

# York Central project puts rail “at the heart” of a new community

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Network Rail and Homes England have fired the starting gun on the regeneration of York Central — they have appointed real estate services specialist JLL to procure a strategic development partner for what is one of the UK’s largest brownfield regeneration projects.

JLL will now begin the process of securing a developer to bring forward the transformational 45-hectare mixed-use scheme, which will be built next to York Railway station.

The hope is the development will grow York’s economy by 20%. The ambitious project will create up to 2,500 new homes and more than 800,000 sq ft of commercial space as part of a new high-quality commercial and residential quarter for one of the UK’s most historic and desirable cities.

The first phase of the project is expected to deliver a maximum of 650,000 sq ft of commercial space and 700 residential units on the strategic development site, predominantly owned by Network Rail and Homes England.

JLL’s development team will guide the public sector partners through the procurement process as they

seek to transform the largely brownfield site into vibrant and distinctive residential neighbourhoods, cultural and commercial space.

Robin Dobson, group property director at Network Rail said “York Central is one of the most strategically important regeneration sites in the UK. It is putting the railway at the heart of a new commercial, residential and cultural community, all whilst delivering thousands of new jobs.

“It’s a project that demonstrates the pivotal role our railway can play in unlocking sites which deliver growth. We’re delivering it through a public and private partnership, an approach we’ll be looking to replicate in other towns and cities across the country. And it will provide long-lasting benefits for the local community and across Yorkshire.”

Henry Burton, director of development at JLL, said: “York Central is one of a select number of projects across the UK which can be deemed to be truly transformational regeneration at scale. In the coming decade, it will bring sustainable growth to York’s £765 million economy as the city continues to welcome more than eight million visitors a year. Critically though, it will also bring much-needed new homes across a diverse mix of tenures, with a clear focus on developing inclusive new neighbourhoods and communities to support the growth of the city and the wider region.”

Peter Freeman, Chair of Homes England, said, “Urban regeneration schemes like York Central have a huge part to play in delivering the government’s Levelling Up agenda by replacing underused brownfield sites with an inviting range of mixed-use buildings and well landscaped public open space. Partnerships between the public and private sector will be crucial to success. We want to hear from developers that share our ambitions to create thriving new quarters and are interested in playing a key role in the delivery of York Central. York Central is at an advanced stage with planning and land assembly in place and the major infrastructure contract placed. It is a tremendous opportunity to bring forward a long-awaited project to the benefit of York’s community.”

An Outline Application for the mixed-use development was granted in 2019 and subsequently a Reserved Matters Application was approved in 2020 for a significant first phase of infrastructure being delivered by the Landowners.