



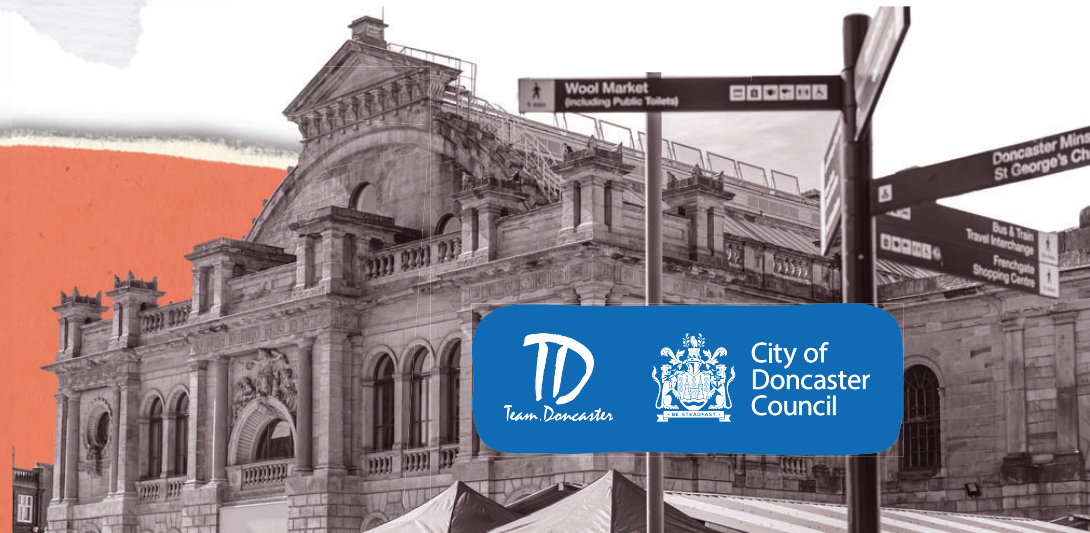
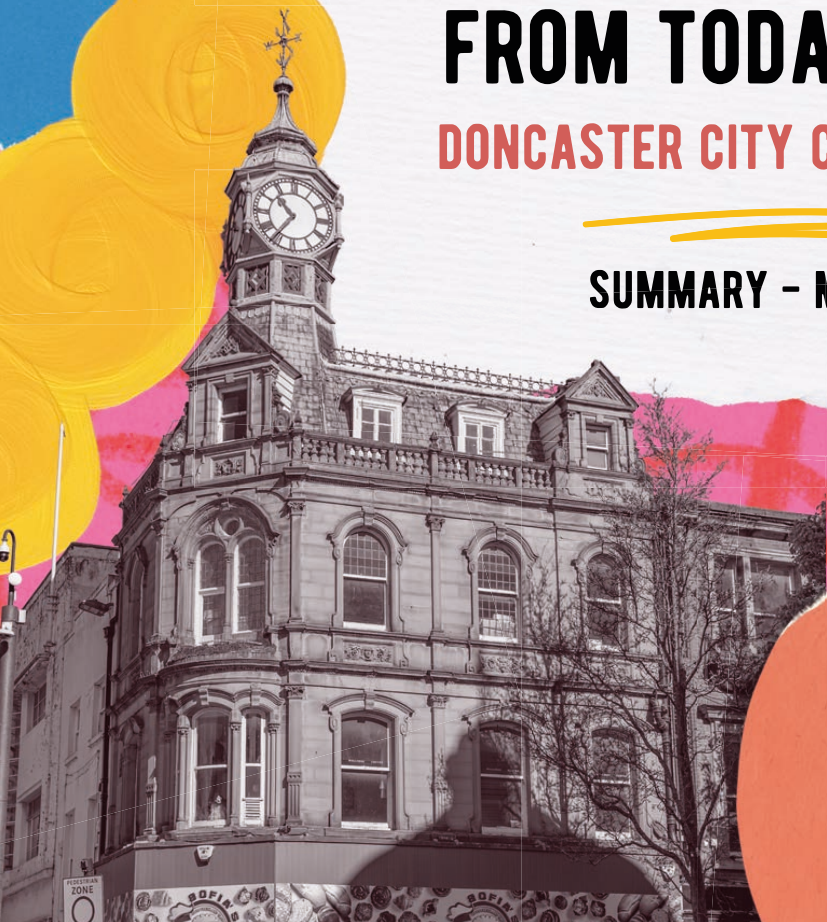
DONCASTER CITY CENTRE

FROM TODAY TO 2050

DONCASTER CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

SUMMARY - MARCH 2025

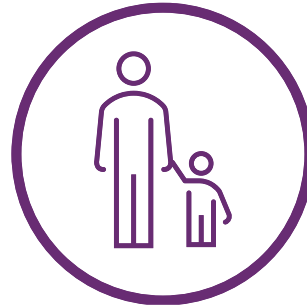
“Our Vision for a
Safe, Prosperous
and Vibrant City”



Delivering the city centre strategy will result in:



A safer and cleaner city centre.



A city centre that is welcoming to all and more child & family friendly.



New housing including homes for families and older people.



A diverse leisure, culture, retail and food & drink offer. More events and entertainment.



Well designed places and more green spaces.



More business and easily accessible public services.



Well connected. A city centre that is easy to get to, and around.

WHAT ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

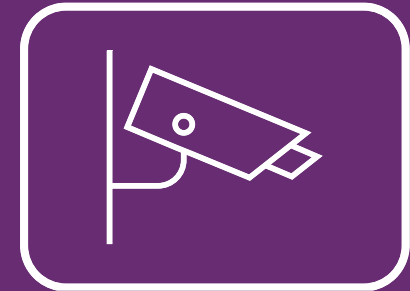
Our activities this year (2025/26) to improve the city centre will include:



More city centre officers including greater police presence.



Expanding use of powers to address anti-social behaviour.



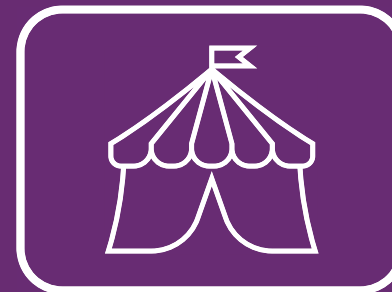
New CCTV, tannoys and street cleaning equipment.



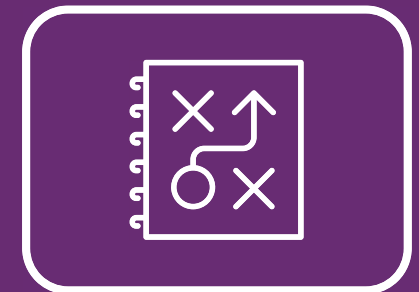
New Gateway One 'digital tech hub' office development.



Waterfront remediation & temporary greenspace. Town Field improvement.



Enhanced calendar of city centre events and activities.



New City Centre Masterplan. New Market Enhancement Strategy.

INTRODUCTION



Ros Jones CBE
Mayor of Doncaster



Tariq Shah OBE
Chair of the Doncaster
City Centre Board



Our city centre is a place of huge importance to Doncaster and its residents. It is a hub of retail, services and employment, a place of heritage and character, and it holds strong memories for people of many generations.

Doncaster has seen considerable change in recent years with several major economic developments, culminating in city status in 2022. In the city centre, new investment has transformed areas like the Civic and Cultural Quarter and Railway Station, alongside the renovation of historic market buildings and a programme to improve our city centre streets.

However, like towns and cities across the UK, Doncaster has experienced unprecedented disruption. This includes long-term shifts in employment, shopping and travel patterns brought about by economic change, social trends, and the rapid growth of online services and working from home arrangements.

These changes have created significant challenges; fewer people are visiting the city centre with visible results such as empty shop units, vacant sites and concern around crime and anti-social behaviour.

The time is right for us to re-evaluate our city centre. This strategy provides a new vision for the city centre and a framework for the next phase of development. It is not a detailed list of projects, but establishes a strategic direction, describing our ambition for how the city centre can adapt, grow and thrive by building on our proud heritage and existing strengths.

These foundations, alongside ongoing public engagement, will inform the development of new investments, projects and services in the city centre.

Doncaster city centre is central to the fortunes of the whole city. The strategy has been developed following extensive feedback from residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

We want the people of Doncaster to continue shaping the future of the city centre and be active participants in its success – whether that be using it on a regular basis, living or trading there, or getting involved in community activities.

The city centre must connect with all communities and create opportunities and benefits for people and businesses across our many towns, villages and neighbourhoods. Everyone has a role to play, and everyone can contribute to its future.



WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT THE CITY CENTRE

Amenities - People speak highly of the food and drink offer. They appreciate retail options that are not met in communities but want a more diverse shopping offer including independent traders. Young people want to have fun when shopping and more shops that target them.

Environment - Residents want more green spaces to help generate pride, improve the experience of being in the city centre and make it more child and family friendly.

Safety and security – People want to feel safe in all areas of the city centre. This is a key priority and influences decisions about visiting the city centre. Young people felt a more visible presence of services and trusted adults would help.

Entertainment - Residents enjoy city centre festivals and events. It is a priority for many that future entertainment is family friendly and affordable. They want to celebrate Doncaster's history and buildings through culture and arts. Many young people visit the city centre to use entertainment venues and want areas where children can come together and play, including through sport.

Accessibility - Residents highly value public transport links but want connectivity to improve. Young people want better public transport to help reduce traffic in the city centre. People like the layout and the pedestrian areas but want more seating and better public toilets. There are mixed views about parking with both positive and negative comments about the quality, availability and affordability of car parks.



35% of respondents to our survey said they visited the city centre every week but 19% visit three times per year or less, and 1% said they never go to the city centre.

Shopping (61%) and Food/Drink (47%) were the most common reasons for visiting the city centre.

65% of respondents said the quality and variety of shops is very important but only 11% rate it either 'good' or 'very good'. More than half of respondents gave it a negative rating.

Almost half (49%) of respondents said improving safety and security should be the priority for immediate action.

BUSINESS SENTIMENT

Business sentiment closely reflects the views of residents. Cleanliness and safety are top priorities. 52% of South Yorkshire businesses see their city centre as being important to fulfilling their own ambitions, while 82% see it as being important to attracting new investors. Consultation by Doncaster Chamber identified three top city centre priorities:

- 1 Creating a safe, clean and accessible city centre
- 2 Updating the offer for businesses, residents and visitors
- 3 Innovating in the use of green spaces and the built environment

VISION STATEMENT

A safe, prosperous, vibrant and inclusive city centre that builds on our heritage and is fit for the future.

Our vision statement reflects the views of residents and businesses, and summarises our ambitions for the city centre:

SAFE:

First and foremost, the city centre must be and feel safe. This is the cornerstone of an attractive, welcoming and successful city centre.



PROSPEROUS:

At the heart of every thriving city centre is a dynamic and diverse business community, providing opportunities for people to prosper socially and economically. The city centre must be a desirable centre of commerce and in-demand location for new enterprises.

VIBRANT:

Evolving retail habits and new technologies have led to a change in High Streets across the UK. Doncaster city centre must adapt to these challenges and be busy, vibrant and full of life. It should be a hive of activity with a diverse offering - seven days a week, during the daytime and into the evening, including through the presence of a larger residential community.

INCLUSIVE:

The city centre must be appealing and accessible to all of Doncaster's residents as well as visitors to our city, through its offer and experience, services and the built environment, as a place of diversity and community cohesion.

FIT FOR THE FUTURE:

The city centre must reflect Doncaster's proud heritage and we must build on our strengths, but it is also essential to look to the future, take advantage of new technologies, and be flexible enough to adapt to opportunities as trends change and time moves on.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

We will frequently measure a range of indicators to monitor the health of the city centre and enable action where required.

Our headline goals are:

- ✓ More **people feel safe** in the city centre
- ✓ More **people are visiting** the city centre
- ✓ More **money is being spent** in the city centre
- ✓ More **homes and business premises are being built** in the city centre



CORE AMBITIONS AND KEY OBJECTIVES

Our core ambitions and key objectives set out the vision in more detail. They will be the basis for organising activity, focusing interventions and monitoring progress.

Ambition	Summary	Key Objectives
A flourishing city centre that is safe and welcoming to all	The city centre should be a place for everyone. This means creating a city centre that is more inclusive, accessible and welcoming to all, reconnecting local people with the city centre and attracting new audiences. First and foremost, it must feel safe. It should be clean, attractive, vibrant and be more family friendly.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Providing a better experience for residents and visitors 2 Creating a more inclusive city centre 3 Reconnecting people with their city centre and attracting new audiences
A successful and resilient city centre economy	A successful city centre economy is fundamental to the vitality and sustainability of the city centre. That means developing an environment where businesses of all sizes and at all stages can succeed, supporting independent traders and encouraging a variety of business sectors to locate in the city centre to supplement a strong retail offer, including a thriving market.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Supporting enterprises at all stages and sizes 5 Supporting specialist and unique business clusters
A living heart to the city	The city centre should provide more homes for our growing population and be a desirable place to live. This means creating a larger and stronger residential community by developing a wider range of housing options, including new family homes and older people's housing alongside purpose-built apartment living. As in other communities, the city centre must also provide what its residents need on a daily basis, such as schools, healthcare, local amenities and access to outdoor spaces.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Providing effective business support services 7 A broad and high-quality housing offer 8 Community facilities to support urban living 9 Fostering a strong and resilient residential community
A thriving hub of leisure, culture, heritage and services.	The city centre should offer access to arts and cultural experiences that are not always available in our local communities, including in music, art, film, theatre, and through exhibitions, events and street entertainment. The city centre will have a diverse food and drink offer, leisure activities and a vibrant evening economy. It will also be an essential, accessible centre of public services and institutions, providing vital services and opportunities for people across the whole city.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Offering quality experiences for all through art, culture, heritage, faith and leisure opportunities 11 Providing accessible services for the whole city 12 Supporting events and animation of the city centre
A green and inviting city centre	The city centre should have high quality, attractive and safe public spaces with a strong emphasis on landscaping that softens the streetscape. This means creating new and improved public spaces, addressing vacant sites, making the most of our canal and riverside, and enhancing access to our existing parks. It involves planting more trees, enhancing biodiversity, and fostering sustainable development solutions to create a greener and more welcoming environment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13 Greening the city centre and improving access to greenspace 14 Creating new spaces and enhancing existing public spaces 15 Transforming vacant sites and empty buildings
A well connected city centre	Access to, and across, the city centre should be easy. This includes clear, safe routes for pedestrians, cyclists and people using mobility aids, with appropriate facilities including more seating. It means good quality parking provision and appropriate vehicle access for traders, operators, visitors and residents. High quality public transport services should help residents get to and around the city centre as well as other key destinations such as the retail parks, racecourse and hospital.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16 Better public transport 17 Improving walking and cycling access 18 Supporting vehicle access

DELIVERING OUR AMBITIONS: UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

As we implement the strategy to achieve our aims and objectives, the following principles will guide our approach to new proposals, interventions and changes in the city centre. **Distinctively Doncaster** is the key theme, underpinning all change and ambitions.

Distinctively Doncaster

Reflecting the city's heritage and culture. Change and development must recognise, respect and reflect the features, landmarks and characteristics that define the city and make Doncaster special, including the built heritage and the well-loved markets. The riverside will be restored as a green and blue ribbon connecting the centre to the wider city and providing an aspirational setting for new development, including a step-change in city centre living.

The city centre will be both locally cherished and known more widely on the national and even international stage.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

A clear message that Doncaster wants to support entrepreneurial activity in the city centre and an enterprise culture at all scales.

QUALITY PLACES

Well-designed buildings, streets, spaces and homes. High-quality design should be the default.

CLIMATE RESPONSIVE

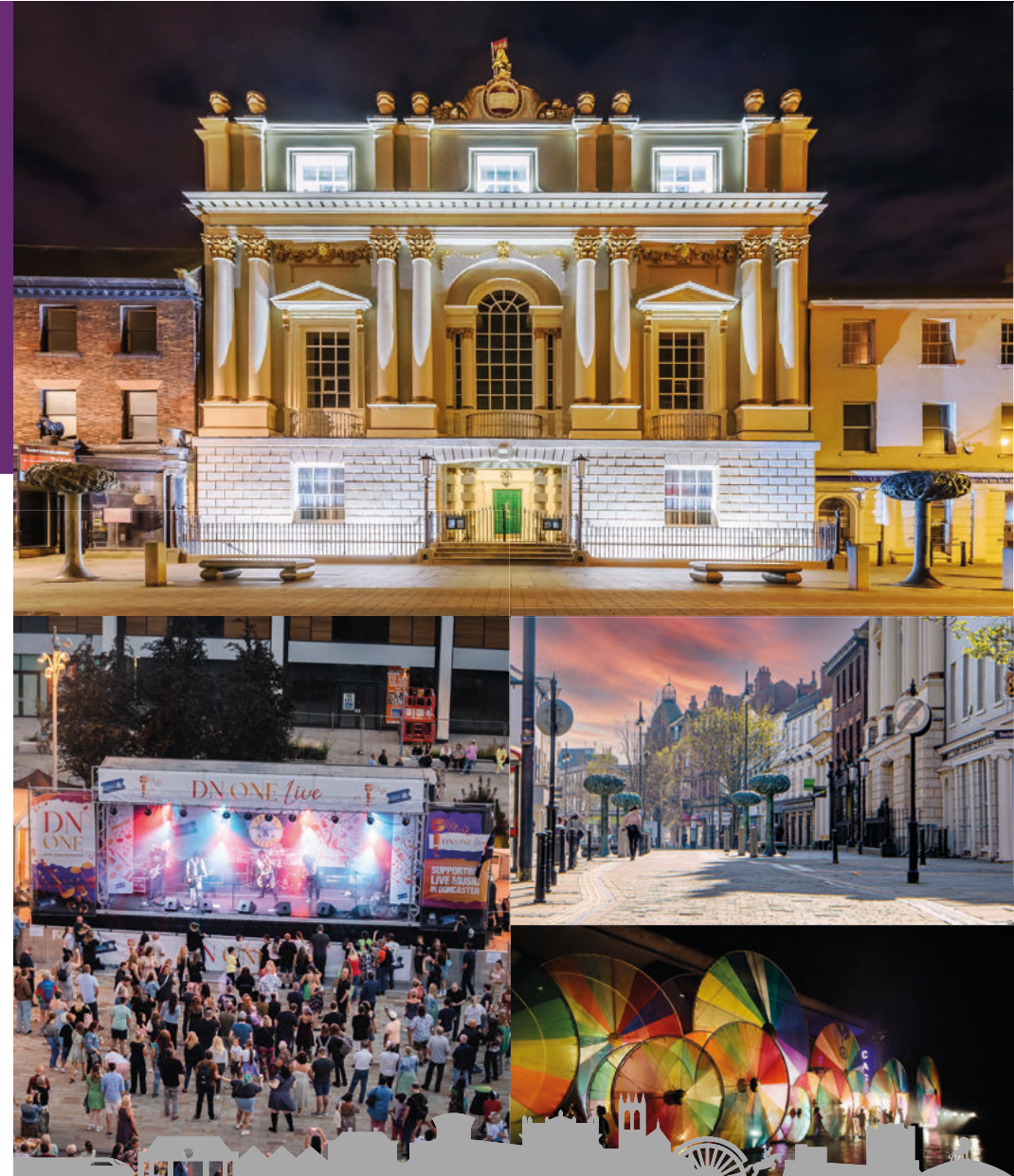
Pro-actively responding to key issues including flooding, energy supply, carbon emissions, rising temperatures and other implications of climate change.

COMMUNITY CENTRED

Widening participation and ensuring Doncaster's people are central to shaping the future of the city centre.

FORWARD THINKING

New development should be designed with future needs and opportunities in mind, making good use of new technologies and digital solutions.



AREAS FOR CHANGE

Four 'Areas for Change' have initially been identified based around broad principles of the type of change, development and interventions that could be appropriate. The boundaries are not rigid, but these broad areas will help to focus the development of investment plans and supporting activities.

Within the Areas for Change are Opportunity Sites, which identify key locations for potential future development, regeneration and investment.

DONCASTER'S BEATING HEART

This represents the retail, business, civic and cultural core of the city centre - the primary area of focus and first choice for investment, development and activity.

WATERFRONT

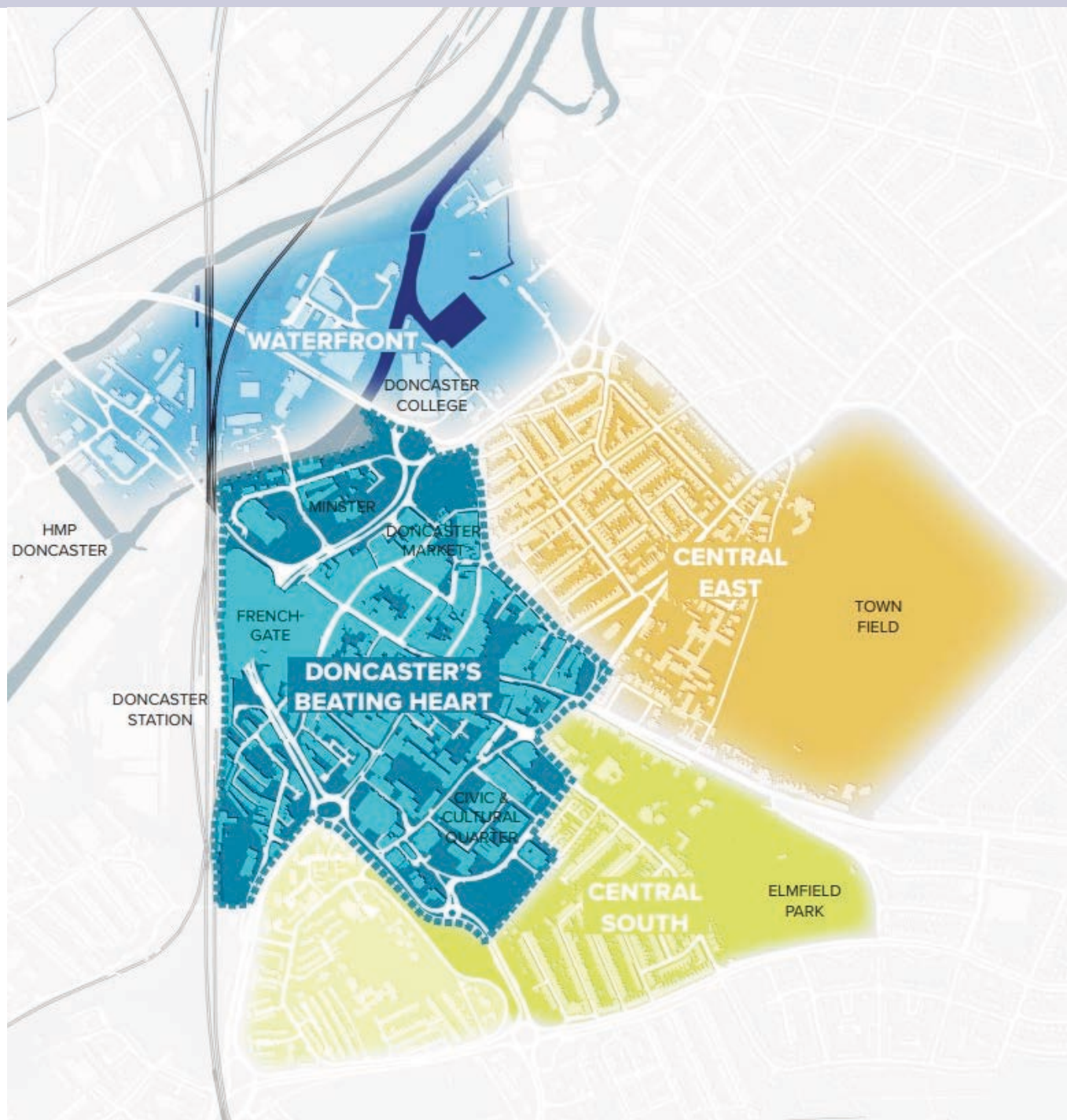
Waterfront represents a major development opportunity for the city and has great potential to deliver a step-change in what the city has to offer.

CENTRAL EAST

Central East is a mostly residential area to the east of the Heart, stretching out to Town Field, with potential for more moderate enhancements to the quality of living environment.

CENTRAL SOUTH

Central South takes in Elmfield Park and the neighbourhoods to the south of the Heart. There are opportunities to improve the quality of the residential environment.



DONCASTER'S BEATING HEART

The 'Beating Heart' is the main retail, business and leisure focus of the city. It is the area that visitors are most likely to interact with and represents what people are likely to think of as the 'city centre'.

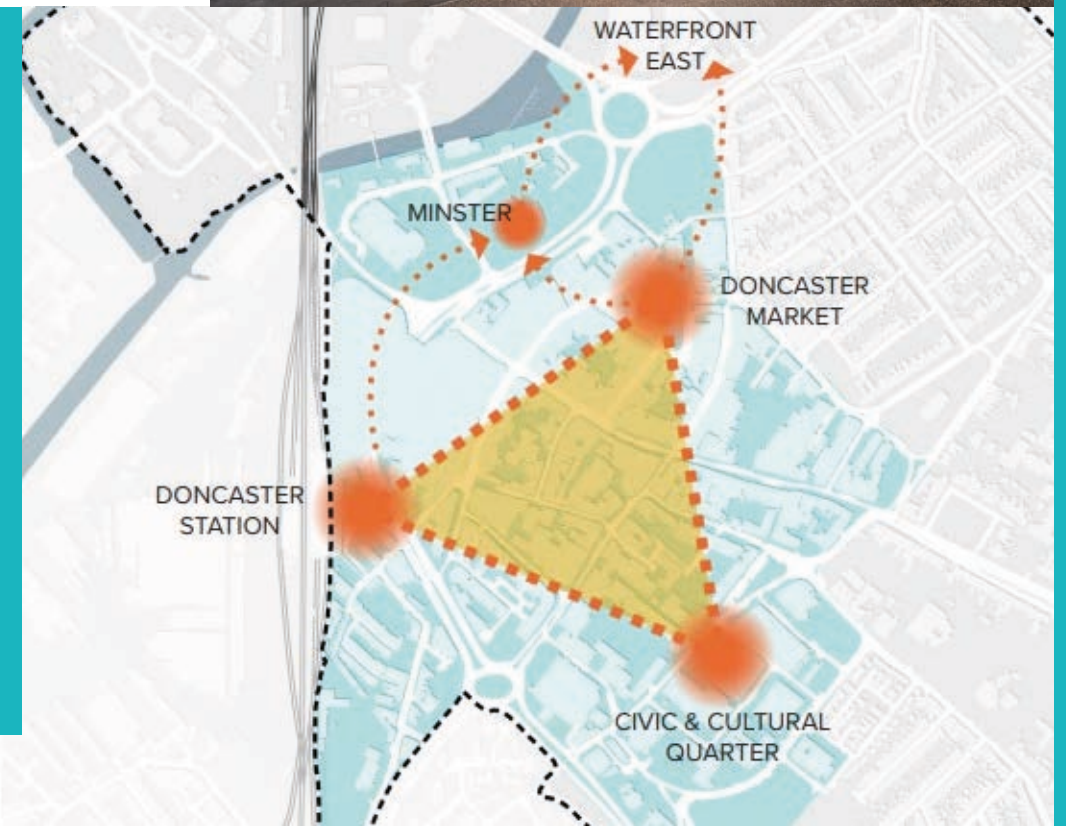
This area needs to be the focus for investment and interventions within the city centre and the first-choice for most new development. Establishing a strong and vibrant heart to the city centre is vital. It can help to generate a 'buzz' that creates further demand and investment in peripheral areas.

Within the 'Beating Heart', three core areas of regeneration and investment focus have previously been identified (Doncaster Market, Civic & Cultural Quarter and Doncaster Station) with the connections between these areas also being critical. Links between these key destinations, and out towards the Minster and Waterfront, should be strengthened with appropriate new development projects to continue improvements.

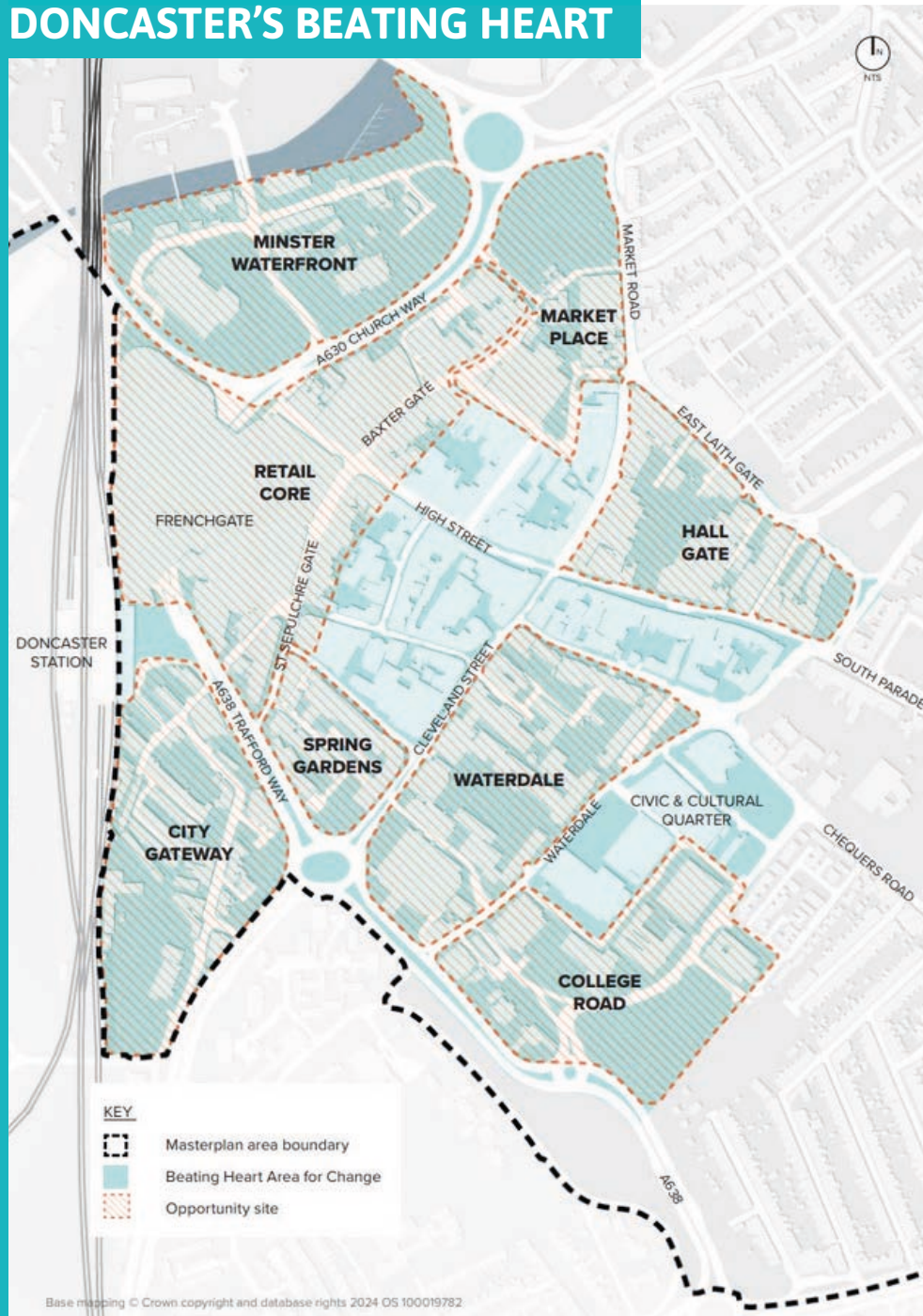


KEY AIMS FOR DONCASTER'S BEATING HEART:

- Increase feelings of safety and security
- Increase city centre living and business activities
- Activities to support the retail and service economy
- Support and enhancement of Doncaster Market as a key city centre destination, building on its existing strengths and market traders
- Continued development of the Civic & Cultural Quarter and City Gateway (Railway Station) areas
- Maximise the benefits of key heritage buildings and assets, including Doncaster Minster and the surrounding area
- Address long term site and unit vacancy, particularly in large and prominent buildings and areas such as Waterdale and The Colonnades.
- Enhanced public realm that guides people between key destinations, provides improved access, and delivers a high-quality setting for the city centre's buildings and infrastructure.
- Improved connectivity across major highway corridors, in particular Trafford Way and Church Way.



DONCASTER'S BEATING HEART



Within the Beating Heart area are several potential Opportunity Sites:

Retail Core – This area should remain the first choice location for the retail and service economy. The focus is expected to be on service delivery including safety and cleanliness. There is potential to further enhance the public realm through planting, public art, seating and lighting.

Market Place - Doncaster Market is a vital asset and city centre destination. The market and the wider Market Place area is a key priority and should be further enhanced through a dedicated plan to support existing traders and the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange and Wool Market.

Minster Waterfront - The Minster area is disconnected from the retail areas but is a key part of the historic city centre. There is potential for regeneration to provide stronger frontage to the road and river corridors, improve the setting of the Minster and provide a much better experience for people using the area.

Waterdale - There is a significant opportunity for residential and commercial development on the vacant site at Waterdale, linking the Civic & Cultural Quarter back into the city's heart.

City Gateway - The City Gateway area around Doncaster Railway Station is a key point of arrival in the city. New development should complement and build on the Gateway One development, a sustainable office hub due to open in 2027.

Hall Gate - This area has potential for redevelopment to address the significant gap sites, notably the former Gaumont cinema site, and sites along Hall Gate and within the centre of the block.

College Road - In this area, there is potential to widen the regeneration that has taken place in the Civic and Cultural Quarter to improve the southern edge of the city centre and the transition into residential areas.

Spring Gardens - While this area is still used as a movement route, it has largely become a back land site offering little surveillance. It has the potential to be enhanced including with infill development. Pedestrians could be encouraged to use other streets to support local traders.

WATERFRONT

Waterfront will be a key location for regeneration of the city centre. It includes very large areas of brownfield and industrial land, representing a major development opportunity for Doncaster.

In many towns and cities, waterfront development has played a transformational role in the growth of urban centre living, business, and leisure activity, enhancing the image and vibrancy of the place. Doncaster's waterfront sites can fulfil a similar role. They could be relatively flexible to accommodate emerging opportunities but will benefit from a strong vision to ensure high-quality development meets the wider needs of the city and complements rather than challenges the viability of the Beating Heart area.

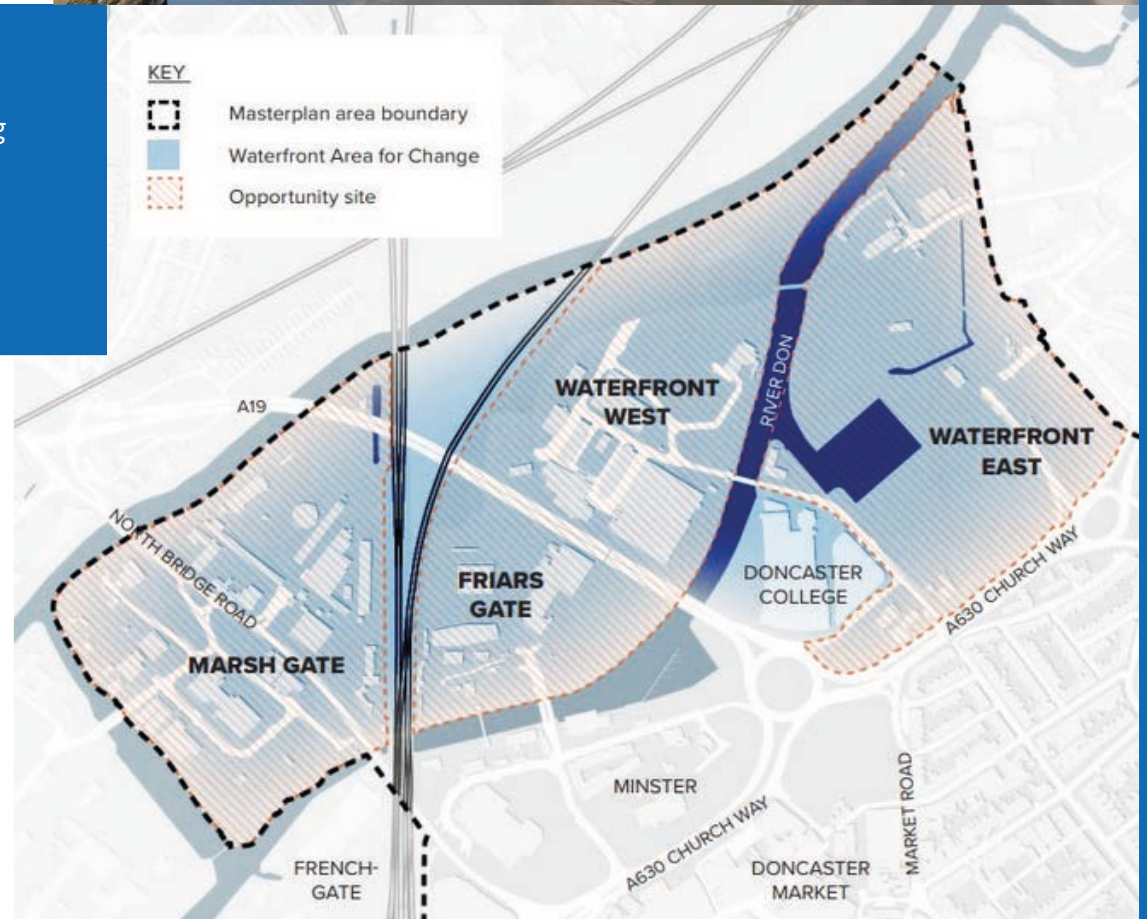


KEY AIMS FOR WATERFRONT:

- Mixed-used living, working and leisure (subject to resolving existing issues of viability and technical challenges including flooding).
- Restoring the prominence of the riverside as a public destination and movement route.
- Connecting the area more strongly to the city centre, linking across Church Way

Waterfront comprises of four potential Opportunity Sites:

- Waterfront East
- Waterfront West
- Friars Gate
- Marshgate



CITY CENTRE COMMUNITIES

Central East lies to the east of the Beating Heart and is mostly housing alongside the city's main green spaces – Town Field and Elmfield Park – and the specialist local centre at Nether Hall Road and Copley Road. This area falls along the routes out to the Royal Infirmary and racecourse and plays an important role in the approach to the city. Central South includes the housing communities south and west of the Civic Centre, including the Balby Bridge Estate.

The immediate focus in these area is likely to be on enhancing existing assets and amenities rather than on significant new development including public realm, access routes, park enhancements, and the quality of streets and spaces. The former Scarborough House site on Chequer Road represents a potential development opportunity.

Opportunity sites include:

- Nether Hall Road / Copley Road
- Town Fields, Regent Square, Elmfield Park, Beechfield Road Park
- Scarborough House Site, Chequer Road
- Balby Bridge Estate



SERVICE DELIVERY



Over the last decade of challenging financial times, many Local Authorities and public services have withdrawn from neighbourhood working approaches. In Doncaster, we have resisted this as far as possible. The 'Thrive' programme is an evolution of our area-based service delivery model. It will be developed and mobilised through 2025, providing a fresh focus on neighbourhood renewal with a strong prevention and community-centred approach.

As part of this work, we are developing our Local Partnership Delivery Teams in each of the five localities across Doncaster: City Centre, North, South, East and Central. These Local Partnership Delivery Teams will bring agencies and key community stakeholders together to plan and drive tactics and delivery, tailored to the strengths and needs of individual communities.

As well as delivering services directly, the teams will be central to the development of an increasingly strong relationship between partner organisations, the voluntary sector, and with local residents and communities.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION – IMMEDIATE INTERVENTIONS

During development of the strategy a number of urgent interventions and priority actions were identified, reflecting the views of residents and other stakeholders. In order to make an impact as soon as possible, £1m of additional Council funding was allocated by the Mayor and Cabinet to immediately commence activity in the city centre. The following actions have already been implemented or are currently underway:



New CCTV/Tannoy System

Installation of new and upgraded CCTV cameras, and a new public address system, at key locations across the city centre to deter anti-social behaviour, tackle crime and support enforcement activity



City Centre Officers

Recruitment of additional Neighbourhood Response Team Officers, City Centre Engagement Officers and Enforcement Officers.

These additional staff will provide high visibility patrols, engagement activity, assistance in enforcement initiatives and prevention of anti-social behaviour, support for city centre events and responses to incidents and accidents.



Street Cleaning

Additional Street Scene officers to improve cleanliness in the city centre.

Dedicated new city centre street cleansing equipment including a street sweeper vehicle, a narrow caged electric utility vehicle with jet wash, mobile jet washers, chewing gum removal machine and smart bins.



Events

Formation of a new City Centre Events group with representation from the public, private and voluntary sectors to develop an enhanced events calendar.

The first events included 'Free Play' in Sir Nigel Gresley Square and the 'City Of Lights' event incorporating the Christmas Light Switch On.



STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION – 2025/2026 ACTION PLAN

In addition to the interventions already started, we will undertake the following actions during 2025/26. Our Implementation Plan will be updated at the end of year one to reflect new government programmes that are currently in development alongside further planning work.

City Centre Projects and Enhanced Service Delivery

- 1** Embed new partnership resources including additional staff and new equipment to improve cleanliness, safety and security in the city centre including an uplift in enforcement activity to tackle individuals committing acts of anti-social behaviour.
- 2** Develop a City Centre Local Partnership Delivery Team, to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of services, strengthen relationships with the community, and work with individuals that most require it to provide support at an early stage.
- 3** In partnership with South Yorkshire Police, explore expansion of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme, or equivalent measures, to provide more partnership staff with powers to address issues such as street drinking, begging and anti-social behaviour.
- 4** Deliver and promote an enhanced annual calendar of city centre events and activities to encourage more people to visit the city centre and support city centre businesses
- 5** On-site delivery and construction of major city centre development projects: Gateway One and Waterfront remediation/temporary greenspace
- 6** Deliver new investment to deliver further enhancements and encourage greater use of Town Field, in line with the Future Parks programme.
- 7** Explore and progress new public and private sector partnership investments and commercial agreements for the development of key city centre Opportunity Sites.



STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION – 2025/2026 ACTION PLAN

Strategic Planning and Development

- 8.** Develop a new city centre masterplan including more detailed proposals key projects and new housing sites, setting out priorities for delivery over the short, medium and long term.
- 9.** Deliver a new Markets Enhancement Strategy, working with market traders, to produce a strategy for the next phase of investment, development and operation of Doncaster Market and the wider markets area.
- 10.** Explore and progress the provision and/or relocation of public services and institutions into the city centre, in particular the Health on the High Street model.
- 11.** Produce detailed project proposals for new capital investment funded through the Community Regeneration Partnership and Long Term Plan for Towns programmes.
- 12.** With the business community, review and explore the potential to progress beneficial partnership schemes such as accreditation schemes, Improvement Districts or digital promotions.
- 13.** Explore options to improve connectivity between key destinations within the city centre including the transport interchange and Doncaster market.

Governance and Performance Monitoring

- 14.** Undertake a review of existing city centre data sources, analysis and information sharing agreements, including opportunities to improve intelligence gathering and develop new mechanisms for tracking the opinions and perceptions of residents.
- 15.** Develop a dashboard of city centre information which can be shared with the city centre business community and reported publicly
- 16.** Implement quarterly performance monitoring and enhanced governance arrangements to oversee delivery of the city centre strategy, city centre masterplan and associated funding programmes.
- 17.** Implement a communications programme to inform and engage with the public and stakeholders regarding city centre projects and activity.



City of
Doncaster
Council

