

**‘Cultural Quarter’ – Draft Final Report**

**Background**

1. This topic was originally registered in early 2008 by Councillor Hogg to examine the ‘Vision’ developed in 2007 for a Cultural Quarter for York, linking the city centre with development sites in York North West. He suggested using the 2007 ‘Vision’ document to explore the relationship between the six areas of the quarter (area 1 to include the Railway Station), including pedestrian and vehicular movement, design, open spaces, a river crossing, performance areas, lighting, landscaping, cultural production, promotion and public art.
2. The aim of this vision is to generate substantially more external funding than that which is currently being achieved through an ad hoc approach. The ‘Vision’ document recognises that getting the link between the city centre and York North West right, will support and guide future city centre development.
3. In coming to a decision to review the topic, the Scrutiny Management Committee recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed.

**Aim**

4. To contribute towards achieving a long-term direction for the area between the National Railway Museum (NRM), York Railway Station and the Minster, and to consider any positive and/or adverse effects on the city in doing so.

**Objectives**

- i. To understand the Council’s strategic approach, and that of its key partners, to the cultural design for the area.
- ii. To contribute to a business plan for achieving the required funding for developing the area into a ‘Cultural Quarter’.
- iii. To develop and establish some key principles, for guiding a collaborative approach to cultural development in the future, including connectivity to other areas of the city.

**Consultation**

5. As part of the review the following organisations and individuals were consulted:

- Head of Arts & Culture at City of York Council
  - External Relations Manager at Visit York
  - The Chief Executive & the Director of Finance and Business Development at the York Museums Trust
  - Officers and Elected Members at Gateshead Council
  - Officers at Newcastle City Council
  - York Theatre Royal
  - Head of Libraries & Heritage – City of York Council
  - Representatives of the National Railway Museum
  - Dean of York Minster
  - Representatives of St John’s University
  - Representative of Rushbond PLC
  - Various Officers in the City Strategy Directorate at City of York Council
  - Members of the public at a public drop in session held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008
  - Public Affairs & Stakeholder Manager and the Head of Property at National Express East Cost
6. During the course of the review several speakers had addressed the Committee via the Council’s Public Participation Scheme; details of the points they addressed are listed below.

7. Minster Quarter

A representative of the Minster Quarter addressed the Committee at their formal meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008. He gave details of the launch of the Minster Quarter and how stakeholders representing attractions in the area, businesses and a retail sector were working together. This was linked to the City Centre Area Action Plan (CCAAP) and was a new approach to urban governance.

Committee Comment

Whilst there was an overlap between the Minster Quarter and the proposed ‘Cultural Quarter’ it was not in any way detrimental as partnership working was crucial to the success of both the Minster Quarter and the proposed ‘Cultural Quarter’.

8. Arts Barge Project

At the same meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008, a representative of the Arts Barge Project attended to inform Members that they were intending to provide a floating cultural centre on the River Ouse.

Committee Comment

Members welcome this project and wished the Arts Barge representatives luck with such an exciting venture. It was, however, noted that the Project would not be within the boundaries of the proposed ‘Cultural Quarter’.

9. St John's University

A representative of York St John University attended the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008 to further urge Members to include York St John University within the boundaries of the 'Cultural Quarter'.

10. Yorkshire Gardens Trust

A letter had been received from the Yorkshire Gardens Trust regarding the idea of setting up a permanent display to celebrate York's horticultural achievements, possibly within the Museums Gardens. To this effect, the Chairman of the Trust addressed the Committee at their formal meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009 to speak to them about the ideas put forward in the letter.

Committee Comment

The Committee requested that the letter be forwarded to the Chief Executive of the York Museums Trust (YMT) and YMT be asked to liaise with the Yorkshire Gardens Trust to investigate the viability of permanent displays and temporary exhibitions to honour York's horticultural, botanical and plant biotechnological achievements both past and present. The Committee suggested that both parties might like to explore further novel means of funding any permanent display by inviting donations as carbon-off setting.

11. The Committee agreed to formally appoint Sir Ron Cooke as a co-opted Member of the Committee for the duration of the review.

**Information Gathered**

12. During the course of this review, at both informal sessions and formal meetings Members gathered the evidence contained in the following paragraphs to enable them to inform their conclusions and recommendations. Issues arising from the information gathered and the Committee's analysis of the evidence received is detailed at paragraphs 55-88 of this report.

The Vision Document

13. The Vision document, dated January 2007, was prepared by Austin-Smith: Lord LLP and has been used extensively to explore the initial vision for a 'Cultural Quarter' in York for the area between the National Railway Museum (NRM) and the Minster. The Head of Arts & Culture at the City of York Council presented the 'Vision' document to Members at their formal meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2008. Members were informed that the area between the National Railway Museum and the Minster had been chosen as it was an area which Sir Ron Cooke, former Vice Chancellor of the University of York, had noted as unique in Europe for containing buildings of all ages and in particular a large number of Grade 1 and 1\* listed buildings. It proposed that the 'Cultural Quarter' would be a vibrant, clearly defined area that any customer would be aware that they had entered. The aim of the vision was to generate additional external funding than that which was currently achieved through an ad-hoc approach, to ensure that the whole quarter would benefit from investment.

14. The Vision document covers several study areas and the presentation given by the Head of Arts & Culture included information and proposals for each of these as detailed below:

#### NRM & South of the River Ouse

15. The area above was a surprisingly green space, however it was not easy to move around it. The walk from the NRM to the Minster took approximately 9 minutes and it was felt that a clear connectivity between these two points was required. Reference was also made to redevelopment plans for the York Station and the possibility of opening up both sides of the building in the future.
16. At the moment coaches dropped visitors adjacent to the Memorial Gardens and there was no easy direct access to the river at this point. The city, generally, made poor use of the river frontage and work was required to improve this area.
17. Mention was also made that as part of the York North West development consideration had been given to a central plaza between the two halls of the NRM. A lighting strategy had also been proposed which would assist navigation around the proposed routes.

#### St Mary's Abbey Precinct Gardens

18. Proposals for these gardens included seeking to open up access to the Art Gallery and the Library from rear entrances in the Museum Gardens. Research with visitors to the city had indicated that Scarborough Bridge and 'Marble Arch' (the underpass in Leeman Road) were unsatisfactory routes and suggestions from the original consultants had included the provision of a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the River Ouse from the NRM/Railway Station into the Museum Gardens. These proposals were intended to cover both daytime and evenings, and would involve reviewing the evening opening of the Gardens.
19. Reference was also made to the possibility of undertaking work on some of the trees in the Museum Gardens to lift their crowns in order to restore the view across the river to the Yorkshire Museum.

#### St Leonard's, Art Gallery & Exhibition Square

20. There were proposals to alter the traffic, which at present used St Leonard's Place. The first phase would involve reducing traffic to 1 lane in each direction and the second phase closing the road to all traffic except buses, cycles and taxis. In the timescales of this development traffic would be much reduced in this area. There were known air quality problems in this area due to the amount of queuing traffic and buses.
21. A private developer now owned St Leonard's Place and was considering a mixed use of hotel, retail and residential for the buildings. A new visitor information centre would be located on the corner of Blake Street.

22. It was proposed that the existing car park to the front of Kings Manor could be moved and replaced by a formal garden and Exhibition Square replaced by civic space.
23. Further proposals looked at linking the Theatre Royal and De Grey House, thereby improving the Theatre facilities.

#### The Library, St Leonard's Hospital & Multangular Tower

24. The railings around St Leonard's Hospital meant that there was restricted space for pedestrian traffic and bus queues. York Library was a magnificent building in an inappropriate setting and the area around it could be turned into civic space to improve the area. There were tentative plans to redevelop St Leonard's Hospital site as a new retail or workshop space.

#### The Minster

25. At present Duncombe Place at the Minster end was used as a taxi turning circle, improvements had been suggested but vehicular access still needed to be considered. There were plans for a plaza at the south entrance to the Minster and these were already progressing. There was a need to look at access to Dean's Park and the setting of the west end of the Minster.

#### The River Corridor

26. At the moment there were no seats on the south bank of the river between Lendal and Scarborough Bridges. There was a need for improvements to this area but any works on the river frontage would need to take into account flooding (i.e. the provision of seating that could easily be washed down).

#### **Studies of other Local Authorities & their Experiences of Developing Cultural Areas**

27. In order to inform their understanding of the best strategic approach for York Members agreed to find out more about how other local authorities had developed their Cultural Quarters/Areas. Members agreed a list of questions that could be used as a premise for their investigations and these are attached at Annex A to this report. A summary of the information gathered is set out in the paragraphs below.

#### Belfast

28. Celebrate Belfast was launched in October 2005 and was a 15 month programme of events and activities centred on the programme themes; 'City Hall Centenary', 'Festivals', 'Cultural Quarters' and 'Sporting Activities'. The aim of the Celebrate Belfast Programme was to help stimulate economic activity and contribute to the cultural life in Belfast through increased arts activity and a change in the perception of Belfast as a place to live and visit.

Belfast City Council commissioned an independent evaluation of the programme and a report entitled 'Belfast City Council Evaluation of Celebrate Belfast 2006 Final Report – Draft Version 2 – April 2007' was produced. This

outlined the key achievements, additional outcomes, legacy and future focus. This report can be accessed through Belfast City Council's website, the address of which appears in the background papers section of this report.

29. The drivers behind the projects had been the promotion of festivals and drawing attention to different areas of the city. It was also indicated from information in the report that it was imperative to have a robust business plan along with robust and certain funding.

#### Wolverhampton

30. Wolverhampton's 'Cultural Quarter' was located in an area that already held most of the city's existing cultural assets including the Art Gallery, Arena Theatre, Light House Media Centre and Grand Theatre. The area also had a number of vacant premises, which were suitable for conversion into cultural uses.
31. Wolverhampton had a vibrant nighttime economy based predominantly around bars and clubs, which appealed mainly to the 18-30 age group. A key objective for Wolverhampton had been to broaden the appeal of the facilities available to families and other age groups.
32. Consultation had taken place with residents and there was a Local Area and Neighbourhood Arrangements (LANA) Coordinator who liaised directly with city centre residents.
33. When asked if they would do anything differently should they have the chance to start again they responded that they would secure longer term funding.

#### Bolton

34. Bolton does not have a designated 'Cultural Quarter' but it does have a 5 year Tourism Development Plan. This sets out the vision for tourism in Bolton, which the local authority aims to achieve by working with, advising and influencing key strategic partners who impact on tourism.
35. Bolton promoted the fact that it was part of Greater Manchester with good transport links and good access to the countryside. Drivers behind the developments were economic.

#### Leicester

36. The 'Cultural Quarter' in Leicester was currently been developed as part of the regeneration of the St George's Area of the city and major cultural projects include a performing arts centre (due to open December 2008), a three-screen digital media centre (construction scheduled to be completed by July 2009) and a depot providing workspace for the city's designers, artists and other creative businesses.
37. Members that had recently visited Leicester had reported that the city had visually improved and now contained some interesting public realm works.

## Doncaster

38. Plans for a 'Cultural and Civic Quarter' had originally been drawn up in the 1950s and had recently been resurrected as part of the town's urban renaissance master plan. The objectives behind it were to diversify the economy promoting cultural industries initiatives, creating a tourism interest, reducing reliance on the drinking culture, promoting better urban design with new housing, provision of new performance spaces, a new cinema, swimming pool and new local authority offices. Some of the funding would come from selling off existing council buildings to enable the provision of new public buildings. As developments were still at the planning stage, results of the proposals were not yet known.
39. When asked what they would do differently, should they have the opportunity to start again they responded that they would ensure that they had a better understanding of the competitive dialogue tendering process and would better define and inform earlier their specifications to the private sector.

## Visit to Newcastle & Gateshead

40. Members of the Committee visited both Gateshead Council and Newcastle City Council on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2008. Officers and Elected Members at Gateshead Council gave the Committee a tour of the regeneration work that had been undertaken at Gateshead Quays including the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, the Millennium Bridge and the Sage Gateshead. The tour of Newcastle included visits to the 'Heart of the City', Grainger Town, Waygood Galleries, Theatre Royal and Old Eldon Square.
41. During the above meeting Members were given a copy of the final report for the 'Review of Physical Regeneration – Impact of the Regeneration of Gateshead Quays and links to Gateshead Town Centre'. This report shows the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Gateshead Council on the regeneration of Gateshead Quays and Town Centre including the impact that the physical regeneration has had on Gateshead, the vision for the future role of Gateshead Town Centre, Separation & Connectivity issues, Transport & Accessibility and Engaging & Connecting with Local Communities. The link to Gateshead Council's report is included in the background papers section of this report.
42. At the same meeting Members were presented with a brochure entitled 'Passionate About Gateshead Quays: The Transformation'. The brochure includes information on how the regeneration of the area was carried out, some best practice examples and some conclusions and advice on regeneration projects.

## Visit to Stakeholders

43. On 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008 Members of the Committee visited and spoke to the major stakeholders about their proposed projects. They also walked around the area within the proposed boundary of the 'Cultural Quarter'. Representatives of the York Museums Trust, York Theatre Royal, York Library, Rushbond PLC (owners of St Leonard's Place), NRM and York Minster talked to Members

about their future plans. A summary of timings and costs for the stakeholders' future plans is attached at Annex B to this report. Further comments from the NRM and Rushbond PLC are attached at Annex C to this report.

44. Members also visited York St John University, which lies outside of the proposed 'Cultural Quarter' boundary. Discussions took place regarding the possibility of altering the boundary to include York St John. A summary of timings and costings for their future plans and some further information are attached to this report at Annexes D and E respectively.

#### **Draft Business Plan**

45. At a formal meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2008 Members were presented with a draft business plan for consideration. The plan looked at the fact that while the cultural institutions within the proposed area were nationally and internationally renowned they were also characterised by under investment in the estate. All the institutions within the proposed 'Cultural Quarter' were in the process of embarking upon major redevelopments and it was important that these had reference to the overall context of the city centre and its connectivity with the York North West developments. The draft business plan is attached at Annex F to this report. Members requested that an Executive Summary be produced and this is attached at Annex G to this report.

#### **Public Drop in Session**

46. A public drop in/consultation session was held in York Minster on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Yorkshire Museums Trust (YMT), the Minster, Rushbond PLC, NRM, Theatre Royal and York St John University were at this event and chatted to members of the public about their future plans. The Head of Arts and Culture, Members of the Committee and the Scrutiny Officer were available to answer questions. An evaluation form was handed out to all those that attended and the results of these have been collated and are attached at Annex H to this report.

#### **Evidence Received at the Formal meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008**

47. At Members request Officers from the City Strategy Directorate attended this meeting and provided details on how the proposed Cultural Quarter sat within the Local Development Framework (LDF) and with the City Centre Area Action Plan (CCAAP). They informed Members that extensive consultations had taken place regarding the CCAAP and 1700 comments had been received. A full report regarding this consultation was due to be presented to the LDF Working Group in January 2009.
48. Officers emphasised that for the Area Action Plan to include the 'Cultural Quarter' as an Action Area, it would be necessary for a robust evidence base to be produced for the 'Cultural Quarter', setting out the proposed projects, delivery partners and funding sources. For this to be incorporated into the next stage of the Area Action Plan and subject to public consultation, the evidence would need to be produced by summer 2009. Further information regarding the above and a summary of the comments received as part of the CCAAP consultation process is attached at Annex I to this report.



49. Members also considered a diagram, prepared by Sir Ron Cooke, which offered a model as to how both the cultural and economic development elements could be encompassed. This is attached at Annex J to this report.
50. Members also received information regarding transport and highways within the proposed 'Cultural Quarter' area. Officers said that a 'City Centre Transport Masterplan' workshop had been held on 15 July 2008. The Transport Planning Unit would be undertaking a review which would consider the findings of a number of projects including the Footstreets Review, Cycling City Strategy, Coach Parking Strategy, various improvements to main routes into the city and an audit of the 'Gateway Streets' to assess where road space could be reallocated to promote sustainable travel choices and improve the experience of visiting and navigating the city. The 'Cultural Quarter' (incorporating St Leonard's Place and Leeman Road) was one of the five areas that would be investigated for accessibility. It was expected that this review would be completed in the summer of 2009.

#### **Informal meeting with National Express East Coast (NEXC) held on 13th January 2009**

51. A main principle of the Cultural Quarter was to increase accessibility for foot traffic within the area and to that effect it had been presumed that access through the station would remain the same as it is now or be improved. It has, however, recently been announced that NEXC intend to 'gate' the station buildings as part of their franchise commitment. Members, therefore, felt it would be useful to meet with National Express to discuss their future plans for the station.
52. Members asked whether public access across the footbridge to the NRM would still be possible once gates had been installed. Representatives from NEXC confirmed that this route would be for ticket holding rail passengers only and would therefore, no longer be a public thoroughfare.
53. Discussions were also had regarding the idea of a new pedestrian river crossing. NEXC were keen to discuss the possibilities of this further whilst acknowledging that this was still very much in its early stages. The possibility of building a bridge from the end of platform 4 across the river was discussed as the land at this point was at the same level on both sides of the river. NEXC were keen to be involved in any further discussions regarding these ambitions, should they be progressed.

#### **Evidence Received at the Formal meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009**

54. Officers from the City Strategy Directorate attended this meeting and provided information on access routes in and out of the York North West development area. The Committee were informed that, at this stage, it was not possible to give detailed information as a number of issues and options were still being considered. Consultants had been employed to look at access strategies and transport models and they were due to present their analysis in February 2009. Officers said that no decisions had been taken regarding Leeman Road but that whatever decisions were made would take into account the priority for existing residents to have access to their properties. Officers said that if

existing access routes continued to be used, these would be improved and enhanced. Lines of connectivity would also be maintained when new accesses were put into place.

## **Issues Arising & Analysis**

55. After due consideration of all the evidence set out above it became apparent that some common themes occurred and, to this effect, this report seeks to consolidate the evidence gathered in paragraphs 12 to 54 of this report under sub-headings indicative of those themes.

### **Naming and Branding the Proposed 'Cultural Quarter'**

56. Discussions were had regarding the term 'Cultural Quarter' and how it had become apparent during the course of the review that some residents saw the term as elitist and divisive. This had resulted in some negative comments being made about the proposals for the Cultural Quarter on the evaluation forms completed as part of the public consultation event. Members of the public had suggested various alternative names and these were listed within Annex H to this report.
57. Further discussions were had regarding the use of the term 'Cultural Quarter' and it was felt that there was a need to differentiate between the concept of the 'Cultural Quarter' and how it was referred to in general terms. In the context of this review it was being used as a term people were familiar with.
58. Further issues raised on this theme included:
- A 'Cultural Quarter' was not a re-branding exercise but the chance to regenerate an area and an opportunity for York to attract finance to support it
  - Members did recognise that there could be potential problems with branding part of the city as a 'Cultural Quarter'
  - The term 'Cultural Quarter' was nationally recognised by government departments and external organisations and could act as a positive trigger when attempting to access funding streams
  - The External Relations Manager from Visit York informed Members that the Visit York Board had discussed the use of the term 'Cultural Quarter' and not all Members of that Board had been happy with it. However they had recognised the importance and strength of the concept in order to attract funding.
  - It was suggested that 'Cultural Development Area' might be a more appropriate term to use than 'Cultural Quarter'.
  - It was noted that the term 'Quarter' was already used within the city as reflected by the recently launched 'Minster Quarter'.
  - As the proposals evolved it was likely that a more appropriate name would be adopted

## **The Proposed Boundary of the 'Cultural Quarter'**

59. At the beginning of the review it was clarified that the boundary of the proposed 'Cultural Quarter' included York Railway Station.
60. Members saw many potential problems with developing a 'Cultural Quarter' and concerns were raised that York was not a large enough city to have designated areas e.g. a cultural area, a retail area, a business area. The Committee did not wish to exclude any part of the city or any particular institution or organisation and acknowledged that York, in its entirety, was a cultural city.
61. There was a need to define specific areas of the city for the purposes of economic development, whilst in terms of cultural provision; there was a need to be as inclusive as possible. The institutions and organisations based outside of the proposed boundary would be part of the wider cultural agenda and would contribute to activities and events within the 'Cultural Quarter' and benefit from its success. Following on from this the Committee believed it important to have a model that was inclusive and non-competitive and one in which all organisations were encouraged to offer cultural contributions. There must be benefits to citizens in all parts of the city as well as to visitors to the area. Sir Ron Cooke had produced such a model and is attached at Annex J to this report
62. It was, therefore, realised that there was a need to have some kind of boundary in order to attract investment to the area. Whilst the area was referred to as the 'Cultural Quarter' this was for the purposes of attracting funding only and not a reflection on how cultural the city was or on whether one area of the city was more cultural than any other.
63. Further issues discussed in terms of boundaries were as follows:
  - Whether the boundaries of the Cultural Quarter should be soft or rigid
  - Whether the present boundaries should be extended to include York St John University.
64. On analysing and considering all the information they had received on this theme the Committee decided not to recommend any changes to the boundaries of the proposed 'Cultural Quarter' (including York Railway Station), for the short term, in order to maximise the chances of attracting funding to the area.

## **Funding**

65. The information received throughout the course of the review led the Committee to determine that attracting funding was of the utmost importance to developing a successful and appealing 'Cultural Quarter' within the city. The Committee acknowledged that all the stakeholder institutions had major development plans afoot and funding for the public realm and for connectivity purposes would need to be requested in the proper context. It was, therefore, imperative to the success of the proposed 'Cultural Quarter', that all organisations involved, including City of York

Council (CYC), speak with one voice in order that appropriate funding streams can be sought for major investment in the public realm and civic space.

66. The following issues were also raised as part of the discussions on funding:
- There was a possibility that because York had a reasonably thriving and stable economy there may be problems in terms of attracting funding
  - Part of the York North West site was within the boundaries of the proposed 'Cultural Quarter' and could be a strong factor in attracting funding
  - How the various organisations would source their funding

### **Role of City of York Council (CYC)**

67. The Committee believed that CYC should act as the key player in enabling the proposals for the 'Cultural Quarter' to be achieved. Most of the stakeholders within the area were independent to CYC and thus, the local authority would need to take a leadership role in terms of the provision of links between the different institutions and ensuring funding was sought for the benefit of the Cultural Quarter as a whole.
68. A draft business plan had been produced and work was still in progress to make this a robust and in depth document that could act as a feasibility study for the agreed 'Cultural Quarter' area. The plan, would ultimately, clarify in clear terms what role CYC should take in relation to the Cultural Quarter.
69. The production of a design master plan for the area was extremely important to allow strategic development of the public realm and civic space in the area between the NRM and the Minster, particularly in terms of seeking to agree an additional pedestrian bridge across the River Ouse as part of the York North West Plans.
70. The Committee noted that Richard Taylor from the NRM had been seconded as a consultant for a project to explore the future of the Archives within the city. His report was presented to the Executive Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2008. A link to this report and the minutes of the Executive meeting is included within the list of background papers at the end of this report. The Committee wished to see the Archives remain within the city centre and hoped that adequate funding could be found to allow this to happen.
71. Further discussions raised the following points:
- The Council would need to provide encouragement as well as leadership
  - The Council would need to support organisations seeking to access funding by removing barriers to investment
  - The Council would need to ensure that Council owned buildings within the area, for example the library, contributed to the success of the Cultural Quarter.

## **Connectivity & Proposals for a New Pedestrian Bridge across the River Ouse**

72. One of the key principles of the 2007 'Vision' document is to explore improving accessibility and connectivity within the area between the NRM and York Minster. In light of this, the Committee see the provision of a new pedestrian bridge across the river as a key factor in developing a successful 'Cultural Quarter'.
73. Other comments on this theme were:
- The importance of getting the transport hierarchy correct; with pedestrians at the top of that hierarchy
  - The connections between all the areas of the proposed Cultural Quarter needed to be reinforced
  - The idea for a pedestrianised Leeman Road and a bridge over the river are key to the re-invention of York in the 21st century as part of a city-centre wide offer that sweeps across from the Minster, through Exhibition Square to Museum Gardens, across the river and up through York North West.

## **St Leonard's Hospital Site & the Area Behind the City Art Gallery**

74. At the moment the St Leonard's Hospital site and the area behind the City Art Gallery were under-utilised. The area behind the Art Gallery was not used at all and comprised quite a large area that had Nissan Huts on it. Thought would need to be given to what would happen to this area.
75. Discussions with Rushbond PLC led the Committee to the conclusion that the route from the back of St Leonard's Place to the St Leonard's Hospital site may be more frequently used once Rushbond PLC implemented their plans for the buildings on St Leonard's Place. Once these buildings were occupied then this route might be used as a short cut to other parts of the city. It was also acknowledged that at present the buildings on St Leonard's Place were only occupied during working hours. In the future they may be occupied for longer periods of time thus providing some lighting for this area, and making it feel safer to use.
76. Further comments were as follows:
- The area between the library and St Leonard's Hospital could be used as a sculpture park or an information centre
  - The public were often deterred from visiting them because of problems with anti-social behaviour.
  - Further consideration needed to be given as to ways of preserving the history of this area for future generations whilst encouraging visitors to benefit from what it had to offer

## **Traffic, Highways and the City Centre Area Action Plan (CCAAP)**

77. The key issue for the Area Action Plan in relation to the 'Cultural Quarter' was the need to co-ordinate the public realm master planning of the wider city centre with the proposals for the public realm within the boundaries of

the 'Cultural Quarter.' It was noted that the information Officers had provided on their CCAAP consultation results largely mirrored those which were collated from comments received at the public drop in session held on 4th November 2008.

78. It would be necessary for a robust evidence base to be produced for the Cultural Quarter in order that it could be included as an Action Area. This would need to set out the proposed projects, delivery partners and funding sources. If this were to be incorporated into the next stage of the CCAAP and subject to public consultation then the evidence would need to be produced by summer 2009.
79. It was important to embed the objectives for the Cultural Quarter into both the CCAAP and the York Northwest Area Action Plan. This would ensure that any proposals were co-ordinated with the wider area.
80. Other factors related to this theme are as follows:
  - Although the boundary of the 'Cultural Quarter' could cover an area of more than on Area Action Plan, the government office has advised that Action Plan boundaries could not themselves overlap.
  - There were air Quality issues in Museum Street and Exhibition Square from queuing traffic and bus manoeuvres
  - Accessibility was a key factor in the success of the 'Cultural Quarter'.

### **Public Drop In Session**

81. The Committee took into consideration all the comments made at this event and these have been collated and are attached at Annex H to this report.
82. It was clear from the evaluation forms received that there were mixed feelings about designating part of the city as a 'Cultural Quarter' and many felt that the boundaries should be broader and not exist at all.
83. The majority of responses indicated opposition to the name 'Cultural Quarter' and various alternatives were suggested.
84. Members of the public generally indicated that they did not want to see large, commercial organisations within the 'Cultural Quarter' but would prefer to see independent organisations alongside performance related events, increased public realm investment, cafes, museums, galleries and creative activities. Late night, noisy activities, large shops and expensive restaurants were some of the things that people suggested would be inappropriate for the area.
85. There was general support for the creation of jobs in the area, with a leaning toward those in the creative industries and the hospitality and tourism trades.
86. Most people who took part in the survey already visited the area at least once every 4 weeks and most said they would visit in both summer and winter and during the day and evening should there be something to do.

87. A large number of people were positive about a new pedestrian river crossing but some felt that improvements to Scarborough Bridge and Marble Arch would be adequate.

### **General/Other**

88. The following issues were raised in general discussion about the evidence gathered during the course of this review:
- It was important to make the most of York's stunning buildings
  - There was a need to be sensitive to other strong cultural offers outside the proposed Cultural Quarter i.e. Castle Museum, Micklegate, Gillygate, Clifford's Tower, Walmgate
  - There were many events in York that did not get publicised
  - Those involved in the creative industries in York should be involved in the planning process and execution of ideas rather than bringing in people from outside. Examples of this would be the use of the specialist creative industries such as stonemasons and glaziers
  - Did the recent launch of the 'Minster Quarter' affect the proposals for the Cultural Quarter?
  - Was York's challenge one of regeneration or preservation of its existing heritage?
  - There was a need to encourage visitors to return to the city and stay longer
  - It was important to get the correct balance between residents and visitors visiting the 'Cultural Quarter'
  - Ways of sustaining the evening economy around the NRM area would need to be explored
  - If the proposals went ahead the evening culture in York may shift
  - It was important to source trees, cycle racks, seats etc suitable to the area and the design master plan should take this into consideration
  - Currently, there was relatively poor use of the river frontage and the south bank of the river was severely under-utilised
  - Any works on the river frontage should take account of flooding e.g. easily washed down seating
  - There was a need to tackle the problem with geese along the river corridor

### **Analysis of the Studies of other Cultural Quarters/Areas Including Members visit to Newcastle & Gateshead**

89. The Committee made the following points regarding the above theme:
- Most of the cities investigated had been hit by economic decline and the creation of a 'Cultural Quarter' had, in most cases, been part of a greater regeneration project
  - It was too early to draw conclusions from most of the cities investigated, as their 'Cultural Quarters' had not been in existence for long enough.
  - The drivers for both Gateshead Council and Newcastle City Council were very different from those in York.
  - The main aim in Gateshead was felt to be regeneration of the riverside to form Gateshead Quays and apart from the York North West Site there was

little regeneration land within the proposed boundaries of the 'Cultural Quarter' in York

- Gateshead Council felt it was important to have a solid plan before applying and sourcing funding
- Gateshead now has one new iconic building (Sage Gateshead) and another iconic building in the conversion of an old flour mill into the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. York already has several iconic buildings
- Neither Council called their areas 'Cultural Quarters'. Members visited areas named Gateshead Quays and Grainger Town
- Both Gateshead and Newcastle were part of a coherent plan of development and were not a re-branding exercise
- Both were Arts and Culture led regeneration and the substantial public investment had drawn in substantial private investment
- Newcastle City Council wished to enhance heritage features to introduce buffers between nighttime drinking areas of the city
- Some of the drivers were similar to York's and some were different:

#### Similar

- Building a nighttime economy not based on drinking
- To improve connectivity, reducing the reliance on motor vehicles
- Opening cultural aspects of the Universities to the public

#### Different

- New sporting facilities for Gateshead
- New cultural icons: Angel of the North, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Sage Gateshead
- To improve Gateshead's town centre which was mainly owned by a private pensions trust.
- To increase city centre housing in Newcastle via 'Living over the Shop'
- To create a new business area in Gateshead

## **Corporate Strategy – Priorities & Direction**

90. This review related to the following corporate priority for improvement of this Council:

Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the City's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces.'

## **Options**

91. Having considered the information contained within this report and associated annexes, Members may decide to:
- i. Amend and/or agree the contents of the report.
  - ii. Amend and/or agree the recommendations within this report.



## Implications

92. **Financial** – Financial implications may arise for CYC if all the recommendations in this report were to be fully implemented. CYC would need to source funding (both internal & external) for major works to the public realm, the upkeep of the Archives and production of appropriate business and master plans. These financial implications would need to be addressed in more detail should the Executive approve the recommendations arising from this scrutiny review.
93. **Legal** – There are no known legal implications associated with the recommendations within this report
94. **Human Resources** – The Head of Arts and Culture has led on this review within her service, it may have further impact on her service in terms of putting forward proposals for York to be a British City of Culture. It may also impact on the resources of the Economic Development Team within the City Strategy Directorate in terms of producing a comprehensive business plan and a design master plan. Any resource issues would need to be addressed in more detail should the Executive approve the recommendations arising from this scrutiny review.
95. There are no known Equalities, Property, Crime & Disorder, or other implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

## Risk Management

96. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no known risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

## Recommendations

97. In light of the above report Members are asked to agree the following recommendations:

The following recommendations should be seen within the context of York being a 'Cultural City' and its culture not being confined to any one area.

1. That City of York Council takes the lead in the comprehensive business plan for this area, especially in terms of implementing any changes to the public realm works, pedestrian links etc between the various investment areas.  
  
REASON: To ensure that a robust business plan is in place.
2. That, with the backing of partner organisations\*, the Chief Executive of City of York Council opens negotiations with Yorkshire Forward and other appropriate public bodies with regard to funding the proposed cultural master plan for the city and seeking major investment for realising the opportunities available for improvements to the public realm and civic spaces.

\*Yorkshire Museums Trust, Rushbond PLC, York Theatre Royal, York Minster, National Railway Museum, York University (King's Manor Area), Visit York, York @ Large and appropriate departments within the local authority.

REASON: To source appropriate funding streams.

3. In view of the fact that development of the York North West site will create more traffic both vehicular and pedestrian:
  - i. The Committee recommends that substantial improvements be made to the area known as 'Marble Arch' (both road and pedestrian tunnels).
  - ii. The Committee recommends that City of York Council should seek to agree a new pedestrian river crossing (linking the National Railway Museum and Museum Gardens) as part of the York North West development plans.

REASON: To ensure that access and egress from the York North West site is appropriate and the area around the NRM receives better connectivity to the rest of the city.

4. That the Head of Arts & Culture prepares the relevant documentation to propose York as a British City of Culture, should this proposed government initiative go ahead.

REASON: To promote the city as an outstanding centre of culture.

5. That a wider strategy for 'Cultural Development Areas' within the city as a whole, be pursued by York @ Large to engage other cultural attractions and leisure providers e.g. a Castle Area.

REASON: To ensure cultural inclusivity across the city.

6. That the boundary of the proposed 'Cultural Quarter' be used for investment purposes only. The boundary is not the most appropriate for the 'Cultural Quarter' in the long term and the position of the boundary should, therefore, be revisited by York @ Large at a future date.

REASON: To find the most beneficial boundary to define the area.

7. That York @ Large be requested to revisit the name 'Cultural Quarter' as part of the work on the comprehensive business plan and the group should consider either a geographical or historical name for the area.

REASON: To reflect the views of the Committee and of comments made by local residents.

8. That the recommendations of the report commissioned by City of York Council to look at the future of York City Archives be fully implemented

to ensure that the Archives are suitably funded and are presented as a key part of the 'Cultural Quarter' area.

REASON: To ensure the future of the Archives within the city.

### Contact Details

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**Final Draft Report  
Approved** ✓

**Date** 10.02.2009

### Specialist Implications Officers

**Finance**

Patrick Looker  
Finance Manager  
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**Wards Affected:** Guildhall, Holgate & Micklegate

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### Background Papers:

- Belfast City Council Evaluation of Celebrate Belfast 2006 Final Report – Draft Version 2 – April 2007’ – This report, along with an Executive Summary can be found at:  
[www.belfastcity.gov.uk/events/docs/celebratebelfastreport.doc](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/events/docs/celebratebelfastreport.doc)
- ‘Review of Physical Regeneration – Impact of the Regeneration of Gateshead Quays and links to Gateshead Town Centre’. This report can be found at:  
<http://online.gateshead.gov.uk/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-2296>
- ‘Passionate About Gateshead Quays: The Transformation’. [A copy of this document is available for viewing from Scrutiny Services, Guildhall, York, YO1 9QN].
- Notes from the ‘City Centre Transport Masterplan’ workshop held on 15 July 2008
- ‘Cultural Quarters: Principles & Practices’ - Simon Roodhouse (2006)
- The Future of the City Archives – reports & relevant minutes can be found at:  
<http://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.asp?CId=102&MId=3582&Ver=4>

## **Annexes**

<b>Annex A</b>	Questions used as a premise for investigating other cultural areas.
<b>Annex B</b>	Timings and costings for stakeholders' future plans
<b>Annex C</b>	Further information from the NRM and Rushbond PLC
<b>Annex D</b>	Timings and costings for York St. John University
<b>Annex E</b>	Further information from York St. John University
<b>Annex F</b>	Draft Business Plan
<b>Annex G</b>	Executive Summary of Draft Business Plan
<b>Annex H</b>	Public Drop in Session Results
<b>Annex I</b>	LDF & CCAAP Information
<b>Annex J</b>	Sir Ron Cooke's Suggested Model