

Make It York Service Level Agreement Narrative Report July - September 2018

SUMMARY

Halfway through the financial year, MIY remain slightly ahead of budget and in a sound financial position. Continued good trading on the Shambles Market is compensating for some shortfalls elsewhere in the business.

Second quarter activity has concentrated on preparing for the Christmas festival, getting everything set up for York Business Week and progressing the creative and cultural strategy development projects.

SLA UPDATES

Business Environment

The last quarter has seen MIY provide intensive support to 45 existing businesses, signposting them into a variety of support and funding. MIY is currently working with businesses to achieve grants of £690K. For the financial year to date, MIY has helped businesses obtain £288K of grants.

MIY has also worked with 26 people looking to start up in business and continues to work with the Ad:Venture programme. 65% of the contractual target on the Ad:Venture programme has been achieved with 9 months remaining. 3 Masterclasses have also been delivered during the same period attended by 38 delegates.

Simon Middleton is leading on a project to build up the level of regular business contacts and to encourage a more collaborative approach from all the different business support agencies.

Visitor economy

The tourism statistics for the quarter (see attached) remain largely positive but the unusually hot summer weather has impacted on York Pass sales and on some of the indoor attractions. Outdoor attractions (City Cruises, York Maze etc.) have had very good summers.

The new Visit York website is performing consistently well with traffic and visitor figures now regularly at least 50% up on last year.

The inaugural hospitality awards took place at the Everyman cinema in September. The aim of the awards is to shine a spotlight on the hospitality sector at a time when staff recruitment and retention is very difficult. The event was well supported with a high number of entries, 10 new award sponsors and nearly 200 people attending on the night. Celebrity chef Tommy Banks made a guest appearance.

More than 220 articles have been generated so far this year through PR outreach work, reaching over 11.4 million people, with a 'PR value' of £2.84 million. This was boosted by the international coverage of the Chinese flocking to Scott's fish and chip shop, Bloom! coverage in the Sunday Telegraph and a full colour destination piece in Best Magazine.

York also featured strongly on film and TV. Aldi featured York in their TV ad, The One Show featured the Shambles Market, help was given in the city to a new Bollywood film and an Australian travel show also spent time in the city filming from several locations.

Culture

The final draft of the new cultural strategy for the city is out for consultation. It is unlikely to be fully endorsed by CYC, the sponsors of the strategy, until after the May 2019 elections but there is work that can be progressed in the meantime. A big question remains whether there is sufficient resource to maintain momentum on the strategy once the consultant steps away.

Everything is in place for the 3rd York Culture awards at the Theatre Royal on 19th December. Darren Henley, Chief executive of the Arts Council, is spending the day in York prior to attending the awards.

The creative industries' strategy will be launched on 5th December by a gathering of local creative businesses.

Sector development

Monthly meetings of the retail 'group' continue with a much more pro-active approach to attracting new retailers to the city. A subscription to the 'retail requirement list' is proving to be useful.

Outstanding is a meeting to define what is required for sector development plans – the question is whether this needs to emerge from the refreshing of York's economic strategy.

York Business Week will run from November the 13th through to the 19th at venues across the city. MIY has been working with businesses, support organisations, universities and public sector partners to develop a rich programme of activity. As in previous years, the aims are to inspire, to celebrate and to encourage growth.

The programme includes a major business conference, 3 celebratory events, two themed days, 11 company open days, a number of supporting workshops and seminars and a TedX event.

The programme is being supported by 20 principal sponsors. All the details can be found at www.yorkbusinessweek.co.uk.

UNESCO Designation

The first Mediale took place at the end of September with over 100 separate events across the city. As part of the activity, York hosted a meeting of the other Cities of Media Arts from across the world. An evaluation exercise is currently taking place and should be complete by Christmas. The festival was generally well received and there has been enough encouragement by key partners to announce that the festival will be returning in 2020.

Work is currently taking place to report back to UNESCO on York's activities over the last couple of years. The Guild of Media Arts and the Mediale will feature strongly.

Markets Management

The Shambles Market enjoyed a good summer with the good weather benefitting the food court in particular.

Two capital expenditure proposals have now gone in to CYC, both aimed at future-proofing the Market.

The Christmas Market sold out some time ago and everything is geared up for the launch and the Christmas lights switch-on on 15th November.

Events Programming

Key things to note include:

- A new, short-term tactical campaign was launched to showcase Halloween content in the city and beyond and to capitalise on the accolade of 'Europe's Most Haunted City' – the campaign incorporates the 'Great York Ghost Search' as well as partner content. www.visit-york.org/haunted
- Meetings have been taking place with the organisers of the Great Yorkshire Fringe to try and address a number of issues from this year's festival. The difficulties of putting a festival on in Parliament Street continue to be an issue.
- The Great Viking Hall and Shakespeare's Rose Theatre have both been given planning permission to operate on the Castle car-park next year.
- The longer-term events strategy needs re-invigorating. A draft sits with CYC and needs some input.

Brand management

Make It York is awaiting developments of the CYC city branding project. The company is committed to giving the project its full support.