

Annex D – Sustainability Appraisal of Vision Prospectus

*York’s City Centre Area Action Plan
A Vision for York – York City Centre Plan Prospectus*

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Foreword

The purpose of a Sustainability Appraisal is to promote Sustainable Development through better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans.

The Sustainability Appraisal forms part of the plan making process and will be undertaken in stages alongside the development of each development plan document.

Changes to PPS12¹ have given more freedom in terms of how to develop Local Development Documents to the Preferred Options stage but still require Sustainability Appraisals to accompany any formal stages in this process such as consultation. A sustainability appraisal statement 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. It is intended that this statement will feed into the Audit Trail to be detailed within future Sustainability Appraisals to set out how the CCAAP has progressed and incorporated suggestions made through the SA process.

The City Centre Area Action Plan

The city centre of York provides a wide ranging role for people living, working and visiting the city. The special and unique historical character of the city centre combined with its compact nature means that planning the future of the city is challenging and must be undertaken in a coordinated manner to preserve and enhance the areas special quality. Whilst the Core Strategy for York will set out the overall vision and objectives for the city, the CCAAP will help to consider what specific issues and measures are needed to help deliver the objectives within the city centre and address particular pressures and needs which it will face into the future.

Introduction and Approach

As part of taking forward the City Centre Area Action Plan, a stage of visioning work has taken place which represents a statement of intent on the part of the Council and aims to gain the support for how to realise the potential of the city in the future.

The Issues and Options Consultation (July 2008) results identified overwhelming support for taking forward the city centre as part of an Area Action Plan within the Local Development Framework to help support, develop and promote the city centre into the future. The Area Action Plan itself will help to deliver the aspirations initially set out by the emerging City Centre policy within York's Core Strategy DPD.

The visioning work thorough the "York City Centre Plan Prospectus" forms part of the City Centre Area Action Plan process to help move the Area Action Plan to the Preferred Options stage with the aim "to draw together a number of ideas for new development, activity and revitalised streets and spaces in a coherent vision to be delivered over the coming years". The timetable with the associated SA preparation expected is shown by table 1:

¹ PPS12: Local Spatial Planning (June 2009), Communities and Local Government

Table 1: The City Centre Plan Process

Process	Date	Detail of step	SA documentation
1. Background Research	Spring 2008	Initial evidence gathered and key stakeholders consulted on issues to be addressed.	Scoping report produced (April 2008)
2. Issues and Options	Summer 2008	Consultation with the community and stakeholders on a range of options.	SA Statement produced (July 2008)
3. Options Appraisal	Winter 2009/10	Review of consultation findings, Sustainability Appraisal and emerging evidence base.	Review of consultation findings
4. Prospectus	January 2010	A statement of the proposed vision and objectives for the city centre, to raise profile.	SA Statement produced (December 2009)
5. Preferred Options	Spring 2010	Consultation with the community and stakeholders on a range of preferred options.	Full Sustainability Appraisal to be produced
6. Charter for Place	Summer 2010	Creation of a steering partnership and shared endorsement of place-making principles	Ongoing SA input
7. Pre-Submission Document	Winter 2010/11	Consultation on the final draft of the document to be submitted to the Government.	Full Sustainability Appraisal to be produced
8. Examination in Public	Spring 2011	The Planning Inspectorate considers if the submitted document is sound.	
9. Adoption	Autumn 2011	If the Planning Inspectorate thinks that the document is sound, it will be adopted.	Monitoring of SA objectives
10. Implement Public Realm Strategy	Winter 2011	Start of roll-out of detailed design and implementation of public realm enhancements.	

Given the many stages that the CCAAP is undertaking it is important to understand the role of this Vision document. The prospectus forms a lead document within the preparation of the Area Action Plan but specifically is a showcase document detailing the aspirations for the city in the future. It aims to introduce a rolling programme of ideas and focus on a few priorities rather than try to radically change the centre.

The Vision document is split into 3 sections: Past, Present and Future. The most applicable sections to appraise at this stage in terms of SA are the sections representing the present issues identified within the city in “The City Centre – As it Is” as this sets the context / baseline and identifies the “big issues” and the future section in “ The City Centre – As It Will Be”.

This appraisal has produced a short analysis of each of the two sections outlined above to understand how each of the issues / objectives relate to the Sustainability issues and objectives set out in the SA Scoping Report for the City Centre Area Action Plan (April 2008). The SA objectives are set out in Table 2.

The next steps in the SA will be continuing appraisal of any emerging versions of the CCAAP and the production of a full Sustainability Appraisal at the Preferred Options stage. This SA Statement will form part of the formal SA process and is produced in conformity with the regulatory requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. A full Habitat Regulation Assessment will be undertaken at the Preferred Options stage.

Table 2: Sustainability Objectives for the CCAAP

Headline Objective H1. To reduce City of York's Ecological Footprint		
Environmental	Social	Economic
EN1. Land use efficiency that maximises the use of brownfield land	S1. Enhance access to York's urban and rural landscapes, public open space/recreational areas and leisure facilities for all	EC1. Good quality employment opportunities available for all
EN2. Maintain and improve a quality built environment and the cultural heritage of York and preserve the character and setting of the historic city of York	S2. Maintain or reduce York's existing noise levels	EC2. Good education and training opportunities for all which build skills and capacity of the population
EN3. Conserve and enhance a bio-diverse, attractive and accessible natural environment	S3. Improve the health and well-being of the York population	EC3. Conditions for business success, stable economic growth and investment
EN4. Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and develop a managed response to the effects of climate change	S4. Safety and security for people and property	EC4. Local food, health care, education/training needs and employment opportunities met locally
EN5. Improve Air Quality in York	S5. Vibrant communities that participate in decision-making	
EN6. The prudent and efficient use of energy, water and other natural resources	S6. Reduce the need to travel by private car	
EN7. Reduce pollution and waste generation and increase levels of reuse and recycling	S7. Developments which provide good access to and encourage use of public transport, walking and cycling	
EN8. Maintain and Improve Water Quality	S8. A transport network that integrates all modes for effective non car based movements	
EN9. Reduce the impact of flooding to people and property in York	S9. Quality affordable housing available for all	
	S10. Social inclusion and equity across all sectors	

Analysis of the Present: “York City Centre – As it is”

The issues identified within the vision statement are split into the three streams of sustainability under: Environment, Community and Economy. The identification of baseline data in this section is followed by the “big issue(s)” to tackle.

	Issue	Sustainability Commentary
Environment	Managing growth whilst protecting and enhancing the historic environment	The SA baseline information for City Centre AAP has captured the issue of York’s historic nature within the sections “Environment” and “ Design and Conservation”. Information from the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal has been taken into consideration. However, an update to this baseline will take place in line with the emerging Heritage Topic Paper to accompany the LDF. Transport issues, climate change and air quality issues have also been included as key issues for York within the SA baseline but will be updated in accordance with emerging evidence. Understanding of these issues will help to deal with sustainability objectives EN2, EN4, EN5, S1, S6, S7 and EC3.
	Protecting, reinforcing and showcasing the special qualities of the City Centre	
	Improving the quality of the public realm and making linkages between the areas if change	
	Reducing congestion and improving accessibility – addressing the barriers to pedestrian and cyclists whilst maintaining essential vehicular access	
	Mitigating and adapting of climate change including promotion of non-car movement and reduction of harmful emissions	
Community	Encouraging more city centre living and providing the right mix of housing	Housing provision, particularly of affordable homes, is a major issue within York and has been included as a key issue within the SA baseline data. The provision of services is also a key consideration for the SA objectives. The SA baseline for the Preferred Options will include more information on existing provision and requirements for leisure and openspace facilities to better understand the demand and how the CCAAP is likely to effect this. The identification of these issues will work towards achieving sustainability objectives S9, EC3, EC4 and EN2
	Providing the services and facilities that are needed in the city centre – address the lack of an events venue and swimming pool	
	Taking best advantage of the cultural vibrancy of the city	
Economy	Maximising the economic potential of the city centre and managing the area out of recession	The economy within York has been recorded as a key baseline issue for the city centre. It identifies the changing nature of York’s economy over the years, including the importance of tourism for the economy today. Identifying these issues as big ideas within the city will towards understanding and tackling sustainability objectives: EC1, EC3 and EC4.
	Improving the competitiveness of the retail offer and maintaining the diversity of independent retailing including enhancing Newgate Market – the city centre is in competition with out-of-town retail parks and surrounding cities e.g. Leeds, Hull.	
	Improving the tourism offer and visitor experience	
	Providing a more varied evening economy	
	Enhancing the office market in the city centre	
	Supporting the growth and success of the universities	

Analysis of the Future: “York City Centre – As It Will Be”

The vision for the future of the city centre aims to raise the reputation of York and make the city centre a “distinctively high quality place” and to make York “internationally renowned as an excellent example of sensitively using historic buildings to contribute to economic success”. The plan to also revitalise the public realm and redesign the streets and spaces around function rather than vehicle movement will also prove positive for meeting sustainability objectives. All of these ideas will help to promote investment within the city centre, make it and functional as well as providing services and facilities required by both residents and visitors and help to improve the environment as a whole. More in depth analysis regarding the different sets of vision objectives is set out below.

Vision Objectives	Issue	SA objectives identified	Sustainability Commentary
6 areas of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart of the City • York Central • Castle Piccadilly • Hungate • Cultural Quarter • Layerthorpe Area 	Potentially all objectives	The 6 areas of change will tackle a broad range of sustainability objectives. This document does not provide a fixed programme of changes and therefore further SA analyses will take place at the Preferred Options stage based upon identified areas for change when more detail on the areas has been provided
Thriving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the city centre is a thriving location for retailing, leisure, offices, culture and tourism to strengthen the role of the city centre as the core of a sub-regional city. • Grow the commercial heart of the city to ensure the long-term viability of York economy. Growth to the South will take advantage of major opportunities to enhance Piccadilly and develop a stronger retail offer, to enhance the setting of important buildings and to better link the centre with the cultural attractions of the Barbican, Clifford’s Tower and the Castle Museum. 	EC1, EC2, EC3, EC4, EN2	The place –making objectives within this theme of “thriving” mainly relate to enhancing and maintaining the long-term viability of the city centre in terms of both commercial office and retail use. In turn these relate well to the economic sustainability objectives, particularly EC1 and EC3. Ensuring that the market share for York is maintained into the future will also to help achieve these objectives. However, any retail growth that is planned within the city centre needs to be complimentary to the existing central shopping area to avoid any

Vision Objectives	Issue	SA objectives identified	Sustainability Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the decline in the city centre market share for retailing is halted and then increased to a 34% share in order to maintain its position in the wider regional retail hierarchy, through allocation and delivery of new retail development and protection of existing retail frontage. • Improve the viability of independent retailing in York city centre - a major component of the uniqueness of the city – through improvement to Gateway Streets and a revitalised outdoor market place. • Focus commercial office use in the vicinity of the railway station, which is a sustainable location and good for business, to complement the new offer at York Central. • Support the growth and success of both the city’s universities within the city centre through improved physical linkages, student accommodation and facilities for showcasing talent. 		<p>potential conflict, particularly with new retail and growth undermining another of the vision objectives to improve the viability of independent retailing within the city centre. The chance to improve the viability of independent shops, a distinctive characteristic of York, is also welcomed and will not only help to achieve economic objectives but at the same time help achieve environment objective EN2. By retaining this feature within the city it will also prove positive in the long-term as this will be a continuing attractive feature for visitors as well as residents. The aim to take advantage of major opportunities and enhancing the setting of buildings as well as the links with cultural attraction and will also help to achieve EN2. The last bullet point relates to supporting the universities, which also tackles SA objective EC2 in relation to good education and training opportunities for all.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Enjoyable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalise the heart of the city as the focus of city life and the host of festivals and events. • Provide public art as an integral component of place-making and public realm enhancement. • Create a lighting strategy for the city centre to illuminate places of interest and aid navigation • Lift the experience of visiting the city centre with exciting interpretation using innovative means. • Provide high quality café-bar environments around public spaces and by rivers that will add vitality, colour and bustle. 	<p>EC3, EC4, EN2, S1, S3, S4, S10</p>	<p>The set of objectives for “enjoyable” focus on the experience of the city centre for both residents and visitors as well as a city centre which has vitality into the future. Within these there will still be achievement towards economic objective EN3 and maintaining conditions for business success, growth and investment given the promotion of café bar environments, festivals and events. This will also be apparent through the aim to develop York’s position as a leading European cultural centre which will help to attract investment to the city.</p>

Vision Objectives	Issue	SA objectives identified	Sustainability Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a swimming pool in the city centre as a resource for the resident community of the city centre and the wider city, to promote active and healthy lifestyles. • Develop York's position as a leading European cultural centre by enhancing the experience of visiting our many cultural attractions through combining unique heritage with a modern outlook. • Ensure the redeveloped Barbican site is easily accessible and well integrated with the city centre 		<p>Many of the objectives will also help to maintain employment opportunities within the city centre directly through festivals and events but also indirectly through investment and attracting business to the area. The cultural heritage within the city centre is set out as a core objective which will help to achieve EN2 as well as promote EC3, although there is a potential conflict between the two which will need to be sensitively mitigated. Improving the public realm aspect within the vision will also directly impact on EN2 and S1 by providing good quality urban spaces whilst maintaining the character of the city centre. The social objectives achieved through this section are S3, S4 and S10. Health and leisure benefits will be gained through the provision of a new swimming pool and the lighting scheme, as well as being decorative, may help to improve the safety / lower perceptions of fear for people moving around. The aim to also provide a varied environment and different facilities will also help to meet a variety of peoples needs from the city centre and will help with social inclusion (S10).</p>
Protected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the nationally significant historical and environmental character of York, including its historic setting, views of the Minster, important open areas and archaeological remains. • Include positive actions and proposals to preserve and enhance the conservation area. 	EN2, EN4, EN6, EC3, Headline objective	<p>This theme of objectives helps to directly achieve environmental objective EN2. In turn this will help to support the economy as the historic assets within the city are a great tourist attraction and with this, will be protected and enhanced into the future. The fourth bullet focussing on ensuring environmentally</p>

Vision Objectives	Issue	SA objectives identified	Sustainability Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for sensitive growth through a suite of policies in the Plan and ensure high quality contemporary design preserves and enhances the special qualities of the City Centre. • Ensure developments are environmentally sustainable through raising environmental quality, minimising resource demands from development, and responding proactively to the global and local effects of climate change. • Work towards World Heritage Status. 		<p>sustainable development including minimising resource demands from development and responding proactively to climate change will help to achieve environment objectives EN4 and EN6.</p> <p>There are two potential conflicts which relate to this section however. The first arises from aspirations for growth of the city centre and for York as a whole with preserving and enhancing the city centre. In order to more fully explore this conflict, the Heritage topic paper is required to understand how and why key buildings, spaces etc make York special. The second conflict lies between the need to ensure environmental sustainability within the city centre and their potential impacts on the historic environment. In particular, there may be an issue regarding energy generation and its impacts on the historic environment. There is the potential to mitigate this through design and a greater understanding of what would create the least impact in terms of the historic and environmental characteristics of the city.</p>
Redesigned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance York's public realm so it becomes the most special in England, adding to the unique York ambience. • Revitalise key spaces and remake streets as places for people that are distinctive, attractive and vibrant through a public realm strategy and masterplan that also enhances connectivity and functionality of the public realm to ensure that areas of change are fully integrated. • Significantly improve the setting of the Minster and other special buildings and enhance key vistas. 	EN2, S1, S6, S7, S8, EC3	<p>This set of objectives will help to directly achieve EN2 given that their aim is to enhance and improve the city centre public realm and setting of major landmarks. In turn this will help to support the economy as the historic assets within the city are a great tourist attraction and with this, will be protected and enhanced into the future. Through this set of objectives the aim to make them more accessible and better able to promote York festivals</p>

Vision Objectives	Issue	SA objectives identified	Sustainability Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Gateway Streets and peripheral streets to encourage residents into the city centre and visitors to explore further. • Expand the pedestrian core of York through extension of the Footstreets area. • Declutter spaces and modify them to be more accessible and better able to promote York City of Festivals. • Make more of the riversides including encouraging active frontages and a possible new footbridge to further link riverside walks 		<p>would be positive for contributing to the success and quality of this type of business enterprise into the future. It will also provide an opportunity for enhance York’s urban and public openspaces to meet sustainability objective S1. This set of objectives also aims to improve access through the pedestrian core and entrances into the city through gateway streets etc, which will encourage people to move around and travel to the city centre on foot. This will therefore achieve the social transport objectives to reduce the need to use the car and also encourage walking around the city centre. This set of objectives would benefit from a reference to high quality and innovative design within the city centre in relation to the redesign and reuse of buildings and spaces as a way to achieving the revitalised and vibrant public realm..</p>
Connected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through an Accessibility Framework, re-model accessibility within the city centre, with a particular focus on the 2 key transport corridors between the station and Bootham/Gillygate and Layerthorpe, to promote sustainable lifestyle choices, improve pedestrian / cycle connectivity between the areas of change and meet the access needs of York in 2030. • Create an attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists with an improved network of routes. 	S1, S6, S7, S8, S10, EN2, EC3., EN4, EN5, Headline objective	<p>The “connected” objectives directly relate to the achievement of sustainability objectives S6, S7, S8. The accessibility framework will help to influence how people move in and around the city centre. In addition to this, encouraging sustainable transport modes will also help to improve air quality through the reduction of vehicle emissions and pollutants and help towards the reduction of greenhouse in connection with climate change. It is important to</p>

Vision Objectives	Issue	SA objectives identified	Sustainability Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve physical linkages between York Central and the City Centre and improve other key linkages with important destinations including the station, hospital, York St John University, the Barbican site and Foss Islands. • Protect and enhance the Snickelways and hidden spaces that contribute to the connectivity and uniqueness of the city centre. • Tackle congestion through demand management measures such as parking controls and access restrictions in the city centre. • Reallocate city centre road space freed up by redistributed traffic for wider footways, cycle paths and bus lanes. • Develop the role of York as a key node for public transport services for the sub area. • Ensure the city centre continues to be accessible for businesses. • Consider the potential role of the river in providing alternative access to the city centre 		<p>note that these issues were also picked up by the Core Strategy Preferred Options document which will help to deliver wider infrastructure improvements, including new park and rides, route improvements etc, which will directly influence and consequently benefit how people travel into the city centre of York. Environmental objective EN2 is also taken into consideration as the spaces and connecting routes, which help to characterise York, such as snickelways, will be protected and enhanced. Reducing congestion within the city centre will also help to achieve this objective. In the long-term, improving air quality and encouraging/ increasing walking around the city will also have associated health benefits satisfying objective S3 too. This objective should reference Green Infrastructure however, in order to acknowledge and link the openspace / greenspace and river corridors in the city centre to the wider city and the emerging Core Strategy policy.</p>
Liveable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate a number of sites for housing, addressing the need for all types of housing and affordable housing. • Protect the amenity of residential areas including those at Aldwark, Walmgate and Bishophill. • Ensure a full range of community facilities are available. 	S1, S3, S7, S9, S10, EC4, EN2	<p>This set of objectives aim to deliver the appropriate environment and facilities so that people can live with ease within the city centre. The aim to deliver different types of housing, including affordable, will help to achieve social objective S9 and help to</p>

Vision Objectives	Issue	SA objectives identified	Sustainability Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sufficient open space and recreation opportunities for children and people of all ages to improve the quality of life for people who live in and visit the city centre. • Provide a safer and healthy place to live. 		<p>tackle the provision of housing issue within York. Other social objectives achieved through this set of objectives are S1 and S3 through the aim to provide openspace within the city centre for all age groups. This in turn will also help to provide recreational opportunities as associated health benefits (objective S3). Likewise, the provision of community facilities will achieve S1, S10 and EC4 through local facilities which will potentially enhance recreational / leisure opportunities and aid social inclusion through the events held.</p>

Recommendations:

- Within the vision section “enjoyable”, reference should be made to the designated historic parks and gardens, which are of particular cultural and recreational importance for the city.
- Within the vision sections “Connected” and “Liveable” make reference to Green Infrastructure to encompass openspace as well as York’s greenspace/ corridors, which are within the city centre but extend to the wider York area. Green Infrastructure within the Core Strategy Preferred Options is to be taken forward through an Supplementary Planning Document but will also include the riverside routes and green linkages which cross through the city centre.
- Within the “Liveable” section the objective relating to community facilities should be expanded to include a reference to a framework for decision-making in order to fully meet sustainable development objectives.
- Within the “Redesigned” section the objectives would benefit from a reference to high quality and innovative design within the city centre in relation to the redesign and reuse of buildings and spaces as a way to achieving the revitalised and vibrant public realm aspired to.
- In order for the population to be sustainable and thrive within the city centre there also needs to be recognition for the need to be prudent in use of energy and resource use into the future.
- The vision should include a reference to flood risk within the city centre. Flood risk is a major consideration for both homes and businesses within the city centre where it could threaten their safety and viability. The Action Plan should refer to PPS25 and set out that mitigation measures would be required in areas of high flood risk.

- The preparation of the Heritage Topic Paper should be completed in order for the City Centre Area Action Plan to be taken to Preferred Options stage. This would also give a substantial baseline for the Sustainability Appraisal to reference for objective EN2: Maintain and improve a quality built environment and the cultural heritage of York and preserve the character and setting of the historic city of York.
- Greater understanding is needed as to the capabilities of renewable energy generation within York as a whole and how this would impact on the city centre as well as understanding what the city centre could reasonably provide without compromising the heritage assets within the city.

Key potential challenges:

There are a number of key challenges in going forward with the City Centre Area Action Plan which need to be picked up at the Preferred Options stage:

- Understanding what makes the Heritage assets within York City Centre special.
- How changing functions, spaces and vehicle movement, for example, will affect the city as a whole.
- Balancing the needs of the economy with provision of social and environmental requirements within the same area.