

Infrastructure investment boost for development at York Central

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Homes England and Network Rail will be investing £77 million to ensure that York's new city centre quarter development goes ahead, following confirmation of the route for the funding to the project from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The announcement has been welcomed as a 'clear signal' of the government's commitment to levelling up and will provide certainty around another major development as the industry plans for recovery from Covid-19.

The government funding, subject to planning approval, will enable vital infrastructure to connect the site, including a bridge over the East Coast mainline railway. The infrastructure will unlock brownfield land with significant access problems and allow the development of up to 3,705 homes; up to 1.2 million sq.ft. of commercial development including 80% Grade A offices and an enhancement of the setting and access to the National Railway Museum.

Investment in the York Central project was first announced in the March 2020 Budget. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has now confirmed the amount of funding and handed

responsibility for overseeing the infrastructure investment to Homes England and Network Rail.

As part of the project partnership, Homes England and Network Rail have supported the development of the site through land acquisition and masterplanning. The joint venture between the two government organisations will now use its expertise in overseeing major infrastructure projects to enable the key city centre development to progress.

A 'reserved matters' planning application for the first phase has already been submitted to City of York Council for a new main road entrance to the development site; a new bridge over the East Coast Main Line; new key cycling and pedestrian routes; improved existing and new drainage systems; and to provide critical landscaping as the beginning of the new public park. Homes England and Network Rail are determined to push forward with the project so work can start on site in 2021, while recognising that Covid-19 may slow progress.

Simon Dudley, Interim Chair at Homes England, said: "This investment is a clear signal of the Government's commitment to levelling up across the country by providing much needed homes and employment space in York. The confirmation of funding provides that market with some much-needed certainty around a major strategic site at a time when it is planning ahead to recover from the pandemic. We look forward to working with all the project partners on behalf of the government to unlock this challenging site so it will become a real landmark development for people living and working in the city, as well as visitors."

Rob McIntosh, Regional Director for Network Rail, said: "We're really proud of the work which has been carried out on York Central and this is a great vote of confidence in both the project and our city by Government. This land has been underused for too long and our railway will be a key part of the success of the development, providing connectivity across the north as well as to the capitals in London and Scotland as we look to support the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic."

Councillor Keith Aspden, leader of City of York Council, added: "This is fantastic news for York and it clearly demonstrates the importance of the partnership's continued work and commitment to delivering this ambitious scheme.

"The funding is a vital step to unlocking a £1.16bn boost to our economy and delivering a new generation of better paid jobs and hundreds of affordable homes, at a time when York needs it most. The scheme will also set new standards for sustainable living and clean growth, utilising brownfield land in the heart of the city.

"The York Central Partnership is delivering where decades of proposals have failed. Our shared vision for an ambitious development which delivers cleaner, greener growth and a fairer economy in York underpins the entire project, and we will keep playing our part to make York Central deliver for the whole city."

Photo credit: Homes England