

**Whitby Business Park Area Action Plan**

**Joint Meeting of Members from North York Moors National Park Authority  
and Scarborough Borough Council**

**Council Chamber, Scarborough Town Hall**

**6<sup>th</sup> May 2009 10am**

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Role and purpose of the joint meetings – report attached
3. Background to Area Action Plan – presentation at meeting
4. Issues and objectives for the Area Action Plan – report attached
5. Highways issues – verbal report at meeting
6. Timescale, draft Project Plan arrangements for consultation – presentation at meeting
7. Next steps – presentation at meeting
8. Date and time of next meeting

## **Whitby Business Park Area Action Plan**

### Report to Joint Meeting of Members from North York Moors National Park Authority and Scarborough Borough Council

6 May 2009

#### Role and Purpose of the Joint Meetings

##### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 As Members will be aware, the Whitby Business Park Area Action Plan is being prepared jointly by the National Park Authority and Scarborough Borough Council to enable a co ordinated and comprehensive approach to be taken to the future of the site.
- 1.2 Arrangements for joint working need to be established in order to facilitate dialogue between the two authorities as work on the Area Action Plan progresses. The arrangements have been discussed with Members from both authorities and the joint Member meetings have been agreed as the best way forward. The minutes from the joint Member meetings will be reported to the Committees of the respective authorities to inform decisions when matters relating to the Area Action Plan are being considered. Up to four joint meetings are thought likely to be necessary at this stage. Meetings at officer level will be arranged as required in addition to the joint
- 1.3 In order that Members and officers are clear about the role and purpose of the meetings, it is recommended that the aims of the joint meetings are agreed from the outset. Members are invited to comment on the following suggested aims:
  1. To provide a forum at which Members from the National Park Authority and Scarborough Borough Council together can jointly discuss matters relating to Whitby Business Park and how these will be addressed through the Area Action Plan.
  2. To provide a forum for discussion prior to formal consideration of matters relating to the Whitby Business Park Area Action Plan including draft documents, arrangements for consultation and consideration of comments received during consultation.
  3. To consider issues at Whitby Business Park in relation to other organisations who will be invited to attend the meetings where they have a specific area of interest or expertise relating to issues that need to be addressed eg Highway Authority, Environment Agency.
  4. To ask officers to prepare notes of the joint meetings and put forward matters for decision to the relevant Committees of the respective authorities when they are considering items relating to the Area Action Plan.

2. Points for Discussion

2.1 The following points would be useful areas for further discussion at the meeting:

- Do Members agree with the suggested aims?
- Are there any other aims that should be included?

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## **Whitby Business Park Area Action Plan**

### Report to Joint Meeting of Members from North York Moors National Park Authority and Scarborough Borough Council

6 May 2009

#### Issues and Objectives for the Whitby Business Park Area Action Plan

1. Introduction
- 1.1 The Area Action Plan for the Business Park is being produced in the context of the Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy, the Scarborough Local Plan and emerging Core Strategy and the adopted North York Moors Core Strategy and Development Policies.
- 1.2 Planning Policy Statement 12 advises that Area Action Plans should be used when there is a need to provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. In areas of change, they should identify the distribution of land uses and their inter relationships, including site specific allocations and set the timetable for the implementation of the proposals. The Planning Advisory Service advises that they can assist in producing a consensus as to the right strategy for an area and how it might be implemented. It also strongly encourages authorities to explore the possibilities of preparing Development Plan Documents jointly with other authorities where practical.
- 1.3 Responsibility for the planning function at Whitby Business Park is split between Scarborough Borough Council and the North York Moors National Park. This presents challenges in ensuring that the site is dealt with as a 'whole' and ensuring a consistency of approach in the way that planning applications are dealt with. A joint Area Action Plan for Whitby Business Park produced by both authorities would therefore help with addressing a number of issues currently affecting the site.
- 1.4 Under the regulations covering the production of Development Plan Documents, the early tasks in the preparation of a document are to notify the 'statutory' consultation organisations as to the subject of the proposed document and invite representations on what it should contain. Local Planning Authorities should also consider whether it is appropriate to invite representations from residents and businesses in the area to inform them of the preparation of the document and must take into account any representations received as a result of preparing the Development Plan Document.
- 1.5 It is therefore important to consider at an early stage some of the issues that the Area Action Plan needs to address and to set some objectives for the outcomes of the document. This report outlines some issues for Members to consider, but suggestions for further matters affecting the Business Park are invited. The issues identified will form the basis of a Discussion Paper which will be used to generate discussion and comments on the content of the Area Action Plan at the first stage of consultation.

## 2. Highway Issues

2.1 The Highway Authority has expressed concern about the incremental expansion of Whitby Business Park and in particular the three separate access roads onto the A171 which could cause difficulties in access to and from the site if any of the junctions became blocked. There is also a risk that piecemeal development by individual firms could prejudice the possibilities for different road layouts that could improve access throughout the site and open up areas for further development. A representative from the Highway Authority will give a verbal report to the meeting about the problems with the existing highway layout and possible solutions to some of the problems.

2.2 The highway layout and access onto the A171 is a critical issue to address if any further expansion of the site is to be considered in the future and will need to be addressed in the Area Action Plan. Scarborough Borough Council is commissioning a Feasibility Study which will develop options for resolving some of the current difficulties with access to and from the site and will also look at:

- Creating significant public realm improvements
- Changes to traffic management arrangements
- Access to and from the A171
- Links within the site to develop areas for future development

Work on the Feasibility Study and Area Action Plan will be co-ordinated and the need for this has been emphasised in the tender document for the Feasibility Study. It will also be necessary to co ordinate any consultation work on the documents in order to avoid any duplication or confusion.

2.3 North Yorkshire County Council has commenced work on a Service Centre Transportation Strategy for Whitby which will cover the town and the Esk Valley area. The process involves a comprehensive study of the accessibility issues facing towns and villages which act as a “hub” for the surrounding area providing employment, shopping, education and healthcare. The final strategy document will form the basis of the transportation infrastructure needs of Whitby and its rural hinterland.

## 3. Further Development of the Business Park

3.1 The Scarborough Borough Employment Land Review (2006) concluded that the topography of Whitby could limit the potential for large scale commercial and industrial development and the Business Park has provided a location for larger business operators. The report noted that whilst the majority of buildings on the site were occupied, demand was not viewed as being high with properties on the market taking some time to dispose of. Conversely if an occupier was looking for premises then they may be forced to seek occupation elsewhere given the time lag for development. The report did note that the availability of properties could stimulate the market and provide interest for owner occupiers to locate to the Park. However, Scarborough Borough Council reports that interest in and demand for units at the site has been good.

3.2 The ‘Rural Capitals’ study commissioned by Yorkshire Forward suggests that towns like Whitby will benefit most from attracting ‘high value’ employment such as

technology and research businesses. In order to achieve this, any future expansion of the site would need to provide a high quality environment and management to attract this type of business.

- 3.3 The Area Action Plan process will need to assess the demand for employment space on the Business Park and whether further land should be allocated to meet demand and consolidate the role of the Business Park. It must also consider the type of employment land that is needed, whether general industrial or more 'high tech' business as suggested by the Yorkshire Forward study. Despite the current economic downturn it is important to ensure the long term future of the site and its contribution to the economy of Whitby which is a Principal Town in the Regional Spatial Strategy and the surrounding rural area.
- 3.4 The site to the north of Whitby Seafoods which was allocated for industrial/commercial use in the former North York Moors Local Plan has not yet been developed and this will be one area of land that will need to be considered for further expansion of the site, taking into account any infrastructure constraints which have prevented it being developed in the past. However, there may be other sites that should be considered on the edge of the Business Park. The first stage of consultation on the Area Action Plan should include a request for sites to be put forward for consideration so that they can be fully assessed in relation to the demand for further employment space at the site. This will involve looking at the capacity of all types of infrastructure on the site to accommodate further development and whether any improvements are needed.

#### 4. Environmental Improvements

- 4.1 The Business Park has developed incrementally and is now in multiple ownerships. This has resulted in varying standards of management and upkeep and some parts of the site are untidy and unsightly. There have been previous initiatives to landscape parts of the site, in 1986 approximately £20,000 was spent on landscaping to make it more attractive to businesses and help to address the high levels of unemployment in Whitby in the early 1980s. The area would benefit from further environmental improvements to upgrade its appearance and attraction to new businesses, including improvements to signage. The Feasibility Study will also be looking at options to improve the public realm of the Business Park. The needs of businesses and employees for improved facilities such as external seating areas should also be addressed through the Area Action Plan.
- 4.2 The site has developed over a long period of time and there is a variety of building design and styles across the site. The opportunity to improve existing buildings will be limited, however there is an opportunity to raise the standards of design for new development on the site to provide greater unity. Its location on the edge of Whitby and adjoining the National Park justifies a high standard of design and landscaping for any new development and design guidelines for new development could be incorporated into the Area Action Plan.
- 4.3 Core Policy E of the North York Moors Core Strategy and Development Policies document requires developments of over 200 square metres to generate energy on site from renewable sources to displace at least 10% of predicted CO2 emissions. New units in that part of the Business Park in the Park will therefore be 'caught' by this policy and there is a need to provide further guidance for developers on the type of installations that will be appropriate to meet the requirement of the policy whilst having regard to landscape impact.

## 5. Retailing

- 5.1 A number of the units on the site operate retail sales, particularly the builders' supply merchants. In general however, retailing has been ancillary to the main employment use of the site. More recently a 'Homebase' DIY shop has been developed adjacent to the former 'Europower' site, on the A171 frontage.
- 5.2 Members will be aware that for some years now there has been interest from national retailers seeking to gain a presence in Whitby. Recent rumours (which appear to have substance) suggest that attention is focussing on the Business Park, and a planning application may be submitted in the near future (on land within the area for which the Borough Council is planning authority). This clearly raises a number of issues of relevance to the Area Action plan process, and could well shape the nature and scope of how the action plan develops.

## 6. Sustainability Appraisal

- 6.1 .A Sustainability and assessment under the Habitats Regulations will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the Area Action and work on this has been started.

## 7. Objectives for the Area Action Plan

- 7.1 It is important that the objectives for the Area Action Plan which will address the issues outlined above are agreed. The following objectives are suggested for discussion at the meeting:
1. To contribute to Whitby's role as a Principal Town in the Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy.
  2. To implement the commitment to further employment development at Whitby Industrial Estate/Business Park in the Scarborough Local Plan, and the emerging Scarborough Core Strategy and the adopted North York Moors Core Strategy and Development Policies documents.
  3. To provide a framework for the future development of the site and a consistent approach to the determination of planning applications between the North York Moors National Park Authority and Scarborough Borough Council.
  4. To propose modifications to the highway layout to secure better access to and from the site and serve new developments and to address the concerns of the Highway Authority in relation to highway safety.
  5. To propose environmental improvements to improve the quality of the environment at the site and improve site facilities for employees.
  6. To review allocations in the Scarborough and former North York Moors Local Plans and assess the scale of further allocations required to meet foreseeable and/or stimulate demand together with the type of employment land needed.

7. To provide guidelines for the scale, design and landscaping of new development in any new allocations and the type of renewable energy installations that might be appropriate for the site.
8. To act as a catalyst for further investment in the site.

8. Points for Discussion

8.1 The following points would be useful areas for further discussion at the joint member meeting:

- Are the issues identified correct or are there any additional areas that should be considered?
- Are there any additional objectives that the Area Action Plan should be seeking to deliver?

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