

York Local Plan Phase Three Hearings.

Strategic Housing Sites.

Policy SS9 (ST7)

Councillor Mark Warters (Osballdwick and Derwent Ward)

29th June 2022

Introduction.

1.1. Given previous submissions regarding the allocation of strategic housing site ST7 I do not wish to burden the Inspectors with repetition except for the one issue that City of York Council and the various developers working together on ST 7 continue to ignore and that is the point raised in connection with a previous Local Plan Inquiry Inspector's comments with regard to the land in which ST 7 is now proposed.

1.2. January 1994 York Green Belt Local Plan Report.
Inspector J.R. Sheppard BSc (Est Man) MPhil FRICS FRTPI concluded;

A7.28 The booklet 'The Green Belts' (1988) states that the main purpose of the York Green Belt is to safeguard the special character of the historic city, which might be endangered by unrestricted expansion. Bearing in mind the national and international fame and importance of York. I can see no reason to anticipate any significant change or derogation from this aim in future. I do not consider that this special character is only related to the walled city, or even just to the green wedges extending almost to that walled city. It relates more to the more general size and character of York. Even from the top of the Minster Tower the countryside around York can barely be seen, other than the parts of the green wedges. Since the construction of the Ring Road views from that road are of especial significance, particularly when they include views of the Minster which define thereby the location of the city centre and indicate the general scale and character of York. I consider that in general there would be serious harm to views of the city from the Ring Road if development were permitted to come right up to the latter and even more so if it passed beyond it.

1.3. In specific regard of the land in which ST 7 is now proposed Inspector Sheppard formed two very similar conclusions, one of which is reproduced;

C61.5 The objection site lies within a broad swathe of open countryside on the Eastern side of the city lying between the built-up area and the Ring Road. This countryside is characterised by fields and hedgerows and forms a pleasant and important landscape setting for the historic city. This countryside setting is particularly evident in views from the Ring Road. The objection site occupies a substantial part of this swathe of open countryside and its development would be a serious encroachment into the countryside which would adversely affect the setting of the city. Encroachment into the countryside in this area would undermine the objectives of Green Belt policy and could not be overcome by landscaping any development on this site.

1.4. Clear and unequivocal, so it would have been reasonable to have expected any subsequent development plans for York to have rejected development proposals for land East of Metcalfe Lane.

- 1.5. The Fact that ST7 has made it through various stages to a point that it is being considered as part of a submitted Local Plan at another public inquiry, albeit with a gap of some 28 years indicates a serious flaw in CYC process, CYC policy SS9 is clearly unsound.
- 1.6. The significance of Inspector Shepard's conclusions for this piece of land is increased when considering how views of York Minster have been compromised In the interim by other developments and how further proposed development in the local plan under examination may impact on views from the Ring Road.
- 1.7. The view of York Minster from the Outer Ring Road across open fields where ST 7 is proposed is one of the best views remaining.

The Proposals.

- 2.1. In reiterating the above it is interesting to review recent CYC and developer correspondence in relation to ST7, in particular EX/CYC/79 Infrastructure May 22 EX/SoCG/11 Statement of Common Ground and earlier developer submissions of March 22 HS/P2/M7/GB/17 and the extensive developer document of Dec 19 EX/HS/M3/PRIN25.
- 2.2. The SoCG and a number of submissions by PBP, the most recent being the March document (para 2.8) are quite clear that the initial 845 dwellings proposed will be expanded to 975 or 1225 to make the proposal viable, the developer has been consistent in making this point for many years.
- 2.3. Any increase in size of the proposed ST 7 site must therefore cause even more serious harm to the setting of York as defined in 1.2 and 1.3 above.
- 2.4. The SoCG refers in para. 3 to 'ongoing engagement between CYC and developers during preparation of the plan'. As I have previously stated there has been no engagement between those proposing this scheme and the local community and that is perhaps understandable given that CYC and developers can still not produce a definitive number of dwellings nor decide on transport routes into and out of the ST 7 site. The recent Infrastructure document May 22 fails to take the opportunity to lift that uncertainty by not producing clear access/egress arrangements.
- 2.5. Access routes onto ST7 will also have significant negative impacts with regard to 1.2 and 1.3 above, most especially if linkages from existing highway networks are unsuitable due to current capacity constraints or future capacity concerns regarding other nearby developments being considered in this Local Plan. The impacts of the surrounding country roads through Murton and further afield have never been given appropriate consideration.
- 2.6. The developer document of Dec 19, EX/HS/M3/PRIN25 in particular paras. 4.22 - 4.34 fails completely, perhaps understandably given encouragement by CYC, to even consider let alone take into account the conclusions of Inspector Sheppard in 1.2 and 1.3 above.
- 2.7. Paragraph 4.32 is particularly of interest, an assertion of only 'minor' harm to the spatial and visual impact of the openness of the York Green Belt in contrast to the previous published opinion of Inspector Sheppard as to adverse affects of serious encroachment of development of this area of Green Belt.
- 2.8. The minutiae of ST7 will of course form part of the discussion at the July hearings but I contend as I have always done that in relation to the York Green Belt the ST7 site should have been ruled out a long time ago, the Minster remains in the same place it was when Inspector Sheppard considered this swathe of land

and reached his very clear conclusions.

Proposed Green Burial Area.

- 3.1. As a material consideration to the ST7 hearing it should be noted that Osbaldwick Parish Council were recently granted planning permission by CYC for a Green Burial Area (Planning Application ref. 21/00415/FUL) that is on Green Belt land North of Murton Way.
- 3.2. The outcome of the Local Plan examination will have a great bearing on how this proposal can be progressed, should the ST7 proposal be rejected and the Inspectors reiterate Inspector Sheppard's previous findings then the Green Burial Area will be an entirely appropriate use for this 9 acre site.
- 3.3. If the Local Plan proposals for ST7 are accepted by the Inspectors then the Green Burial Area site represents an opportunity to include as a suitable green buffer space between the ST7 development and Osbaldwick Village Conservation Area. A buffer space that by virtue of its intended use can not be developed or used for access infrastructure.

Conclusion.

- 4.1. The ST7 proposal is an unwelcome attempt to thoroughly compromise a very important area of Green Belt important to the setting of York as concluded in 1994 by Inspector Sheppard and has no place in a future development plan for York.

Councillor Mark Warters.

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