

ANNEX A – The Westfield Centre Proposal & Endorsement Statements

The Westfield Centre A partnership between the Westfield Primary Community School, York High School and the University of York

Background

In 2019, the University of York entered into a formal partnership with IntoUniversity and the University of Hull to establish a community learning centre in Marfleet, an area of Hull that faces some of the largest levels of deprivation in the country. While fundraising for IntoUniversity, a philanthropist living in York asked why we weren't doing this sort of work to serve communities on our own doorstep. This prompted a conversation with Maxine Squire (Assistant Director of Education at the City of York Council), Rod Sims (Head of York High School) and Lamara Taylor (Head of Westfield Primary Community School). This proposal to establish a community learning centre in Westfield is a direct result of those conversations.

The Westfield Centre

The Westfield Centre proposal is a collaborative ambition created in partnership with York High School and Westfield.

The proposal has evolved significantly from the IntoUniversity model as a base and reflects the input we've had from schools, local organisations, employers and the Community Association. The project will continue to evolve in this way.

Vision

Our collective vision is to provide a safe space for children and young people to learn and grow and for adults to connect, access support and take part in lifelong learning or training. The centre will be a physical space, right in the heart of the Chapelfields estate, that will be open from 8:30am to 7pm, Monday to Friday including school holidays and will be the location for a range of activities and open sessions.

With a firm belief in the power of education to transform lives, the centre will enable young people and adults to realise their potential and aspirations. The centre will provide access to opportunities that help to raise attainment, improve attendance, facilitate a return to learning for adults and improve well being and mental health.

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We believe that for the success of the centre, and for the greater good of the local community, the centre must provide more than just educational opportunities for children. As a result, the centre will also provide opportunities for adults to connect, providing room in the timetable for adults in the area to develop networks, access support, advance their own interests and enhance their wellbeing.

We aim to open the centre in Autumn 2023 and it will be free to access for beneficiaries. The University is raising £2.25million through philanthropic donations, that will be invested solely into the running of the centre, alongside significant in kind support from the University and other centre partners.

This is a long term commitment to the running of the centre, with funds established for the first five years and fundraising set to continue for the foreseeable future, ensuring a consistent presence and willingness to learn and adapt.

Please note that 'The Westfield Centre' is a holding name. A communications agency will work with key stakeholders and most importantly, local adults, children and young people, to develop an official name for the centre.

Centre objectives

The centre vision is focused on improving the outcomes of children and young people. Our objectives are:

- A reduction in the attainment gap between advantaged and less advantaged children
- Improved attendance at school and engagement in education and future choices
- Improved access to information, advice, guidance and support that will secure lifelong fulfilling career choices
- Increased progression to continued education including higher education, further education, work based training and apprenticeships.

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- Reduced feelings of isolation and hopelessness experienced by children and adults
- Championing a sense of pride and belonging felt by the community for their neighbourhood and neighbours
- Improved mental health and wellbeing for children and adults
- A reduction in anti-social behaviour and bullying.

Programme of Delivery

Exactly what will be delivered from the centre is still in development as more members of the community become involved in the conversation.

The following sessions have been agreed in conversation with professionals who work in the area, and particularly with the two main school partners. We have also held focus groups with over 200 children who live in the area and spoken to more than 40 parents. This is just the start of our community engagement plans. This programme will continue to develop before the launch of the centre and beyond, as we learn what works, what attracts interest and as we adapt to the changing needs of the community.

An example of a typical weekday along with brief session descriptions is provided below.

8am - 9am	9am - 10am	10am - 12pm	12pm - 1pm	1pm - 3pm	3pm - 5pm	5pm - 7pm
Breakfast pick up and play	Adult socials and learning	Supporting learning	Community lunch (social and learning)	Supporting learning	After school clubs	Co curricular clubs with dinner
For children and families	Open sessions - a programme may evolve in collaboration with active community partners	For school groups	Open sessions - a programme may evolve in collaboration with active community partners	For school groups	For school children	For school children

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Adults social sessions

From informal drop in sessions for parents with young children to intergenerational ‘social connect’ sessions for all residents including those without children and older residents, we will provide time for adults in the area to socialise and connect with each other and local services. We anticipate these sessions will evolve to provide adult learning, taster sessions, and advice sessions once we have developed close relationships with residents who will become active community partners.

Adult learning sessions

To be developed in partnership with adults in the area, our intention is to provide lunch time sessions, with a space for children to play while residents (parents or not) attend sessions covering ‘return to learn’ or ‘learning for fun’ alongside digital literacy, financial literacy, enterprise and wellbeing. Importantly, this offer will be refined once a larger number of adult residents have become involved in co-creation of the programme.

Primary and secondary curriculum programme

Involving higher education and further education students and academics, local cultural and heritage organisation staff and local employers, our curriculum programme will support schools in taking a ‘deep dive’ into key curriculum areas, bringing subjects to life and connecting them to the world of work. This programme will involve interconnecting workshops, workplace visits and cultural trips and will be developed and delivered in collaboration with our school partners.

Specialist primary support

Focusing specifically on supporting children with special educational needs. Working with small groups of pupils alongside our school partners, student mentors, education specialists and trainee teachers, we will support the school in raising the attainment, confidence and wellbeing of their pupils.

Specialist secondary support

Focusing specifically on supporting pupils suffering emotionally based school avoidance, we will develop a programme of support for pupils facing problems with their mental health and anxiety. Aligning with the home tuition service and school partners, we will co create a programme that utilises small steps, habit formation, behavioural activation and mentoring with a long term aim of improving attendance.

Employability

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Working with our corporate partners, we will provide CV, application and interview workshops, access to interview clothing, and hope to expand to include work placements and internships. With employee volunteers, we also have the chance to provide coaches and mentors who will champion a person's progression, adult or child.

After school clubs

Both schools have asked frequently for a safe, quiet space with all the tech and learning support required for after school learning and homework. Later in the evening, we will run 'youth club' activities targeting different groups in the area providing access to a range of extra curricular activities from music and DJ skills, to coding and crafts. This has also been requested by parents and the community association.

Other considerations

Providing food

We hope to provide a 'grab and go' breakfast, as requested by local schools who see how well children learn when well fed and know some of their families struggle to provide several meals a day for their children. This will be provided to align with existing services. Lunch, dinner, snacks and refreshments will also be provided throughout the week.

Food and clothing banks

At the request of the community association, we hope to support their already established food bank, and extend this provision to a clothing bank. We will also consider becoming a registered 'warm place', in partnership with local residents.

Volunteers, safeguarding and behaviour considerations

We will seek to engage volunteers from the local community, students from across the further and higher education providers of York, and employees from a range of large and small employers in the city. All volunteers and staff will be enhanced DBS checked, and receive frequent safeguarding training alongside training relevant to working with children. The centre will have a robust safeguarding policy and risk assessments to ensure this is a truly safe space for all. We will also work with centre partners (including young and adult residents) to establish expectations and behaviour policies.

Considerations specific to Sanderson House

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Refit, redecoration and garden

Making sure the space we use is safe, a home from home, with all the space required to facilitate 'socials', small classes, homework sessions, and extracurricular activities will be vital to the success of the centre. We intend to redecorate the Centre, seeking support from local residents and children with, for example, design, decorating and gardening. We also intend to fit the centre with new flooring and furniture including sofas, desks, tables and IT equipment. We're also speaking with CYC colleagues about a potential kitchen refit. We also hope to provide a gardening club for residents of all ages.

Weekends

We have not currently planned to use the centre during weekends although we have had requests to extend our offer to support residents who work weekdays. We will look to establish staffing to support this request once the centre is open and established.

We understand that each year approximately four resident groups have used Sanderson House for parties on a weekend. The building refit makes it difficult to maintain this commitment, although we are and will continue to work with CYC colleagues and residents to find solutions. Currently, the suggestion is that we work with other local providers to find suitable, equally affordable and accessible alternatives.

Gateway Youth Club and Sunday worship

The Gateway Centre currently delivers a youth club on a Thursday afternoon and a Sunday worship service once a month. It is vital that the Westfield Centre project does not displace any existing activities that benefit the area. As such, we have met with Gateway and agree these activities should continue.

Accessible Arts and Media

Similarly, Accessible Arts and Media currently use the upstairs space for offices, with a view to moving to a new location in September 2024. We agree that AAM should remain in place until their move and look forward to working together.

Community Hub, Family Hubs and Multi-agency hubs

Sanderson House currently has a hub running every Thursday, with an expanding vision for family hubs from the City of York Council and a multi-agency hub model from the local police. We are keen to work in partnership with all such organisations. As such, we assume the Thursday hub will continue, and hope to be involved with discussions to support a family hub and multi-agency hub.

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Partnerships and Collaboration

Although the Westfield Centre initiative is coordinated by the University of York, it is a collaboration driven by key stakeholders in the area and will become increasingly collaborative as residents and young people are asked to join the partnership as critical friends. The University of York brings to the project significant investment in the form of staff time, convening powers and fundraising networks. The University will continue to oversee the centre and take responsibility for ensuring the centre delivers on the objectives set out. However, the centre will not be branded with University logos. It will have a distinct name, logo and brand and feature thanks to all partners and supporters.

The following organisations and people have been involved in conversations about the centre so far:

Focus groups, interviews and questionnaires completed by over 250 pupils so far from Westfield Primary School and York High School.

Senior Leadership Team members of local schools (York High School, Westfield Primary School, Southbank Multi Academy Trust, Hob Moor Primary School, Carr Junior Primary School, Danesgate School, Ebor School Sport Partnership)

Council staff for community, children, education services and family learning including lead members from the Council Management Team.

Local police and Youth Justice services

Explore York, York Cares, Gateway Centre, York CVS, Inspired Youth, The Island, Inspired Choices, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Merchant Adventurers, Accessible Arts Media, Energise, local employers (Aviva, Nestle), York Museums Trust, Make It York, Reach, York St John University, York College and Askham Bryan College.

Local Ward Councillors have also been involved in conversations about the centre throughout development (pre-local elections) and will be a key part of developments and oversight going forward.

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Chair of the Chapelfields Community Association, has also contributed to the vision so far through several conversations.

We are keen to continue connecting with organisations and people working across York, and particularly in the Westfield Ward. Our commitment is to add value to and supplement activities already taking place and to work in partnership with others across the city. Our partnerships will become more formalised and a governance structure will ensure that key stakeholders are formally involved in the development and management of the centre once implemented.

Future community engagement

This centre puts the local community at its core and although many of the project objectives are focused on outcomes for young people, we believe this will only be successful with meaningful engagement of adults. We've therefore ensured open access time in the timetable and built a communications plan and governance framework that will involve residents as active partners.

Without a location confirmed, we have been reluctant to speak too soon to residents for fear of disappointing a local community who have grown used to people and organisations over promising and under delivering. Now we have confirmation of sufficient funding, we have moved to begin conversations with local residents.

We have already begun to hold, through warm introductions, a series of face to face conversations that enable us to listen to local residents to understand how they feel about the area and what they would like to see us provide.

As this project is largely focused on provision for young people, we have started these conversations with parents first. Through regular attendance at school events and conversations on the school gates, we are developing a group of parent influencers who will work with us.

We will expand this conversation to all residents, with a leaflet drop to all homes and a series of regular drop in cafes for anyone to speak with us and share their thoughts and concerns. We hope these conversations will

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allow us to develop a group of resident influencers. We will also attend the community hub regularly to have informal conversations and become more well known by residents.

We will grow our focus groups with children and develop a group of young influencers.

In the week commencing 19th June, our meetings in schools will increase to involve a presence at sports days and on the school gates. We are also aiming to schedule a door to door leaflet drop during this period. From week commencing 3rd July, we will begin drop in sessions for all residents based at Westfield Primary Community School and, if the Community Association is supportive, at the Community Hub. We're keen to hear feedback and suggestions for ways of engaging local residents.

These conversations will not be 'one-offs' but the beginning of frequent and on-going listening. It will also directly feed into the governance structure outlined below.

Governance

The governance structure involves:

- A steering group involving representatives from across the various groups involved and key representatives from the lead partners
- A delivery group involving people who are actively involved in the delivery of the centre programme, content and timetable
- An external stakeholder group that will involve professionals from across the city who are contributing to the development and delivery of the centre
- A community advisory group involving a core group of experienced community leaders working or living directly in the Westfield area who will support the successful launch and establishment of the centre, with nominees on the steering group
- A local residents group involving adults (those with and without children) living in Westfield who will ensure we provide a service that is relevant, useful and has potential for success. Nominees will sit on the steering group.

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- A young influencers group involving children and young people from partner schools who will ensure we provide a service that will attract and serve local young people. Nominees will sit on the steering group.
- A network of community champions who will work with the centre team and support ongoing conversations with residents in the area.

We intend to hold frequent regular drop-in sessions that will allow all residents an opportunity to speak with the centre team and intend to hold twice yearly “General Meeting” style events.

This governance structure will ensure a strong voice from all involved. Each group will be involved in steering the project going forward, working to determine if the centre is meeting the core objectives set out above, how the delivery programme should be amended and evolve to meet changing needs, and how to deal with any challenges faced along the way.

This structure is also intended to ensure we do not only create an ‘echo chamber’ of supportive centre friends. An bi-annual general meetings and regular drop ins should ensure we also listen carefully to residents and young people who do not feel well served by the centre.

Additional Notes

IntoUniversity

The Centre is inspired by IntoUniversity, a charity with over 20 years of experience delivering 35 learning centres across the UK. Their first centre opened in 2002, led by two youth workers as a local response to the needs of the people they supported through an evening youth group. Now supporting over 40,000 young people each year, across 35 centres nationwide, they have a proven track record of becoming integral parts of communities experiencing some of the largest levels of deprivation in the country, supporting families facing innumerable barriers gaining skills and qualifications, accessing well paid and secure employment and building stable and safe home lives.

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Each centre operates much like the first, as a local hub for young people, providing children the opportunity to become who they want to be, despite the circumstances in which they happen to have been born. The IntoUniversity team is driven by a firm belief in the talent of every young person, believing that, with support, every young person can access fulfilling careers. Working with university and corporate partners, and a network of over 1600 volunteers, IntoUniversity provides less advantaged children, from the age of seven onward, with a safe space for after school study, inspirational mentoring programmes, exciting academic enrichment workshops, careers insight opportunities and much more.

While inspired by IntoUniversity, the Westfield Centre will be quite different. It is specific to the needs of communities in the Westfield Ward and will deliver a programme of support that has been directly asked for by those living and working in the area. Very importantly, it will not focus on university as the only measure of success and higher education will not be an overt message of any of the sessions run there.

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Statements in support of University of York Proposal

“I have had the pleasure to lead Westfield Primary Community School for the past four and a half years and it is an amazing experience. The staff team is the foundation of Westfield and they bring energy and commitment to our school community every day through inspiring the children to learn in a safe place. Relationships are at the heart all that we do and many people who visit say they can feel the warmth between everyone. Quite simply, we are very proud of what we have achieved.

Just as covid interrupted all of our lives, it interrupted our school improvement journey. When we had fewer children in school we used the time to make stronger connections with external partners to support our families during and after the pandemic. During one of our many meetings with CYC regarding mental health support, I was introduced to Rebecca Clark and this formed the beginning of some exciting conversations about how we can support our school community.

We often talk about what is in our gift. By this we mean the things we can control and influence. We have noticed that there are many things that affect our children that happen outside of the school gates that impact on attendance at school, motivation to learn and engagement in education. To ensure our children achieve the best possible outcomes, we are exploring ways to enhance the opportunities in their own community and this is where the concept of the Westfield centre began.

With regard to the location, we talked about spaces within a school and felt that this would feel that the children were going back to school after 3:15pm. Strangely, not popular! With the cost of travel, it became essential that a venue was accessible. I introduced Rebecca to our parent governor, Rebecca Main as she is Chair of the Community Association. It felt like a positive meeting and the idea of Sanderson house was discussed. We would like any future venue to be easily accessible, safe and within the heart of our community. I believe Sanderson House would offer such a space and could be reinvented with the community, for the community.”

Lamara Taylor, Headteacher, Westfield Primary Community School

York High School



Resilience ~ Aspiration ~ Success

18th May 2023

To whom it may concern

I am writing this letter to offer my wholehearted support for the Westfield project and locating it in Sanderson House.

Initially, I want to establish my understanding and commitment to the area. My parents moved to Acomb when I was 6. I went to Westfield Primary School before passing my 11 plus and going to Nunthorpe now Millthorpe. I have been proud to be Deputy Headteacher at York High School for 10 years and for the last 5 years Headteacher. My father used to be a youth leader at Chapelfields Adventure Playground before it was turned into houses at the end of the 1970's.

In my job I am instinctively sceptical about the next great thing, all too often they peter out after a year or never get off the ground. The Westfield project is different; it is seeking to make generational change through a long-term commitment to providing facilities, services and activities that the Chapelfields area needs. The possibility that from Sanderson House the project can create a genuine community hub where currently there is none. This can become a focal point for children and adults alike where currently there is none.

The Westfield project could enhance the work of the school through offering a base for additional learning, for other agencies to meet families away from the formal school setting, for careers, for homework and for pastoral care. This would not be possible if the community had to travel, this is why the central location of Sanderson House is essential for the success of the project.

When I grew up Chapelfields had an Adventure Playground and a Youth Club there is nothing for the young people of Chapelfields to do, boredom leads to Anti-Social Behaviour. I wholeheartedly support the Westfield Project and its use of Sanderson House.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rod Sims'.

Rod Sims

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Our Ref: TW/ajh

23 May 2023

Dear Committee Member

Reference: The Westfield Centre

We write with reference to the paper tabled at the City of York Executive Committee meeting to determine a venue for the Westfield Centre initiative.

Higher York members are all too aware that York is a city of contrasts. Alongside affluence and outstanding educational outcomes, York is home to some areas of significant deprivation and has one of the largest gaps in attainment between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils. In the last year, Higher York institutions have worked together to establish a new initiative to help address the challenges local communities face.

Working alongside partners from across the City, The Westfield Centre, will serve members of our local community who face significant socio-economic disadvantage, barriers to education and opportunities. This initiative has been co-created with local schools, employers, charities and City of York Council colleagues to establish a community learning centre in the heart of Westfield, one of the most disadvantaged areas of York.

To successfully transform the lives of children across the city, we must work together. Children in York should be able to access a multitude of services, people and opportunities that will enable them to thrive. Through the Westfield Centre, the City will convene to provide access to educational enrichment, extra-curricular development, mentoring, tutoring, skills development, advice and guidance. This will be made possible by the significant investment of Higher York staff and students, employee volunteers, local culture and heritage organisations and the philanthropic donations of our friends and supporters.

There is one central value at the heart of this initiative: community co-creation. This centre will not be a 'university' or 'Higher York' venue and the programme delivered through the centre will not be the creation of Higher York. We have listened carefully to those living and working in the area to build the plan so far. The governance structure for the centre will feature children, young people and residents as core members. Once a venue is agreed, we will move quickly to bring in even more voices from the local community and provide opportunities for community volunteers.

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Alongside community co-creation, it is vital that this unprecedented coordination of support and funds is delivered on the doorstep of the community we intend to serve. The venue, at the heart of Chapelfields, is therefore essential to ensure the success of the initiative.

Yours sincerely



Tim Whitaker
Principal and Chief Executive
Askham Bryan College



Lee Probert
Chief Executive and Principal
York College



Karen Bryan
Vice Chancellor
York St John University



Charlie Jeffery
Vice Chancellor and President
University of York

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“It was good to meet with you and the rest of the team earlier this year. We enjoyed hearing about your innovative and exciting plans to develop the Westfield Centre to provide services and support to one of the most deprived areas of York. York Museums Trust is committed to sharing stories with and of our local communities, connecting place and past with the present and future. We work to inspire communities and to produce creative opportunities and activities which give voice to our collective heritage. We should be delighted to work with you to explore ways to support the community in Westfield.”

Kathryn Blacker, Chief Executive, York Museums Trust

“The Shepherd Group and its flagship operating business Portakabin are proud to support the creation and establishment of the Westfield Centre. We recognise the need for this learning centre to be embedded directly within the community, and created in collaboration with the people it will serve. It is important to us, as a major employer based in York since 1890, to work with those who share our passion to transform lives through education and opportunity. In doing so, we foster social mobility and encourage career paths that might not have previously seemed attainable for the young people and adults within this community.”

Kurt Calder, Group Shareholder Relations Manager, Shepherd Building Group Ltd

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As a partner in the Westfield Centre project, York Cares is fully supportive of the proposal for Sanderson House to provide a base for the centre.

York Cares is committed to working in partnership with the Westfield Centre and to engaging employers to support the work of the centre by providing employability support for children, young people and families to support them to reach their full potential.

Having worked in the Westfield ward for a number of years on a number of projects, we are all too aware of the need in this area and believe that the Westfield Centre has the potential to make a real difference in the local community and beyond. Basing the centre in the heart of the community at Sanderson House would enable work to be embedded at a local level thereby ensuring the long-term sustainability of the centre.



Holly Hennell
York Cares Manager

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“As someone who runs provision for youth and children from Sanderson House (as well as living on the Chapelfields Estate myself), I'm confident that Sanderson House would make an excellent base for the Westfield Centre project. Situated right at the heart of the estate, it's a place well known with children and young people, with excellent access for many families who would benefit from the project. As Gateway Church, we've been running youth and children's provision from Sanderson House for many years, and we're hopeful that the familiarity that the young people in the area have with the building will serve the project well - enabling a good uptake right from the start.”

Caleb Ellwood, Gateway Church

“Aviva has committed their support to the creation of the Westfield Centre, and to five years of financial support.”

Sally Dillon, Aviva York Site Lead

“The Westfield ward has proved challenging for policing for the last few years, the police and partners have worked hard in the area to tackle ASB and criminality. We have attempted to engage with the local community to improve our relationship but its always proved difficult as we never had a regular place to meet and engage with the community. Sanderson House will provide the community and all those people who within the locality with somewhere they can meet up, have a chat and discuss any issues or problems they may be having. The area desperately needs a community hub and Sanderson House is right in the centre of the local community, I know the vision for the future and what the aspirations are, what is being discussed for Sanderson House is just what this community needs and I look forward to my team being an active part of this.”

Lee Pointon, North Yorkshire Police