behaviour, for example through reducing the use of private vehicles and adopting active transport modes. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the challenge.

Research by the Royal Town Planning Institute suggests that we need to tackle this through:

- Increasing home working, digital services, new forms of flexible working and community spaces.
- Shifting residual travel demand away from private transport to active, public and shared services.
- Integrating transport networks whilst implementing access and parking restrictions on private vehicles.
- Ensuring that sustainable modes are always the most convenient and cheapest choice.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT & NEW NEIGHBOURHOODS

Transport for New Homes identifies the factors which help ensure that development takes place in a way that supports sustainable transport provision. The location of the development, mix of uses, local employment opportunities and facilities, all determine whether sustainable transport provision is possible.

The key transport elements of the checklist are: walking, cycling and public transport to the wider area and key destinations are well planned; **mix of uses, with local facilities and employment;** pavements and paths (attractive, safe, easy to use); **cycle routes and cycle storage (attractive, safe, direct);** public transport services at the development (frequent, unhindered and prioritised); **Parking (controlled and communal).**

They recommend a location that is served by walking, cycling and public transport to an existing town, and a minimum density of 75 dwellings per hectare, and preferably higher. Major employment should be available within 30 minutes travel by public transport. Parking standards should discourage car ownership and use. Walking, cycling and public transport provision should be safe, frequent and reliable.

The Town & Country Planning Association published *'Guide 13: Sustainable Transport'* in September 2020. This sets out the principle on which sustainable transport in planned Garden Cities should be based: "A Garden City design must enable at least 50% of trips originating in the Garden City to be made by non-car means, with a goal to increase this over time to at least 60%; and the latest best practice in street and transport design should be used as a minimum standard. Public transport nodes and neighbourhood facilities should be a short walk (no more than 10 minutes) away from every home. Homes should be within 800 metres of schools for children under the age of 11". The TCPA assumes a minimum population for its garden cities of around 30-35,000 (equivalent to around 12-15,000 dwellings).

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

ACCESS & ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

The suggested standards for accessing public transport, cycling and walking vary between experts, but here are some suggestions

Access to public transport

- Transport for New Homes suggests that public transport should operate 7 days per week, including evenings.
- Provision should be guaranteed by the operator and start from day 1 of a development.
- Buses should have priority over other vehicles wherever possible.
- Services should go direct or with efficient changes to all key locations.
- Fares should be affordable.
- There should be bus shelters with lighting, raised kerbs and real-time information.
- The maximum walk to a bus stop should be 300m or 400m where the service has a frequency of 10-12 minutes or less.
- A *frequent* public transport service is defined as a daytime service interval of not more than 12 minutes, and an early morning/evening/weekend service interval of not more than 20 minutes.
- The maximum walk to an available rail service should be 800m.
- A *frequent* heavy rail service is 20 minutes or less in the daytime and 30 minutes or better early morning/evening/weekends.
- Standards for light rail, including trams, might be expected to fall mid-way between those for buses and for heavy/standard rail.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

ACCESS & ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

Cycling distances

- Cycle routes should be segregated wherever possible, and/or use low-traffic streets.
- All dwellings, including apartments, should have secure cycle storage.
- Locally provided cycleways should integrate with wider networks.
- An 'easy cycle ride' (generally taken to be 20 minutes). At an average speed, enabling a journey of approximately 6km depending on age/fitness and gradient (the Cycle Map of York shows some approximate distances). E-bikes would give an extended range.

Walking times and distances

- Walking routes should be direct, safe and attractive.
- Locally provided footpaths should integrate with wider networks.
- Walking to local services should be 'easy'. This is a widely abused term! Walking speeds depend on terrain, age and gender, and how encumbered they are. The New Towns designers suggested that a neighbourhood should be an area approx. 400m from a primary school. Probably the key is time rather than distance. 10 minutes is a good maximum for an 'easy walk' with an objective in mind - up to 800m at a walking speed of 5kph. Anecdotally, many people switch to the car for journeys over 400m.
- We may also need to consider suitable standards for deliveries and servicing (not specified yet) except to suggest that:
- We should minimise the amount of local freight traffic by rationalising deliveries and providing central collection hubs
- Penetration of residential streets by heavy and medium vehicles should be strictly controlled.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

QUESTIONS

- Is reducing the amount of travel realistic, and how can we best achieve it?
- How can we encourage more people to use active travel means (walking or cycling) & what should be our standard for an 'easy' walking or cycling distance?
- How can we make public transport a more attractive and cost-effective choice for the residents of new neighbourhoods & do we have any views on the acceptable frequency, availability and cost of services?
- How can we persuade more people that using private vehicles should be the option of last choice & how can we best educate people on the nature and scale of the required behavioural changes?
- How can we design new developments so that they are not dominated by private vehicles and local freight delivery services?

SELECTED SOURCES

Net Zero Transport: The role of spatial planning and place-based solutions, RTPI Research Paper, January 2021. Research by LDA Design, City Science and Vectos.

Uxcester garden city, 2014 Wolfson Economics Prize, Urbed.

City of York, Draft Local Plan, 2019.

York Local Transport Plan 2011.

Design to Delivery: eco-towns transport worksheet, TCPA, 2008.

Transport for New Homes, 2018 (Project Report and Checklist)

Garden Villages and Garden Town: Visions and Reality, Transport for New Homes, June 2020.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, London Cycling Campaign, 2020.

Welcome to the 15-Minute City, Natalie White, 2020.

The Rise of 15-Minute Cities, Smarttransport.org, 2020.

20-Minute Neighbourhoods, Melbourne Plan, 2017.

15-Minutes City, Stra Topo (Nederland), 2020.

Die 15 Minuten-Stad Infrastruckturelle Entwicklungen, Engel Volkers, 2020.

Guide 13 Sustainable Transport, TCPA, 2020.

The English New Towns since 1946, Mark Clapton, 2017.

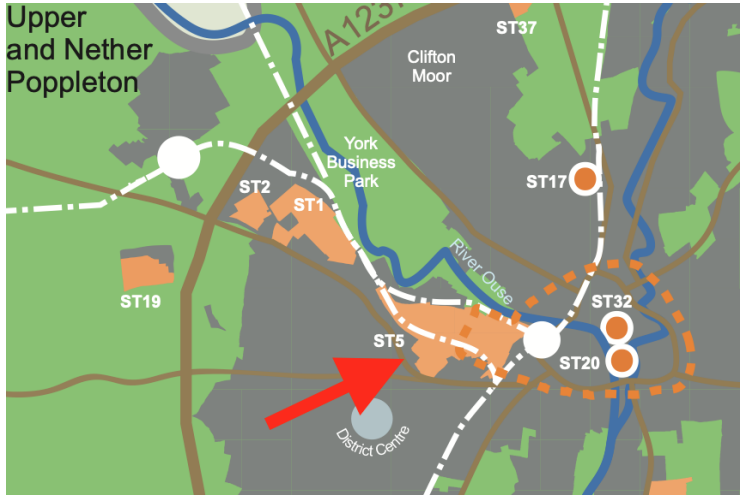
Home Comforts, Place Alliance, 2020.

National Design Guide, Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019.

Decarbonising Transport, travelling less and the role of online opportunities, Local Government Association, 2020.

Sustainable living places – a systems perspective on planning, housing and infrastructure, National Engineering Policy Centre, 2020.

Local Plan Policy SS4: York Central



York Central (ST5) will enable the creation of a new piece of the city; a high quality sustainable, mixed use urban quarter for York including a range of commercial, residential, cultural and leisure uses. This will include a new central business district, expanded and new cultural and visitor facilities, residential uses and a new vibrant residential community.

The following mix of uses will be permitted within York Central:

100,000 sq m of Offices to provide a new business district with a critical mass of high-quality offices suitable for modern business requirements, including financial and professional services.

1,700 – 2,500 Residential dwellings to create a sustainable new community with a range of housing types and tenures. (To reflect the site's location, high density development may be appropriate.)
Hotels

Culture, leisure, tourism and niche/ancillary retail facilities, including supporting expansion and improvement of the National Railway Museum as a prime cultural asset and enhancing the quality of the cultural area around it through high quality public realm and improved connectivity to the wider city.

Open space, high quality public realm and supporting social infrastructure, creating a distinctive new place of outstanding quality and design which complements the existing historic urban fabric of the city and respects those elements which contribute to the distinctive historic character of the city and assimilates into its setting and surrounding communities. (This should also: deliver development and maximise connectivity within a green infrastructure network and integrate with wider public realm in the city; ensure provision of social infrastructure which meets the needs of York Central and, where viable, the wider city communities including sports, leisure, health, primary and nursery education, community facilities and open space.)

Rail uses, including maximise integration, connections and accessibility to/from the site including inter-modal connectivity improvements at York Railway Station.

Local Plan Policy SS12: Land West of Wigginton Road (Clifton Gate)

The development of Land West of Wigginton Road (ST14) supports the Local Plan vision in delivering a sustainable garden village situated to the north of the outer ring road.

It will deliver approximately 1,348 dwellings, approximately 1200 units of which will be delivered within the plan period. In addition to complying with the policies within this Local Plan, the site must be master planned and be delivered in accordance with the following key principles.

Create a new 'garden' village that reflects the existing urban form of York of the main York urban area as a compact city surrounded by villages.
Deliver a sustainable housing mix.

Create a new local centre incorporating appropriate shops, services and community facilities to meet the needs of future residents.

Deliver on site, accessible combined nursery and primary education facilities, which are well connected to housing by dedicated pedestrian/ cycleways.

Ensure provision of new all-purpose access roads from A1237 Outer Ring Road/Wigginton Road roundabout and off the Wigginton Road/B1363. (The internal layout of any future development on the site could be such that it creates discrete sectors, each with a specific access.)

Deliver high quality, frequent and accessible public transport services throughout the development site

To encourage the maximum take-up of more active forms of transport (walking and cycling), ensure the provision of high quality, safe, direct and accessible pedestrian and cycle links which create well-connected internal streets and walkable neighbourhoods.

Maintain landscape buffers around the site to prevent coalescence with adjacent settlements and maintain the setting of the city and the village of Skelton.

Protect and enhance local green assets, trees and hedge-lines and enhance existing landscape character.

Local Plan Policy SS13: Land West of Elvington Lane (Elvington)

The development of Land West of Elvington Lane (ST15) supports the Local Plan vision in delivering a new sustainable garden village for York. It will deliver approximately 3,339 dwellings, around 2,200 units of which will be delivered within the plan period. In addition to complying with the policies within this Local Plan, the site must be master-planned and delivered in accordance with the following key principles.

Create a new 'garden' village that reflects the existing urban form of York as a compact city surrounded by villages.

Deliver a sustainable housing mix.

Be of a high design standard to reflect the existing settlement form of villages around the main urban area of York in-keeping with the existing urban form.

Create new open space within the site to maintain views of the Minster and existing woodland.

Impacts on biodiversity within the site and zone of influence will be addressed by following the mitigation hierarchy withthe overall aim to prevent harm to existing biodiversity assets (including Heslington Tillmire SSSI and the Lower Derwent Valley SPA/Ramsar), delivering no net loss for biodiversity and maximise further benefits for biodiversity.

Provide an appropriate range of shops, services and facilities including social infrastructure such as health, social, leisure, cultural and community uses …. and made early in the scheme's phasing in order to allow the establishment of a new sustainable community. This should be principally focused around a new local centre.

Deliver new on-site education provision to meet nursery, primary and potentially secondary demand. New nursery, primary and potentially secondary provision will be required to serve the earliest phases of development.

Deliver high quality, frequent and accessible public transport services through the whole site and ensure provision ofnecessary transport infrastructure to access the site with primary access via the A64 and a potential secondary access via Elvington Lane.

Optimise pedestrian and cycle integration, connection and accessibility in and out of the site, and retain CommonLane/Long Lane/Langwith Stray as cycle/pedestrian routes only to ensure protection of the character of Heslington Village.