

Whitby Business Park Area Action Plan Joint Meeting

Notes of the meeting held at The Council Chambers, Town Hall, Scarborough on 6 May 2009.

Present:

Scarborough Borough Council	Cllr Dorothy Clegg, Cllr Hazel Lynskey, Cllr Jim Preston
North York Moors National Park	Jane Mitchell, Cllr Helen Swiers, Cllr Tim Lawn, Philip Lawson

In attendance:

Scarborough Borough Council	Jill Low, David Walker, Marcus Whitmore, Matthew Lickes, David Kelly
North York Moors National Park Authority	Val Dilcock, Sarah Housden, Fiona Farnell

Apologies:

Scarborough Borough Council	Pauline Elliott
North Yorkshire County Highway Authority	James Kennedy

Welcome, Introduction, Apologies and Appointment of Chair

Val Dilcock welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting, an around the table introduction took place.

Members agreed to appoint Philip Lawson as chair for this meeting and to rotate the chair between the National Park and the Borough Council.

Role and Purpose of the joint meetings

Scarborough Borough Councillors requested a copy of the National Parks 'Core Strategy and Development Policies' for information.

Members agreed aims 1 – 4 contained within the report as follows:

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.

Notes of the joint meetings would be available and will form an important consideration when items relating to the Area Action Plan are being formally considered by the respective authorities.

Background to Area Action Plan

Members received a presentation at the meeting on the background to the preparation of the Area Action Plan. The following matters were raised:

- At a recent cabinet meeting unemployment figures for the Whitby area were not optimistic and lost jobs lead to a reduction in spending power which would be felt in the surrounding area.
- It was confirmed that some of the land within the allocation in the former North York Moors Local Plan was still owned by Whitby Seafoods, although some land swapping had taken place.

Members were keen to investigate how far land ownership is constraining future development of sites or whether infrastructure capacity is the key issue.

Issues and objectives for the Area Action Plan and Highway Issues

Members considered these reports together.

Members considered a note which was circulated from the Highway Authority which outlined some of the difficulties with access to and from the site.

The following matters were discussed by Members and Officers:

- That it was inconvenient when visiting more than one location on the Business Park, that you have to keep coming back onto the A171 and was there any possibility of compulsory purchasing some land to make link roads. It was confirmed that the Borough Council had right of access across some land which they wanted to use to link up two of the roads.
- Businesses in the past had never put any finances into the infrastructure and it was confirmed that the Highway Authority would be looking for some contributions in the future.
- The group was asked if they accepted the Highway Authority's concerns and they indicated that they did.
- The existing buildings had been put up by individual businesses.
- Query over why certain businesses could not relocate to the Business Park. It was confirmed that businesses/employers preferred serviced land, which the Business Park does not have. Yorkshire Forward funding may be available to assist in making the land serviced land.
- At present there is unprecedented interest in the Whitby area by businesses.
- Yorkshire Forward funding is only available to assist/boost the labour market through re-skilling/training.

- It was felt that not all the untidiness on the Business Park was the fault of the businesses; travellers had previously used the site which had caused difficulties. A sub-regional working group and a project officer were now in place to work with the travellers, which was hoped would help. It was noted that a seasonal site in the area was needed for the travellers.
- It was noted that the Business Park was a mixture of buildings and that the infrastructure should have been in place at the beginning; however it is never too late to introduce a corporate image, as the Business Park at Scarborough has.
- Landscaping needed to be both soft and hard.
- The business group which exists on the Business Park needs to be engaged in the Area Action Plan.
- Were any powers available to get businesses to tidy up their sites. The National Park confirmed that there were a number of enforcement issues on the site. The Borough Council has recently increased its enforcement staff which will help to address some of the problems on the Scarborough borough council area of the site.
- The National Park has a renewable energy policy and this is something that the Borough Council will also be doing. The Economic Development Team at the Council is keen to encourage sustainable development.
- Current retail uses on the Business Park are ancillary to the main employment use. However more recently the Borough Council has received enquiries from retailers proposing significant development in particular a meeting had recently taken place with Sainsbury's.
- Members discussed whether the 50 jobs at Europower would be relocated elsewhere on the site.
- Members were advised that any retail proposals in this area would need to be assessed in light of potential impact on the town centre
- The National Park Authority views the Business Park as an employment site and not as a retail park although they do appreciate that it could be increasingly difficult to "hold the line".
- Sainsbury's are confident that the dynamics of the town centre would not be affected. However Scarborough Borough Council feels that there are a lot of things to address including PPS6 with regards to pedestrian and public transport accessibility. A national test can also be applied. Sainsbury's are yet to submit a retail impact assessment. The Borough Council will report further discussions with Sainsbury's to this group.

Key Points from discussions:

- The Business Park needs to have serviced land to make it more attractive to businesses.
- The key areas to look at are: the amount and type of employment land need for the future and infrastructure/obstacles to development.
- Highways layout is a key issue for the future development of the site and developer contributions are likely to be required.
- Scarborough Borough council is commissioning a Feasibility Study using funding from Yorkshire Forward looking at highway arrangements and public realm improvements on the site.

The Area Action Plan must look at the types of businesses that are needed for future employment – the "Rural Capitals" study by Yorkshire Forward suggests that towns like Whitby will benefit most from attracting "high tech" businesses.

Members agreed the aims for the Area Action Plan, 1 – 8 contained within the report as follows:

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.

Timescale, draft Project Plan arrangements for consultation

Members received a presentation at the meeting.

The following matters were discussed:

- The Borough Council hopes to publish its draft Core Strategy in the Autumn. Until then any applications submitted would have to be dealt with under the Scarborough Local Plan.
- That it would not be practical to put together an interim design guide for the Business Park - needs to be part of the Area Action Plan.
- That it would not be possible to request funding for infrastructure from developers putting in applications at present as there was no policy to base the request on.

Groups or organisations to be consulted should include:

Chamber of Trade; Whitby Town Council; The Business Park Business Group; Hawsker cum Stainsacre Parish Council; East Side Trading Association.

It was noted that more would be achieved with the businesses on the Business Park if a positive approach is taken to the issue of tidying up sites.

Any Other Business/Date and time for next meeting

There was no other business. The date of the next meeting was agreed to be held in October at The National Park Offices in Helmsley.