

City of York

**LDF** | Local  
Development  
Framework

**DRAFT**  
**City Centre**  
**Area Action Plan**  
**Summary of**  
**Issues and Options**

July 2008

## **Why do we need a plan ?**

The Area Action Plan (AAP) for the city centre is the beginning of a 2-year process to agree a master plan for the city centre. It will lead to a Preferred Options document early next year – where there will be more opportunity to comment.

This is a short summary of the full AAP (which can be viewed at the Council offices, libraries and on the CYC website); it gives a brief explanation of some of the key issues and ideas, but is not intended to cover everything.

When adopted as part of the Local development Framework in 2010, the AAP will help to protect and enhance the historic environment and provide a focal point for York's communities and visitors - whilst also planning for economic growth and vitality over the next 20 years.

It aims to balance the need for growth and regeneration of the city centre with the need to protect our built and natural resources.



**The Guildhall and sensitively designed new development along the Ouse**

It is the first time a review of the city centre has tried to pull all the various issues together under one comprehensive plan.

The Plan will eventually become the 20-year vision document for the city centre of York. It will be used by anyone with an interest in working, living in and enjoying our city centre.

It will help to ensure that the city centre performs to its full potential in terms of employment and housing, shopping and recreation. It will help to coordinate growth and improvements to the local environment in the right places and at the right times, and to be of benefit to people who live, work in and visit the area.



**Old and new residential and office development on the north side of the Ouse**

The Plan suggests new ideas as well as building on what we have already achieved and learned. It will be subject to more detailed assessments of funding and delivery options and, eventually, detailed master plan ideas. These will be fed into a 'Preferred Options' report early next year, 2009.

### **3 key themes**

There are three key themes running throughout the plan and, by setting out key issues and questions, we are asking you what sort of place the city centre of York should be in 2029. We have proposed a number of options to deal with the issues, and we want to hear from you on which options you think will work best.

The full AAP report sets out the 3 key themes – economic vitality, historic environment and community life. A short background for each theme is given, followed by a number of issues and questions for you to consider. A brief summary of each is given below, and the full AAP report adds more detail and background.

### **Economic Vitality**

York has the second largest earnings growth rate in the country and, with over 30,000 jobs, the city centre plays a critical role in that competitiveness and attractiveness. It is a vibrant city with a strong retail presence and over 4 million visitors a year. The evening economy and diversity of attractions are changing, and the Action Plan asks questions about how this should take shape, as well as how we should look at new office and retail development opportunities. It also asks what improvements are needed to help manage traffic congestion and build on the importance already given to pedestrians and cyclists.



**Office development, Rougier Street**

## Historic Environment



York is internationally famous for its unique townscape and rich architectural heritage, and a major asset for the whole region. Managing this environment – including the parks, rivers and public open spaces as well as the Minster, City Walls, Abbey and over 760 other listed buildings - is a huge challenge.

The Issues and Options document asks questions about how new development design should be considered in the future, and how public spaces and key attractions could be improved. It looks at the possibility of extending the footstreets area, improving public squares and green spaces, and dealing with climate change and flooding.

## Community Life



**New city centre apartments overlooking the Ouse**

As well as being the focus for retail and business activity, the city centre is also the cultural and community heart of York. It serves people from the wider York community as well as city centre residents and people working, shopping and relaxing.

The Issues and Options document provides an opportunity to respond to what people want from their city centre now and in the future. It asks questions about what types of services and facilities are needed, what types of home, and how we can help the ambience of the city centre in the evening.

## Opportunity areas

Five areas within the city, which we think have the potential to be improved, have also been identified. These are called 'Opportunity Areas' and are set out in section 9 of the issues and Options document. They are :-

- ❑ Castle Piccadilly
- ❑ The Cultural Quarter
- ❑ Gateway Streets
- ❑ City Spaces
- ❑ Riversides

### Castle Piccadilly

The area includes Clifford's Tower and other buildings of exceptional historical and architectural quality. It also includes the Eye of York, the car park and across the Foss to Piccadilly. There are opportunities to regenerate this area through quality mixed use development, public open space and connections with Piccadilly and Hungate.

### The Cultural Quarter



The area between York Minster and the National Railway Museum. There are opportunities to make this route more attractive, improve Museum Gardens and even bridge the Ouse. Opportunities for performance space, lighting, and promotion of public art will be assessed within wider efforts to improve linkages and use of the public realm.

### Gateway Streets

There is concern that some of the main routes into the city centre, like Goodramgate and Micklegate, are not benefiting from the prosperity of new investment in the city centre. Some streets are appearing under used and run down as a result. These gateway streets have great individual character, and through coordinated thought and investment, would deliver many benefits to businesses, residents and visitors.



**What opportunities are there to extend the footstreets, for example Fossgate , into the evening ?**

## **City Spaces**

These include public squares, like St. Sampson's Square and Kings Square, as well as streets and snickleways between them. The Action Plan will look at ways to make better use of them, improve their quality and see how they can help define key tourist and shopping circuits. Better interpretation of the historic environment is suggested, together with high quality lighting and seating, public art and improved security and accessibility.



**Would Kings Square, and other public squares in the centre, benefit from de-cluttering and re-design ?**



**Can more be made out of the Newgate market area ?**

## **Riversides**

The city centre tends to turn its back on the rivers in places and does not really maximise their potential. Access is restricted and there is a shortage of vibrant riverside public spaces, as well as quality areas for contemplation and relaxation. Through this Action Plan we will look at the potential to extend walkways, open up under used areas, and provide the right conditions to redevelop poorer quality buildings and spaces.



**The boardwalk and recent regeneration along the Ouse riverside, at the rear of Coney Street.**



**..should it be extended further towards Ouse Bridge ?**

## How you can respond

Some of the more challenging issues and options put forward in the main report are set out in the table on the next page. There are questions posed for each of these, together with a number of options for dealing with them.

They are not intended to cover everything at this stage. It will be for the public, as key interest groups, businesses and individuals, to comment and add to these and to think creatively about how York city centre should be 20 years from now.



**For a full and comprehensive account of all the city centre issues and options addressed in this consultation, please see the main AAP report.**

This has an orange cover and is titled 'City of York LDF City Centre Area Action Plan Issues & Options report July 2008.'

Question in AAP report	Key issue	Challenging options and ideas
<b>Economic Vitality</b>		
4, page 13	New retail sites	Should the Castle Piccadilly area be promoted as a key retail site in the city centre ? Should York Central be developed as a complementary role to the city centre ?
5, page 14	Improving the visitor experience	Should we redesign and enhance city centre public spaces ?
7, page 17	Evening economy	Should we extend the hours of operation of the footstreets area into the 5-7pm period? Should we create new pedestrian zones throughout the evening ('evening footstreets')?
10, page 21	New office development	Should this be focused on an office quarter around Rougier Street/ Toft Green, or in other areas ?
12, page 24	Managing congestion	Should certain streets and bridges in the centre be closed at certain times of the day ? Should car parking provision be changed ?
14, page 27	Bus accessibility	Should bus stops be improved and enhanced ? Should some be re-located ?
15, page 27	River transport	Is there potential ?
<b>Historic Environment</b>		
19, page 37	Design approach	Should we develop a city centre Design Code and policies on views and tall buildings ?
20, page 38	Decision making	Should we promote the appointment of a design champion and design competitions for major or sensitive schemes ?
22, page 40	Public streets, squares and spaces	Should we de-clutter and re-design public squares ? Should Newgate Market be relocated ?
23, page 41	Extending the footstreets	Fossgate ? all of Goodramgate ? Piccadilly ?
24, page 42	Connecting green spaces	Should the Memorial Gardens area be re-designed ? Should the City Wall ramparts be explored as a potential linear route for recreation ?
25, page 43	Enhancing green space provision	Where are there new opportunities for new city centre planting ? Should green roofs be encouraged on some buildings ?

	<b>Community Life</b>	
28, 29, page 48	Community services and facilities	What types are needed and where ? Should city centre facilities be targeted at specific groups ? eg. elderly people, teenagers, children ?
31, page 51	Evening activity	Should we be promoting new cultural development and activities? Should we restrict the growth of alcohol dependent activities ?
32, page 52	Ambience and perceptions	Should there be more outdoor seating for café bars and restaurants in the city centre ? Should we expand lighting schemes to a wider area ?
33, page 52	Night-time transport	Should the park & ride service be extended to operate later in the evening ?
34, page 54	Equality and access to housing	Should new housing be built for families, single people, older people, people on low incomes ?

You can download the full City Centre Area Action Plan on the City Council's website

[www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/Local\\_development\\_framework](http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/Local_development_framework)

Hard copies will be available to view at the Council's planning reception, 9 St. Leonard's Place and at all York libraries.

Please phone our City Development Team if you have any questions about this plan or how you can respond.

**Please take this opportunity to respond to the challenging issues for the city centre.**



Consultation will run throughout the summer, and a number of exhibitions and presentations at Ward Committees and other Forums will be held during this time.

Details of these can be found on the website link or by contacting the City Development Team on 01904 551463 or 551474. You can email us on [citycentreaap@york.gov.uk](mailto:citycentreaap@york.gov.uk)