

Heslington Parish Council

Response to the City of York Local Plan preferred Sites

Consultation 2016.

1. Heslington Parish council (HPC) commented on the City of York Local Plan Preferred options on 29th July 2013.
2. HPC made further comments on the York Local Plan: Further Sites proposal on 16th July 2014
3. This response comments on the current proposals as they affect the Parish of Heslington and its setting within York.

4. **The village and its rural setting**

Heslington sits on the southern edge of York as a green belt village, but despite proximity to York University, has retained its village feel and rural charm. Heslington is the one village of all those previously surrounding York that has retained its historic identity. Most of the village falls within the Conservation Area including the paddocks between Main Street and Holmefield, which were incorporated into the Conservation Area a few years ago precisely in order to retain and protect the structure, identity and character of the village from damage by intrusive housing development, both peripheral and internal. Various policies in the Village Design Statement, adopted by CYC as Supplementary Planning Guidance, stress the importance of these green spaces, together with the views out of the village to open farm land.

5. **Sustainability of sites.**

HPC are concerned that the current proposals only include summaries of probable Sustainability Appraisals (SA) and that Full SAs will only be drafted as the emerging Local Plan moves forward. This makes it difficult to comment at this stage on sustainability and infrastructure matters and any significant effect on the environment, economic and social factors. Further comments will be submitted at the next consultation phase when the full SA is published.

6. Ref ST 27 University expansion site

Objection

HPC support the reduction in the size and extent of this new proposal but the objections made in their previous comments in July 2013 are still valid and for clarity repeat the wording used in the 2014 objection but with the adjusted size:

HPC objects to this proposal for the following reasons:

3.1 *This proposal covers 21.5ha of good agricultural land currently classified as green belt and which forms a vital part of the attractive setting of the city of York and of Heslington village. Its current use as agricultural land complements the undoubted high environmental status of the university lake and the ground-nesting habitat alongside the lake. This will be lost if the land is developed. The proposed development will compromise the setting of the village and views out of the village to the Yorkshire Wolds. The significance of both setting and views is fully recognised in Heslington Conservation Area No28 from CYC which states that “one of the main elements of the character and appearance of the area is - the charm of the rural setting of the south-west outer edge of Main Street.”.*

The application proposal involves reserving a substantial chunk of Green Belt land which currently forms a valuable green wedge protecting the environment of York and Heslington inside the A64. This would radically change the rural character of this area. It is a disproportionately large-scale development in the wrong place.

3.2 *Heslington still preserves its unique village character despite great pressures from the surrounding developments. During the current expansion of the university a great deal of care was taken to preserve the character of Heslington and its setting in Green Belt. This was achieved in two ways: Firstly, by the creation of a buffer zone between the village and the campus. Secondly, and most importantly, by the creation of a barrier between the campus and the access to the village via Low Lane. This was achieved by careful landscaping of the lakes. No traffic, of any sort generated by the University can cut through the heart of the village. This has proved to be very successful. The Inspector in his report from the Public Inquiry for the current University expansion particularly comments that the lake and wetland area will provide a positive limit to built development to the south of the Heslington East site.*

3.3 *The siting of a new development to the south of Low Lane will severely compromise the village integrity and the objectives set out in the Heslington East development brief and landscape and master planning*

documents and particularly the inspector's report which were all designed to make sure that no university traffic goes through the village. It will certainly mean that the village will be used as a main thoroughfare for pedestrians and cyclists and vehicles between the new development and Heslington West.

3.4 *If further land is required, it should be prioritized to be taken to the East of Campus East and Low Lane, up to the Grimston Bar roundabout. It should prevent access to Low Lane from the University.*

3.5 *If this allocation were to be approved then its use and access must be conditioned so that:*

- 1. *There should be no direct access from the site, when developed, into the village other than via Field Lane.***
- 2. *The Local Plan should stipulate that the land can only be developed for the university's own academic purposes, and not be designated as general development land.***
- 3. *All existing public routes and Rights of Way should be retained in any completed development***

7. Ref ST 15 Land to the West of Elvington Lane

Objection

HPC welcome the reduction in the size of the largest proposed site in the Plan. HPC also welcome the fact that this proposal is partly on Brownfield land. HPC consider that for development of this scale, there are currently too many unknown issues including a lack of information on bio-diversity mitigation, traffic infrastructure and landscape strategy. HPC object to this proposal.

8. Ref H56 Land at Hull Road

Qualified Support

HPC support this proposal provided that there is no vehicular access onto Windmill Lane or to York Science Park and University Road. HPC also support the continued preservation of the mature trees around the site.

9. **Ref ST4 Land adjacent to Hull Road**

Qualified Support

The comments made by HPC in support of this proposal in 2014 still apply and in particular:

This site should be providing good family accommodation and affordable housing. It should not be wasted on student housing.

10. **Ref ST6 Land North of Grimston Bar**

Objection

HPC object to this proposal.

The site forms an important part of the open land setting of the southern part of the City of York. Development here will add to congestion and air quality problems on the highways in Heslington and including Hull Road and Heslington Lane and Field lane.

Heslington Parish Council
11 September 2016