

Local Development Framework Working Group

04 January 2010

Report of the Director of City Strategy

**Local Development Framework:  
City Centre Area Action Plan – Progress Toward Preferred Options**

**Summary**

1. This report outlines progress on the City Centre Area Action Plan (AAP). Following comprehensive consultation on the Issues and Options Report last year, it presents:-
  - appraisals of options and emerging preferred options
  - progress on ongoing consultation
  - progress on background documents and further work required
  - next steps in preparation of a Preferred Options document.

**Background**

2. The City Centre AAP will be one of a suite of Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Framework. Public consultation took place on an Issues and Options document in 2008. The outcomes of the consultation were reported to LDF Working Group in January 2009.

**Summary of Progress since January 2009 Report**

3. Since January, Officers have completed the appended options appraisals, progressed the evidence base, worked with Beam on the People Changing Places project, progressed discussions regarding a number of key projects including the riverside, cultural quarter, Minster Piazza and undertook ongoing consultation, including a presentation of information to the WOW Board in March and the York Civic Trust in September.
4. Another key area of work has been the production of a Vision Prospectus (see below and Annex C – please note that Annex C is available online with hardcopies provided for LDF Working Group Members. The Prospectus is intended to be printed in a bespoke format with fold-out maps so the hardcopies provided have map content spread over a number of pages, a mock-up of the intended format is available in the Members' Library). This work was guided by the City Strategy Management Team who felt it was important that there was a clear expression of the vision and objectives for the city centre and how the various potential projects fitted together. Closely allied to this work have been ongoing discussions, and recent agreement, with Yorkshire Forward to fund the York Renaissance Project which includes Visioning and Economic Masterplanning including the consultant team acting as a 'critical friend' on the City Centre AAP. It also will fund 6 new temporary

posts as part of a Renaissance Team (see paragraphs 30-32 below) to help develop major projects including those within the city centre. More detail on each area of work is set out in the remainder of this report.

### **Options Appraisal**

5. To move forward the AAP it is necessary to review the Issues and Options set out and consulted upon in Summer 2008 and decide which ones should be taken forward as Preferred Options. See Annex A (Summary of Options Appraisals - Emerging Preferred Options) and Annex B (Options Appraisal – Emerging Preferred Options, which is available in the Members’ Library, online or a hardcopy on request).
6. The option appraisals has followed a similar process to that already agreed by Members for the York Northwest AAP. Options are reviewed against the criteria of PPS12 – that options are consistent, justified and effective. The outcomes of the Issues and Options consultation and the Sustainability Statement have been reviewed, as well as a review of changes to national and regional planning policy and updates to the York LDF evidence base.
7. The options appraisal process will be incorporated into a Background Paper that will be published as part of the Preferred Options consultation. This will show a clear audit trail of the evaluation of options consulted on at Issues and Options stage.
8. Options appraisal work is ongoing. Annexes A and B notes the further work required to complete the process prior to Preferred Options consultation. The main areas of proposed further work are discussed below, namely the Accessibility Framework, Conservation Area Appraisal and Placecheck.

### **Ongoing Consultation**

9. An important component of producing a ‘sound’ development plan document is the need to engage stakeholders on an ongoing basis with consultation proportionate to the options being proposed. In the preparation of preferred options, a number of consultation approaches are proposed. This includes:
  - engaging key stakeholders in the preparation of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Accessibility Framework
  - public participation in place-shaping through the ‘Placecheck’ process (based on the People Changing Places pilot), and
  - participation of key delivery stakeholders through a Vision Prospectus and a ‘Charter for Place’.
10. In addition to the above, before preferred options, further discussions will take place with key groups including the Without Walls Board and ‘thematic’ Partnerships, Retail Forum, Property Forum, Conservation Area Advisory Panel and others. A consultation strategy for the Renaissance Project is also being developed that will include issues relevant to the city centre through the Economic Masterplanning process.

### People Changing Places

11. People Changing Places (PCP) is a one-year programme funded by the Commission for Architecture and The Built Environment (CABE) and The City of York Council. It is being run on behalf of the Council by an organisation called BEAM, an arts, architecture and learning centre based in Yorkshire, and their partner architects DSDHA.
12. City of York Council were approached by BEAM to work with them to run the programme in York in 2009/10. The programme is jointly funded by CABE and funding from the City Centre AAP budget. The programme aims to raise public and stakeholder awareness of high quality design by linking communities with professionals through a programme of design exercises and consultation workshops. It is helping to facilitate stakeholder involvement (internal and external), as well as providing an ideal opportunity to rehearse public consultation methods such as 'Placecheck' and design workshops that can be used to implement the public realm proposals being developed through the AAP.

Vision Prospectus (Annex C).

13. Feedback from previous presentations of the AAP (Issues & Options) to LDF Working Group, Without Walls Board, Retail Forum, Property Forum, and others strongly backed the idea of branding and raising the profile of this important city centre work.
14. People were extremely enthusiastic and keen to support the place-making principles and longer-term plan for York city centre but wanted to be clear about what the AAP would do.
15. We were specifically requested, therefore, to produce something eye-catching, inspirational and welcoming that defined clearly and simply the Council's vision for the future of the city centre. They wanted to see a shared vision, not just a Council one. It should cross professional boundaries, they said, and provide us all with a common framework and a clear and shared goal for the city centre.
16. It was also seen as a great opportunity to attract early attention, to encourage people to engage in the process, to get broad support for the ambitions of the plan and, ultimately, to encourage investment and funding for the ideas put forward.
17. For these reasons it was agreed that a separate Vision Prospectus be produced. A prospectus was chosen since, as well as being a summary of the thinking behind the wider AAP (and therefore a lead document of the AAP), is literally a search or a sketch of the landscape ahead. It is a prospect of success.
18. The York-based design group Stone Soup were commissioned to carry out branding and image work, working together closely with the Projects team. They have previously produced well received work for the Council and the Without Walls Local Strategic Partnership.

19. The style of the vision document is intended to promote a striking and memorable yet accessible image and to raise the profile of the York City Centre Plan now.
20. It is intended that the professionally finished booklet be given a limited print run, with electronic copies and CD's also available. Following presentation to members of the LDF Working Group, it would be sent to key groups and organisations such as the Property Forum, Retail Forum, Yorkshire Forward, York Civic Trust, English Heritage, Visit York, CABE, and others who have a direct interest in the future of the city centre. These groups could be given the opportunity to comment on the format of the plan before wider public consultation.
21. An A4 format document will be produced for wider public consultation, alongside the wider City Centre AAP. It would stand out and engage the public, but still be aligned with the other documents in the York LDF.

#### Vision Prospectus Sustainability Appraisal

22. A Sustainability Appraisal Statement of the Vision Prospectus is attached at Annex D. This has been undertaken for this informal stage of the Area Action Plan as an interim measure to audit the progression of the vision for the City Centre. The purpose of a Sustainability Appraisal is to promote Sustainable Development through better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. It is intended that this statement will feed into the Audit Trail to be detailed within future Sustainability Appraisals to set out how the AAP has progressed and incorporated suggestions made through the SA process. A full Sustainability Appraisal will be produced in line with the emerging AAP Preferred Options document.

#### Charter for Place

23. The Charter for Place, which is introduced early on in the Prospectus, is intended to encourage early and common ownership and a partnership approach to implementing the Plan. It is asking individuals and organisations to openly demonstrate their commitment to design quality and change for the better, whether small or large-scale.
24. Early engagement of key delivery stakeholders is vital to the success of the AAP. The Charter will insure buy-in from organisations that can fund the enhancements to the centre and investors. The Prospectus and the AAP will raise awareness of investment opportunities and the future commercial potential of the centre once revitalised.

#### Vision Prospectus and Charter for Place Launch

25. Discussions have started about how to successfully launch the City Centre Vision Prospectus and tie it into the proposed consultation for the York Visioning and Economic Masterplanning. It will take place early in 2010 and involve a targeted audience of architects, designers and other interested parties and individuals.

### **Preferred Options**

26. We intend to consult on a Preferred Options document in Summer 2010. The emerging preferred options in terms of both the suite of policies and the 30 projects (as set out in the Prospectus), represents a significant step forward from the high level analysis of the issues and options document. This, combined with the new evidence base (Conservation Area Appraisal, Accessibility Framework and Placecheck), will present a considerable amount of new information for the public and key stakeholders to comment on.
27. As stated in January 2009, we intend that the AAP would include three documents: 1 - A Preferred Options Justification Document, with a summary of issues and options, reasons for selection and rejection of options, as well as details of evidence bases and implementation; 2 - the Preferred Options Policy Framework Document, with visions, objectives and thematic policies; and 3 - a Spatial Masterplan, which would be a visual document showing the action areas and proposals being suggested.
28. In order to progress the AAP toward Preferred Options, there is a significant level of background work to be completed. The work to preferred options includes:
- An Accessibility Framework that will review changes to access into and through the city centre for all modes of transport – this will be led by the Transport Planning Unit and is included in their work programme.
  - ‘Placecheck’ of key spaces – this process will involve the Renaissance team (6 new posts) and will build on the pilot project – People Changing Places.
  - A Conservation Area Appraisal and strategic views analysis – this will be prepared by consultants and a budget is in place for this with a contribution from English Heritage.
  - Conservation Area Management Strategy, to be incorporated into the APP, involving the Renaissance Heritage Officer.
  - Development of a ‘Charter for Place’ – this will follow on from the launch of the Vision Prospectus, and link in with the York Visioning and Economic Masterplanning as part of the Renaissance Project, to engage key delivery stakeholders in the production of the AAP. This will be progressed by City Development and the Renaissance Team.
  - Sustainability Appraisal – this will be undertaken for the Preferred Options by existing staff.
  - Drafting of the document itself – led by the Projects team within City Development.
29. Preferred Options consultations will take place in Summer 2010 and pre-submission consultation in Winter 2010/11. A revised detailed timetable will be produced to coincide with the timetable for the Conservation Area Appraisal and to reflect the work programme of the Renaissance team when that has been established. It is the intention that the target date for preferred options consultation will coincide with consultation on the Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal.

#### Involvement of the Renaissance Team

30. Progress on the AAP will be greatly assisted by the involvement of the Renaissance Team, part of the Renaissance Project approved by Executive on 17 November 2009 and funded by Yorkshire Forward and English Heritage.
31. The York Renaissance Team will lead on the delivery of major developments in the City. It will also help to deliver the key projects emerging from the work on the AAP, including public realm, accessibility improvements and proposals to enhance gateway streets. This team will work closely alongside existing staff, particularly those involved with the LDF, conservation and development control.

#### Visioning and Economic Masterplanning – ‘Critical Friend’ role for the City Centre Area Action Plan

32. The Visioning and Economic Master Planning commission will also comprise a role acting as a ‘critical friend’ in terms of the AAP. This will involve acting as an advocate and a ‘stimulator’ in terms of the work carried out to date on the AAP flowing out of workshops, including advice on how to embed its aspirations with key stakeholders in the city, raise its profile and ensure that it is led by a clear vision.

#### **Evidence Base**

33. As indicated in the Options Appraisals, further work is required in terms of the evidence base before the Preferred Options document can be completed for public consultation. The key strands of work are as follows:

#### Conservation Area Appraisal

34. A Conservation Area Appraisal for the Central Historic Core Conservation will be produced by consultants to a brief set by the Council in partnership with English Heritage and will also include an analysis of strategic views for the city as a whole. The Appraisal will follow English Heritage guidance: “A character appraisal should set out how the area or place has evolved as an exciting, but unfinished story, draw out the key elements of the townscape quality and character of the place as it now is and define what is positive and negative – the opportunities for beneficial change. A successful appraisal should provide an insight into the character of the area that goes beyond mere description linked to historical facts... involving the community in the appraisal process is vital.” (English Heritage/Planning Advisory Service, Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas). The beneficial future management of the Conservation Area will be achieved through appropriate policies incorporated into the AAP. The AAP will include detailed policies and actions to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area, based on the findings of the Appraisal. The Heritage Renaissance Officer, funded through the Renaissance Project, will have a key role in project managing and securing delivery of this work following completion of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

#### City Centre Accessibility Framework

35. The opportunities for changing the city centre, to create a ‘sense of place’, are likely to have an impact on how people access it. Conversely, the needs for

getting to and through the city centre and how these access needs can be met or altered will affect how much of the opportunities for changing the city centre can be realised.

36. In order to make some form of assessment of this interaction, work commenced to identify the broad range of issues to consider (e.g. economic, historical/heritage, environmental and social) for the potential expansion of the city centre economic area to ensure its continued vitality in the face of competition from other cities in the region and postulate potential solutions to address any issues identified. This work was also partly prompted by the receipt of petitions requesting the expansion of the 'Footstreets' city centre pedestrianisation.
37. This initial work evolved in to the City Centre Accessibility Framework (CCAF), which is intended to examine accessibility into and within the city centre and evaluate potential changes, as necessary, to assist in the delivery of the vision and objectives of the AAP. The CCAF will form part of the evidence base for the AAP and will also help inform (or become a strategy within) the city's emerging third Local Transport Plan (LTP3).
38. Work undertaken includes establishment of study / design programme for the review and modification of the 'Footstreets' with a number of elements:
  - A high level strategic review of public transport, walking and cycling routes into and within the city centre (in effect, the CCAF) – ongoing at present;
  - Data gathering and analysis of the operation of the Footstreets zone – completed in early 2009;
  - Preparation of potential options for improvements or alterations to the city centre including the Footstreets Area and its operation - commenced in October 2009, and
  - Seek appropriate Council permissions prior to implementation of Footstreets zone modifications (awaiting outcomes of previous elements before starting).
39. Work undertaken to date on the high level strategic review (the CCAF) includes:
  - Identifying the potential areas for opportunity within the CCAAP
  - Mapping traffic flows in and around the City
  - Mapping where this traffic is coming from / going to in relation to York's surroundings
  - Mapping the main origins and destinations of traffic using the inner ring road
  - Mapping the location of car parks in relation to areas of employment and visitor attractions
  - Mapping bus routes through the city centre and bus frequencies on those routes
  - Mapping the main cycling routes into the city centre
  - Plot walk-time isochrones from the city centre

- Photographic record of the impacts of traffic on the free movement of pedestrians at various locations in the city centre, and
- Productions of plans to show various access modifications within the city centre (on bus routes, as changes to bus routes generally result in the same changes to other motorised vehicles).

40. Further work expected to be undertaken includes:

- Model selected options
- Determine accessibility strategy for opportunity areas/areas of change
- Review/affirm case for city Interchange (linked with York Northwest)
- Incorporate Accessibility Framework within City Centre Area Action Plan (Preferred Options).

#### Placecheck

41. Placecheck is a nationally recognised way for community involvement in helping to inform urban development. It uses a series of questions to assess the qualities of a place, showing what improvements are needed and focuses people on working together to achieve them. It uses the public, various users and professionals to provide an in-depth assessment of people's experience of places and what changes they feel are needed.

42. Exhibition Square and the Abbey Precinct of Museum Gardens has already had a placecheck carried out by BEAM in partnership with the Council. See section on People Changing Places below. This project has helped to build capacity to assist with place-checking other project areas.

#### City –wide Evidence base

43. There are a number of city-wide evidence base studies that have implications for the AAP. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will review a number of potential housing sites in the city centre; the Retail Study makes recommendations regarding the allocation of sites, the central shopping area and retail frontages; the Employment Land Review is completed and short-lists a number of sites within the city centre for B1a office use.

#### **Core Strategy City Centre Policy**

44. The Core Strategy Preferred Options document includes a section on the city centre including a city centre policy. This provides the strategic context for the AAP. Responses to the consultation are currently being reviewed to inform the role and scope of the AAP in developing the preferred options document and the Core Strategy submission document.

45. Further work will be required to refine the section on the city centre in the Core Strategy for submission stage. The Core Strategy policy on the city centre needs to provide more specific information on the spatial vision for the city centre and the requirements of the AAP.

#### **Next Steps**

46. The next steps in the production of the City Centre Area Action Plan, to the Preferred Options consultation stage, include:

- Finalise, print and launch the Vision Prospectus



- Develop the Charter for Place
- Work with the Renaissance team to further develop projects
- Progress the Evidence Base, including:
  - appointing consultants for the Conservation Area Appraisal and undertaking the Appraisal
  - progressing the Accessibility Framework with the Transport Planning Unit and the Renaissance Team
  - Placecheck key spaces with the Renaissance Team (and complete the People Changing Places pilot project)
  - Review and prioritise the 30 projects identified in the Vision Prospectus
- Review City Centre allocations for housing, retail, employment and leisure uses
- Draft the Preferred Options document
- Undertake a Sustainability Appraisal of the preferred options
- Draft the Core Strategy Submission document City Centre policy
- Review branding and marketing approaches for the preferred options consultation
- Develop a consultation strategy for the preferred options consultation and develop new consultation techniques – web-based etc
- Report back to LDF WG with Preferred Options.

### **Options**

Members have two options relating to the City Centre AAP Progress Report:

**Option 1:** To approve the emerging preferred options and Vision Prospectus as the basis for the production of the Preferred Options document and the next steps as set out in paragraph 46.

**Option 2:** To seek amendments to the emerging preferred options and Vision Prospectus for the Preferred Options document and the next steps as set out in paragraph 46.

### **Corporate Priorities**

47. The City Centre AAP has the potential to contribute towards most of the Corporate Priorities through its policies and actions. It will aim to:
- Reduce the environmental impact of Council activities and encourage, empower and promote others to do the same;
  - Increase the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport;
  - Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces;
  - Increase people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects;
  - Improve the economic prosperity of the people of York with a focus on minimising income differentials;
  - Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest;

- Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city;
- Improve the quality and availability of decent, affordable homes in the city.

### **Implications**

48. The following implications have been assessed:

- **Financial** – The cost of preparing the City Centre Area Action Plan DPD will be met through current budgets provided for the LDF.
- **Human Resources (HR)** - None
- **Equalities** - None
- **Legal** - None
- **Crime and Disorder** - None
- **Information Technology (IT)** - None
- **Property** – The AAP identifies areas within the city centre for development or public realm enhancement which includes land and buildings in the Council's ownership.
- **Other** - None

### **Risk Management**

49. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

### **Recommendations**

That Members recommend the Executive to:

1) Approve the Vision Prospectus, that incorporates the emerging vision and objectives of the City Centre AAP, for publication and use in a targeted consultation to inform the AAP Preferred Options, subject to any changes recommended at the LDF Working Group .

Reason: To ensure that the LDF City Centre Area Action Plan can be progressed to its next stage of development as highlighted in the Council's Local Development Scheme.

2) Delegate to the Director of City Strategy in consultation with the Executive Member for City Strategy the making of any incidental changes to the Prospectus that are necessary as a result of the recommendations of the LDF Working Group.

Reason: So that changes recommended as a result of discussions at this meeting can be made and the report can progress through to the Executive.

3) Note, and comment on, the Options Appraisals as the basis for drafting preferred options and undertaking further background work.

Reason: To ensure that the LDF City Centre Area Action Plan can be progressed to its next stage of development as highlighted in the Council's Local Development Scheme.

4) Note, and comment on, the next steps in preparing the Preferred Options document for presentation to Members in 2010.

Reason: To ensure that the LDF City Centre Area Action Plan can be progressed to its next stage of development as highlighted in the Council's Local Development Scheme.

### Contact Details

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**Specialist Implications Officer**  
*n/a*

**Report**  
**Approved**

**Date** 17/12/09

**Wards Affected: Guildhall, Micklegate and Fishergate.**

**All**

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

**Background Papers:**

- City Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options report, July 2008.
- City Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options Sustainability Statement, July 2008.
- LDF Working Group report - Local Development Framework: City Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options report - consultation summary, January 2009.

Annex A – Summary of Options Appraisals - Emerging Preferred Options

Annex B – Options Appraisals – Emerging Preferred Options

(Please note that Annex B is not part of the agenda pack and is available in the Members' Library, online or hardcopy on request)

Annex C – Vision Prospectus

(Please note that copies of Annex C are available online with hardcopies provided for Members. A 'mock-up' of the proposed bespoke format for the Prospectus is available in the Members' Library)

Annex D – Sustainability Appraisal of Vision Prospectus.