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From: [REDACTED]

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To: neighbourhoodplanning@york.gov.uk

Subject: Copmanthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Consultation (Submission Draft)

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Attachments:

[Copmanthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Consultation - Representations by Peacock+Smith \(May 2025\) \(PDF\).pdf](#) 

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached comments in relation to the above consultation.

I would be grateful if you could confirm safe receipt and keep me notified about the progress of the plan.

Yours faithfully

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Managing Director

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14 May 2025

Dear Planning Policy Team

COPMANTHORPE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATION (SUBMISSION DRAFT)

This letter has been prepared in response to the consultation exercise for the making of the Copmanthorpe Neighbourhood Plan ("the Neighbourhood Plan"). This public consultation exercise is active between 26 March and 14 May 2025.

Copmanthorpe Parish Council ("the Parish Council") submitted a Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan, alongside an evidence base document, to the City of York Council ("the LPA" or "the Council") on 29th January 2025.

The Neighbourhood Plan was first published in 2014 and has been updated following public consultations in 2017 and after consultations with respondents and City of York Council.

Our primary concerns with the Submission Draft Local Plan are that it does not reflect revised National Policy in relation to Green Belt; it fails to recognise that the Plan is already out of date in light of the significantly increased housing requirement for York generated by the Revised Standard Methodology; and the Plan does not fully advance sustainable development in that regard.

We consider that there is a compelling case for the Plan to adopt a more flexible approach that recognises recent changes in National policy, and to accommodate future development needs. Land to the west of Copmanthorpe, between the A64 Askham Bryan junction and the railway tracks at the southernmost point of the village, is a logical option to help provide for the increased housing needs now faced by York.

Background

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to provide a policy framework for the management of development in Copmanthorpe over the period 2022 to 2037. It focuses on 8no. core policies, associated to the following principles:

- Policy CNP1 - Housing Development
- Policy CNP2 - Design Principles
- Policy CNP3 - Affordable and Special Housing
- Policy CNP4 - Local Occupancy
- Policy CNP5 - Community Facilities and Organisations
- Policy CNP6 - Green Belt
- Policy CNP7 - Green Infrastructure
- Policy CNP8 - Parish Consultation

The Neighbourhood Plan is an updated revision of that which had previously been published in 2014 and consulted on in 2017. The policy position at this time comprised the 2012 edition of the NPPF, and the LPA's draft Local Plan, dated April 2005.

Section 2 paragraph (b) of the Neighbourhood Plan states:

“The Copmanthorpe Neighbourhood Plan has been adapted to conform with the City of York Council Submitted Local Plan (Publication Draft February 2018).”

The Neighbourhood Plan’s summary of updates closes in 2024 and is understood to take account updates to the NPPF in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023, and the contents of the Council’s draft local plan in 2018, which was subsequently adopted on 27 February 2025.

The NPPF was updated further in December 2024, to account for the Government aspiration of delivering 1.5 million new homes, through notable amendments to paragraphs concerning housing land supply and the introduction of ‘grey belt’ land within the Green Belt. Para 155 of the revised NPPF indicates that development of grey belt via a planning application is not inappropriate, subject to various criteria and compliance with the Golden Rules as set out at Para 156 of the Framework.

Although the York Local Plan was adopted in February 2025 with an annual housing requirement of 822 dwellings (net), the Revised Standard Methodology for the calculation of housing need means that the minimum housing requirement for York increases substantially to 1,217 dwellings/annum (an increase of 395 dwellings/annum). In due course the City Council will therefore need to carry out a review of the Local Plan that reflects this revised housing need figure. This will mean that the Council will be in a position whereby alternative housing sites, beyond existing allocations, will need to be considered for accommodating additional residential development, including on suitable ‘grey belt’ sites within York’s Green Belt.

Para 69 of the Revised NPPF (and 67 of the previous Framework) indicates that one scenario where housing figures may need testing at a neighbourhood plan examination is where there has been a significant change in circumstances that affects the requirement since adoption of the strategic policies plan. It is arguable that the Revised Standard Methodology housing figure for York represents a significant change in circumstances in that regard.

Paragraph 1 (b) of the Neighbourhood Plan states:

“The village enjoys a wide range of facilities, both commercially and publicly provided, and has a large number of community groups run predominantly on a voluntary basis. Given the good access to the A64 trunk road and the regional road network, the great majority of residents in employment commute to York, Leeds and West Yorkshire and further afield.”

The Neighbourhood Plan itself acknowledges that Copmanthorpe occupies a sustainable location in terms of availability of transport links and proximity to amenities/services, and as the second largest village in York, the village is an ideal location for future housing development, at a quantum which would significantly contribute to bettering York’s housing land supply position.

Neighbourhood Plan **Policy CNP1** allows for up to 250no. houses across 2no. allocations at Tadcaster Road (ref. ST31, 158no. homes) and Moor Lane (ref H29. 92no. homes), which occupy positions to the northeast and south of Copmanthorpe respectively, alongside small-scale infill developments of up to 8no. units.

The policy rejects future development to the west of the village, mainly premised on the Landscape Character Assessment which forms part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan. Paragraph 1 of the subtext under Neighbourhood Plan Policy CNP1 presents justification for this position, stating that:

“The Landscape Character Assessment (p30 Part 3 Evidence Base) demonstrates that the land to the west of the built-up area of the Village (areas 5 – 7) “has a strong sense of openness and strong intervisibility with the adjoining western edge of Copmanthorpe and is sensitive to built development or planting which would diminish this sense of openness or intervisibility”. “Development should be avoided

where it would adversely affect the key characteristics or sensitivities of the landscape or where there is a particularly high level of community value”

Furthermore, Neighbourhood Plan **Policy CNP6**, which concerns development in the Green Belt, states that:

“Within the general extent of the Green Belt inappropriate development will not be supported except in very special circumstances. New buildings are regarded as inappropriate development and will not be supported other than in the circumstances identified in the National Planning Policy Framework.”

The justification under Policy CNP6 also attempts to detail the significance, in green belt terms, of land along the western boundary of Copmanthorpe. The reasoned justification under this policy summarises that the land to the west of Copmanthorpe:

- preserves the openness of the Green Belt and holds a high landscape and heritage value;
- protects the character and setting of historic City of York;
- restricts suburban sprawl and promoting and enhances York’s setting as a prime tourist destination;
- provides highly-graded agricultural land and a wildlife haven.

Within the Intention subsection under policy CNP6, paragraph 4 states (emphasis added):

“It is accepted that if the new housing development envisaged in the Neighbourhood Plan is to be accommodated, then given the lack of development sites within the village envelope of Copmanthorpe, some limited incursion into the Green Belt surrounding the village will be necessary. However, development will only be allowed on the preferred sites where it will not undermine the strategic function of the York Green Belt in protecting and enhancing the historical character and setting of the city of York and do least harm to the character, identity and setting of Copmanthorpe itself.”

Paragraph 5 of the Intention then states:

“Beyond this, the Neighbourhood Plan will not support development within the Green Belt, particularly on land to the west of Copmanthorpe, since this would harm the special character and setting of York at one of its principal approaches. It would also harm the character, identity, and setting of the village itself and be detrimental to the openness of the Green Belt and the amenity and well-being of Parish residents.”

Objection to Submission Draft Plan

The Submission Draft Plan is presented as a long-term local policy framework for Copmanthorpe covering the period 2022 to 2037 (15 years), however in some respects it is already out of date before it is Examined.

Firstly, the Revised NPPF introduces the concept of grey belt and therefore it is quite conceivable that planning applications for new housing development in the Green Belt around Copmanthorpe may be warranted to help address housing needs in the event that a 5 year land supply cannot be maintained in York or the housing delivery test (HDT) falls below 75%. This is a pertinent point given that average annual housing completions for York over the last 3 years¹ have only exceeded the Local Plan requirement figure in a single year, and the last HDT measurement was just 79%.

Secondly, the housing requirement upon which the Submission Draft Plan is based has been significantly increased (by around 400 dwellings/annum) following the publication of the Revised Standard Methodology in December 2024. The City Council will need to carry out a review of the Local Plan that reflects this revised housing need figure, and given the inflexible approach of **Policy CNP1** of

¹ Based on the most recent Government HDT measurement.

the Submission Draft Plan towards any development other than allocations ST31 and H29 and small scale development, this will render the plan out of date. Indeed, in the context of Para 69 of the Revised NPPF (and 67 of the previous Framework) there is a credible case for pausing work on the Neighbourhood Plan given that the Revised Standard Methodology housing figure for York represents a 'significant change in circumstances' in that regard. In the light of the substantially increased housing requirement for York required by the Revised Standard Method, it is questionable whether the Submission Draft Plan represents sustainable development when the social objective as set out in the NPPF requires sufficient homes to be provided to meet the needs of current future generations.

Thirdly, Policies CNP1 and CNP6 of the Submitted Draft Plan appear to have been partly justified by a Landscape Character Assessment ("the LCA"), which was prepared in 2015 – some 10 years ago. In this context the NPPF requires that all plans are underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence, and with regard to preparing a neighbourhood plan, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Paragraph: 040, Reference ID: 41-040-20160211, states that *"Proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken.."*

The LCA, and other evidence base documents for the Neighbourhood Plan predate both updates to national and local policy. The datedness of the LCA means it should only be applied limited weight in the formulation of emerging policy, and in this instance, its weighting is such that it conflicts with the updated NPPF (2024) and the inevitable outcomes of the imminent York Local Plan review.

In the light of the above, we consider that the Submission Draft Plan needs to be amended to provide a more flexible policy framework that recognises the significant recent changes to National policy in respect of Green Belt (in particular grey belt), and the future need for the York Local Plan to be amended to provide for additional housing to meet the requirements of the Revised Standard Method. Furthermore, consideration should be given to identification of additional housing options that have the potential to meet future housing needs. Such an approach is encouraged within Planning Practice Guidance to allow Neighbourhood Plans to remain up to date over a longer timescale:

"Neighbourhood planning bodies are encouraged to plan to meet their housing requirement, and where possible to exceed it. A sustainable choice of sites to accommodate housing will provide flexibility if circumstances change, and allows plans to remain up to date over a longer time scale.

Paragraph: 103 Reference ID: 41-103-20190509"

In terms of other housing options, it is considered that land to the west of Copmanthorpe is the logical solution to delivering housing at the settlement, at a scale which will proportionately contribute to addressing the significant shortfall which will imminently occur to York's housing land supply position.

Land to the west of Copmanthorpe, between the A64 Askham Bryan junction and the railway tracks at the southernmost point of the village, appears as the only logical extension to the village, and one which would not drastically alter the settlement form. The east coast mainline bypasses the village along a northeast to southwest lineage, and encloses the village and restricts further development to the east/southeast of the settlement.

The A64 and railway line represent clear defining boundary features, and the field pattern of land to the west is such that a boundary could readily be created in a north to south direction, such that Copmanthorpe could be developed in a way which would retain its triangular settlement pattern. Applying these boundaries, it is considered that land to the west of Copmanthorpe could be brought forward as 'grey belt' per the 2024 NPPF, which has evidently not been considered in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Whilst the Submission Draft Plan presumes against western expansion of Copmanthorpe, we note that this land is not subject to any landscape or biodiversity designations, and it comprises agricultural land with limited biodiversity habitat. Through residential development there is scope to provide structural landscaping that will achieve a softer interface with the surrounding countryside than the current existing

western boundary of the settlement, which is characterised by housing fronting or backing onto the Green Belt, and which provides a hard built edge. Such new development also has the potential to deliver significant biodiversity gains.

We also note that the Submitted Draft Plan refers to the previous allocations of land on the western side of the village for housing/safeguarded land in the 2013 Preferred Options Draft Local Plan. Whilst these allocations did not ultimately progress, their status as draft allocations indicates that Officers of the Council were supportive of their development for housing at the time, and they considered that the land was suitable for release from the Green Belt in that regard.

Summary

For the reasons discussed throughout this representation, we consider that the Submission Draft Plan is out of date. The plan needs to be amended to provide a more flexible policy framework that recognises the significant recent changes to National policy in respect of Green Belt (in particular grey belt), and the future need for the York Local Plan to be amended to provide for additional housing to meet the requirements of the Revised Standard Method. Furthermore, consideration should be given to identification of additional housing options that have the potential to meet future housing needs.

Land to the west of Copmanthorpe needs to be reconsidered within the Neighbourhood Plan, namely within **Policies CNP1** (Housing Development) and **CNP6** (Green Belt). Development on land to the west of Copmanthorpe can be delivered proportionately and in alignment with the settlement's existing pattern of development, whilst ultimately delivering much-needed housing in accordance with the 2024 NPPF.

Yours faithfully



PEACOCK AND SMITH