



Report to City of York Council Shareholder Committee
Monday 2 February 2026

Introduction

This paper provides an update of Make It York's (MIY) activities from the new Service Level Agreement from April 2025 to January 2026. It also presents:

Appendix 1 – Management Accounts report incorporating Profit & Loss statement, Balance Sheet and Cashflow forecast – November 2025 and 2-year budget 26/27 and 27/28 **(Confidential)**

Appendix 2 - MIY Strategic Business Plan 2026 – 2035

Appendix 3 - MIY Service Delivery Plan 2026/27

Appendix 4 - SLA strategic linkages Key Performance Data dashboard to December 25

Appendix 5 – MIY Strategic Risk Register Quarter 4

Make It York Celebrated its **10 Year anniversary** at the end of 2025. For 10 years MIY have driven and delivered: -

York's Visitor Economy and City Promotion

Driving York's Visitor Economy

For over a decade, Make It York has been at the forefront of promoting York as a premier destination, leveraging the Visit York brand to showcase the city to millions globally.

UNESCO City of Media Arts

Make It York played a pivotal role in securing and championing York's UNESCO City of Media Arts designation, positioning the city as a global hub for creativity and innovation.

International Reach

Through global campaigns, international exhibitions, and targeted promotions, Make It York ensures York's reputation and profile extend far beyond the city's borders.

Festivals, Markets & City Experiences

York Christmas Market

Recognised as one of the UK's most iconic Christmas markets, this event is designed, curated, and delivered by Make It York, attracting thousands of visitors each year.

York Christmas Lights

In partnership with York BID, Make It York transforms the city each winter with spectacular Christmas lights, creating a magical festive atmosphere that enhances the visitor and resident experience.

York Ice Trail

Our UK-leading outdoor Ice Trail has turned February into York's "coolest" month, drawing tens of thousands of visitors and establishing a signature winter event.

Shambles Market

Managed and grown the historic Shambles Market, nurturing its role as the heart of York's largest independent trading community.

Supporting People & Businesses

Powering Local Business

Through initiatives such as the Visit York Tourism Awards, business conferences, and promotional campaigns, Make It York celebrates and supports local businesses, helping them to thrive.

York Residents' Festival

This annual festival provides residents with free access to city attractions, discounts, and a dedicated weekend of events, reinforcing community pride.

Bringing York to Life

Through year-round events including Haunted York, Yorkshire Day celebrations, and city-wide trails, Make It York continually creates memorable experiences that engage residents and visitors alike.

Financial Position (April 2024 – March 2025)

The audited results for the year demonstrate a strong financial performance, reflecting effective financial management, disciplined cost control, and successful income generation across the organisation's activities. This marks the second consecutive year of positive results, returning Make It York to a strong and sustainable financial position. In recognition of this improvement, the Board approved a dividend payment to shareholders of £50,000. The company's equity position strengthened significantly during the year, providing a solid foundation for the future.

Financial Position (April 2025 – March 2026)

Current forecasts indicate that the organisation remains on track for another profitable year. Performance to date has exceeded budget expectations, supported by higher-than-anticipated income and continued control over staff and operating costs. While income is slightly lower than the previous year, overall performance remains resilient, underpinned by strong member and partner support and the success of city events.

Key Income Streams

Core income streams, including memberships, Shambles Market, and Christmas activity, have all performed strongly and exceeded expectations. These results reflect sustained demand, effective delivery, and careful cost management across the company's commercial activities.

Cash Position and Investment

The company continues to maintain a strong cash position, enabling ongoing investment in Make It York and its key assets, particularly Shambles Market. International marketing remains a strategic priority, supporting the organisation's ambition to promote York nationally and internationally and to drive long-term growth.

The strong financial position of MIY should give CYC confidence that MIY is in a robust position to deliver on all its objectives for the years

MIY Strategic Plan 2026 - 2031

MIY Board has endorsed the Make It York Strategic Plan 2026–2031, included as **Appendix 2**. The plan sets out Make It York's vision:

“Creating a vibrant and inclusive city where everyone can thrive.”

It is built around four core priorities:

- 1. Keeping York the UK's leading city for residents and visitors alike.**
- 2. Enabling a dynamic, successful city centre where businesses can grow and prosper.**
- 3. Championing social value and sustainability by driving forward regenerative tourism.**
- 4. Strengthening Make It York as a resilient, high-performing organisation.**

A service delivery plan is in place to deliver key priorities and objectives of the Strategic plan, and this is attached as **Appendix 3**.

Governance

Board of Directors

Director Appointments

A recruitment campaign for new directors commenced in January. This ensures that the board maintains an appropriate mix of skills, experience, and fresh perspectives and operates with strong capability and strategic oversight.

Interviews will take place with shortlisted candidates soon.

Director Resignations

There have been no resignations from the board since the last report to shareholder.

Performance

We continue to be transparent in measuring our impact. A copy of the most up to date Quarterly Strategic Linkages Key Performance Dashboard Report is included in the report pack (**Appendix 4**). This report has become stronger in terms of data reporting to show how we are having an impact and the return on investment, which is wider than a financial return on investment.

Accountability and Transparency

We have transparent and accountable processes and procedures along with a clear governance structure in place for Board members, Managing Director, and Heads of Service.

The board of directors meets bi - monthly and all board papers are circulated one week in advance with managers attending to present reports and answer questions.

Data reports are provided to the board including key performance data, evaluations including customer satisfaction, and industry data such as tourism data.

Challenge on delivery of agreed outcomes

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) is monitored, and performance data is challenged as part of quarterly monitoring meetings with the City of York Council officer and members.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety – We have had no Health and Safety incidents.

All MIY delivered events are risk assessed and have event management plans in place and are discussed at CYC Safety Advisory Group. All third-party events taking place on MIY managed spaces are required to complete detailed application forms and submit risk assessments, event management and noise plans and the organiser is required to attend a Safety Advisory meeting.

Risk Management

We manage businesses risks adequately and effectively. The latest Strategic Risk Register is attached as **Appendix 5**.

- As a result of an in-depth security review of our system to safeguard from hacking and phishing we have introduced additional measures to protect our systems with regular testing of these in place.
- Our contractors provide adequate protection and assurances of securing

our data held on their systems.

- We have an adequate Risk Register in place that is reassessed on a quarterly basis and monitor the top 3 risks.
- We have a full and comprehensive business continuity document that is tested and reviewed twice a year.

Assets

All our equipment in use is safe, maintained and employees are adequately trained on how to use the equipment prior to commencement of use. Appropriate maintenance contract in place for relevant equipment.

We have a retention and disposal asset schedule which is reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Tourism Advisory Board

Tourism Advisory Meetings (TAB) meetings are held monthly and chaired independently. Representatives of CYC at meetings as do MIY. They are tasked with collectively delivering the CYC Tourism Strategy.

Tourism Economic Impact

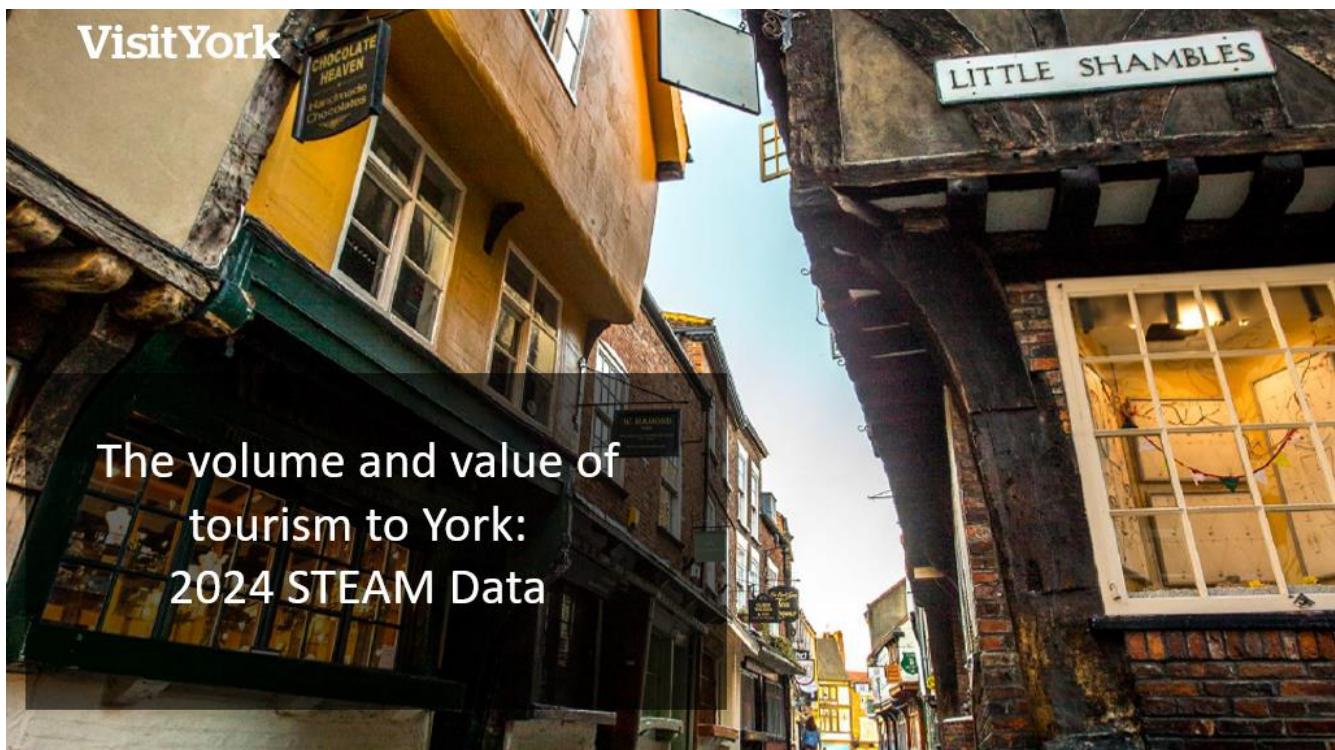
Data and Analysis

- **Achievements**
 - Tourism contributed an outstanding **£2.01 billion** to York's economy in 2024 – a **5.4% increase** from 2023.
 - **34%** of visitor spend went to York's vibrant retail offering,
 - **27%** was spent on our diverse food and drink scene,
 - **25%** supported the city's accommodation sector,
 - **11%** went toward recreation and entertainment, and
 - **3%** was spent on transport and getting around the city.
 - Overseas visitors alone accounted for nearly a quarter of the

economic impact, injecting £0.5 billion into York's economy.

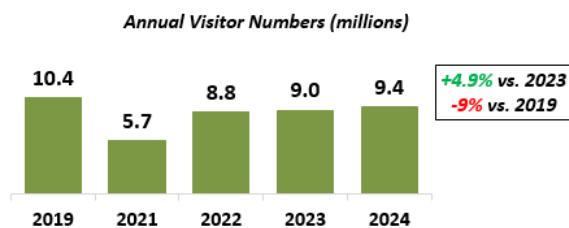
- The number of **staying visitors reached 1.7 million**, with an average stay of 3.3 nights – a slight increase on the previous year. Most overnight visitors, 54%, continued to stay in serviced accommodation and hotels, with non-serviced accommodation a close favourite.
- In 2024, **16,788 employees** (FTEs) were **supported directly and indirectly by tourism**, up 4.8% from 2023.

Steam Data 2024

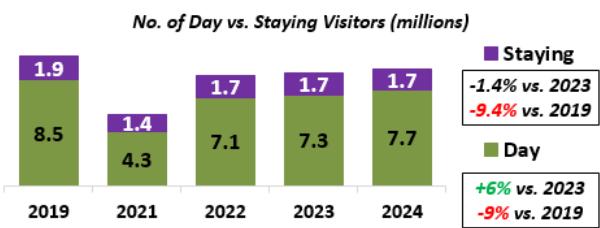


2024 York Visitor Numbers

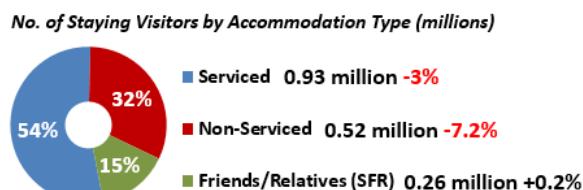
- York attracted 9.4 million visitors in 2024, up 5% vs. 2023, but below pre pandemic levels.



- Day visitors have increased 6% on 2023 but still remain 9% lower than pre pandemic levels.



- Most overnight visitors continued to stay in serviced accommodation in 2024.



- Overall, 14% of visitors were from overseas. Of these, 43% stayed in York.

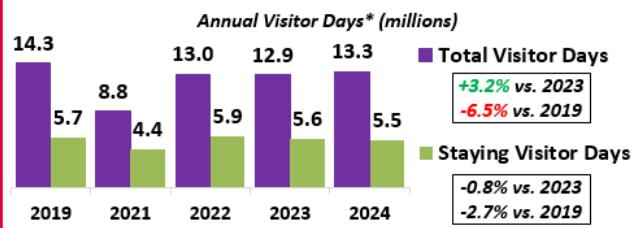


Source: 2024 STEAM report by Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd 2024.

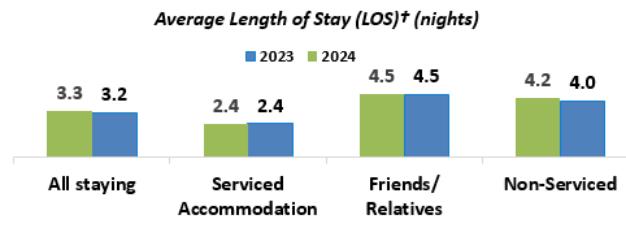
KEY ↑3% or more vs 2023 ↓3% or more vs. 2023

2024 York Visitor Days

- Visitors spent a total of 13.3m visitor days in York. 5.5 million of these visitor days were from staying visitors.



- Overnight visitors stayed 3.3 nights on average, a slight increase on 2023.

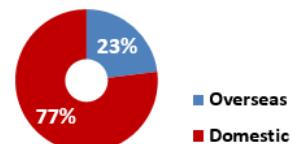


- The number of staying visitors has decreased 1.4% on 2023.



- The average length of stay was 3.82 nights for international visitors; this is higher than the average of all staying visitors of 3.3 nights.

Percentage of total visitor days split by Overseas vs. Domestic Days



Source: 2024 STEAM report by Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd 2024.

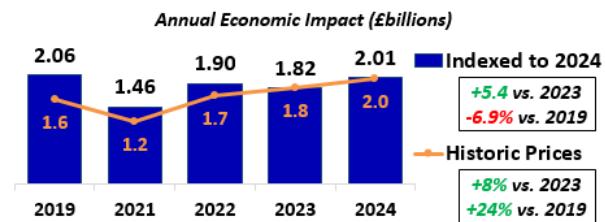
*Visitor days is the no. of days spent in an area by different visitor types. 1 day visitor = 1 visitor day.

†Average length of stay = visitor numbers divided by visitor days

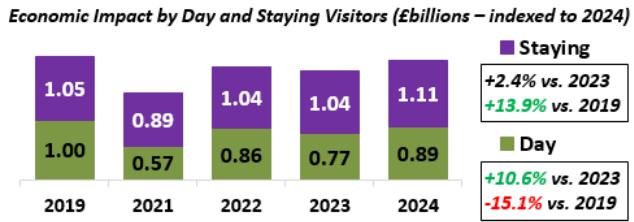
KEY ↑3% or more vs 2023 ↓3% or more vs. 2023

2024 York Economic Impact

- The value of tourism to York in 2024 was £2 billion, an 5% increase vs. 2023.



- The economic impact of staying visitors has now exceeded pre pandemic levels.

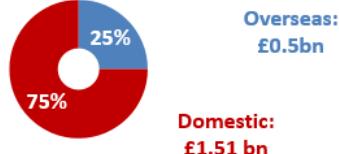


- Both Non serviced and SFR accommodation types have increased in economic impact in 2024.



- Almost a quarter of the economic impact of tourism was generated by overseas visitors.

Overseas vs. Domestic Visitors

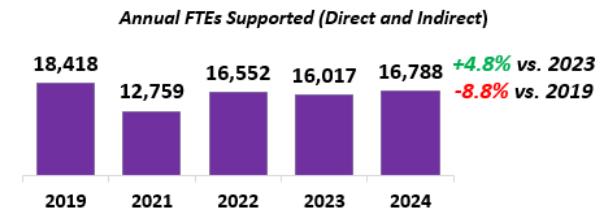


Source: 2024 STEAM report by Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd 2024.
Comparisons to 2023 are shown against historic spend and/or indexed to adjust for the effects of inflation by multiplying 2023 spend by 1.134

KEY ↑3% or more vs 2023 ↓3% or more vs. 2023

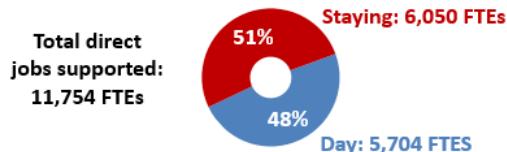
2024 Employment Supported

- Over 16,000 employees (FTEs) were supported directly and indirectly by tourism in 2023.



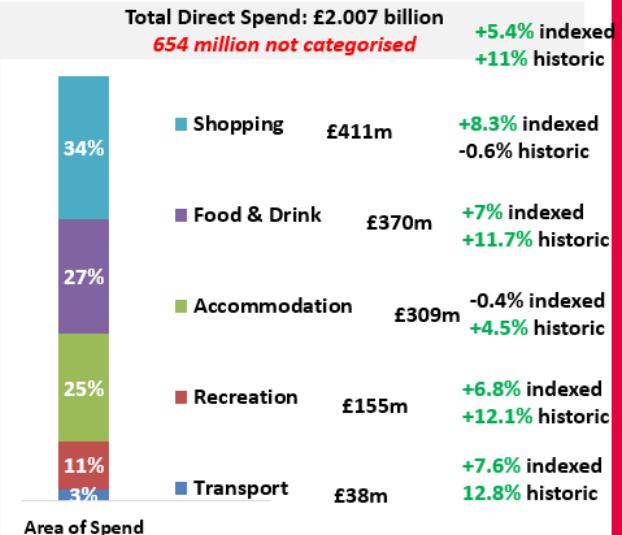
- Staying visitors supported 51% of all direct jobs supported by tourism.

Day vs. Staying (Direct Jobs)



2024 Direct Expenditure by Area of Spend

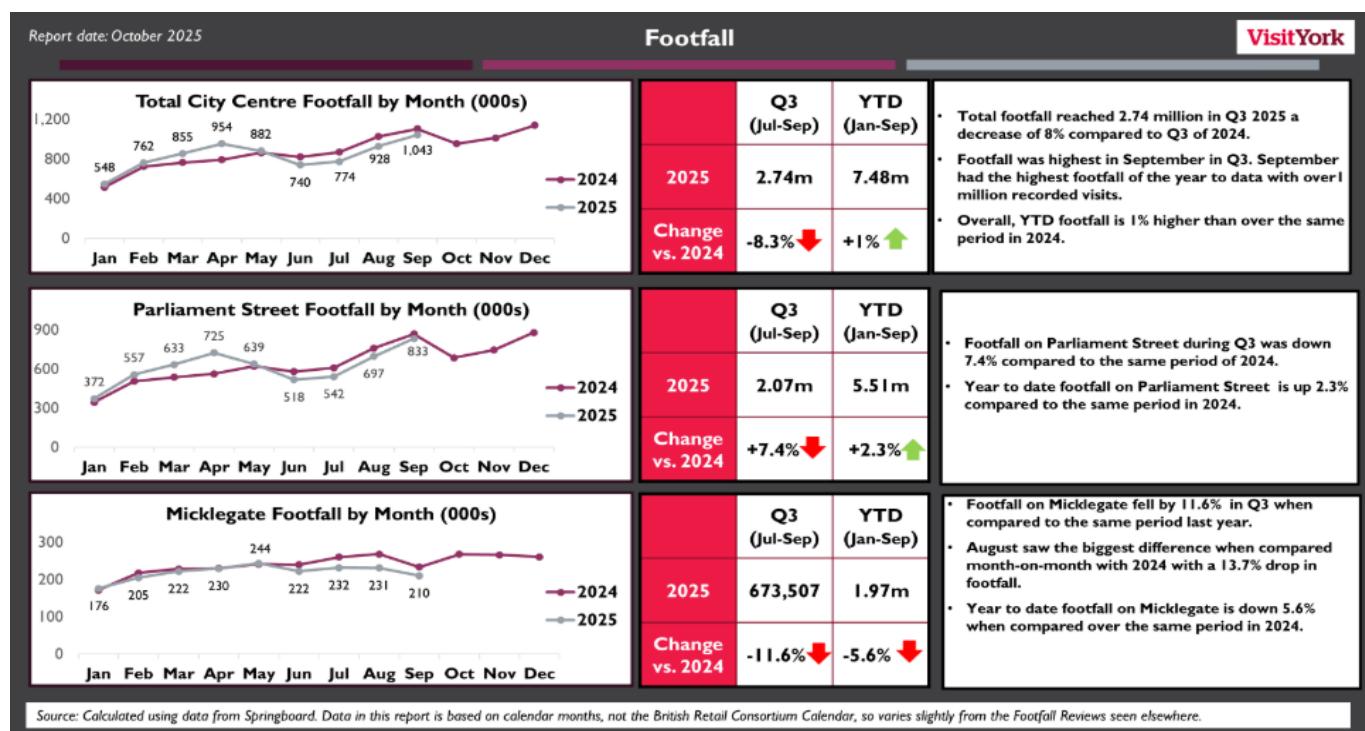
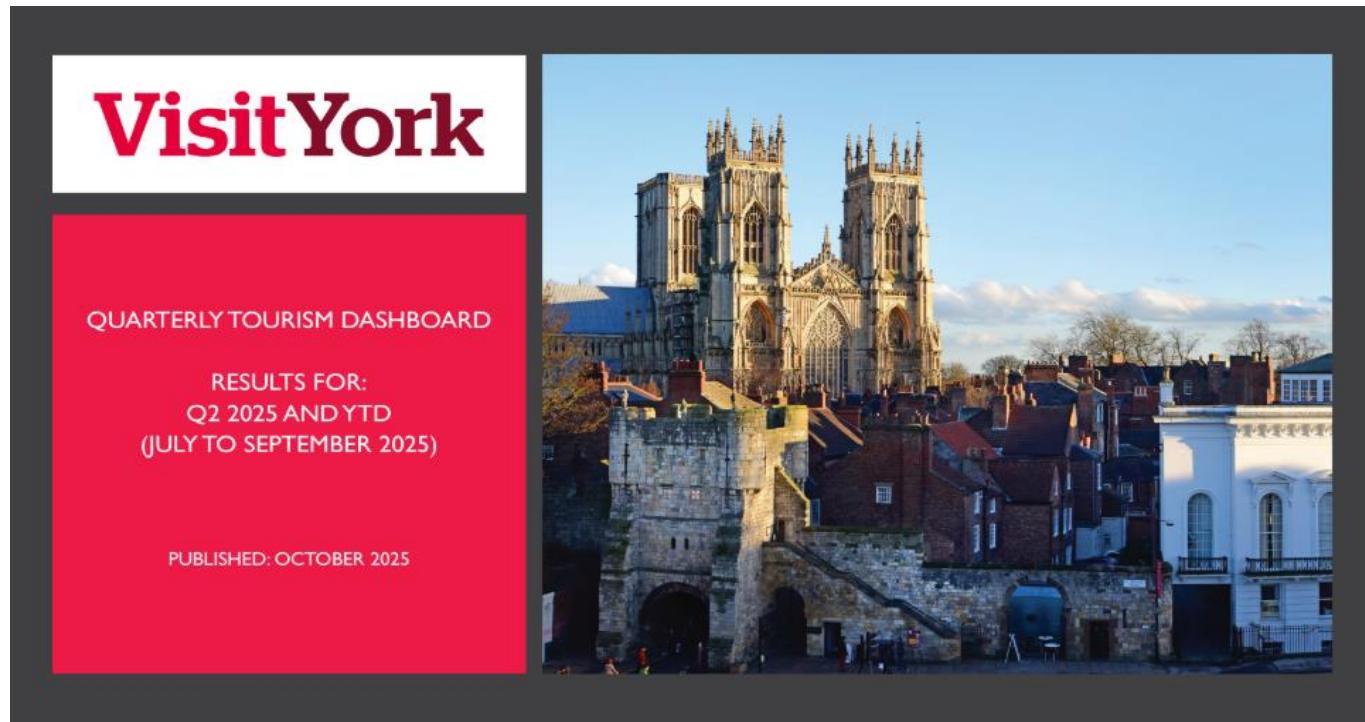
- Accommodation is the only area have increased above inflation, while there has been a large drop in retail spend.

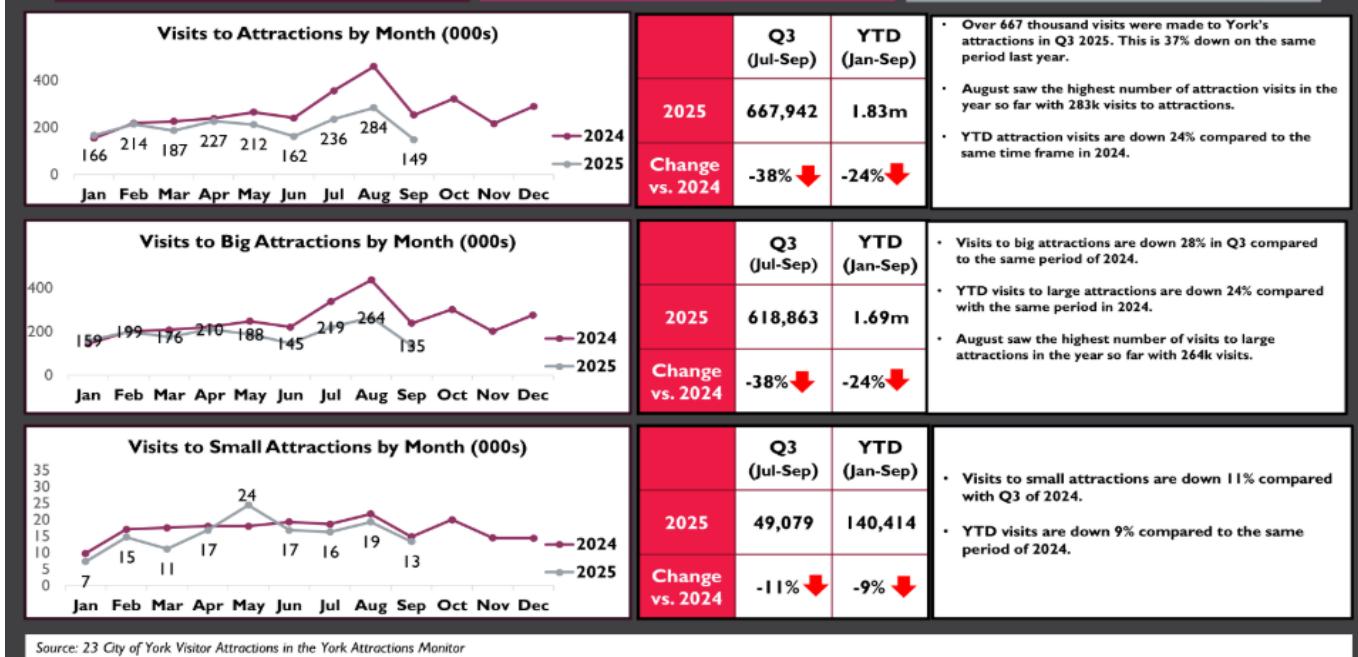


Source: 2024 STEAM report by Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd 2024.
Comparisons to 2023 are shown against historic spend and indexed to adjust for the effects of inflation by multiplying 2023 spend by 1.134

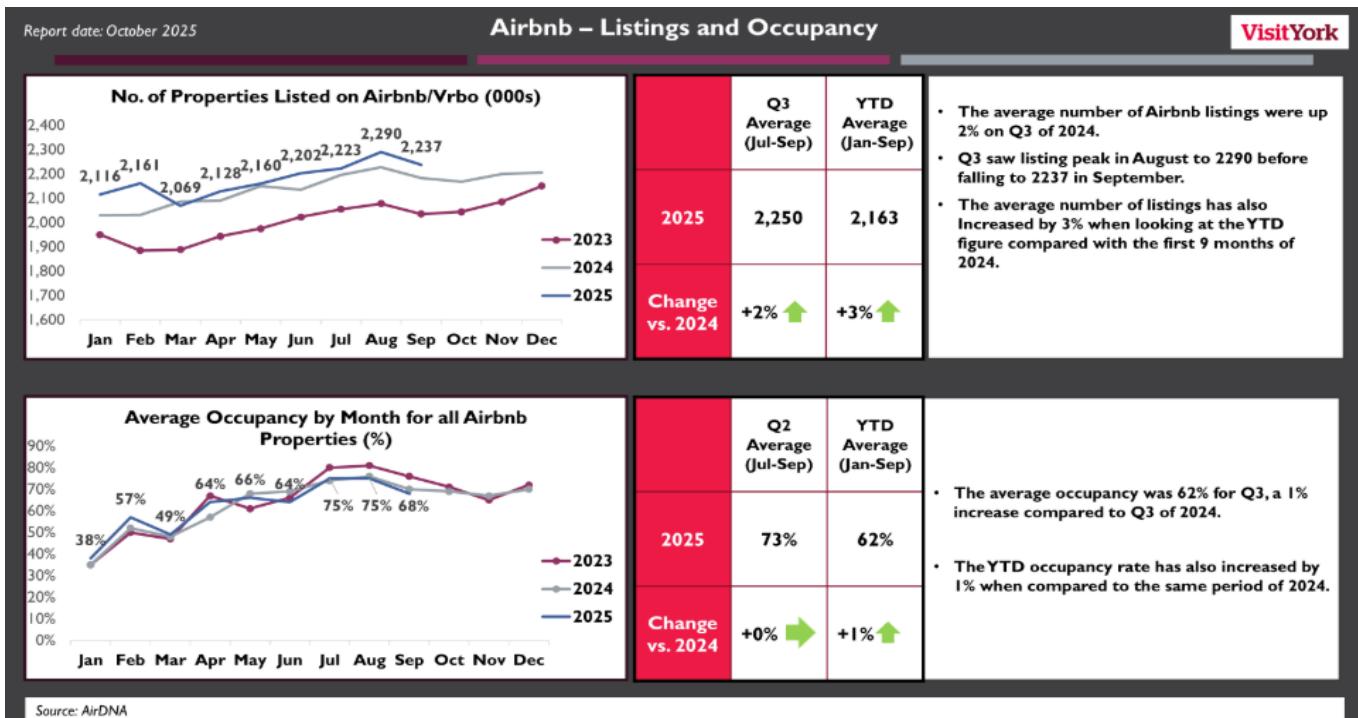
KEY ↑3% or more vs 2023 ↓3% or more vs. 2023

Quarterly Tourism Data





Source: 23 City of York Visitor Attractions in the York Attractions Monitor



Source: AirDNA

International Tourism

Showcasing York as a world-class destination, connecting with international travel and tourism buyers to inspire future visits and partnerships – events included:

- Destination Britain in China Northeast Asia - meeting with high quality buyers from China, Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea.

- World Travel Market London - one of the most influential travel and tourism event globally.
- The Global European Marketplace (GEM) - targeted audience of decision-makers and tourism professionals.
- Destination Britain Americas - reaching the North American and Brazilian travel trade, meeting with high quality buyers from the USA, Canada and Brazil.
- Following the BETA Annual Summit in Leeds, we hosted 31 key contacts on an educational visit to spotlight York's appeal for the youth and student travel sectors.
- In partnership with VisitBritain, we welcomed press visits from Denmark and Sweden – one producing a feature on Railway 200, and another preparing a multi-page magazine spread on York's ghostly and spiritual heritage.
- We also met with the UK Senior Product Manager for Delta Vacations, who is expanding their portfolio to include York through curated destination activities.
- As part of our national promotion for the city, York is on display at the only official City Information Centre (CIC) located next to St Pauls Cathedral in London, with over 400K visitors per year.

England's Heritage Cities Travel Trade

York is part of the ETOA Membership and will attend a meeting of the EHC travel trade leads to discuss making the most of ETOA membership and future opportunities and utilizing this as another avenue for promoting York.

Digital Statistics

Visit York's digital strategy has delivered outstanding results from October to December 25 leveraging web, social media, and email marketing to engage audiences, promote the city, and support its stakeholders.

Website Summary

Total users

1.1m

Views

2.9m

Outbound Link Clicks

287k

Average session duration

00:03:06

Sessions

1.5m

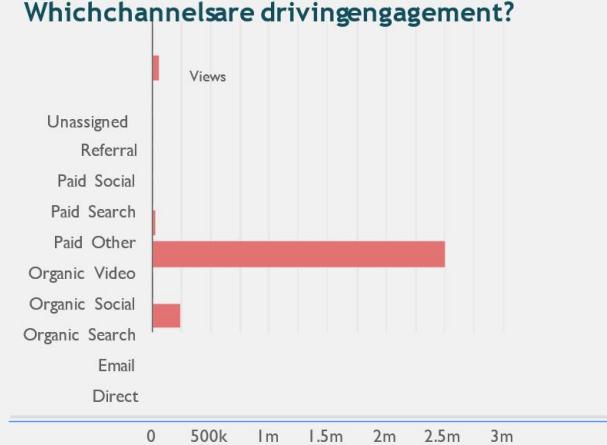
When are users visiting your page?



Where are your users located?



Which channels are driving engagement?



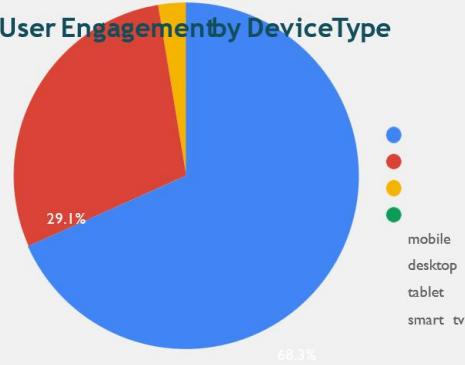
Keyboard shortcuts Map data ©2026 Google [Terms](#)

Country

Country	Views
United Kingdom	2,532,347
United States	87,745
China	34,437
Germany	23,544
Australia	20,632

Page r...

User Engagement by Device Type



How are users finding your page?

Page referrer	Views	Views
1. https://www.google.com/	1.3m	51.4%
2. https://visityork.org/christmas	166.6k	6.5%
3. https://visityork.org/whats-on	103.5k	4.1%
4. https://visityork.org/	89.3k	3.5%
5. https://www.bing.com/	52.8k	2.1%

Page Listings

Page path	Views
1. /christmas	367.5k
2. /whats-on	195.2k
3. /	163.9k
4. /christmas/york-christmas-market-traders	79.8k

Social Media Summary

Post Type

Filter

Number of Posts

4,644

Impressions

14.7m

Comments

26k

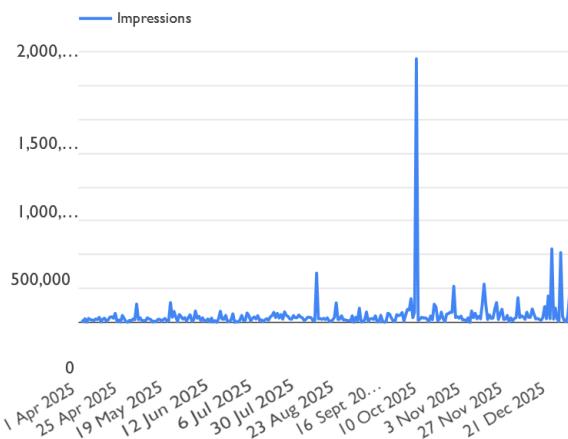
Likes

224.9k

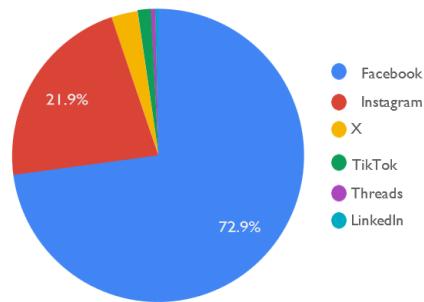
Engagements

434.7k

Engagement Rate

3.54%


Impressions by Network



Top Posts	Post Type	Link	Date	Network	Impressions	Engagements
1. York: The Most Haunted City in Europe » ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	6 Oct 2025	Facebook	1,935,421	22,074
2. York Ice Trail is back 7€“8 February 2026 ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	26 Dec 2025	Facebook	510,357	6,090
3. York Ice Trail returns on 7€“8 February 202... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	21 Dec 2025	Facebook	486,486	4,978
4. The coolest weekend of the year returns 7€... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	31 Dec 2025	Facebook	198,486	1,873
5. York Christmas Market 2025 is OPEN! Ž.....	Reel	https://www.facebook...	13 Nov 2025	Facebook	150,958	4,460
6. York Minster's Christmas Tree Festival is ba... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	2 Dec 2025	Facebook	141,048	5,146
7. Ž Ghost sighting in York? Ž This eerie ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	27 Oct 2025	Facebook	135,737	5,302
8. Ž 6 magical places you HAVE to visit th... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	19 Dec 2025	Facebook	127,910	2,442
9. Autumn in York is a season like no other Ž... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	16 Oct 2025	Facebook	123,428	4,302
10. Make York your base for an adventure in the... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	21 May 2025	Facebook	120,695	2,855
11. Ž York, but make it Tiny! A playful celebr... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	11 Aug 2025	Facebook	115,087	5,096
12. Enjoy extended opening hours at York Chris... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	14 Nov 2025	Facebook	102,919	3,747
13. Where ancient streets meet vibrant city life Ž... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	4 Sept 2025	Facebook	93,624	3,177
14. Ž York, but make it Tiny! A playful celebr... ...	Reel	https://www.instagram...	11 Aug 2025	Instagram	90,047	6,523
15. York Christmas Market returns! Ž Im... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	3 Oct 2025	Facebook	88,626	2,923
16. Experience the wonder of York Minster this ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	17 Dec 2025	Facebook	85,401	4,786
17. Celebrate the beauty and meaning of Christ... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	23 Dec 2025	Facebook	83,305	5,209
18. Ž York, but make it Tiny! A playful celebr... ...	Post	https://www.tiktok.com...	11 Aug 2025	TikTok	81,869	13,495
19. Soak up the sights, sounds and summer su... ...	Post	https://www.facebook...	22 Aug 2025	Facebook	81,458	2,497

NewsletterSummary

Filter

Number of Emails

141

Total Recipients

884.1k

Total Opens

534.8k

Total Clicks

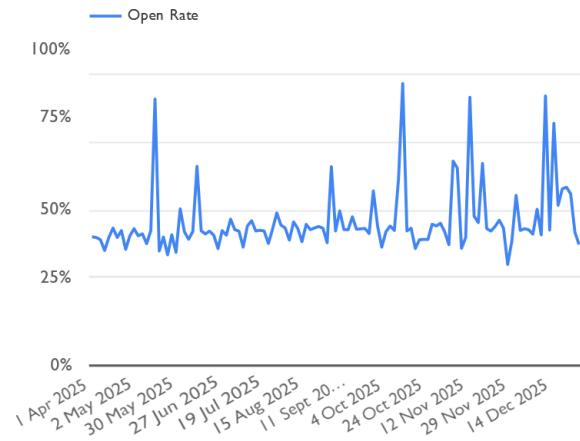
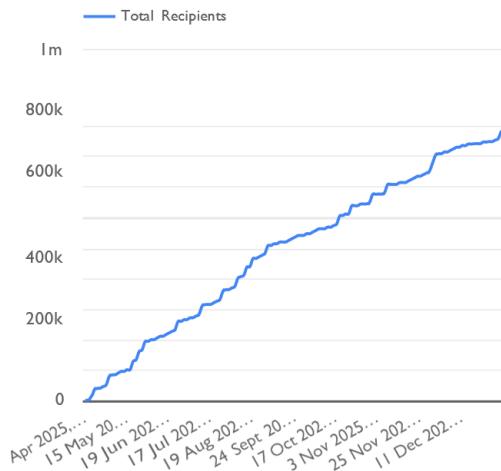
39.4k

Average Open Rate

46.20%

Click-through Rate

7.37%



Subject	Link	Send Date	Open Rate	Recipients	Total Clicks	CTR
1. 7 Days in York - The Festivities Cont...	https://us14.campaign...	26 Dec 2025	40.15%	4,940	277	10.15%
2. Visit York Discover 2026 in York â...	https://us14.campaign...	26 Dec 2025	34.74%	25,537	943	7.67%
3. Visit York It's not Christmas witho...	https://us14.campaign...	23 Dec 2025	42.04%	4,946	218	7.76%
4. Visit York strengthens trade engage...	https://us14.campaign...	22 Dec 2025	31.57%	1,531	187	28.46%
5. York Christmas Market Evaluation	https://us14.campaign...	22 Dec 2025	80.81%	101	48	31.79%
6. Visit York Pass Update	https://us14.campaign...	19 Dec 2025	58.62%	29	14	48.28%
7. York Christmas Market Evaluation	https://us14.campaign...	18 Dec 2025	89.9%	101	59	27.44%
8. 7 Days in York - Countdown to Chris...	https://us14.campaign...	18 Dec 2025	40.89%	4,947	162	5.66%
9. Englandâ€™s Historic Cities launch ...	https://us14.campaign...	18 Dec 2025	43.39%	401	50	18.05%
1... Merry Christmas from Make It York	https://us14.campaign...	16 Dec 2025	53.49%	180	24	11.32%
1... Merry Christmas from Visit York	https://us14.campaign...	16 Dec 2025	50.32%	799	631	84.93%
1... York Christmas Market Chalet remi...	https://us14.campaign...	14 Dec 2025	82.28%	79	0	0.00%
1... Visit York An epic production of H...	https://us14.campaign...	13 Dec 2025	42.78%	4,954	174	5.68%
1... York Christmas Market Final Day Cl...	https://us14.campaign...	12 Dec 2025	92.41%	79	0	0.00%
1... 7 Days in York - Festive Funâ„„,ï,�	https://us14.campaign...	11 Dec 2025	41%	4,958	275	9.52%
1... Overnight Visitor Levy proposals - c...	https://us14.campaign...	10 Dec 2025	50.5%	801	766	66.21%
1... Visit York Swap Socks for Street Fo...	https://us14.campaign...	9 Dec 2025	41.27%	4,965	315	10.84%
1... Visit York Castle Howard's Oz extr...	https://us14.campaign...	7 Dec 2025	42.93%	4,969	507	16.56%
1... Starring York â€“ from the big scree...	https://us14.campaign...	4 Dec 2025	45.16%	404	71	23.36%
2... 7 Days in York - Christmas Tours & ...	https://us14.campaign...	4 Dec 2025	41.4%	4,975	353	11.72%

2...	Visit York Festive days out with the...	https://us14.campaign...	2 Dec 2025	42.68%	4,978	267	8.72%
2...	Visit York Member Update - Decemb...	https://us14.campaign...	1 Dec 2025	55.65%	803	1,158	119.26%

Marketing & Communications Campaigns

Campaigns

Visit York's "Haunted York 2025 – Trick & Treat" ran across; social, web, Video on Demand and email channels and positioned York as the UK's must-visit Halloween destination. Activity combined always-on storytelling (short-form video, carousels, and image posts), event listings and hub content on visityork.org, and a drumbeat of targeted email sends. The campaign delivered multi-million social reach, strong web discovery for Halloween pages, and high email open rates at scale - driving partner visibility, outbound clicks to attractions, and intent to visit.

This Campaign saw another record-breaking month on social media, 4.2 million overall impressions achieved in October, and 2 million organic impressions – both the highest ever achieved in a calendar month! Partner engagement and traffic to website, again, saw a record number during this campaign.

'Starring York' in partnership with North York Moors National Park goes live this week, with a social media campaign, Visit York Hub page and London Underground advertising took place first week of December.

Positive PR and Promotion for York:

- York's Shambles Market is in the running for the 'Best Outdoor Market' at NABMA's Great British Market Awards
- Make It York Celebrates 10 Years
- York Has Been Named in The UK's Top 10 Best Christmas Markets
- Budget-Friendly Christmas Shopping Breaks: 5 UK Cities That Feel Like a Festive Movie Set
- Yorkshire has UK's 'most magical street' filled with quirky shops
- 12 Unmissable Things You Can Do in York with the Visit York Pass
- York named city of 'wonder' that's officially one of UK's happiest places to live

PR stats from September - November 2025:

- 329 print and online articles
- £1.45M sum of advertising value equivalent (AVE)
- 274M opportunities to see (OTS)

Visit York Tourism Awards

On 12 March 2026, the annual Visit York Tourism Awards will be held, celebrating excellence in the city's tourism sector.

Markets

It has now been 12 months since the introduction of the new Rules and Regulations, and in line with the agreed implementation plan, a scheduled review has been undertaken. The purpose of this review is to evaluate how effectively the new provisions have been implemented, determine whether they are achieving their intended outcomes, and identify any areas where refinement may be required to enhance clarity, compliance, or practicality. The review has found that the Rules and Regulations are operating as intended, with only minor adjustments proposed to improve clarity and ensure continued effectiveness.

Markets Strategy

The Market Strategy identified 5 priority areas to improve. These being: -

- Mix and offer of the Shambles Market
- The environment and physical experience of the Shambles Market
- Targeted operational improvements and efficiencies within the Shambles Market
- Improved the marketing & promotion of the Shambles Market
- Improved & extend the markets provision across the city

A strategy delivery plan and an investment plan are now underway to align initiatives with the MIY's strategic objectives, to identify resources to deliver, and deliver measurable outcomes that support long-term growth of Shambles Market.

Events and Festival

Christmas Market

In September 25 CYC received a formal recommendation from North Yorkshire Police that an Anti- Terrorism Traffic Regulation Order (ATTRO) be put in place for the 2025 Christmas Market. Once granted, the ATTRO prevented all non-emergency access within the hostile mitigations (HVM) zone between 10.30 – 7.00pm.

Following detailed discussions CYC and Counter Terrorism Police subsequently agreed to a small number of exemptions for essential services for waste management, Royal Mail, and Boots, as these are deemed essential for removal of waste, delivery of critical medicines, and collection of important documents. This however resulted in extra control measures and costs. Blue badge access was not agreed.

Following the approval of the ATTRO, CYC requested that MIY assume responsibility for the additional costs associated with the ATTRO measures.

Parallel to this MIY in liaison with Counter Terrorism Police agreed additional costs for provision of explosive sniffer dog each day and additional stewarding which incurred an additional cost of £34k.

In approving the ATTRO CYC, the Executive agreed to receive a report in early 2026 reviewing the strategic rationale and ongoing delivery of the Christmas Market and other major city centre events. This report is expected to provide a detailed assessment of both the positive benefits and negative impacts, informed by engagement with key stakeholders. It will evaluate whether the Christmas Market is meeting community needs effectively, whether the current operational approach remains practical and efficient, and whether event planning and management arrangements continue to be robust in a dynamic operational environment.

Planning for Christmas market 2026 commences in January and therefore it is essential that this review is completed and presented in a timely manner to inform decision-making and ensure continuity of planning. Early insights will allow MIY Board to consider adjustments to its strategic approach, resource allocation, or operational processes of the Christmas Market.

The introduction of the ATTRO potentially has impact on the delivery of other events including third-party bookings and this will affect revenue, partnerships, and community engagement.

2026 Christmas evaluation

VisitYork

**2025 York Christmas
Market
Evaluation Report
January 2026**



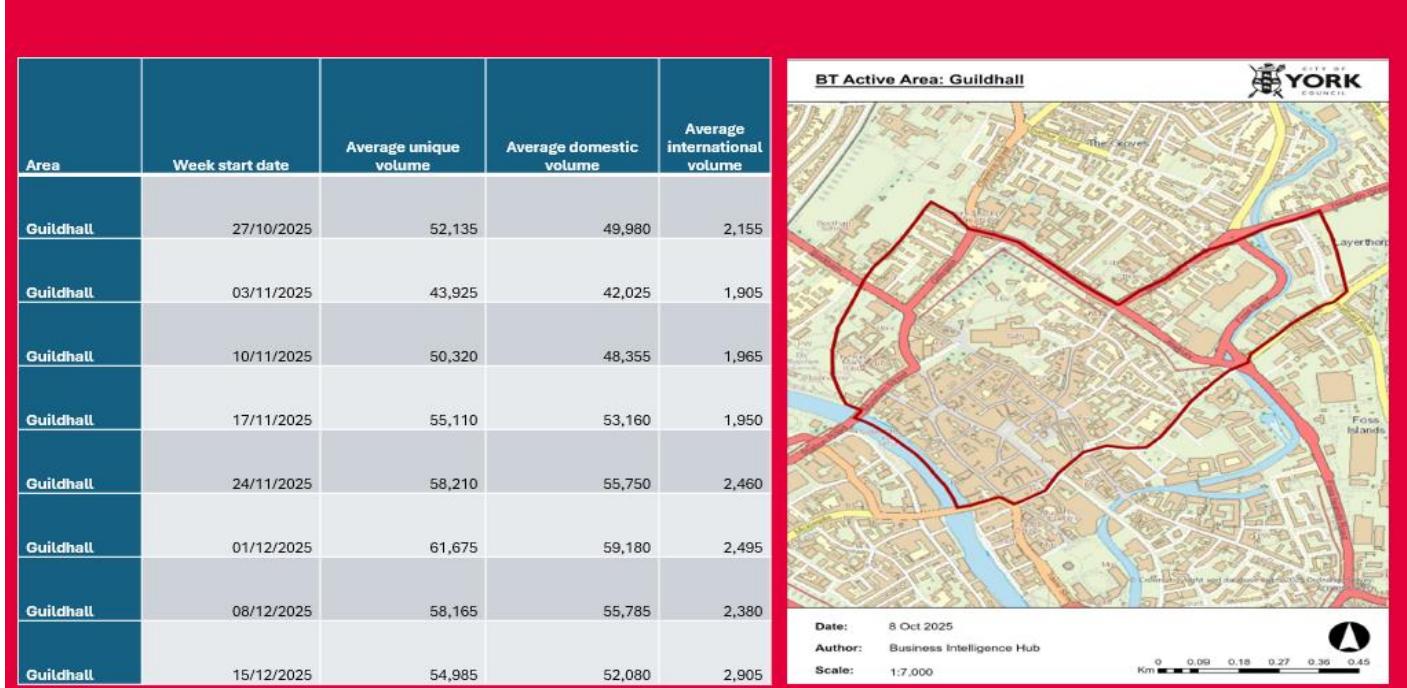
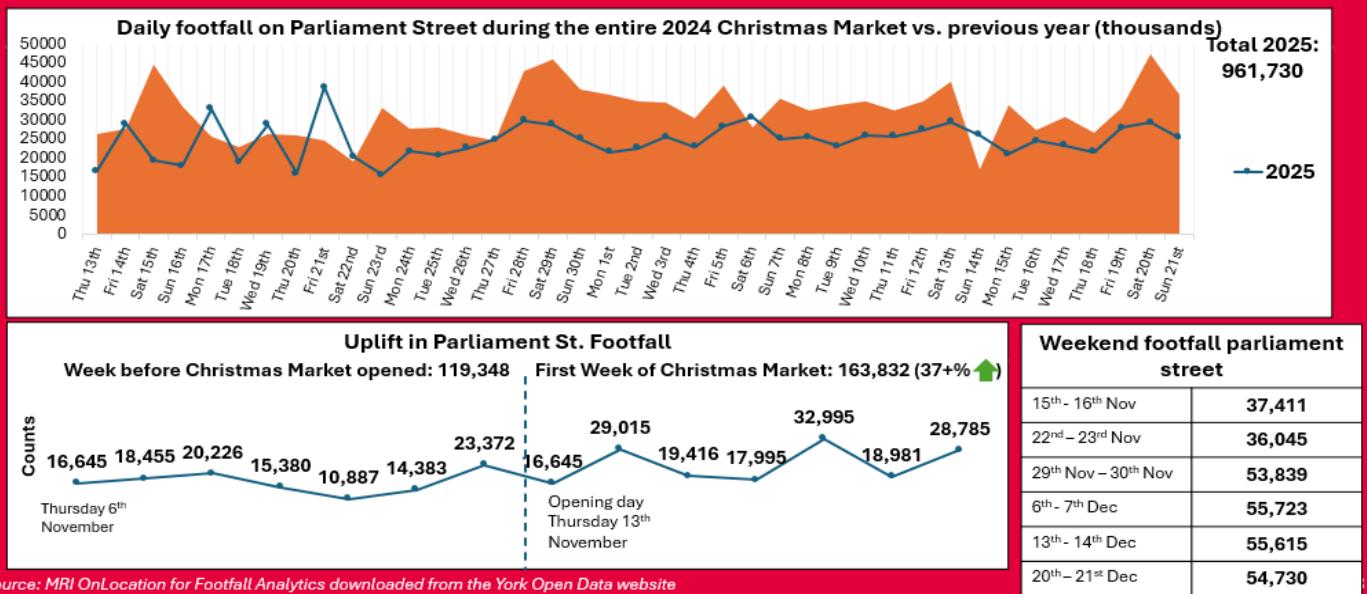
VisitYork

**Summary of 2025
Christmas Market
Footfall data**

papers



- A total of **961,730 thousand** counts were recorded by footfall cameras on Parliament Street during the 2025 Christmas Market. The daily average was **24,660**. The busiest weekend was 6th and 7th December 2025. Footfall recorded on Parliament Street during the Christmas market in 2025 was down around 23% compared to the same period of 2024. It is important to note however that there were issues with the footfall camera on Parliament during some of the Christmas Market 2025, leading to some of the counts to be based on estimated figures.



Source: BT Active footfall data provided by City of York Council

VisitYork

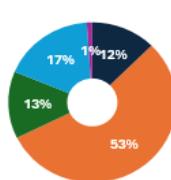


Summary of 2025 Christmas Market Visitor Survey Results

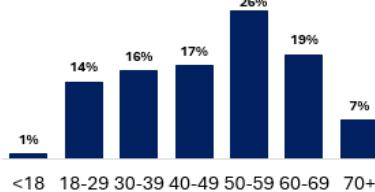


Summary of Visitor Profiles

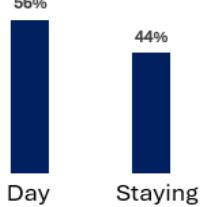
Visitor type:



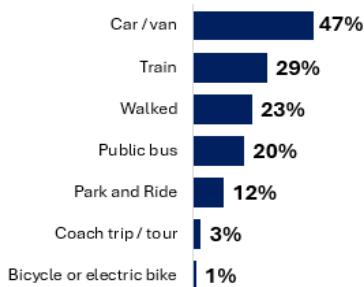
Which of these age groups do you belong to :



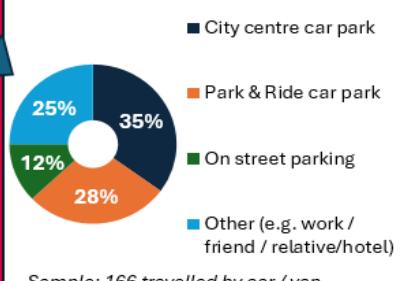
Day or Staying Visitor:



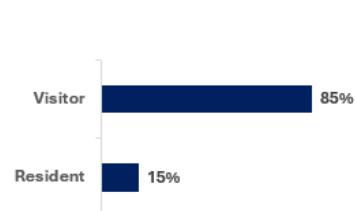
Main modes of transport used:



Where parked if travelled by car/van:



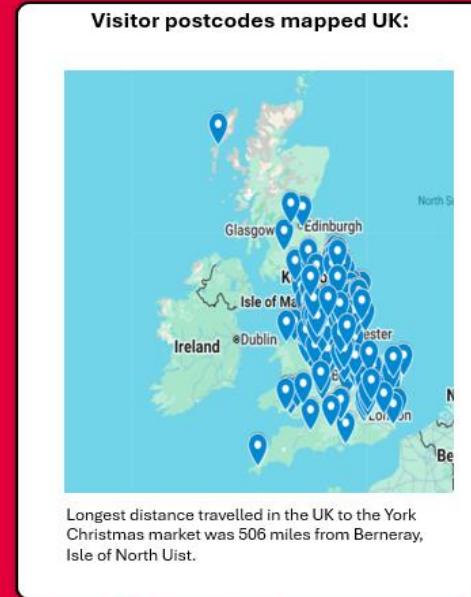
York Resident or Visitor:



Source: 390 online interviews with visitors to the 2025 Christmas Market

Visitor origin

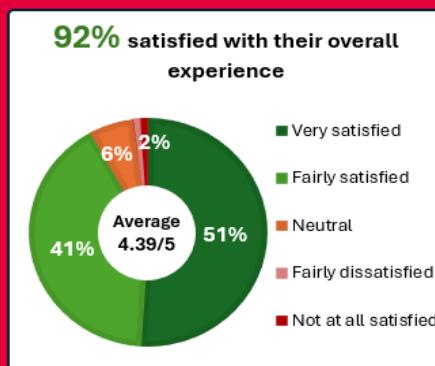
Visitor Origin	
West Yorkshire	18%
North Yorkshire (excluding York residents)	4%
East / South Yorkshire	22%
TOTAL YORKSHIRE	44%
North East + Scotland	17%
North West + Wales	14%
West Midlands	6%
East Midlands	11%
East / South of England	7%
TOTAL UK	99%
INTERNATIONAL	1%



Source: 390 online interviews with visitors to the 2025 Christmas Market

7

Summary of Visitor Satisfaction



What could be improved for next year: Number of comments linked to theme	
Stall variety and balance – more crafts, fewer repetitive food/alcohol stalls	65
Size, spread and location – make it bigger, more spread out	40
Crowding, footfall and accessibility – better queue management, one-way systems, improving comfort of visitors	32
Seating, shelter and eating areas	30
Food options – range, dietary needs, pricing	28
Entertainment – Music and festive features	20



Any other comments...

"Great example of what a Christmas market should be"
 "It's our favourite market of all"
 "Very enjoyable lovely people and city ,markets one of the best"
 "we go every year; park and ride was so convenient and easy to use"
 "Be nice to see more street entertainment"
 "Very predictable, similar stalls as last year"
 "As a resident I find the market intrusive, however I realise we need the revenue, and it is our bread and butter"

Source: 390 online interviews with visitors to the 2025 Christmas Market.

8

Summary of 2025 Christmas Market Trader Results

Summary of Christmas Market Trader Feedback

Revenue compared with previous years			
	Better	About the same	Worse
Revenue	40%	42%	18%

What worked well?

- Layout, spacing and crowd flow
"Layout of the market worked really well"
"The Layout worked better than last year"
- Footfall, sales and Market success
"Strong footfall and good customer interest worked really well for our stand position"
- Organisation, Management and staff support
"This year in particular our team have expressed how well supported they have been by Make it York"
- Security and safety
"Security was much better"

What challenges did you face, and how could we improve?

- Weather and drainage
"The wet weather proved a challenge, having covered spaces could be an idea"
- Toilets and welfare facilities
"The only thing that worries us is when and where to go to the loo"
- Chalet design, maintenance
"External chalet lights not working"
- Accessibility and inclusion
"There were no wheelchair ramps initially"

94% thought the overall layout worked well, including:

- Queuing system was better
- Having the food and drink stalls grouped together

"I felt it was better than previous years."

trading hours feedback

- Mixed views on the 10:30 am opening time.
"10.30am opening seemed to be perfectly ok"
"I think the 10:30 start worked well, id suggest an earlier finish on Sunday and Monday."
"Many customers were there earlier than the new opening hours and were vocally upset they couldn't purchase before"
- Calls for changing of trading hours on weekends
"Open earlier and close earlier just on Sundays"
"Need longer weekend trading"

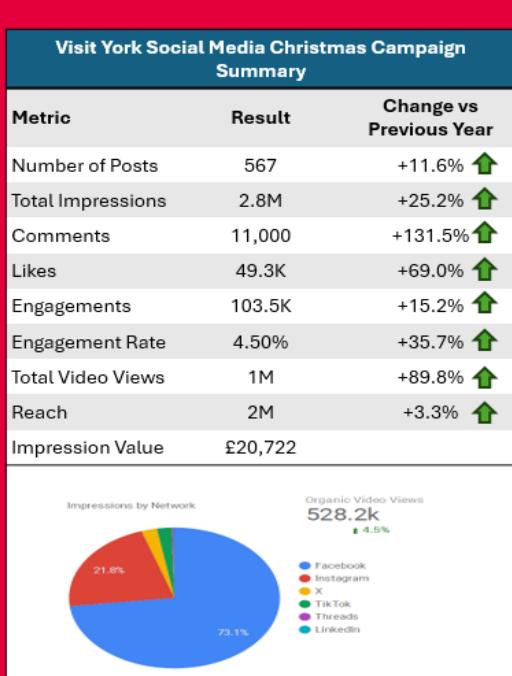
93% of traders consider attending the Christmas Market to be good value for money.

*"The revenue was great"
"My takings were up from 2024"*

100% are interested in the 2026 York Christmas Market.

VisitYork

Summary of 2025 Christmas Market Promotional Activity



The 2025 **Christmas Social Media Campaign** outperformed 2024 on every measure, generating increased reach, impressions and engagement.

Comments on the Christmas Market were mostly positive (65%) and centred around key themes:

Emotional connection: "York Christmas market is the highlight of my winter!"

Praise for Atmosphere: "All I can say is wow it's fab."
Returning Visitors: "Come every year we love it"

Specific Highlights: "The stalls are all amazing, worth the madness."

Transport: "York Park and ride is great service, use it every time we visit"

Negative feedback also featured common themes -

Crowding Issues: "weekend was rammed couldn't move"

Parking and Transport: "Half an hour trying to park at park and ride, then a long bus wait."

High Costs: "£5 an hour parking is too much"

General Disappointment: "been today and was disappointed"



Source: Visit York Christmas 2025 Digital Report and Social Media comments

Visit York Website: Christmas Campaigns Summary		
Metric	Result	Change vs Previous Year
Total Users	288.0K	-32.1% ⬇️
Views	658.7K	-17.3% ⬇️
Outbound Link Clicks	32K	-2.2% ⬇️
Average Session Duration	2 min 40 sec	+3.1% ⬆️
Sessions	413.1k	-28.0% ⬇️

Users:



Country	Views	%
1. United Kingdom	626,222	-18.4%
2. United States	8,964	-10.0%
3. Netherlands	2,834	26.9% ⬆️
4. Germany	1,869	54.6% ⬆️
5. Ireland	1,793	1.5% ⬆️

Visit York Christmas Newsletters Summary		
Metric	Result	Change vs Previous Year
Number of Emails	43	-15.7% ⬇️
Total Recipients	178.9K	-45.5% ⬇️
Total Opens	109K	-42.3% ⬇️
Total Clicks	13.5k	-14.8% ⬇️
Average Open Rate	54.61%	-1.2% ⬇️
Click-through Rate (CTR)	12.37%	+12.37% ⬆️

Christmas Press Coverage Summary

Metric	Result
Articles	140
Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE)	£1.09M
Opportunity to See (OTS)	292M

Later opening time for Christmas market confirmed



Source: Visit York Christmas 2025 Digital Report



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Visit York

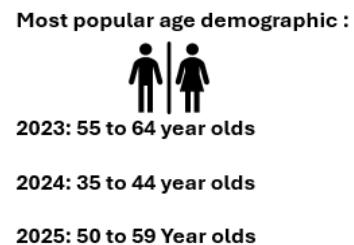
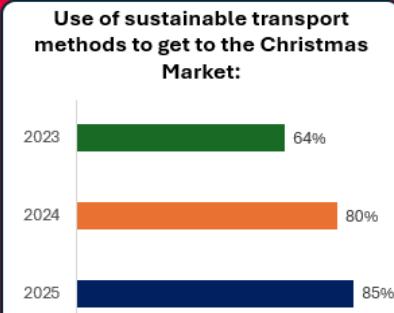
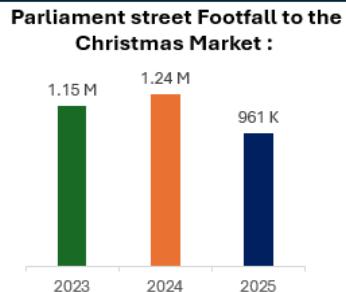
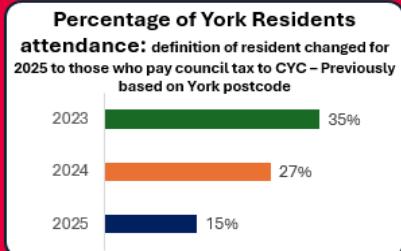
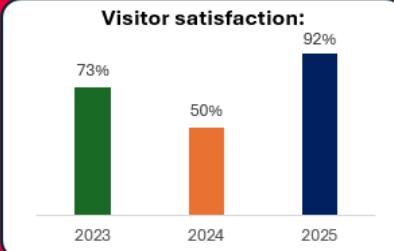
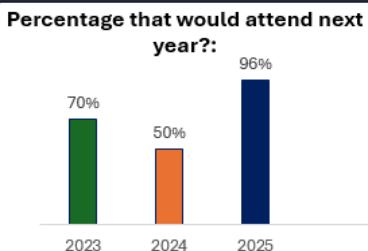
Summary of 2025
Comparison to previous
years Christmas Market





Make It York
Visit | Culture | Markets | Events

Comparison to previous years



Source: 390 online interviews with visitors to the 2025 Christmas Market

15

Culture

MIY will deliver ***The Watchers of York*** is an innovative, sculpture trail bringing the historic grotesques of York Minster to life. For centuries, these stone guardians have watched silently over the Minster, each imbued with its own character, humour, and air of mystery. This project celebrates their quirky charm by allowing them to step off the stonework and wander the streets of York, engaging residents and visitors alike.

The event will have.

Interactive Trail: A series of large-scale, whimsical sculptures placed throughout key locations in York. Each sculpture is inspired by a grotesque from York Minster, capturing its unique personality.

Storytelling: Each sculpture will have accompanying storytelling, revealing its origins, symbolism, or a playful backstory.

Artistic Collaboration: The trail will work in partnership with local and national artists to interpret the grotesques in creative, contemporary ways.

The trail will be installed in prominent locations around the city (in privately owned gardens and public spaces) for a period of 9 weeks between 29th June - 31st August 2026.

UNESCO

The UNESCO City of Media Arts EXPO was held between 5-7 November 25. The UNESCO City of Media Arts EXPO hosted **40 exhibitors** from across York & North Yorkshire, showcasing the full breadth of the contemporary creative economy, including screen, games, music, design, fashion, immersive technologies, theatre, and visual arts. Its strategic alignment with the **BAFTA-Qualifying Aesthetica Film Festival** significantly amplified its reach, credibility, and commercial impact.

The EXPO attracted **over 200 high-profile national and international delegates** from organisations such as the BBC, Channel 4, Film4, Aardman Animations, Ridley Scott Associates, Universal Music Group, The Guardian, and The New York Times. In total, **3,000 people attended over 2.5 days**, including **500 young people** from the region.

By leveraging the festival's international platform (delegates from over **60 countries**), the EXPO positioned York & North Yorkshire as a **centre of creative excellence**, not a regional showcase. Media coverage and engagement from bodies such as **Innovate UK** and the **Department for Business and Trade** reinforced its national significance and policy relevance.

The EXPO delivered **tangible business outcomes**. Exhibitors secured commissions, production contracts, studio enquiries, meetings with major production companies, and new national and international leads. Many outcomes are still emerging, underlining the EXPO's role as a catalyst for longer-term deal-making rather than a one-off marketplace.

It also played a strong role in **skills development and employability**, inspiring students and early-career creatives through direct access to industry professionals, workshops, and real-world insight into creative careers.

Strategically, the EXPO aligns tightly with:

- The **UK Industrial Strategy**, supporting innovation, IP development, exports, and high-growth creative sectors.
- The **York & North Yorkshire Local Growth Plan**, by retaining talent, strengthening SMEs, supporting inclusive growth, and enhancing place-making.
-

Looking ahead, the EXPO has clear potential to scale as a **national platform**,

including acting as a convening hub for the **UK's UNESCO Creative Cities network**. Future ambitions include expanded programming for commissioners and policymakers, deeper cross-sector collaboration, stronger skills pipelines, enhanced national and international marketing, and robust impact evaluation.

Conclusion:

The EXPO is a proven, high-value platform with demonstrable economic, reputational, and sector-development impact. Its partnership with the Aesthetica Film Festival is the critical differentiator, giving it national credibility, international reach, and scalability. With strategic investment, the EXPO is well positioned to become a flagship national event for the UK creative industries, anchored in York & North Yorkshire.

Contemporary Art Galley

A grant of **£30,000** from the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority has been successfully secured. This funding will enable a **feasibility study** to evaluate the potential for establishing a **new contemporary art gallery** in York and North Yorkshire.

The proposed gallery would have a strong focus on **media arts**, encompassing film, photography, digital installations, and immersive technologies. The study will examine demand, economic impact, and delivery models, providing the evidence base required to assess whether such a cultural investment is viable and sustainable for the region.

Conclusion

MIY delivered an exceptional performance in 2025/26 and met the key targets as outlined in the SLA. MIY have also cemented York's position as a leading place to live, work, study, and visit. The city's brand is gaining stronger national and international traction, driven by focused marketing activity, the continued success of the Visit York Pass, and the appeal of its culture, heritage, markets, and events. MIY's growing digital reach has amplified this momentum, keeping York firmly on the radar of a wide range of audiences.