MakeItYork

Business Plan

2022 - 2025

Photo by Ravage Productions

Introduction

Greg Dyke
Chair

I first came to York in my twenties to study at The University of York. Forty years later, I became the Chancellor of the same University, a role I undertook for eleven very special years. I share this now as Make It York looks to enhance its collaboration with the city's higher education sector. Indeed, with approximately 40,000 students and more than 5,000 members of staff, the city's universities and colleges have a significant impact on York and its economy.

As a city, York has a long history to be proud of; our walls and cobbled streets are well walked; we have brilliant museums and plans to develop others; we have world class culture and events and an appetite to do more, and we have a city centre with a difference with our markets and a large number of independent retailers. As a city we are also known for our ideas and creativity, along with being the UK's first and only UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts.

We want York to be a city of investment and opportunity, of commerce and tourism, not only for visitors, but for the benefit of the 200,000+ people who live, work and play in the city on a daily basis.

As an organisation Make it York is not complacent. We will learn from other cities in Europe and further afield; we will continue to work together with our partners and stakeholders; we do plan to further develop a 365-day place which is vibrant, respected and of which we can all be proud.

Sarah Loftus
Managing Director

When I joined Make It York as Managing Director in November 2021, I was overwhelmed by the volume of people who thanked me for the tireless work that Make It York undertook throughout the pandemic. York residents and business owners are proud of their City and I would therefore like to offer my heartfelt thanks to our 800+ members for not only making me feel so welcome, but for the way you all adapted to ensure that York remained open for business throughout the last two years and inspired such a strong recovery.

Now that we have the green light to open the city without restrictions (at the time of writing), we look forward to working in partnership with York BID, as well as the city's attractions, accommodation providers and hospitality venues to build back even better.

Despite ongoing challenges such as rising energy costs, difficulties in attracting staff and supply chain uncertainties, Make It York pledges to work tirelessly to make York stronger by promoting the city to local, national and international audiences, as well as providing an unforgettable Yorkshire welcome and experience for all residents and visitors to this great city.

Our first Make It York business plan demonstrates that we mean business and we are proudly focused on what we aim to deliver for this city. We have developed a clear and commercially viable plan, while at the same time accepting the commercial risk associated with focusing more closely on cultural and eco-tourism, as well as including more resident-focused activity in our marketing and event plans.

We know that we are predicting a short-term loss in 2022/23, but we have made the decision to retain a physical visitor information centre in the centre of York, unlike most other UK cities who have permanently closed the doors of their information centres in favour of an online presence. We are committed to keeping our doors open and striving to retain the 'York Welcome' – people will always come first in this city.

We will reach far and wide to support our members by continuing to invest in great experiences that we know residents and visitors enjoy, whilst also being 'thought leaders' as the visitor economy adapts to the post-Covid age. We will encourage visitors to stay longer, take the lead on the city's new tourism strategy and produce our first markets strategy to protect and sustain our unique offering. We will work in partnership wherever possible, encourage sustainable practices and view both York residents and students as valuable participants in our future activities.

Our Vision

Photo by Stevie Campbell Photography

We want our residents to be proud to live here

Make It York will contribute by:

- Creating incredible events that our communities love
- Developing our dynamic and engaging cultural and arts scene
- Ensuring our city centre is attractive and befitting of our city's heritage

We want more businesses to prosper here

Make It York will contribute by:

- Supporting local businesses with advice and information
- Building strategic partnerships locally, nationally and globally
- Attracting and retaining the right investment and talent for the city

We want more people to come here to visit

Make It York will contribute by:

- Making York famous as a first-class destination for leisure, business and study
- Creating unrivalled experiences for visitors across the city
- Supporting local businesses who help make this happen

We will use data, evidence and smart technology to help businesses make the right decisions, as well as to attract visitors and new investors.

We will draw on the expertise of a talented team of Make It York staff, with local, national and international experience, and an influential Board of Directors including local Councillors, business leaders and city stakeholders.

We will work strategically to identify and support areas that are important to the city's future; the needs of York are always changing and that's why we are always improving our services to meet the City's evolving demands.

OUR PRIORITIES 2022-2025

CREATING A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION

Photo by Ravage Productions

MAKE IT YORK COMPANY VALUES

VALUES	BEHAVIOURS
ENTREPRENEURIAL	We will champion new ways of working We will deliver great results We will always be improving
COLLABORATIVE	We will work in partnership We will share our resources We will support our teams
RESPONSIBLE	We will put customers first We will do what we say We will be true to our City
AMBITIOUS	We will make York the best place it can be We will make MIY the best company it can be We will become the best team we can be

MAKE IT YORK BUSINESS PRIORITIES

We will:

- Ensure all our policies and procedures are up to date.
- Improve our financial and budget management procedures, so we spend our resources more effectively to do more with less.
- Tender our audit/external accounting services in 2022.
- Review our finance systems and identify a better platform in 2022.
- Implement a clear tendering and commissioning process that is open and transparent and gets value for the City.
- Hold one awards ceremony to celebrate the successes of our tourism, hospitality and culture sectors.
- Develop and implement a set of measures to evaluate our performance that will include an annual membership survey.
- Develop 3 new activities that will diversify our business model to ensure our financial stability, e.g. reviewing our digital offering, Tap and Give and expansion of the successful York Pass scheme.
- Achieve Good Business Charter status.
- Evaluate all our events through impact assessments.

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

We will measure our success by:

- Carrying out an annual 'member' survey.
- Hosting monthly member events.
- Monitoring PR, media and social media coverage.
- Presenting performance reports to the MIY Board.
- Producing Quarterly Narrative reports for City of York Council.
- Increasing the number of members engaged in activities.
- Increasing the number and quality of events and activations.

St Nicholas Fair 2021
Photo credit Gareth Buddo

OUR PRIORITIES 2022-2025

PIONEERING YORK AS THE BEST TOURISM CITY IN THE UK

Photo by Charlotte Graham

"One of the reasons I love Visit York is the help and support which I receive from the whole team – you are always my 'Go-To' choice in the first instance and you have never let me down. I have been a member of Visit York for almost 17 years now and have always shouted from the roof tops about how good the organisation is, and how essential it is to York as a whole – businesses, tourists and residents alike. One of the reasons I renew my membership year after year is because I know Visit York will be there to hold my hand when I lose my way or things get tough – this last year has been a test of that, with you and your fellow colleagues coming through with help and advice every time! Please could I trouble you to pass on my thanks to all, and I wish everyone a very successful year ahead, together with many more to come."

Susan Kitchener
York Luxury Holidays

Visit York Tourism Award Winners 2022

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES 2022-2025

We will:

- Promote York as a leisure, business and visitor destination, by partnering with VisitEngland and VisitBritain, overall ensuring York is included in leading international, regional and national marketing initiatives with the aim of increasing visitor spend in the City by 5% above the Retail Index-Base figure by 2025.

- Continue to develop and grow our Visit York membership scheme, increasing our membership by 2% year on year and maintaining our retention rate at 94%.

- Work with the Tourism Sector to increase 5% GVA growth in the sector by 2025 by maximising private sector led investment into the City Centre, building a strong evening economy (incorporating York's Purple Flag status) and attracting new tourism into the city.

- Develop and support the Tourism Advisory Board leading on, contributing to and implementing, the development of a new Tourism Strategy.

- Manage a Visitor Information Service which celebrates the "York Welcome".

- Attract new business tourism to the city by providing a clear and effective process for responding to conference enquiries with high quality support and work proactively to attract new enquiries appropriate to the city.

- Pioneering new ways of managing tourism, cultural tourism and eco-tourism, to ensure sustainable growth

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY 2022-2023

We will:

- Grow our Membership back to 2018/2019 levels.

- Increase followers, impressions and engagement on our Visit York social media channels by 5% year-on-year throughout 2022/23. For context, at the time of writing Visit York has a total of 132,619 followers across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and we achieve in excess of 1 million impressions and 50,000 engagements per calendar month (current record stands at 1.7 million impressions and 74k engagements in December 2021).

- Increase footfall, occupancy, average length of stay and the overall value of the visitor economy by developing seasonal domestic leisure marketing campaigns aimed at the local, regional and national UK markets with campaign partners from across the sector, as well as pushing 'York and beyond' with twin centre break packages.

- Build on the success of York's domestic marketing campaign activity over the last 12 months by targeting international markets. We are looking to mirror the chosen VisitBritain overseas markets, initially concentrating on North America and Europe and then starting to refocus on the longer haul Asian markets as they re-emerge. To return international visitation into York to pre-pandemic levels (3.87% of overall visitation) by the end of 2023 whilst maintaining domestic visitation. Measured by monthly visitor surveys and biennial economic impact modelling.

- Grow our press coverage value and reach by 5% year-on-year throughout 2022/23, as measured by our KANTAR media monitoring platform.

- Hold 12 member training and networking events across the year.

- Measure our effectiveness by monthly visitor surveys and biennial economic impact modelling.

OUR PRIORITIES 2022-2025

Pop-Up Patio, York Theatre Royal, Summer 2020
Photograph by Karen Boyes. © York Citizens' Theatre Trust

CREATING HISTORY EVERYDAY THROUGH OUR EVENTS, FESTIVALS AND MARKETS

York Ice Trail 2022
Photo by Charlotte Graham

'Despite having only been Visit York members for a short period, we have found that the opportunities available to us have already made it well worth it. We have experienced increased traffic into our shop and onto our website, and have loved getting to know other local businesses too. The marketing opportunities in particular have been extremely useful to us as a new business!'

Tom Calvert
Chief Executive Officer, Avorium

"Events experience is undoubtably one of Make It York's strengths. Staff are a font of knowledge, they can advise on health and safety, support with licensing and planning proposals and help to transform our idea into a successful city centre event. Over time, THOR'S has grown into a national, much-loved brand – whose roots belong in York. And ultimately without Make It York's trust in our offer and ability to deliver, we wouldn't be here today."

Amanda Monaghan
Director, Thor's Events

EVENTS, FESTIVALS & MARKETS PRIORITIES 2022-2025

We will:

- Manage the Shambles Market by operating the City's Market Charter and supporting existing and new market retailers to bring even more vibrancy to the Market. We will trial speciality markets within the Shambles Market to help grow the diversity and use of the area for local people.

- Lead on developing York's first Market Strategy for the whole of York, ensuring York is leading the way on Market development and sustainability.

- Enhance the City Centre vibrancy by creating new experiences in the City Centre for residents and visitors alike, as well as helping to attract new tenants and businesses to fill vacant city centre premises. Maximising the use of the footstreets, Eye of York and Tower Gardens by creating and promoting a high-profile calendar of events and festivals which add value to the York Experience.

- Develop and enhance the commercial event offerings in the City Centre, including, St Nicholas Christmas Fair, Summer in the City, York Halloween etc. and as a result generate investment in and for the City. We will provide clear and transparent procedures for running City Events and providing appropriate management and support, to ensure all events are held within current laws, regulations and health and safety guidance.

- Support and encourage a variety of free events for residents and visitors to enjoy, including trails, Residents' Festivals and community and voluntary activations.

- Help enable third party events including The Festival of Ideas, The Viking Festival and York Mystery Plays to thrive.

- To help secure value for money and promote fair and transparent procurement, we will develop and utilise a tender process to award major contracts to suppliers.

EVENTS, FESTIVALS & MARKETS ACTIVITY 2022-2023

We will:

- Manage the Shambles Market more effectively in line with the City's Market Charter on behalf of the City of York Council.
- Develop the first Markets Strategy for the City by December 2022.
- Introduce a series of night and specialist markets in the Shambles Market area during the year.
- Deliver five commercial events including the Christmas Market, summer and autumn event including Halloween, Easter and an Arts Trail.
- Assist and support approximately 12 major third party events in a regular non-Covid year, by curating space for events and producing marketing campaigns.
- Curate a year-round programme of public events, catering to peak and off-peak times of the year to encourage seasonality, and create a high-quality, vibrant and attractive city offer that will provide a consistent and uplifting experience for residents and visitors.
- Add resident engagement opportunities to all our events.
- Make our events examples of best practice, to increase quality and where possible, create more sustainable events.
- Promote and implement our new event booking system.
- Develop and design a new programme of events to maximise the spaces we manage.
- Develop a plan for the footstreets we manage.
- Invest £45k into the Christmas Lights provision for the City whilst exploring enhanced sponsorship opportunities.
- Develop an Event Framework to inform York's major events and help shape the future direction of world class City bids, such as the Rugby League World Cup.
- Create an overarching Events Strategy, drawing on the Culture Strategy, City Narrative and Tourism Strategy, and other major local strategies.
- Invest in events monitoring and evaluation.
- Transfer back West Bank, Rowntree, Rawcliffe Country and Hull Road Parks to City of York Council.

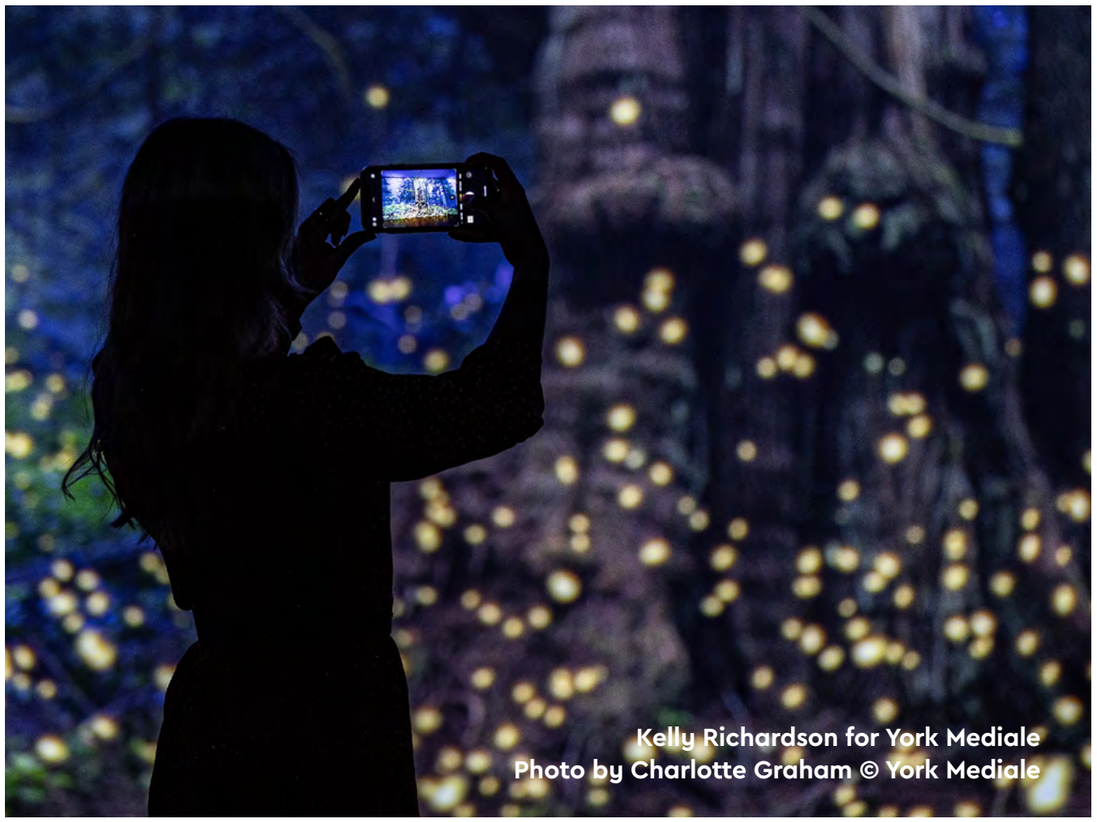
OUR PRIORITIES 2022-2025

MAKING CULTURE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

York Mystery Plays – The Creation and Fall of the Angels
Photo by Kippa Matthews. © York Mystery Plays

"The Arts Council believes that everyone, irrespective of age or background, should have access to arts and culture as both participants and audiences. By embedding arts and culture at the heart of key elements across the city such as regeneration development, children and young people, talent development and retention, residents' wellbeing and tourism, York's Culture Strategy aligns with the vision of Let's Create, our ten year strategy for 2020–2030. I look forward to seeing how York Culture develops and impacts on the lives of the local community and visitors to the city."

Darren Henley,
Chief Executive of Arts Council England



Kelly Richardson for York Mediale
Photo by Charlotte Graham © York Mediale

CULTURE AND WELLBEING PRIORITIES 2022-2025

We will:

- Develop, promote and manage the City's Culture Strategy, York's Creative Future, 2020 – 25. by working with partners to deliver an ambitious and cohesive range of programmes. Promoting the culture and creative sector through media channels, policy work, networking opportunities, working groups and forums.
- Develop an Events Framework for the Culture Strategy that enables the City to proactively identify events it wishes to host and attract.
- Promote and maximise York's UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts Status.
- Support cultural events and initiatives, such as the York Mystery Plays.

Creative Learning Programme Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment © NCEM

CULTURE AND WELLBEING ACTIVITY 2022-2023

We will:

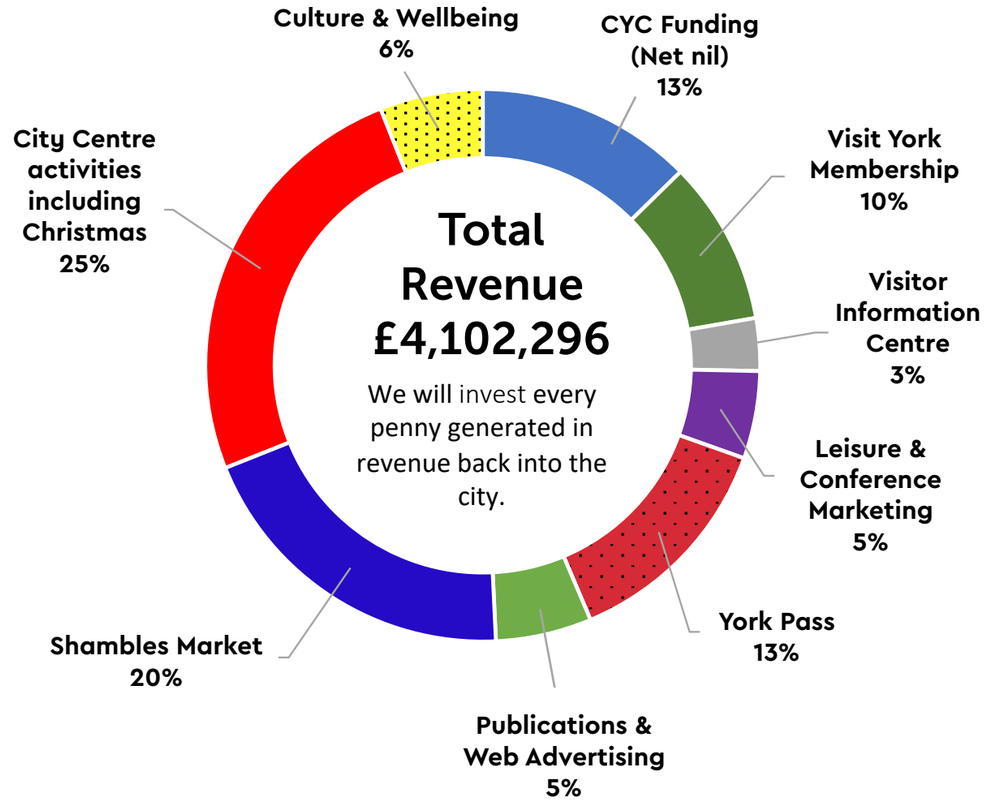
- Establish an open and equitable Culture Forum, led by a largely elected Culture Executive, to drive future Culture Strategy development.
- Set up working groups to facilitate delivery of the different Culture Strategy priorities.
- Support the development of the UNESCO Creative City status and support on production of the UCCN Monitoring Report 2022.
- Establish York TrailBlazers, working alongside York Civic Trust and key partners on an exciting citywide programme of events and activities, including potentially a large scale sculpture trail.
- Secure a cultural listings guide, to enable cultural activities to become more visible and accessible within York.
- Continue to deliver the Cultural Wellbeing grants programme, alongside City of York Council and Ways to Wellbeing (funding dependent, through the Better Care Fund), to support charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups who work in the arts for health.
- Explore the potential for a York Creates Fund.
- Curate a year's programme of cultural initiatives and installations, providing opportunities to artists and cultural practitioners, prioritising initiatives that include engagement with marginalised communities across the city's wards (i.e. not limited to the city centre) and engage closely with students.
- Advocacy for culturally significant events, such as the York Mystery Plays.

OUR FINANCES – OUR INVESTMENT INTO THE CITY

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Culture	£635,542	£726,334	£787,761
Events & markets	£1,789,772	£1,916,193	£2,002,363
Marketing campaigns	£1,676,982	£1,799,948	£1,867,260
	£4,102,296	£4,442,475	£4,657,384

Jorvik Viking Festival © York Archaeological Trust

MAKE IT YORK BUDGET REVENUE BREAKDOWN



As Make It York, it is our privilege to be the city's destination management organisation, enhancing and promoting York as a world-class destination. We continue to play a pivotal and positive role in positioning the city of York to attract leisure and business tourism visitors, as well as engaging and inspiring residents and students to celebrate the joy of living and working in the city.

Our marketing campaigns drive traffic to our digital channels and footfall to our annual programme of cultural events and festivals.

Our commercial revenue enables us to continue supporting and enhancing the city's visitor economy, which (on average) receives 8.4 million visitors per annum, bringing an economic value of £909 million to the city. A fifth of York's visitors stay overnight and more than half of all spend is by overnight visitors. The city's visitor economy also supports more than 28,000 jobs.

We aim to be a commercially viable organisation over the next three years and intend to make no further borrowings from City of York council.

OUR MEMBER BENEFITS

All these benefits are included with Visit York membership:

Presence for your business on visityork.org – including ten images – with **450,000 visits per month**.

All members receive access to the content management system – allowing you to quickly add and update your business info and events.

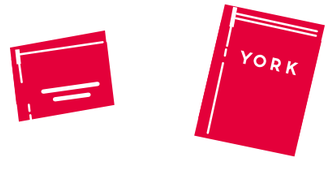
Exposure to **400,000 people** who come to our award-winning Visitor Information Centre each year

Digital exposure to our social media audience of over 140K

- **69,000** Twitter @VisitYork and @VisitYorkBiz with #vymembers
- **52,000** Facebook @VisitYork
- **37,000** Instagram @VisitYork
- **3,200** Linkedin @MakeItYork

Free training sessions – including social media, website and more...

Preferential rates on all enhanced marketing opportunities – including exposure within our 1,300,000 publications distributed globally, digital advertising, and more.



Regular **free member events and networking** opportunities with 850 York businesses

Monthly newsletter bringing you the latest tourism news, events and opportunities.

REASONS TO JOIN

York profiled to 1000s of journalists – with the **opportunity to be included in journalist and blogger press trip itineraries**

Exposure through our 1,300,000 publications distributed globally

Two free York Passes – worth over £100

Free recruitment advertising at jobsinyork.com

Exclusive Insurance deals

Mystery Shopper Services

Save money on your business energy bills

Free legal helpline

Access to our network of over 200 local business supplier contacts at visityork.org/members

Exclusive member discounts through our perks cards

Our wider marketing and PR campaigns reach national and international audiences

Our award-winning marketing campaigns help bring 8.4 million visitors to York, spending £909 million per annum

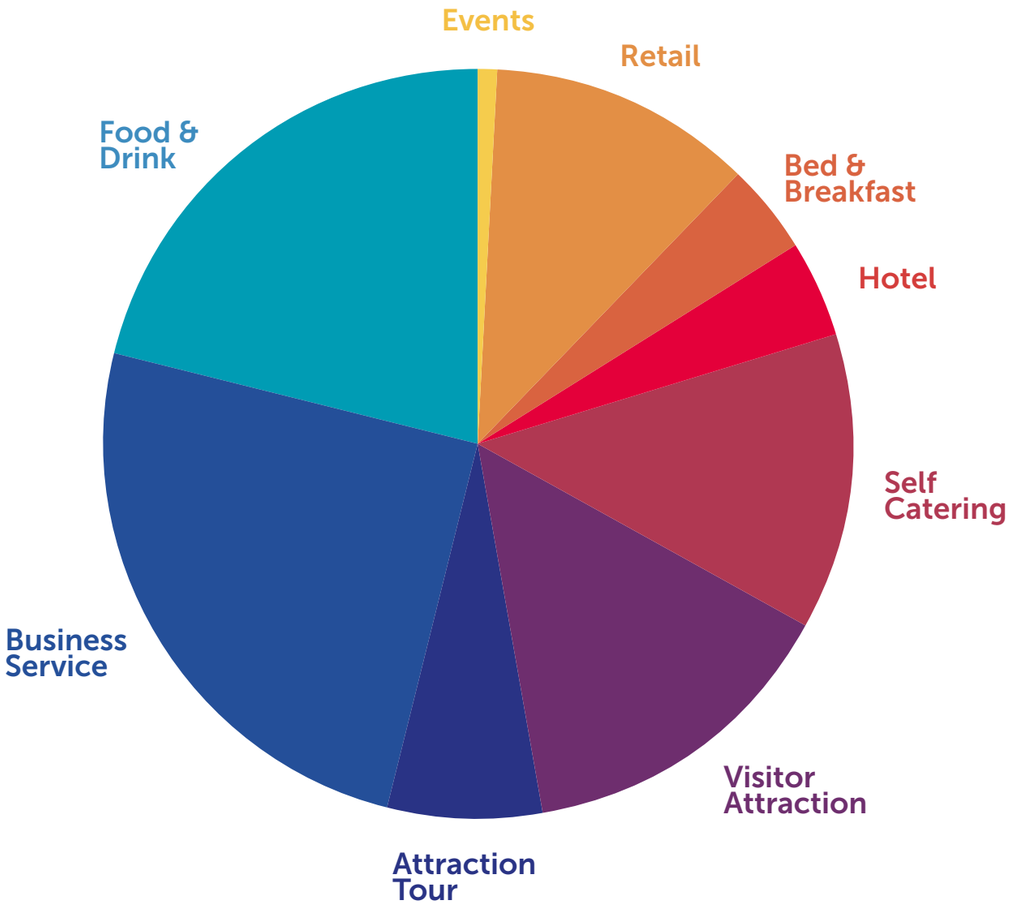
Over 900 pieces of press coverage generated in 2020

We market York as a world-class destination across the globe

13.9 million impressions on Visit York socials in 2020

A network of 850 businesses

VISIT YORK MEMBERSHIP BY SECTOR



MAKE IT YORK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greg Dyke
Chair

Sarah Loftus
Managing Director

Cllr Nigel Ayre
City of York Council

Professor Chris Bailey
Cultural Policy Consultant

Cllr Denise Craghill
City of York Council

Joan Concannon
Director of External Relations, University of York

David Horne
Managing Director
LNER

Mark Fordyce
Managing Director
York Data Services

James Farrar
York and North Yorkshire LEP
Adviser to the Board

Lyndsey Turner Swift
VisitEngland
Adviser to the Board

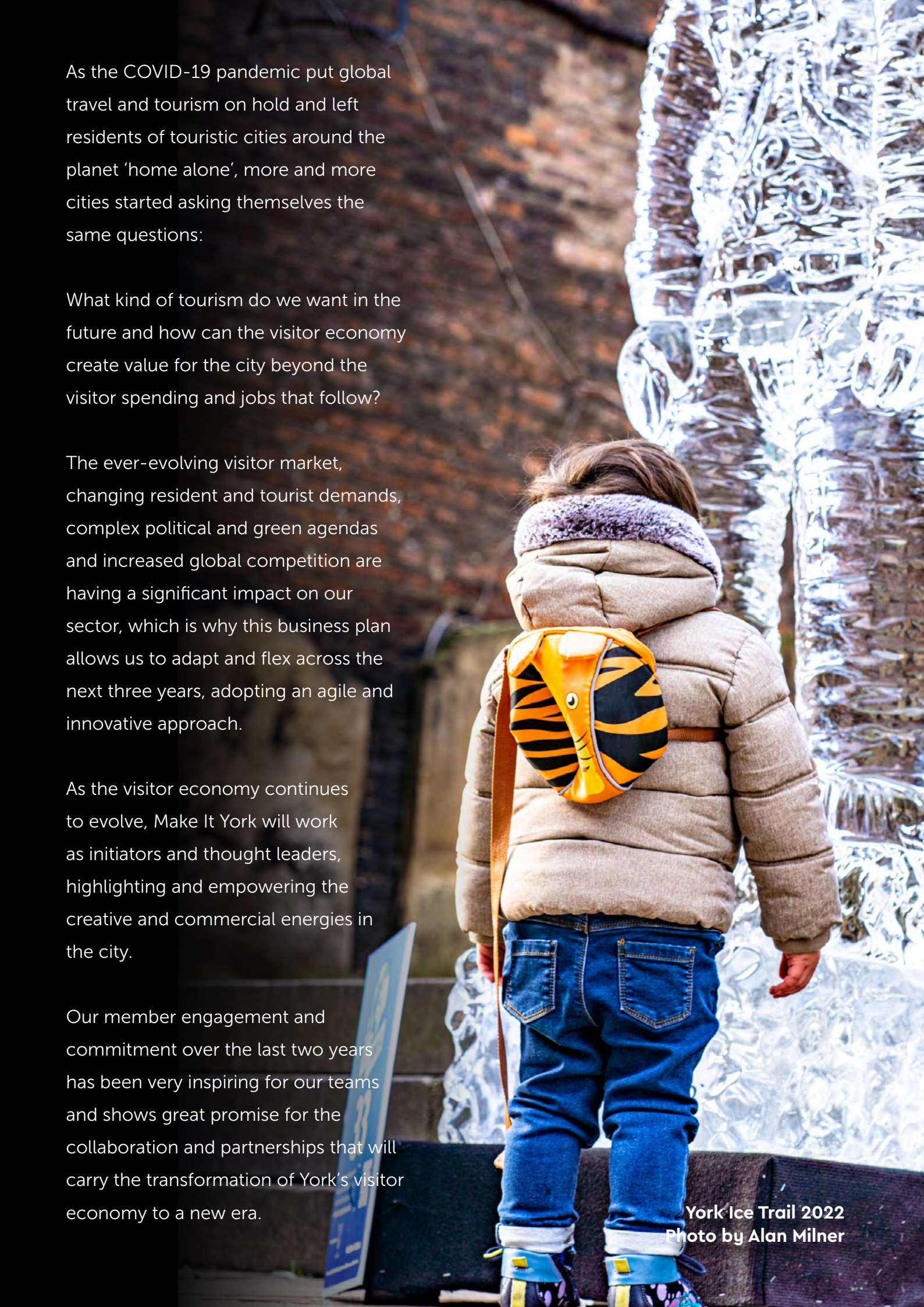
As the COVID-19 pandemic put global travel and tourism on hold and left residents of touristic cities around the planet 'home alone', more and more cities started asking themselves the same questions:

What kind of tourism do we want in the future and how can the visitor economy create value for the city beyond the visitor spending and jobs that follow?

The ever-evolving visitor market, changing resident and tourist demands, complex political and green agendas and increased global competition are having a significant impact on our sector, which is why this business plan allows us to adapt and flex across the next three years, adopting an agile and innovative approach.

As the visitor economy continues to evolve, Make It York will work as initiators and thought leaders, highlighting and empowering the creative and commercial energies in the city.

Our member engagement and commitment over the last two years has been very inspiring for our teams and shows great promise for the collaboration and partnerships that will carry the transformation of York's visitor economy to a new era.



York Ice Trail 2022
Photo by Alan Milner