

## **CLOA Case Studies: Heritage**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

This paper presents case studies about how councils are driving growth and attracting visitors through their leadership of, and support for, the local historic environment.

### **Recommendation**

Members are invited to note the report.

### **Action**

To be taken forward by officers as directed by members.

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### ***St Albans - A New Vision for Heritage***

St Albans City & District Council is working to strengthen its visitor and wider economy by developing its magnificent Roman, early Christian, medieval and modern day heritage. The aim is to attract an additional 200,000 visits to the City.

St Albans is rich in heritage stretching back over 2,000 years. The City is well known for its Roman history. It has important stories to tell. It is the site of the longest continued Christian worship in England, a medieval Cathedral city, and an important place in the development of the Magna Carta. More modern day heritage, for example related to the City's part in the history of the Ryder Cup, are of significant interest to visitors.

The Council is leading private and community sector partners to deliver a new vision for heritage within its wider economy. The focus is on the development of an integrated museum and gallery in the little used 1826 former Town Hall, located in the heart of the City. Redevelopment of this historic and iconic site will offer visitors renewed reason to visit the city centre, to linger longer, and to spend their money!

At the same time the Cathedral is aiming to improve its visitor experience through a new welcome centre, education facilities and contemporary interpretation of the heritage. The project is a catalyst to improve the famous Roman cluster of Verulamium Museum, the Roman Theatre and Hypocaust, working with the Gorhambury Estate

### ***Revitalising Halifax Town Centre***

Calderdale Council is running a project to transform the Piece Hall, a unique Grade 1 listed Georgian masterpiece in the very heart of Halifax, West Yorkshire. The project's vision is to transform the opportunity for understanding, enjoyment and engagement with the Piece Hall, by establishing state-of-the-art interpretation and learning centres, offering both formal and informal learning opportunities and brand new opportunities to volunteer. The project, worth £19 million, also hopes to conserve the Hall, whilst installing the necessary modern infrastructure and services to deliver high quality business and public facilities. To complement this, regeneration of the Hall's courtyard is planned to transform it into an attractive and thriving town square surrounded by a range of high quality visitor facilities and an events programme to draw in local people and visitors from outside the area. The Piece Hall will become a vibrant arena for business, pleasure, entertainment, learning, participation and relaxation. Overall, the plans aim to create a sustainable, dynamic 21st century cultural and creative business economy within the unique setting of Calderdale's heritage centrepiece.

Three further projects are being developed alongside the Piece Hall by the Council and its key partners. A young people's Centre, Orangebox, will benefit from a £4.2 million investment, while a new Central Library and Archive Centre will receive £9.25 million. The £5.2 million Cornerstone extension to Square Chapel Centre for the Arts, which brings in the

22 May 2013

**Item 9**

best touring theatre, music, comedy and dance to Halifax, is the final piece of the jigsaw that will transform this area of the town centre, complementing the Piece Hall, the new library and the Orangebox Young People's Centre, making it the key destination for culture and tourism in the town.

***York Museums Trust***

York Museums Trust is an independent charity which manages York Castle Museum, Yorkshire Museum and Gardens, York Art Gallery and York St Mary's. The buildings and their contents are owned by the City of York Council, which has agreed to long-term funding of the Trust. In 2002 the Council entered into a partnership agreement with the newly constituted York Museums Trust (YMT) to turnaround the business performance of the museums which had been losing an average of 37,000 visits every year over the previous ten years and were costing around £120,000 more to run each year. The museums are now central to the City of York Council's ambition to be a world class city recognises as a great place to invest, visit and do business. They attract over 600,000 visits every year and make a significant contribution to growth:

**\*YMT brings £6.4 million annually into the regional economy.**

**\*This supports 100 full time equivalent jobs for York people.**

**\*The economic impact of visits to YMT venues is worth at least £15.5 million per year to the York economy.**

**\*This is the equivalent of 196 full time jobs supported in the York economy...**

**\*...and represents a 'return on investment' of around £10 of impact for every £1 invested by City of York Council.**