

Annex A



The Heritage Programme Proposal

4 November 2025



Context



- The city's expertise in research, conservation, archaeological science and cultural heritage management is globally recognised. Great opportunities to improve appreciation of this significance and York's diversity of history and heritage with local communities, to visitors and on an international stage.
- Nationally and internationally significant heritage buildings, places, green spaces and rivers that offer exceptional value to the fabric of the city, including: the most complete medieval city walls, York Minster, the Shambles and the city's medieval stained glass. It has 35 conservation areas, including one of the most complex in UK, 23 scheduled monuments, is an Area of Archaeological Importance (one of only 5), 71 grade I listed buildings, 6 registered parks/gardens, and is a UNESCO City of Media Arts.
- York's heritage is highly valued with an estimated GVA of £2.1bn. The proportion of people employed in libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities is three times England's average. The council has expertise across multiple teams to contribute to the programme. And engaged and committed partnerships across the private, charitable and voluntary sectors.
- There is great potential for trailblazing initiatives covering: health and wellbeing, addressing climate change and sustainability, and digital interpretation of history and heritage.
- Home to two national cultural heritage centres – the National Railway Museum and National Centre for Early Music – and national/ regional headquarters including: Council for British Archaeology, Historic England, English Heritage and the National Trust.
- There are, however, significant conservation, maintenance and sustainability issues with the city's heritage estate placing a proportion at risk, including its collection of medieval timber-framed buildings, requiring significant investment to be sustainable.

Working together to improve and make a difference

Proposal

Co-design with the lead Executive Member, heritage and conservation groups a 10-year strategic action plan to better reveal York's heritage significance, attract significant investment and lead the UK in addressing the challenges the heritage estate and sector faces



Working together to improve and make a difference

Objectives

- Co-design a shared ambition with the heritage sector and community groups
- Explore alternative uses of council assets
- Attract new anchor partners/tenants in the heritage, conservation, and curation sector
- Support partners, including York Museum Trust's plans
- Strengthen and support existing networks by connecting communities to our heritage – through engaging, advocating, learning and participating in heritage activities
- Develop skills pathways and routes to employment for all our residents esp. those at risk of deprivation, building on CYC apprenticeships
- Curate everyday history in new and extraordinary ways, including at a new modern art gallery on a heritage campus
- Explore a specialist purpose-built climate-controlled shared facility to store York's collections

Outcomes

Outcomes	Description
A 10-year Heritage Estate Strategic Action Plan	Co-designed with the city, setting a series of actions and priorities for capital investment following successful grant applications
30+ new roles in the heritage sector	Attract a key national anchor institution to relocate to join York's heritage economic cluster, based in a repurposed heritage asset
£50m+ over 10 years	Externally funded successful grant applications to invest in York's heritage estate – based on the agreed priorities
4+ community groups enabled to take control of heritage assets	Legal arrangements and additional support to neighbourhood community groups to manage/control local assets with community-based activity to help build community pride and cohesion.
5% uplift in heritage visitors	Increase heritage visitors attracted to the globally significant heritage, to enhance the family friendly and cultural tourism offer
£250k+ pa generated from licencing and sponsorship of heritage artifacts	Passive income from licencing and sponsorship of archaeological, architectural, artefacts, images, etc. of York's collections and archives.
50+ newly qualified residents age 16-24yo	16-24yo pa qualified in heritage skills, building resident interest and appetite for contemporary roles in heritage conservation and curation
80+ residents take part in social inclusion projects	Neighbourhood based heritage based social inclusion/community capacity projects to promote well being and increase physical activity
Programme	Self-funding within 24 months

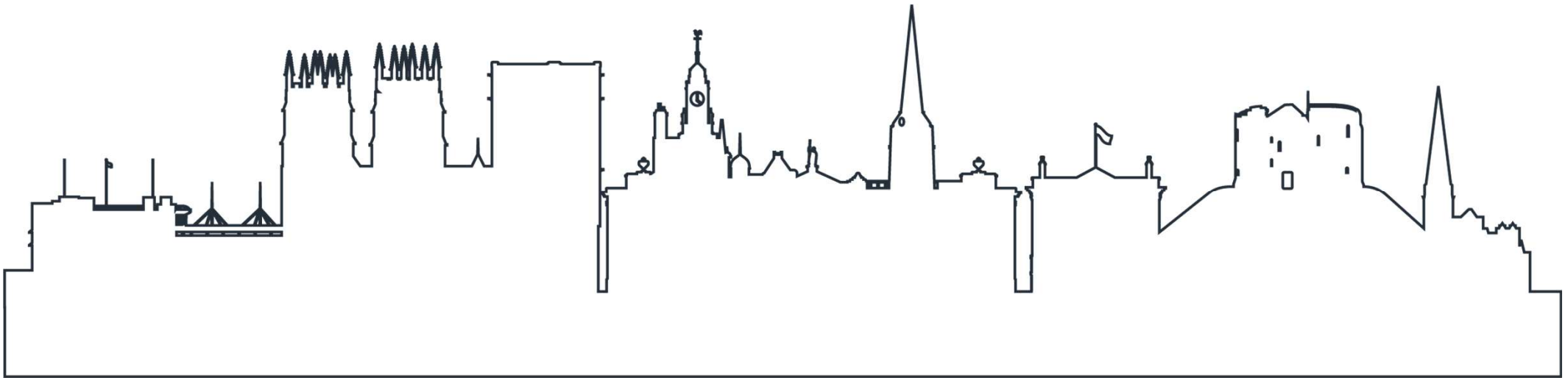
Key benefits

Residents

- Increased pride in our heritage
- New opportunities for community involvement
- Education and skills opportunities

Businesses

- Strengthened and extended supply chain
- Increased sector resilience
- Increased and new market opportunities and products



How would we do this?

1. Formalise collaboration between York's conservation and heritage and community sector, with a new **strategic partnership** and member appointment of a **Heritage Champion**.
2. Review the **Partnership Agreement** with York Museum Trust to ensure remains fit for purpose and reflects ambition.
3. Together with a small group of other heritage cities, raise awareness of the **global significance of York's rich heritage estate**, to showcase its historical importance and value and the risk of climate impact to the nation, and lobby for more national investment.
4. Co-design a **10-year Heritage Estate Strategic Delivery Plan** to articulate the role York's heritage estate plays, identifying key priorities for restoration and adaptation, and identifying opportunities for national investment and align this with planned investment in public space and construction skills opportunities.
5. **Attract investment** through a blend of funding, for example: grants, disposal of heritage assets to community groups for local use, private investment and sponsorship, and product licensing, develop a more sustainable and resilient business model
6. **Restore priority heritage assets** to be more sustainable, affordable, accessible and deliver more social and economic benefits so they are protected for future generations.

6. Within the four neighbourhoods, encourage **community pride and build community capacity**, encouraging active participation by setting out a pathway of engagement opportunity, from historical reenactments through voluntary conservation to disposal of assets to community groups for meaningful local use.
7. **Protect archives and collections** through consolidation and storage at climate-controlled purpose-built facilities, exploring commercialisation opportunities.
8. Work closely with the heritage sector and MCA, to **increase the productivity and GVA of the sector**, through targeted business growth, inward investment, skills pathways etc. demonstrating a joined-up, innovative, forward-looking sector that is protecting, conserving and enhancing York's rich heritage estate on behalf of the nation.
9. Attract investment in **research and innovation** opportunities from partner expertise to drive new approaches to conservation and curation.
10. **Evaluate the impact**, understanding what has already worked to know the Programme is making on the city, the sector, residents, communities, and the heritage assets themselves.
11. **Establish a programme**, led by the City of York Council, comprised of partners and officers to deliver a series of projects, and support partners own project delivery, setting out an engagement plan to encourage resident involvement (inc. through YCT local list and the Local Plan refresh).