

YORK ECONOMIC VISION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The value of York's economy in 2010 is £3.37 billion. The city's vision is to grow that value to £4.5 billion by 2035. It will achieve this by enhancing the city's cultural, social and physical assets, and it will work with the businesses, the universities and colleges, the voluntary sector, and communities to achieve sustainable economic growth.

The City of York Council in collaboration with Yorkshire Forward commissioned the production of a long-term, economic vision for the City of York in 2009. The amenity, business and political communities within the city have been central in advising and developing the vision, together with those concerned with matters civic, cultural, ecological, commercial and political. Through these engagements a citywide consensus emerged on how the city might best be improved and fulfill its potential.

This consensus focused on York's primary economic assets: the combined knowledge base of its people through the universities, businesses, and the many other communities of the city; the special qualities of the physical fabric of the place, and the ways in which through its culture and heritage the people and the place combine.

Many see York as a successful and attractive city unequalled by all but a few in the country. However, the City of York Council recognizes in the emerging Local development Framework and Local Transport Plan the need to redefine its transportation infrastructure; to promote higher quality places and spaces; to introduce more green spaces, trees and green infrastructure in the city centre; and to celebrate its two historic rivers. These plans highlight the fact that fractured connections limit the potential of several key city assets, including the railway station (the main gateway to the city); the university campus to the east; and links between commercial areas in and out of town.

The City Centre Area Action Plan sets a starting point for the creative development of the York Economic Vision. It concludes that there is a need 'to create a more attractive and accessible city', and in particular 'to reduce the impact of vehicles on the city and its environment'. It highlights that investment is needed to strengthen the way that the people, their culture and the place combine. Investment in the culture and heritage of York must be promoted through leadership and good governance. This is a hallmark of successful cities: leadership and good governance are not the province of city councils alone, but of the community at large. They must come from social, cultural and civic life, in business and commerce, in politics and education, in health and wellbeing, and in the making and managing of our towns and cities.

This document sets out an economic vision for York, identifying key areas of intervention that will be required to deliver this vision. These are set within an approach that builds on the city's great physical assets. It takes as a model – a city paradigm – the City Beautiful Movement of the early 20th century, and draws on the strategic character of that approach. It describes a means of delivering a more

accessible and attractive – and indeed a more beautiful – city through a strategic rediscovery and reinterpretation of key city assets:

- **The City Rivers**
- **The City Walls and Gateways**
- **The City's Streets, Places and Spaces**
- **The City as Park**
- **The Great Street**
- **York Central**

The City of York, through its business, cultural, social, and political communities, can lead in environmental stewardship, public transport, park systems, cultural strategies, energy planning, food production and carbon reduction – and in the creation of a beautiful and thriving city where its streets and spaces are playgrounds for innovation, investment and success.

The York Economic Vision has been prepared by Professor Alan J Simpson and a panel of urban, economic, cultural and movement advisers..

A new section of the City of York Council's officer team – the Renaissance Team – has been established to continue the working approach set out by the plan; to engage further with the community on strategy development; and to take projects and proposals through the stages of delivery.

The Economic Vision

York must grow its economy by enhancing the city's cultural, social and physical assets, working with the businesses, the universities and colleges, the voluntary sector and communities. The York Economic Vision, underpinned by the council's existing and developing policies, describes how this can be achieved.

York must continue to support the high-quality small business community linked to the science and knowledge sectors, and to the creative industries, improving the city's levels of business density and self-employment. It must support skills development and tackle deprivation in order to raise aspirations and focus on unemployment.

The city must embed low-carbon economic opportunities into all of its enterprises; build on the strong bioscience and renewable research; and link this to the city's carbon-reduction targets and its strategy for renewable energy infrastructure. The city can give new life to its economy by focusing on six distinct strengths: as conservation city; knowledge city; city of innovation; city of contemporary production; entrepreneurial city; and civic city. The economic vision explains how this approach must be reflected in the city's physical development.

City Beautiful

The economic vision takes inspiration from the city beautiful movement of the early twentieth century. That movement pioneered new approaches to creating a city that not only worked well, but that would also become more beautiful through rediscovering its best assets and making the most of them. To achieve that, York must build a strong partnership between the private and public sectors, with effective joint leadership. Physical development must create a structure of landscape, rivers, streets and a system of parks inspired by the city's strategy and its aspiration to be the new city beautiful. The economic vision explains how this can be done.

York – New City Beautiful

The city's major development opportunities must be shaped by a new understanding of the elements that define York: the city rivers; the city walls and gateways; the city's streets, places and spaces; the city as park; the Great Street; and York Central.

The city as park is a new way of thinking about York's existing and potential green spaces as a connected system of parks that could transform the ways in which people use and experience the city. The city centre will be focused on pedestrian movement along great streets, squares and parks unparalleled in a British historic city, and linked through a series of extended strays to all of the city's neighbourhoods and countryside beyond.

Three new city parks will be created in the city centre: a great cultural park, a grand civic park and an innovative production park. All three will be connected by the new circular Rampart Park, and its connected pathway and cycleway. Each will provide a unique destination for leisure and relaxation.

Beyond the city centre, new country parks at the ring road will be connected through a series of green cycle and pedestrian pathways. New park-and-go facilities will link to the city centre along arterial routes that will be transformed into parkways. Outer and inner parks will be connected by enhanced and expanded strays and protected green space to create a series of green spokes.

The rivers should provide highly connected routes that join the pathways in and around the city, defining the city centre, inner neighbourhoods, and outer parks and strays. The rivers must be an integral part of the green wedges, parkways and pathways being developed through this vision. Development must face the rivers rather than turning its back on them.

The Great Street

The new city beautiful will develop through a series of strategic projects. The Great Street will connect countryside to city centre. It will reconnect the University of York to the walled city, providing a direct, legible route to the Minster and York St John University. It will continue to the city's grand entry point at York station. This new route, along dramatically improved existing streets, will unite the city's great civic, cultural, natural and educational amenities.

York Central

York Central must be planned not as a development site but as a new piece of city, able to contribute to the aspirations and the reality of York, the New City Beautiful. York Central lies due south of the River Ouse. Development proposals should seek to connect the area to the river by a series of routes, pathways and cycle ways. The Ouse might be drawn into the site as a canal or lake with marina facilities, adding appropriately to the New City Beautiful plan and enhancing the role of the river. Gateways and access between York Central and the historic core of the city will be critical in the development of the site as a piece of city and its long-term economic success. Connections between York Station, the city walls and the city centre through the existing tunnels beneath the city walls are a further opportunity to create pedestrian linkages to the historic core.

City Development

The economic vision sets out in detail how its distinctive approach must be applied to the city's remarkably balanced portfolio of development sites and areas: Castle Piccadilly, Hungate, University of York, British Sugar, Nestle South, Terry's, Derwenthorpe, Germany Beck, Barbican and Monk's Cross. The economic vision will be achieved only if these are treated as opportunities, not just to get something built, but also to be part of a place with the aspiration to become a new city beautiful.

Going Forward

The York Economic Vision will be delivered through several key city strategies. The Local Development Framework will be key to this. It is essentially a series of documents that set out York's blueprint for the economic, social and environmental future of the city. It provides the framework for the council's future aims and objectives for land and buildings in York.

Policy relationships and connections between the framework and the York Economic Vision are fundamental in moving forward. Particularly relevant documents within the framework are the Core Strategy and City Centre Area Action Plan.

Movement and the public realm are a primary layer and critical element of the York Economic Vision and such propositions and proposals put forward within this vision should be accounted for and tested within the emerging Local Transport Plan 3. Similarly, it should guide the emerging City Movement and Accessibility Framework. This will form part of the comprehensive evidence base for the Local Development Framework and will need to reflect the aims of the Economic Vision.