

York's Creative Future

Culture Strategy 2020 - 2025

Sector Report 1 January – 31 March 2022

MakeItYork



Introduction

York's Creative Future is the city's culture strategy for 2020-2025. It was launched in December 2020 following extensive consultation across and beyond the creative sector. Find the full strategy and watch the launch event [here](#).

The strategy identifies six priority areas:

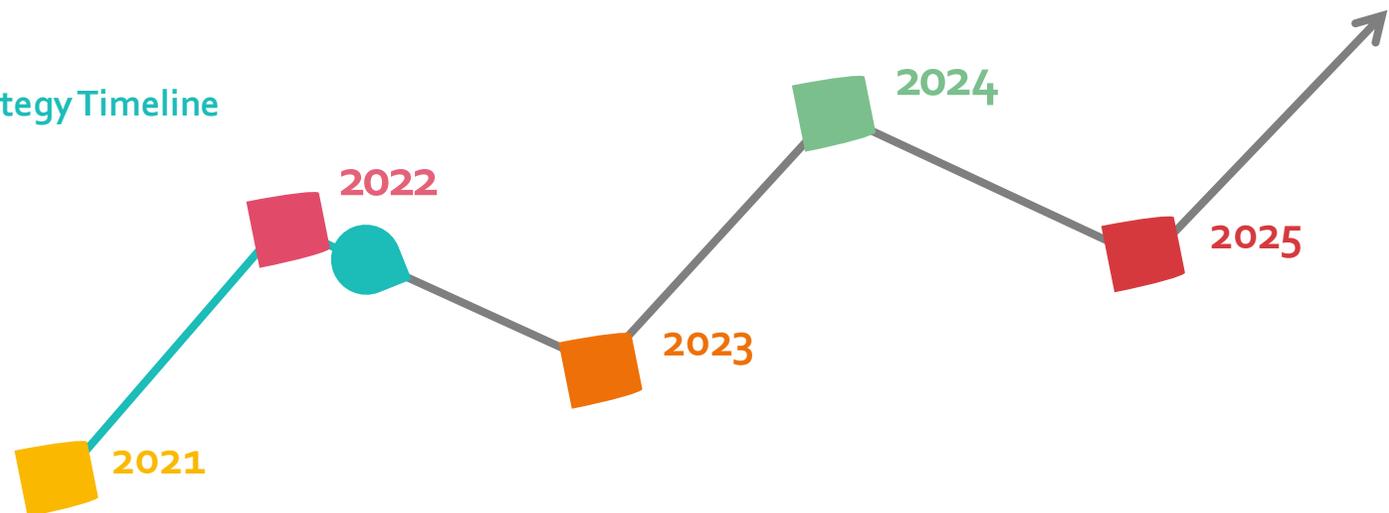
- Cultural Engagement, Participation and Relevance
- Placemaking
- Children and Young People
- Talent Development and Retention
- Culture and Wellbeing
- York's National and International Profile

This report covers the period of 1 January – 31 March 2022, quarter one of year two of the strategy's implementation. Some initiatives and projects mentioned straddle multiple priority areas and are therefore referenced throughout.

The report comprises a summary of the period followed by a more detailed update on each of the priority areas.

Information on creative activity is drawn from the sector through the York Culture Forum and tracked by Make It York.

Strategy Timeline



Launch of the York Culture Forum

The Cultural Leaders Group met for the final time in November 2021, formally disbanding and launching the York Culture Forum, which held its first meeting in January 2022. The Culture Forum is a platform for York's creative and heritage workers in the city to meet, network, enable partnership building, hear about collaboration and funding opportunities, and have regular updates on the progress of York's five-year Culture Strategy.

During January 2022 over 100 people joined the new Culture Forum, representing freelancers and organisations across the city across diverse creative disciplines; animation, printmaking and fine art, theatre, dance, heritage, design, music, media, writers, and digital art forms. By the end of the quarter the membership was close to 140, with more continuing to express interest and to join.

Designed to be inclusive, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the sector, the Culture Forum will elect its own Executive Group, becoming the first elected cultural executive group in the country.

Make It York facilitate and administrate the Forum. Taster sessions for new members in January were positively received, and the first two meetings took place during this quarter using a mixture of online and in person formats.

City Centre Activities

During the traditionally quieter season in York city centre, a number of activities designed to inspire

local engagement took place. These included Residents Festival 2022, the York Ice Trail, and new music festival, York Life.

For the tourism industry and culture sector, the Visit York conference was a lively morning of discovery considering the future of tourism in the city, and the role culture has to play in it.

Shaping policy

The quarter was busy for contributing to new policy evidence calls and reports. The results of consultation in 2021 also emerged in this period:

In 2021, the York Cultural Leaders Group consulted with Group NAO on the upcoming [York Tourism Strategy](#). At the Visit York Conference in January, a key recommendation from the agency is to embed culture, and cultural tourism, into the strategy.

In January, the Northern Culture APPG report [A Case For Culture](#) was published, which included prominent York case studies and recommendations for action, thanks to the sector's response in May 2021.

During the period, the DCMS Committee opened a call for evidence for a new inquiry into cultural place making and levelling up. Make It York coordinated a city-wide response.

Make It York also coordinated a response to the [NP11 Draft Report](#) to lobby for more York-specific data to be included. The final report is yet to be published.

Pressure from global events

The cost of living crisis continued to develop during this quarter, with periods of fuel shortages and sharp increases in fuel costs, the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on supply chains and global pricing, and the anticipated energy price cap increase in April 2022 all contributing to an increase in inflation rates from 5% to over 7% between January and March.

The fast-increasing costs and fuel scarcity complicates creative production and movement of workforce, which is beginning to produce a slow-down in recruitment – despite many cultural roles on offer, organisations reported trouble recruiting into creative positions. There is concern that wage stagnation in the sector will further exacerbate issues recruiting both staff and freelancers, who may be turning to higher paid sectors.

Conclusion

A lively quarter to begin 2022, with a very positive response to the launch of the York Culture Forum, a number of resident-focused events and projects, and shockwaves from Omicron being less than anticipated in many areas of the sector.

However, the emerging threat of high inflation, wage stagnation, and supply issues is a developing problem for the sector.

1. Cultural Engagement, Participation & Relevance



[Not Going Anywhere](#) - York Explore hosted an exhibition from disabled artists across Yorkshire that explores the themes of disabled people in lockdown, living disability experience, the social model in Yorkshire and accessibility.

[Residents Festival 2022](#) saw the return of attractions and cultural offers for residents, with cultural institutions reporting a strong return of visitor numbers despite uncertainty around the Omicron variant.

The much-loved family friendly [York Ice Trail](#) took place in March 2022, drawing an estimated 25,000 visitors. Despite taking place slightly later than usual because of the Omicron variant, the weekend was well attended by locals enjoying exploring the city.

A new free music festival for residents, [York Life](#), funded through CYC's ARG Fund, was planned during this period and delivered in April 2022, with more information to be featured in the Q2 report. During the 2022 festival (April 2 –3), footfall was 19% higher than the same period in 2019, with over 71K visitors into the city centre that weekend. Over 30 local acts performed.

[Our City](#), York's first diversity festival, took place in March 2022 on York Explore Library Lawn.

[Make It York](#) administered a grant fund for festivals and events taking place in 2022, that were previously impacted by Covid-19. Applications were opened during this quarter. The funding was made available by City of York Council through the UK Government's Additional Restrictions Grant. The next progress report will include information on the supported activities.

[York Art Gallery and York LGBT Forum](#) partnered to queer the Burton Gallery by telling the stories and sharing the perspectives of LGBTQIA+ people using the gallery's permanent collection. The exhibition is ongoing, with a suite of events taking place during February half term.

The 2022 [York Music Venues Symposium](#) took place at the National Centre for Early Music, bringing together music venues, artists, promoters and musical educators across the city.

2. Placemaking



STREETLIFE
YORK



Street Life is designed to breathe life into one of York's historic streets. It was announced in November 2021 and aims to bring the history of Coney Street to the fore and give the iconic thoroughfare a new and vibrant post-pandemic future. Activities take place between Jan and June 2022, with the space officially opening in early April 2022. Led by the University of York and funded by UK Government's Community Renewal Fund, it will create opportunities across the heritage and creative sectors and revitalise empty shops in the street.

York Civic Trust have [published recommendations](#) for a City of York Transport Strategy after consultation across the community. Designed to promote discussion across the city about the future of transport in York, it focuses on sustainability, safety and cost-effective options for increased public transport and walking and cycling routes.

Clifford's Tower reopened after a £5 million development project to safeguard the structure and enhance visitor experience.

The **York St John Creative Centre** opened in January 2022. The space includes a theatre which will programme a mixture of university and public events. Prisons collective Open Clasp Theatre were some of the first to perform in the space.

CYC submitted York's bid to be the home of the headquarters of **Great British Railways**.

During the period, the DCMS Committee opened a call for evidence for a new inquiry into **cultural place making and levelling up**. Make It York coordinated a city-wide response.

REACH, the Cultural Education Partnership, has been offered a temporary home by York Theatre Royal and have been funded by IVE and CYC to resource their activities over the next four school terms. MIY are supporting REACH's online activity and have created and maintain a [Children and Young People web page](#) on the Culture Hub of the MIY website.

The Island published plans for a new centre in Huntington which includes extensive creative facilities including a theatre space, recording studio, and more.

A York-based dance team, [Lisa Marie Performing Arts](#), have qualified for Team England at the Dance World Cup in Spain this June, and are the first team ever from the North Yorkshire area.

A new [York Book Award](#) has been launched by school librarians at St Peter's School and All Saints RC School. 11-13 year olds across the city are being encouraged to read, review and vote for their favourites on the shortlist.



3. Children & Young People

4. Talent Development & Retention



York Theatre Royal commissioned new work from twenty local professional artists across a variety of art forms in a new project called [Green Shoots](#). Following the success of May 2021 show Love Bites which took a similar format, during this quarter the call-out for submissions from artists across Yorkshire took place.

As part of the ACE-funded Creative Incubator scheme, [SLAP](#) ran a series of free artist development workshops, [The Work of Art](#), covering everything from project management to tax assessments, managing social media and marketing and more.

5. Culture & Wellbeing



The [Cultural Commissioning Partnership](#) made a site visit to Foss Park Hospital to view the art exhibition in the atrium and corridors. The exhibition is programmed by students from Converge, York St John, who also offer creative activities in the hospital for residents.

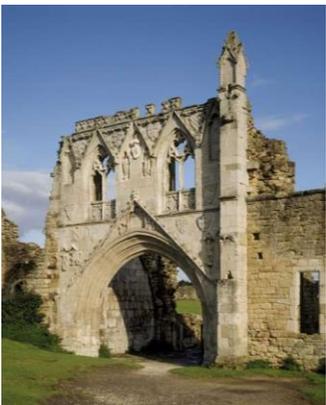
The nineteen [Culture and Wellbeing](#) grants-funded projects continued during this quarter, with activities coming to an end in March 2022. Case studies for the projects will be published on the Make It York website throughout the summer. Funding for a 2022 round of grants was confirmed in this quarter, with the grant process opened in Quarter 2.

Throughout the autumn, [York Archaeology](#) ran a pilot archaeology on prescription programme, partly funded by the culture and wellbeing grants. A nine week dig took place in the grounds of Willow House, a disused care home next to Walmgate Bar. Around 35 people took part in the pilot scheme.

Following the pilot, a continuation of the [York Archaeology](#) project in Spring 2022 was awarded funding by the Community Renewal Fund. This increased direct work with GPs in the York area and enabled people to be directly referred by their healthcare providers. It also brought many new partners to participate in the project across different suburbs of the city.

The [Street Life](#) project opened their shop space in late March 2022, which brings a range of culture and wellbeing activities to Coney Street during the spring. This activity is also funded through UK Government's Community Renewal Fund,

6. York's National & International Profile



The [York Culture Forum](#), a key outcome of and major vehicle for achieving York's Creative Future, was ratified in November 2021 by the Cultural Leaders Group. Membership to the York Culture Forum opened in December 2021 with first meeting taking place in January 2022. During the quarter over 100 creative, cultural and heritage professionals joined the forum, tripling its size.

York Museums Trust were finalists for a social media award at the [Digital Culture Awards](#) in January for their #CuratorBattle competitions during lockdown. The campaign attracted 17,350 new Twitter followers for YMT, and YMT objects were seen by around 6.2 million people during the activity, of which around 40% were international.

Domestic tourism has benefitted [lesser-known heritage sites](#) in North Yorkshire, with local sites Kirkham Priory, Aldborough Roman Site and Pickering Castle reporting as much as a 75% rise in visitors since 2019.

York took part in [UNESCO City to City PLAY](#), launched on 9 Feb, which showcased the work of artists from around the world taking part in a virtual city exchange programme. York was represented by artist Taeheon Lee. His virtual residency in York was supported by Jorvik Viking Centre and the Guild of Media Arts.

During the period, the [Guild of Media Arts](#) restarted its lively events programme, featuring discussions on the future of Coney Street, and practical support for B2B creative businesses.

[York Mediale](#) are collaborating with fellow UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts, Viborg in Denmark, in creating a hybrid artist residency, [Immersive Assembly Volume II](#), running from April – September 2022, for emerging to mid-career artists and studios working in animation, performance and play. This has been funded by Arts Council England and the Danish Embassy, and has been supported by Make It York, on behalf of the city, and by the Guild of Media Arts.

Picture Credits

Front page and side image	York Mediale Archive
1. Cultural Engagement, Participation and Relevance	York Ice Trail, Make It York One City Festival, CYC Queering the Burton, YMT
2. Placemaking	StreetLife Logo, University of York Clifford's Tower, English Heritage Creative Centre, York St John
3. Children and Young People & 4. Talent Development and Retention	REACH Logo The Island Development image Green Shoots, YTR Logo SLAP Incubator Project
5. Culture and Wellbeing	Foss Park Hospital, Vale of York CCG Hull Road Heritage Hunters, YMT Archaeology on Prescription open day, York Archaeology
6. York's National and International Profile	Kirkham Priory, English Heritage UNESCO City to City PLAY Logo York Mediale Immersive Assembly Logo