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## Economy & Place Policy Development Committee    22 November 2017

### Impact of the Arts and Culture Sectors on the Economy of York Scrutiny Review - Final Report

#### Summary

1. This report and its annexes present the findings from the scrutiny review of the 'Impact of the Arts and Culture Sectors on the Economy of York', together with the review conclusions and recommendations.

#### Background

2. In late June 2016, as part of a discussion on potential topics for scrutiny review during the 2016/17 municipal year, the former Economic Development & Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee expressed an interest in scrutinising the impact of the arts and culture sectors on York's economy, and asked whether such a review would add value to work already ongoing in the city.
3. After consideration of a feasibility report in July 2016, the Committee agreed to undertake the review, and appointed a Task Group comprising Cllrs Cullwick, Looker and K Myers to carry out the work on their behalf.
4. The Task Group met for the first time in August 2016. They appointed Cllr Looker as Chair and agreed the review should focus not on the quality and content of the city's cultural offer, but instead on the economic benefits it brought, particularly jobs. Recognising that York was keen to attract businesses to the city and that the city's cultural offer was a driver for job relocation, the Task Group also agreed that the attractiveness of the city was one of the things that encouraged people to relocate to York.
5. With the intention of maximising the benefits the city already had and developing the city's cultural sectors over the next decade, the Task Group identified the following review remit, which was endorsed by the full Economic Development & Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in early September 2016:

## Aim

To understand the value and impact of the arts and culture sectors on the economy of York and examine how they can further increase their impact on economic development and create additional high-value jobs in the city.

## Objectives

- i. To promote cultural amenities in the city for the purpose of attracting economic investment, leading to an increase in high-value jobs and the retention of high-quality employees.
  - ii. To examine the City Council's role within these sectors and assess what further interventions the Council can undertake to support these sectors.
  - iii. To identify ways to facilitate more and better joint working among cultural organisations.
6. The Task Group concluded its work on the review in May 2017, and a draft final report was presented to this Committee in September 2017.
  7. At the same meeting, Members were made aware of a recently concluded independent review of Creative Industries undertaken by Sir Peter Bazalgette, published in September 2017. The Committee recognised the need for the Council to consider the Bazalgette Review, and its connection to the findings of the scrutiny review. They therefore agreed to defer their consideration of the review draft final report to allow the Task Group time to consider the Bazalgette findings.
  8. In October 2017 the Task Group met with the Chair of York@Large to discuss the Bazalgette Report and to consider its recommendations in the context of York. The Task Group used the information to reflect on its review findings which has resulted in this revised draft final report.

## **Consultation**

9. To gather evidence in support of the original review remit the Task Group met representatives from numerous city organisations, including York@Large; Make It York; York Museums Trust; York Archaeological Trust; York Theatre Royal, City of York Council, the Arts Council, the Guild of Media Arts, York Business Improvement District, Indie York; the National Centre for Early Music, Explore York Libraries and Archives, Borthwick Institute of Archives, York Minster, the National Railway Museum, the Yorkshire Air Museum and Welcome to Yorkshire.

10. In October 2017 they met again with the Chair of York@Large, specifically to discuss the findings from the Bazelgette Review

### **York's Cultural Sector**

11. For the purposes of this report, all references to the city's cultural sector and offer relate to the following three mutually beneficial sub-sectors:
  - Heritage  
Heritage is positioned as the main driver of tourism in York, but is over dependent on declining markets, with cultural tourism its biggest opportunity;
  - Arts  
York has an active and vocal arts community, including both individuals and organisations. This sub-sector is considered to be highly vulnerable to public funding cuts.
  - Creative Industries  
The Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) defines the creative industries sector as 'Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.' The city is strong in innovation and talent and has some star companies, but the sector is seen as fragile as York lacks support for growth in a company's early stages.

### **Information Gathered - Summary**

12. In support of the review objectives above, the Task Group considered information on the following – see Annex 1:
  - York's Local Plan, which now has a stronger cultural element;
  - Regional Information & Comparison Data provided by Historic England;
  - Culture White Paper published by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in March 2016
  - Heritage Lottery Fund research
13. They also considered information on York's current Tourism Strategy & Economic Strategy, and research by the British Council around the value of cultural attractions. Finally, they gathered detailed feedback from the consultees listed above in paragraph 9 - see Annex 2.

14. York's Cultural Offer & its Relationship to the City's Economic Strategy  
One of the aims of York's Economic Strategy 2015-20 is to 'Make a *Fresh Loud Statement of Cultural & Visual Identity*'.
15. Information gathered in support of this review evidenced the intrinsic link between the city's economy and its cultural offer, and how that offer was affected by a number of the city's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified within the Economic Strategy. For example, the challenges around developing office accommodation in the city centre. As the evidence for this review showed, many of our creative industry start-up businesses were struggling to find space to grow and develop, often resulting in them relocating elsewhere. Other issues identified within the economic strategy were also highlighted as part of this review e.g. graduate retention and how external perceptions about the image of the City were affecting its cultural offer.
16. York was placed 7<sup>th</sup> in Trip Advisor's Travellers' Choice top UK destinations in 2017. A significant number of the seven million visitors to the city every year are drawn here by its cultural offer. Spending by visitors is instigated in two ways. Some come to York primarily to visit cultural attractions, while others take part in cultural activities during trips that are made for other purposes, potentially extending trips and generating additional spending as a result.
17. York's rich history gives it a clear advantage, but the national tourism market grows increasingly competitive with towns and cities regionally and nationally investing heavily to attract the tourist pound.
18. Whilst York's heritage continues to be the centrepiece of its cultural offer, the diversity of its creative industries and its artists, businesses, entrepreneurs, festival organisers and retailers are also widely recognised. Furthermore, it is one of the best connected cities through its transport links and its ultrafast broadband network. The whole of the city's cultural offer is therefore of significant economic importance to York – as an employment sector, a driver of innovation and inward economic investment, and through its associated income generation (GVA<sup>1</sup>).
19. In addition to its fantastic history and heritage, York is the UK's only UNESCO City of Media Arts. Next year, a £1million international festival 'Mediale' will take place, bringing media art to life for people (for further

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<sup>1</sup> Gross Value Added (GVA) measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector in the UK. It is used in the estimation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP is a key indicator of the state of the whole economy. In the UK, three theoretical approaches are used to estimate GDP: "production", "income" and "expenditure" When using the production or income approaches, the contribution to the economy of each industry or sector are measured using GVA.

information on Mediale see Annex 2, paragraphs 114-116). The Festival is seen as an important tool to showcase the city and encourage more inward investment based around York Central, the city's links to London, and its ultrafast broadband network, which as a combination makes York ideal for people working in the creative sectors who look to their environment for creativity.

20. The city's Guild of Media Arts was created to recognise and build on York's UNESCO status, to help develop an environment in which businesses and creative enterprises could flourish, using culture and creativity as drivers (for further information on the guild see Annex 2, paragraphs 13-18).
21. Creative industries represent York's fastest growing economic sector and add balance to its heritage assets and identity. Data collected by the Business Register and Employment Survey released in September 2016 showed that 4,500 are employed in the creative industries in York (based on the department of Culture, Media and Sports definition - see bullet point 3, paragraph 11 above).
22. The city's historic environment is also intrinsically linked to its economic activity, with a large number of those activities occurring within it, dependent on it or attracted to it. Thus, the economic value the cultural sectors bring to the city is increased by a variety of associated functions, e.g. the construction industry (maintenance of heritage buildings); conservation activity; investment in the investigation, research and display of archaeological sites and structures; education; other economic activity in historic buildings; and other businesses that benefit from spending by tourists, including shops, restaurants and hotels etc.
23. A Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) study shows that historic buildings and the historic quarters of major towns and cities are the places where new ideas and new growth are most likely to happen. Research shows that the commercial businesses based in historic buildings in major cities are more productive and generate more wealth than is the average for all commercial businesses across the whole economy. For more information on the study findings, see Annex 1 paragraphs 30-32.
24. Not only does the range of economic activity associated with York's cultural offer help to make the city economically successful for its residents, it also brings a high quality of life. Culture and the arts drive pride in place and a sense of identity and belonging. They are good for social cohesion and mental health, reducing the impact on social care and health budgets. This high quality of life contributes to attracting new

businesses to the city and is a factor in retaining employers and residents in the city.

25. While York has always been recognised as a leading centre economically, militarily and educationally, it has also consistently been a leading spiritual centre, as the home of the Archbishop and due to the wealth and vibrancy of its spiritual landscape. While the Minster is a jewel in the crown of York's tourism offer, the church and faith communities' strand of the city's history is also a significant part of York's story and form a large part of its cityscape (see Annex 2, paragraphs 89-101).
26. The Role of City of York Council (CYC)  
The Council has previously had a defined leisure and culture function with a dedicated team delivering those services, but this is no longer the case and its current role is that of a participant and collaborator, influencing and linking into the networks that are in place. The Council has a long history of establishing successful independent bodies to provide cultural services. These include York Museums Trust and more recently York Explore and Make It York.
27. The Council contributes both to Make It York (MIY) and Welcome to Yorkshire. It is also a member of a number of partnerships which have been created to enable joint initiatives and better collaboration both across the sector and with Council departments, including York Cultural Education Partnership, Culture & Wellbeing, an Arts & Place Group, and a Cultural Leaders Group.
28. The city's Cultural Leaders Group pulls together high-level creative and cultural leaders and managers from the larger organisations in York, including English Heritage, York Museums Trust, Aesthetica, Make It York, the National Trust, the National Railway Museum and the Guild of Media Arts.
29. The Independent Review of Creative Industries by Sir Peter Bazalgette, September 2017 (the 'Bazalgette Review')  
The review was commissioned from former Arts Council Chair Sir Peter Bazalgette by the Government's Business and Culture Secretaries and was published in September 2017. The Report on the review was requested as part of the activity projected by the Industrial Strategy Green Paper and, as such, its recommendations could form part of ongoing Government policy, including 'Sector Deals' for specific areas of the economy. In preparing the Report its author worked closely with the

Creative Industries Federation, a large membership based advocacy body, and the smaller industry-led Creative Industries Council.

30. It is important to note that the term 'Creative Industries' is used in the Report to apply to all nine sub-sectors defined in successive DCMS Mapping Documents, 'Advertising and marketing; Architecture; Crafts; Design; Film, TV and Radio; IT, Software and Computer services; Museums, Galleries and Libraries; Music, Performing and Visual Arts; Publishing'. This is identical to the 'culture sector' as we refer to it in York. The Report usefully describes how the sub-sectors reinforce one another through mutual interdependence, and have beneficial impacts that reach beyond 'its irrefutable economic contribution' to international soft power, to influence on other sectors, and to measures of wellbeing.
31. The Report argues that the current success of the sector in absolute and relative economic terms appears will continue, provided the framework for development is right. The core recommendation is that a £500m fund is used to support Creative Clusters as part of a Sector Deal, using the City Deal model currently employed in English regions. It refers to the existing Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Creative Clusters programme to invest £39m in industry-driven research and development activity. It notes that success depends on recognising that creative talent is widely distributed, and that understanding what factors drive successful clustering for the sector will enable more cities and regions to participate. The keynote of the discussion is the importance of the local authorities in these areas showing 'leadership, commitment and vision'.
32. The Report gives consideration to the protection of Intellectual Property, to the importance of digital infrastructure to enable clustering, of access to finance with appropriate sector expertise, and to the significance of the supply and nature of workspaces and studios.
33. A significant section is concerned with talent development, recognising that there are barriers to entry to the sector at all educational levels and that many groups may find their aspirations blocked. Two more specific sections relate to the screen-based industries and to reaching international markets.
34. The nineteen recommendations of the Report are for Government to consider. However, the thinking they embody, especially if the recommendations are taken up, is likely to shape the policies and attitudes of the national organisations with which York works. For instance the Report continues the policy direction of the Arts Council's

current Chair, Sir Nicholas Serota, who in 2016 spoke of a 'fresh start' in the relationship with local authorities with a devolution deal, whether through a city-region or combined authority.

35. In a similar report 'The Geography of Creativity in the UK' published by NESTA in September 2016, 47 creative clusters were identified across the country based on 'travel to work areas'. York is not identified as one of the 47 creative clusters due to the way the data was collected. However it is named in the report as an example of another location where there is significant creative activity. The closest cluster to York was Leeds and Harrogate. Arguably York has as many preconditions for success as the places that are included. For example, an audit of current initiatives underway in York would include the University of York's Digital Creative Laboratories leading a Yorkshire-wide bid for the screen-based industries, which in turn is based on Screen Yorkshire's successful partnership planning with British Film Institute support; York Cultural Education Partnership's commitment to ensuring that every young person encounters and has the opportunity to be inspired by creative and media arts; and appropriate workspace is high on the agenda in discussion of York's Local Plan and redevelopment plans.

### **Issues Identified**

36. In gathering information specific to the review objectives, a number of recurring themes arose during the meetings with representatives of the various city organisations, as detailed below:
37. Objective (i) – Attracting Economic Investment  
Many consultees agreed that York's role in the wider Yorkshire offer needed greater clarity and promotion. They felt that more could be done to attract more world-class events, and to further establish York's identity in events held across Yorkshire in which the city could play an even greater part i.e. improving the city's profile beyond its borders.
38. Several organisations highlighted the need to attract and retain younger people to the city - evidence suggested the limited number of premises which offer space for start-up businesses to grow and develop was a barrier to supporting and keeping starts ups in the city, and many younger people were leaving the city to pursue their careers. In order to fill the jobs the city is trying to create, and encourage more start-up business, the Task Group proposed that a better understanding about the reasons for the exodus was needed at city, civic and cultural leaders' level.



39. It was also suggested that while the city is strong in innovation and talent with some 'star' companies, there is a sense of fragility and some concern that York lacks support for growth in a company's early stages. Specifically in regard to the city's young, talented artists, evidence suggested many were leaving the city because there was nowhere for them to express their talents. It was therefore proposed that the city should improve its support for contemporary arts.
40. In recent years York has been described as a City of Festivals and some of those festivals are clearly useful both as attractions in their own right and as a tool for community engagement. Nevertheless many organisations felt that the idea of holding fewer but better quality festivals should be considered. Consultees pointed out those festivals which disappoint may devalue other festivals, damaging whatever brand identity has been created. They therefore suggested that strong quality control was fundamental to the city's long-term festival programme, if it was to continue to generate economic investment.
41. Generally, there was a perception that York was being held back due to a lack of confidence and that the city needed to raise its game. While there is an inherent belief that people will come to York because of its cultural offer, it is becoming an increasingly competitive market and other cities (e.g. Liverpool and Hull) are doing more to attract visitors. Many felt that York could extend the range of its visitor experiences, suggesting the city was not setting its sights high enough and could be in danger of being left behind.
42. Objective (ii) – CYC's Role in Supporting the City's Cultural Sector  
In recognition of the importance of the city's cultural sector, not only for tourism and employment, but also in attracting new businesses to the city, many of the consultees felt it was important for the Council to make a statement of commitment to the cultural sector to recognise their value to the city's economy. They also agreed that the Council could:
- Strengthen its cultural leadership;
  - Better facilitate ways of bringing organisations together;
  - Better articulate what we do as a city;
  - Be clearer about York's position locally, regionally and nationally
43. In regard to MIY, a number of the consultees suggested there was a lack of clarity among the city's cultural sector about its function. For example, whilst MIY is working to tie together the sub-sectors of the city's cultural

offer (as evidenced by initiatives such as Mediale and the development of digital arts), there was a feeling amongst some that MIY was competing with cultural bodies for Arts Council money, rather than supporting them. They agreed it would be beneficial if the Council took a strategic view with regards to culture, and MIY facilitated greater co-production, co-operation and collaboration in the city, and provided a co-ordinating role for joint funding bids in order to make sure the most is made of what funding is available.

44. Feedback from the Arts Council suggested they consider York to have quite high levels of cultural engagement against the national average; therefore York would not normally be a priority. However, they made it clear they would back the ambitions of any council which invests in arts and culture, or which finds innovative models for developing the cultural future of their city. Traditionally, the amount of funding granted by the Arts Council has been dependent on a city's ambition and commitment, the quality of its bid and the match funding it is prepared to put forward. All of these factors were taken into account when bids were assessed. More recently in recognition of the reduced budgets of local authorities, there has been less emphasis on match funding. In York, a lack of strategy appears to be affecting its ability to attract funding, but the Arts Council has indicated that if CYC made a clear commitment to the development of its cultural sub-sectors, it would respond.
45. A number of consultees drew attention to the problem of way finding around York. They agreed that signage was inadequate and the finger posts around the city were unsuitable for guiding visitors to lesser known places of interest.
46. MIY suggested that visitor enjoyment was being marred by incidents of anti-social behaviour. Evidence showed that because York is seen as a safe and easily accessible city with a concentration of entertainment venues, it has become a magnet for daytime drinkers on a Saturday. Whilst this contributes significantly to the hospitality industry, it was the view of a number of consultees, that it was having an adverse impact on the city centre, evidenced by a decrease in city-centre footfall on Saturdays and an increase in footfall on Sundays. In their view it was damaging York's reputation and threatening the viability of some events.
47. Objective (iii) – Improving Joint Working Among Cultural Organisations  
The cultural providers acknowledged that standing still was not an option for them, whether artistically, in their learning and volunteering practice, or in their venue infrastructure. They agreed that while there had been some operational joint working between organisations for some time

(e.g. sharing premises and box office functions), they could all benefit from more strategic collaborations and more collaborative promotion of the city as a place of world-class cultural importance.

## Analysis

### 48. Objective (i) – Attracting Economic Investment

The Task Group recognised that the city's UNESCO designation provided a new communication channel for the city to promote its identity and its potential as a place to visit and in which to do business. They agreed that York's biggest opportunity was to exploit and promote its UNESCO status, by mobilising its wider cultural offer around it, wherever possible. York is involved in partnerships with two sub-groups, the UK Creative Cities, and the worldwide Media Arts Cities. All 180 Creative Cities are in active dialogue through exchange and conferences. It was agreed that the increased exposure to a refreshed identity for the city that would result from e.g. hosting the UNESCO Creative Cities Annual Conference, would be likely to increase the value of tourism and trade.

49. Referencing Mediale (see paragraphs 114-116 of Annex 2), the Task Group agreed that such initiatives were one of the ways in which different types of people might be attracted to the city, thereby expanding the opportunity for additional GVA.

50. Furthermore, the Task Group agreed the city's heritage attractions are among the best in the UK and should be used where ever possible to support opportunities to attract inward investment. They agreed that York has only just started to explore how it might use its heritage in new and imaginative ways to support the other cultural sub-sectors e.g. the City Walls could be used as a back drop for displaying visual/digital arts.

51. They also agreed with the consultees that new ways of attracting visitors could be developed, e.g.:

- Explore York and the Borthwick Institute both hold invaluable archives relating to York and the wider Yorkshire region which presents the city with an opportunity to develop heritage tourism. The popularity of television programmes such as 'Who Do You Think You Are?' and the ease of discovering family trees via the internet has seen a huge growth in heritage tourism in other parts of the UK. The Task Group acknowledged that from an international perspective most of the ancestral tourists wanting to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors and learn more about their real life history, would be from the English speaking world, such as the United States, Canada,

Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. In the main, they would be high-end visitors to the city staying in the more expensive hotels and eating at the more expensive restaurants. In addition there was also the potential of attracting UK visitors and day visitors, all of which would bring more money into the local economy.

- A project to raise the profile of its Roman history could have huge benefits for the city - the city celebrates its Viking heritage in many ways, including the Jorvik Viking Centre and Europe's biggest annual Viking festival. Whereas, the city's Roman past is overshadowed, even though its international status is built on its Roman foundations. Consultees suggested that greater emphasis should be placed on the city's Roman past.
- The city's youngsters could be encouraged to learn more about and better value its history and heritage. – The Task Group learnt that one of the current projects of the Cultural Education Partnership is the Culture Pledge. This lists cultural activities and experiences that a young person studying in York might expect to have access to, which includes items such as to walk the Walls and visit attractions e.g. the Minster, museums, York Theatre Royal and the National Railway Museum. The Task Group were pleased to note that the objective of the Pledge is to instil an appreciation of the city's cultural offer from an early age.

52. The Task Group noted that because of the change in the way the Business Register & Employment Survey (BRES) figures for 2016 had been recorded i.e. to now include solely PAYE based businesses with employment counts of less than 20, there was no evidence to show what if any increase there had been in the number of creative sector jobs in York since 2015 (see Annex 2 paragraph 45). The Task Group agreed that going forward this should be monitored and positive action taken to address the exodus of young people and start-up businesses (see paragraph 31 above). Acknowledging that the use of heritage buildings for businesses (see paragraph 22) and more investment to create additional SME work space could help maintain and increase the number of creative sector jobs, thereby benefiting the economy, the Task Group questioned what more could be done to better utilise the city's stock of historic buildings. For example, using the empty space above existing city centre shops to help meet the demand from growing and start-up businesses, which are looking for accommodation in the city centre with easy access to the railway station. They agreed this would go some way to addressing the limited number of suitable available premises in the city for start-up businesses to grow and develop, which in turn may assist

in addressing the drain of York's younger talented/skilled workforce. They accepted that the CYC may be able to influence this through its Asset Management Strategy and the future development of its commercial portfolio.

53. The Task Group acknowledged the issue of revellers and anti-social behaviour and its effect on the city centre particularly on a Saturday afternoon. They recognised that a co-ordinated response would be required if the issue was to be properly addressed and were pleased to note the ongoing work of the AVANTE Group and its Operation ERASE (see Annex 3). The Task Group took account of the good work already undertaken by the AVANTE Group, and the evidence that showed when there are family events in the city e.g. Sky Ride, instances of ASB were greatly reduced. They suggested that the Cultural Leaders Group could lead on the development of a complementary approach, using the city's cultural offer to either re-position families and visitors away from the drinking hotspots on a Saturday afternoon and/or increase the saturation of cultural visitors to the city centre on a Saturday afternoon in order to dissipate the public's perception of revellers and ASB.
54. In regard to the Bazalgette Review report, the Task Group questioned why York had not been featured as a creative cluster when it could be argued it had many of the pre-conditions for success as the places that had been included. They accepted that the determination of successful cities can be affected by such factors as their boundaries. In the case of York the local authority boundary excludes some areas where previous studies, for instance by Burns Owen Partnership in a 2010 report, counted a substantial number of creative businesses based outside of the city that look naturally to York for their networks and service requirements. The Task Group agreed that the creative profile of York and its role as a hub for those creative sector organisations based outside the city boundary would benefit from improved promotion and partnership working with neighbouring authorities, in order to improve the city's ability to access future funding opportunities. The Task Group also noted that cluster designation came as a result of the provision of appropriate data to certain bodies. Recognising that being identified as a cluster city provided more funding opportunities, the Task Group agreed it may be worthwhile for York to gather and submit the relevant data in the future.
55. Objective (ii) – CYC's Role in Support of the City's Cultural Offer  
The Task Group agreed the Council's role and that of MIY needed clarity. They recognised that the Council's role should be one of strategic leadership, and agreed MIY's role should be to ensure appropriate

collaborative working arrangements and support is in place to help steer the city's cultural partners and co-ordinate funding bids etc.

56. In consideration of the relationship between the Council, Make it York and Welcome to Yorkshire, the Task Group accepted that a stronger relationship between Make it York and Welcome to Yorkshire could bring additional benefits to York, e.g. Welcome to Yorkshire could be encouraged to further promote York's events and attractions on a broader regional, national and international stage. They agreed there were opportunities to be gained through the Yorkshire brand, without losing sight of York's own brand. They also agreed that as the Council was as an investor in both bodies, it was in a position to encourage positive change.
57. In regard to city centre open spaces, noting that the current infrastructure did not best facilitate the staging of major public events, they questioned how and when the Council would be progressing its intention to seek the necessary funding to undertake a '*Programme of maintenance and enhancement of the public realm in York city centre to improve its attractiveness as the 'shop window' of the city.*' as stated in the city's Economic Strategy.
58. They also recognised that maintaining cultural assets and supporting improvements in the city's cultural offer was costly. The Task Group looked at the potential for introducing a nominal hotel tax to help meet this cost and ease the burden on Council Tax payers who fund local services which are under pressure as a result of visitor numbers.

*The Task Group discovered that over the past decade or so, several UK cities have considered introducing an additional tax on overnight stays. Notable examples include Edinburgh, Camden and most recently Bath, but none have been introduced as yet. The specified purpose of this tax would be to contribute towards the cost of maintaining public realm spaces e.g. rubbish collection etc. The Task Group recognised that in York city centre some of this work is already being done through the Business Improvement District, and as it is not within a local authority's current power to introduce this additional tax on a mandatory basis, its future implementation would be dependent on gaining additional devolved power from Government or hotels signing up on a voluntary basis. The Task Group therefore agreed that this was not the way forward for York.*

59. Objective (iii) – Improving Joint Working Among Cultural Organisations

The Task Group noted that the 'Vespertine' programme which took place 2014-16 (see paragraphs 117-118 of Annex 2) was a result of collaboration between arts and culture partners. Recognising the success of that event, and the benefits that improved joint working could bring, the Task Group questioned how best to bring together those working in the arts and cultural sectors and agreed with the consultees that the city would benefit from a more co-ordinated approach and that MIY should be the conduit to making this happen – see paragraphs 35 & 45 above.

60. They also suggested that linking the cross-promotion of cultural attractions into improved way-finding opportunities would be a positive way forward and would benefit the smaller less well known attractions. They were therefore pleased to note the inclusion in the Economic Strategy of a commitment by the Council and its partners to '*Roll out a comprehensive creative approach to digital signposting / communicating what's on and things to do in the city, which is accessible both virtually (e.g. through apps) and physically at key points in the city*'.
61. Finally, the Task Group accepted that as employers and through their contribution to the city's cultural offer and visitor experience, the churches and faith communities were a driver for attracting tourists, businesses and incomers. They therefore agreed they should be included in any conversation about enhanced co-operation across the cultural sub-sectors.

## **Conclusions**

62. The Task Group agreed:
  - The value of the cultural offer on the economy of York cannot be overestimated, but it is difficult to monetise and isolate the added value or net impact of the activities attracted to or embedded within it.
  - The cultural offer's three sub-sectors (see paragraph 11) are all drivers for attracting economic investment.
  - York has yet to take full advantage of its UNESCO designation or meet all of its UNESCO obligations. It needs to be more ambitious and co-ordinated in terms of its creative credentials and its full cultural offer, and programming and promotion needs to be improved, with more effective collaboration between cultural organisations. The key going forward is initiatives such as Mediale which successfully tie

together a modern and contemporary cultural offer with the city's heritage.

- The Council should demonstrate its commitment to the city's cultural sector and its ability to attract inward investment, by taking a strategic lead, giving more clarity on its role, what its expectations for the city are, what it can offer and what needs to be promoted.
- The role of Make it York should be clarified through the renewing of its Service Level Agreement
- The economy would benefit more from investment in the creation of work spaces for SMEs in and around the city centre.
- The number of tourists attracted to York places a lot of pressure on the city centre infrastructure. It is therefore important that the Council and its partners' progress their commitment to a programme of maintenance and enhancement of the public realm in the city centre (as detailed in the city's Economic Strategy - see paragraph 56), as this would also ensure the safety and viability of major outdoor events.
- It is essential the visitor experience is joined up and way-finding needs to improve. It is therefore important that the Council and its partners progress their commitment to this, as detailed in the city's Economic Strategy (see paragraph 60).

### **Review Recommendations**

63. In order to advance the aim of York's Economic Strategy to 'Make a Fresh Loud Statement of Cultural & Visual Identity', and positively influence the Art Council's consideration of future funding bids, the Task Group agreed to recommend the following:
  - i. The Council should demonstrate its commitment to the city's cultural sector by progressing the development and promotion of a clearly defined Cultural Strategy with the Cultural Leaders Group, with the Council showing leadership in its creation and adoption. This should include the provision of:
    - A one-off sum of £20k early in the new financial year, to support its development;
    - An ongoing sum of £6k annually for secretarial services;



- ii. The Council should support the Cultural Leaders Group in working as a cohesive unit to build and achieve wide acceptance of that Cultural Strategy
  - iii. As part of renewing MIY's Service Level Agreement, the Council should clarify the role of Make It York in supporting York's cultural sector and offer, and ensure it:
    - Develops a narrative about York's ambitions with cultural partners;
    - Improves its collaboration with Welcome to Yorkshire
    - Facilitates greater collaboration and co-operation between the cultural sub-sectors in the city
    - Co-ordinates future funding bids to the benefit of all cultural providers
  - iv. The Council should work with BID to explore all means available of achieving improvements to the public realm in the city centre, particularly Parliament Street.
  - v. The Council should seek ways of protecting and utilising the city's stock of historic buildings to attract more growing business, rather than increasing residential use, by encouraging imaginative approaches to redevelopment through the Local Plan and master-planning frameworks, and through its Asset Management Strategy and the future development of its commercial portfolio.
64. The Task Group recommends that Make It York:
- vi. Concentrates its focus on higher quality events and festivals in the city centre to protect the York festival brand and maximise their GVA.
  - vii. Works with BID and other interested parties e.g. York Civic Trust, to devise a comprehensive 21<sup>st</sup> century system of way-finding within the city using all available methods and technologies incorporating smaller cultural providers into those way-finding opportunities to expand the city's promotion of its full cultural offer.
65. The Task Group recommends that the Cultural Leaders Group:
- viii. Explores the suggestions for new initiatives identified through the consultation for this review, as listed at paragraph 51 above.

## **Council Plan**

66. This review supports A Prosperous City For All; A Focus on Frontline Services and A Council That Listens to Residents elements of the Council's Plan 2015-19.

## **Implications**

67. The following implications have been identified as a result of the review draft recommendations in paragraphs 63-66 above.
- **Financial:** To support the Cultural Leaders' Group by making available secretarial services would require a budget of around £6k p.a., and a one-off sum to support the development of a cultural strategy would need to be in the region of £20k. The council received 156k from the Leeds city region business rates pool, and to date no allocations have been made from this. If the Executive were minded to approve Recommendation (i) this funding could be used to cover the 20k one off funding, and possibly up to 3 years of secretarial support.
  - **Human Resources (HR)** If the recommendations are agreed, secretarial support will be provided in accordance with the council's HR processes.
68. There are no Legal, Equalities, Crime & Disorder, IT, Property or other implications associated with the recommendations arising from this review.

## **Risk Management**

70. York is facing a growing challenge from other towns and cities throughout the UK that are actively promoting their own heritage, arts and culture offers. If York were to slip down the UK list of key destination cities this could impact on both the tourism economy and further inward investment. There is therefore a clear risk to the city' economy if the city has no defined strategy in place to promote and co-ordinate its offer.

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**Wards Affected:**

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

**Background Papers:** None

**Annexes:**

Annex 1 – Information Gathered

Annex 2 – Information Gathered from Consultees

Annex 3 – Information on work of the AVANTE Group

**Abbreviations:**

BAFTA – British Academy of Film & Television Arts

BRES – Business Register & Employment Survey

CYC – City of York Council

DC Lab – Digital Creativity Laboratory

DCMS – Department of Culture, Media and Sports

EDAT – Economic Development & Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee

EU – European Union

FTE – Full Time Equivalent

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GVA – Gross Value Added

IT – Information Technology

MIY – Make It York

NPO – National Portfolio Organisation

PAYE – Pay As You Earn

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation

YAT – York Archaeology Trust

YMT – York Museum Trust

YTR – York Theatre Royal

WHS – World Heritage Sites