

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

16 June 2026

North Yorkshire Council Local Plan Timetable

Report of the Corporate Director of Community Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To recommend to Executive the approval and publication of the Council's Local Plan Timetable, which includes key milestones as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026. The report also proposes delegated authority to the Corporate Director for Community Development in consultation with from the Executive Member for Open to Business for specific reporting tasks that form part of the new Local Plan process.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The preparation of a Local Plan Timetable is a statutory requirement of the recently updated national planning legislation and associated regulations that requires local authorities preparing Local Plans to set out a timetable for the commencement, achievement of key milestones and the adoption of the Local Plan.
- 2.2 The requirement for the Local Plan Timetable replaces the existing local development scheme considered and agreed by the Executive in a report dated 18 March 2025. The updated process for preparing a Local Plan and how this differs with the former plan making system in respect of the timeline is covered later in this report.
- 2.3 This report will set out an overview of the process, key legislative requirements and the recommended timetable that gives North Yorkshire Council the best possible opportunity of meeting the new mandatory 30-month period to prepare a Local Plan.
- 2.4 The report will also set out the key risks to delivery of the Local Plan within the mandatory 30-month window.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Section 15B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ("the Act") requires all local planning authorities to prepare and maintain a "Local Plan Timetable". The Act sets out the requirement for what the Local Plan Timetable must specify including:
- a) the matters which the authority's Local Plan for their area is to deal with,
 - b) the geographical area to which the authority's Local Plan is to relate,
 - c) any supplementary plans which the authority are to prepare,
 - d) the subject matter and geographical area, site or sites to which each of those supplementary plans is to relate,
 - e) how the authority propose to comply with the requirement in section 15F(1) (requirement in relation to design code)
 - f) whether the authority's Local Plan for their area is to be a joint Local Plan and, if so, each other local planning authority for whose area the joint Local Plan is to be their Local Plan,
 - g) whether the authority are to prepare a joint supplementary plan and, if so, each other local planning authority who are to prepare that joint supplementary plan with them,

- h) any matter or area in respect of which the authority have agreed (or propose to agree) to the constitution of a joint committee under section 15J, and
- i) a timetable for the preparation of the authority's Local Plan for their area, and any supplementary plans the authority are to make, which is consistent with this Part and any regulations made under it.
- 3.2 The proposed Local Plan Timetable is set out in Section 5.0 and Appendix 1 and covers the matters above where appropriate, as set out below.
- 3.3 The authority is not proposing to take forward any Supplementary Plans currently and points (c), (d), (g) are not relevant. This may change in the future, but it is assumed that if the need arose the Council would seek to update and amend the timetable to incorporate any additional documents. Examples of when it may be relevant to take a Supplementary Plan forward could include, but is not limited to:
- Address the requirements of future Government policy or directives that require a rapid response; or
 - Set out the detail of new settlement options if that is the direction the Council decide to follow.
- 3.4 Part (e) relates to the consideration of design codes within the Local Plan. Whilst this requirement was set out in the Act, the subsequent Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Commencement No. 11 and Saving and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2026 has sought not to bring this requirement into force. Notwithstanding this the Local Plan will still consider how best to establish positive design principles through design codes and/or master planning of sites and site requirements for allocations.
- 3.5 Parts (f) and (h) relate to jointly prepared Local Plans. North Yorkshire Council is not proposing to prepare its Local Plan on a joint basis with any neighbouring authorities. A further report on the preparation of a Joint Minerals and Waste Plan will be brought to the Executive at a future date. This will set out the joint working arrangements with the City of York Council and the North York Moors National Park Authority.
- 3.6 Prior to the changes to the Planning Act and Regulations, the Council had been preparing a single Local Plan for North Yorkshire under the former plan-making system. To provide context to the new timetable set out later in this report, the table below shows the key milestones established in the previously agreed timetable (the local development scheme).

Stage	Description	Timescale
'Issues and Options' consultation	First consultation to identify the issues to be addressed through the plan	May – July 2025 (<i>complete</i>)
'Preferred Options' consultation	Working draft of the plan – emerging policies and site allocations	Q4 2026
'Pre-Submission' consultation	Version of the plan the Council intends to submit for Examination	Q4 2027
Submission to the Secretary of State		Q3 2028
Examination		2028-29
Adoption		2029

Figure 1: Adopted local development scheme milestones

- 3.7 When those milestones were agreed in March 2025, officers highlighted that impending reforms to the plan-making system would likely impact the preparation of the North Yorkshire Local Plan (NYLP), and that further work would be required to understand the implications once the details of the reforms were known. These are now understood and planning authorities that **cannot** submit their plan to the Secretary of State for examination by 31 December 2026, **must** work under the full provisions of the ‘new’ plan-making system. In practice, this means following the new rules and procedures (regulations) including all the consultation stages and related production milestones. The introduction of the new plan making reforms supersedes the requirement for North Yorkshire Council (NYC) to produce a Local Plan within five years of reorganisation.
- 3.8 This should not be interpreted as having to start the Local Plan afresh, as much of the content, evidence and work produced / committed to date will simply be ‘repackaged’ within the new system. However, it does mean that the Council needs to consider how this is communicated (internally and externally) and to be clear on how the previous ‘Issues and Options’ consultation will feed into and influence the plan under the new system. The proposed timetable presented in this report does not differ significantly with the date of adoption still expected to be in 2029.

4.0 THE NEW PLAN MAKING SYSTEM: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

- 4.1 The headline feature of the new plan-making system is the mandatory 30-month production timescale. However, as shown at Figure 2 below, there are tasks that must be completed before the 30-month period starts. Therefore, the timescale should be understood as 30-months plus any requisite lead-in time (i.e. including the “Get Ready” stage). It is also important to note that within the process, only 23 months are designated for preparing the plan, with the remaining seven months set aside for examining the plan and eventual adoption.

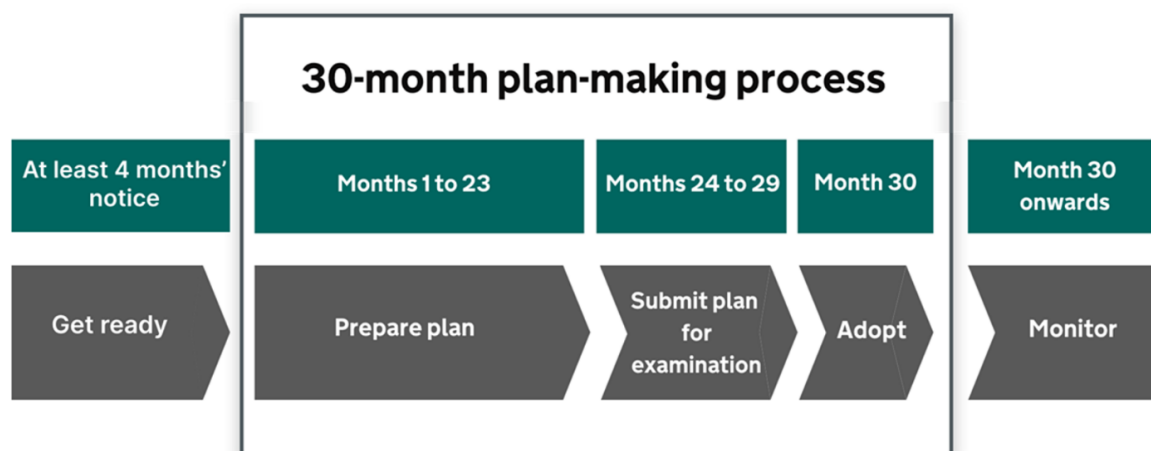


Figure 2: Summary of plan production stages

- 4.2 It should be noted that this new 30-month timescale has been implemented as a ‘one size fits all’ approach, which applies equally to both the smallest and largest local planning authorities. Consequently, no additional considerations are factored in even though the Council has the largest Local Plan in the country in terms of geographical area, over two thousand (2,000) sites submitted to date that require assessment, as well as the requirement to start the plan-making stages from scratch.

- 4.3 The Council must produce a Local Plan Timetable which shows that the plan will be delivered within 30 months. It is therefore imperative that we look to frontload the plan-making process as much as possible. An extended period of early preparation (the “Get Ready” stage – before notice is given on or before the 31 December 2026) will pay dividends later in the process when the production milestones come quickly. No timeline is provided for how long the “Get Ready” stage should take although it must be completed by 30 April 2027. By utilising this time on getting it right; planning the content, procuring the evidence, getting the processes, systems and governance arrangements in place, this will contribute to efficient and expedited plan-making when the 30-month period formally starts.
- 4.4 The new plan making system represents a significant change and follows a process that proceeds through four distinct phases; ‘Get Ready’, ‘Prepare the Plan’, ‘Examination’ and ‘Adoption’ with three formal consultation stages; ‘Scoping’, ‘Proposed Content and Evidence’ and ‘Proposed Full Plan’.
- 4.5 Other than the condensed timeline, one of the most significant changes is what is termed as ‘Gateway Assessments’. These are independent checkpoints at the beginning, middle and end of plan preparation. They are designed to allow for the early identification of potential legal, procedural and ‘soundness’ issues, allowing local planning authorities to resolve them before they cause delays later in the process. Used effectively, these Gateway Assessments should reduce the time spent at examination, which is expected to be reduced to a maximum of six months. The system should also provide greater transparency for stakeholders with the publishing of the Gateway Assessment findings. For information, a table showing the comprehensive local plan process can be found at Appendix 2.

Democratic and decision-making process

- 4.6 Preparing the plan in a condensed period will be challenging. Consequently, the decision-making process needs to be plotted out precisely up-front to ensure any arrangements work within the constraints of the shorter plan-making timescales.
- 4.7 In setting the timetable and proposing the commencement of the Local Plan as set out in Section 5.0 of the report, the aim is to reduce the level of risk associated with the decision-making process by expediting as much plan preparation upfront (in the ‘Get Ready’ stage). This proactive work will leave the plan in a position whereby it is possible to ensure sufficient lead in times to the decision-making process; typically, 7-8 weeks. It should be noted though that the further the plan progresses, the greater the likelihood that the period available for content production could be squeezed.
- 4.8 The ability to meet the deadlines set out under Section 5.0, will also be reliant on specific tasks being delegated to the Corporate Director for Community Development in consultation with the Executive Member. There are several opportunities where the Head of Planning Policy and Place (HPPP) could utilise delegated powers to expedite the process, typically involving the administrative tasks of plan preparation, and these could include:
- the publication of monthly updated Local Plan Timetable and other Local Plan data as necessary
 - publishing the Notice of Commencement
 - publishing consultation findings and summaries (scoping, content and evidence), and
 - signing off Gateway 2 and 3 recommendations

4.9 The guidance requires that the timetable must be updated:

- every month if there are any changes to the dates
- at each Gateway assessment and following the publishing of the examiners report; and
- if you decide to carry out additional consultation

4.10 Any changes to the timeline must be recorded with a schedule of amendments for the timetable to be clear and concise showing those amendments alongside the timetable.

4.11 Overall, this has been a fundamental change to the plan making system in terms of the stages of production with new consultation and engagement requirements, the mandatory passing through of three gateway assessments and most importantly the need to do all of this and adopt a Local Plan in a significantly condensed timeframe of 30-months. The difficulty in doing this, especially for an authority with the geographical scale and scope of North Yorkshire, and with a substantially increased housing requirement to allocate of over 4100 homes per annum, cannot be underestimated.

5.0 DEVELOPING A LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE: HOW CAN NYC BEST MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF PREPARING AND ADOPTING A LOCAL PLAN IN 30-MONTHS?

5.1 The Act (as supplemented by Regulations) sets out a very specific set of requirements that need to be addressed in the timetable. In addition to setting out the matters which the Local Plan will deal with, and the geographical areas covered (North Yorkshire excluding the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the North York Moors National Park areas) there is a requirement to set out specific dates for key milestones in the preparation of the Local Plan.

5.2 To enable a recommendation to be set for the timings of these key milestones, officers have weighed up various options for progressing the preparation of the Local Plan and developed these with Management Board and in discussion with Legal and Democratic Services. Further information on the consideration of the various options is set out under Section 7.0.

5.3 Following detailed consideration, the optimum date for commencing the Local Plan preparation to allow North Yorkshire Council the best opportunity to deliver the plan within the required 30-month timeframe is 30 April 2027. This is the date on which the council would publish the Gateway 1 assessments and formally commence the 30-month period. This does not mean that work is not progressed until then. On the contrary, significant preparation work is already in train in terms of evidence collation and will continue up to and beyond that date with several major milestones prior to that date; the scoping consultation being one. The table below sets out the timetable for the dates at which each critical key stage will be met.

Regs	Plain English	Date
(a) the date on which the local planning authority will make their notice of intention to commence local plan preparation available under regulation 19(1) ,	Publication of “notice of intention to commence local plan preparation”	Fri 2nd Oct 2026
(b) the date on which the local planning authority will make a notice of scoping consultation available under regulation 20(1)(b) , (5) <i>In this regulation, “notice of scoping consultation” means a notice specifying—</i> (a) <i>the matters which the local planning authority have invited representations about under paragraph (1)(a)(i) and (ii),</i> (b) <i>the date on or before which representations about the matters set out in paragraph (1)(a)(i) and (ii) must be received by the local planning authority,</i> (c) <i>the address to which representations about the matters set out in paragraph (1)(a)(i) and (ii) may be made, and</i> (d) <i>that representations about the matters set out in paragraph (1)(a)(i) and (ii) may be accompanied by a request to be notified at a specified address when one or more of the following steps occur— (each stage...)</i>	Publish Consultation Notice for “Scoping Consultation” including draft Engagement Strategy (Signals the start of the consultation)	Fri 23 rd Oct 2026 (lasting 6 weeks)
(c) the date on or before which representations will have to be received by the local planning authority in accordance with regulation 20(4) (scoping consultation),	End of “Scoping Consultation”	Fri 4 th Dec 2026
(d) the date on which the local planning authority will make their self-assessment summary available under regulation 21(3) ,	Publish Gateway 1 self-assessment summary	Fri 30 th Apr 2027
(e) the date on which the local planning authority will make a notice of plan content and evidence consultation available under regulation 23(1)(a) ,	Start “Content and Evidence Consultation”	Fri 4 th Sept 2027 (6 weeks)
(f) the date on or before which representations will have to be received by the local planning authority in accordance with regulation 23(4) (consultation on proposed local plan content and evidence),	End of “Content and Evidence Consultation”	Fri 15 th Oct 2027
(g) the date on which observations and advice will be sought under section 15CA(3) of the Act in accordance with regulation 26 (gateway 2) ,	Seek observations and advice through Gateway 2 Assessment (when we send to PINS)	Fri 5 th May 2028
(h) the date on which the local planning authority will make a notice of proposed local plan consultation available under regulation 27(1)(a) ,	Start the “Proposed Local Plan Consultation”	Fri 29 th Sept 2028 (8 weeks)
(i) the date on or before which representations will have to be received by the local planning authority in accordance with regulation 27(4) (consultation on the proposed local plan),	End the “Proposed Local Plan Consultation”	Fri 24 th Nov 2028
(j) the date on which observations and advice will be sought under section 15CA(3) of the Act in accordance with regulation 31 (gateway 3: prescribed requirements assessment) ,	Seek observations and advice through Gateway 3 Assessment (when we send to PINS)	Fri 16 th Feb 2029
(k) the date on which the local planning authority will submit their proposed local plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination under section 15D(1) of the Act, and	Submit the “Proposed Local Plan”	Fri 30 th Mar 2029
(l) the date on which the local planning authority will consider adopting the proposed local plan under section 15EA of the Act.	Adoption of the Local Plan	Fri 26 th Oct 2029

Figure 3: Local Plan Timetable – Milestones

5.4 The table sets out the milestone dates that are being proposed under this Local Plan Timetable. As set out under paragraphs 4.8 and 4.9 there will be a mandatory requirement for publication of monthly updating of the timetable.

5.5 Any minor amendments to the timetable would be delegated to the HPPP in consultation with the Executive Member. For more substantial amendments, advice would be sought to determine if this would need to be reported to and agreed by the Executive.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

6.1 The preparation of a new Local Plan will help the Council to deliver its Corporate Plan Vision to build on North Yorkshire's natural capital, strong local economy and resilient communities, to improve the way local services are delivered and support a good quality of life. The Local Plan will help to deliver the spatial elements of the Council's ambitions in relation to Place and Environment, Economy, Health and Wellbeing and People

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 The Council has a statutory duty to prepare a new Local Plan for North Yorkshire and there are no options in respect of that absolute requirement. The options in relation to this report relate to the timings of the Local Plan preparation process, which have been developed through discussions with Management Board and Legal and Democratic Services.

7.2 In collaboration with the above officers, different options were considered for the pivotal 'Content and Evidence' consultation stage. The content of this stage is discretionary in terms of the matters it can include and could take the form of a light touch version or a full draft plan. This can be summarised as follows:

- **'Light Touch'** – proposed vision, aims and objectives; emerging spatial strategy; summary of evidence required (obtained/to be commissioned); summary of policies to be included (policy list)
- **'Hybrid'** – minimum requirements (as above), plus some policies and/or sites
- **'Full Draft'** – minimum requirements (as above), plus all policies and sites

7.3 The following principles were developed by officers to aid the assessment of the options for progressing the plan:

- **Meet Government requirements** – conform to national regulations, policy and guidance, and demonstrates that the Plan will be delivered in 30 months (plus the requisite lead in time).
- **Are appropriate for North Yorkshire** – provide a timetable that is deliverable from a workload perspective and that gives the best chance of delivering beneficial outcomes for North Yorkshire.
- **Add value to previous work** – ensure that value is added at each stage of production to show evolution and refinement in thought process and plan content. This extends to the "Issues and Options" document that was consulted upon under the current system in May-July 2025.

7.4 The recommendation is that of these three options, the hybrid option provides the best opportunity for the Council to meet the 30-month timeframe for plan production. The other two scenarios were not considered to be deliverable and would present significant risks to the Council. The additional six to seven months afforded to plan-making under the recommended timescale will be critical given the volume and complexity of work that must be undertaken and enables the appropriate engagement with members through DPC, Area Committees and member updates.

7.5 Taking all of this into consideration, officers are of the view that the recommended option is the only realistic one available to the Council. While it is not without risks, they are more manageable and mitigatable than the alternatives. The reality is that as we move through the process there are several risks for us to monitor and there are pinch points that increase the risk of slippage. Again, this comes back to progressing a large and complex plan within a timescale that will be challenging to even the smallest plan areas in the country. An overview of the current key risks to the timescale for the NYLP are set out at Appendix 3 along with information on mitigation.

8.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

8.1 The preparation of a Local Plan for North Yorkshire will require input from staff across the organisation as it will be the vehicle to deliver the spatial elements of the Council's plan and its vision and objectives and other relevant plans and strategies.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The resources for delivering the Local Plan in accordance with the timetable have been factored into the Council's budget. The initial budget included a significant investment to establish a Reserve to fund the development and production of a Local Plan and associated documents. This reserve will be available to fund associated expenditure in 26/27 and the subsequent years of the timetable.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The requirement to produce a new Local Plan for North Yorkshire within the timescales set out within this report and is set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023. The preparation of a Local Plan and the Local Plan Timetable are statutory requirements.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 An impact screening assessment has been undertaken, and this concludes that proposals are in place to ensure that as many people as possible are made aware of and are engaged with the relevant consultation stages. The Local Plan will have its own Equalities Impact Assessment (see Appendix 4).

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no implications arising from the Local Plan timetable itself, as it only seeks to set out the timescales for the preparation of Local Plan. Development Plan Documents are legally required to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess the environmental impacts of the plan's policies and site allocations, and in doing so test reasonable alternatives to derive the most sustainable outcome. This would have been previously considered and integrated into the Sustainability Appraisal process, which has now been ceased- although there is the forthcoming Environmental Outcomes Reports which will take the place of SEA in due course. The application of the planning process is still seen as being key to the achievement of sustainable development, by managing the use and development of land.

12.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that all plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long- term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. The Local Plan will be prepared in-line with the NPPF and Strategic Environmental Assessment, alongside Habitats Regulations Assessment, and wider sustainability considerations through the will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the plan to ensure that the climate change implications have been adequately assessed (see Appendix 5).

13.0 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The publication of a timetable and monthly updates thereafter are statutory requirements for the preparation of a Local Plan.
- 13.2 Ensuring the updating requirements are dealt with quickly is therefore a must as any delay in meeting these requirements could impact the overall timescales for plan preparation. As such, it is recommended that delegated authority to the Corporate Director for Community Development in discussion with the Executive Member is provided to deal with these monthly reporting requirements to Government.

14.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 A number of risks to the timescales for preparing the Local Plan have been identified in the Local Plan timetable which are set out below and in more detail with mitigation where appropriate in Appendix 3.

- Ensure that we are making best use of technology for project planning
- Need for increased reliance on Geographic Information System (GIS) to handle data more efficiently and carry out more effective customer interaction
- Decision making process and lead in times
- The scale of evidence base requirements due to increased level of housing growth
- The need to minimise delay in commissioning evidence with neighbouring authorities
- The complexity of transport evidence across the geography
- Timing of local elections (May 2027)
- Officer resource/capacity to maintain a proactive and influential role in work with the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA)
- Corporate resource (outside of Planning Policy team) to support the Local Plan process
- Review of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan will need to meet the same requirements as the North Yorkshire Local Plan and will need to be prepared at the same time
- Level of consultation responses is unknown but expected to be high when consultation on draft policies and site allocations occurs

15.0 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 Sufficient staffing resources will be required to complete the preparation of the Local Plan.

16.0 ICT IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1 The preparation of the Local Plan is reliant on software to support project management, public consultation, in drafting documents, GIS for mapping and a range of service specific monitoring systems.

17.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 17.1 The preparation of a new Local Plan for North Yorkshire is an important opportunity to set out the Council's place making and sustainable growth ambitions and to seek to meet the needs of our communities. The Local Plan timetable sets out key milestones for the new Local Plan with adoption scheduled for 2029.
- 17.2 With the new monthly updating requirements it will remain critical to monitor progress and update the timetable as required.

18.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 The preparation of a Local Plan Timetable is a statutory requirement as set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

19.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 19.1 That the Executive approve the Local Plan Timetable as set out in Appendix 1 and provide delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Community Development to package this timetable up into any relevant document / webpage as directed by forthcoming Government guidance and announcements.
- 19.2 That the Corporate Director for Community Development in consultation with the Executive Member for Open to Business be delegated authority to carry out specific administrative duties including, but not limited to, publishing updates to Local Plan data, publishing consultation summaries and approving the Gateway Assessment Recommendations at stages 2 and 3.
- 19.3 That the Corporate Director for Community Development in consultation with the Executive Member for Open to Business be authorised to review and amend the timescales of Local Plan Timetable.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix 1 The North Yorkshire Local Plan Timetable
- Appendix 2 Stages of Plan Production
- Appendix 3 Current Risks to Delivery of The North Yorkshire Local Plan
- Appendix 4 Equality Impact Assessment Form
- Appendix 5 Climate Change Impact Assessment Form

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Nic Harne
Corporate Director of Community Development
County Hall
Northallerton

Report Author – Linda Mckenzie
Presenter of Report – Steve Wilson/Rachael Hutton, Planning Policy and Place Manager

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.