

Further Comments from The National Railway Museum (NRM)

NRM is a very successful facility for York residents and visitors alike.

- The most visited museum outside of London, over 800,000 visitors per annum
- 50% of our visitors cite the NRM as their main reason for coming to York
- 200 staff, over 200 volunteers
- Puts £23 million per annum into local economy

Like all successful organisations we need to change to survive and our long term vision is to be a world class attraction for York, which encompasses a learning, leisure and business campus. To do this we must overcome the many shortcomings of our split site and poor quality public realm: areas, which are not in NRM's control

Elements of our vision include:

- A new visitor experience, (including a first phase redevelopment of the Great Hall for 2012)
- A new signature entrance building
- Public plaza
- High quality eating and shopping
- Links to the centre of York across the river
- Business development
- Hotel/ conference facilities
- Parkland Green spaces

We see ourselves as the western anchor of a new axis linking the Minster, Museum Gardens and Railway Museum across the railway and river – part of an extension of York's city centre made possible by York Central.

This long term vision is intimately connected to York Central development, which would deliver many elements of the plan, but has even more resonance in a city wide development of the Cultural Quarter and York's re-focus on its river environment.

York Central, through its comprehensive re-development incorporating a new approach to land traffic in the area, provides the opportunity to pedestrianise Leeman Road where it bi-sects the museum.

The ideas of a pedestrianised Leeman Road and a bridge over the river are key to the re-invention of York in the 21st century as part of a city-centre wide offer that sweeps across from the Minster, through Exhibition Square to Museum Gardens, across the river and up through York North West.

These elements have been enthusiastically received by other Cultural Quarter stakeholders, the York Central group and by Yorkshire Forward, but only York City Council can make these elements a reality through the planning and development process.

Two areas of discussion followed:

1. As with other elements of the Cultural Quarter, NRM's institutional vision can only contribute to an holistic re-development of York if all those elements of the public realm which currently lie with the City Council join them together.
2. The issues around the re-routing of traffic away from Leeman Road and the form of the public transport offer is something which Scrutiny group felt they need to apprise themselves of.

Note: it will be a requirement on the Developer appointed to develop the York central site to come up with a proposal that meets the requirements of York City Council.

Further Comments from Rushbond plc

Rushbond plc acquired 1-9 St Leonard's Place and 2 / 4 Museum Street from the City of York Council, who continue to occupy the premises pending relocation to new offices.

Rushbond have instructed architects to produce an initial masterplan / scheme concept design for the property. The scheme concept involves the reconfiguration and re-use of the existing buildings, the clearance of the low quality extension buildings and the development of a new building alongside. The new building element would offer an opportunity for an exciting new contemporary form of architecture to complement the refurbished historic buildings as well as enhancing the level of activity in the street to the rear of St Leonard's Place.

A mixed use development is envisaged to include a high quality luxury hotel together with restaurant, retail and office space as well as residential (town houses and apartments) uses with associated car parking. This would be a significant development which would represent a major private sector led investment into the Cultural Quarter. It would add to the diversity of uses in this area and extend the hours of operation of the buildings into the evening times. A high quality luxury boutique style hotel would expand the range of hotel accommodation available within the City Walls. Additional restaurants would support and complement nearby attractions including the Art Gallery and Theatre Royal. There is an opportunity to provide space for retailers, particular seeking high quality and unique accommodation, as well as for office users, seeking a flagship office location. Residential uses can support the overall mix, add to the diversity of the total offer, and provide an appropriate use for this superb array of historic buildings.

A planning application is expected to be submitted in 2009 / 2010 with redevelopment proposed for 2012 onwards. Extensive consultation on the proposals is planned prior to the submission of any planning application.