



**EXAMINATION OF THE CITY OF YORK LOCAL PLAN
2017-2033**

PHASE 4 HEARINGS

MATTER 3: Castle Gateway and York Central

CITY OF YORK COUNCIL STATEMENT

Matter 3 – Castle Gateway and York Central

3.1 Is the approach to Castle Gateway (ST20) in Policy SS5 a suitable one in heritage and any other terms?

- 3.1.1 Castle Gateway is a significant regeneration area in the heart of York's historic centre, sitting largely within the Central Historic Core Conservation area, an area of special architectural and historic interest. The principle of regeneration in this area supports several of NPPF2012 Core Planning Principles, in particular that it encourages the effective use of brownfield land, promotes mixed-use and promotes the conservation of historic assets [NPPF, para 17].
- 3.1.2 As is set out in the policy's explanatory text (para 3.31): "The significance of heritage assets and the opportunities for improvement offered by regeneration are key priorities for this Area of Opportunity". Policy promotes 'joined-up' regeneration and masterplanning as part of a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment (reflecting NPPF2012 para 126), enhancing/better revealing the significance of the Conservation Area and preserving those elements of its setting that make a positive contribution (reflecting NPPF2012 para137).
- 3.1.3 The Council approved a high level vision for Castle Gateway in 2017, and a Castle Gateway Advisory Group was established to bring together local business representatives, interest groups, principal landowners and custodians for this part of the city to help understand the area's history and how to shape its future. SS5's policy principles and the Castle Gateway Masterplan evolved in response to key themes raised through public engagement and within the context of the Issues and Opportunities identified in the Central Historic Core Conservation Area Character Appraisal (<https://her.york.gov.uk/Source/SYO1335>, re Kings Staith / Coppergate, Castle and Piccadilly), .
- 3.1.4 SS5 is supported by Historic England [Consultation Statement Reg 22, Annex 22 Schedule of reps in policy order, CD013W], recognising that it will:
- assist in realising the potential of this important part of the City;
 - radically enhance the setting of Clifford's Tower and the Eye of York;
 - create new public spaces and high quality development opportunity
 - improve connectivity, through the opening up of both sides of the River Foss and the addition of a new landmark bridge;
 - improve the permeability and appearance of the Coppergate Centre viewed from Clifford's Tower and as a gateway to the area;
 - reduce vehicle dominance
- 3.1.5 Modifications are proposed to SS5 to update references to the 2018 Castle Gateway Masterplan and recent planning consents.

3.2 Does Policy SS5 provide sufficient guidance for any development that might come forward as a result of the allocation?

- 3.2.1 Castle Gateway area sits within a highly sensitive area within the city walls, in close proximity to a number of listed buildings and within the Central Historic Core Conservation Area. The policy is considered to identify sufficiently detailed aims and actions to ensure future development would comply with legislation in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. As such any development, which might come forward in accordance with the policy, would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and would have special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed buildings or their settings. Policy SS5 recognises the significance of the existing heritage assets and sets out guidance and design parameters on what acceptable enhancements may come forward on the allocation.
- 3.2.2 The Policy provides sufficient guidance as it is focused on improved connectivity, public realm enhancements and regeneration of this area in order to reinterpret and revitalise the existing settings of the five Castle Gateway sub-areas. It is supported by a Masterplan¹, approved by the Council's Executive committee in 2018, and which provides a positive framework to preserving those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area (para 137, NPPF, 2012). This positive approach recognises the irreplaceable resource provided by our historic environment, allowing it to be conserved but also ensuring that, where harm is identified, development is only permitted where public benefits are identified which outweigh that harm (paras 133 and 134, NPPF, 2012).
- 3.2.3 The policy identifies the importance of the site to the city in terms of its historical significance, but also the opportunities available for enhancement in this area. In particular, potential benefits are identified in the areas of heritage, connectivity, public realm and economic development, all of which contribute to improvements in sustainability for the area, in accordance with the key elements of sustainable development identified in para.7 of the NPPF, 2012. It then identifies a number of key elements of the proposals which are intended to help achieve these aims. Further detail is provided within the Castle Gateway Masterplan.
- 3.2.4 Policy SS5 recognises the different characteristics of this sizeable site and breaks it down into different sub-areas such that the specific characteristics of each area can be identified, and targeted development guidelines are provided. For instance, in line with policy T1 and para.35 of the NPPF 2012, improvements to the permeability of Coppergate for pedestrians and cyclists are identified as a key principle for the Kings Staith/ Coppergate sub-area. The St George's Field sub-area and River Corridors are prone to flooding and this is identified as a key consideration for these areas and to ensure compliance with policy ENV4: Flood Risk and paras. 100-104 of the NPPF 2012.

¹ City of York Council. (2022). *Castle Gateway Masterplan*. Available at: <https://www.york.gov.uk/CastleGatewayMasterplan>

- 3.2.5 In line with the requirements of policy SS5, development of a multi-storey car park (planning application 19/02063/FULM) has already been approved on St Georges Field taking into account the aspirations of the Castle Gateway Masterplan. Additionally, a planning application (22/00206/FUL) is currently under consideration for public realm improvements in the area around Clifford's Tower and the Eye of York.
- 3.2.6 Policy SS5, when read alongside the additional detail provided within the Castle Gateway Masterplan 2018 is considered to provide good guidance for developers in relation to future development on this allocated site. A minor modification is proposed to the policy to include additional relevant policy references – see Appendix 1.

3.3 Is Policy SS4 (ST5) a sufficiently comprehensive guide for the redevelopment of York Central?

- 3.3.1 York Central is a significant brownfield regeneration site in the heart of the City, offering potential to deliver exemplar sustainable development.
- 3.3.2 Policy SS4 is considered to provide sufficiently comprehensive guidance, setting out:
- the quantum of development for both residential and employment uses as modified and shown in Appendix 1
 - the appropriate mix of uses on site;
 - a series of development principles to guide contemporary, mixed-use development within a historic setting.
- 3.3.3 While there are a number of significant buildings on site which will be retained (including the National Railway Museum), the site is largely underused, having historically been occupied by the rail industry. Relocation of the remaining rail site will allow new development to take place. Alongside policies DP3, D1-D6, T5 and other design and transport policies, SS4 provides a staged approach which provides a clear direction as to how a decision maker (and others) should consider proposals coming forward on the allocation.
- 3.3.4 Outline planning permission was granted in December 2019 on a large proportion of the allocation for York Central (application reference 18/01884/OUTM) and a number of subsequent reserved matters applications have been granted or are under consideration. The mixed-use redevelopment proposals are consistent with Policy SS4, notwithstanding the modifications proposed [EX/HS/P3/M4/1] regarding legislative changes to use classes (4.1.4), number of dwellings being delivered within the plan period (4.1.6) and requirement of 100,000 m² of office use (see Appendix 1).
- 3.3.5 Minor modifications proposed to include further policy references – D1-D6, H1, T5, for clarity.

Appendix 1 – Proposed Mods

Policy SS4: York Central

York Central (ST5), **as identified on the policies map**, will enable the creation of a new piece of the city; with exemplar mixed- use development including a world class urban quarter forming part of the city centre. This will include; a new central business district, expanded and new cultural and visitor facilities, residential uses and a new vibrant residential community.

The following mix of uses will be permitted within York Central:

- **Offices (B4a E);**
- **Financial and Professional Services (A2 E);**
- Residential;
- Hotels (C1)
- Culture, leisure, tourism and niche/ancillary retail facilities;
- Open space, high quality public realm and supporting social infrastructure;
- Rail uses, and
- Non-ancillary retail, subject to an impact and sequential assessment.

Land within York Central is allocated for 1,700 – 2,500 dwellings, **of which a minimum of 1,500 around 950** dwellings will be delivered in the plan period, and **approximately** 100,000 sq m of Office (**Use Class E B4a**).

Development within the York Central site will be permitted in accordance with the principles of development set out below. The principles of development at York Central are to:

- i. Create a high quality sustainable, mixed use urban quarter for York including a range of commercial, residential, cultural and leisure uses.
- ii. Provide a new business district with a critical mass of high quality offices suitable for modern business requirements.
- iii. Enhance the quality of the cultural area around the National Railway Museum through high quality public realm and improved connectivity to the wider city.
- iv. Support expansion and improvement of the National Railway Museum as a prime cultural asset.
- v. Create a distinctive new place of outstanding quality and design which complements the existing historic urban fabric of the city and respects those elements which contribute to the distinctive historic character of the city and assimilates into its setting and surrounding communities.
- vi. Conserve and enhance the special character and/or appearance of the adjacent Central Historic Core Conservation Area and St Paul's Square/ Holgate Road Conservation Area.
- vii. Maximise the benefits of job creation and sustainable economic growth.
- viii. Create a sustainable new community with a range of housing types and tenures. To reflect the site's location, high density development may be appropriate.

- ix. Ensure provision of social infrastructure which meets the needs of York Central and, where viable, the wider city communities including sports, leisure, health, primary and nursery education, community facilities and open space.
- x. Maximise integration, connections and accessibility to/from the site including inter-modal connectivity improvements at York Railway Station.
- xi. Deliver development and maximise connectivity within a green infrastructure network and integrate with wider public realm in the city.
- xii. Demonstrate that all transport issues have been addressed, in consultation with the Council and Highways England as necessary, to ensure as many trips as possible are taken by sustainable travel modes and promote and facilitate modal shift from the car.
- xiii. Minimise the environmental impact of vehicular trips.
- xiv. Ensure sustainability principles are embedded at all stages of the development.
- xv. Provide high speed fibre broadband across the whole site.

See also Policy SS3, **D1-D6**, EC1, R1 **and**, R3, **H1, T5**

Explanation

- 3.23 York Central comprises around 78 hectares (ha) gross of brownfield land. This is equivalent to two thirds of the area of the walled city. York Central has historically been occupied by a broad mix of operational rail related uses, alongside the National Railway Museum. Other key uses within the site include existing residential dwellings and a number of local businesses in the light industry and trade sectors. Network Rail are currently rationalising their operational rail activities within York Central and it is anticipated that a significant proportion of land within the site will become available for redevelopment. At York Central, the net area of land available for development is around 35ha.
- 3.24 The vision for York Central will deliver a high-quality and sustainable new urban quarter. The scale and quality of new development will enhance the city as a contemporary employment, residential, cultural and leisure destination. Close to the historic city centre, this former rail yard will build on the city's existing assets to become an exciting new urban quarter for York residents. Given the site's location adjacent to the Central Historic Core Conservation Area and St Paul's Square/ Holgate Road Conservation Area, account should be taken of the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The relevant Conservation Area Appraisal identifies opportunities for beneficial change or the need for planning protection.
- 3.25 The site is considered to have the capacity to deliver a total of up to 2,500 residential dwellings and 100,000 sqm of office space. The figure of 1,700 dwellings has been assumed at this stage in the plan process to reflect complexity of delivery. The site will include a range of uses including offices, residential, cultural, leisure, tourism and niche/ancillary retail, open space, public realm, social infrastructure, rail use and car parking. Whilst part of ST5 falls within the city centre boundary (as shown on the **proposals policies** map), in retail terms this element of York Central is 'edge of centre' as it is more than 300m from the Primary Shopping Area. The type and quantity of any retail provision on the York Central site would therefore need to be informed by a detailed retail assessment. It should be noted that ST5 is subject to

detailed ongoing technical work and masterplanning which may change the overall capacity of the site.

- 3.26 The York Central site offers a unique opportunity to provide a critical mass of modern and fit for purpose, high quality grade A commercial development. This will help to remedy current shortfalls of city centre grade A office accommodation in a central, well connected location which is fit for the modern day office occupier market. The scale of development opportunity, largely in a single ownership, and highly accessible to large volumes of people by a range of sustainable transport modes, allows for the development of a new urban extension with sustainability at its core.
- 3.27 This is an exceptional site for sustainable transport in terms of links to train/bus network and cycle routes and proximity to the city centre. However, the majority of the site remains rail locked and the potential capacity to redevelop the site is, therefore, constrained. The provision of new road /bridge infrastructure and reconfiguration of the existing road infrastructure will provide the necessary access into the site to release capacity and facilitate delivery of development. Sustainable travel modes taking full advantage of the site's location will need to be maximised in order to limit impacts on the wider road network, congestion and air quality. Opportunities will be developed around pedestrian and cycle linkages, Park & Ride, and bus service improvements. These will be aligned with the aspiration to improve interchange and arrival at the station, enhance the station environment, and implement general rail capacity schemes designed to improve and enhance all routes on the network affecting York.
- 3.28 The site is well located close to the city centre and has good access to local services. It is anticipated that new local centre facilities will be provided within the site to meet the needs of the new community.

Delivery

- Key Delivery Partners: City of York Council; landowners, developers; and infrastructure delivery partners.
- Implementation: Planning applications; and developer contributions.

Policy SS5: Castle Gateway

Castle Gateway (ST20) is allocated as an Area of Opportunity, as indicated on the **Proposals Policies** Map. The York Castle Gateway ('Castle Gateway') has been identified as a major regeneration area of the city centre. The area is home to major high quality cultural, river and heritage assets that form part of York's unique character, but suffer from a poor quality setting amongst car parking and neglected buildings. There is significant potential to revitalise the area, reinterpreting and reasserting the varied history of the site, and creating a better connection with the city centre through improved pedestrian and cycle access.

The purpose of the regeneration is to:

- Radically enhance the setting of Clifford's Tower and other features within the Eye of York to recognise the significance of these historic assets and interpret their importance in York's history.
- Improve the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the area.
- Integrate the area with the broader city centre.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle flow throughout the area and improve connections with the wider city.
- Bring forward new commercial and other development that improve the area and complements and facilitates the implementation of the public realm enhancements.

To achieve these aims development in the Castle Gateway will be delivered through the following:

- Removing the Castle Car Park to create new public space and high quality development opportunities.
- Provision of a replacement car park within the Castle Gateway area.
- The addition of a new landmark River Foss pedestrian cycle bridge.
- Where possible, the opening up of both frontages of the River Foss with riverside walkways.
- Engagement with stakeholders in the development of masterplan and public realm proposals.
- Securing public realm, transport and infrastructure investment as a catalyst for wider social and economic improvement.
- Funding the implementation of public space, transport improvements and infrastructure through developer contributions and commercial uplift from development sites across the area.

Development within the five Castle Gateway sub-areas will be **permitted delivered where having regard to the above regeneration objectives** and in accordance with the following principles, **as appropriate**:

King's Staith / Coppergate

- i. Improve the physical fabric, permeability and appearance of the Coppergate Centre including the possibility of a modest extension, to optimise the retail and cultural offer and to present an appropriate and well designed aspect when viewed from Clifford's Tower (see also Castle and Eye of York below).

- ii. Create new and improve existing pedestrian connections between the central shopping area and the Castle Gateway.
- iii. Improve the permeability of Coppergate as a key gateway into the area for pedestrians and cyclists.
- iv. Improve the Castlegate streetscape by reducing vehicle dominance and creating a pedestrian friendly environment

Piccadilly

- v. Reduce the size of the vehicular carriageway on Piccadilly and improve the size and quality of the pedestrian foot streets, including tree planting.
- vi. Ensure active ground floor frontages to new developments fronting Piccadilly.
- vii. Provide active river frontages to any new development on sites adjoining the River Foss.
- viii. Seek developer contributions in the form of land and/or funding to contribute to delivering the masterplan and highways improvements.
- ix. Consider the opportunity to provide a new multi-storey car park on the site of existing surface level parking at Castle Mills to replace existing parking at Castle Car Park.
- x. Improve the Fosggate streetscape by reducing vehicle dominance and creating a pedestrian friendly environment.

Castle and the Eye of York

- xi. Create a public realm scheme for the Castle and Eye of York which celebrates the significance of historic assets and the setting of the historic Castle and prison.
- xii. Consider the opportunity to create a development opportunity for a contemporary new building of exemplary architecture alongside the western bank of the River Foss on the site of the existing Castle Car Park.
- xiii. Consider the opportunity to provide a new building to improve the southern aspect of the Coppergate Centre and service yard and enhance the setting of Clifford's Tower and the Eye of York.
- xiv. Provide a new landmark bridge for pedestrians and cyclists across the River Foss linking the Castle and Eye of York with Piccadilly, with funding augmented from developer contributions and commercial uplift from new development sites.
- xv. Improve Tower Street to make it easier and safer to move between the Eye of York, Tower Gardens and St George's Field, by reducing vehicle dominance and creating a more pedestrian friendly environment.
- xvi. Consider important sightlines across the Castle Gateway area.

St. George's Field

- xvii. Consider the opportunity to provide a new multi-storey car park on the site of existing surface level parking at St. George's Field to replace the existing parking at Castle Car Park.
- xviii. Improve existing and create new connections for pedestrians and cyclists between St. George's Field and the Foss Basin and the wider Castle Gateway area.
- xix. Maximise the development potential of the Foss Basin and St George's Field as a key economic, cultural and social asset for the city.
- xx. Consider the potential for flood improvement work as part of any new development.

The River Corridors

- xxi. Encourage new public access, with varied treatment along one, or both sides of the River Foss, with new and improved connections linking to the wider pedestrian and cycle network.
- xxii. Enhance the existing public realm and consider new facilities at Tower Gardens to encourage better use of the space.
- xxiii. Improve the environment of the Foss and Ouse riversides and promote waterborne activities.
- xxiv. Consider the potential for flood alleviation work as part of any new development.

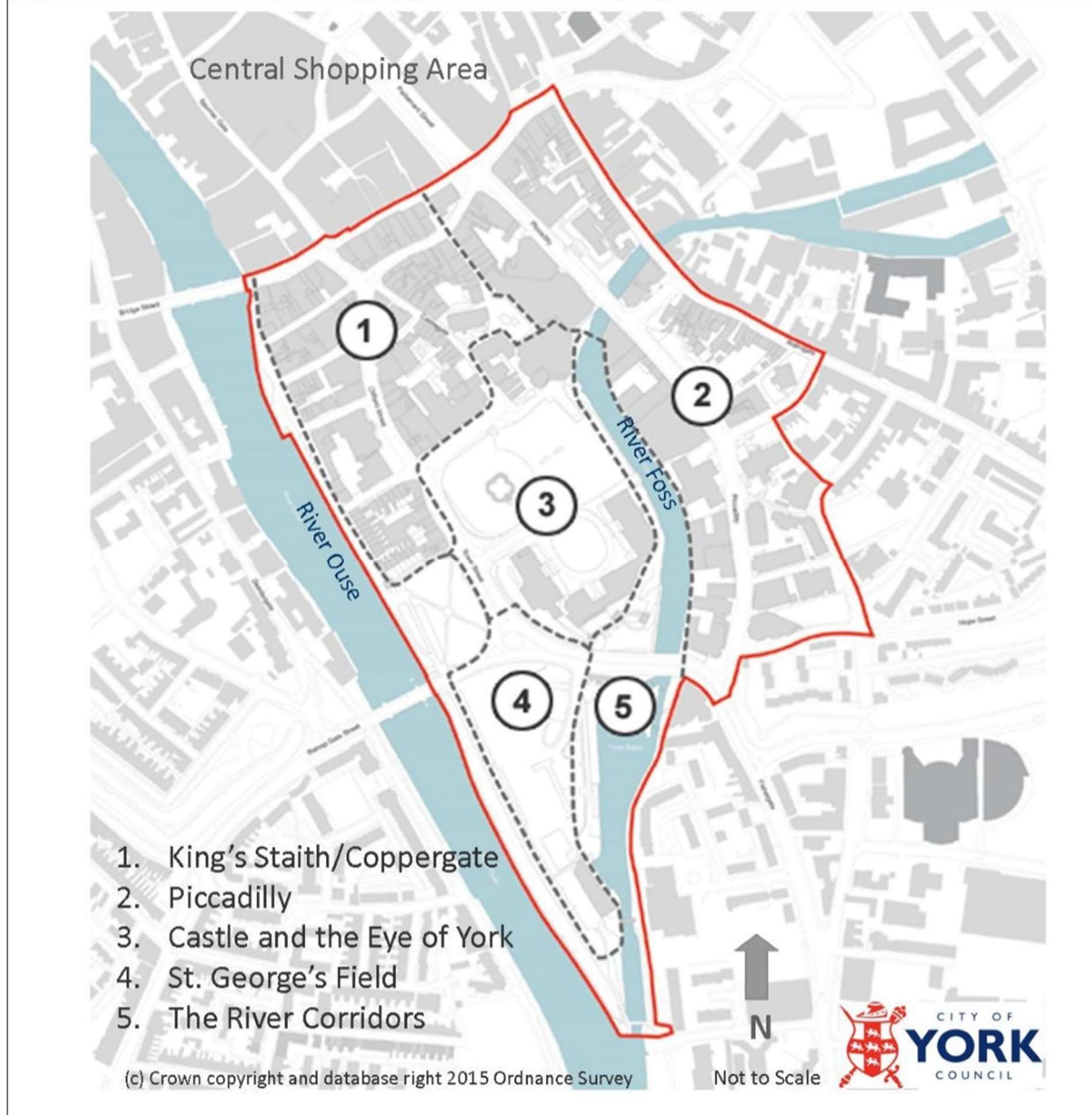
See also Policy SS3, R1, R2, D1, D2, D4, D5, D6, ENV4, T1, and T5

Explanation

- 3.29 Located on the southern side of the city centre, the Castle Gateway area sits largely within the city walls and the Historic Core Conservation Area, at the confluence of the River Ouse and River Foss. The Castle Gateway area covers the length of Piccadilly, the Coppergate Shopping Centre and the Eye of York and runs through to St George's Field and the Foss Basin. Much of the area is of low quality with significant dereliction and underdevelopment and yet the area has great potential in both its location and its historic and cultural assets.
- 3.30 Castle Gateway comprises five distinct, but inter-linked, sub-areas shown at Figure 3.4 overleaf: Castle-Piccadilly; the Foss Basin and Ouse Riverside; and the area around the Coppergate Centre and Fossgate. The area contains a mix of private land ownerships and a substantial amount of public estate with three museums / attractions (Castle Museum, Fairfax House and the Jorvik Viking Centre), three court buildings (Crown Court, County Court, Magistrates Court), many listed structures and a Scheduled Ancient Monument of international significance (Clifford's Tower).
- 3.31 Delivery of joined-up regeneration across the wider Castle Gateway area by City of York Council and partners, land owners and developers, will improve the locality and maximise social, economic and cultural benefits for the city. The significance of heritage assets and the opportunities for improvement offered by regeneration are key priorities for this Area of Opportunity.
- 3.32 The York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2011) (the Appraisal) provides the key evidence base for the Local Plan and an important evidence base for any future plans for the Castle Gateway area. The proposed Castle Gateway Area of Opportunity broadly covers the areas defined in the Appraisal as the Kings Staith / Coppergate, Castle and Piccadilly areas, and several of the stated Castle Gateway development principles directly reference the Appraisal. The Castle-Piccadilly Planning Brief, which was agreed in 2006, and 2018 Masterplan for Castle Gateway also provides an important evidence base.
- 3.33 A key challenge is to ensure that this important historic environment is safeguarded whilst allowing stakeholders and land owners to make the most of heritage and commercial assets and the council to maximise planning gain to enable potential

benefit for the city. Delivery of high quality mixed use development of sites will enhance the vitality and viability of the area and ensure it is more effectively integrated into the city centre. Appropriate uses include retail, leisure, civic and open space, residential and employment, with active ground floor uses.

Figure 3.4: Castle Gateway Sub Areas



3.33a To achieve these aims development in the Castle Gateway will be delivered through the following:

- Removing the Castle Car Park to create new public space and high quality development opportunities.
- Provision of a replacement car park within the Castle Gateway area.
- The addition of a new landmark River Foss pedestrian cycle bridge.
- Where possible, the opening up of both frontages of the River Foss with riverside walkways.

- Engagement with stakeholders in the development of masterplan and public realm proposals.
- Securing public realm, transport and infrastructure investment as a catalyst for wider social and economic improvement.
- Funding the implementation of public space, transport improvements and infrastructure through developer contributions and commercial uplift from development sites across the area.

- 3.34 A conceptual masterplan and detailed design of the public realm and infrastructure will have been prepared, focusing on conservation and urban design and including a Statement of Significance. The masterplan will shape the key elements of the development on Castle Car Park, including the bridge across the River Foss. The commercial development elements of the Castle Gateway will also need to meet the quality criteria and vision for the area.
- 3.35 St. George's Field has been identified within the Castle Gateway regeneration plans as an opportunity to provide enhanced car parking arrangements through the development of a multi-storey car park.
- 3.36 The site has an existing usage as a car park and this would not present a change in use or flood vulnerability. Car parks are not specifically identified within the National Planning Policy Framework flood risk vulnerability classification but due to its existing usage it could reasonably be considered as low risk. This continued usage as car parking should be supported where the design of the development maintains and preferably increases flood storage at this site.
- 3.37 The flood risk assessment for the site must ensure that the at grade parking area of any multi-storey car park continues to be floodable in the same frequency of flood events as present and delivers, through design, improvements in flood storage to ensure no increased risk to the site or others. All other levels of the car park should be designed with safe access and egress above the design flood levels. S104 of the National Planning Policy Framework identifies approaches to the Exception Test to determine safe placement of developments within flood risk areas which is pertinent to the design ideals at this site:
- It must be demonstrated that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment where one has been prepared.
 - A site-specific flood risk assessment must demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.
- 3.38 The usage of undercroft car parking within the river corridor of York shows how well designed developments can continue to deliver flood storage benefits. Careful consideration within the flood risk assessment is required to achieve this, and any development on St. George's Field will need to consider similar approaches. There are many exemplars of this nationally.

Delivery

- Key Delivery Partners: City of York Council; York Museums Trust; English Heritage; Historic England; York Civic Trust; Environment Agency; developers; landowners; and infrastructure delivery partners.
- Implementation: [The Castle Gateway Masterplan 2018](#); Planning applications; developer contributions; commercial uplift from new development sites; and external funding opportunities.