

# **MakeItYork**

## **Quarterly Narrative Report**

**May – July 2021**

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## Introduction

This report covers the period May – July 2021 and is produced in line with the requirements of the Service Level Agreement with City of York Council.

The report has been produced with input from the Senior Management Team following the departure of the Managing Director from Make It York in March 2021.

Greg Dyke has chaired a Senior Management Team meeting on a weekly basis and will continue to do so until a new MD is in post.

While we are all very aware of current challenges, the future for York remains very bright and the opportunities for 2021, including those around the York Central development, the green economy and the current government's levelling-up agenda remain very significant.

## Marketing and Communications

### Leisure Marketing

#### Tourism Advisory Board

Coordinated by MIY, Tourism Advisory Board (TAB) meetings continue to take place on a monthly basis to ensure we're meeting the needs of the sector and taking into account feedback from all relevant stakeholders as we evaluate and plan our leisure marketing campaigns. Minutes from all 2021 TAB meetings can be provided if further information is required on specific content, discussions and attendees.

#### Recovery Strategy Campaign

Our tourism recovery strategy campaign ran from 17<sup>th</sup> May through until 11<sup>th</sup> July.

The aim of this was to promote the city as a staycation destination and to complement the safe reopening of the city. This campaign was run in partnership with CYC and, as you'll be aware from previous updates, used the council's recovery strategy budget that was originally planned to be spent between July and December 2020 but, due to various national and regional lockdowns and pauses in activity, we ended up carrying forwards a budget of £61k into this year.

In a nutshell, the activity included a new 30 second TV advert, an 8-week broadcast TV campaign on channel 4, a new 'good to go' safety video produced in conjunction with Welcome to Yorkshire, a new printed 'Summer Guide' to the city and paid social media activity... the overall aim here being to increase visitor spend and to inspire people to choose York as their summer break destination.

### TV Activity

We invested £50k of the recovery budget in a TV campaign with Channel 4, which was also match-funded by Channel 4 through their greenhouse fund for new advertisers, thereby giving us £100k media spend and a really strong campaign. The match-funding was particularly attractive in choosing Channel 4 for this campaign as it delivered significantly better coverage than we could have achieved with any other media. We targeted an ABC1 45+ audience travelling without kids to try and bolster midweek stays as previous sector feedback told us that midweek visitation would be the major challenge this year without any international tourism and a weakened group travel sector. This is also a further reason why the Channel 4 programming was a particularly good fit.

To remind you on the detail, we bought linear (live) TV spots on two of Channel 4's macro regions for a 2-month campaign: The North with a total of 6,460,000 ABC1 adults and the Midlands with a total of 3,765,000 ABC1 adults. There are twice as many adults in both regions (almost 20million combined) but our TV spots only appeared in shows that were watched by a majority of upmarket ABC1 adults. We also bought VOD (video on demand) in the London region, so £10k match funded to £20k, on All4 and targeting the same ABC1 upmarket shows in the London region. The campaign delivered an OTS (opportunity to see) of 3.3, meaning it was seen that many times on average. Overall the campaign delivered close to 9 million impacts in total.

Looking at further campaign analysis, the campaign over delivered by £15k of real value, so for the £50k spend we received £115k of genuine media value across the Channel 4 North and Midlands Macros and All4 through the London area.

We also added a couple of questions relating to the TV advert to our June visitor survey, with 24% of people claiming to have seen it.

### 'Good to Go' Safety Video

Running alongside the TV advert and campaign, we worked with CYC and the Welcome to Yorkshire digital team on a 'we're good to go' safety standard video. This now sits within the Love York hub on the VY website, as well as being used in social media posts between 10<sup>th</sup> May and 11<sup>th</sup> July. The purpose of this video was to inspire confidence in visitors to return to York across all our channels. The premise was that the video focused on the city preparing and getting ready to fully reopen and showcased all the safety measures we have in place.

### #Love York Summer guide

An A5, 36-page 'Love York Summer Guide' was distributed from May onwards, with 50,000 copies zooming around Yorkshire and slightly beyond with NPD, Take One Media and Info Display, as well as through our own Visitor Information Centre. An online version is also available and is being promoted across our website and social media channels. This year's summer guide is in lieu of the traditional 'mini guide' and 'visitor guide' that we produce in a 'normal' year and we're aiming for these to return in 2022.

### Paid Social Media Activity

Kicking off from 17<sup>th</sup> May, we used the TV advert and 'Good to go' videos across our social channels and allocated £2.5k from the recovery strategy budget to significantly boost the reach of these (across the same geographic regions as the TV campaign).

To give you an idea of what we're achieving organically across our VY social media channels, for April we achieved over 1.2 million impressions, meaning this many people have seen our content. To put that figure into context, the 2019 pre-pandemic impressions figure for April was 809,000, so we're already seeing strong interest and a 48% increase over the same month two years ago. This 1.2 million reach would equal roughly a £36k spend if we were paying to promote our content and we're hoping to continue to grow this over the coming months.

Between May and July 2021, the Visit York website was visited by 323,378 users, an 8.7% increase on previous all-time-high figures from 2019, and pages on the website were viewed 1.05 million times. Visit York social media channels received 4.3 million impressions, 163,973 engagements and gained 2,187 new followers with all metrics exceeding previous records during the same time period in previous years.

The new Visit York website also launched on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June and has already had 201,719 users visiting the site, a 5% increase on the previous record numbers from the same time period in 2019. The new website has an improved design and greater functionality to showcase the city's activities, events and the wide range of Visit York member businesses to over 115,000 online visitors to the platform each month.

### Summer of Sport

You'll have seen that we launched our summer of sport campaign on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July, with activities taking place through until early September.

This is supported by online and social media with a hub at <https://www.visitYork.org/summer>

This is a collaboration between Make It York, Thor's Tipi and First Bus York, with activity that includes an interactive sporty sculpture trail, pop-up tipi bars, urban running routes, free yoga classes and outdoor ping pong tables.

Our new 'summer of sport' activity leaflet and map was ready in time for the event launch on 9<sup>th</sup> July and we've produced 15,000 copies.

Six interactive sports-themed sculptures have been installed across the city centre offering photo opportunities for residents and visitors to get involved in. From celebrating on a winner's podium and driving a racing car, to posing with weights, the trail aims to get people moving around the city to enjoy the installations and share pictures on social media using #SummerinYork. Trail sponsors include York BID, Middletons Hotel, First Bus York, York City Knights and St Peter's York.

Until September 5, a pop-up Thor's Tipi bar is on Parliament Street offering a range of tropical-inspired drinks, cosy evenings around fire pits, and weekend DJ sets. Thor's is also joined on Parliament Street by a variety of York-based food vendors – including Yuzu Street Food, KREP, Shambles Kitchen, Sloppy's Burgers, Stam & Maria and The York Roast Co.

The colourful new outdoor seating will also remain across the city.

Outdoor ping-ping tables sponsored by Jorvik Viking Centre are located on Parliament Street, which residents and visitors can use for free and free yoga classes will also take place in Thor's tipi each week in partnership with Emperor's Gym. Kicking off from July 14, the classes will run each Wednesday (7.30AM -8.30AM) and Friday (8.30AM - 09.30AM) with pre-booking required by email to [leisure@middletonsyork.co.uk](mailto:leisure@middletonsyork.co.uk). For runners, two urban running routes have been devised in partnership with York Knavesmire Harriers.

### Summer Days Out Campaign with York Park & Ride

We're working closely with First Group on a Yorkshire-wide days out campaign that is encouraging families to use the park & ride scheme to enjoy the city throughout the summer holidays.

The focus here is on exploring 'hidden gems' in the city rather than well-known attractions and venues and includes activity with Capital FM Yorkshire, VOD with ITV, YouTube and podcast advertising and paid social across the VY channels.

Adam & Jojo from the Capital FM breakfast show filmed in York earlier this year and we are running an on air and on online competition to win £1,000 for a day out in York.

Plus launching on Monday 9 Aug, a new 30 sec clip for Video on demand with ITV hub and a new 15 sec clip for Youtube advertising targeting Yorkshire families with a little help from Polly at Little Vikings and her family. See video [here](#).

Brand new hub page for this at <https://www.visitYork.org/summer/summerdaysout>

This campaign is being funded by an £85k partnership with First Bus.

LNER Autumn campaign

Planning is underway for a national campaign (to begin in September) with LNER, targeting London and the South East for short break takers and to promote both Haunted York and Christmas, targeting go getters and empty nesters. Looking at a mix of Capital FM, Classic FM, digital and outdoor media.

## Halloween

Launching in mid-to-late September, we're looking to run a month-long 'Haunted York' campaign from 1-31 October 2021.

We're formulating this into an activity plan which will also support the current city of York drive for Purple Flag status and York's evening economy.

In previous years our Haunted campaign has run for a period of two weeks to cover the school half-term, however by extending this to cover the whole of October we feel that we can hit two distinct audiences.

Regional family and pre-nester focus targeting Yorkshire, the North East and North West. We will look to target pre-nesters from mid-September onwards and families in the run up to during the weeks when the school holidays are taking place.

## New photography

We've worked with Ravage Productions on new imagery to use across the new VY website and other digital and publication use and we're also now working with Milner Creative for new Shambles market imagery and a new series of 'farm to fork' videos showcasing the market as a hub for local produce.

## Business Marketing

### Business tourism highlights

Business tourism activity has focused around positive messaging that York is ready to safely welcome delegates for business events when the time is right:

- We are working with event organisers who have postponed events since March 2020 to support rescheduling these if/when they can. A few have committed to new dates, but most are still uncertain and subject to confirmation.
- We have been promoting newly-opened venues such as Sandburn Hall hotel and Malmaison, sharing enticing new products with a conference audience to encourage a return to York to enjoy the enhanced events offer in the city.
- We are supporting the Liberal Democrats again with their planning for the Spring Conference 2022, and coordinating dates and spaces for the 2023/24 events too.



- The Visit Britain Domestic Events fund is an opportunity for not-for-profit organisations to apply for funding to support events happening before the end of the year, so we've been sharing this with eligible clients.
- We have continued to host sales managers' meetings every 4-6 weeks, gathering vital intelligence from member venues about returning business, customer confidence and ongoing challenges for the sector. These meetings have also been an opportunity to encourage members to provide ongoing business intelligence to the Meetings Industry Association (MIA) to feed into research shared with DCMS.
- Engagement with the refreshed Visit York business tourism channel on LinkedIn is increasing, followed targeted invitations to relevant contacts to follow these updates, and our bi-monthly e-news to our conference mailing list shares similar content.
- Meetings with key venues as more colleagues have returned from furlough.

### Business support highlights

- Ongoing updating of content on makeityork.com, in particular signposting around changes to covid-related support, current grants and lockdown restrictions as well as training/apprenticeships content.
- Provided 350 words for Commercial Property Monthly for their Yorkshire and North East feature.
- Worked on the York Business Week survey to gather feedback to help shape content for this year's programme.
- We continue to gather examples of York's achievements, innovations and pioneers to be jointly used to promote the city and its sector strengths in future inward investment activity and in business tourism activity showcasing York as a conference destination as appropriate.
- The previously mentioned MIY feature in the Little Vikings 'Moving to York' guide for families will not be included in the publication, reflecting the changes regarding business support provision. Similarly, work on the Living in York guide has also been paused.

### Digital & Social Media

#### Make It York

Between May and July 2021, the Make It York website had 13,428 page views, an increase of 10% compared the same period last year and was visited by 5,915 users, an increase of 29.6% compared to the same period last year. Relevant business content has been continually updated by the team to signpost businesses to the correct resources and the 'Meet the Team' page was the most viewed page on the site during this period after the home page. Meanwhile, social media coverage on MIY platforms resulted in 151,678 impressions and 3,250 engagements, while gaining 311 new followers across all social media channels.

#### Visit York

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A global hub for displaying York's tourism offer, the new website was developed by our team at Make It York together with the web development supplier DestinationCore and supported by the Visit England grant funding.

- New modern design with greater functionality
- Visually impactful and intuitive experience for both member businesses and leisure visitors
- More dynamic and interactive content for popular hub pages like the #LoveYork hub
- More dynamic and user-friendly interface of the site's mobile version
- Improved user journey contributing to higher engagement
- New login system for members - offering a more advanced and easier way to edit product pages, events and offers
- Integration with the TXGB booking system
- Interactive itinerary building functionality, allowing users to share their itineraries online

## PR & Communications

### **Period from 1 May 2021 to 31 July 2021**

- Total news volume: 143
- Total news reach: 4.84 million
- Total news value: £543,485

National coverage in The Sun (print & online) plus The Sun Scotland, iNews, The Sunday Times, The Daily Star Online, Travel Weekly, Boundless Magazine, TopicUK and MSN.

Local and regional coverage in York Press, YorkMix, Yorkshire Post, Yorkshire Live, Sheffield Star, Your Local Link, Lancashire Times and Yorkshire Times.

Broadcasts included BBC Radio York, YorkMix Radio and Greatest Hits Radio.

Coverage themes: York as a staycation destination, Summer Of Sport campaign, Rugby League World Cup 2021, Youth Traders market competition at Shambles Market, Yorkshire Day celebrations, Cultural Grants, PAPI and MIY Business Grant event, new VisitYork.org website, Christmas Markets and York's covid recovery.

Fifteen press trips organised/supported including: The Sun, Express, OK!, Woman, LA Times, Daily Star, Bradt Guide, BRITAIN Magazine, The Telegraph and influencers such as 'The Cutlery Chronicles', 'Mummy Travels' and 'Londoner'. These cover a mix of proactive invites to media and reactive requests.

## Culture and Wellbeing

### York Culture Strategy update

The culture, wellbeing and events team have produced an action plan for the strategy, which takes the form of a RAG report with key actions to achieve the outcomes/ recommendations within the strategy and a quarterly reporting framework. This has been shared with the Cultural Leaders Group Strategy Steering Group and Cultural Leaders Group to gain their feedback. Following this, we have created a shared drive space where CLG members can input projects/ updates to be included in the Culture Strategy RAG quarterly reporting.

The progress across each Key Priority for the strategy for the second quarter has included:

- **Engagement:** Working on the research phase around engagement, inclusion and equality, to learn more about the current practices of organisations both within York as well as further afield (including the approach taken by large, national organisations). Planned conversations with York Travellers Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- **Placemaking:** Ensuring culture is taken into consideration in placemaking conversations – MIY staff now sit on the Castle Gateway Advisory group, My City Centre, CYC Vacant Premises group. Meetings have also taken place with the creative sector on creative-led workspace in York, and initial design meeting with CLG members to produce proposal on key role culture can play in the York Central development. Also, ongoing conversations with regional culture contacts, including on the forthcoming North Yorkshire Culture Strategy and synergies with this.

- **Children and Young People:** MIY are supporting REACH, the Cultural Education Partnership, and have created a web page for them to showcase cultural and creative activity for children and young people in York, on the Culture hub of the MIY website, as they do not have their own website.
- **Talent Development:** MIY is giving support in kind to SLAP (Social Live Art Performance), who are planning to develop an Incubation and Artist Development project for emerging artists that create 'Live' work and are based in York, supporting them to develop their artistic practise and business knowledge. Now the new Cultural Development Manager has started (in late July), we will also set up a workshop with key higher education partners, with the anticipation that this might develop into a working group to lead on this priority.
- **Culture and Wellbeing:** see separate section below.
- **York's National and International Profile:** The UNESCO working group of York Mediale, City of York Council, Make It York and the Guild of Media Arts, continues to meet on a regular basis. MIY is working to create partner packs to raise profile and awareness of the designation. MIY contributed to a range of case studies on creative initiatives in York, which was submitted by the Guild of Media Arts to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, for their forthcoming Creative Cities publication. MIY is also taking part in forthcoming meetings to restart conversations about plans for a potential event in 2022, to celebrate the city's significant anniversaries next year.

We are also working to further develop the online Culture Hub on the MIY website, which hosts the strategy and acts as a hub for the city's creative and cultural activity – we plan to include a separate web page for each of the Culture Strategy's six Key Priorities, sharing key info and progress on each area.

### [Cultural Leaders Group update](#)

The Cultural Leaders Group (CLG) have continued to meet on a monthly basis throughout 2021. This open and continuous communication with the culture sector has allowed us to keep up-to-date on their situations, facilitate collaboration, as well as inviting guest speakers to present.

Recent guests include Olivia Chatten, Master of the Guild of Media Arts and Business Development Manager at York Science Park, to present on the Guildhall development plans, and Rachel Cowgill, Prof. of Music at University of York and Research Theme Champion for Creativity, to discuss her role. At our most recent meeting, we also discussed the role of culture in York Central, and this has led to a forthcoming workshop where members of the CLG will work together to co-create a proposal for the key role of culture in the development, to share with the York Central Strategic Board.

The Cultural Leaders Group Strategy Steering Group (CLGSSG) continue to meet on a monthly basis to develop and refine plans to create an open and inclusive Culture Forum and Culture Executive, in place of the current CLG and CLGSSG structure, as a key recommendation of the Culture Strategy. We are well on the way to developing a Terms of Reference for the new

Exec and Forum, which describes how these will function and key processes and responsibilities of each. Following our most recent meeting (29/06) MIY will edit the ToR with latest feedback and also look to produce a Person Specification for members of the new Exec. We anticipate sharing these papers with the broader CLG in the autumn for their input and feedback, before we then look to launch the Forum.

MIY continue to 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.

## Culture and Wellbeing

Through the Better Care Fund, MIY and CYC awarded over £12,000 to seven social and cultural initiatives across the city, for projects running from December 2020 – March 2021. Since their completion, MIY has been working with the projects, from music and art through to dance and storytelling, to create a series of case studies about the work this funding has enabled. The case studies can be read here (links at bottom of article): [New Cultural Wellbeing Grants Awarded to Seven Local Community Projects \(makeityork.com\)](#)

It is our plan to create a Culture and Wellbeing page on the Culture hub of the MIY website, where these case studies and cultural wellbeing initiatives in the city more broadly will be shared. This resource (and the case study work already done) will act as a qualitative evaluation measure to capture the impact of the projects in the charity/ social enterprises and participants own words, in line with the recommendation for Cultural and Wellbeing evaluation in the Culture Strategy. We have discussed this model of evaluation with CYC and Converge, who have done significant work in this area.

City of York Council has confirmed that the Better Care Fund will provide funding for 2021, which means we will be able to run the cultural commissioning grants programme again this year, to support resident wellbeing through arts, culture and heritage activity. York CVS, Make It York and City of York Council are collaborating on this year's funding process, bringing together two funding streams made available by the Better Care Fund, of a total £50,000, so organisations can now be considered for both via one simple application process. Organisations are being invited to apply for grants of up to £5000 to support initiatives that boost mental and physical wellbeing across the city and reduce isolation through cultural and social engagement. We anticipate that successful applicants will be notified by late August.

York's Cultural Commissioning Partnership (CCP) meetings are ongoing on a monthly basis, to coordinate and share information on work around culture and wellbeing in York, as well as raise the profile of the sector, and undertake joint funding bids to increase capacity to develop social prescribing projects together. This group Chair and Secretariat are by Make It York.

## Events

2021 has seen a cancellation/postponing of all events from January - July\* due to COVID restrictions and lockdowns.

Make It York worked with City of York Council and York BID to deliver a range of seating across the city to encourage residents to visit the city centre and the use of outdoor spaces with social distancing thereby enabling city centre hospitality businesses to operate from April - June.

From late June, Make It York have worked with a range of local businesses, partner organisations and community groups to deliver a '**Summer of Sport**', offering a range of physical activities and additional seating areas for residents and visitors. Taking inspiration from the sporting events across the summer (Wimbledon, Euros, Olympics and later in the year, Rugby League World Cup – *nb, now postponed to 2022*), the offer includes a sports themed sculpture trail, vintage carousel, pop up cafe/bars in Parliament St and Tower Gardens, urban walking and running routes, ping pong and free yoga classes. There will also be a number of activations throughout the summer, including York community sports clubs and a new pop-up 'Festival of Archaeology' on August bank holiday.

For **Yorkshire Day**, we developed a programme of activity from 30 July - 1 August, in collaboration with City of York Council, the Civic team, York BID, and the Yorkshire Society, to create a cohesive, celebratory atmosphere in the city centre and raise the profile of the event. This included dressing the city with white rose bunting, Yorkshire deckchairs, giant TV screens showing archived footage of York and fun family movies in St. Sampson's Square and Tower Gardens, Yorkshire themed food stalls, selfie opportunities, window dressing, as well a high-profile marketing campaign across our channels, and opportunities for PR.

This summer-long programme will ensure a vibrant and animated city centre whilst supporting local businesses to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy York's attractions, retail and hospitality offer.

Plans are in place to programme events for the rest of the year, government restrictions pending, including: Festival of Food & Drink (September), family friendly Halloween themed events (October), the Christmas Market (November/December), York Design Week (October) and Aesthetica Short Film Festival (November).

We have now released the dates for Ice Trail 2022, which will take place on the weekend of 5 – 6 February: planning for this event is ongoing internally between our teams.

We are working alongside Visit England to coordinate the Tourism Awards 2022, and anticipate that these will happen in late March – early April 2022.

\*with the exception of Festival of Ideas which delivered a mainly digital programme

## Commercial and Revenue Generation

### Membership

There is a 70% retention rate to date and all members have paid their membership fees. During 2021-22 we have acquired 45 new members to date, making a total of 640 members and we are averaging 3 member events each month. Face to face events will be starting again when restrictions are lifted, but forums will remain online.

Members are positive about the new website and we continue to work on members page set ups.

Training member events that have been held include:

- Website Copy
- B2B members Forum
- New restaurant launch

### City Centre

- THORS TIPI and Street Food Village offering opened on Parliament Street on the 21<sup>st</sup> June
- YO1 Beach Café / Club opened on the 24<sup>th</sup> June and will run until Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September. It will open daily between 10am and 7pm and is located in Tower Gardens
- The Summer of Sport marketing campaign launched on the 9<sup>th</sup> July, showcasing sport activations around the City including a Sport Sculpture trail, ping pong tables and free yoga classes
- Yorkshire Day plans took place during the first weekend in August
- Rugby League World Cup – 100 days to go events are scheduled for late July and August (this has since been postponed to 2022)
- Shambles Market Sponsorship has been confirmed and we are planning to release a partnership piece at the end of August. MIY will work closely with them around branding opportunities in the market including signage, parasols and stall boards
- The Young Traders Event held in Shambles Market went well. It was held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June and is a good feeder for the Market sponsor

## Sponsorship and Publications

**Ice Trail** sponsorship opportunities have been communicated to members and confirmations are starting to come in. The Commercial team will focus on this event during August and September

Promotion of the **Christmas Guide** has started and there is significant interest.

The team are starting conversations with previous print advertisers regarding the requirement and formatting of the next **Visitor Guide**. We are looking at possible changes in format along with print numbers.

## Visitor Information Centre (VIC)

Full time opening hours resumed on 1<sup>st</sup> July. The VIC team are spending considerable time assisting visitors with pre booking of attraction tickets. Footfall and income are steadily increasing. Online pre-booking has impacted both York Pass and attraction ticket sales in the VIC.

Average daily footfall is between 250 – 687 per day vs an average 1200 – 1400 per day in June 2019.

The Grand Central Lego train has now returned to GC Head Office freeing up a considerable area for both merchandise and a new desk area enabling a staff member to cover an area of the VIC previously unmanned. This should provide opportunities for more customer engagement in terms of merchandise.

We are continuing to clear old product ranges and better resident engagement would help to grow quality merchandise sales.

## York Pass

- Online sales are going well with June being 100% over budget. However, VIC YP sales are struggling due to pre booking conditions. Trade sales are performing beyond expectation due to Online Travel Agents' targeting of the UK domestic market rather than the international market
- Reduced attraction line up with a focus on city centre attractions in 2021



## Business, Network Innovation and Inward Investment

### Key Account Management

During the 3-month period there were 21 virtual conversations with key accounts. The conversation over the last couple of months have mostly been about the difficulty recruiting staff, and the impending reduction in furlough support from those companies that have staff on furlough. The government's roadmap out of lockdown was also a topic of conversation.

COVID – 19 – During May, most firms were optimistic about the upcoming months as the positive vaccine rollout continued to instill confidence in the business community. Some sectors were doing better than others with the consumer services, public transport and hospitality sectors lagging behind the likes of the construction sector. During June, companies were disappointed about the delay in moving out of lockdown but also recognise that public health comes first. That being the case, the impact of the 4-week delay will hit the hospitality and leisure sector even though some have been trading at a reduced capacity. July saw further relaxation of covid restrictions, but businesses are still cautious especially with the sustained rise of the delta variant. Contacts reported robust retail sales, in particular for household goods and DIY products, supported by strong housing market and home-improvement activity.

According to the Bank of England, spending on hospitality and leisure continued to strengthen as social distancing restrictions were relaxed around the UK. Contacts reported robust bookings at most hotels, self-catering accommodation, and visitor attractions, partly due to restrictions on foreign travel. Restaurants, bars and personal care services, such as hairdressers and salons, also reported strong demand. However, many contacts reported staff shortages, which in some cases was constraining activity.

Contacts in accountancy, legal and consultancy continued to report good levels of demand, as did companies in IT. Recruitment activity was reported to have increased to pre-pandemic levels, partly due to shortages of temporary workers. By contrast, activity relating to business travel, corporate hospitality and events remained subdued. Labour shortages were said to be limiting growth in some sectors, such as logistics.

Manufacturing output was supported by strong demand for food, beverages and construction-related products. However, activity growth was constrained by shortages of materials and labour. And contacts in some sectors reported stockpiling materials and components in anticipation of continued supply-chain disruption. Contacts said they were adapting to the new arrangements for trading with the EU.

Demand for bank credit from some small and medium-sized enterprises, centred around asset finance to support investment. Supply-chain issues led to a rise in demand for working capital finance. Bank credit was readily available in stable and growing sectors, though some

smaller businesses and those in sectors that have been most affected by the pandemic continued to report tight credit availability.

The city has seen over 43 commercial properties change ownership in the last 12 months to June 2021 with the office and retail sector making up the bulk of these. Of the 20 different transactions, the ten where the purchase price is known represents an investment of £14.6m. (this does not include the recent Helmsley Group purchase of units on Coney Street). The buyer make up includes 8% by the new user, 35% by institutions and 57% by private investors.

There is a lot of ongoing conversations around office space and usage going forward. Most companies are looking to maintain their current space but planning to use it differently with a mixture of remote and office working, using the space for teams to meet up one or two days per week. Some have surveyed their staff, and this was the most favoured way forward. Others are considering subletting parts of the office to other companies that are looking for informal city centre working space for small teams. The good news is we have not seen any evidence of mass exodus of city based office workers.

Demand for industrial property on the outskirts of the city continue to be strong with several units being developed speculatively, while there is significant available office space in the city centre for the first time in a while. This is mainly due to new developments like Hudson Quarter and the Toft Green developments.

Innovation is still continuing to play a major role in companies big and small and many see it as a chance to enter new markets. This has not changed in the last few months and businesses expect to continue to review products and assets with a view to mutually beneficial collaborations.

Nationally, rent collection figures 60 days after due date reveal that commercial tenants in the UK have paid 70% of all rents due at the 60-day mark. March quarter day, down -4% from the same point in the previous December quarter. While this marks a rise of 49% on the level of rent collected on the due date of 25 March, it remains lower than the equivalent period in the preceding two quarters. These are national figures but likely to closely reflect York's position.

Looking ahead, Britain is set for a "sharp snap back" in spending by shoppers as restrictions ease, according to experts at Deloitte. The firm found "going to a shop" topped the list of leisure activities people are most likely to do after lockdown. Separate research suggested that the UK's economy will grow at its fastest rate on record this year, helped by the rebound in consumer spending. The forecasting body has upgraded its 2021 growth forecast from 5% to 6.8%, which would mark the fastest rate seen since Office for National Statistics (ONS) records began. There is cautious optimism that conditions would stabilise in the coming months, and a few expected a return to modest growth as the vaccination programme progresses into the summer.

**Top 100 Club** - Having conversations with York St John University about establishing the Top 100 Executive Club. A networking group created from the York Top 100 list of companies. WE are exploring what added value we can add to the club with special incentives from the University. There is also the potential to arrange networking groups with Top 100 from other

areas. There is the potential to do this by sector or non-competing sectors to encourage collaboration.

## Business Support

In the last quarter, MIY has provided general business support via the Growth Managers to 122 businesses, including but not limited to:

- A re-useable beeswax food wrap manufacturer is expanding. They are about to move to a larger unit and are looking at new machinery/kit, engineering solutions /manufacturing process, are taking on more staff and considering internships and apprenticeships. To follow on from this, the Growth Managers have managed to secure a PAPI grant of £20,000 to assist the company, securing equipment and further innovation
- A QSPM business that specialises in care homes confirmed that they are as busy as they have ever been and there is high demand for care beds. They are seeking extra staff and hoping to develop closer relationships with universities.
- Working with a marketing business who are offering a new all-in-one marketing hub for small businesses which connect businesses looking for marketing help with providers. The business is just about to go live with their website and would like 100 users to test it, so that they can refine their offer.
- A natural health supplement manufacturer and retailer is experiencing server problems with the EU Transition, they are looking at setting up a hub in Ireland to help with this. Referred the company to DIT and they are now receiving intensive help.
- Supported a production company to access a £6.5k Digital Enterprise grant
- The Growth Managers have also supported a further education skills consultancy/ provision to receive a £50k capital investment from BEF via Investment Readiness. They have signed new contracts with various institutions across USA and Australia.
- Other support included an SEO Agency, a recording studio, a landlord of a business park and a couple of tech businesses.

We delivered 6 Connect over Coffee virtual business support events attracting approximately 81 delegates. The concept has proved to be very effective and colleagues from neighbouring local authorities are asking for help and advice to do something similar in their area.

Recent topics included but not limited to:

- All about the networking! This meeting focused on making connections, so the businesses had the opportunity to take part in a lot more Zoom breakout rooms than usual.
- How the City of York Council sources contractors and suppliers, including tendering processes and an opportunity to give comments and views on how it can be improved. Phill Monk, Commercial Procurement Team, City of York Council.
- How to create a consistent pipeline of new opportunities? Jo Eckersley, NBD Rocks!
- GDPR Essentials – What businesses need to know, Samantha Dunwell Dunwell Data Protection – 14 delegates attended

Connect Over Coffee customer quotes:

“Excellent networking, one of my two favourites to attend” *Hannah Swierstra, Balance VA Services*

“I really love Connect over Coffee - thank you for organising it and for creating such a positive, supportive space for York business owners to meet” *Lucy Pembayun, LEaF Translations*

“I really enjoy them, well run, slick and great business opportunities. Thank you, Louise, for running them” *Rebecca Mason, The Social Media Tree*

### Further Support

Funders Roadshow - Led by Brian and Louise, over 40 businesses attended on 10th June. The event featured presentations by PAPI plus 15 funders/skills providers. The Growth Managers are now directly working with 5 new leads from the roadshow - PAPI have picked up 5 leads and 4 funders have had continued contact with businesses. A great result for everyone involved.

Growth Managers met with the Good Business Charter and helped to raise awareness and introduced LEP colleagues.

Both Growth Managers are giving CYC support on the criteria and potential voucher scheme distribution for the £1.2m ARG fund.

### Growth Managers Observations

We are still seeing a high demand for jobs and interest in internships, kickstart and apprenticeships and developing close working relationships with Universities. Companies in a number of sectors reported temporary, but material, staffing issues as a result of employees being required to self-isolate.

The creative and digital networks exist but are not maximizing the grants and funding opportunities available to them. York Creatives have now signposted the Growth Manager contacts details on their website.

The lack of capital grants is a major concern as businesses are no longer able to get any support with premises/unit fit out. The Business Growth Program administered through the Leeds City Region has been a big help for businesses in the past and helped to create jobs over the years. This is from both the SME and larger company sectors.

A lot of firms are looking for some form of digital support - be that capital investment or website redesign.

## Inward Investment

Handled **12** Inward investment enquiries for the period, including but not limited to:

- A Cheshire-based restaurant group is looking at York for expansion. 6500-10,000 sq ft building or 1 acre+ on which to build
- Carter Jonas client looking for Industrial/warehouse with office space; 2,500-3,500 sq ft with access for machine tools
- Manufacturer of compostable masks looking for 10,000 sq ft with good power supply
- Private tuition and exam centre looking for space in York. Yet to determine clearer search parameters but have provided information on working in York and access to talent
- An established retailer in Knaresborough looking to relocate to York. Looking for city centre space for around £12,000 pa
- Travel company - office space for 20+ people, with potential to take more and sublet.
- Govt dept/civil service roles - 100,000 + 250,000 sq ft of city centre space, close to station
- Cloud networking business - considering a relocation to York.

## Indigenous Investments

Handled **19** indigenous investment enquiries for the period, including but not limited to:

- Car rental business looking for second location, east York, 0.5 acres+
- Fuel experts looking to relocate manufacturing premises - 15,000 sq ft unit on 1-1.5 acres.
- Dry florist, cafe and bakery looking for less than 1000 sq ft.
- Recording studios and label - temporary office space during refurbishment
- 4 x start-up businesses - retail space
- Start-up business looking for light industrial space on the outskirts of York.
- Executive recruitment business looking to relocate their growing team to larger premises.
- Funding provider for churches considering freehold office space between 700 and 1500 sq ft in York city centre.
- Occupational therapy business - clinic and storage

## Foreign Direct Investment

Handled **4** Foreign investment enquiries for the period including but not limited to:

- A science institute in India - shell laboratory space
- Tool manufacture, already present in UK - office space for digital team
- Food manufacturer looking for up to 270,000 sq ft of warehouse/manufacturing/office space + parking and infrastructure
- Aeroponics and pyrolysis project – looking for land to lease

## Other Activity

- Tool manufacturer based in Doncaster, has indicated it will be landing at Raylor Centre. Follow-up meeting tba for further support re recruitment and for introductions.
- BoConcept, Danish furniture company, has opened at Monks Cross. This has been a long-term project; now assisting with recruitment and promotion.
- Training consultant is setting up at York Science Park.
- TT and film production company - their offer has been accepted on city centre premises, hoping to move towards end of July. Catch-up meeting shortly.
- Specialist structural engineers, focusing on two likely sites - Clifton and York Business Park
- Hull-based coffee business is in conversation with York Conservation Trust and Barry Crux re Stonegate property
- Website and communications planning for amalgamation of MIY business team and CYC economic development team.
- Continuing to work with CYC Economic Development teams on identifying the right businesses and contacts for the forthcoming Bosch lunch
- Sovereign Group requested a meeting to discuss York's offer as a business location. SG is an independent corporate and trust service provider and assists companies and individuals to establish themselves in the UK. We have made introductions to YNY LEP and key people in the city. Ongoing engagement

## Premises and Developments

- Meeting with heritage venue - assisted with review of business plans and made connections for regular use of space.
- York Biotech Campus - meeting with YNY LEP to determine best practice with communications and update on demand and supply. Discussions took place re challenges and opportunities.
- York Conferences - new relationship with Sales & Events Supervisor with aim to better understand space offer (including Guildhall) and make connections re sector assets.
- New co-working space available at Spark Studios. Viewing the space in July.
- Sector Focus – With Growth Manager, met with a well-connected entrepreneur and champion of York's creative and digital sector. New contacts given and made; better understanding of networks and space provision, particularly for arts.
- Meeting with DC Labs. An update on activity at Labs and progress with a year left on the programme. Of particular interest: Cutting Room facilities for co-design projects and Digital Creativity speaker series.
- Ongoing work to build and maintain a rapid response team across the city and beyond. New relationships in relation to skills (LCR LEP), travel (iTravel York), biotech sector (BioVale).
- The Business Team are attending regular meetings with CYC Economic Development Team as well as the Business Support Team from the YNY LEP. Meeting to make introductions where relevant and to improve the working relationship between LEP and MIY business team.

- Met with Brickman Yale (property management business. Providing feature briefs on specific properties) enabling Inward Investment Executive to pick out relevant enquiries and target for likely tenants.
- Provided supporting piece for entry of Hudson Quarter into Property Week Awards.

## HR and Operations

### Recruitment

- Recruitment for the Managing Director post is well underway, with interviews scheduled for early September.
- Interviews for the replacement Digital Marketing Executive post took place on the 30<sup>th</sup> July.
- We have appointed a freelance Events Manager to provide maternity leave cover from 31 August.
- An experienced Market Manager will start in this new role on 13 September.
- A temp with sales experience has been hired to cover the recently vacated Sponsorship and Advertising Sales Executive position.

### Premises

Subsequent to a Health & Safety review, a phased return to the Museum Street office started on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August. This will be on a hybrid office/homeworking basis with a limited number of hot desks available for pre-booking and will be reviewed on a regular basis.