

NEW HOUSING FOR YORK

A CHANGE OF DIRECTION

CONTEXT

There is no doubt that the proposals in the 2014 Draft Local Plan for a significant increase in house building on greenfield sites, many of them in the provisional greenbelt, are proving to be highly controversial. The Environment Forum circulated its detailed comments on this issue to CYC on 16.7.2014.

They are based on the assumption that low density housing will be provided, that the loss of productive agricultural land is acceptable, and that adequate infrastructure, such as roads and underground services, as well as cost effective and reliable public transport, will be provided from the outset.

The larger sites will require new schools, new local shopping facilities, provision for healthcare and other community uses.

There is little indication that these aspects of the proposals can be funded from the private sector, and fully sustainable development guaranteed.

Even if these requirements were to be met, residents, unless they work from home, must travel elsewhere to work, the majority of them by car, imposing unacceptable demands on the strategic road network, contributing to congestion and a reduction in air quality.

The draft Local Plan Policy **SS1** itemises five spatial principles for development which should underpin developers' proposals, including impacts on the setting of the city in the surrounding countryside, accessibility to sustainable transport and services, and the avoidance of congestion, air pollution and flooding.

This review argues that by increasing housing densities on sites within the ring roads of the A1237 and the A64, taking advantage of existing infrastructure, much of the proposed development in the provisional green belt could be avoided.

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ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

In order to reduce the greenfield land take implicit in the proposals this preliminary review suggests that the density targets set for several of the urban area sites could be significantly increased. Under CYC Policy H2 these are currently set at 100 units/ha within the city centre; 50 units/ha within the York urban area; 40 units/ha within the suburban area + Haxby/Wigginton, and 35units/ha in the rural area and villages.

There is ample evidence from elsewhere that higher densities can provide satisfactory housing suitable for a variety of household formations, without compromising the social and environmental benefits which the CYC drive for new housing seeks to promote, in line with its sustainability agenda.

This review selects nine greenfield sites which have been put forward for development, with the proposed number of units and housing densities, ranging from **17-40units/ha**.

It then evaluates five major sites:- ST1 British Sugar; ST2 Civil Service Ground Boroughbridge Road; ST29 "The Gardens",Boroughbridge Road; ST12 New Lane Huntington; ST5 York Central, with a potential density range of **60-180 units/ha**. and assuming **70% developable area** of the total site areas, with the remaining 30% allowed for access roads, miscellaneous utilities and open space.

It compares the Draft Plan target figures with the potential for increases in housing numbers and densities, and the opportunities to correspondingly reduce the demand on the greenfield sites

The housing targets and site areas in the tables are those proposed in the Draft Plan, revised after the Further Sites consultation

This review does **not** suggest that all the sites would be suitable for development at these higher densities, either in whole or in part, but seeks to show what additional units could be incorporated if appropriate, and what potential reductions in land take from other sites might be. It does **not** examine the social, physical and environmental implications of higher density living, nor the issues of viability covered in the Brett and Arup reports.

It does indicate that a radical rethink of policies would be in order, if the arguments against extensive building on existing greenfield sites are to be logically addressed.

METHODOLOGY

STAGE 1- nine sites in the greenbelt were evaluated, with their Plan allocations and densities, allowing for 70% developable area (areas rounded)

ST7- east of Metcalfe Lane	1800 units@ 23/ha	total site area 113ha
ST8- land north of Monks Cross	1400 units@ 39/ha	total site area 52ha
ST9- land north of Haxby	747units @ 32/ha	total site area 33ha
ST12-Manor Hth.Rd.C'manthorpe	421units @ 30/ha	total site area 20ha
ST13-Moor Lane Copmanthorpe	125units @ 30/ha	total site area 6ha
ST14-north of Clifton Moor	2800 units @ 25/ha	total site area 157ha
ST15-Winthorpe	4680 units @ 17/ha	total site area 393ha
ST30-North of Stockton Lane	165 units @ 39/ha	total site area 6ha
SF810-Earswick	2112 units @ 34/ha	total site area 88ha
Plan allocation 14250 units		total land take 868ha

STAGE 2-Five sites within the outer ring road were evaluated, showing the potential for increased density development, which could then be set against the allocations and proposed land take outlined in **Stage1 above**.

SITE

potential additional housing units

site ST1- BRITISH SUGAR

Local Plan- site area 40.70 ha.

developable area @ 70%= 28.5ha

Plan target **1140 units @ 40units/ha**

option(1) 28.5ha @ 60/ha = 1710	570
option(2) 28.5ha @ 80/ha = 2280	1140
option(3) 28.5ha @ 100/ha =2850	1710
option(4) 28.5ha @ 120/ha =3420	2280
option(5) 28.5ha @ 150/ha =4275	3135
option(6) 28.5ha @ 180/ha =5130	5130

site ST2- CIVIL SERVICE GROUND

Local Plan- site area 10.43ha

developable area @ 70%= 7.3ha

target **289 units @ 40units/ha**

option(1) 7.3ha @ 60/ha = 438	149
option(2) 7.3ha @ 80/ha = 584	295
option(3) 7.3ha @ 100/ha =730	441
option(4) 7.3ha @ 120/ha =876	587
option(5) 7.3ha @ 150/ha =1095	806
option(6) 7.3ha @ 180/ha =1314	1025

SITE**potential additional
housing units****site ST29- "THE GARDENS"- BOROUGHBRIDGE ROAD**Local Plan- site area 5.75ha

developable area @ 70% = 4ha

target 135 units @ 34units/haoption(1) 4.0ha @ 60/ha = 240 **105**option(2) 4.0ha @ 80/ha = 320 **185**option(3) 4.0ha @ 100/ha=400 **265**option(4) 4.0ha @ 120/ha=480 **345**option(5) 4.0ha @ 150/ha=600 **465**option(6) 4.0ha @ 180/ha=720 **585****site ST11- NEW LANE HUNTINGTON**Local Plan- site area 13.76

developable area @ 70% = 9.6ha

target 400 units @ 42units/haoption(1) 9.6ha @ 60/ha = 576 **176**option(2) 9.6ha @ 80/ha = 768 **368**option(3) 9.6ha @100/ha= 960 **560**option(4) 9.6ha @120/ha=1152 **752**option(5) 9.6ha @150/ha=1440 **1040**option(6) 9.6ha @180/ha=1728 **1328****site ST5- YORK CENTRAL**Local Plan(a)- site area (phase 1) 10.55ha

developable area @70%= 7.3ha

target 410 units @ 56 units/haoption(1) 7.3ha @ 60/ha = 438 **28**option(2) 7.3ha @ 80/ha = 584 **174**option(3) 7.3ha @100/ha=730 **320**option(4) 7.3ha @120/ha=876 **466**option(5) 7.3ha @150/ha=1095 **685**option(6) 7.3ha @180/ha=1314 **904**Local Plan(b)- total site area 23.7ha

site area (less phase1) 13.15ha

developable area @70%= 9.2ha

*(note there is no overall target for this in the Plan)*option(1) 9.2ha @ 60/ha = 552 **552**option(2) 9.2ha @ 80/ha = 810 **810**option(3) 9.2ha @100/ha= 920 **920**option(4) 9.2ha @120/ha=1104 **1104**option(5) 9.2ha @150/ha=1380 **1380**option(6) 9.2ha @180/ha=1656 **1656***(note- up to 2008 3000 units had been projected for the York Central site as a whole)*

STAGE 3- alternative permutations of density options were applied to establish the potential for removing development sites from the draft green belt.

site	higher density additional capacity	equivalent green belt "strategic sites to be deleted
scenario A		
British Sugar	80/ha 1140units	
Civil Service Ground	80/ha 295	
Boroughbridge Rd.	80/ha 185	
New Lane	80/ha 368	
York Central(a)	80/ha 174	North of Clifton Moor 2800units
York Central(b)	<u>150/ha1380</u>	North of Haxby <u>747</u>
	3560units	3547
scenario B		
British Sugar	80/ha 1140units	
Civil Service Ground	80/ha 295	
Boroughbridge Rd.	80/ha 185	
New Lane	100/ha 560	East of Metcalfe Lane1800units
York Central(a)	100/ha 920	Earswick 2112
York Central(b)	<u>180/ha1656</u>	North of Haxby <u>747</u>
	4736units	4659
scenario C		
British Sugar	100/ha1710units	
Civil Service Ground	100/ha 441	North of Monks Cross1400units
Boroughbridge Rd.	80/ha 185	Stockton Lane 165
New Lane	120/ha 752	North of Clifton Moor 2800
York Central(a)	120/ha1104	North of Haxby 747
York Central(b)	<u>180/ha1656</u>	Copmanthorpe(12,13) <u>546</u>
	5848units	5658
scenario D		
		Whinthorpe 4680units
		North of Haxby 747
		Copmanthorpe(12) <u>421</u>
as for scenario C above	5848units	5848

selection of these scenarios is not prescriptive, and is intended to illustrate the possibilities of density variation, which could also be applied to other sites not covered in this analysis.

SUMMARY

It is clear from the scenarios A - D that an increase in housing density in some or all of the five selected sites could mean a significant reduction in the amount of land in the draft green belt needed to meet the draft Local Plan housing targets, and contribute to the conservation of the setting of the city, which is acknowledged as being of major importance.

Other permutations could achieve similar results.

Apart from the saving in agricultural land, increasing urban densities will take advantage of savings in essential advance infrastructure costs, when there is no guarantee that such costs will be met by developers of the "out -of-town" sites before development starts, and maximise the potential for intensive public transport services, cycling and pedestrian movement.

Higher densities should mean fast construction times, so that the housing requirement, in itself open to debate, could be met within a relatively short time-scale.

Innovative design, using terraced town housing, courtyard housing, duplex dual aspect apartments and flat blocks of a maximum five storeys, together with adequate open space, would deliver high quality development which maximises the value of these urban sites, which lower densities fail to do.

Annexe "A" lists a number of examples(excluding continental developments) which show how medium to high density housing can be well designed and built at a profit without sacrificing practicality and amenity.

Many of the examples were featured in the exhibition of "Housing Design Awards" promoted by the Environment Forum in the York Guildhall in March 2014. Website details are included for further reference.

references:- Local Plan Preferred Options June 2014
Local Plan Further Sites Consultation + Appendices 1-13 June 2014
Local Plan Publication Draft 2014
"Housing Requirements in York" - Arup 2013
"Local Plan Area Wide Viability Study" - Peter Brett 2013
"York's Objectively Assessed Need for Housing" - Arup 2014
Evidence on Housing Requirements in York - methodology - Arup 2014

ANNEXE "A"- HOUSING EXAMPLES

Newhall "Be" Harlow	Alison Brooks www.alisonbrooksarchitects.com	52 units/ha
Peterborough	(Browne Smith Baker)	61 units/ha
Evolution Square, Edgware	Maccreeanor Lavington	62 units/ha
"The Meadows" Nottingham	Marsh Grochowski	69 units/ha
Prince Charles House, St. Austell	PRP www.prparchitects.co.uk	84 units/ha
Hargood Close, Colchester	Proctor and Matthews www.proctorandmatthews.com	95 units/ha
Bourbon Lane, Shepherds Bush	Cartwright Pickard www.cartwrightpickard.com	96 units/ha
"The Point" Bristol	Feilden Clegg Bradley www.fcbstudios.com	106 units/ha
Baylis Old School, Lambeth	Conran & Partners www.conranandpartners.com	114 units/ha
"The Malings" Newcastle	Ash Sakula www.ashsak.com	126 units/ha
Hulme, Manchester	(MBLA) / Buttress www.buttress.net	130 units/ha
Old Ford Road, Tower Hamlets	Pollard Thomas Edwards www.ptea.co.uk	137 units/ha
Mile End, London	Proctor and Matthews www.proctorandmatthews.com	148 units/ha
Harvard Gardens, Southwark	Pollard Thomas Edwards www.ptea.co.uk	167 units/ha
Chorlton Park, Manchester	Stephenson Bell www.rogerstephenson-architects.com	180 units/ha
Buccleuch House, Hackney	Levitt Bernstein www.levittbernstein.co.uk	181 units/ha
Chester Balmore, Camden	Rick Mather www.rickmather.com	220 units/ha
Royal Road, Southwark	Panter Hudspith www.panterhudspith.com	228 units /ha