

PLANNING FOR YOUR ESTATE: MANAGING CHANGE TO HERITAGE ESTATES

An introductory guide to masterplanning
and neighbourhood plans

June 2023



FOREWORD

Being responsible for a large and complex heritage estate can sometimes feel very daunting. But whilst additional care must be taken, planning for long term change in complicated historic places is not impossible. And, often, custodians of these multifaceted places find themselves dealing with many of the same issues, regardless of who or where they are.

So this paper seeks to help heritage estate owners and managers to navigate the complex process of shaping development whilst ensuring they meet the statutory responsibilities associated with important heritage buildings and places. This requires thought beyond the immediate commercial or maintenance priorities, to consider the broader picture of an estate's future role, objectives and context.

An increasingly important layer of complexity is how heritage assets are appropriately adapted to face the challenges we face as a global community in addressing the climate emergency and meeting regional and national net zero targets.

This note has been drafted to share the recent experiences we have been through at York Minster to produce the first Neighbourhood Plan of its kind, in the hope that it might be a helpful reference tool for other estates about to start a similar journey.

Where useful, we have shared links to our online resource which forms part of our Centre of Excellence for Heritage Craft Skills & Estate Management, one of the principal projects of our Plan. We hope you will be able to use these as a template for the type of evidence base you may need to produce to support any masterplan.

Good luck.

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York Minster
June 2023



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savills

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His Majesty The King unveils the statue of the late Queen Elizabeth II. The first project of the York Minster Precinct Neighbourhood Plan to complete. 6th November 2022.

1.0 AN INTRODUCTION TO MASTERPLANNING

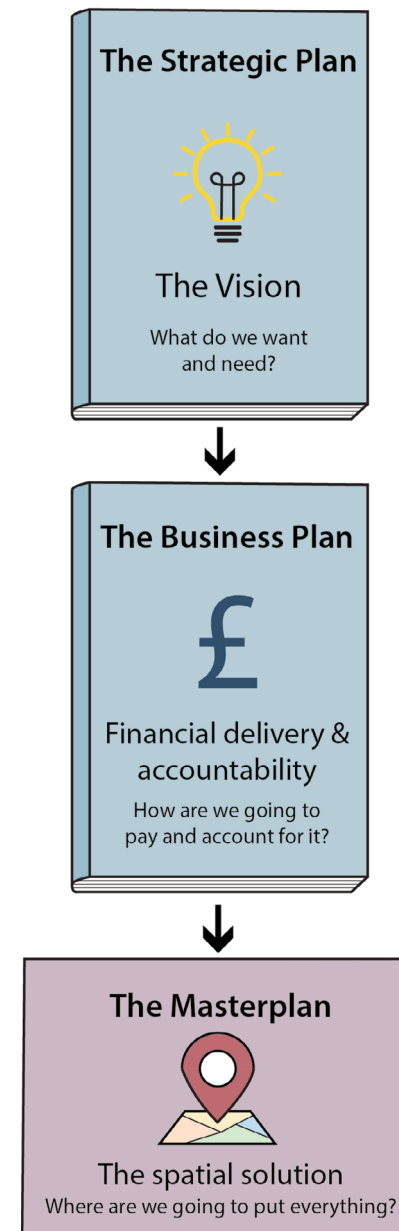
Before you start: knowing where you are going

York Minster is first and foremost a place of worship, but it is also a business like every other heritage estate.

Every successful business has a plan and knows where it is. So, before embarking on a masterplan, make sure to prepare a strategic plan, or update your existing, with clear objectives, a business plan to deliver it, and a timeline. A plan like this allows you to see what is important, the infrastructure you need to deliver it and how you are going to get there.

Taking the time every year to review past performance, and predict future performance, gives a road map to follow. Performance indicators will help monitor success and where changes may need to be made. Importantly, as we face the climate crisis, decarbonising your estate and increasing biodiversity should be embedded into the exercise from the top down.

With your strategy and business plan approved, you now know what you need from your estate, what is lacking and where you need to invest. You have the objectives for your masterplan.



Estate planning:
three key documents

Legislative context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines a heritage asset as ‘*a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest*’.

Planning policy places the responsibility for the care, upkeep and conservation of heritage assets on their owner. This responsibility can often present constraints to development opportunities, particularly where the setting of a heritage asset is heavily protected through the legislative framework.

In particular, an understanding of the following legislation is of particular importance for owners of historic places:

- the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest.
- the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 provides specific protection for monuments of national interest.
- the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 provides specific protection for wreck sites of archaeological, historic or artistic interest.
- the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 makes provision for the compilation of a register of gardens and other land (parks and gardens, and battlefields).
- Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011 sets out the powers and duties of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England where change to a cathedral or its precinct is proposed.

Change in the historic environment and good design

Where changes are proposed to heritage assets or their settings, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for plan making and decision making to ensure that heritage assets are conserved and where appropriate, enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance. National Planning Guidance defines conservation as an active process of maintenance and managing change.

Any planning applications and decisions relating to heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, must consider the statutory considerations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as considering relevant policies within Local Development Plans and National Planning Policy Framework.

Chapter 12 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of good design as an essential component of sustainable development. It notes that design policies should be developed with local communities so that they reflect local character, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of an area’s defining characteristics. Design or ‘placemaking’ is therefore a key consideration in planning for the future of a heritage estate and an opportunity to create spaces or buildings of exceptional quality, beauty and longevity which sit comfortably in their historic environment because they are informed by a deep understanding of it.

Given all of these legislative and planning policy considerations, managing change in heritage estates, or estates with a number of heritage assets including listed buildings, archaeology or conservation area designations, can often seem a daunting task. Whilst additional care must be taken, planning for long term change in complicated historic places is not impossible. This paper seeks to assist heritage estate owners or managers to navigate the complex process of shaping development whilst ensuring they meet the responsibility of care for heritage assets. This requires thought beyond the immediate commercial or maintenance priorities, to consider the broader picture of an estate’s future role, objectives and context.

What is masterplanning?

The planning and commercial risks of managing or approaching change in a complicated historic estate can be reduced through the development of a spatial strategy or 'masterplan' which considers the estate holistically, and with a broad, long-term outlook.

In contrast to the design of an individual building within a closely defined red-line, masterplanning considers the bigger picture of an entire estate and its urban or rural context. This enables a joined-up approach to placemaking, identifying opportunities across a wide range of considerations – land uses, site availability, movement, public realm and landscape, sustainability, conservation, commercial and other objectives.

Experienced masterplanners are skilled at drawing out key issues and opportunities from what can seem like a muddle of differing objectives, technical information and conflicting perspectives. Through the masterplanning process they support the client in developing a clear placemaking vision for the evolution of their estate.

The final outputs of a masterplanning exercise can vary in scope from a high-level vision or broad spatial concept through to a detailed and costed plan describing parameters for development across an estate.

However, in all cases, good masterplanning is a process not simply an output.

To achieve a final plan that has value and weight in the planning system it is important to achieve buy-in to the proposals not only from the client team and internal stakeholders, but also from external stakeholders including the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Historic England, and potentially the wider community and estate visitors.

This is achieved through an iterative and concurrent process of creative design and engagement, in which baseline synthesis, ideas and options are produced by the masterplan team and refined in collaboration with project stakeholders, leading to a final and agreed set of masterplan proposals. The optimal required level of engagement and buy-in will depend on the scope of the masterplan and the intended final status of the document, variables that are explored in Chapter 2.

With a long-term masterplan in place, individual, short term projects can be progressed in the knowledge that they are the building blocks of a coherent and beneficial plan. This maximises the value of investment and limits the risk of inadvertently jeopardising longer-term objectives through piecemeal development or the sale of assets.

Alongside spatial masterplan drawings, a phased action plan or delivery plan can be produced indicating projects for progression in the short, medium and longer term. Immediate next steps can be identified and advice provided on further technical studies that will be necessary to achieve your objectives.

Masterplans also have a role as a promotional tool and can be used as evidence to support bids for funding and inward investment as well as supporting your drive to net zero and increasing biodiversity.

Where to start?

The first stage of the masterplanning process is to consider what you would like to achieve as an estate and express this in the form of an initial brief:

- ✓ What are the operational and other issues you are facing and what do you need to address?
- ✓ What are the limitations of your estate and where could there be opportunities?
- ✓ What are the special characteristics of your estate?
- ✓ Where might there be potential for change, and what is fixed?
- ✓ Who are the key stakeholders and how should they be involved?
- ✓ What is your budget and timescale for the work?

At this early stage you might like to invite your internal stakeholders or local community to put forward their own thoughts to shape the brief.

Baseline information should be compiled upfront to enable the appointed masterplan team to progress without delay. This could include:

- ✓ Land ownership boundaries
- ✓ Existing uses
- ✓ Physical and planning constraints information
- ✓ Previous technical studies and surveys, visitor data, management plans, business case, strategic plans etc
- ✓ Assessment of heritage significance (conservation management plan, statement of significance or similar)
- ✓ Carbon audit, sustainability strategy or similar
- ✓ Relevant planning applications, masterplans and other proposals
- ✓ Previous consultation findings

Appointment of the masterplan design team

Masterplan design projects are typically led by an urban design, architecture or landscape architecture practice or a multi-disciplinary consultancy. The skills and expertise of the masterplan design team should reflect the nature of your estate and objectives of the study.

Other specialist input may be required as the project progresses:

- Town planner
- Highways engineer
- Conservation and archaeology
- Ecology and arboriculture
- Sustainability consultant
- Consultation and engagement specialist
- Commercial advisor / viability specialist
- Cost consultant

Through the appointment process, the brief should be refined to firm up the programme, milestones, outputs and the stakeholder engagement process.

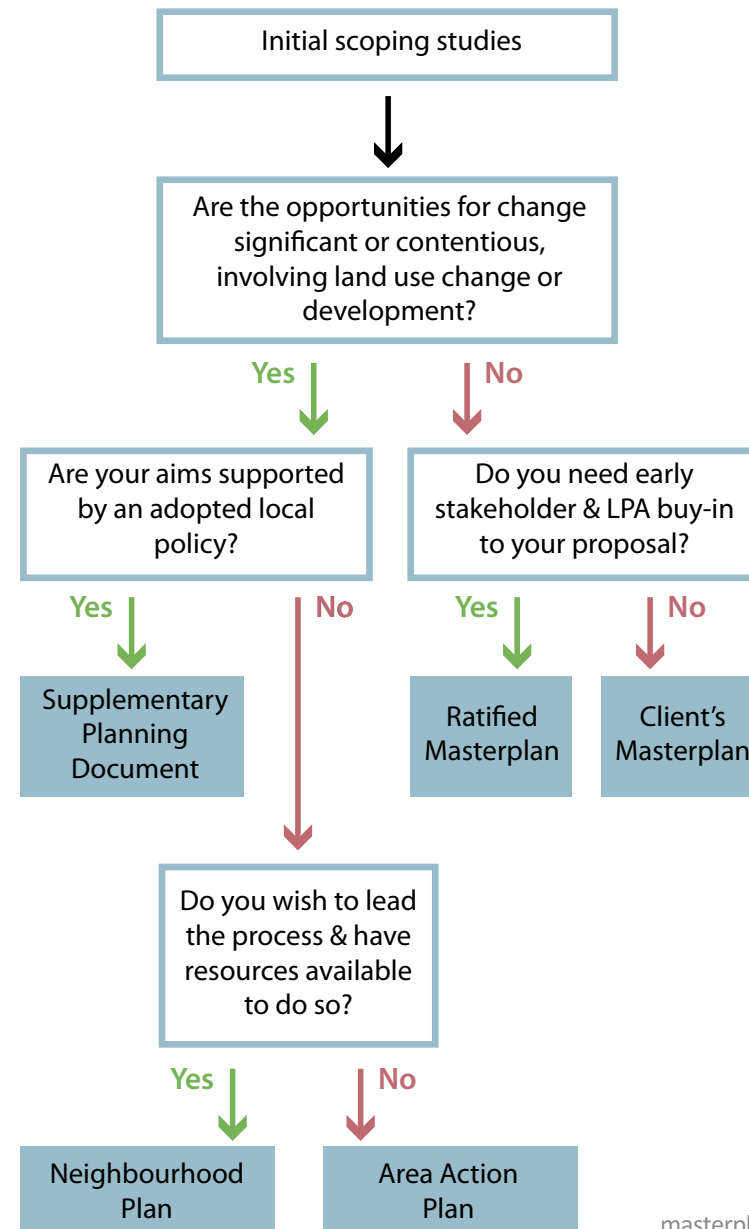
Planning approaches

The final scope and status of a masterplan will depend on the process undertaken to develop it and the robustness of the evidence base that underpins it.

In some cases, the masterplan will primarily be a document for internal use with no planning status, while in others a wider public process will be necessary (and in many cases, strongly advised) so that the masterplan has weight as a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications. The next chapter explores these different options.

Scoping masterplan

An initial scoping or concept masterplan can be a helpful precursor to a more detailed masterplanning study. This provides a high-level indication of the potential opportunities and scale of change, so that you can consider whether investment in a more rigorous masterplanning process will be of value in achieving your goals.



Which masterplan type?

2.0 WHICH MASTERPLAN TYPE?

Non-adopted masterplans

Options 1 and 2 do not create planning guidance or policy that is adopted by your local planning authority. Generally these are cheaper and quicker, but they carry none or only limited weight in the planning system.

Option 1: Client's masterplan

Where your masterplan proposals are likely to be straightforward, in line with existing policy and uncontentious, you may choose to move straight to planning applications once your masterplan is agreed internally. In this scenario the masterplan holds no planning weight but is helpful in guiding internal decision making and investment strategies.

This option is probably the least difficult to achieve. An experienced masterplanning practice could typically develop such a masterplan in a few months if they are given a good brief that reflects a clear understanding of your needs.

Whilst this option could be progressed relatively quickly to provide a useful tool, in town planning terms it would carry no weight in the determination of planning applications and therefore limited weight with potential funding partners.

Steps to delivery

1. Internally agree issues to be addressed and functional requirements to be met with internal departments and then at an executive level, and use this to draw up a clear brief
2. Engage a masterplanner with experience and understanding of complex historic places

3. Meet and workshop with the masterplanner, supply them with baseline information
4. Receive a draft masterplan showing areas of change and proposed development
5. Review and amend draft
6. Receive final masterplan and have it adopted / endorsed by your governing body

Pros

- ✓ Quick to produce.
- ✓ Relatively cheap to produce.
- ✓ Provides a useful visualisation of proposed change across your estate.
- ✓ Represents a positive starting point in the process of managing change through planning.

Cons

- ✗ Holds no planning weight and therefore does not reduce risk associated with any planning applications.
- ✗ No certainty in delivery and therefore a weak document in terms of fundraising strategies.

Budget

£

Time

3 – 6 months

Lead

Estate owner

Option 2: Ratified masterplan

The second option is a progression on Option 1. It would include an element of consultation with Local Planning Authority (LPA) Officers, Members or Councillors in which the proposed areas of change would be discussed and, at a high level, agreed upon. To support this, a brief document summarising the vision and proposed areas of change could be developed.

The ultimate objective of Option 2 would be to have the Masterplan ratified by the LPA Planning Committee. This would present a level of comfort in progressing any application, that the changes proposed for the estate reflect the aims and wishes of Local Councillors and their officers, in consultation with Historic England.

This may provide sufficient confidence to move forward with any development proposals for your estate. However, given the significant legal protections given to heritage assets, there may be a requirement for additional certainty. It should also be noted that whilst a ratified masterplan would provide some confidence that a development proposal within your estate has high level support from Members, this may not provide sufficient comfort to funding partners. Similarly, a ratified masterplan may only provide short term comfort and may not withstand periods of political change.

Finally, for many historic estates, especially those with scheduled monuments and listed buildings, Historic England must also be engaged at an early stage of the process because they provide advice to the local authority (and Secretary of State in the case of scheduled monuments).

Steps to delivery

1. Internally agree issues to be addressed and functional requirements to be met with internal departments and then at an executive level, and use this to draw up a clear brief
2. Engage a masterplanner, ideally one with experience of complex historic places.
3. Meet and workshop with the masterplanner and supply them with baseline information, to develop initial options and concepts.
4. An assessment of the heritage significance of the estate will be required, either an existing Conservation Management Plan or similar, or a proportionate new evaluation. A sustainability strategy or carbon audit or similar may also be beneficial.
5. Enter into pre-application discussions with your LPA. Hopefully, this builds on an existing relationship with the LPA. If not, arrange to meet the Head of Planning to discuss your aims and strategy. A member of the Council's conservation team should be at the meeting.
6. You should also arrange to meet Historic England. They may suggest you enter into extended pre-application discussion. Ultimately, the success of your plan will be determined by your relationships with your LPA and Historic England. Successful partnership working is critical.
7. Masterplanner prepares a draft plan for you to review and amend
8. Receive final draft masterplan
9. Arrange meetings with Local Councillor or Ward Councillor to discuss the Masterplan and understand their views on the proposals included within it, making any agreed amendments where necessary.
10. Undertake community and stakeholder consultation including further discussions with Historic England, ideally with a staffed onsite exhibition, workshops and the opportunity to provide comments over an extended period, ideally six weeks – minimum four weeks. Present the findings of the consultation in a Statement of Consultation. See link at Appendix 1 as an example.

11. Your Statement of Consultation should summarise the broad themes arising from consultation and how you have responded to those changes in the revised version of your emerging masterplan.
12. Masterplanner refines the draft plan in collaboration with you in light of comments received.
13. On completion of your draft masterplan, and following the advice of your LPA, this should be taken to your LPA's Planning Committee for ratification. It should also be taken to Historic England for their endorsement.
14. Your governing body adopts the final masterplan.

Pros

- ✓ Carries more weight than an 'unratified' masterplan.
- ✓ Relatively quick to produce.
- ✓ Relatively cheap to produce.
- ✓ Provides useful visualisations of proposed change on your estate.
- ✓ Represents a positive starting point in the process of managing change through planning.

Cons

- ✗ Vulnerable to political change.
- ✗ Holds little planning weight in the determination of planning and other applications.

Budget ££

Time 6 – 9 months

Lead Estate owner



A CGI of the forthcoming Centre of Excellence Heritage Quad looking into the new workshops.

Adopted masterplan types

To provide the greatest level of planning certainty, it will be necessary to align your masterplan proposals closely with the Adopted Local Plan policies and to secure approval of the masterplan by the LPA as a 'material consideration'. Options 3 to 5 are possible routes to achieve this.

These documents require a robust evidence base, are tested through public examination and once adopted, have the same planning weight as the Local Plan. Alternatively, where a new Local Plan is in production, you may choose to submit your masterplan proposals through a 'Call for Sites' or 'Reg 18' Local Plan consultation process, with the aim of securing a site allocation or supportive policy in the eventual new Local Plan.

Option 3: Supplementary Planning Document

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) build upon and provide more detailed guidance about policies in the Local Plan. Legally, they do not form part of the Local Plan itself, however they do constitute a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Note: At the time of writing the Government has consulted on amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework which could see SPDs replaced with a new type of planning document.

The development of a Supplementary Planning Document is ultimately led by the LPA. An estate owner may be able to work alongside an LPA to create and influence a Supplementary Planning Document which relates to their heritage estate, and provide funding to facilitate it.

Crucially, a Supplementary Planning Document cannot create new policies or deviate from the existing policies within the Local Plan. However, it can provide more detailed guidance and specific development management policies which can be used to guide development within an area.

National Planning Policy suggests that Supplementary Planning Documents can take the form of a design guides, development brief, masterplan or an issues-based document. This provides the opportunity for heritage estate owners/managers to identify design principles and guidance which reflect local character and which are consistent with principles set out in the new National Design Guide.

The geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription included within a Supplementary Planning Document should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change proposed for each place.

Steps to delivery

1. Liaise with the LPA to discuss your intent. You may wish to consider a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) to ensure sufficient officer time is dedicated to the project. There will be a fee associated with the PPA.
2. Develop the brief and appoint a masterplanner.
3. Gather an evidence base. For historic estates this should include a Conservation Management Plan or Statement of Significance to establish agreement on heritage significance; a sustainability or carbon audit should also now be provided.
4. Working closely with the LPA, and in consultation with Historic England, develop a draft SPD incorporating your masterplanning vision and development management policies in the context of existing Local Plan and National Planning Polices.
5. The SPD will be subject to consultation with the public and statutory bodies. Their comments should be taken into account.
6. Undertake community consultation, ideally with a staffed onsite exhibition, workshops and the opportunity to provide comments over an extended

period, ideally six weeks – minimum four weeks. Present the findings of the consultation in Statement of Consultation. See link at Appendix 2 as an example.

7. Your Statement of Consultation should summarise the broad themes arising from consultation and how you have responded to those changes in the revised version of your emerging masterplan.
8. With LPA officers amend the draft SPD and take it to the LPA’s executive for formal adoption.

Pros	
✓	The SPD will carry weight in the determination of any planning application.
✓	Provides specific design and planning guidance which can be used to direct and manage development across an estate.
✓	Benefits from extensive public and stakeholder consultation.
Cons	
✗	Requires an adopted primary policy framework (e.g. Local Plan).
✗	Process ultimately led by the LPA, so less control over process and outcomes.
✗	Relatively lengthy process.
Budget	£££ (incl costs of a Planning Performance Agreement)
Time	18 - 24 months
Lead	LPA with estate owner input

Option 4: Area Action Plan

Area Action Plans (AAPs) form part of a suite of documents which sits alongside the adopted Local Plan and focus on a specific location or an area subject to conservation or significant change, in line with policies in the Local Plan (or equivalent Primary Policy Framework). Unlike an SPD, Area Action Plans can also allocate sites for development, providing certainty to developers and the community. Ultimately, an Area Action Plan will become part of the local development framework and have the remit to create new planning policies to guide development proposals, along with detail of how these proposals will be delivered. Area Action Plans are afforded weight in the determination of any planning application.

Area Action Plans are often utilised to guide positive new development in historic areas and places where new policy is required.

Steps to delivery

1. Work with LPA to develop a brief and appoint a consultant team.
2. Gather an evidence base. For historic estates this should include a Conservation Management Plan or Statement of Significance to establish agreement on heritage significance; a sustainability or carbon audit should also now be provided.
3. Develop initial masterplan options for exploration with stakeholders and the community. Early hands-on planning workshops to develop masterplan concepts.
4. Publish 'Issues and Options' for consultation, to seek the views of stakeholders on the issues and options for the future development of the area that will inform the Preferred Options stage. Typically, this stage seeks views on the baseline findings and emerging planning policies.

5. Publish 'Preferred Options'. As the name suggests, the 'Preferred Options' document will set out the LPA's preferred way forward for the area, including the draft masterplan and headline planning policies.
6. Following consideration of responses to this consultation, prepare the 'Submission Document' incorporating the draft final masterplan proposals and planning policies, and supporting technical evidence base. This will be submitted to the Secretary of State.
7. The final stage is the independent examination of the submitted document. The purpose of this is to consider the soundness of the AAP and representations. A Planning Inspector will be appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to conduct the examination.
8. The Planning Inspector will produce a binding report that sets out the final version of the AAP. Following amendments to the AAP, it will then be adopted by the Council and incorporated in the Local Development Framework.

Pros

- ✓ Carries significant weight in the planning process and can be used to direct change and growth in Heritage Estates.
- ✓ Unlike an SPD, an AAP can make new policy.
- ✓ Once adopted, is less influenced by changes in local politics.
- ✓ Directs change through policies and a masterplan which represents a clear long-term vision for the estate.
- ✓ An AAP can be developed to relate to large or small estates.
- ✓ Shows a commitment to delivery and provides confidence for funding partners.
- ✓ Involves the community from the outset leading to buy-in and ownership.

Cons

- ✗ An AAP will be led by your LPA so there must be appetite at a corporate/governance level to invest the time needed to create the document.
- ✗ The process is quite lengthy and onerous.

Budget ££££ (incl costs of a Planning Performance Agreement. Grant funding is available)

Time 18 - 24 months

Lead LPA with estate owner input

Option 5: Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Planning was introduced by the 2011 Localism Act which ultimately seeks to put communities in control of planning decisions in their local area, thus providing invaluable opportunities to effect change at the local level. A Neighbourhood Plan puts into place planning policy for a neighbourhood area to guide future development. A Neighbourhood Plan is about the use and development of land and may contain a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities. Like Area Action Plans, Neighbourhood Plans can also allocate sites for development.

A Neighbourhood Plan, when formally 'made' will become part of the Local Development Framework, ultimately being afforded significant weight in the determination of any planning application within the 'neighbourhood area' to which the Plan relates.

The process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan is specified by National Policy, which requires that a Neighbourhood Plan must meet certain specific 'basic conditions' which ensure plans contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, have regard to national policy and guidance and are in general conformity with adopted strategic local planning policies.

The development of a Neighbourhood Plan must include robust public engagement and the content of a Neighbourhood Plan must be based upon proportionate evidence.

As with AAPs, a Neighbourhood Plan must be submitted for Independent Examination before it can be formally 'made'. This ensures that the Plan is robust and is a source of confidence for funding partners. However, unlike AAP the Neighbourhood Plan is subject to a local referendum before it can be adopted.

This is explored in more detail in the next chapter, through the experience of preparing the York Minster Precinct Neighbourhood Plan.

Steps to delivery

1. Establish a Neighbourhood Forum to lead the preparation of the plan.
2. Liaise with the LPA to receive a neighbourhood area designation.
3. Develop a brief and appoint masterplanner.
4. Build an evidence base.
5. Consult the community and statutory stakeholders.
6. Draft the plan, ensuring that it meets the basic conditions.
7. Pre-submission consultation.
8. Submit the plan.
9. LPA will consult again upon the plan.
10. Independent examination by a Planning Inspector.
11. Referendum.
12. Adoption by the LPA as part of the Local Development Framework.

Pros

- ✓ Afforded significant weight in the determination of planning applications.
- ✓ Locally led.
- ✓ Gives significant confidence to funding partners.
- ✓ Lengthy public and stakeholder consultation during the emergence of the plan minimises risk at planning application stage.
- ✓ Presents the opportunity to create policies relating to the entirety of your estate, which provides a framework for change in the medium term.
- ✓ Can be utilised even when there is no primary policy framework in place.
- ✓ Funding pots are available to support the preparation process.

Cons

- ✗ Lengthy process and legal requirement to meet certain basic conditions before the plan can be made.
- ✗ Requires input from a range of technical disciplines to ensure that the plan is sound.

Budget ££-££££ depending on complexity (incl costs of a Planning Performance Agreement. Grant funding is available: £10,000 basic grant + technical support)

Time 36 months +

Lead Neighbourhood Forum



3.0 CASE STUDY

York Minster Precinct Neighbourhood Plan A Sustainable Future 2020 – 2035

Introduction

York Minster has worked collaboratively with key stakeholders, including City of York Council and the local community, to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. It sets out an ambitious masterplan to sustain and enhance the cultural significance and environmental value of York Minster's Precinct and buildings through specially created planning policy. Delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan signals the biggest programme of planned works at York Minster and within the Minster Precinct Neighbourhood Area in 150 years.

The Neighbourhood Plan is crucial in not only meeting the ongoing conservation challenges the Minster faces but ensuring the Minster and its Precinct continue to flourish for generations to come. Sustainability sits at the heart of its aims for the next 15 years, specifically around three core strands of environmental, financial and heritage craft.

Stage 1: Getting started

Identifying needs and appointing a team

In 2015, the Chapter of York adopted its Strategic Plan (2015 – 2020). The Plan - created in consultation with over 1,500 people (both internal and external) - set an ambition to create a detailed property strategy for the 7 ha Precinct and identified specific properties for alternative uses.

The Strategic Plan placed great emphasis on the role of the Precinct in generating additional income to support the mission of Chapter and care of the Minster fabric.

From the Strategic Plan, Chapter developed a project brief:

1. The need to develop a vision for the care of the Minster and Precinct for the next 20 years which would clearly articulate Chapter's objectives and embed the masterplan in local and national planning policy in order to de-risk planning applications as each project was implemented.
2. The need to set out proposals within a holistic masterplan for future development of the Precinct including 'parameter plans' for individual project areas to allow detailed planning applications to be brought forward in the future. Projects to be explored would include:
 - ✓ a new café
 - ✓ a new community building and chapter office space
 - ✓ a new ticket office
 - ✓ a new learning centre with dedicated exhibition space for the collection and library
3. The need to establish clear design parameters for public realm and buildings within the Precinct.
4. A requirement that the design and development parameters should provide sufficient flexibility for Chapter but offer clear guidelines for future development projects.
5. The need to create a defined Minster Precinct which is both welcoming and easy to navigate. The masterplan would identify key pedestrian routes with particular focus on how Dean's Park and College Green could be better used.

6. The need to establish priorities for creating a sustainable future for the Minster which reduces its carbon footprint and operating costs.
7. The need for consultation with the local community and Precinct residents and businesses, the City Council, Historic England, Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England and the Minster's Fabric Advisory Committee.

The brief formed the basis for agreeing a project budget and appointing masterplanning professionals to support Chapter in preparing the masterplan. A limited competition was held by invitation to selected firms. Shortlisted practices were subject to an interview by staff and members of Chapter and the FAC.

Identifying the right masterplan option

Chapter wanted the masterplan to provide planning certainty and therefore needed an 'adopted' masterplan. However, because City of York Council had not got an adopted Local Plan, an SPD or AAP led by the Council were not options available to Chapter. Therefore, Chapter decided to use the Localism Act to create a Neighbourhood Plan containing its own suite of bespoke planning policies against which it could deliver significant change within its Precinct. This would be a national first.

Establishing a Neighbourhood Forum and plan area

In a location like the Minster Precinct that does not have a town or parish council, or that is being carved out of a wider ward, a Neighbourhood Forum must be established to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. Once established, the Forum is the legal qualifying body for Plan production. The process of establishing the Forum must meet the legislative requirements of the 2012 Neighbourhood Plan Regulations to allow the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to legally designate the Forum as the qualifying body.

This may seem an onerous task, but it proved relatively straightforward. The process was led by Chapter in consultation with the local community (immediate neighbours, members of staff and local businesses) through a series of presentations and workshops.

The boundary of the Forum area must also be established. At York, we were able to use the boundary of the Minster Precinct previously established in the draft Local Plan. Your LPA will be able to advise you if they have not already defined the Close or Precinct in planning policy.

Armed with support and boundary, at the Forum's founding AGM a constitution was established, the executive members nominated and a formal decision made to apply to City of York Council for Forum/Area designation. We also adopted our vision as a basis for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

We were then able to make concurrent applications to the LPA to agree the boundary and have the Forum designated as the qualifying body. Our application forms are linked as Appendix 2 as a suggested format to follow.

The boundary of the neighbourhood area of the Plan is important because it designates not just the area in which the adopted Plan policies will be applied, but also the area from which Neighbourhood Forum members must be drawn. As a result, the neighbourhood area map must be attached to the Forum constitution in order to provide clarity on whether individuals and organisations (including businesses) are eligible for membership of the Forum.

Further, the boundary defines the area from which residents who have registered to vote can participate in the final referendum. Gaining their support for the Forum's work is vital to a positive referendum result. This places great importance on wide-ranging and careful consultation throughout the development of the Plan with the greatest number of people and institutions to minimise the likelihood of surprise objections at the later stages of the process.

Successful plan making is a partnership

Before we began the process of developing our Plan, we first met with City of York Council's Head of Planning and Senior Conservation Officer, as well as a representative from Historic England. Partnership working is the key to the success for your Plan. At York, we entered into a formal Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the City Council to ensure dedicated officer time. For the same reason, we also entered into an extended pre-app with Historic England. Early presentations were given to York Civic Trust, York Fabric Advisory Committee and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England. We also met our Ward Members, Leader of the Council and the portfolio holder for planning. We briefed our MP and wrote to the amenity societies.

Important matters to consider

Basic condition test: Neighbourhood Plans must meet certain 'basic conditions' before they can come into force. These are tested through the independent examination, before a neighbourhood plan may proceed to referendum. These are:

- have regard to national policy
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area
- compatible with Environment Act 2021

We also included conformity with the United Nations Sustainability Goals which are increasingly being used as an international test for sustainability. We recommend your Plan makes reference to this.



Stage 2: Consultation on Issues & Options

Now that you are up and running with a Forum, a neighbourhood area and strong stakeholder partnerships, the next stage is set out your brief to the public and statutory bodies, known as 'Issues and Options':

- What are the issues you are facing and what do you need to address?
- What are the limitations of your estate and where could there be opportunities?
- Where might there be potential for change?
- What security issues might you need to address?

You might like to invite your local community to put forward their own ideas

You need a consultation plan setting out who you need to consult, when you will engage with the press, how you will advertise the consultation, details of any public exhibition – when/where. A successful consultation strategy helps to create a sense of community ownership and acceptance – essential at the referendum vote.

Consultation should last for a minimum of 6 weeks. Our consultation started with an exhibition in a marquee outside the Minster where members of the public could drop in, look at information and ask questions of the masterplanning team. The exhibition had been published in the local press and on BBC Radio York. We encouraged everyone who visited the exhibition to complete a questionnaire so we could record answers and draw out principal themes from the feedback we received. During the consultation period, we met local community groups and offered walking tours of the Precinct to discuss areas of change.

It was very important to us that as many people in the city as possible could engage in the consultation so we hosted the exhibition online and used Survey Monkey for the online questionnaire (this had the added benefit that replies could be directly downloaded into Microsoft Excel). We also displayed the exhibition boards in the Precinct and inside the Minster with QR codes that took members of the public directly to our dedicated website and consultation survey.

For us, this consultation was vital to steering some fundamental concepts that were emerging in the Plan. For example, we had initially envisaged Dean's Park, tucked away on the north side of the Minster, becoming the focus of more activity and facilities, but overwhelmingly locals told that they valued the tranquillity of this quiet city-centre green space. So later iterations of the Plan shifted facilities such as a new refectory to the busier south side.

Your Statement of Consultation

When you ultimately submit your Neighbourhood Plan for examination, you are required to submit a Consultation Statement meeting the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012. This document should provide a summary of the whole consultation process from beginning to end (including Forum meetings), as well as a summary of the issues raised and how you responded. It should demonstrate how consultation has helped to shape the emerging Plan.

Solid public consultation from the very start of the process is fundamental to the success of your Plan. We cannot stress strongly enough the importance of engaging with your local community and key stakeholders!

Stage 3: Drafting the Plan

The results of your Issues and Options consultation should really help to inform your first iteration of the Plan. We worked in collaboration with our masterplanning consultants to draw out options for how the buildings and spaces within the Precinct could be used to deliver our vision. It was helpful to have a fresh perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of the Precinct, and together we identified areas which had potential to be used more effectively through new development, alternative uses, and improvements to the public realm and green spaces of the Precinct.

The process revealed the importance of considering how the Minster relates to its wider city setting: visitor arrival routes informed the location of our new welcome and refectory facilities, and the Centre of Excellence will be showcased to visitors looking into the Precinct from the City Walls above.

Having debated these with our team and settled on a preferred spatial plan, we then set about drafting our Plan according to this structure:

Preface:

We used the preface to remind the reader of the strong commitment to partnership working and our commitment to consultation to ensure as many people as possible had an opportunity to help shape the Plan. Here we set out the Forum's vision for the 15 year plan:

"In 2035, York Minster Precinct continues to be a welcoming and special place loved and used by the local community and visitors from around the world. It is acknowledged as a lynchpin in the cultural identity and daily life of the City of York and reaches out to engage the community in discovering God's love".

Introduction:

Here we set out the purpose of the Plan, its status and what we needed it to achieve.

Policy Context:

This section set out the legislation and local and national policy against which the Plan was developed.

The Minster Precinct in context:

This is an overview of the Neighbourhood Plan area and provided the context for its Policies. It also established some of the important data sets for the area - social, economic and environmental. These were derived from an evidence base that included a revision of the Minster's Conservation Management Plan, ecological surveys and so on.

Preparing the Plan:

This mapped the evolution of the draft Plan and was updated throughout the Plan process. It helped stakeholders to see previous iterations and track the development of the Plan. We revised it after each iteration of the document and this in turn informed the final Statement of Consultation.

Vision and objectives:

Here we set out a vision and objectives that informed and underpinned all Policies.

Policies:

The most important chapter. These Policies are now used to determine all relevant planning applications and carry significant weight. Working closely with City of York Council and Historic England, we spent time drafting the Policies to ensure they provided a very clear indication of how a decision maker should determine future development proposals. We also provided supporting text to explain how each Policy should be read.

The policies of your Plan will carry significant weight in the determination of all future planning applications in the plan area in accordance with English planning law. It is therefore very important that they unambiguous, or they

will cause confusion and uncertainty in the future. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance states that *"A policy in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and unambiguous. It should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared."*

The golden rule is that your Policies should be clear, precise, positive, relevant and capable of being delivered. They also need to be evidence based.

Project Areas:

We used this section of our Plan to set out the spatial detail for the delivery of the vision in four areas of the Precinct. This part of the document has been highly important in developing the vision into working planning drawings for submission to the LPA because it contains 'Parameter Plans' that set out the spatial parameters for development in the project areas. By the nature of the Precinct, these are highly sensitive locations. Two, for example about the City's Roman and Medieval walls. The Parameter Plans are essential to the provision of the all-important planning certainty for capital projects that are vital to the future Mission, care and financial sustainability of the Minster.

Non-planning matters

During the process of preparing your Plan, you may find matters crop up that can't be addressed by the planning policies in the Plan. These might include things like fund raising and traffic management. At York, we wrote a series of 'community actions' into the Plan to pick these up, such as one for a cycling and pedestrian strategy that was drafted to give us the mandate to work collaboratively with the City Council and the Highway Authority to address conflicts in the Precinct between pedestrians and cyclists.

Stage 4: Submission Draft

Neighbourhood planning regulations ('Regulation 14') require the draft Neighbourhood Plan proposal to be the subject of a pre-submission consultation before it is submitted to the local authority for independent examination. The consultation should last at least 6 weeks. The neighbourhood planning forum will need to approve the consultation draft of the Plan and the Regulation 14 consultation.

As with each stage, we consulted with the City Council and Historic England to confirm there were no concerns with the draft and supporting evidence base. Ahead of launching the public consultation we met with key stakeholders, gave presentations and arranged interviews with the press and broadcast. The submission draft plan was summarised in a series of consultation boards to allow people to engage in the process without having to read the detail of the document if they didn't wish to.

At the end of the consultation period, our Statement of Consultation was updated to address issues and concerns raised; where we had discounted comments, we explained why this was the case.

A full meeting of the York Minster Precinct Neighbourhood Forum was then called ahead of submission to the LPA to seek permission to submit the Submission Draft Plan for examination.

Stage 5: Statutory consultation

After submission of the Plan to the City of York Council, the Council publicised the Plan ('Regulation 16') and arranged for an independent examination of the draft Plan to take place. City of York Council invited representations from the public and statutory stakeholders to be made through a statutory consultation process that they as the LPA ran for 6 weeks. These were submitted directly to the appointed Independent Examiner.

Stage 6: Examination

The appointed Examiner notified us that he intended to carry out the examination by way of written representations and a site visit. In cases where representations from the public and statutory stakeholders are more contentious, the Examiner may request an informal hearing.

On receipt of the Examiner's Report, the LPA will review the recommendations set out. If the Examiner suggests major modifications to the Submission Draft Plan then you will need to return to the submission stage, make the necessary amendments, consult under Regulation 14 and then re-submit to your LPA. This would be a worse-case scenario and can be easily avoided with strong partnership working with your LPA and solid consultation at the early stages of the process.

At York, the Examiner recommended only minor modifications and also a wider referendum area, because of the substantial impact of the Plan's proposals beyond the Plan area, and the status of York Minster in the city. The Neighbourhood Forum was happy to accept these changes and, on this basis, City of York Council found that, subject to the modifications being made, the Neighbourhood Plan met the requirements of paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and was compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Plan could now proceed to referendum.

Stage 7: Referendum and adoption

The referendum was arranged by City of York Council. The LPA is required to publish information about the Neighbourhood Plan 28 working days before the date of the referendum. Then, 25 working days before the date of the referendum, they are required to give notice that a referendum is taking place and the date of the poll.

The referendum question that was asked was: *Do you want City of York Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Minster Precinct to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?*

People on the electoral register within the defined Neighbourhood Plan area were entitled to vote. If more than 50% of the turnout vote 'yes', then the Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the Development Plan for area.

In York, 83% voted in favour of the Plan and it was adopted by City of York Council in 16th June 2022. It now forms part of the Development Plan for the City and carries significant weight in the determination of all planning applications with the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Results

Since its adoption, the York Minster Precinct Neighbourhood Plan has supported 8 major planning consents in the Precinct. Some of the projects include a statue of the Late Queen (the first part of a wider public realm scheme), our Centre of Excellence for Heritage Craft Skills & Estate Management, the first solar tiles on a listed building in the Precinct, two new parks and 199 solar panels on the Quire roof of York Minster.

Four years in the making – including a hiatus due to the Covid pandemic - the Neighbourhood Plan has already more than justified Chapter's investment, by nurturing community support, helping to secure funding and providing planning policy certainty for major projects that may easily have failed without it.

Appendix 1: Statement of Community Involvement

[york.gov.uk/downloads/file/6670/york-minster-precinct-neighbourhood-plan-statement-of-community-involvement](https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/6670/york-minster-precinct-neighbourhood-plan-statement-of-community-involvement)

Appendix 2: Neighbourhood Forum application

<https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/1290/minster-precinct-neighbourhood-plan-application-b-forum-application>

4.0 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Policy Advice

National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>)

Neighbourhood planning - GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>)

THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>)

York Minster Precinct Neighbourhood Plan (all documents)

<https://www.york.gov.uk/planning-policy/minster-precinct-neighbourhood-plan/1>

York Minster Centre of Excellence Resource

<https://yorkminster.org/discover/centre-of-excellence-for-heritage-craft-skills-and-estate-management/>



His Majesty The King officially opens the York Minster Refectory following Royal Maundy at York. 6th April 2023.

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At York Minster we have supported the Dean and Chapter over many years to plan and manage change within their estate. Projects include the Precinct Neighbourhood Plan, Conservation Management Plan and Net Zero Strategy.

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