

Should York be a World Heritage site?

**The Report of the
York World Heritage Steering Group**

April 2022

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Executive Summary

This report has been prepared by the York World Heritage Steering Group for City of York Council. The report:

- summarises the UNESCO World Heritage and UK Tentative List of World Heritage Sites history and procedures;
- advises that seeking World Heritage Status is a three stage process:
 - stage 1, Report of the York World Heritage Steering Group
 - stage 2, Nomination to the UK revised Tentative List
 - stage 3, Application to UNESCO for World Heritage status
- advises that the UK government last reviewed the UK Tentative List in 2010 and a review of the existing Tentative List and creation of a new Tentative List is overdue;
- advises that on 26th March 2022 the UK Government announced the timetable and process for the review of the existing Tentative List;
- advises that in 2010 York applied unsuccessfully to be placed on the UK Tentative List but was advised by the Expert Panel that the city should apply with a revised, holistic Statement of Significance when the Tentative List reviewed;
- advises that York has a very strong case for designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site and that it will have a difficult, though not impossible, task of achieving a place on the revised UK Tentative List (Stage 2) and being designated a World Heritage site by UNESCO (Stage 3);
- recognises that York has already been successful in achieving designation as UNESCO City of Culture
- advises that an application for World Heritage Site status accords with the city's Cultural Strategy
- advises that York's bid for World Heritage status must deliver greater empowerment and involvement of residents in managing, understanding and enjoying the heritage of the city;
- advises that the process of applying for UK Tentative list status, even if it turns out to be unsuccessful, will be a valuable contribution to the implementation of the York Narrative, will inform and support strategic planning, tourism and economic development policies in the City;
- recommends that the boundary of the World Heritage site should be co-terminus with the Central Historic Core Conservation Area;
- considers that designation as a World Heritage site will be a vital contribution to the future economy of the city through promoting a quality tourist product in

a highly competitive market and attracting and retaining entrepreneurs, investors, risk-takers and students who, in the modern world, can choose to locate anywhere;

- advises that the financial cost of Stage 2 could be around £7.5k. The report identifies that Stage 2 funding will be required in 2022/23 and that this funding should come from a broad-based public and private partnership within the City and Region led by the City of York Council;
- recommends that the model of the York Millennium Bridge Trust could be used as a vehicle which could take a bid forward. It recommends that if York is successful at stage 2 a York World Heritage Trust should be created and that it should be responsible for raising the money to carry out and manage Stage 3;
- advises that the costs of a Stage 3 Bid could be in the region of £200k-£250k (at current prices). The very earliest this Stage 3 expenditure would occur would be in 2023/24, but will probably be no later than 2025/26;
- recommends that:
 - City of York Council accepts this report of the YWHSG and that City of York Council will make a bid for World Heritage status;
 - City of York Council and York World Heritage Steering Group continue to work together to take this project forward to Stage 2;
 - If successful in achieving UK Tentative List status, City of York Council, with advice from the York World Heritage Steering Group, initiates a formal review of Stage 3 and creates a York World Heritage Trust to lead the application process to UNESCO for World Heritage status.

YORK AS A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

1 Background

- 1.1 In 2006, the Lord Mayor, Janet Hopton, decided to examine the question “Should York be a World Heritage site?”. In order to carry this out, she invited representatives of Institutions and individuals from the city to form a small advisory group, the York World Heritage Steering Group (YWHSG) to address this question and to explore the benefits and disadvantages of World Heritage status. Members of the YWHSG are listed in Appendix One and have all contributed their time and expertise pro-bono.
- 1.2 This report has been produced by the York World Heritage Steering Group in late 2021 to provide City of York Council with information and recommendations on the question “Should York be a World Heritage Site?”.

2 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and the UK Tentative List

- 2.1 UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world which is considered to be of outstanding universal value to humanity. This is embodied in the international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, (World Heritage Convention) adopted by UNESCO in 1972. Since then, national governments which have ratified the World Heritage Convention (State Parties) have been encouraged to nominate sites within their national territory for inclusion on the World Heritage List.
- 2.2 The Convention provides for the identification, protection, conservation and presentation of cultural and natural sites of "outstanding universal value". It requires a World Heritage List to be established under the management of an inter-governmental World Heritage Committee.
- 2.3 State Parties are responsible for creating Tentative Lists of potential World Heritage sites under their jurisdiction. A State Party may nominate one site per year from their Tentative List to UNESCO for inscription on the list of World Heritage sites; the UK has agreed that it will nominate one site every two years. Nominations are subjected to a rigorous assessment by UNESCO's advisers (IUCN and ICOMOS) over an 18 month period. Decisions on whether to inscribe sites in the World Heritage List are taken by the World Heritage Committee at its annual meeting each July. The Committee comprises 21 of the member states of the Convention, each elected for a six year term.
- 2.4 The World Heritage List currently includes 1154 properties around the world which the World Heritage Committee considers as having outstanding universal value. A site can be nominated as a cultural site, a natural site or a mixed (both cultural and natural) site. The World Heritage List can be viewed at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/> . There are currently 33 UK World Heritage sites, of which 28 are cultural, 4 natural and 1 mixed (see Appendix Two).

- 2.5 The World Heritage Convention was ratified by the United Kingdom in 1984. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for the UK's general compliance with the Convention, and for nominating sites to UNESCO.
- 2.6 In 2006, the Lord Mayor of York, Janet Hopton, posed the question "Should York be a World Heritage Site?". After consultation with City of York Council, an independent advisory group, York World Heritage Steering Group (YWHSG), was established to address this question. The YWHSG submitted a report to City of York Council in 2007 that recommended that City of York Council should apply for admission to the UK Tentative List of World Heritage Sites. In 2009, after considerable public consultation, City of York Council formally agreed that it would apply for admission to the next UK Tentative List of World Heritage Sites.
- 2.8 In 2010, the UK Government invited nominations for a new Tentative List to identify more exceptional cultural and natural heritage places of global importance in the UK and advertised for applications to the new Tentative List. Government also stated that these applications would be evaluated by an independent expert panel, drawn from across the UK.
- 2.9 City of York Council applied to be placed on this renewed Tentative List. In 2011 the independent expert panel submitted its report. York's application was not successful. The expert panel considered that York's sub-surface archaeological deposits, the focus of the application, did not on their own meet the criteria for OUV. However, the panel stated that "two sites (City of York: subsurface archaeological deposits and the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean) might consider a future application to the next UK Tentative List with substantially revised component parts."
- 2.10 City of York Council asked the YWHSG to continue its work so that it could advise the council on what actions should be taken when the next UK Tentative List review takes place. This report sets out the results of that work and makes a series of recommendations for City of York Council to consider.
- 2.11 The UK government last reviewed the UK Tentative List in 2010. It is normal to review the content of the Tentative List every 10 years. A review of the existing Tentative List and creation of a new Tentative List is therefore now due.
- 2.12 The YWHSG has identified three stages in the process of gaining World Heritage Status:
- Stage 1, Report of the York World Heritage Steering Group and consideration by City of York Council;
 - Stage 2, Nomination to the UK revised Tentative List;
 - Stage 3, Application to UNESCO for World Heritage status.

This report represents Stage 1.

- 2.13 On 26th March 2022, the UK Government announced that it will prepare a new Tentative List of natural, cultural and mixed sites for potential nomination for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It has set out a two stage application process. To apply to be considered for the UK's Tentative List, DDCMS are asking applicants to first submit an expression of interest form, followed by a full application form at a later date. Both parts must be completed and submitted on time in order to be eligible for consideration. The closing date for submitting the expression of interest form is Friday 6 May 2022. The closing date for submitting the application form is Friday 15 July 2022. The full application forms will then be assessed by a panel of independent experts appointed by the government. A list of the recommended sites for the Tentative List will be submitted to ministers for approval before being registered at UNESCO later this year. Full details are available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/unesco-world-heritage-sites-uk-tentative-list-review>.

This means that Stage 2 must be completed 15th July 2022.

- 2.14 If York is placed on a new UK Tentative List, it is probable that the first nomination from the new List to UNESCO will be made in 2024. If York wanted to be this first nomination it would need to complete all the necessary documentation and application procedures in 2023/24.

This means that Stage 3 could be completed as early as 2024.

3 York: a World Heritage Site?

- 3.1 York has come late to the World Heritage process. There were inconclusive discussions about York applying for World Heritage status in the 1980's and again in the early 1990's. An application at that time would have stood a considerably greater chance of success than an application today. Nonetheless, York World Heritage Steering Group believes that York should give serious consideration to pursue World Heritage status.
- 3.2 There is an issue for York in that the nomination process and attitudes to the types of site suitable for nomination have moved on. The World Heritage List is biased against Western European sites, and there are already a number of medieval walled cathedral cities on the List. UNESCO has taken the view that the World Heritage List should be more balanced and encourages applications from countries that are not well-represented on the List. However, the YWHSG considers that York should draw strength from the comments made by the independent expert panel in 2011: "*The Panel considered that a more holistic application for the second city of England would have been much stronger and recommended that a nomination of the whole city above and below ground could be considered for a future Tentative List.*"
- 3.3 YWHSG considers that York has a very strong case for designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site. York will, however, have a difficult, though not impossible, task of achieving a place on the revised UK Tentative List (Stage 2) and being designated a World Heritage site by UNESCO (Stage 3).

- 3.4 The wealth and significances of the historic environment in York are considerable. There are 22 Scheduled Monuments over 2000 individual listed buildings, 35 Conservation Areas, and it is one of only five Areas of Archaeological Importance in England. York Minster and York City Walls are two of the best examples of such monuments in Europe. These are representative of the well-preserved and well-managed historic buildings and structures that survive in the city.
- 3.5 York's importance is underlined by the evidence of occupation for almost 2000 years. It possesses a complete set of archaeological deposits from the Roman period onwards. Significant parts of these deposits are deep, waterlogged, and anoxic; arguably, they constitute a unique sequence of well-preserved Roman, Viking and medieval features and deposits.
- 3.6 York's street plan is a testimony to successive episodes of formal and informal planning by Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, medieval, Georgian, Victorian and modern administrations.
- 3.7 The primary documentary archives of the City of York, the Dean and Chapter, the Borthwick Institute, coupled with the archives of many private organisations such as the Merchant Adventurers Company represent an almost unparalleled body of archival material for academic and popular study.
- 3.8 The historic environment and the archival and archaeological resources have been studied extensively and are well documented through the numerous histories of the City (from Francis Drake's *Eboracum* published in 1736 to *York* edited by Prof P Nuttgens, 2001 and *Historic Atlas of Towns York*, PV Addyman 2018) and through volumes and journals such as those published by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England), the York Archaeological Trust fascicule series and web publications, and the Esher Report of 1968.
- 3.9 However, if York is to be successful in gaining nomination to a revised UK Tentative List it must demonstrate that it meets the criteria for cultural sites adopted by UNESCO for Assessment of Outstanding Universal Value. These criteria are listed in Appendix Four.
- 3.10 The Steering Group has considered these criteria and believes that York meets criteria i) ii) iii) iv) and vi):
- i. to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
 - ii. to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
 - iii. bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
 - iv. to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape;

- vi. be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria).

3.11 A draft Statement of Significance has been prepared that broadly meets UNESCO's word limits. The draft Statement of Significance sets out the Outstanding Universal Value of the city of York (Appendix 5):

York is the pre-eminent historic urban centre in northern England. For many centuries, it was the second city of England, at times a centre of government. It developed around a strategic tidal river crossing and has been at the centre of a network of national and European communications and trading links since its establishment. The city is the outstanding example of urban development in western/north-western Europe originating with Roman occupation. York has exceptional evidence of its Roman origins and of all successive phases up to the modern day.

Roman York, Eboracum, was established c.71 CE. In the 7th – 9th centuries CE, the Anglo-Saxon city, Eoforwic, became a centre of power, belief, trade and learning. In the 9th and 10th centuries CE, Jorvik, was the centre of an extensive Viking kingdom. Urban occupation developed through the Norman conquest and the medieval period and development continued post-Reformation to the present day.

This sequence of historical urban development, although common in western/north-western Europe, is marked in York by exceptional survival of evidence for all these periods. The town plan, buildings, archaeological deposits and objects, and documents and archives that evidence this include: remains of the Roman fortress and colonia; early development of the Minster and merchant's wic from the 7th century CE onwards; Viking Age occupation and trade evidenced by new streets, house plots, new forms of urban housing and exceptional organic artefacts; the surviving Norman castles and near-complete circuit of medieval defensive walls and gates and St Mary's Abbey show the transformation of the city after the conquest in 1066. The wealth and development of the medieval town is evidenced for example by the Minster and historic urban churches and their ornamentation, particularly with exceptional stained glass, and the many exceptional timber-framed buildings including three surviving Guildhalls. Post-medieval, post-Reformation development is well evidenced for instance, by The King's Manor, seat of the King's Council in the North, and in 18th century Georgian domestic, civic, and administrative architecture, the 19th century scientific institutions, and the impact of the railways. Since the mid-20th century, historic buildings have been conserved and repurposed alongside often sympathetic contemporary architecture. The sequence of surviving evidence sheds an unparalleled light on urban development in western/north-western Europe.

The YWHSG considers that York meets UNESCO's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) Criteria (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) and (vi) and is a strong candidate for World Heritage status.

3.12 The Steering Group also considered potential boundaries for a York World Heritage site and possible associated Buffer Zone. In York there are already a

number of statutory conservation designations which cover the historic core of the City. The central historic core, Bootham, Clifton, The Mount and Blossom Street are contained within three contiguous Conservation Areas designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and its predecessors. A significantly larger area was designated in 1984 as an Area of Archaeological Importance under Part 2 of the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. The Steering Group considered the benefits of including other parts of the City in a World Heritage site. New Earswick and the Retreat were discussed but rejected on the grounds that although significant they did not add greatly to the case made in the Statement of Significance. The Steering Group considers that there is a very close match between the Statement of Significance and the area designated as the Central Historic Core Conservation Area.

- 3.13 Therefore, the Steering Group recommends that the boundary of the World Heritage site should be co-terminus with the Central Historic Core Conservation Area (Plan 01).
- 3.14 It is a requirement that a candidate World Heritage Site considers whether a buffer zone will be required to manage and protect the OUV of the Site.
- 3.15 The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DDCMS) maintains the view that buffer zones are not necessary in every case, particularly where adequate layers of protection already exist.
- 3.16 The YWHSG has considered the issue of whether a buffer zone is necessary. In York, it is clear that existing statutory protections and supporting documentation will provide a suitable mechanism to protect Outstanding Universal Value of York:

the Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (2011) which includes Management Strategy and Views Analysis;

Historic Core Conservation Area designation and surrounding/adjoining Conservation Areas (the setting of Conservation Areas must be taken into consideration in planning process when assessing sites outside of the designated boundary);

Area of Archaeological Importance designation;

Designation of Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings;

Conservation Management Plans relating particularly to York Minster, the City Walls, Clifford's Tower and Mint Yard;

Examination Draft of the City of York Local Plan and emerging York Minster Precinct Neighbourhood Plan;

Greenbelt protection – currently given weight under Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy (policies YH9 and Y1) and NPPF. The green wedges and strays form part of the proposed Green Belt in the Examination Draft of the City of York Local Plan.

The YWHSG considers that designation of a Buffer Zone is not necessary.

- 3.17 The YWHSG recommends that as part of Stage 3 City of York Council should prepare a World Heritage Site and its Setting Supplementary Planning Document and Management Plan that will provide an authoritative, comprehensive framework to help manage any threat to both the site and the setting of the site.
- 3.18 The YWHSG recommends that as part of Stage 3 City of York Council should also prepare a detailed Comparative Study that establishes the qualities and attributes that the proposed York World Heritage Site will bring that are not already represented on the World Heritage List. However, a shorter scoping study will be required to support an application to a new UK Tentative List. Therefore, a short Comparative Study is being produced for this purpose by Dr Christopher Young, formerly World Heritage Officer for English Heritage.

4 Assessment of Advantages and Disadvantages of World Heritage Status

- 4.1 Inscription as a World Heritage Site and the international recognition that a Site is of outstanding universal value is perhaps the highest heritage accolade a place can receive and brings with it significant international prestige. The UNESCO World Heritage Convention considers that there are three main benefits to gaining World Heritage status:
- 4.1.1 *Public awareness.* Inscribing a site for heritage preservation on the World Heritage List can serve as a catalyst to raising awareness for heritage preservation on the part of governments and citizens alike. Heightened awareness, in turn, should lead to greater consideration and a general rise in the level of protection and conservation afforded to heritage properties. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee can provide financial assistance and expert advice as support for promotional activities for the preservation of sites as well as for developing educational materials. It is highly unlikely that UNESCO would contribute any financial support to York.
- 4.1.2 *International assistance.* It is the State Parties' responsibility to provide adequate protection and management for their sites. In this regard, a key benefit of ratification, particularly for developing countries, is access to the World Heritage Fund. Annually, about US\$3 million is made available, mainly to Least Developed Countries and Low Income Countries, to finance technical assistance and training projects. Emergency assistance may also be made available for urgent action to repair damage caused by human-made or natural disasters. Inscription of a site on the World Heritage List may also open the way for financial assistance from a variety of sources in heritage conservation projects.
- 4.1.3 *International recognition.* The overarching benefit of joining the World Heritage Convention is that of belonging to an international community of appreciation and concern for unique, universally significant properties that embody a world of outstanding examples of cultural diversity and natural wealth
- 4.2 The UK Government has published its guidance on Conserving and enhancing the historic environment in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021). Paragraph 189 of NPPF 2021 states: "*Heritage assets range from sites and*

buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.”.

- 4.3 The YWHSG recognises that York has clear development ambitions set out in the Local Plan and that York needs to build its economic future and capitalise on its historic assets. It recognises that the City Council has a responsibility to ensure the continued economic and social well-being of its citizens through a period of uncertainty and rapid change. Therefore, the YWHSG has carefully assessed the impacts that might arise as a consequence of designation as a World Heritage site. The YWHSG has produced a Matrix of advantages and disadvantages of World Heritage status Appendix Eight. It is clear from the Matrix that there are both pros and cons to World Heritage Status.
- 4.4 These were analysed under the headings of *Status and Recognition, External interference and involvement in City Decisions, Possible Attraction of Increased Funds, Costs, and General* which include tourism benefits. From the matrix it can be seen that the Group considered that the disadvantages came from the possibility of external influence and interest in planning decisions in the City and from the issues of leadership, costs and other resources required to make a Stage 2 and Stage 3 bid.
- 4.5 In February 2020, YWHSG contacted six relatively new UK World Heritage Sites asking what the impact had been for them. We received two helpful responses before Covid-19 struck: the Mining Areas of Cornwall and North Devon, and the Lake District, both very different areas from York so generally with different experiences. The many deprived areas within the Cornwall Mining World Heritage Site had greatly benefited from World Heritage status, making a substantial contribution to regeneration and economic wellbeing, attracting considerable funding, creating employment opportunities in construction, tourism and related retail and catering operations through the infrastructure and community assets created.
- 4.6 The Lake District was a tourist honeypot before securing World Heritage status. There had been more international interest and an increase in Japanese and Chinese visitors but it had not really made much difference to the number of UK tourists as they came anyway, it being a National Park, with the numbers affected by the weather. (With the increase in staycations resulting from the pandemic, 2021 had, however, seen a massive increase.) Business had been quick to see the potential and had engaged with WH status. The WHS branding had helped promote this and hopefully would add value to local produce. WH status had raised the profile of the English Lake District not just internationally but also with government departments such as DEFRA. Designation had raised people’s expectations that because it was a WHS there would not be development or change. However, as a living, continuing landscape there would always be change and this change has to be managed in order to address people’s expectations and the requirement to protect the OUV of the World Heritage Site. Planning, which had always been

high profile, was ever more so.

- 4.7 YWHSG has carried out other research on existing UK historic city World Heritage sites in an attempt to assess the impact of York gaining World Heritage status, considering the most likely challenges this could bring: increased number of tourists; management costs; future developments. Benefits are listed elsewhere, the most obvious being a raised international profile for the existing World Heritage UK sites.
- 4.8 Most of the UK historic cities became World Heritage Sites between the mid 1980s and mid 1990s, 25 to 30 years ago. Even these historic World Heritage Sites vary, reducing realistic comparisons to two: Edinburgh and Bath. Canterbury and Durham focus on specific buildings within their surrounding area – cathedrals and castle. Only Edinburgh and Bath cover wider city areas similar to York. In 2008, in a discussion with the Bath World Heritage officer, he said the impact of World Heritage Site status had been very good: extra status, civic pride, a positive impact upon tourism, brought prosperity, and that World Heritage status encouraged better design as there was greater scrutiny as it was a World Heritage Site. The perception of developers saw designation as an extra layer of bureaucracy to overcome.
- 4.9 Both Edinburgh and Bath were established successful tourist centres before becoming World Heritage Sites and were early on the list. In 2008, the World Heritage officer in Bath said it was difficult to assess whether increased visitor levels were directly related to World Heritage. However, it was a brand name which was used widely by hotels and tour operators when advertising which suggested it was a selling point. The challenge for York would seem to be managing quality tourism and a possible increase in international tourists attracted by the World Heritage label, in itself a bonus in raising York's profile and resulting in longer stays.
- 4.10 The issue of the impact of WH status and external scrutiny by UNESCO on development and planning decisions has been thrown into focus recently on account of Liverpool's development plans and its subsequent loss of WH status. Bath's Riverside Development was also challenged by UNESCO but survived and developments in Edinburgh have also been subject to external scrutiny. YWHSG considers that York's proposed WH site is already well protected, as there are so many heritage assets of the highest significance within the historic core (the Central Historic Core Conservation Area, listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments) that are protected by legislation, the emerging Local Plan and the NPPF 2021.
- 4.11 There are two major redevelopment areas where development may impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the proposed World Heritage Site: the Castle Area within the proposed World Heritage Site; and York Central, outside the World Heritage Site but immediately adjacent. York Central may therefore impact on the setting of the World Heritage Site and its OUV. York Central has an approved outline planning application. Future Reserved Matters applications should be prepared in the context of York's aspiration to be a World Heritage Site. Development of the Castle Area already has to take into account NPPF guidance on heritage assets as the site is in the Central Historic Core Conservation Area, the central Area of Archaeological

Importance and contains a Scheduled Monument and Grade I listed buildings. However, these two sites present great opportunities where York can demonstrate how it can conserve and enhance the heritage and OUV effectively and to the highest standards. The Vision for York is a wider proposal including other aspects than the heritage. As ideas progress, regard should be given to protecting York's Outstanding Universal Value.

- 4.12 York Civic Trust has undertaken a superficial view of recent developments within the Central Historic Core Conservation Area (the proposed boundary of an application for World Heritage Site Status) to assess the impact that these developments could have had should they have come forward in the future and if York was a designated World Heritage Site. This initial survey has shown that existing management and planning controls are effective in protecting York's physical assets but a lack of sensitive architectural ambition and overall aspiration expected from development within the area has been missing. Their findings are attached at Appendix Seven.
- 4.13 The York Culture Strategy 2020 – 25, York's Creative Future, has the vision that by 2025, York is known as a city where outstanding, renowned heritage comes together with a cutting-edge contemporary approach to creativity. York is one of just twelve UK cities in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the UK's only UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts. This UNESCO designation has helped to galvanise citywide support to bid for a second UNESCO designation to demonstrate York's outstanding universal value as a World Heritage Site.
- 4.14 Make It York (MIY) fully supports the city's application for UNESCO World Heritage Site status, as it aligns with the key priorities of the York Culture Strategy 2020 – 25, York's Creative Future, which MIY leads on the implementation of, alongside City of York Council and the York Culture Forum. The York Culture Strategy focuses on inclusion, participation and wellbeing, alongside the importance of placemaking and of raising the city's profile both nationally and internationally.
- 4.15 The historic environment of York is one of its key assets. World Heritage status will promote the need for outstanding new developments and will continue the careful management of the historic environment which together will contribute to the quality of life which sets York aside from its competitors. The YWHS consider that designation as a World Heritage site will be a vital contribution to the future economy of the City through promoting a quality tourist product in a highly competitive market and attracting and retaining entrepreneurs, investors, risk-takers and students who, in the modern world, can choose to locate anywhere. With heritage acknowledged as the basis of York's economy, we believe that the addition of WH status will benefit both tourism and attract new business. All three, MIY, the Council's International Relationships Group, and WH, share a common purpose: to raise York's international profile. World Heritage status will acknowledge the importance of heritage for York's economy and will ensure this heritage is celebrated and protected.

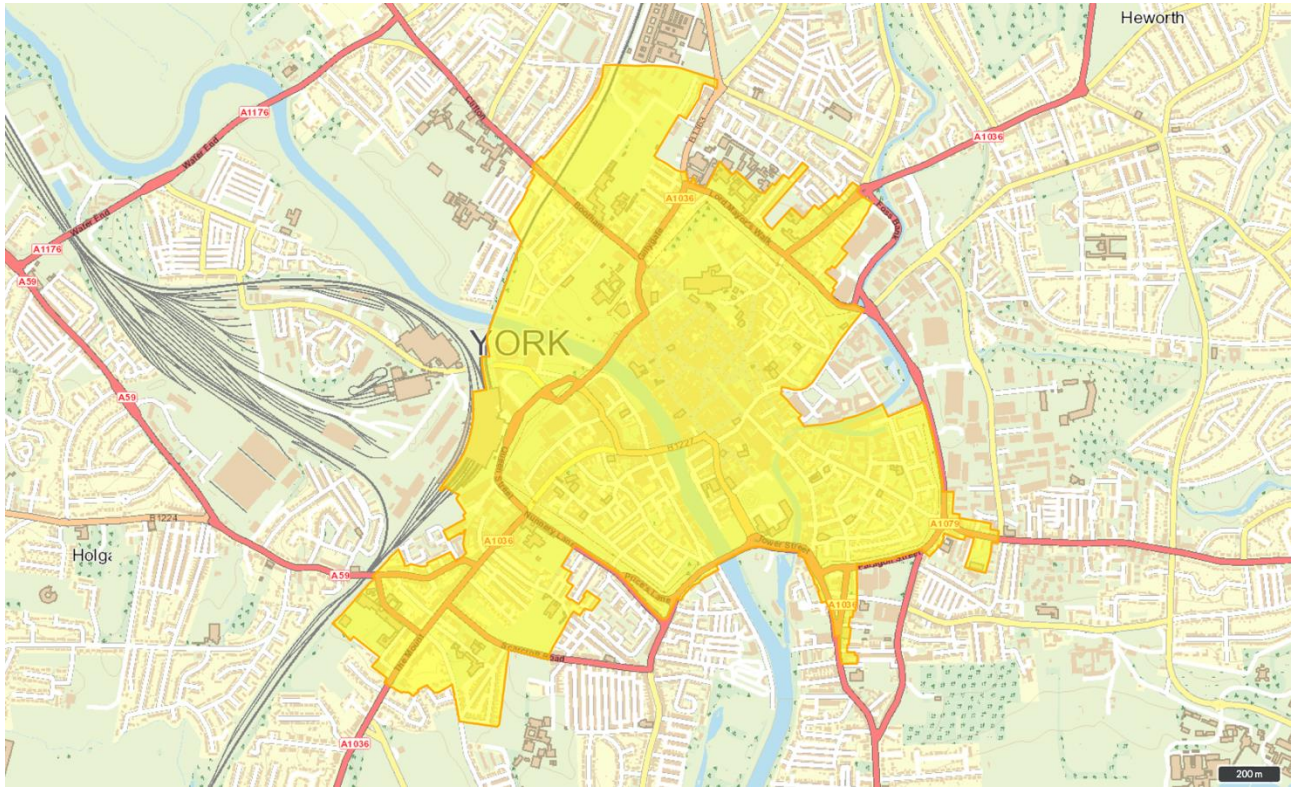
5 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 The timetable for the Stage 2 process has been announced and is summarised above (para 2.12). Given this relatively short timescale, the Steering Group believes that it is at this stage that the City of York Council can provide effective leadership supported by and working in partnership with the York World Heritage Steering Group.
- 5.2 The Steering Group believes that the financial cost of Stage 2 could be up to £7,500 and that this funding will be required in 2022/23. If possible, this funding must come from a broad-based public and private partnership within the city and region led by the City of York Council.
- 5.3 If York is successful at Stage 2, it is recommended that the Stage 3 process is subject to a formal review to clarify the timescales, processes, and costs. It will be necessary to decide if a new vehicle is required to manage the Stage 3 bid to UNESCO. If successful in gaining a place on the Tentative List, we would suggest a more formal Steering Group is formed to take the Bid forward to the next stage. However, it is important to retain both the experience, knowledge and understanding of WH gained by current members and the heritage representative format. Some members have been involved since 2006, others later but still for several years, and may wish to retire. A well-known person as Chair would be an asset for this stage. The current Steering Group should advise on the composition needed for the restructured Steering Committee. The City is fortunate in that a successful model exists in the city for managing and resourcing a major project. The York Millennium Bridge started as a community initiative. This was taken forward and given leadership by York City Council. The City Council then created the York Millennium Bridge Trust which managed the bid to The Millennium Commission and took the project forward to completion. The Steering Group recommends that the model of the York Millennium Bridge Trust should be used as a vehicle which can carry out the post-Stage 2 review, take a bid forward and that it should be responsible for raising the money to carry out and manage Stage 3.
- 5.4 The Steering Group advises that the costs of a Stage 3 Bid could be in the region of £200k-£250k (at current prices). The very earliest this Stage 3 expenditure would occur would be in 2023/24, but will probably be no later than 2025/26.
- 5.5 Should York be successful at Stage 2 and Stage 3, it will be faced with ongoing costs of managing the World Heritage Site. The management costs depend largely on the type and size of the WH Site. Bath, which has a designated World Heritage site of comparable size to that proposed for York, has a WH officer who is employed directly by the city council. Edinburgh World Heritage Trust has a sizeable office with sixteen officers (2019 January). The Trust includes members drawn from the City Council and Historic Scotland. The Edinburgh Trust is funded by public funds (Edinburgh City Council, Historic Scotland) and private sponsorship and donations. It is therefore difficult to estimate precisely what post-designation management costs in York will be as this will depend very much on the management structure.

- 5.6 The York World Heritage site will include properties that are under different ownerships. Various parts of the proposed World Heritage Site are already under council ownership and management such as the city walls, with areas voluntarily managed such as Fishergate Postern by the Friends of York Walls, Red Tower by a Community Interest Company, and Monk Bar and Micklegate Bars are leased to York Archaeological Trust as museums. York Archaeological Trust also manages Jorvik and Barley Hall. The Dean and Chapter of York Minster is responsible for its estate including its Stained Glass. The stained glass in the named parish churches is cared for by their congregations (for example All Saints, North Street, currently undertaking restoration work after winning an NHLF grant for this). The three Guild buildings are managed by their members. The University of York is responsible for King's Manor and, in future, the Guildhall, York Museums Trust for their buildings, and York Civic Trust for Fairfax House. The York Conservation Trust has played a major part with its acquisition of over 90 historic buildings in the city, repairing/restoring and finding new uses for them.
- 5.7 Monitoring of these assets is also undertaken informally by various heritage and amenity societies (e.g. the Georgian Society). Others, such as York Civic Trust and Yorkshire Architectural and York Archaeological Society (YAYAS) also take a general watching brief of the city as a whole regarding good management or any threats to its heritage generally. Many small historic local buildings are managed and supported by residents. There are many local history groups and the popularity of history courses through the Centre for Continuing Learning and the development of websites such as York Past and Present show the extent of local interest in the heritage of the city. Across the city many residents take a pride in looking after York's heritage, as Friends of a heritage building, or keeping a watchful eye on what is happening – letters to The Press evidence this. The WH accolade would acknowledge the contribution of so many residents in managing York's heritage.
- 5.8 One obvious cost to the Council would be maintaining high standards within the public realm – condition of pavements, cleanliness, absence of litter. The Snickleways, the medieval alleys, now grubby are a particular challenge. These matters should be sorted regardless of being a WHS, for the benefit of residents. Clear efforts are being made in all these problem areas and since the inception of the York Business Improvement District (BID) much has improved.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The York World Heritage Steering Group recommends that:
- City of York Council accepts this report of the YWHSG and that City of York Council will make a bid for World Heritage status;
 - City of York Council and York World Heritage Steering Group continue to work together to take this project forward to Stage 2;
 - If successful in achieving UK Tentative List status City of York Council initiates a formal review of Stage 3 and with advice from the YWHSG creates a York World Heritage Trust to lead the application process to UNESCO for World Heritage status.



Plan 01 Central Historic Core Conservation Area - Proposed World Heritage Site