

**‘Cultural Quarter’– Interim Report**

**Background**

1. This topic was originally registered in early 2008 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. He 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.
2. 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.
3. In coming to a decision to review this topic, the Scrutiny Management Committee recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed:

**Aim**

4. To contribute towards achieving a long-term direction for the area between the National Railway Museum (NRM), York Railway Station and the Minster, and to consider any positive and/or adverse effects on the city in doing so.

**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, including connectivity to other areas of the city.

**Consultation**

5. This review, has so far, been carried out in consultation with the following:
  - Head of Arts and Culture at City of York Council

- External Relations Manager at Visit York
- The Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Business Development at the York Museums Trust
- Officers and Elected Members at Gateshead Council
- Officers at Newcastle City Council
- York Theatre Royal
- Head of Libraries & Heritage – City of York Council
- Representatives of the National Railway Museum
- Dean of York Minster
- Representatives of York St John University
- Representative of Rushbond PLC
- Simon Daubeney, Business Analyst, City Strategy, City of York Council
- Ian Stokes, Ruth Egan, Wendy Taylor, City Strategy, City of York Council
- Members of the public at a public drop in session held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008

## **Information Gathered**

### **Draft Business Plan**

6. At the last formal meeting on 29 October 2008 Members discussed a draft business plan and considered a table which highlighted stakeholder development plans, resources and overall development plans until 2015 (these were attached as Annexes D & E to the previous interim report). The plan, as it stands at the moment, suggests that the following would be of key importance for the Cultural Quarter geographic area:
  - The production of a design master plan for the public realm
  - Seeking to agree a new river crossing as part of the York Northwest development plans
  - Funding should be sought for a major investment in the public realm of the city to realise the opportunities in improving our public and civic space
  - The commissioning of an in depth Business Plan feasibility document for the agreed Cultural Quarter area
7. Members suggested that an additional section be added to the draft business plan highlighting the role City of York Council should take in relation to the Cultural Quarter. It was also suggested that an Executive Summary of the draft business plan be prepared for members of the public. This would be included in the agenda for the January meeting.

### **Issues arising**

8. The following issues were highlighted in discussions at the last formal meeting:
  - Whether York St John University should be included within the Cultural Quarter boundaries
  - The role that City of York Council should play in the process of developing a Cultural Quarter
  - The name of 'The Cultural Quarter' and its appropriateness
  - The recent launch of the Minster Quarter and whether it could affect the proposals for the Cultural Quarter

- What should be done with the St Leonard's Hospital site and the area behind the Art Gallery
- Whether the boundaries of the Cultural Quarter should be 'soft' or rigid

**Public drop in session**

9. A public drop in session was held in York Minster on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Stakeholders (Yorkshire Museums Trust, the Minster, Rushbond plc, the City Council, NRM, The Theatre Royal etc) the Head of Arts and Culture and Members of the Cultural Quarter Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee were available to answer questions. The session was well attended and members of the public were given the opportunity to complete an evaluation form. The information received in the returned forms has been collated and is attached as Annex A to this report. Members may wish to consider analysing this data for trends and to look at how the information fits the key objectives of this review.

**Further information requested**

10. At a previous meeting Members of the Committee asked for further information regarding transport issues within the proposed Cultural Quarter with particular emphasis on possible traffic restrictions in the Leeman Road area and St Leonard's Place. Council Officers will be attending this meeting to answer questions on transport, highways and the City Centre Area Action Plan (CCAAP).
11. At the last formal meeting Members agreed to look at 'Cultural Quarters – Principles and Practice' by Simon Roodhouse particularly in relation to his comments in Sections 2.1 & 2.2 regarding Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter.
12. At that meeting Members also requested that a representative of Sheffield City Council be invited to address the Committee at this meeting. Unfortunately no one from Sheffield was available to attend. Members may therefore wish to consider whether they still want to invite a representative and if so consider an alternative date for this event.

**Timetable**

13. At the last formal meeting the timetable below was changed to reflect the further evidence that Members requested.

Date	Event
16.12.2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider the evidence collected at the public drop in session held on 04.11.2008</li> <li>• To receive information regarding Highways/transport/CCAAP</li> <li>• To discuss Simon Roodhouse's Book; especially in relation to his comments on Sheffield</li> </ul>
29.01.2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To receive an Executive Summary of the Draft Business Plan</li> <li>• To formulate some draft recommendations for inclusion in the draft final report</li> </ul>

## Options

14. Having regard to the aims and objectives of this topic remit, and having considered the information provided in this report Members may chose to:
  - i. Agree the timetable for the remainder of the review as set out in paragraph 13 of this report or amend it if further evidence is required.
  - ii. Consider whether they wish a representative from Sheffield City Council to address them and if so when.
  - iii. Consider further analysing the data from the public drop in session (Annex A to this report).

## Implications

15. **Human Resources (HR)** – The Head of Arts & Culture is already leading on this within her service and has indicated that this review would only incur minimal additional administrative work, which could be retained within her team.
16. **Legal** – There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations in this report.
17. **Financial** – There are minimal funds allocated from within the scrutiny budget for research relating to ongoing reviews, therefore there are no financial implications associated with the recommendations within this report.
18. There are no Equalities, Property, Crime & Disorder, or other implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

## Corporate Strategy – Priorities and Direction

19. This review relates to the following corporate priority for improvement of this Council:

‘Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the City’s streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces.’

## Risk Management

20. In compliance with the Council’s risk management strategy, there are no known risks associated with the recommendations of this report other than the focus of the review and the progress of the Scrutiny work plan would be adversely affected if the review did not keep within the agreed timescale.

## Recommendation

21. It is recommended that Members consider:

- i. Approving the revised timetable as set out in paragraph 13 of this report.
- ii. Whether they wish to invite a representative from Sheffield City Council to address them and if so when.
- iii. How they wish to analyse the data from the public drop in session (Annex A to this report).

Reason: To ensure the progression of this review and compliance with scrutiny procedures, protocols and work plans.

## Contact Details

### Author:

Tracy Wallis  
Scrutiny Officer  
Scrutiny Services  
Tel No. 01904 551714

### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Quentin Baker  
Head of Civic, Legal & Democratic Services  
Tel No. 01904 551004

Interim Report  
Approved

Date 5.12.2008

## Specialist Implications Officers

None

Wards Affected: Guildhall, Holgate & Micklegate

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

## Background Papers:

None

## Annexes

Annex A – Collated responses from the public drop in session