

**Decision Session - Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Tourism      27<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities and Culture)

**York800: Review and Legacy Plans**

**Summary**

1. This report reviews the programme of activities that were undertaken in York as part of our York800 celebrations: including the two royal visits and the Olympic torch and Paralympic lantern relays, and sets out the aspirations and plans for continuing the cultural and community legacy in 2013 and beyond.

**Background**

2. 2012 marked a significant year in York's history, being 800 years since the city was granted a royal charter by King John in 1212. This charter enabled York's citizens to take charge of their own affairs with the right to elect a council, hold courts, appoint a mayor, and collect taxes. To celebrate this historic anniversary a programme of activities was undertaken, designed to engage York residents, communities and businesses in the civic life of the city.
3. York 800 was supported by a sub group of York @ Large, the city's strategic cultural partnership, and an internal York 800 officer group which met monthly both prior to and during the year. They agreed that the outcomes we were looking to address were:
  - building an understanding of the past
  - celebrating a sense of belonging in the present to all our communities and
  - contributing towards a shared vision of the future of York.
4. As momentum around the York 800 theme grew many community and business organisations adopted these aspirations and put their organisation, time and resources behind successful activities in the York 800 programme.

The challenge that remains now is to ensure that York does not lose this momentum and motivation that was inspired by York 800 and that we build on the goodwill, networks and activities undertaken in the year as we move forward.

### **Consultation**

5. In preparation for, and throughout the York 800 programme, we worked closely with the York 800 advisory group whose members included representatives from higher education, faith, business, media, voluntary sector and cultural organisations to ensure a coordinated approach. These members not only advised on potential programmes and activities but brought their own resources to the table to support events and activities. They also used their networks to promote York 800 which brought in additional activities for the programme throughout the year.

### **The York800 programme review**

6. When plans for the year were initially submitted to the Cabinet Member for approval in November 2011 we had a programme of 30 events, activities and festivals. One of the early decisions by the Advisory Group was that as long as activities met the criterion of the three outcomes listed (Para 3.) and were of sufficient quality to promote York positively then they would be allowed to use the York800 logo and brand themselves a York 800 activity. While there was some small element of rebranding of already planned activity this meant that activities were added throughout the year as more people understood what we were trying to achieve and wished to be involved in the success. This approach was in contrast to the LOCOGs approach with Olympic and Paralympic branding and we undoubtedly benefited from this decision with over 100 events making it into the final printed brochures and nearly 200 separate events listed on the website throughout the year.
7. In addition to specific events the initial budget supported a substantial level of marketing and promotion activity. As a result of this and with active support from the press partners on the York 800 advisory group we had at least one York800 press article per week, from July we had one 15 minute weekly radio programme on BBC Radio York, we produced 8000 bi annual events brochures, a rolling events website and the York 800 logo appeared on every council letterhead, every piece of events publicity and over 25,000 badges. It was picked up in worldwide publicity generating articles in the Times and the Huffington Post.

8. Some of the bigger one off events of the year, Charter Weekend, Queen's Maundy Thursday visit, Mystery Plays, Olympic and Paralympic Relays have generated attendance figures and economic impact data. However, such was the range of activities that we are currently still collating the attendance and evaluation information from the other events. The review below has allotted each of the major events under consideration into the outcome with the greatest relevance to the activity. However, it is recognised that many events had impacts in all three of the outcome areas. Given the amount of activity undertaken in this year there approach within the review has been to pick out highlights to illustrate the outcomes achieved.
9. Understanding the past – King George the Fifth said “York's history was the history of England”, and this outcome was to encourage a greater appreciation of the city's unique contribution to the development of civic society in the UK. The part that businesses, guilds and commerce has played in the development of local democracy in the city including the emergence of the role of the Lord Mayor were explored fully in a series of exhibitions, public lectures and celebratory events.
10. Both the Minster and Fairfax House ran exhibitions. The Minster had a year round programme entitled the Eight Mysteries of York Minster exploring building of the Minster and their treasures. In October they opened their Orb, educational centre dealing with the construction of the Minster for the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. Fairfax House hosted an exhibition of artistic views of York. Both organisations ran a full educational programme.
11. In April the York Museums Trust had HM the Queen open their “1212 – the makings of the city” exhibition and since then over 70,628 people have attended the exhibition. It is still open and deals with the social and ecclesiastical changes that were taking place in society at the time, with particular reference to York and the North. Education activities for school children have run alongside the exhibition introducing young people to the regional and national role that York played in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.
12. York is host to the National Quilt Museum and we worked with them and the National Quilters Guild to encourage responses from all over the country to the theme York 800 – Quilt City. Following a juried submission process 29 quilts were chosen for exhibition on a trail around the city centre.

In addition two quilt artists produced special commissions on the theme of York 800 which are now in the Quilt Museum's permanent collection.

13. The original idea for 'a small celebration' around the city's 1212 charter came from Richard Taylor, City Archivist. The libraries and archive service played a major role in the activities this year from their production of a mounted 'archives' exhibition which was shown both inside and outside York Explore, through to the 'Mystery In the Minster' specially commissioned book by Susannah Gregory for Big City Read, and many other activities in between. It was fitting therefore that the successful Heritage Lottery Stage 2 bid for re-housing the City Archives was announced in December 2012
14. Creating a sense of belonging in the city: York is an increasingly multicultural city and while the majority of people feel that they enjoy living here and belong to the city there is still more to be done to make sure everyone feels as if they have a part in civic life. This outcome sought to promote activities to ensuring that all residents felt as if they had a stake in the city.
15. York Stories 2012 - a community story capture programme was launched in March with the aim of capturing over 800 stories from all sections of the community in the city. This target has been more than met with over 1000 stories lodged via the York Stories2012 website, work with the press and community organisations and specific story catcher events throughout the year.
16. In April HM the Queen, HRH Duke of Edinburgh and HRH Princess Beatrice visited the city to distribute the Maundy money at York Minster, enjoy a civic lunch at the Mansion House with various community members including the Community Pride award winners and open the "1212 –The making of a city" exhibition at the Yorkshire Museum. The sun shone and over 40,000 people cheered her entrance to the city at Micklegate Bar and her route around York. Coverage of the event was broadcast world wide.
17. In June we welcomed the Olympic torch to the city with street entertainment throughout the city centre and a sports and evening event at the racecourse. Over 55,000 people lined the route of the Olympic Torch, with over 300 volunteer stewards, 18 entertainment groups giving their talent for free, nearly 200 cyclists accompanying the torch convoy and an 'on the move' Twitter poetry programme.

On the day the sporting activities were organised Sports and Active Leisure with York Arts Education undertaking the Sporting Giants programme. There were over 24,000 people in attendance at the Knavesmire to see the stage performers and Harvey Smith completed our section of the torch relay by lighting the cauldron on stage. The twin report on the York Gold 2012 legacy has more details on the voluntary sporting activities supporting this event.

18. Specifically for the York800 celebrations, the Arts and Culture team supported the Ebor Vox programme over our 'Charter Weekend' which saw over 200 community choirs and 300 school children come together to sing a specially commissioned choral work by Benjamin Till with lyrics sourced from an open poetry competition. Over the Charter Weekend, on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> July, the choirs collectively and individually delighted us with 'Flash choirs' throughout the city culminating in the EborVox event on the 9<sup>th</sup> July. Chilli Bon Bon, York St John's and Ebor Morris dancers joined with Shepherds Brass Band, St Chad's Scouts and 6 giant puppets to accompany the choral rendition of 'Our City' by the massed choirs from the community. This has been captured in the film which can be downloaded from [www.eborvoxfilm.net](http://www.eborvoxfilm.net) or the City Council website. Flooding meant the postponement of the York Regatta.
19. Our second official royal visit came on Charter Day, 9<sup>th</sup> July, with HRH Duke of York joining us for a full day of celebrations. HRH Duke of York visited the set of the Mystery Plays being build in Museum Gardens, reviewed the plans in development for the new home for the City Archives, joined the Civic Party to serve our special York800 birthday cake, (made up of 800 cup cakes made by York College catering students) and hosted a reception at the Mansion House for representatives of the voluntary and community groups that had involved themselves in the York 800 celebrations.
20. York Theatre Royal, York Museums Trust and Riding Lights together formed the York Cultural Company to stage the York Mystery plays 2012 in Museum Gardens for the whole of August. As well as a critical success these plays, the audience of over 32,000 ensured that they made a small profit. An eighteen month long community programme was delivered and ensures that the Mystery Plays were supported by over 1700 volunteers from all sections of the community right across the city.

21. York's entry into Britain in Bloom was supported by York @ Large and included in this year's programme was the York 800 flower bed by Lendal Bridge and the York 800 garden planted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation at Homestead Park featuring only plants that would have been available in the city in 1212. York won Gold in the Britain in Bloom competition for the first time.
22. In August we hosted the Paralympic Lantern and became the hub point for Yorkshire as our lantern travelled from London and then split into 5 Yorkshire lanterns at York. We hosted our Paralympic Lantern for a weekend which included; a reception at the Royal York Hotel, an open top bus tour to Celebrating Ability Day, visit to Special Olympics sports clubs, an afternoon with Channel 4 at York Races and leading and (by great sleight of hand) finishing the re run York Regatta. The twin report to this on the York Gold 2012 legacy has more details on this event.
23. Given that the 1212 Charter set in process our own local democracy in the city, York undertook a whole range of York 800 activities during the national Local Democracy Week. With the encouragement of new civic volunteering in mind, each Councillor had their opportunity to tell their story on what first motivated them to become councillors. Both ward and parish councillors were invited to take part and their stories were recorded for the Archives and some were displayed in the Guildhall. In addition, York Civic Trust held an educational debate programme open to all York secondary schools, there was a community 'Question Time' and the University of York started a programme of historical public lecture which ran until the end of the year.
24. Each of the major activities noted above ran programmes of work to ensure that they gave opportunities for those not usually involved in culture, or those communities with low participation rates, to get involved. The support from, not only the Arts and Culture team but cultural organisations throughout the city as well as thousands of volunteers, brought about a real sense of belonging to the city. The volunteers for the Mystery Plays 2012 have already organised themselves into a York Mystery Plays Supporters Group with the mission to support all future productions of the Mysteries in the city. Some of the positive public comments on both Ebor Vox and the York800 year long programme were captured in two films that were shown all around the city as part of the New Year's Eve and end of York 800 celebrations. All films can be downloaded from the Council website.

25. Creating a future: As well as connections into York Business Week, Venturefest and many of the major festivals in the city, York 800 saw the emergence of at least three new festivals going forward. Although the city has boasted being a city of Festivals since 2004, York 800 saw not only a new way of working and collaborating in the city, but the increased willingness of the wider community to involve themselves in developing strong and quality cultural product.
26. Following the York 800 launch at Resident Festival in January 2012, HMD, Early Music, Illuminating York, Aesthetica Short Film Festival (ASFF) and the Food and Drink Festivals all delivered supporting programmes for York 800 as their contribution to this special year. However three new festivals also emerged that looks set to become a permanent legacy of the year.
27. Easter 2012 saw the launch of the Chocolate Festival mainly driven by York Cocoa House and the Chocolate visitor attraction, but drawing in contributions from artisan chocolateers throughout the city. With the establishment in November of the York Guild of Confectioners (the first new guild for many years) with its emphasis on quality chocolate and confectionary produce then York's reputation as a world class Chocolate visitor destination is set to grow. This Festival will be supported by our Cultural, Tourism and City Centre teams.
28. York has a national reputation for its street entertainers and buskers. Timed to contribute to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations CYC Arts and Culture and City Centre Events teams launched our first Buskival over the June Bank Holiday weekend. Despite two days of very contrasting weather the programme and involvement of the Busking community proved a bit hit with the public. It was supported by a major sponsorship deal from Homesense. We will be retaining this festival as an annual event and working with the positive community commitment from Ebor Vox and the Torch Relay we will be seeking to include elements of poetry and flash choirs.
29. York Archaeological Trust launched their Medieval Festival in collaboration with a range of other providers and helped to cement a whole summer of medieval themed activities also encompassing Big City Read. YAT capped this off with an archaeological dig at the seat of local democracy, the Guildhall. It is their intention to continue a Medieval Festival in early August every year.

## Legacy

30. There are also emerging a range of benefits to the York 800 programme. In particular the following should be noted and considered moving forward:
- The early involvement of a wide range of strategic partners across the city allowed for involvement in the shaping of the programme which considerably enhanced the ownership of the York 800 theme. This brought a huge amount of additional resources to the year not only in terms of events but also in participation and promotion of the key messages of the year.
  - A strong internal CYC team which, while lead by Arts and Culture, had a regular and committed membership from right across the council.
  - The early decision for the logo and the branding of both York 800 and York Gold to be open to a wide range of uses, subject to meeting three simple and straightforward criteria. This encouraged community groups to develop their own approach to the celebrations and certainly strengthened community involvement.
  - Early and positive engagement with local media through the Advisory Group. Both the Press and BBC Radio York made positive contributions to the development and delivery of major events throughout the year.
  - The recognition that this could not be delivered by our own resources and, that working by with partners, we developed and encouraged a new culture of volunteering in the city.

Although these approaches are not new the combination of all of them has delivered stronger partnerships for delivery across the city and should be the basis on which we move forward with events, tourism and cultural sector activities.

31. York Stories 2012 has left specific legacies around approaches in community art work through: empowering partners to deliver, the use of instantly accessible technology and establishing protocols whereby community generated creative production can be accessed by other artists to deliver additional artistic product.



Stories have been used to deliver Illuminating York artworks, a community painted “Bayer’s Tapestry” and we are in the process of developing city trails using the stories submitted and mobile app technology.

32. The Royal Visits, the Olympic torch and Paralympic Lantern relays in the city, the York Regatta, the Jane Tomlinson York 800 10K run and Ebor Vox activities have left a strong legacy of new events and the confidence to work across the council, and with external partners, to deliver, safe, successful and enjoyable mass participation events. This includes new approaches to operational management, collaboration across media and marketing communication and working with specialist teams, i.e. Sport and Active Leisure, Minster Chapter. Most striking in this has been the increased use and confidence in operating with a wide range of volunteer workers and voluntary groups. As we take on more mass participation events like the Tour de France and the Yorkshire Marathon we will build on the skills and expertise developed.
33. Making effective use of modern technology has almost become a by word in reports, however During York 800 the city stepped up its game in using modern technology; not only as a way of delivering elements of the programme but also in communicating this and enabling more people to participate. Chief amongst this was the York Stories 2012 website, Facebook and Twitter programmes. Pilot Theatre, in a unique and groundbreaking programme, allowed internet users to choose their viewing options on the Mystery Plays 2012. The York800 year was launched by a free downloadable film and since then this film has been used by many businesses as a promotional film for the city. Working with the Archives we have also captured and recorded many of this year’s activities for permanent placement in the City Archives.
34. Big screens touring around the city brought the films to the whole community and all films made have been available for download from the internet. Going forward this element will pay a key part in any profile, participation and delivery of events aimed at a wide community and therefore this has to be included in the planning and resourcing of the activity.
35. The York800 programme, endorsed by elected members, supported right across the Council and by a wide range organisations was a great success. It brought the excitement of a city wide celebration into local neighbourhoods and engaged thousands of residents and visitors in York 800 inspired activities.

In particular, it showcased the strength of networks that exist to promote cultural, sporting and artistic community development in our city.

36. The year long City of Festivals programme and the continuing legacy work that York 800 has generated is facilitated and supported by the newly merged Culture, Tourism and City Centre team. The Council makes a significant investment in this team but income, additional resources and one off project grants are secured by the team to continue to deliver world class culture in the city.
37. Moving forward resources associated with events such as the Tour de France will be considered by a separate paper to CMT but it should be noted that many of the additional funds and resources we currently access are only available if CYC can demonstrate tangible partnership funding either in confirmed budget or in kind resources against a project. With this in mind, it is important to note that officers will always look to utilise core budgets creatively to lever external investment to the city, but still require a sufficient level of service resource to attract such new funding packages.

### **Council Plan**

38. The York 800 activities supported the Council priorities of building strong communities, developing a world class culture and creating jobs and grow the economy.

### **Implications**

39. The implications of the activities outlined above are as follows:
  - **Financial** - There are costs associated with maintaining the staff capacity to deliver these legacy activities and also the development of any additional cultural provision. These will be reported on for specific projects and issues as they arise.
  - **Equalities** - One of the key objectives of York800 was to promote activities that engaged the whole community and developed a sense of belonging in the city. Specifically, many of the targeted projects were aimed at ensuring participation by those with the lowest activity rates.
40. There are no Legal, Crime and Disorder, Human Resources, Information Technology, Highways or Property Implications arising from this report.

## Risk Management

41. In compliance with the Council risk management strategy there are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

## Recommendations

42. The Cabinet Member is asked to comment on the effectiveness of the York800 programme and support the principles outlined in taking the legacy forward.

Reason: To support the development of a world class cultural offer and build stronger more participative communities.

## Contact Details

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**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 15 February  
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### Wards Affected:

All

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

**Background Papers:** Report to the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion “York 800 Activities in 2012” 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011