

York Castle Gateway Draft Area of Opportunity Policy

The York Castle Gateway ('Castle Gateway') has been identified as a major regeneration area of the city centre. The area is home to major high quality cultural, river and heritage assets that form part of York's unique character, but suffer from a poor quality setting amongst car parking and neglected buildings. There is significant potential to revitalise the area, reinterpreting and reasserting the varied history of the site, and creating a better connection with the city centre through improved pedestrian and cycle access.

The purpose of the regeneration is to:

- Radically enhance the setting of Clifford's Tower and the Eye of York to recognise and interpret their importance to York's unique history.
- Improve the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the area.
- Integrate the area with the broader city centre.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle flow throughout the area and in to the wider city.
- Bring forward new commercial development that improves the area and compliments and facilitates the implementation of the public space masterplan.

To achieve these aims development in the Castle Gateway will be delivered in accordance with the following principles:

- The removal of the Castle Car Park to create new public spaces and a high quality development opportunity.
- Provision of a replacement car park either underground at its current location or as a multi-storey car park on the site of existing surface level parking at Castle Mills.
- The addition of a new landmark River Foss pedestrian cycle bridge.
- The opening up of both frontages of the River Foss with riverside walkways on one or both banks.
- Engagement with important stakeholders in the masterplanning of high quality public realm and spaces, as a catalyst for wider social and economic improvement.
- Funding the implementation of the cultural partnership masterplan for public space and infrastructure through viable developer contributions and commercial uplift from new development sites.

Development within the three Castle Gateway sub areas will be delivered in accordance with the following principles:

Castle Piccadilly

- i. Create a development opportunity for a contemporary new building of exemplary architecture alongside the western bank of the River Foss on the site of the existing Castle Car Park.
- ii. Deliver a contemporary new car park either underground at its current location or as a multi-storey car park on the site of existing surface level parking at Castle Mills.
- iii. Provide a new landmark bridge for pedestrians and cyclists across the River Foss linking Piccadilly with the Castle Precinct through developer contributions and commercial uplift from new development sites.
- iv. Create new public access, with varied treatment along one, or both sides of the River Foss, with new connections linking to the wider pedestrian and cycle network.
- v. Provide active river frontage to any new development on sites adjoining the River Foss.
- vi. Reduce the size of the vehicular carriageway on Piccadilly and Lower Tower Street and improve size and quality of the pedestrian foot streets.
- vii. Seek developer contributions in the form of land and/or funding to contribute to delivering the masterplan and highways improvements.
- viii. Consider the potential for flood improvement work as part of any new development.

Foss Basin and the Ouse Riverside

- ix. Improve existing and create new connections for pedestrians and cyclists between St George's Field and the Foss Basin and the wider Castle Gateway area.
- x. Maximise the development potential of the Foss Basin and St George's Field as a key economic, cultural and social asset for the city.
- xi. Enhance existing public realm at Tower Gardens and along the Ouse Riverside and River Foss.
- xii. Consider the potential for flood improvement work as part of any new development.

Coppergate/Fossgate

- xiii. Improve the physical fabric, permeability and appearance of the Coppergate Centre to optimise the retail and cultural offer.
- xiv. Create new and improve existing pedestrian connections between the central shopping area and the Castle Gateway.
- xv. Improve the Fossgate streetscape by reducing vehicle dominance and creating a pedestrian friendly environment.

Explanation

Located on the southern side of the city centre, Castle Gateway area sits largely within the city walls and the Historic Core Conservation Area, at the confluence of the River Ouse and River Foss. The Castle Gateway area covers the length of Piccadilly, the Coppergate Shopping Centre and the Eye of York and runs through to St George's Field and the Foss Basin. Much of the area is of low quality with significant dereliction and underdevelopment and yet the area has great potential in both its location and its historic and cultural assets.

Castle Gateway comprises three distinct, but inter-linked, sub-areas: Castle-Piccadilly; the Foss Basin and Ouse Riverside; and the area around the Coppergate Centre and Fossgate. The area contains a range of private land owners and a substantial amount of public estate with three museums/attractions (Castle Museum, Fairfax House and the Jorvik Viking Centre), three court buildings, many listed structures and a historic monument of international significance (Clifford's Tower).

The Castle Gateway Area of Opportunity is an expansion of the previous draft Castle-Piccadilly Area of Opportunity Policy SS10 (Publication Draft Local Plan 2014). The geographic area has been widened to reflect new and emerging regeneration opportunities, and transport and other initiatives. Delivery of joined-up regeneration across the wider Castle Gateway area by City of York Council and partners, land owners and developers, will improve the locality and maximise social, economic and cultural benefits for the city. The significance of heritage assets and the opportunities for improvement offered by regeneration are key priorities for this Area of Opportunity.

It has long been recognised that a comprehensive planning approach is needed to secure high quality regeneration in this significant and sensitive historic environment, and draft policies to guide development of the area are contained within the Local Plan Development Control Draft 2005 and the Draft Local Plan, supported by other non statutory Planning Guidance and evidence bases.

The Central Historic Core Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CHC CACA) provides the key evidence base for the Local Plan and an important evidence base for any future plans for the Castle Gateway area. The proposed Castle Gateway Area of Opportunity broadly covers the areas defined in the CHC CACA as the Kings Staith/Coppergate, Castle and Piccadilly areas, and several of the stated Castle Gateway development principles directly reference the Appraisal. The Castle-Piccadilly Planning Brief, which was agreed in 2006, also provides an important evidence base.

A key challenge is to ensure that this important historic environment is safeguarded whilst allowing stakeholders and land owners to make the most of heritage and commercial assets and the council to maximise planning gain to enable potential benefit for the city. Delivery of high quality mixed use development of sites will enhance the vitality and viability of the area and ensure it is more effectively integrated into the City Centre. Appropriate uses include retail, leisure, civic and open space, residential and employment, with active ground floor uses.

A conceptual masterplan and detailed design of the public realm and infrastructure will be prepared, focusing on conservation and urban design. The masterplan will shape the key elements of the development on Castle Car Park, including the bridge across the River Foss. The commercial development elements of the Castle Gateway will also need to meet the quality criteria and vision for the area.

Delivery

- Key Delivery Partners: City of York Council; York Museums Trust; English Heritage; Historic England; York Civic Trust; Environment Agency; developers; landowners; and infrastructure delivery partners.
- Implementation: through Local Plan policies; planning applications; developer contributions; commercial uplift from new development sites; and external funding opportunities.