

York Museums Trust

Forward Plan 2012-18

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Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives

Our Vision is for York Museums Trust to play a major part in positioning York as a world class cultural centre

Our Mission is to cherish and enhance the collections, buildings and gardens entrusted to us, presenting and interpreting them as a stimulus for learning, a provocation to curiosity and a source of inspiration and enjoyment for all

Strategic Objectives

- To protect and conserve the collections, gardens and buildings
- To promote access to the collections, gardens and buildings appropriate to the 21st century
- To attract more visitors to our sites, thus contributing to the local and regional economy
- To create learning opportunities for all and develop innovative programmes springing from the collections, gardens and buildings
- To network and collaborate with partners and contribute to the development of the economic and cultural life of the city and the region
- To raise substantial funds to realise these aims

Introduction

York Museums Trust was established in 2002 by City of York Council to run the accredited museums and galleries, housed in listed buildings and located in scheduled ancient monument sites, previously managed by the Council.

The five sites are: York Castle Museum, Yorkshire Museum, York Art Gallery, York St Mary's and the Museum Gardens.

York Museums Trust has had a very successful 10 years with an increasingly stable financial base and much improved museums with growing audiences and expanding public programmes. Successes have included the £2m redevelopment of the Yorkshire Museum, a 67% increase in visitor numbers across our sites, an award winning learning service and an expanding volunteer scheme.

We have invested several millions in the buildings and award winning displays, and currently have 660,000 visitors per annum across the museums and galleries with an additional c1.2m visits per year to Museum Gardens. We also have built up unrestricted reserves of c. £700,000.

We are considered one of the most successful independent charitable trusts to run museums in the UK museums sector demonstrated by our successful bid to become one of Arts Council England's 16 Major Partner Museums and to take on the responsibility of Museum Development for Yorkshire and the Humber.

We see 2012–2018 as a time to build on this success.

Our future plans include significant enhancements of the public realm through major capital works and we anticipate delivering a much broader and deeper programme of public engagement both in York and regionally throughout Yorkshire and the Humber.

From 2012-2015 we will have stable funding from City of York Council at £3.9m, as well as £3.6m from the Arts Council England through the Major Partner Museums fund, plus around £7.5m income coming from admission charges, Gift Aid and profits on commercial business. In addition, we will continue to fundraise for specific projects and capital investments.

Unrestricted Income 2012-18

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
ACE	£830,000	£1,370,000	£1,406,000			
CYC	£1.5m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m
Admissions	£2m	£2m	£2.3m			
Enterprises Income	£809,000	£947,000	£966,000			
Gift Aid Income	£282,000	£297,000	£340,000			

(not including other sources of income e.g. project specific funding, donations, membership, legacies,)

Until 2015-16 we forecast significant growth in revenue income. Beyond that date, although it is not itemised above, the plan assumes that overall revenue income will stabilise. We anticipate applying again to the Arts Council England for Major Partner Museums funding for a further 3 years from 2015.

This plan sets out York Museums Trust's main ambitions and actions for 2012-18. As might be expected, the plan sets out the earlier years in more detail. It is anticipated that this document will be supplemented with business plans covering shorter timeframes in future years.

Challenges and Opportunities

Central to our work has been partnership working especially with the Yorkshire Hub museums and the National Museums. The Tate was a key partner with Art in Yorkshire and we hope to work again with them in the future. The British Museum is a formal partner and we will work with them for developing loans and expertise especially in archaeology. We are planning a new partnership with the Imperial War Museum with the 1914-1918 World War I commemorations. The biggest change in our partnerships will be with the regional museums in Yorkshire through the Museum Development team.

We will continue to work on the same successful business model that has served us well over the last ten years but we are aware of changing demographics and the economic climate.

Admission sales remain crucial to our success so continued investment in the buildings and the public programmes are crucial to maintaining, and growing the interest of, our visitors.

We are also dependent on York continuing to attract tourists to ensure our market share. We will therefore continue to work beyond our core business on projects that promote York and the region. We also think that we should try, as a city, to attract more cultural tourists through improving the quality of the heritage and arts offers in the city. We will ensure that we are part of the discussions in the city that will determine the policy of tourism and culture.

We also need to continue to excel at meeting the aims and objectives of our two major funders in order to keep their support.

We will also need to agree what are our ambitions for growing the business as in this period of change there might well be opportunities to manage other sites and organisations. They could either help us to expand our reach and be more sustainable, or weaken our core business. We will need to keep fresh eyes on opportunities but will proceed with due caution as our perspective must always be on the long term success of York Museums Trust.

There will be some changes to our business practice to develop new income streams which include:

- Potential to charge for special exhibitions at the newly developed York Art Gallery to underwrite some of the costs of mounting expensive exhibitions
- Continuing to invest in public content and marketing at York Castle Museum
- Launching a membership scheme
- Encouraging private giving through legacies
- Improving the quality and originality of retail products
- Partnership working in terms of new exhibitions, public programmes including events, performances to spread the risk and cost.

At the foremost of our minds are:

- The general economic situation that will impact on our ability to raise funding for our capital projects
- People's priorities and spending habits are changing
- The regional remit of York Museums Trust will inevitably change our focus and activities
- York Museums Trust will have a number of major capital projects happening concurrently over the next three years which will put a strain on our staff and resources

Given this situation we will need to have the right people in place with sufficient resources and support. We are confident that we have the skills and energy to deliver this Forward Plan 2012-18.

Capital Projects

The coming years will be a time of significant capital investment in York Museums Trust. Our activities during this planning period include several key projects, at various stages of development:

2013–2014

Castle Museum Changing Spaces

This is a £2 million project currently being developed involving mainly the 1st and 2nd floors of the Debtors Prison seeing new public display areas on the 1st floor beginning with a changing display about World War 1. This will continue until 2018 with changing content according to the anniversaries of the war and societal change.

The development will also see new offices, meeting rooms, secure stores and learning spaces on the 2nd floor with improved public access to both floors with the addition of a new lift.

Creating major new public offers at York Castle Museum continues to be an important part of our strategy for financial sustainability.

This project is expected to be funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£1.5m), £250,000 from Arts Council England with £250,000 match funding to be secured from other sources.

2013–2015

York Art Gallery Development

This is a major capital project costing £8 million involving the whole of the footprint of the existing 19th century grade 2* listed building. This includes the space currently occupied by York City Archives and the hidden space above the Main Gallery which we call the Secret Gallery.

The project will create:

- A 60% larger exhibition space enabling more of the permanent collection to be on display
- the Centre of British Studio Ceramics
- a suite of three interlinked exhibition galleries on the ground floor
- a new and larger learning space
- a new shop, café, and extra toilets
- a new garden entrance and balcony

The project is due to start in January 2013 and York Art Gallery will reopen in early 2015.

2013–2015

Exhibition Square

As the public space in front of the gallery, Exhibition Square is extremely important to the repositioning of York Art Gallery when it reopens in 2015. The major works on the capital development of the gallery are largely internal so there is no real sign of change from the front view, consequently a newly designed Exhibition Square will be a necessary signal of the change.

Exhibition Square is the responsibility of the City of York Council. York Museums Trust will discuss a coordinated plan with all the main stakeholders to make this a truly wonderful public square by 2015.

York Museums Trust plans to play the role of partner and catalyst; the project would have to be funded through resources other than our own.

2013–2015

Museum Gardens

The Museum Gardens project involves extending the gardens to include York Art Gallery thereby increasing the overall size of the gardens by 20%. We will develop a master plan drawing on the expertise of our Garden Manager with contributions from a variety of experts and stakeholders. The master plan will be steadily rolled out between 2012–2018, funded in the early years through the Major Partner Museum funding. This new development of greening the city has been an ambition of York Museums Trust for several years.

The ambition includes becoming a nationally recognised botanic garden with its own distinctive character. The gardens will be an extension to the cultural life of the city, a recreational green space, accessible for all.

2015-2018

Castle Area

Castle Area is a very important project for York's developing tourism message. We are currently working with English Heritage on ideas to position the Castle Area as a major tourist destination featuring Clifford's Tower and the medieval castle remains in the Castle Museum. With the future development plans for the Castle Piccadilly Area forthcoming it is important that we make a statement about the importance of the heritage and its tourism potential so we can feed our ambitions and plans into the planning process.

However, we will start to articulate the public understanding of the Castle Area with more interpretation and public activity outside the Castle Museum and Clifford's Tower. York Museums Trust will lead on consulting with stakeholders and developing a master plan for the area.

Capital Programme Outcomes

By 2018 we will have:

- Repositioned the developed York Art Gallery as a leading regional gallery and Centre for British Studio Ceramics after an investment of £8million
- Enlarged Museum Gardens, extending the green spaces in the city, created new botanical gardens and contribute more to the cultural life of the city with increased connectivity to the historic city
- Created a European quality Exhibition Square in partnership with stakeholders
- Developed the Debtors Prison half of Castle Museum
- Developed the Castle Area as a tourist destination including a new Castle Piazza with Partners

Public Programme

York Museums Trust promotes its museums and collections through a varied range of activities including exhibitions, displays, community projects, volunteer schemes, formal learning for schools, informal activities for families and adult learning.

Yorkshire Museum

We are planning the following major exhibitions and projects:

2013–2016, Yorkshire’s Prehistory

This is a three year extensive research project about the rediscovery of Yorkshire’s earliest prehistory.

Three distinct periods are firstly Star Carr, a Mesolithic site which contains evidence of some of the earliest hunters and gathers in Europe; secondly, Bronze Age ‘landscapes of the dead’ on the North York Moors; and thirdly, Arras cultures from the Yorkshire Wolds and North York Moors, featuring Iron Age continental cultures and chariot burials.

Partners include the British Museum, North York Moors National Park, English Heritage, English Nature, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and University of York.

2014–2016, Sea Dragons

A major exhibition will be the outcome of a joint research project with Scarborough Museums Trust, the Natural History Museum and other local museums opening in 2016, focussing on the sea creatures from the Jurassic period, centering on important fossils such as York’s Ichthyosaur.

2016 -2018, Alcuin and the Anglians

Anglian York (Eoforwic) was a seat of royal power, religious importance and European learning. King Edwin of Northumbria, whose kingdom stretched from Carlisle to the Humber was baptised here in AD 627. By AD 866 the city was renowned throughout Western Europe for learning and scholarship. Alcuin, York’s great scholar and teacher, became Charlemagne the Holy Roman Emperor’s right hand man at his court at Aachen. He made York and the library he established here famous throughout Europe until, as he

commented at Lindisfarne, “heathens desecrated God's sanctuaries”. This was Alcuin’s description of the arrival of the Vikings.

Sandwiched in time between the now renowned cities of Eboracum and Jorvik, Eoforwic is often overlooked. This exhibition aims to illuminate the glory of Eoforwic on a European stage.

York Art Gallery

2013 -2014, York Art Gallery Interim Programme

With York Art Gallery closing for the capital project from 2013 to 2015, we will be arranging an interim programme which will take place in York St Mary's and in other galleries regionally and nationally. We will organise a touring exhibition of about 40 of our most important paintings which will tour across Yorkshire to 7 venues for the 2 years we are closed.

We will also lend a substantial amount of the WA Ismay collection of British Studio Pottery to the Hepworth as Ismay came from Wakefield. We will also be lending the Hepworth and Leeds Art Gallery some paintings for display as well as a few key paintings to Tate and the National Gallery.

We are also considering a series of lectures by prominent people from the art world to be held at the Tempest Anderson Hall.

In addition we will also be fully using York St Mary's with an extended opening period from March to November 2013 with the following exhibitions:

- Aesthetica International contemporary art exhibition featuring 8 artists organised in partnership with Aesthetica magazine who are based in York.
- Julian Stair, an established ceramicist who will create an installation in York St Mary's in partnership with the University of Westminster
- Artists Rooms from Tate

We are currently researching the opening programme of exhibitions and displays for York Art Gallery when it reopens in 2015.

York Castle Museum

2014 – 2018, World War I

This will be the opening exhibition after the Castle Museum capital project. The content is currently being researched and will involve a large number of interest groups and local people. The exhibition will center on World War I dealing with both military and social history using individual histories from York people. It is intended to refresh and change the displays over the next five years until 2018.

The legacy of this project will be a suite of interlocking galleries that will be adaptable to a range of exhibitions in the years to come.

Museum Gardens

2012–2018

Over the next six years we will be working to develop the expanded Museum Gardens – see Capital projects. We will see the following initiatives:

2012

York Mystery Plays production in front of the Abbey ruins

Illuminating York held across the gardens including land behind York Art Gallery

2013

Interpretation of Museum Garden's hidden and visible including St Mary's Abbey

Opening up the Multangular Tower as a partnership youth project to develop skills

Garden Development plan for Museum Gardens agreed and delivered incrementally

2014

Garden Development Plan continues to be delivered

2015

New gardens behind York Art Gallery opened ready for launch of gallery

Working in Partnership with Funders

York Museums Trust has established strong partnerships across the educational and public service sector in York and the region. We deliver major public benefit by working in close partnership with our key funders, City of York Council and Arts Council England.

In the coming years we will ensure that our work supports our two major partners' strategic objectives as follows:

City of York Council Goal: Economic Growth

The importance of cultural tourism to economic development is now widely acknowledged. York Museums Trust's own economic contribution was demonstrated by the 2011 DC Research report which showed that spending by our visitors equates to nearly 200 full time equivalent jobs in York.

In the coming years we intend to invest significant sums to secure and grow our visitor numbers. This will secure jobs in York's economy.

City of York Council Goal: Improving the Civic Realm

York Museums Trust's investment over the course of this plan will focus on developing high-quality public spaces with high social value.

As well as our own direct investments in York Art Gallery, Museum Gardens and York Castle Museum, we will work with partners in the city to encourage improvements to the wider public realm, particularly around Exhibition Square and the York Castle area.

City of York Council Goal: International City

York Museums Trust has an ambition to work internationally. During the next five years we will develop partnerships that will take our collections and work into an international context. We are currently exploring a partnership with Bristol Museums and Galleries to develop a European Commission cultural project with international partners.

In addition we will be seeking partners to develop the art exhibitions for York Art Gallery. Again this is early in gestation. Some funding will be required to facilitate the networking and knowledge development that such partnerships require over a period of years.

By 2018 we will have:

- Increased our contribution to York's economic impact by increasing visitor numbers
- Improved the public realm through capital investment and imaginative interpretation schemes
- Developed active international partnerships to enhance our public programmes, raised our reputation within the museum sector in this country and in Europe and raised funding from the European Commission
- Catering more to the needs of our many overseas visitors including providing translations of exhibition information

Arts Council England Goal 1: Excellence is thriving and celebrated in museums

York Museums Trust is committed to developing the designated collections and their impact to ensure maximum public benefit. We will develop expertise and knowledge about the collections, working with individual experts and partnerships from regional and national museums, HE and FE institutions and other related cultural organisations. The new posts of Collections Facilitators will work with staff, volunteers and experts to enable access to collections and ensure that the research and information has a wider public benefit in the short and long term.

By 2018 we will have:

- Established active Arts and Humanities Research Council projects around British Studio Ceramics and Star Carr prehistoric landscapes, and undergraduate and postgraduate, and doctoral award projects with the Universities of York, York St John, Bristol, Exeter, Manchester Metropolitan and Hull
- Established the Digivols project involving virtual experts with online collections
- Developed our partnerships with the British Museum and the Natural History Museum further

Arts Council England Goal 2: More people experience and are inspired by museums

York Museums Trust will use its rich resources of historic sites, collections and buildings for the benefit of a wider public through sharing our collections with other museums both regionally and nationally through loans and touring exhibitions. We will interpret and open up the historic sites of York Castle and St Mary's Abbey, both physically and intellectually, to more people. We will also develop close links with hard to reach groups

and young adults.

We see the York Art Gallery Interim programme as a direct way of benefiting regional museums with a touring exhibition selected from the painting and ceramic collections during closure.

Art in Yorkshire directly benefits Yorkshire's public galleries through the marketing campaign and demonstrates York Museums Trust's strong commitment to leadership of the sector through collaborative projects.

We will work with other museums, libraries and cultural organisations to develop a regional marketing campaign and information platform to promote activities around the anniversary of World War I. York Museums Trust will take the lead for the sector and advocate for museums and other organisations as holders of the collective memory.

Our new project Genesis will build on the success of Precious Cargo. This project is primarily aimed at young people aged 16 to 24 and provides opportunities to work with experts on the collections in areas specifically relevant to the interests and aspirations of young people.

We will expand our York Art Gallery Territories programme, which is aimed at disadvantaged groups in the city, across all of York Museums Trust.

We will deliver a collections based project Your Story/England's Story at the Castle Museum exploring the links between local people and the museum collections.

We will continue to deliver our successful informal learning programme in the Studios at the Castle Museum and extend it to the Yorkshire Museum.

We will develop our family learning particularly Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics challenges linked to the exhibition programme.

We will increase the Volunteers scheme and extend the range of opportunities for volunteers, expanding the total number of them and the hours they work.

By 2018 we will have:

- Increased our visitor numbers from 660,000 to 900,000 per year across all sites
- We will have increased the number of volunteers by 100% active at any one time from 200 to 400 per year and the hours to 25,000 per year
- We will have benefitted the regional museums encouraging an increase in their visitor numbers as a result of our partnership projects

Arts Council England Goal 3: Museums are sustainable, resilient and innovative

York Museums Trust's financial success has been linked to consistent investment in the visitor offer added to effective marketing. Ticket income from York Castle Museum and the Yorkshire Museum is now the single most important source of income and incremental reinvestment in the displays and is the key to our continued sustainability.

As mentioned above, the new exhibition at York Castle Museum on World War I will open in 2014 and run with refreshed displays until 2018.

The investment in York Art Gallery will also enable us to consider the opportunity to mount major exhibitions that we can charge admission to. This would give us the resource to be more ambitious in our exhibition planning and raise our profile.

The expanded Museum Gardens will give us opportunities for catering, hospitality and events that will raise income and raise profile whilst adding to York's cultural profile.

Investment in new researched displays at Yorkshire Museum will increase admission numbers as well as positioning it as a research resource for universities.

The new membership scheme will provide a regular and growing source of revenue, as well as a group of known supporters who can be nurtured.

Overall, our self-generated revenue income will have grown significantly.

Arts Council England Goal 4: The leadership and workforce in museums are diverse and highly skilled

York Museums Trust does not have any Arts Council England funding associated with this goal but we can demonstrate that we are active in the region through collaborative projects which taken together show that 20% of York Museum's Trust's income will be spent on activity outside York.

We intend to set up a Subject Specialist Network on British Studio Ceramics because of the new Centre at York Art Gallery and offer opportunities to get involved in our projects such as Pocket Money.

We are also interested in skills development in the sector and will set up and broker our *On the Job* project which aims to provide opportunities for people working in museums and galleries to become involved in specific real projects being undertaken by other museums. For example, museums setting up a new shop, creating a store, a new display, or app, would invite colleagues to join the team working on the project. Projects offering this service would be brokered through the Museum Development system. The project is aimed particularly at small and independent museums where staff has very limited time and resources for training. We would also envisage our staff broadening their skills and experience by learning from our regional partners.

Good customer care is crucial to successful museums. We will lead the sector on a regional Front of House development project called *Up Front* bringing together a project group to devise a training programme.

By 2018:

- Sector better networked and used to working on collaborative projects
- Sector more confident and skilled in wider areas of work
- Customer care improved across participating museums

Arts Council England Goal 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of museums

This is a large part of our work involving both formal and informal learning for children and young adults. We are constantly developing extensive formal learning opportunities delivered on all subjects across all sites working across all ages from Under 5's to two new career development opportunities for young people hoping to start work in the cultural and creative sector

By 2018:

- We will be increase the number of children and young people we work with by 25%

Business as Usual 2012 -2018

2012–2018 will also see the development and improvement of the work of a number of key functions in York Museums Trust not specifically mentioned above including: front of house and customer service, finance, retail, marketing, HR, conference and weddings, learning and volunteers. We already have a number of specific planning documents in place to which we are working and several more in preparation. A list of these is appended to the Forward Plan.

In this time of economic recession with restrictions on creating new jobs we must ensure that young people are not excluded. We will create opportunities to engage them in real opportunities for young people to learn the skills for working in the arts, tourism and heritage sectors.

We will also continue to work with our many partners on specific projects across the Trust including Tate, the British Museum, University of York, York Theatre Royal, whilst also forging exciting new partnerships, such as with the Imperial War Museum.

Focus on People

Over the last ten years the organisational structure of York Museums Trust has changed considerably. We see that the organisation will need to continue to change shape with new skills being required to remain effective in the current times and the developing abilities and experience of the staff needing to be recognised. The senior team has been remarkably stable for a decade but inevitably there will be changes in personnel. Succession planning will be a central task over the next 2–5 years.

The capital projects, temporary site closures and new exhibitions and public programmes will provide an exciting opportunity for a fresh approach to customer service. Customer focus will be the mainstay of our business and we will make sure that this is at the centre of our training and staff development plan. We will focus on the 'the customer journey' rather than 'customer service' and to follow the path of the customer.

We would aim to be a sector leader in delivering excellent customer service and enable other museums to achieve the same through the Museum Development Fund. We see this in the wider context of staff and volunteer development across all the diverse roles we have in our teams from front of house to technical and senior management. As a first phase we will concentrate on the front of house staff.

The initiatives, also mentioned above, are as follows:

The *Up Front* project aims to develop the front of house staff extending the range and quality of work, ensuring a consistently high customer service and job satisfaction. We will use a variety of delivery including external trainers and consultants who will train our staff to deliver the training in house.

On the Job will offer opportunities through the Museum Development Fund for staff from small and independent museums to develop their experience and professional skills by becoming involved in projects being undertaken by other museums.

We will double the number of volunteers working with us and devise skills development opportunities to keep engagement high and help us deliver an excellent 'customer journey'.

Collections Management

Collections are at the heart of our work. We know that we need to continue to develop the collections and improve all aspects of collection management. We will be making a number of improvements and developments including:

- New storage facilities for the social history collections
- A major re-evaluation and rationalization of our bulk archaeology post excavation holdings
- Improved collections IT and data support for staff and volunteers
- Be ready for the next round of accreditation

Digital

We recognise that digital content offers a major opportunity for our museums to deliver large parts of their work in increasingly innovative ways, to larger and more diverse audiences. Over the period of this plan we will ensure that all major elements of YMT's public programme will have a significant digital expression.

We will use existing platforms or build new ones to encourage creative interaction with content, e.g. through digital volunteering.

We will encourage the repeating, re-use and re-purposing of content across different platforms and media.

We will actively seek to promote and cross-promote the museums and the collections through these various digital outlets.

In support of these aims we will seek wherever possible to open up content through appropriate Creative Commons licensing.

We also recognise the need to increase the skill base within the organisation in order to make the most of these opportunities. To that end we will create a team dedicated to supporting our digital expansion. The team will work with existing staff and within the

existing programme. We will also explicitly seek digital skills through our broader recruitment process.

Governance

Effective governance is at the heart of York Museums Trust. We will continue to review our process of the recruitment of Trustees and the Chair regularly to ensure best practice. As a publicly funded body we will operate in an open and transparent way. We will aim for the Forward Plan 2012-2018, board minutes, policies and information on Trustees to be posted on the website, being available to everyone.

Janet Barnes
August 2012