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## Scrutiny Management Committee

21 April 2008

### Cultural Quarter for York, linking the City Centre and the York North West development sites - Feasibility Report

#### Summary

1. This report asks Members to consider a scrutiny topic registered by Councillor Hogg to examine the 'Vision' developed in 2007, for a Cultural Quarter for York, linking the city centre with development sites in York North West. The aim of the vision is to generate substantially more external funding than that which is currently being achieved through an ad-hoc approach. The vision recognises that getting the link between the city centre and York North West right, will support and guide future city centre development.
2. The suggested scrutiny review would test this vision by working with wider city partners and examining best practice in other Local Authorities – see topic registration form attached at Annex A.
3. In submitting this scrutiny topic, Councillor Hogg would like to achieve a long-term direction for the area between the National Railway Museum, York Railway station and the Minster, by:
  - agreeing an overall approach to the design of the public realm in the area;
  - encouraging a more co-operative working environment to produce new and exciting cultural activities, and;
  - creating a sense of place to improve longer term visitor figures.

#### Criteria

4. Councillor Hogg believes this topic fits with the following eligibility criteria as set out in the topic registration form:
  - Public Interest (ie. in terms of being in the public interest and resident perceptions)
  - National/local/regional significance e.g. A central government priority area, concerns joint working arrangements at a local 'York' or wider regional context
  - It is in keeping with the following corporate priority – 'Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces'.

5. The Head of Arts & Culture agrees that this topic is in line with the above criteria as the area defined as our cultural Quarter has major Grade 1 and Grade 2\* listed buildings from every major building period since the Romans and there is no other site like this in Europe. It is important therefore that the Council gets the proposals for the area right as it could have a significant effect on visitor and tourism figures.
6. The Policy Development Unit has also provided comment on how this topic fits with the above criteria – see Annex B.

## Background

7. The Cultural Quarter proposals for the city were one of the Council's main objectives in the Sub Regional Investment Plan which was submitted to Yorkshire Forward by the Economic Development Unit (EDU). At that time, the vision document that Cllr Hogg refers to in his topic submission, was created. This defined a Cultural Quarter as:

'A complex cluster of activities, embedded in a particular place which are iconic and identifiable, and which together are more than a sum of the parts'

8. The vision identified six distinct study areas within the Cultural Quarter, and looked at existing patterns of pedestrian movement together with a number of improvement strategies. The issues under consideration within each study area are shown below:

<b>Study Area</b>	<b>Issues</b>
South of the river	NRM & York Central Plans Links Above or Below the Tracks Status of Leeman Road Views & Orientation
St Mary's Precinct	Restoration of the Historic Landscape East / West /North / South Linkage The Relationship to the River The North Garden
The Library, St Leonards, Multangular Tower	Forecourt to the Library Opening up the Site St Leonards Hospital Public Realm
St Leonards Place	Traffic Management The Terrace Theatre Royal Exhibition Square
The Minster	Routes & Links Landscape Setting Information & Signage

The River Corridor	A New Crossing A Sense of Place Events & Activity Links into Landscape

9. As detailed in the Lifelong, Learning & Culture Service Plan for 2008/09 (extract attached at Annex C), the Head of Arts & Culture is responsible for co-ordinating the discussion and planning around the cultural quarter from the Council viewpoint, which involves other significant institutions e.g. York Museums Trust, NRM etc. This work is currently ongoing but without the direct involvement of Council Members.

### **Consultation**

10. Consultation with other relevant Members and officers and has been carried out and their responses are shown at Annex D

### **Conduct of Review**

11. A scrutiny review involving our external partners and stakeholders would allow Members to:
- a) *enter into an in-depth discussion of the topic thus ensuring the understanding of Members and partners about the potential and how the proposals work closely with both City Centre Redevelopment and York North West proposals.*
12. Councillor Hogg has suggested using the 2007 Vision document to explore the relationship between the six areas of the quarter (area 1 to include the Railway Station), including pedestrian and vehicular movement, design, open spaces, a river crossing, performance areas, lighting, landscaping, cultural production, promotion and public art.
13. If a decision is taken to proceed with this review, It may be beneficial if the ad-hoc scrutiny committee either visit other successful Cultural Quarter programmes e.g the Art Quarter at Wolverhampton or the Creative Industries Quarter at Sheffield. Alternatively they could invite external experts in the process to come and demonstrate their learning – for example, Simon Roodhouse, author of ‘Cultural Quarters – Principles & Practices’ (Academic at University of London).
14. A scrutiny review involving our external partners and stakeholders would also allow Members to:
- b) *support the ongoing work by contributing to the production of a business plan, which in turn could support the Council in a submission for funding from Yorkshire Forward / the Lottery Fund*

15. In doing this, Members would have to work within a fixed timescale in order not to delay the submission of a business plan.
16. As the Head of Arts & Culture is already leading on this within her service area, and has indicated that a scrutiny review of this nature would only incur minimal additional admin work which could be contained within her team.
17. Having contributed to a business plan, Members could choose to progress the review by establishing some key principles for guiding future collaborative work aimed at cultural development in the City. They could also explore the relationship between cultural activities and their long-term attraction to visitors.
18. Taking this and the comments made by key officers into consideration, it is agreed that a topic of this nature would require no more than 3-6 months to complete

### **Implications**

19. **Human Resources (HR)** – The HR implications associated with carrying out a review of this scrutiny topic are limited as detailed in paragraph 14 above.
20. **Legal** – There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations within this report.
21. **Financial** - There is money available within the scrutiny budget for research relating to ongoing reviews, therefore there are no financial implications associated with the recommendations within this report.
22. There are no Equalities, Property, Crime & Disorder, or Other implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

### **Risk Management**

23. There are no known risks, associated with the recommendations within this report.

### **Recommendations**

24. Based on the evidence presented within this report and its annexes, Members are advised to proceed with the review. It is suggested that this review commence immediately in order to reach a conclusion prior to the submission of the Council's business plan scheduled to happen in approximately 6 months.
25. In making this recommendation, an overall aim for this review was recognised together with a number of key objectives. A suggested remit for the review is therefore attached at Annex E, and Members are asked to consider this and make any changes necessary, prior to approving a remit for the review.

## Contact Details

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**Feasibility Study Approved**

**Date**

14 April 2007

**Wards Affected:** Holgate, Clifton & Guildhall

**All**

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

**Background Papers:** 2007 Vision Document

**Annexes**

**Annex A** – Scrutiny Topic Registration Form

**Annex B** – Response from Policy Development Unit to Feasibility

**Annex C** – Extract from the Lifelong, Learning & Culture Service Plan for 2008/09

**Annex D** – Feedback from Member & Officer Consultation

**Annex E** – Suggested Remit

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## SCRUTINY TOPIC REGISTRATION FORM

**PROPOSED TOPIC:** A Cultural Quarter for York, linking the city centre and the York North West development sites.

**COUNCILLOR(S) REGISTERING THE TOPIC:** Chris Hogg

### SECTION 1: ABOUT THE TOPIC

Please complete this section as thoroughly as you can. The information provided will help Scrutiny Officers and Scrutiny Members to assess the following key elements to the success of any scrutiny review:

**How** a review should best be undertaken given the subject

**Who** needs to be involved

**What** should be looked at

**By when** it should be achieved; and

**Why we are doing it ?**

**Please describe how the proposed topic fits with 3 of the eligibility criteria attached.**

*As a general rule, topics will only proceed to review if they meet 3 of the criteria below. However, where it is adequately demonstrated that a topic is of significant public interest and fits with the first criteria but does not meet 3, Scrutiny Management Committee may still decide to allocate the topic for review. Please indicate which 3 criteria the review would meet and the relevant scrutiny roles:*

	✓	Policy Development & Review	Service Improvement & Delivery	Accountability of Executive Decisions
Public Interest (ie. in terms of both proposals being in the public interest and resident perceptions)		X		
Under Performance / Service Dissatisfaction				
In keeping with corporate priorities		X		
Level of Risk				
Service Efficiency				
National/local/regional significance e.g. A central government priority area, concerns joint working arrangements at a local 'York' or wider regional context		X		

**Set out briefly the purpose of any scrutiny review of your proposed topic. What**

**do you think it should achieve?**

*If you have not already done so above, please indicate in response to this, how any review would be in the public or Council's interest e.g. reviewing recycling options in the city would reduce the cost to the Council for landfill*

There is substantial evidence to support the premise that an agreed plan for a Cultural Quarter City in the City of York, which has the support of all the partners in the scheme will attract substantially more external funding than the current ad hoc approach to funders. A vision has been developed in 2007 working with the key stakeholders but we need to test this through scrutiny with wider city partners and learn from best practice in other Local Authorities. The benefits of this approach have been seen clearly in the previous scrutiny topics of River Usage, and Archaeological Resource management.

The scrutiny of the vision for a Cultural Quarter will aim to achieve a long-term direction for the area between the National Railway Museum, York Railway station and the Minster. Exploring the 2007 vision, the aim would be to agree a overall approach to design of the public realm in the area, encourage more co-operative working to produce new and exciting cultural activities and to create a sense of place to improve longer term visitor figures. Getting the link between the city Centre and York North West right will support and guide future city centre development.

**Please explain briefly what you think any scrutiny review of your proposed topic should cover.**

*This information will be used to help prepare a remit for the review should Scrutiny Management Committee decide the topic meets the criteria e.g. How much recycling is presently being done and ways of increasing it*

The scrutiny will use the 2007 Vision document to explore the relationship between the 6 areas of the quarter (area 1 must be enlarged to include the Railway Station). It will cover pedestrian and vehicular movement, design, open spaces, a river crossing, performance areas, lighting, landscaping, cultural production, promotion and public art .



**Please indicate which other Councils, partners or external services could, in your opinion, participate in the review, saying why.**

*Involving the right people throughout the process is crucial to any successful review e.g. CYC Commercial Services / other local councils who have reviewed best practice for recycling / other organisations who use recycled goods*

Participants in the scrutiny would include the City of York Council, The York Museums Trust, York Minster, York University, English Heritage, Rushbond, York Theatre Royal, Network Rail, The National Railway Museum and York Conservation Trust. We would also seek to engage other councils who have developed cultural quarters or city centre master plans in order to understand best practice in this area of place making.

**Explain briefly how, in your opinion, such a review might be most efficiently undertaken?**

*This is not about who might be involved (addressed above) but how the review might be conducted e.g. sending a questionnaire to each household to gather information on current recycling practices and gathering information on how recycling is carried out in Cities similar to York*

It is envisaged that the Scrutiny will take place over a 6-month period with 4 facilitated sessions to gather information and opinions with final recommendations for future direction and actions being made in the scrutiny report.

**Estimate the timescale for completion.**

*Please circle below the nearest timescale group, in your estimation, based on the information you have given in this form.*

- (a) 1-3 months;
- (b) 3-6 months; or     **6 Months**
- (c) 6-9 months

PLEASE ENCLOSE ANY SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS OR OTHER INFORMATION YOU FEEL MIGHT BE USEFUL BACKGROUND TO THE SUBMISSION OF THIS TOPIC FOR CONSIDERATION.

There is widespread support for the scrutiny from all the Key stakeholders listed previously, but especially YMT, MRM and York Theatre Royal who would otherwise be applying for external funding on an ad hoc basis. This scrutiny topic would also contribute to work on York North West and the City Centre Development Plan.

If officers require a copy of the original visioning document for the Cultural Quarter please contact Gill Cooper, Head of Arts and Culture ext. 4671.

### **What will happen next?**

- a Scrutiny Officer will prepare a feasibility study based on the information you have provided above and on further information gathered. This process should take no more than six weeks;
- on completion, the feasibility study will be presented to Scrutiny Management Committee together with a recommendation whether or not to proceed with the review. If the recommendation is to proceed, the feasibility study will include a remit on how the review should be carried out

## Cultural Quarter for York, linking the City Centre & the York North West Development Sites

### **Response from Policy Development Unit on Feasibility of Review**

#### ***Public Interest (i.e. in terms of both proposals being in the public interest and resident perceptions)***

Resident perceptions – make York more vibrant ?

#### ***In keeping with corporate priorities***

A proposal for a Cultural Quarter links with some elements of our vision, the following are taken from our Direction Statements

- We will listen to communities and ensure that people have a greater say in deciding local priorities
- We will be an outward looking council working across boundaries to benefit the people of York

A cultural quarter could have potential to benefit people by bringing in inward investment and using creative and cultural industries as a component for economic regeneration. This has been done in other European cities.

Tourism is still a key industry for York and there is potential for higher value tourism as recognised in the Future York report produced in 2007.

#### ***National/local/regional significance e.g. A central government priority area, concerns joint working arrangements at a local 'York' or wider regional context***

This is the major area where there is a fit between the potential for linkage across the national local and regional policy agendas. The key national agenda is around 'place shaping' and locally specific decision-making. 'Place shaping' can be seen as making the most of the specific locality, for example York as a city with a long cultural heritage.

The central government Review of Sub- National Economic Development and Regenerations in 2007 (the SNR) proposed that LAAs should include a clear focus on economic development and it also suggested a statutory economic duty for local authorities. This is currently under consultation but reviewing the economic and skills needs combined with consideration of economic areas to focus on would form part of the duty. There would also have to be community consultation/involvement. A key government goal is sustainable growth and prosperity.

York's LAA has city of culture as one of it's elements. It mentions a strong and distinctive cultural sector, cultural sector contributing to the economy, cultural enterprises as part of key business sector with links to economic and social well-being and contribution to regeneration.

The Future York Report June 2007 recognised that continuous improvement in the quality of York's cultural offer is essential if the city's success in this key sector of the economy is to continue. Not just the refreshment of existing visitor attractions but also development of new facilities to develop higher value added tourism

However it also noted that York finds it difficult to access government Funding streams for economic development/regeneration, which has the potential to expedite the city's plans to develop its economy. In terms of tourism York is a top national and international destination. Concerns about lack of access to funding mean that York not developing its visitor offer to the extent needed to sustain its market position. Innovation and investment required.

Locally we also have a changing demographic in terms of aging population but also changing cultural diversity.

Regionally Yorkshire Forward the RDA see the creative and digital cluster as a key component for economic regeneration. Creative industry can be an economic driver.

Tourism is one key issue as it is a key sector of regional significance

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) 2006-2015 suggests using culture to contribute to economy, renaissance and profile by focusing on

- culture, major events and regional marketing
- business start up/ growth and innovation
- tourism and visitor economy

Nationally a number of the National Performance Indicators (NPIs) have links with culture measures

- NPI 9 use of public libraries
- NPI 10 visits to museums and galleries
- NPI 11 engagement in the arts

### **LAA - A City of Culture:**

What York@Large has to deliver is:

"Celebrating both our uniqueness and our diversity, we will promote a culture that helps build a confident and creative community, welcomes and inspires resident and visitor alike, and encourages quality opportunities for fun and fulfilment open to all."

We will do this by:

- Articulating a sense of what York is - Celebrating and interpreting what's already there, championing the cultural sector in its widest sense: arts and heritage, sport & active leisure, play, open spaces, learning and the built environment.
- Raising aspirations – Creating debate and engagement, challenging the city's existing assumptions on culture thus inspiring our citizens to do new things, visit a variety of places and try new experiences. This will increase participation in, and improve the quality of, the cultural life of York.

- Creating change – Helping to make York more like the words citizens have suggested we should be aiming for: Cosmopolitan, vibrant, innovative, go-ahead, creative and modern.
- Encouraging creative expression and talent - Supporting and promoting the cultural sector's contribution to York's economy, inspiring entrepreneurs to develop cultural enterprise in the city.
- Building successes – Recognising and celebrating what we do well, making the best of what already exists, encouraging co-operation and partnerships, adding value through joined up working, providing practical support to the cultural sector.
- Raising the quality of provision – Creating a plan for investment in the cultural infrastructure, identifying the gaps and seeking funding to address the issues and allow York to secure its international and national cultural role.
- Getting more people involved – Raising awareness of the opportunities that are available for active lifestyles, creativity and learning for life. Seeking to identify the barriers to this and being active in breaking the barriers down.
- Using all of our resources – Maximising the opportunities to enjoy our parks, rivers and open spaces.

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## Relevant Extract from Lifelong Learning & Culture Service Plan for 2008/9

### Developing a Vibrant Cultural Infrastructure

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The drivers here are the City of Culture aims to make York:

- A City of International Significance
- A Diverse, Inclusive and Cosmopolitan City
- An Active and Participative City
- A Creative City
- A City of High Quality Spaces

We need to develop the necessary infrastructure to support these aims. Infrastructure means not just buildings but also the softer elements that contribute to cultural development, for example leadership, effective partnerships, community development.

York is a beautiful city with a wide range of cultural and heritage assets, excellent open spaces and a broad programme of cultural activity, festivals and events. York has a correspondingly high profile nationally and internationally drawing over 4 m visitors each year.

There is a strong sense of commitment, energy and goodwill across the cultural sector leading to innovative and creative provision. There are a number of strong functional partnerships enhancing cultural provision in the city.

Despite these strengths culture suffers a perceived lack of leadership which in turn diminishes the city's cultural ambition. There is scope to improve the effectiveness of our strategic partnership working.

Participation in the broadest range of cultural activity in York is high compared to regional and national data (see Household Survey and Active People). However, there remain whole swathes of citizens who do not get involved. This is particularly striking in active leisure where three quarters of the population are inactive. People continue to cite lack of knowledge of the opportunities available to them as a reason for not participating. There may also be a perception that there is a bias towards elitism in cultural provision and in some cases that activity is skewed towards visitors.

It is also clear that there is much more to do to address a lack of diversity in the city's cultural offer and to ensure that it addresses the needs of all sections of our community.

There are many potential opportunities to improve the built infrastructure, to address the gap between where we are now and what a "city of international significance" would look like in cultural terms. There is a huge investment requirement if, for example, our heritage institutions are to return to the cutting edge status they once held. And there is a real need to improve the public realm in the city.

The way forward is likely to centre on the opportunities as they arise, for example through York Northwest, Castlegate Piccadilly, St Mary's Precinct. However, it is essential that a clear vision is developed first to enable effective partnerships to be built, capable of advocating for and delivering provision in which everyone wants to participate, if these opportunities are to be grasped.

### Actions:

	We will describe the cultural requirement for a city centre cultural action plan	30.06.08	Gill Cooper
Create a description of a vibrant cultural infrastructure for York which brings to life the strategic vision of Y@L	We will drive forward the cultural quarter as the key project that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ demonstrate the cultural sector contribution to place-making</li> <li>▪ bring investment to the cultural infrastructure</li> <li>▪ shape the cultural development of the city centre</li> <li>▪ develop and showcase means of improving the public realm in the city promoting high quality design</li> <li>▪ contribute practically to taking forward the city's heritage strategy</li> </ul>		
	Initial steps will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ develop an e-prospectus outlining the up to date vision and plans for the Cultural Quarter will be accessible from the major stakeholders' websites</li> </ul>	30.06.08	Gill Cooper
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ develop an outline business plan</li> <li>▪ identify funding sources and enter discussion with potential funders</li> </ul>	30.8.08.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ engage / consult with all the key partnerships / decision makers to advocate for the Cultural Quarter</li> </ul>	31.12.08.	
	We will scope major development sites to identify cultural requirements	30.12.08	Gill Cooper
	We will ensure through process that local development framework needs of target groups are recognised	30.09.08	Charlie Croft
Provocatively market cultural opportunities using	We will have a cross service arm marketing group to produce a strategy to use the latest digital technology to advertise cultural events and activities	31.03.09	Fiona Williams
	We will reinvigorate Yortime as a cutting edge community cultural information website	31.03.09	Fiona Williams



innovative, creative methods employing the very latest digital technology	We will produce a strategy to market the learning and cultural offer using the Council's GIS system	31.03.09	Fiona Williams
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## Cultural Quarter for York, linking the City Centre & the York North West Development Sites

### **Members & Officers Comments on Feasibility of Review**

#### **Cllr Vassie - Executive Member for Leisure & Culture**

"I think it would be useful for a cross party look at the suggested Cultural Quarter for York in order that Members can be better informed and have an opportunity to contribute to the process".

#### **Cllr Ken King - Shadow Executive Member for Leisure & Culture**

"I do not have any problems with the proposal, it could be quite interesting"

#### **Assistant Director of Lifelong Learning & Leisure**

"I support this topic which is consistent with a significant priority identified within the Lifelong Learning and Culture Plan and York@Large's strategic plan.

Since the ideas are already quite well advanced and since there is the need to begin to present to potential funders quite soon I would suggest a shorter timeframe. I think a 3 afternoon sessions would be adequate with one per month over a 3 month period. I think this should be set as a maximum in order to prevent the subject drifting on and taking up excessive resources."

#### **Head of Arts & Culture**

"In regards to HR capacity, I'm already leading on this for our area so it would be included in the allocation of my time to that already. It may incur some additional admin work but this will probably be containable within current service admin, as long as its supported by admin from Scrutiny.

"In regard to the timeframe for a review of this topic, I believe it could be done quicker than Cllr Hogg suggests. Probably only 4 meetings at most would be required."

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## **Suggested Remit for the Scrutiny of a Cultural Quarter for York** (Linking the City Centre & the York North West Development Sites)

### **Overall Aim:**

To contribute towards achieving a long-term direction for the area between the National Railway Museum, York Railway station and the Minster

### **Key Objectives**

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

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