

Museum Gardens
Plan:
A Garden for
York 2010 -
2015



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Introduction

Right at the heart of the city we have one of the biggest visitor attractions in the north of England attracting over 1.3m visitors and capable of attracting more: the Museum Gardens.

The potential of this space is enormous. Few cities have the opportunity to develop such an exciting horticultural and botanical space right in the centre of the city, especially one with an astounding historic and cultural content. At present the Museum Gardens are seen as an amenity for local people and visitors alike and, in the context of the Cultural Quarter, as a setting, venue and backdrop to the cultural life of the city. The various regional and city strategies do not specifically recognise the potential of the Museum Gardens.

Our relationship to the environment is one of the dominant issues society faces today. The Museum Gardens are a wonderful way to explore this relationship as well as addressing the interplay with the historic content and the cultural life of the city. We can harness the power of cultural involvement to generate further interest and engagement.

The Museum Garden needs gardening, nurturing, using, appreciating and celebrating.

York Museums Trust Vision and Mission

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 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.

York Museums Trust 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 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 as a world class cultural venue.
- To raise substantial funds to realise these aims.

We have additional strategic objectives for the Museum Gardens

- Promote the gardens as the 5th site in the York Museums Trust portfolio
- Enhance the visitor enjoyment of the gardens
- Realise the potential of the gardens as a garden
- Develop a plan to enhance the horticultural and botanical content with new specimens
- Develop the relationship between the Yorkshire Museum and York Art Gallery and the Gardens

Executive Summary

The Museum Gardens have, over the years, developed the identity of a city park with a loss of horticultural and botanical interest, a diminution of biological diversity, and an unfortunate reputation for being an unsafe place at certain times of the day. The historic archaeological remains are not interpreted in the garden. The gardens are in the top 10 tree collections in Yorkshire on the National Tree Register and are held up as exemplary by the City of York Council. The site is the most visited historic site in York with an estimated 1.3m people every year. The main reasons for visiting are largely concerned with amenity rather than the content and few visitors see them as a destination in their own right. The last two years have seen a big gear change in the commitment of YMT to the gardens and the resources being allocated to them. The strategic objectives for the gardens include promoting the gardens as the 5th site in the YMT portfolio, enhancing the visitor enjoyment of the gardens, raising awareness and realizing the potential of the gardens, and developing a plan to enhance the horticultural and botanical content.

As the 5th site for YMT the vision is for them to be a nationally recognised garden, a garden for York that is horticulturally distinctive and important with its own recognisable character. It will be a green delight, full of plants, an extension to the cultural life of the city, a recreation space, and a place for everyone, safe, clean and accessible for all. They will be an encouragement to wildlife, contribute to the wider environmental debate and play a role in the development of horticulture in the city. It will be a garden for the community offering learning opportunities for all

In the southern half of the gardens there will be a multi-layered approach to the new planting and design of the beds that will combine artistic flair, creative use of the archaeological features, botanical interest, intellectual rigour and long flowering periods.

The long term strategy is to unite the older southern sections of the garden with new gardens created behind York Art Gallery. In the longer term consideration will be given to working with partners to combine further open space areas into the garden.

York has a garden, but it needs gardening, nurturing, using, appreciating and celebrating. It should be a garden that people come from all over the country to see and enjoy and one that York can be truly proud of.

Policy Context

The plans for the Museum Gardens need to be developed in the context of the wider city, regional and national strategies. The relevant highlights from the important strategies can be found in the Appendix 2.

The garden strategy will fit with the broad thrust of all the significant regional and national strategies including the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy that emphasises the role open spaces play in the identity of the region. The policy of Natural, and their concern to advocate the importance of the natural environment, stresses the importance of involving more people in conservation and sustainability. It supports the City of York Without Walls plans for increasing green space and actively encouraging people to become more involved. It supports the recommendations from the City of York Open Space Sport and Recreation study. It also contributes to the

performance targets for the Local Area Agreement and finally the Partnership Delivery Plan between York Museums Trust and the City of York Council.

1. Environment

The gardens play an important part in maintaining the biodiversity of the centre of York. They form part of a chain of green open space that stretches across the city. They contain over 100 different tree species and varieties, and over 33 species of birds have been recorded in the gardens. This could be considerably improved.

They are a place for many local residents to experience and enjoy the natural environment. We have begun to provide opportunities for people to learn about the natural environment and gain new skills including adult learning for Natural Sciences, family science and wildlife events, and joining in with national natural history events such as the Big Garden Bird Watch.

2. Culture

The gardens are a vital component of the Cultural Quarter. They have provided a venue for a host of cultural events, including the Mystery Plays, sculpture exhibition, contemporary art installations, open air theatre, Illuminating York festival and space for the Grand Tour in York paintings. They are a very special location for cultural events as well as containing a huge permanent historical cultural offer. They are also used by many individuals and small groups for many cultural activities including sketching, reading, photography and music. The space is also particularly significant for young people who see the gardens as somewhere they can feel at home.



3. Historic Context

The gardens are a scheduled ancient monument as part of the medieval St Mary's Abbey. They are surrounded by Grade I and II listed buildings. The gardens' green spaces owe much of their existence to the protection offered to them by their archaeological status.

The Yorkshire Philosophical Society founded, created and managed the gardens for over 150 years. Today members still retain a great interest in the gardens and are keen to see them properly looked after and developed. Society members are also interested in the volunteering opportunities in the gardens and their educational potential. They have their offices in the Lodge at the Museum Street entrance.

4. Community

The gardens are the major green space and lung for those houses within a quarter of a mile of the gardens who do not have their own gardens and or who see the gardens as their communal garden space. The City open space report demonstrated the high value local residents put on the Museum Gardens particularly by young people.

They are also the venue for a number of important civic functions including the 8 Royal gun salutes and medal ceremonies for soldiers from the Yorkshire Regiment. The gardens are also used by hundreds of local workers as a fine weather lunch space.

A number of recent garden visitor surveys and studies have been undertaken, including:

- *People Changing Places*: City of York Council carried out this community consultation to find out what people think of York's outdoor spaces as they are now, and how they could look in the future. The results of the consultation will help to create a Public Realm Strategy for the city centre area. This is in collaboration with CABE (Council for Architecture and the Built Environment) and BEAM (public arts agency).
- *Institute for the Public Understanding of the Past (IPUP)*, based at University of York have been working on the public's perception of the historic content of gardens and how people would like to be informed about it.
- *Working Heritage* have undertaken surveys of local people and especially commuters on foot and how they understand and use the gardens.

All these surveys confirm that local people really value the Gardens, notice what is going on and are pleased with the horticultural developments so far. They all agree that the natural environment and the amenity and refreshment it offers are the most important element of the garden. They are under informed on the historic and natural content of the garden and would welcome information in suitable formats. Some people would like to be involved with the care of the gardens.

5. Urban Regeneration

The site to the rear of York Art Gallery is a prime site for further urban regeneration. The central location will mean it can play an important role in providing an improved cultural resource and contribute to the economic success of the city through an enhanced tourism offer. It is intended that this will connect to the existing Museum Gardens, extending the public realm and connectivity with the rest of the city.



6. Transport

The City of York Council's open space strategy identifies the need to maximise communication between and within parks through the effective development of footpaths, cycle routes and public transport. The gardens play a part in providing pedestrian routes and short cuts across the city.

7. Learning

The gardens provide only limited offers in the way of formal learning at present these include: pilot sensory trails developed in conjunction with York Art Gallery and an element for KS2 science workshop on minibeasts. Informal Learning has been much more active with major events based around York Observatory and the well attended and highly successful Wild Wednesdays that promote the Yorkshire Museum collections. The gardens provide a constant venue and inspiration for adult arts learning.

The gardens are the context, setting and supporting background to the Yorkshire Museum, City Explore Centre, York Observatory and York Art Gallery all of whom play a major role in providing exciting learning at the heart of the city. The development of the

gardens as a learning resource will fit with current thinking in education that support a cross curricular theme based approach to learning and the push towards extending learning beyond the classroom. These ideas are now echoed in proposed changes in the National Curriculum for primary school children. It could provide opportunity for secondary, HE and FE experience.



8. Recreation

The gardens do not play any significant role in formal recreation provision in the city. The bowling green is one of 22 greens in the city.

The single most important reason for visitors using the gardens is for relaxation and peace and quiet, including workers in the city over lunch time, and for families to informally relax and enjoy themselves. In the day time the

gardens are safe and are a major asset for parents with very young children needing space for them to run around. At twilight the gardens can be a venue for visitors who behave antisocially and illegally.

9. Play

The gardens already play a part in delivering the governments National Play Strategy offering safe, attractive, clean, spaces open everyday and free of charge to all local residents. The gardens are well used by families with young children as a safe clean play space for physical games; running, jumping, crawling, as well as exploring the natural world through play.

There is much that can be done to develop the potential of the gardens for play.

Site Description Assessment and Aims

1. Unification of the site

The extending of the garden to include the area behind York Art Gallery will reunify the Abbey precinct and open up the possibility of new routes into the centre of the city. It will help to define and unify the cultural quarter. It will give a proper context and setting to York Art Gallery.

Acknowledging the importance of different priorities and management, we should consider in the longer term how we can unite all the open spaces that form part of the natural whole including the Kings Manor, the Library and St Olaves Church.



2. Botanical

Assessment

Botanical status

Overall the botanical status of the gardens at present lies in the quality, quantity, rarity and variety of trees. The remaining areas (except the new planting) have had their botanical interest whittled away. The existing beds have a poor variety of species, with almost no interpretation or labelling.

Tree status

There are over 100 trees in the garden, the majority being mature with some truly magnificent specimens. The gardens are in the top 10 tree collections in Yorkshire on the National Tree Register. There are significant gaps in the succession planting and this will need to be addressed. There is a fine collection of specimens and a good selection of the Acer, Sorbus, Prunus family there is also a good number of evergreens including Holly and Yew. Thanks to the work of former curator Peter Helmsley we have saved two specimens of Ulmus from the deadly Dutch elm disease.

The most significant trees include:

<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> 'Quercoides'	Oak Barked Beech
<i>Fraxinus angustifolia</i> 'Lentiscifolia'	Narrow Leaved Ash
<i>Carpinus Betulus</i> 'Incisa'	Cut leaved Hornbeam
<i>Pyrus elaeagrifolia</i>	Elaeagnus leafed Pear
<i>Tilia petiolaris</i>	Weeping silver lime
<i>Ulmus Glabra</i>	Weeping elm
<i>Sorbus domestica</i> 'Pyriformis'	Service Tree
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> 'Pendula'	Weeping Ash
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	Maidenhair Tree
<i>Cotoneaster</i> 'Rothschildianus'	Cotoneaster Tree
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Tulip Tree
<i>Quercus Ilex</i>	Holly Oak

Champion Trees

Within the gardens there is a fine collection of county champion trees, and a runner up, second to the tallest and thickest tree in the UK and Ireland. The trees are being recorded by the Tree register:

<i>Alnus glutinosa</i> 'Imperialis'	County Champion Girth & Height
<i>Carpinus betulus</i> 'Incisa'	County Champion Girth & Height
<i>Fraxinus angustifolia</i>	County Champion Girth & Height
<i>Prunus x sieboldii</i>	County Champion Girth & Height
<i>Pyrus communis</i> subsp. <i>sativa</i>	County Champion Girth
<i>Pyrus elaeagnifolia</i> (runner up)	County Champion Girth & Height
<i>Tilia cordata</i>	County Champion Height
<i>Tilia tomentosa</i> 'Petiolaris'	County Champion Girth

Rockery

Set up in the 1980's with the help of Askham Bryan students and using pieces of rare limestone pavement. A number of rockery plants have thrived but overall it had become shabby and down at heel. It does not have a clear intellectual concept and a new access path has become a short cut rather than an exploration path for the rockery. It has no labelling or explanation. Recent work has replanted the rockery which looks much improved. There are plans to extend the rockery.



Rose Walk

Set up as a joint project with students from Askham Bryan in the 1980's. There is a good quality paved path running through it. The dominance of Yew trees and Ivy and the lack of plant variety together with substantial empty sections make this a dull feature. It also needs further work to connect the walk to the next section to the north.

Latest Developments

The Prairie bed planted in 2009 combines; artistic flair, creative use of the archaeological collection, botanical interest, intellectual rigour and a long flowering period. It exemplifies the type of multi layered approach we will need to achieve in our new planting. The bed celebrates the rich botanical heritage from North American prairie grasslands. It features plants that have now become part of the gardening palette for UK gardeners. It draws attention to the historic links going back to the 1650's with the royal gardeners John Tradescant father and son. The bed is in flower from June until November and the seed heads remain on the plants through the winter as food for wild life.



Fern Bed



This also uses this multilayered approach with over 50 different species of ferns both native and non native. This bed is enhanced with fossils from the collection. Remains from St Mary's Abbey were used to build low ground retaining walls and more stones from the Abbey where used in the bed as artificial objects to combine with a striking sculptural upside down tree. Complementary planting and wild flowering bulbs such as Cyclamen, Dogs tooth and Alium give all year interest.

Botanical Aims

- Restore the Botanical quality and status of the gardens
- Identify what botanical roles the garden should undertake

- Maintain and enhance the Tree collection giving it intellectual direction and a horticultural purpose and plan for succession planting
- Make exciting links with the collections in the Yorkshire Museum, York Art Gallery and York Observatory.
- Raise awareness of plants and ecosystems
- Building relationships with other Botanical Gardens
- Identify all plants within the garden and have an accurate and easy to use data base.
- Labelling of garden plants with sufficient information.

3. Horticultural

Horticultural Assessment

A Vision for the Garden

At present there is no agreed overarching horticultural vision for the gardens beyond preserving the broad ideas of Naysmith in the lower section. The garden alterations have been driven by a small budget and heavy visitor pressure.

Naysmith

Naysmith was an architect and as far as is known is not in the canon of great garden designers. He did not pay much attention to the horticultural and botanical elements in the gardens. He set out the gardens following the Gardenesque style using the trees and plants to frame the views and vistas, the essential framework of Naysmith's vision is still very much intact and the views and vistas of the ruins are still breathtaking. More work could be done to open up further views and to ensure the trees enhance rather than obscure.

York and Yorkshire's horticultural heritage

There is almost no acknowledged or visible connection with the horticultural heritage of York and Yorkshire in the gardens.

Contemporary work

Apart from the newly planted beds there is very little expression of contemporary design or practice.

Horticultural Aims

- Ensure an overarching vision and identity for the Gardens
- Increase the variety, interest and impact of the gardens
- Celebrate and preserve the overall Naysmith vision for the Museum Gardens.
- Identify key themes and ideas to be expressed in new planting within the confines of the Naysmith garden including York and Yorkshires horticultural, and botanical heritage
- Create new gardens on adjacent areas
- Integrate neighbouring green spaces and gardens e.g. King's Manor gardens, Manor Lane, St Olaves Church yard.
- Be a driving force for horticulture in the city of York

4. Ecological

Assessment

Biodiversity

The gardens have a relatively poor biodiversity, the predominance of short cut grass and large mature trees have helped some species, such as feeding areas for blackbirds, but the lack of a secondary shrub layer and poor density of plants within the flower beds has led to a reduction in the quality, quantity and variety of habitats.

Reserves

There are some reserve areas notably the abbey wall banks that provide a quieter and more species rich habitat. Some areas of the garden have become more attractive to wildlife notably the derelict area behind York Art Gallery that contains the occasional fox, roosting tawny owl, and sparrow hawk. Some of the archaeological ruins have also attracted a variety of plants and increased the number of plant species.

Disturbance

Some species do cope with the very high level of visitor use, and the undisturbed nights and rainy days also help. A high level of grey squirrels has also led to substantially reduced nesting by small birds.

Ecological Aims

- Increase the biodiversity of the gardens through improvements to habitat
- Increase the volume of wildlife through habitat improvement
- Promote the study of natural history and wildlife conservation
- Work with partner groups to provide expertise & event support
- Provide space and opportunities to do science for real
- Connect with the science collections in particular the Herbarium, insect and bird collections and play a major role in the understanding delivery and work of the science team based in the Yorkshire Museum

5. Archaeological

Assessment

Abbey structures

The medieval abbey was the largest in the north of England and contained the finest abbey church rivalling York Minster. Today there are extensive remains of the church as well as foundations, standing structures and walls from the other abbey buildings.

Roman

The gardens contain fine upstanding roman remains of the fortress walls. They are an extraordinary survival. The Yorkshire Museum redisplay in 2010 will feature the Romans.



Yorkshire Museum

The Yorkshire Museum collections date back to the 18th century. The museum has been at the forefront of the study of natural science and archaeology. The collections are nationally designated and are of national and international significance, they have an intimate and exciting relationship with the gardens

York Observatory

The oldest working observatory in the region, supported by a group of dedicated volunteers, the observatory is a natural pathway for people to take their initial steps into astronomy.

Archaeological Aims

- Work with the archaeology team to do justice to the high quality of the historic environment
- Explore and celebrate the connections between Archaeology and the natural world, both domestic and wild.
- Contribute to the presentation of the historic structures
- Interpret the historic structures
- Make links with collections inside the museum and outside in the gardens

6. Visitor Services

Assessment

Numbers

The numbers visiting the garden exceed 1.3 m per annum. Users come from all parts of the community and all age ranges; the numbers of users is very weather and season dependent. The gardens are very well used by local people, visitors and city workers

The Welcome

People do not have a strong sense of arrival or welcome. They are not aware of all of the boundaries of the garden they do not know where the garden starts or finishes, consequently many parts of the garden are underused.

Equality

Given these issues there is an equal access for all members of the community with no physical restriction at the main entrances.

Services

The gardens have poor quality toilets that are in the process of being demolished. Ice cream can be purchased in the summer months. Adjacent city outlets provide refreshments for visitors to the garden.

Activities

The gardens at present provide a venue for a wide variety of activities. Many are passive enjoyment for example private relaxation, lunch space for groups and individuals, sunbathing, social meeting space for young people. Others are more



active, dog walking, informal children's play, and others are exploring the garden content feeding the wildlife, photography, historic guided tours. The Hospitium has a very busy programme of weddings and conferences throughout the year.

Presentation

The gardens are kept clean and tidy.

Litter

Litter issues have been addressed and we have a predictable variation in litter quantity as visitor numbers rise and seasons change. We have an adequate litter picking regime. The policy of removing all litter bins has been very successful in reducing the amount of litter in the garden. It has also reduced the quantity of waste we handle and the time and resources we spend handling it. However this is not universally accepted or liked. The visibility of litter and the passions it generates mean that this will continue to be an issue for the gardens.

Aspirations

The gardens are very much appreciated and loved by the local residents and community. There is some apprehension about making changes to them.

Visitor Services Aims

- Ensure all our visitors have a safe and enjoyable visit.
- Gardens should be cleaned and well maintained. A policy on litter, vandalism and maintenance should be in place, in practice and regularly reviewed.
- Ensure there is sufficient provision for the many existing activities to continue.
- Provide good safe access, effective and appropriate signage, and access to suitable refreshments and public toilets

7. Community

Assessment

Recent research has shown that the gardens are held in high esteem and with great affection by the local community. People are very aware of developments in the gardens and are keen to see them preserved and improved. At present people feel that the gardens are more of a public park than a community's garden. There are few opportunities for people to become involved with them other than as spectator and user.

Community Aims

- For people to feel proud of the gardens and to see them as one of the local spaces that defines their local distinctiveness
- Engage the local community more actively in the care and management of the gardens, including volunteering and consultation
- Use the gardens as shared spaces to build bridges between different parts of the community

8. Sustainability

Assessment

There has been no overall assessment of the environmental sustainability of the gardens. There is a presumption against using, peat based composts and the excessive use of pesticides and herbicides. We have set up areas to make leaf mould, and to compost garden waste. The recycling of litter and rubbish is poor. The gardens play an important role in counteracting CO₂ emissions from the city.

Aims

The methods and practices used to maintain the gardens are ecologically sustainable, and informed choices made from the best environmental advice:

- An environmental policy or charter and management strategy should be in place, in practice and regularly reviewed.
- Energy conservation, pollution reduction, waste recycling, and resource conservation measures should be used

9. Learning

Assessment

- The gardens at present play only a minor role in formal learning. The Yorkshire Museum offers a KS2 Garden explorer trail and a KS 2 session *Worlds Apart: Exploring the Earth and Beyond* using the working observatory and a menu of hand-on activities to find out about our planet, our solar system and beyond. We have a sensory trail for SEN students
- They provide a venue for informal learning events including the successful Wild Wednesdays and art events such as Cavalcade. They are used by blue badge guides as part of their city tour
- They provide an inspiration for self directed personal learning for pleasure in particular, drawing, painting and photography. They are underused as a resource for horticultural, botanical, and environmental learning
- There is an unrecorded amount of informal adult learning through tours and trips to the gardens.

Learning Aims

- To provide botanical horticultural and ecological learning
- To provide formal learning opportunities for 0 to 19 Science,
- To encourage and support astronomy learning
- To enhance the archaeological and historical structures to help the delivery of our archaeological and historical learning.
- Provide opportunities for HE
- Adult learning Natural Science learning
- Volunteer and community involvement
- Horticultural, botanical and biological training for staff & the wider sector

10. Interpretation

Assessment

Existing interpretation is inadequate and has suffered from abuse and vandalism. There are hardly any plant labels, and minimal description and information on the historic structures. This is a major failing of the garden. There is hardly any information on our website and only two garden based publications available in the Yorkshire Museum.

The interpretation of elements of the garden will spring from the activities and newly developed areas.

Interpretation Aims

- Information for the visitor to understand the garden is a key factor in raising the status of the garden and ensuring it becomes a destination in its own right and the 5th site in the YMT portfolio
- The approaches to the garden. There are 10 entrances to the gardens: main entrance at Lendal, Marygate, Kings Manor, entrance by the restaurant, riverside, Manor Lane, gardener's gate, Library gate, bowling green and one kept locked from Kings Manor courtyard. All 7 public entrances must give a sense of arrival and state the identity of the Gardens making it completely clear that the visitor has moved from the street into the gardens realm, where a new set of behaviours are expected (each entrance displaying a list of byelaws and other behaviour signs), and a new set of delights on offer. There should be clear directions for example a map showing what the garden contains. The larger entrances at Lendal, St Mary's and the Restaurant should also give further indication of the whole range of exciting spaces, offers and amenities that are available
- Provide sufficient information for all our visitors to enable them to have an enjoyable visit, including an overall understanding of the site
- Ensure that all the subjects of interest are covered



11. Transport

The gardens provide 8 public spaces for bikes to be locked up, and secure bike racks at Kings Manor. There is car parking for around 60 cars for staff at the Kings Manor and YMT. The car parking provision is not significant in city wide terms. There is no disabled parking provision.

The gardens are a major commuting route/short cut for pedestrians not only from the Marygate car park but also from the residences to the north. Recent research

has shown that the gardens are a route of choice for commuters who go out of their way to use them and slow down when walking through.

12. York Museums Trust staff

Assessment

The required maintenance of the gardens is still within the capacity and resources of the existing garden team. However as the amount and complexity of the areas that is gardened increases there will be a need to match resources to our ambitions.

Aims

- Improve the professional development and training of staff
- Provide Apprenticeships for young people
- Provide an opportunity for a diverse range of people to volunteer and explore the work involved in the garden,
- Lead on the practice and understanding of horticulture in the city

13. Recreational

Assessment

There is very little provision for formal recreation apart from bowling. All ball games are forbidden. A number of individuals and groups use the garden for low level recreation for example, jogging, tai chi, Japanese martial arts.

Although two bowling greens exist, only one remains operational and that is separated from all the other visitors so the users of the space are not really part of the life of the gardens.

Aims

- Assess the ambition and appetite for formal recreation
- Ensure that wherever possible and without damage to plants and structures that we encourage appropriate low level recreational use. This would exclude ball games and formal pitches.
- Use the stones and archaeological fragments in imaginative ways for recreation

14. Play

Assessment

The site delivers high quality green space for informal play enjoyed by a large number of local people and visitors. There are many improvements to be made in improving the gardens for play.

Aims

- Encourage play in the gardens
- Increase the interest of the space, for young people providing stimulating and exciting play infrastructures that utilise the natural and historic environment and assets of the gardens
- Increase the provision of play opportunities to a wider age range
- Enhance the security of the site and to encourage young people to take a stake in the gardens and join with us in developing their potential for play

15. Events

Assessment

The gardens host a large number of civic, cultural and festival events including; gun salutes, military parades, illuminate, wagon plays, theatre, concerts, weddings as well as our own YMT events. We do not get enough credit or benefit from the external events, although we do a lot of work supporting these events this needs to be better understood.

Aims

- Maintain the range of events in the gardens
- Increase the number of events in the gardens
- Ensure that the needs of the events are met without detriment to the gardens.
- Raise awareness of the events programme and the YMT contribution to it



16. Security

Assessment

There is a certain amount of low level anti-social behaviour including littering, cycling, playing loud music, as well as this there are more serious behaviours such as abusive language, graffiti, threatening behaviour, drinking alcohol, and a number of serious crimes including drug use, physical violence, criminal damage, fire and assault. These set the reputation for the gardens, create a poor atmosphere in the gardens and badly affect visitor enjoyment. They impinge on staff recruitment for the gardens, staff safety and job satisfaction.

Certain behaviours although apparently minor for example stepping on plants in flower beds result in many months of work being quickly wasted, and future enjoyment of other visitors degraded.

There is also a perception of crime and ant-social behaviour that is greater than the statistics support.

We have set up a security group with our neighbours North Yorkshire Police, Safer York, the Library, Kings Manor, and NRM. This group meets once a month to work on the practical reduction of security problems.

The garden at night presents a further set of challenges including, rough sleepers, people breaking into the gardens and leaving rubbish and litter, unauthorised entry upsetting evening functions as well as on occasion extensive criminal damage.

Aims

- To ensure that all our visitors have a safe and enjoyable visit to the gardens. Equipment and facilities must be safe to use.
- There is a need to change the atmosphere around behaviour in the gardens we need to change the public attitude to unacceptable behaviour and to engender a greater respect for the contents of the garden
- The gardens must be a secure place for all members of the community to traverse.
- Health & Safety policies should be in place, in practice and regularly reviewed.

17. Site Management.

Assessment

The gardens contained within the historic boundary of the Abbey precinct as a whole are owned and managed by a whole range of different people and organisations, including City of York Council, York University, City Library, St Olave's Church, There is a further layer of people who play important roles in the life of the garden Safer York partnership, North Yorkshire police, blue badge guides and English Heritage.

There is no overall coordinated communication between all these groups, for all of them their involvement in the gardens is only a small part of their overall work.

Aims

- Ensure that we talk to all groups involved in the garden management.
- Develop where possible an agreed approach to management
- Support neighbours in delivering their objectives

A Vision for the Gardens

The gardens are the 5th site for York Museums Trust. They will be a nationally recognised garden, a 'garden for York' that is horticulturally distinctive and important with its own recognisable character. They will be a green delight, full of plants, an extension to the cultural life of the city, a recreation space, a place for everyone, safe, clean, accessible for all. They will be an encouragement to wildlife, contribute to the wider environmental debate and play a role in the development of horticulture in the city. They will be a garden for the community offering learning opportunities for all.

Action Plan

1. Botanical

2010/11 onwards

- Identification of plant data and entering that into a data base
- New planting to restore the Botanical quality and status of the gardens
- Establish partnerships with Kew and Natural History Museum. To celebrate and explore the legacy of regional botanical heritage including Richard Spruce his work in the Pyrenees, Teesdale, Peru, Ecuador South America. mosses and liverworts
- Use labels and information to draw attention to classes, plant families, and botanical stories within the garden (see interpretation), beginning with Trees, prairie bed, fern bed and butterfly border
- Identify subjects for a series of garden catalogues
- explore working exchanges with other Botanic gardens

2011/12

- Continue entering in information on the plant data base
- Succession planting to develop the botanical quality, identity and direction of the tree collection
- Begin catalogues
- Develop partnerships
- Continue labelling stage two shrubs

2012/13

- Continue catalogue
- Continue partnerships
- Complete plant labelling

2. Interpretation

2010/11 onwards

- Create a compelling identity for the gardens including, promotional literature, Garden leaflet,
- Entrance gates new signage on all 8 entrances to the gardens Main entrance Lendal Street, Mary Gate, Kings Manor, entrance by the proposed restaurant riverside, Manor Lane, Gardeners gate, Bowling Green
- Relocate the two large flag pole banners to improve the outlook of the prairie bed at the main entrance this will also improve the overall outlook to the entrances
- At the Museum Street entrance remove the bike racks and create a screening bed in their place. Lower the holly hedge in front of the Lodge

Create a Recycling point for litter that encourages the visitors to separate out glass, paper and plastics and send a strong ecological and sustainability message and relocate the marketing banners.

- Begin plant labelling
- Work with IPUP on information provision pilot
- Begin work on gathering materials for guides on archaeology and horticulture

2011/12

- Provide more ways of delivering information for the visitors guided tours, sign posts, viewing points, mobile telephone information
- Explore Botanical information could be delivered using trails and routes through the garden rather than necessarily creating specially planted botanical order beds. For example we could explore all the plants of a particular family or those associated with an historical period, famous gardener or geographical region for example Richard Spruce. This type of trail would be a way of complimenting and extending ideas from other exhibitions in the art gallery or Yorkshire museum
- Complete labelling of plants
- Increase promotional material to include event programme
- Create a vista from Lendal bridge

2012/13

- Plant guides and catalogues, guide book and merchandise
- Encourage research by the University of York, Gardens Trust and others, into the history of the gardens and give this research public outcomes.

Site Entrances

We have 10 entrances to the gardens, Main entrance on Museum Street, Marygate, King's Manor, entrance by the proposed restaurant, riverside, Manor Lane, gardener's gate, Bowling Green and Library garden, and one kept locked from the Kings Manor courtyard.

All 7 public entrances must give a sense of arrival and state the identity of the gardens making it completely clear that the visitor has arrived somewhere exciting and important and they have also moved from the street into the gardens realm, where a new set of behaviours are expected and anew set of delights on offer. Each entrance must display a list of byelaws and behavioural signs.

There should be clear directions, for example a map showing what the garden contains.

The larger entrances at Museum Street, St Mary's and the restaurant should also give further indication of the whole range of exciting spaces offers and amenities that are available. We will need to reconcile the promotion of the Yorkshire Museum at the same time as the Museum Gardens.



At the Museum street entrance we will remove the bike racks and create a screening bed in their place. Lower the holly hedge in front of the Lodge. Create a sense of arrival by improving the look of the tarmac apron directly inside the gates with attractive planting, new fencing and new signage.

This entrance is also the right place for a recycling point for litter. This point would encourage visitors to separate out glass, paper and plastics and send a strong ecological and sustainable message. This potentially ugly facility will need to be cleverly designed to reduce its visual impact and have a rigorous management system to ensure there is little impact on the YPS using the lodge

The two large flag banners will need to be relocated. We will need a new set of signs that match across the site announcing the gardens and their contents. At the new restaurant river entrance will be an opportunity to create a new entrance that welcomes the visitor and announces the gardens

3. Behind York Art Gallery

2010/11 onwards

Develop a plan that explores the many demands on this section of the garden, including reconciling and enhancing York Art Gallery, access to the gallery, for both visitors and services, new access into Exhibition Square, as well as potential exhibition space for sculpture or art installations.

To begin with we will have to clear away the hutments removing the Bowling Green, remodelling the interface with the Kings Manor. This will create the opportunity to connect up York Art Gallery and the Yorkshire Museum and Gardens and create a route through to Exhibition Square

Whatever the uses, the space can also be a new area of contemporary garden.

4. Horticultural

2010/11

The Lower Naysmith Section

Left hand entrance bed

Increase the width of this border to ensure a sense of surprise when the visitor reaches beyond the cut leafed hornbeam. The bed will contain plants that give a clear message that this is a botanic garden with special and unusual plants the planting scheme might include palm trees,

The proposed riverside entrance

This new entrance proposed as a result of the development of the restaurant could be a great improvement for the garden. The entrance will have good views up to the multangular tower. To create this entrance will involve felling the walnut tree. We would want to preserve the beech tree. The entrance will need strong welcoming signage.

The store shed area

This building would make an ideal base for environmental work and a base for the garden guides, volunteers, community groups and our community pay back groups. We would relocate the compost heaps next to the gardeners' workshops

Butterfly border

The outline of this bed will be re drawn sweeping further into the garden, giving a greater depth to the border with more scope for planting, colour etc. Butterflies and insects will be the theme. Relocate the flood light, retain and reposition the benches in the new border. The planting scheme will use plants that encourage butterflies. In the spring alyssum lobelia, honesty, valerian sweet rocket will attract the overwintering tortoiseshells and peacocks as well as orange tips and brimstones. Later in the season we might consider wall flowers, catmint, buddleia, Sweet William, Candytuft, rubeckia, sedum, Echinacea and salvia, . Caterpillar food plants can be accommodated in the reserve areas,

The bulb and woodland in the centre of the garden

To extend this area and give it a new and more elegant shape. Increase the numbers and varieties of bulbs introduce meadow perennials with plant plugs to extend the flowering season and interest of the area. Renew the rope barrier. This would be an ideal site for a bird feeding station

York Observatory

The planting around the observatory would become a night time garden featuring those plants that have an intellectual connection with outer space, the night, and astronomy. Including plants that will work well at night, night scented stock, paper bark tree, some lilies, and birch. This area will also be opened up to the visitor with paths to allow them to explore. It will require the felling of some yew trees to allow more light into this section

7) Rockery

Undertake some modest replanting and new gravel to give this feature a face lift prior to total redesign in 2012/13

2011/12

The abbey wall bank

This area would continue to be a nature reserve, improve the access to the bank with paths and steps. Increase the number of plant species, provide additional invertebrate habitats

The section below the walls

This area would be designed after the new riverside entrance section has been completed

Garden shed area

Create more secure storage for garden equipment and processes

Relocate compost heaps to this section

The compost heaps are a really useful learning tool. They allow us to talk about sustainability, recycling, plant processes and invertebrate life. We would so design the heaps to demonstrate these ideas and functions and to allow them to be used

for learning. This space would link up with the recycling point at the museum entrance

To the front of the Yorkshire Museum

We would reinstate the sculptural features either side of the main staircase from the lawn to the terrace. Around the base of the terrace we would feature the white rose of York in all its glory York 800th anniversary event

Begin Bluebell project under Yew trees to the left of the museum building

Woodland area to the north of the new entrance

Increase the size of this area with a new outline for the beds give it a better visual shape. We would plant indigenous UK species. Provide paths within the woodland for visitors, particularly young people, to explore. Relocate the existing benches in line with the new outline edge. Increase the numbers of benches at this point. We would involve local schools in the design, delivery and maintenance of this section. We should consider something to find in the woods for example some exciting sculpture or a giant magnifying glass in the shade of the yews for children to view the things they have found in the garden

Themed project

Florists to illustrate and celebrate the extraordinary story of the York Florists with florist flowers of Carnations, Pinks, Auricula, Chrysanthemums, etc. This could be achieved using plant theatres showing in succession the different plants this would be in bloom from late spring to mid autumn. This work would be done in partnership with the York Florists. York 800th anniversary event (see events)

2012/13

The woodland area by the flood banks

To continue the theme of indigenous planting as in section above effectively making this an extension of the child exploration area

The first bowling green

Turn this into a performance or event area. We will modestly extend the existing banks and terrace them into seating/ viewing banks, improve the catering facilities and the pavilion. We would also install some provision for refreshments for everyday visitors and to complement and support the events these would be mobile and non litter producing. This area would include laying on of electricity, water and drainage

To the front of the Hospitium

Relocate the stones that are set up either side of the access road extend the border on the right of the Hospitium The horticultural theme of this border to be determined

Lupins project

Create a bed to celebrate and illustrate the Russell Lupin, and its connection to York. This would demonstrate some of the principles behind plant breeding, a section of the planting could recreate the breeding method Mr Russell used to create the



wonderful lupins we have today. There is a strong learning element to this and it could feature as a learning resource area

The Rockery

Re-design and extend the rockery garden right up to the church walls and down to the edge of the access road. Removing some of the holly trees to allow more light. We would explore rock plants, Victorian rockeries and the Backhouse connection. This could include a grotto, underground fernery, water and ponds. The rockery could also illustrate the story and conservation of limestone pavements a special North of England Habitat and their associated species e.g. rock rose and juniper. York 800th anniversary event

2013/14

The Abbey Church

Work needs to be done to make it clear that the visitor has entered the Abbey church rather than passing alongside some ruins. To do this we would remove the section of tarmac path from the abbey church entrance to the museum. Install a new path from outside the church door up the side of the central lawn to the museum

To emphasis the outside overall shape of the church we would lower the ground adjacent to the low foundation wall. We would remove the bridge of soil that the current path uses to cross from inside the church to the museum so restoring the line of the outside of the church wall

To dig down and level the interior of the church to emphasis the inside of the building. Consider planting to emphasise the pillars at the top of the church.

The woodland area to the right of the museum building

To develop woodland flora to explore the species variation of Hyacinths, bluebells etc and their conservation story. Increase the variety of plants for example honeysuckle, and wood anemone . This would be a spring delight. In order to achieve this we might need to consider removing some trees to increase the light

Artists and community engagement

Using sections of hard landscaping to create a space that would provide an opportunity for a range of professional artists/community groups/residents to create their own space for planting, artists' installations, vegetable production, special commemorations, contributions to city festivals and events, etc. This would be a temporary and programmed area. It would offer a fabulous opportunity for people to make their mark on the city, express themselves in a public arena

Front of the Yorkshire Museum

The tarmac apron to the front and the temporary wheelchair ramp will be replaced with a new ramp more sympathetic to the building and a more exciting surface treatment

2014/15

Address the re-landscaping behind York Art Gallery and the interface with Kings Manor

5. Ecological actions

2010/11 onwards

- Wildlife surveys and counts throughout the year as part of regional and national surveys
- Increase the biodiversity of the gardens, extending the spring bulb area and incorporating meadow species such as yellow rattle, cranesbill, scabious etc (see above)
- Identify and grow specific insect, butterfly and moth food plants
- Work with partner groups and encourage visitors to join in with their work
- Encourage reserve areas with a controlled minimal maintenance regime e.g. abbey wall banks
- Create purpose built aids to the observation and study of invertebrates including ground covers, roosting and nesting aids
- Create a wild bird feeding station and observation point(s)

2011/12

- Create a more interactive composting area (see 15 above)
- Create more purpose built aids to the observation and study of invertebrates including ground covers, roosting and nesting aids
- See creation of central grass and bulb area

2012/13

- Incorporate water and bog areas into the new gardens in the new rockery.

6. Archaeological

2010/11 onwards

- Provide sufficient, relevant information on the historic structures to understand them. Consider guides and tours at set times
- Increase our understanding of the Abbey Precinct through the practical application of archaeological techniques



2011/12

- Set up access to the top of the multangular tower giving a unique view of the garden and enhancing our understanding of the fortress and how it worked. York 800th anniversary event Project for *Precious Cargo*
- Create supporting archaeology leaflets and information

2012/13

Use landscape improvements to restore the integrity of the ruins. (See Abbey Church above).

7. Visitor services

2010/11 onwards

- Provide a strong site identity, welcome, and information at all entrance points
- Continue, and keep under active review litter management
- Garden guides, continue with the scheme, with their work forming the backbone of the visitor services provision, providing a welcome, security and information. (see volunteers)
- Ensure we have access to the public toilets for the garden,
- More informal seating

2012/13

Identify suitable site for visitor interpretation point (for example in St Leonard's hospice).

2013/14

- Create a visitor interpretation area for the gardens providing a welcome, information, guides and sales point,
- Restore the gas lamps to function again.

8. Staff

2010/11 ongoing

- Develop the skills and abilities of the staff
- Staff to visit other gardens to study layout, planting, history and management
- Develop team cohesion between gardeners, garden guides and other staff from the departments within the Trust
- To raise a constant awareness regarding Health and Safety issues within daily work
- To use of machines safely and effectively

2011/12

- Raise the professional recognition of staff through training and participation in local national and regional activities
- Provide exchange possibilities for staff members between different gardens

2012/13

- Offer regular placements to the Horticultural colleges
- Enhance the number of skilled staff members, especially a working foreman

2013/14

Offer and have an operational apprenticeships scheme for young gardeners

9. Community Engagement Volunteers

Provide Opportunities for active participation in the work of the gardens through volunteering consultation and community involvement

2010/11 ongoing

- Increase the numbers and variety of volunteer opportunity by creating a range of volunteer projects, including general gardening, more skilled horticulture, guided tours, ecological and botanical work
- To undertake research into why young people like the gardens and what they are coming for
- To provide opportunities for Community payback

2011/12

- Set up a regular community consultation group to give York residents an opportunity to tell us what they would like to see, and how the work of the gardens affects them
- To engage young people as an extension of the community consultation group



10. Sustainability

2010/11 ongoing

Consult with city partners, visit other gardens and parks to understand better the issues surrounding sustainability

2011/2

Consider an overall assessment of the environmental sustainability of the gardens and their development and maintenance regimes

11. Learning

2010/11 ongoing

- Provide the natural place for many York residents to find out about horticulture, botany and ecology
- Signpost other key local and regional providers, York College, Askham Bryan York University local specialist societies
- Develop an informal event programme, including a regular flower show possibly in collaboration with York Florists, to use the annual event

programme to explain not only the seasonal changes and delights but the proposed improvements and new planting ideas and schemes.

- The Yorkshire Museum will initially be the customer care point for people studying the garden
- Develop a China sensory trail to complement York Art Gallery exhibition
- Pilot story telling
- Develop KS2 Minibeasts bug hunt
- Early years teddy bear picnic offer

2011/12

- Work with local horticultural colleges to involve their students in a regular programme of work and activities
- Create an atmospheric all weather story telling space(s), all weather does not mean indoor but will mean some provision for the rain
- Create an Interactive compost heap
- Create wildlife observation points
- Identify some covered space for further activities
- Create 4 seasonal sensory trails through the gardens. These would follow the work piloted via York Art Gallery. There would be different one for each of the four seasons and would replace the more traditional idea of a sensory garden. It would involve additional planting and imaginative use of smell, texture, light, sound, etc. Visitors would collect the current in flower trail from the museum establishing a direct link with the museum

Ideas for Consideration

Build a tree stair, a staircase that threads all the way up to the top of a tree providing a special view and understanding of this unvisited layer of the garden.

12. Transport

The gardens are essentially a pedestrian space, and we will need to work on reconciling the city's plans to increase the use of cycles and the development of the gardens

The gardens will remain as exciting short cuts and we should capitalise on these to provide bite size botany or bits of heritage, as well as marketing other products as they do on the underground

Parking for existing staff will have to be resolved

13. Recreation

There is a considerable interest in the gardens as recreation spaces but their main function of providing passive quiet and contemplation should not be lost. Children's play area.

2010/11 ongoing

We should actively encourage the use of the garden as an outdoor space for dance, gymnastics, yoga and other exercise requiring no infrastructure. These activities could become part of our garden event programme and provision

marketed by us in partnership with the deliverers whom we have actively sought out

Special recreational events could be staged including, walks, skipping

2011/12

Following community consultation we should commission special sculpture that will have the dual purpose of providing young children chances to climb and slide as well as being artistically worthwhile and exciting. The lower woodland walk will also be a child's recreation area

14. Security

2010 /11 ongoing

- Maintain and improve our garden guides service
- Develop our collaboration with the Police and Safer York
- Continue with our partnership with neighbours
- Consider CCTV
- Take advice during the construction phases of the new garden elements on designing out crime and bad behaviour
- Fill the social vacuum with positive work and alternative activities for young people
- Night time security will be scrutinised to see how best to deal with the particular problems it raises



15. Events

There are a number of events in the gardens that are not necessarily our event however they all impinge on the work of the garden and its presentation. We have just begun a modest number of public garden events including guided talks on the gardens and natural history events

2010/11

- List the various external events and bring them together in joint marketing this would include, gun salutes, mystery plays, city festival
- Develop a calendar of horticultural events including seasonal guided tours and talks, demonstrations
- Temporary events displays and trails associated with and supporting exhibitions in the Yorkshire Museum and York Art Gallery
- Seasonal natural history events , big garden birdwatch, bug watch, moth trapping etc
- Actively partner up with complementary bodies to arrange events such as fitness, health

2011/12

- Consider an annual horticultural show in partnership with the York florists
- Take part in York 800th anniversary

- Venue for *Precious Cargo* events
- Venue for *York Mystery Plays*

16. Partners

2010/12

- Regular partnership meetings with CYC, North Yorkshire Police, Kings Manor, City Library, Restaurant owners, St Olaves church
- Develop new partners as necessary

17. The wider precinct Garden

The garden should be extended to cover all the open space in the Abbey precinct including outside the Library, the Kings Manor courtyards, gardens and car parks, and St Olaves church. These new potential gardens would provide a different range of ecosystems and micro climates and would lend themselves to whatever garden their current owners wanted, for example a contemplative natural space in the church yard that encouraged wildlife or courtyard gardens within Kings Manor. Taken together this would double the size of the gardens. It would provide an ideal medium for cooperation and would ensure joined up management. The gardens would become the visible marker, the setting that joins up and defines the Cultural Quarter.

18. Monitor and review

Progress will be monitored against the action plan which should be updated annually. The whole garden plan should be reviewed every 5 years

Finance and Resources

Running costs

The Gardens at present cost £160,000 per annum, of which £137,000 are wages, and £86,000 of which is Hub funded. The impact of changes to the Hub funding will need to be considered alongside all of YMT priorities. As the number of areas that we have improved increases so will the overall running costs. At present the gardeners spend 6 % of their time on garden improvements the rest is spent on maintenance, mowing etc

Budget 2010/11

	Total	YMT	HUB
Wages	136,790	70,090	66,700
Maintenance	22,500	3200	19300
Projects			
Improve site identity	15,000	15000	
Horticultural improvements	20,000	20,000	
IPUP partnership	20,000	20,000	
Total projects	55,000	55.000	
Total	194,290,	108,290	86,000

This will deliver the action plan for the coming year, including an overall design package for information signs, new signage at the two main entrances and relocation of the flagpole banners, a Observatory bed, St Marys Lodge entrance and new planting to Museum Street entrance.

Development

For the ambition of this plan to be realised it will require more capital and revenue funding. The ability of YMT to fund the capital improvements is limited. The ability for YMT to cover increases in running costs needs to be considered, especially given the uncertainty of Renaissance in the Regions funding. Once this plan is agreed a fundraising strategy will need to be identified. Further ways of raising income in the gardens should be developed including:

Income Development

2010/11

The ice cream van should continue but open more frequently

2011/12

- Special event ticketing e.g. theatre, flower show and evening events
- Multangular tower viewing platform could be charged for

2012/13

- Creation of event area to be rented out for events
- The refreshments/coffee shop attached to the event area open throughout the day

2013/14

Consider the role of shop sales in the garden information point

Sjaak Kastelijn and Martin Watts
March 2010

Appendix 1

Key extracts from relevant strategic plans

Yorkshire and the Humber Plan Regional spatial strategy May 2008

- Env 8 environmental policy Retain and incorporate biodiversity in development and encourage networks of urban green space and ecological corridors in line with the Region's habitat enhancement map.
- Env 9 Roman military and civil settlements and communications, especially in North Yorkshire the historic street patterns, sky lines, views and setting of the City of York
- Env10 The Region will safeguard and enhance landscapes that contribute to the distinctive character of Yorkshire and the Humber. Development strategies, plans and decisions will maintain and enhance the following landscapes and related assets of regional, sub-regional and local importance Historic landscapes, parks and gardens. Measured by the green flag award scheme

Natural England Policy

Direction

- Our diverse landscapes continue to provide inspiration and enjoyment for people and enable our wildlife to adapt to the challenges of the future.
- Our rich biodiversity thrives across the landscape, with ecosystems and habitats resilient to climate change.

Outcomes

Outcome 2: People are inspired to value and conserve the natural environment

- People fully understand and value the contribution of the natural environment to our quality of life.
- People increasingly take action to protect and enhance the natural environment.
- People have places to access and enjoy a high quality natural environment

Outcome 3: Sustainable use of the natural environment

- Land is used for social and economic development in a way that recognizes, protects and enhances the value of the natural environment.
- Land is managed in a way that delivers environmental services alongside other benefits.
- Community awareness and active participation
- Education, learning and volunteering
- Welcoming, well-managed and wildlife-rich places

Access to Nature

Five main outcomes:

- A greater number and diversity of people having improved opportunities to experience the natural environment.
- More people having opportunities for learning about the natural environment and gaining new skills.
- More people able to enjoy the natural environment through investment in access to natural places and networks between sites.
- Richer, more sustainably managed, natural places meeting the needs of local communities.
- An increase in communities' sense of ownership of local natural places, by establishing strong partnerships between communities, voluntary organizations, local authorities and others

City of York Council Local plan Without Walls Sustainable City

- To increase the amount and quality of publicly accessible green open space
- To enable everyone in York to enjoy, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for the benefit of present and future generations
- Involvement of the community in the gardens is in line with the City wide Without Walls strategy, and will contribute to the LAA PI's 1 and 4. Our volunteering programmes will support PI's 6 and 7 Addressing the security issues will help with nos 17,19, and 111,

City of York Open Space Sport and Recreation Study

Consultation

- The study recommends the council concentrates on improving the quality of gardens.

Parks and gardens

- Facilities and standards the quality standards see appendix one as devised by CYC and informed by the Green Flag award scheme. Identified the Gardens as achieving an 84% rating this is second best beneath the best that is achieved at Rowntree Park.
- The Gardens are the largest green space within the city walls. They play an important role in providing a refuge for wildlife and contribute to the Local Area Agreement Performance indicator (PI) 197 increasing Bio diversity. They provide access to nature for a number of local residents and support the strategy of Natural England.

City of York and York Museums' Trusts Partnership delivery plan

- The long term plan will open up the whole of the precinct making it accessible through new pathways and interpretation so that people can understand the significance of this unique area.
- Museum Gardens - increase use and public understanding; create new gardens interpret built heritage
- Use all reasonable endeavours to maintain the existing registration of the Museum Gardens on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest maintained by English Heritage
- Use all reasonable endeavours to maintain the registration of the gardens as botanical gardens
- Give public access to the gardens daily (except Christmas Day) unless closure is necessary for reasons of public safety. Opening hours will be 7:30 am to 6:00 pm in Winter and 7:30 am to 8:00 pm in Summer
- Permit access to the Museum Gardens for all civic ceremonial and similar events promoted by the Council on up to 10 days in each year provided that the Council give as much notice as is practicable and provided that where the Council requires access at times outside the normal opening hours set out above YMT may restrict (but not prohibit) access for the purpose of maintaining security and/or good estate management

Play England National Play Strategy

- In every residential area there are a variety of supervised and unsupervised places for play, free of charge;
- Local neighbourhoods are, and feel like, safe, interesting places to play;
- Routes to children's play space are safe and accessible for all children and young people;
- Parks and open spaces are attractive and welcoming to children and young people, and are well maintained and well used;
- Children and young people have a clear stake in public space and their play is accepted by their neighbours;
- Children and young people play in a way that respects other people and property;
- Children and young people and their families take an active role in the development of local play spaces;
- play spaces are attractive, welcoming, engaging and accessible for all local children

Appendix 2

Key Criteria for Green Flag Award



The following is an outline of the Key Criteria against which every park or green space for which an application is made, will be judged. Where certain criteria are not met, an applicant may provide justifications that will be taken into account in the judging process. Similarly, where changes in management practice are in progress but not yet fully implemented, transitional phases will be acknowledged and viewed positively.

Parks or green spaces will inevitably offer a variety of facilities and be managed and developed in response to a wide range of opportunities and constraints. Judging criteria will be sufficiently flexible to allow for these as well as recognising and encouraging innovation.

In principle any facility or feature which the park or green space offers, should conform to the relevant key criteria, but the range of facilities offered and their appropriateness to the needs of the user community will also be taken into account.

1. A Welcoming Place

The overall impressions for any member of the community approaching and entering the park or green space should be positive and inviting, regardless of the purpose for which they are visiting. Features of particular importance are:

- Good and safe access
- Good signage to and in the park or green space
- Equal access for all members of the community

2. Healthy, Safe, and Secure

The park or green space must be a healthy, safe and secure place for all members of the community to use. Relevant issues must be addressed in management plans and implemented on the ground. New issues that arise must be addressed promptly and appropriately. Particularly important issues are:

- Equipment and facilities must be safe to use.
- The park or green space must be a secure place for all members of the community to use or traverse.
- Dog fouling must be adequately addressed.
- Health & Safety policies should be in place, in practice and regularly reviewed.

- Toilets, drinking water, first aid, public telephones and emergency equipment where relevant (e.g. life belts by water) should be available in or near the park or green space, and clearly sign posted.

3. Clean and Well Maintained

For aesthetic as well as Health and Safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be adequately addressed, in particular:

- Litter and other waste management issues must be adequately addressed.
- Grounds, buildings, equipment and other features must be well maintained.
- A policy on litter, vandalism and maintenance should be in place, in practice and regularly reviewed.

4. Sustainability

Methods used in maintaining the park or green space and its facilities should be environmentally sound, relying on best practices available according to current knowledge. Management should be aware of the range of techniques available to them, and demonstrate that informed choices have been made and are regularly reviewed. Specifically:

- An environmental policy or charter and management strategy should be in place, in practice and regularly reviewed.
- Pesticide use should be minimised and justified.
- Horticultural peat use should be eliminated.
- Waste plant material in the park or green space should be recycled.
- High horticultural and arboricultural standards should be demonstrated.
- Energy conservation, pollution reduction, waste recycling, and resource conservation measures should be used.

5. Conservation and Heritage

Particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of:

- Natural features, wildlife and fauna.
- Landscape features.
- Buildings and structural features.
- These features should serve their function well without placing undue pressure on the surrounding environment.

6. Community Involvement

Management should actively pursue the involvement of members of the community who represent as many park or green space user groups as possible. Management should be able to demonstrate:

- Knowledge of user community and levels and patterns of use.
- Evidence of community involvement in management and/or developments and results achieved.

- Appropriate levels of provision of recreational facilities for all sectors of the community.

7. Marketing

- Marketing strategy in place, in practice and regularly reviewed.
- Good provision of information to users, e.g. about management strategies, activities, features, ways to get involved.
- Promotion of the park or green space as a community resource.

Management

A Green Flag Award application must have a management plan or strategy in place which reflects the aspirations of Local Agenda 21 and clearly and adequately addresses all the above criteria and any other relevant aspects of the park or green space's management. The plan must be actively implemented and regularly reviewed. Financially sound management of the park or green space must also be demonstrated.