

CYC Shareholder Meeting – 4 March 2021

Make It York – Managing Director’s Report

Introduction

This paper outlines MIY’s work since the last Shareholder Committee meeting in November 2020 and provides detailed analysis of MIY’s current financial position, together with a range of forecasts for future years.

The operating environment has remained extremely difficult for MIY, as it has for millions of businesses across the country, with core revenues from a range of sources continuing to be hit very hard. This led to a request from MIY’s Board to CYC for an investment package, to ensure the business’ commercial viability. This was approved by CYC in December 2020, linked to the agreement of a new Service Level Agreement. Discussions around the detail of this are ongoing.

Governance

Hybrid working model

With the exception of staff responsible for the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and the Shambles Market, everyone else has been working from home for the last 12 months. While this can cause some localized delivery issues, corporate productivity has not been adversely affected.

As is the case across the economy, some employees have found adapting to the new working environment easier than others. While continuing to keep a careful eye on staff morale and wellbeing, we have also extended our cover with Benenden Health to include support with mental health issues.

With respect to the future requirement for office space, we continue to have an open mind and, not least for reasons of cost-savings.

Staffing

MIY is recruiting a new Markets Manager. The role is currently being advertised and will be filled as soon as possible.

The Head of Business, Network Innovation and Inward Investment has recently resigned. Consideration is currently being given as to how his role should be best covered in future.

Activity

MIY's Business Team

Business Week

The business team facilitated 25 Virtual events for York Business Week attracting over 1,000 delegates.

Website:

- 2,040 Users
- 8,115 Pageviews
- Traffic to the site during business week increased by 19% on the previous year
- Overall Reach: 295,420

York Tech Accelerator

The business team has been working with a number of key city stakeholders to articulate the need for a tech accelerator to stimulate innovation and support start-ups in the city. The steering group and York stakeholders have identified that the development of a business accelerator could promote York as an exciting and vibrant entrepreneurial city in the North and could enable and support tech start-ups to succeed in the city and attract additional high-value inward investment.

Key Account Management

The Make It York Key Account Management (KAM) programme is designed to gather business intelligence, to provide a link between the local authority and the top companies in York and, where appropriate, to offer and provide business support services. There were 54 KAM company engagements this quarter from a diverse sector range including rail, property development, transport and logistics, agricultural, IT and telecoms, product fulfilment and engineering and manufacturing.

Recent Trends: Most of the KAMs are looking beyond C19 now and looking to get back to generating sales and secure the business pipeline. Cash flow remains an increasing challenge, and we are helping businesses to unpick their processes, in particular, their process for lead generation, account management and CRM along with marketing. Other priority themes include, looking after staff welfare and exploring innovative ways to provide additional services/products to existing

customers. A lot of support has switched from Covid survival to post Covid recovery. We are no longer getting enquiries about purely Covid related issues, but a mix of investment support enquires for future growth. Recent conversations suggest there is some anxiety about the furlough scheme coming to an end in March.

MIY are working to analyse upcoming lease break points for city centre offices to easily identify office movements in response to remote working as well as rent collection rates. Although there has been a decline in office space demands, we have seen an increase in demand for industrial space on the outskirts of the city.

Business Support

- Provided general business support via the Growth Managers to 40 businesses.
- Supported 23 businesses for the £1-£3k digital grants from the LCR valued at over £38,000
- Delivered 2 coffee and connect virtual business support events attracting approximately 32 delegates

Inward Investment

MIY continue to work on Promoting York for Business and are exploring new ways of working with York & North Yorkshire LEP. There is ongoing work to develop pages on the MIY website to promote York as a place to do business, and include sector focus and case studies, major sites information, publications (e.g. Living in York refresh), and a soft-landing section.

MIY received 13 new enquiries from a mix of indigenous, UK and foreign owned business. Enquires ranged from start-up health, asset management, manufacturing, R&D and energy businesses.

Culture and Wellbeing Team

York Culture Strategy

The 2020 – 2025 Culture Strategy, York's Creative Future, was virtually launched on 3 December 2020 featuring a series of keynote speakers from across the cultural sector, including Dr Darren Henley, Chief Executive of Arts Council England in conversation with York Museums Trust Chief Executive, Reyahn King, and Jamie Njoku-Goodwin, Chief Executive of UK Music.

The strategy aims to boost cultural activity in the city and places culture at the heart of activities – from major capital developments to residents' wellbeing and cultural entitlement for every child. With inclusion and participation at its core, the strategy aims to ensure culture is relevant and accessible to everybody in York, regardless of age, background or postcode.

The Culture Strategy has the vision that by 2025, York will be known as a city where outstanding, renowned heritage comes together with a cutting-edge and contemporary approach to creativity – reflecting the city's rich history and its status as the UK's first UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts. It was taken by the Council's Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities, Cllr Darryl Smalley, to formally adopt the strategy across all areas of the Council's work as part of the wider plan.

Both the Strategy and the video can be found on the new Culture Hub, <https://www.makeityork.com/culture/> hosted on Make It York's website, which already provides examples of cultural content showing the diversity of York's cultural offer focusing on:

- Culture in Lockdown
- Culture & Wellbeing
- Socially Distanced Culture
- York Festivals
- York's Culture Made Digital

The Culture & Wellbeing team are currently in the process of mapping out the strategy's priorities, working with key delivery partners on how and when they can be achieved by. Another key task is to review and formalise the governance structure of the Cultural Leaders group to enable clear management of implementing the strategy.

Culture sector update

The team are still working regularly with partners (CYC, Cultural Leaders Group) to raise awareness of the challenges facing the cultural sector in the city. Whilst many in the sector have innovated and found new ways of working during lockdown, there are still concerns around getting clear information regarding reopening and concern over public confidence. MIY provide a fortnightly e-news update to the Cultural Leaders Group in York, detailing current culture news, funding updates, and MIY news, which we encourage the sector to contribute to, to act as a further information channel. At present many are waiting for news in March of

funding from the Arts Council's Recovery Fund (round 3). Many key York venues and organisations were successful in the first two rounds in late 2020.

We are working with the Guild of Media Arts & CYC on the UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts designation with a view to raising its' profile at a national and international level.

Events

The MIY team are working with external partners (CYC & York BID) to address re-opening in the City Centre. We're currently reviewing a number of proposals for a summer long presence/event which reflects the need for making the best use of open spaces, factors in social distancing measures but also engages and encourages people to come into the city centre.

We have started the process of planning the Christmas Market - a tender has gone out for the food and beverage provision. We will again be working closely with CYC and Public Health in the planning stages to ensure we can provide a safe and reassuring environment in line with the relevant restrictions in place.

Planning for the Rugby League World Cup (Oct/Nov) continues with MIY project managing the promotion and engagement of the championships across the City, working with key partners (University of York, York St John's University, York Stadium, York City Knights Rugby Club, Queen Ethelburga's College and CYC)

The team are also in discussions with key third-party events (York Design Week, York Mystery Plays, Food & Drink Festival) as to how they can be supported and develop their events when faced with the current challenges.

An Event Strategy is being drafted in line with the Cultural Strategy's priorities, focusing on raising the profile of current events and how the event calendar can be developed to enable new or more ambitious events to take place in the city.

Marketing and Communications

Since 15th October 2020, we've continued to work closely with City of York Council on the tourism recovery marketing strategy and adapted

our campaigns and activities to reflect the ever-changing regional and national lockdown restrictions.

In December 2020, we established the reshaped Tourism Advisory Board to help inform the direction of the current tourism recovery marketing strategy, along with the development and delivery of a longer-term tourism strategy. The Advisory Board now meet monthly and also monitor the performance and progress of York's tourism strategy in achieving its aims and ensuring it is meeting the needs of all relevant stakeholders.

Leisure Marketing

We ran a national paid social media advertising campaign from mid-October onwards, promoting both Halloween in York and October half-term. This campaign resulted in visityork.org witnessing 110,211 users through October, a 43.7% year-on-year increase from October 2019.

Moving into November, we cancelled our planned 'Light and Dark' campaign as we moved into a month-long national lockdown. As such, we altered our focus to promoting virtual content from across the city in our 'York at Home' website hub, as well as focusing on promoting essential local traders, shop local content and food delivery and takeaway services. Overall, we managed to beat the total number of impressions on our social media channels from the previous two years with over 1.2 million impressions in November 2020.

With the physical Christmas market being cancelled, we launched our virtual Christmas market from late November onwards in conjunction with a virtual Christmas light switch-on and a #LightUpYork campaign. These campaigns ran across social media to promote individual businesses as they switched-on their own festive displays. We also ran a digital display campaign promoting both the virtual Christmas market and a strong shop local message that delivered over 3.4 million impressions.

Moving into January, we launched our celebratory #LoveYork campaign to champion the city's unique offer and promote York's diverse range of indie businesses and attractions. With a focus on 'shopping local', the campaign put a spotlight on some of York's best businesses and included a new 'Love York' virtual market. With over 35 local traders, the platform continues to offer a diverse selection of products from York's array of independent businesses. A new #KidsLoveYork hub for children

has also been launched, filled with fun activities, crafts and recipes from organisations across the city.

The hero activity within the Love York campaign is the virtual Love York awards. Covering 11 categories altogether, these awards have been all about lifting spirits and showcasing York's amazing leisure, tourism, hospitality and retail businesses. We wanted to highlight the great work these businesses have done over the last year, as well as looking to the future by asking people to vote for the experiences they are looking forward to returning to and experiencing again the most. After two weeks of online voting and over 6,400 votes being cast, we announced the winners and podium finishers across the Visit York Twitter and Facebook channels on 12th February with Gold, Silver and Bronze awards for each specific category. Over 25 different businesses received awards.

Business Marketing

With reference to the redeveloped business support pages on makeityork.com, we've continued to expand the EU Exit page to include international trade information and future opportunities from the Department for International Trade, as well as reworking the business support content on the Covid-19 support page with an accordion of sections to make it more user-friendly and easier to find relevant information.

We have continued to develop case study series on how businesses are working with MIY, as well as collating examples of York's world-class achievements, of current and past innovations and the pioneers behind these bold ideas and discoveries. The innovation content we are currently gathering will be used across our different platforms to share these stories, highlighting historical figures and inventions alongside the innovative research and products that are shaping the future.

We are also looking at ideas for future sector showcase events as part of wider planning around profile-raising for MIY / business support activity.

Digital and social media

From the period 15th October 2020 to 15th February 2021, the Make It York website received 16,900 page views by 7,004 users. New content has been added to the Make It York website to signpost businesses to the correct resources and provide insight from the team where

necessary. The Coronavirus Business Support page is the most viewed page after the home page during this period. Meanwhile, social media coverage on MIY platforms has resulted in 385,210 impressions and 6,248 engagements.

For the period 15th October 2020 to 15th February 2021, the Visit York website has seen 674,997 page views and 253,836 users, while our social media coverage on the dedicated Visit York platforms has produced 3.02 million impressions and 117,718 engagements.

PR and Communications

Over the period 15th October 2020 to 15th February 2021, we have seen 275 pieces of news coverage across a range of different topics including the virtual Christmas market/lights switch on, York Business Week, tourism marketing recovery, the culture strategy launch, our business support activity, the #LoveYork campaign and #LoveYork Awards. Overall, for the period the reach of our print/online coverage was 6.75 million.

Breakdown by month:

- In October, the reach of our print/online coverage was 1.1 million
- In November, the reach was 3.25 million
- In December, the reach was 1.44 million
- In January 2021, the reach was 2.96 million

This includes ongoing print/online coverage on York Press, York Mix, Yorkshire Post, BBC and additional broadcast interviews with our senior team on BBC Radio York, BBC Look North, ITV Calendar, Jorvik Radio and Greatest Hits Radio.

Throughout this period, we also worked with a range of national titles for features promoting York and businesses across the city – this included The Telegraph, National Geographic Traveller, Conde Nast Traveller, Sunday Mirror, Sunday Mail, The Independent and Yours Magazine.

Commercial and Revenue Generation

Visitor Information Centre (VIC)

The VIC has suffered due to tiered structures being re-introduced and the reimposition of lockdown. An eCommerce function has been

introduced, it is in the developmental stages but it will allow for the cross promotion of Shambles Market traders and York specific firms. We have been utilising campaigns for the city as a tie-in to promote product sales and drive awareness.

York Pass

Conversations with attractions are continuing, however, some have proved difficult due to furlough/lockdown. The York Pass is now fully digitised to allow it to be more cost effective and follow market demands. We are working with partners to help drive additional revenue and ensure visitors to York are buying into attractions/the city before travelling.

City Centre

Ongoing meetings take place on a weekly basis with York BID to discuss options around the reopening of the city, split between experiential and events to help promote the city centre. Staff from MIY have offered to attend Retail Forum meetings and we consulted with various stakeholders around late opening in the centre during the Christmas period.

A Pop-Up offering in Parliament Street, to mitigate for the cancellation of the Christmas Market, received positive feedback. This helped to support local businesses during lockdown. It also helped with the animation of Parliament Street during the Christmas period.

Shambles Market

Regular meetings with representatives continued. Commendation awards for representatives from NABMA have been secured, highlighting the excellent work carried out by YMTF and improving relations. Brisk trade was reported during the Christmas period by many traders and late opening, in conjunction with wider city retail offering, was explored, however, there was a poor take up.

The Shambles Market was kept open for essential traders during lockdown with a reduced rent of 50% offered.

A number of case studies have been produced to help promote the market and market traders. Social media containing new content/pictures has been updated.

MIY have supported YMTF in communicating access to funding/grants, liaising with Simon Brereton at CYC.

VY Membership

MIY have been proactive in contacting Visit York members. Regular updates have been broken down into sectors.

In November MIY conducted 17 zoom forums split by sector on support/sector updates. 2 training events, and 1 tasting session showcasing a York business.

In December MIY held a retail based zoom forum, 1 training event and 1 tasting session for a York based firm.

January included 1 zoom forum for the B2B sector, 1 training event on customer service and 1 cook along event with a York firm.

In February MIY continued the B2B forum, held a training event and one tasting event.

A Virtual market was established for York based businesses.

Membership costs were suspended during lockdown whilst continuing to help with the promotion of York businesses.

VY members who were at risk of flooding were contacted with any issues being escalated to CYC.

Online training events have been created to maximise a return on investment. Sector working groups have been established for any members who felt they needed a louder voice.

Retention rates of members has been relatively positive (in comparison with other cities). Our ability to retain and grow membership is directly linked to perceptions of VY/MIY and negative press does have an impact on membership.