

**Executive**

**7 December 2017**

**Report of the Director of Housing, Health & Adult Social Care  
(Portfolio of the Executive Member Housing & Safer Communities  
and Executive Member Economic Development and Community  
Engagement)**

**PURPLE FLAG**

**Summary**

1. At full council in April 2017 the council resolved:

To ask Council officers to:

- make contact with the Business Improvement District, Make It York, and North Yorkshire Police to start exploring an application for Purple Flag status for York city centre
- report back within three months to the Executive with an analysis of the costs, risks, and benefits of an application.”

This report sets out the detail of the Associate For Town Centre Management Purple Flag Scheme and asks the Executive to consider the principles of the purple flag and embedding them within relevant higher level strategic plans including the community safety plan.

**Recommendations**

2. Executive is asked to approve option 1

**Option 1:**

To continue the multi-agency work aligned to addressing issues relating to safety and economic growth within the city with a view to strengthening the relationship between Make It York, York BID, Safer York Partnership and the Health & Wellbeing Board. Ensure that the principles of the Purple Flag accreditation are embedded

within relevant high level strategies including the Community Safety plan.

**Reason** – It is felt by the partners that by embedding the principles of the purple flag in their higher level strategies which will boost the city's economy and ensure the city centre is safe.

## **Background**

3. Purple Flag is an accreditation process similar to the Green Flag awarded for parks and the Blue Flag for beaches. It leads to Purple Flag status for town and city centres that meet or surpass the standards of excellence in managing the evening and night time economy. The scheme is administered by the Association for Town Centre Management (ATCM) and aims to raise the standard and broaden the appeal of town centres at night. It is designed to change both the perception and reality of town and city centres in the evening and night time economy through a virtuous cycle of improvement.

4. **Who can apply?**

Any body with a legitimate stake in the evening and night time economy of a town or city centre can apply provided they are working in partnership with health, licensing, security and safety, late night transport and public realm management, hospitality and entertainment, planning and development, residents and consumers. Purple Flag is designed to apply to all centres of entertainment or those areas with a leisure offer that is active and varied after hours.

5. **Application Process**

To apply requires registering interest and accessing the Purple Flag Entrants' Resource. For a city of York's population size, the application fee is currently £3,150 with an annual renewal fee of £1,250. Applications are assessed by ATCM trained assessors who undertake overnight assessments, liaise with applicants and prepare recommendations for the accreditation panel. Each applicant location will be visited by two assessors as part of the application. Representatives from the assessor panel will also undertake spot checks and the 12 month interim renewal. Following the assessment, the application will be referred to the Purple Flag

accreditation panel made up of senior figures with experience of creating and managing successful town and city centres at night. The panel will then make a formal decision on whether Purple Flag is awarded.

**6. What is being assessed?**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Purple Flag Aim</b>
Crime & ASB	A sustained reduction in night time economy related crime and disorder
Alcohol & Health	Reducing levels of alcohol misuse and harm
Composition	Increasing choice and balance of provision for consumers
Footfall	Increasing enjoyment of the centre in the evening and at night
Perceptions	More positive perceptions of the centre in the evening and at night
Volume and value	Increasing business
Patronage	Widening consumer representation in the centre in the evening and at night

**Consultation**

7. Research has been undertaken to look at the 42 towns and cities who have obtained Purple Flag Status. The majority of applications have been made by Business Improvement Districts or Town Centre Management Groups in recognition that achieving purple flag status impacts on various agendas.
8. North Yorkshire Police have expressed concern about the prospect of applying for Purple Flag. They feel that the scheme is similar to Best Bar None, in that it is highly labour intensive for little benefit. Furthermore, that achieving and promoting Purple Flag status could lead to an increase in York's popularity as a drinking destination, leading to increases in crime and anti-social behaviour.

9. The York BID are in the process of discussing Purple Flag. It does not feature in their work plan for 2017 due to capacity issues. Early views are that Purple Flag may bring some merit in providing a PR platform for the already well embedded partnership working that takes place in relation to keeping the city clean and safe. However, the BID do not have the staff in place to drive a Purple Flag application and the work involved to achieve the award.
10. Make It York are of the view that there is still work to be done in partnership to address some of the issues relating to the city centre before an application for Purple Flag should be considered.

### **Options**

#### **11. Option 1:**

To continue the multi-agency work aligned to addressing issues relating to safety and economic growth within the city with a view to strengthening the relationship between Make It York, York BID, Safer York Partnership and the Health & Wellbeing Board. Ensure that the principles of the Purple Flag accreditation are imbedded within relevant high level strategies including the Community Safety plan.

#### **Option 2:**

To establish a meeting with the key organisations with an interest in the city centre to submit an application for Purple Flag Status. The emphasis any motivation to apply for purple flag status would focus on business and growth in the economy.

### **Analysis**

12. York is one of the safest cities in the UK. It is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the UK's 15 safest cities and 5<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of the Safest University towns and cities. Each year it attracts approximately 7 million tourists placing it in the top 20 best cities in Britain to visit 2017. As such, York is a popular destination for hen and stag parties because it is, safe and has a variety of facilities to offer from retail to tourist attractions and licensed premises all within a fairly contained area.
13. Unlike the majority of UK cities, York has a unique mix of residential properties within its city centre and these residents often come into conflict with the night time economy as the mix of volume footfall

combined with alcohol and the close proximity of shops, licensed premises and residential property often manifests in loud behaviour and disturbance.

14. Despite low crime levels, perception of crime differs between residents and visitors to the city. Visitors view York as a very safe place, adding to its attraction as a destination of choice. However, the perception of crime amongst York residents is disproportionately high and tolerance levels are very low in relation particularly to noise and low level anti-social behaviour linked to large groups of revellers.
15. Make It York is the city's Destination Management Organisation, established in 2014, with a role to promote and develop the city both nationally and internationally. York also established a Business Improvement District in 2015 as a partnership to drive improvement to York's city centre. Both organisations are well engaged with the local authority and the police in working to maintain York's low crime figures and increase feelings of safety amongst both residents and visitors to the city.
16. There are three Purple Flag towns within the Yorkshire region – Leeds, Halifax and Sheffield. Of the 42 Purple Flag towns and cities, the majority are large industrialised urban cities where crime rates are higher than York. Given the emphasis within the Purple Flag accreditation process on increasing footfall, patronage and vibrancy of economy, it is easy to see that carrying Purple Flag status would be attractive.
17. York's visitor numbers and popularity are testimony to its success as a tourist location. Over the years, the city centre has developed to offer a variety of small local businesses alongside a number of high-end and popular retail outlets. Research undertaken by British Transport Police with groups travelling to York for hen parties identified the safety and variety of what York offers as a major reason for it being the destination of choice.
18. Crime and anti-social behaviour in York is low. Licensing officers within City of York Council and North Yorkshire Police have worked closely with Safer York Partnership to ensure that licensing policy is used to control the impact of licensed premises on levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. This has included the introduction of a Cumulative Impact Zone (CIZ) which limits the number of licensed

premises within the city where it is felt that they could impact on levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. Within this area, both crime and anti-social behaviour have continued to fall. Best Bar None was introduced in York in 2002 but was discontinued as it was felt to be costly, labour intensive and only attractive to those licensees who behaved responsibly anyway. Purple Flag was briefly considered in 2012 but rejected for similar reasons of cost effectiveness and the intensive work required to achieve it.

19. Alcohol related incidents of anti-social behaviour have fallen year on year since 2013 in York.

	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
<b>Alcohol Related ASB</b>	2,341	1,852	1,749	1,495

Within the Alcohol Restriction Zone (ARZ) incidents of ASB peaked in 2014 and have reduced year on year since

	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
<b>ASB within the ARZ</b>	2,301	2,576	2,305	2,175

Within the Cumulative Impact Zone (CIZ) incidents of ASB peaked in 2014 and have reduced year on year since

	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
<b>ASB within the CIZ</b>	1,530	1,808	1,518	1,399

20. York has a strong history of partnership working to secure the safety of the city centre. In the 1980s it was part of the Government's Safe City Programme and this collaborative approach to city centre management has continued to develop through the establishment of Safer York Partnership, the creation of Retailers Against Crime in York (RACY) and more recently, York Business Against Crime (YBAC), Make It York and the BID. A number of successful multi-agency operations have been delivered aimed at reducing alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour in

the city centre. These include Operation ALTN8 – engaging with revellers to provide water and encourage them to alternative alcohol with soft drinks; Operation STYLE (Safe Time in York, Let's Enjoy) – promoting safety messages and more recently Operation Erase – aimed at a low tolerance approach to alcohol related anti-social behaviour. All have resulted in reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour. Last summer, British Transport Police carried out some consultation which showed large groups were being deterred from coming to York solely to drink, complaints about anti-social behaviour had reduced and feelings that York was safe had increased.

21. Within the draft Community Safety Plan 2017-20, Making the City Centre Safe is identified as a strategic priority and within that theme, Operation Erase is undergoing a refresh which will again be underpinned by the collation of both quantitative and qualitative data.
22. In 2015, City of York Council established a joint Community Safety Hub which included the development of a uniformed Neighbourhood Enforcement team to work alongside the neighbourhood policing teams in tackling anti-social behaviour and environmental crime. This team supports Operation Erase and has contributed to the successful resolution of a number of anti-social behaviour issues within the city centre. In addition, the BID appointed uniformed BID Rangers in 2016 to provide a further patrolling presence to engage with visitors and residents and to identify issues within the city centre which may need to be addressed. This combined resource provides an increased visible reassurance presence within the city centre but due to its embryonic status, the impact has yet to be measured. This may be picked up through the consultation element of Operation Erase.
23. Given York's low crime/anti-social behaviour status, its popularity as a major tourist destination and the highly embedded multi-agency problem solving which goes into addressing emerging issues at the earliest opportunity, it is difficult to determine what added value could be achieved in terms of community safety by applying for Purple Flag status. The emphasis of Operation Erase has been to deter large groups from viewing York as a place where they are perfectly safe to consume large quantities of alcohol without coming to any harm. Given that in most cities where purple flag status has been awarded the focus was on expanding the

economy. There maybe merit in a meeting with the business community to discuss whether they wish to submit an application

## **Council Plan**

24.. Purple flag relates to all three elements of the Council Plan:

- A prosperous City for All
- A focus on frontline services
- A council that listens to residents

## **25. Implications**

### **Financial** (*Contact – Director of Resources*)

Application for Purple Flag Status for a city with the population of York would cost £3,150 plus a further annual renewal fee of £1,250. In addition, the application requires significant support from both the local authority and partners. Internally, this would involve officers from Public Realm, Community Safety, Highways, Public Health and Licensing as well as requiring co-operation and contribution from partners such as Make It York, York BID and the police. Consideration needs to be given to the benefit that would be derived from achieving Purple Flag status versus the costs in officer time of applying, implementing and maintaining it.

- **Human Resources (HR)**

The only HR implications relate to internal officer time required to scope, develop and deliver the scheme

- **Equalities**

There are no equalities implications identified.

- **Legal**

Purple flag is not a legal status therefore there are no legal implications identified

- **Crime and Disorder**

An element of Purple Flag is linked to crime and disorder, the detail is set out in the body of the report



- **Information Technology (IT)**

There are no identified IT implications

- **Property**

There are no identified property implications

- **Other**

Due to the inclusion of public transport within the application criteria, there are some implications for Highways

### **Risk Management**

26. There are no known risks associated with this report

### **Contact Details**

**Author:**

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

**Jane Mowat**  
**Head of Community Safety**  
**Housing, Health & Adult Social Care**  
Tel No. 555742

**Martin Farran**  
**Director, Housing Health & Adult Social Care**

**Report Approved**



**Date**

27 November 2017

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

None

**Wards Affected: Guildhall**

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

Community Safety Plan 2017 - 2020