

Make It York

Quarterly Narrative Report

January – April 2021

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Introduction

This report covers the period January – April 2021 and further reports will be produced on a quarterly basis.

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.

Positive discussions are ongoing between a small group of MIY directors and CYC representatives with respect to a new SLA and updated papers will be discussed at the CYC Executive Committee on the 20th May.

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

On 11th January, we launched a new celebratory #LoveYork campaign to champion the city's unique offer and promote York's diverse range of indie businesses and attractions. With a focus on 'shopping local', the campaign put a spotlight on some of York's best businesses and included a number of new initiatives, competitions and awards designed to engage residents, businesses and virtual 'visitors' to the city during lockdown and beyond.

The new #LoveYork website hub promoted the virtual 'York At Home' experiences available in the city, alongside various takeaway and online delivery options that York businesses were promoting during lockdown. We also launched a new #LoveYork virtual market in early January promoting online products, gift vouchers and offers from a wide range of York businesses. With over 35 local traders, retailers, hotels and attractions featured, the platform offered a diverse selection of products from York's array of independent businesses.

We also worked on a new online #KidsLoveYork hub for children, filled with fun activities, crafts and recipes from organisations across the city. From learning how to craft a Viking helmet, to making prehistoric cheese and creating sock puppets, the hub contained a wide variety of interactive activities for kids of all ages to help keep them entertained during lockdown. The initial #LoveYork campaign also included a series of new social media competitions, promoting prizes from local businesses, as well as a special celebration of York's local music venues with activity in support of Independent Venues Week (25th -31st Jan 2021) – a 7-day celebration of music venues around the country.

The brand new #LoveYork Awards, a fun and inclusive social media initiative, launched on Monday 25th January to lift spirits and showcase York's amazing leisure tourism, hospitality and retail businesses. Taking place across the Visit York social media channels, York residents and virtual 'visitors' were invited to vote for their favourite York businesses and experiences nominated for each of the 11 award categories.

These virtual awards supported York's leisure, tourism, hospitality and retail businesses by showcasing the great work they've done over the last year, as well as their resilience, creativity and passion. A number of award categories focused on the 'best of the best' experiences and initiatives introduced by organisations during the period of national lockdowns and Covid-19 restrictions and voters were also encouraged to choose their favourite virtual and foodie experiences, to cast their votes for businesses who've gone above and beyond in the 'Going the Extra Mile' award category and to choose the true 'Lockdown Hero'.

The #LoveYork Awards also looked to the future, asking people to vote for the restaurants and cafes, bars and pubs, hotels and B&Bs, as well as attractions and events they were looking forward to returning to and experiencing again the most, once restrictions were lifted. Overall, more than 6,400 residents, 'visitors' and York fans voted for their favourites in the #LoveYork Awards – choosing over 25 different businesses to be awarded the Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes.

As part of the celebratory #LoveYork campaign, a new #LoveWalking hub was also created to help inspire local residents to explore the city. The hub includes a variety of themed trails, walking inspiration and tips for exploring York on foot – showcasing the unique offer of the city.

Launched on 8th March, and as part of the #LoveWalking campaign, Little Vikings (York for Kids) have created a brand new family-friendly I Spy Trail. This permanent free walking trail is the perfect way for families to explore York, with 22 weird, wonderful, iconic and interesting things to spot along the circular route. The hub also includes a variety of other themed trails for residents to enjoy and highlights some of the best walking spots including the city's iconic walls, Visit York's chocolate trail, which explores how the city was built on chocolate and the sweeter side of York's history – and the famous York Cat trail, which celebrates the unique history of York's cat statues. The campaign has been inspired by Welcome to Yorkshire's #Walkshire activity which showcases Yorkshire's diverse landscapes and invites people to share their walks using #Walkshire.

Running parallel to the 'live' campaigns, the £134k tourism recovery marketing budget was originally planned to be utilised between July and December 2020 but, due to various national and regional lockdowns, we carried forwards a budget of £61k into this year. We now have an 8-week TV campaign scheduled with Channel 4 (North, Midlands and London macro regions) to start on 17th May, so taking us through to the end of the first full week of July. We're investing £50k in this TV campaign and it's being match-funded by channel 4, thereby giving us £100k media spend and a really strong campaign. We're targeting an ABC1 45+ audience travelling without kids to try and bolster midweek stays. Public Health have also recently signed-off the 30 second TV advert creative. Other campaign elements include photography, paid social media activity, press / influencer visits and group travel advertising.

Running alongside the TV advert and campaign, we've been working closely with CYC and the Welcome to Yorkshire digital team on a 'we're good to go' safety standard video. This was filmed w/c 29 March and is still being edited and tweaked, the idea being that this can be used from late April / early May onwards to inspire confidence to return to York across all our

channels. The premise is that the video focuses on the city preparing and getting ready to fully reopen and showcasing all the safety measures we have in place.

In terms of publications, the Love York summer guide is now in the final stages of proof reading and amends before its early May launch. We haven't produced the usual visitor guide or mini guide this year, however there was an appetite from attractions to support a printed summer guide... as such, we'll be printing 50k copies of this, as well as having a digital version available, for distribution via regional leaflet racks with NPD, Take One and Info Display.

Our 'book of ideas' press kit for 2021, which goes out nationally to press with invites for visits to York, is almost finalised. The purpose of this is to provide inspiration for journalists, travel writers and influencers who are looking for fresh ideas and reasons to visit and write about York. Other leisure comms activity of note is centred around maximising publicity for our marketing campaigns, case study activity, member communications, ice trail planning, York pass relaunch and the Rugby League World Cup.

Business Marketing

Business support highlights:

Ongoing development of online content on makeityork.com, with particular focus on case studies, skills/training and signposting for covid-related support and grants.

Content has been developed and submitted for the Little Vikings' 'Moving to York' guide for families, which focuses on supporting people interested in relocating / working in York, as well as the support that MIY offers to people and businesses relocating to the city. Work has also begun on refreshing content for our own 'Living in York' guide, which will be digital-only and will enhance our existing online content.

Work has also started on collating examples of York's world-class achievements and innovations and the pioneers behind these ideas and discoveries. The aim is to build and share these examples across our different platforms to promote the city and its sector strengths from an inward investment perspective and to support business tourism activity showcasing York as a conference destination.

Business tourism activity highlights:

We attended MeetEngland Virtual (9 & 11 February), organised by VisitEngland, and took part in 20 appointments (10 USA buyers, 10 European). Lots of interest in York/Northern England from buyers who are keen to give their clients UK options that aren't just London-based, and definitely a strong focus on incentives and experiences. In addition to individual proposals sent post event to these buyers, follow up information was also sent to all 400 buyers registered for the event.

Working with VisitBritain to supply images and content for refreshing the York page on the 'Events Are Great' website and supplying copy on York venues for a feature in the April issue of 'Conference News', all about conference and meetings venues with outstanding outdoor space (the Principal York was selected).

We attended the Meetings Industry Association (MIA) Destination Summit, 22-23 February, a 2-day virtual conference with around 30 other DMOs focusing on business tourism, sharing best practice and recovery support such as researching and bidding for relevant events that align with city strengths and top tips for virtual and hybrid events.

We hosted sales managers' meetings every 4-6 weeks to gather intelligence from our member venues about returning business, customer confidence and ongoing challenges for the sector and we developed content for the refreshed Visit York business tourism handle on LinkedIn, with similar content shared in a bi-monthly e-news to our conference mailing list.

Digital & Social Media

Make It York

During the period of 5 January to 25 April, the Make It York website had 18,997 page views by 7,130 users. Relevant business content has been added to the Make It York website to signpost businesses to the correct resources and providing insight from the team where necessary, and the Coronavirus Business Support page continues to be the most viewed page after the home page. Meanwhile, social media coverage on MIY platforms resulted in 275,237 impressions and 5,894 engagements, while gaining 593 new followers across all social media channels.

Visit York

During the period of 5 January to 25 April, the Visit York website was visited by 253,836 users, pages on the website were viewed 474,028 times, and Visit York social media channels received 4.2 million impressions, 183,000 engagements and gained 3,497 new followers.

PR & Communications

Total news volume - 218 pieces of coverage

Total news reach - 9.67m

Total news value - £562,256

This includes coverage in outlets such as The Daily Telegraph Online, Mirror online, ITV.com, BBC, Yours Magazine, Prima Magazine, MSN.uk, British Travel Journal, Planet Radio, Yorkshire Post, Yorkshire Live, York Press, Northern Echo and more. We've also had radio interviews with the MIY team on BBC Radio York, YorkMix Radio, Greatest Hits Radio and Jorvik Radio.

This includes a range of local coverage for activity such as our #LoveYork campaign including the #LoveYork awards and launch of the #LoveWalking hub, business support, case studies and April reopening news. We've also been working with travel writers on a number of national pieces to promote York including Daily Telegraph, Yours Magazine & Prima.

Culture and Wellbeing

York Culture Strategy update

Since the launch of the 2020 – 2025 Culture Strategy in December 2020, the team have been busy producing an action plan for the strategy. To facilitate this, more generally we have been:

- Meeting with different cultural partners (individuals, organisations, higher education institutions, etc.) in the city to identify what is already in place and how we might be able to fill any gaps
- Determining where the culture sector may need representation in other work / areas of development in the city
- Looking into what opportunities might be available for making joint cultural bids for funding and researching these potential options at present.

The progress across each Key Priority for the strategy for the first 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). It is our hope that we will be able to utilise this work to enable York to better support and engage those who are disadvantaged.
- **Placemaking:** One of the primary goals of the strategy is to ensure that the culture sector is represented across those groups that are integral to York's place profile (these include capital development projects). We also hope to further develop York's sense of place and raise York's profile regionally by working more closely with cities in both West Yorkshire (including Kirklees, Calderdale, Bradford, Leeds, Wakefield) and the eastern side of North Yorkshire (including Selby, Malton, Scarborough).
- **Children and Young People:** We are supporting REACH, the Cultural Education Partnership, with the second round of their Bags of Creativity initiative, to provide bags to 2,000 disadvantaged children in the city as part of the York Festival of Ideas, supported by the University of York.
- **Talent Development:** Meetings between Make It York and representatives from York St John University and University of York have taken place to discuss the approach for the strategy. It is intended that Make It York will set up a workshop with key higher education partners to develop this approach further, 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:** A UNESCO working group has been established, which includes representation from York Mediale, City of York Council, Make It York and the Guild of Media Arts. This has led to the creation of a new page on the UNESCO designation (on the Make It York website), as an early part of this work

and will lead to coordinated partner promotion of the designation as we develop further collateral together.

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: [Culture Hub | Make It York](#).

Cultural Leaders Group update

MIY, CYC and the Cultural Leaders Group (CLG) have continued to meet on a monthly basis throughout early 2021. This open and continuous communication with the culture sector has allowed us to keep up-to-date on their situations (and concerns) in and out of lockdown.

Cultural Leaders Group Strategy Steering Group (CLGSSG) agreed at their April meeting, to press ahead with creating more adaptive format of the CLGSSG and CLG, to take the form of an Executive body and Forum - with anticipation that this will be in place within six months. This new format will feature a co-chair model, with a Cultural Leader as co-chair and MIY Head of Culture and Wellbeing as co-chair. Subsequent CLGSSG meetings over next six months will look at more detail regarding new model, and it will function as an interim body for this period.

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 sector funding update

In April, DCMS published their figures for funding from: CRF2, BFI, National Heritage Lottery Fund and Repayable Finance. Here are the breakdown of the numbers for York and Yorkshire and the Humber:

- Cultural Recovery Fund 2 (Arts Council England):
 - York received £2,965,522 of the total £261,582,823 given out. Of the 297 local authorities that received funding, York ranked 17th (in terms of quantity of funding, not number of successful bids).
 - Yorkshire and the Humber received £19,958,923 of the total £261,582,823 given out. This was approximately 8% of the funding. Of the 11 regions that received funding, Yorkshire and the Humber ranked 6th (in terms of quantity of funding, not number of successful bids).
- National Heritage Lottery Fund:
 - York received £325,300 of the total £44,171,070 given out. Of the 201 local authorities that received funding, York was ranked 44th (in terms of quantity of funding, not number of successful bids).

- Yorkshire and the Humber received £4,238,900 of the total £44,171,070 given out. This was approximately 10% of the funding. Of the 9 regions that received funding, Yorkshire and the Humber ranked 6th (in terms of quantity of funding, not number of successful bids).

York did not receive funding through the BFI funding or the Repayable Finance.

The following were York-based (central and outer) recipients of CRF2 funding: National Centre for Early Music, York Archaeological Trust, York Theatre Royal, York Museums Trust, The Crescent, Performing Arts etc. Ltd., J-Night, MCR Music Ltd., National Association of Writers in Education, Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers.

The following York-based companies were recipients of the National Lottery Heritage Fund: York Minster, Central Methodist Church York, Council for British Archaeology.

Culture and Wellbeing

York's Cultural Commissioning Partnership (CCP) was reinstated during 2020, 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.

The Partnership submitted a joint bid to Arts Council England and the National Academy of Social Prescribing in January 2021, for their Thriving Communities Fund. Whilst the bid was ultimately unsuccessful (only 37 awards were made across the country), it showed how the Partnership could put together a cohesive, large-scale (£50k) application in a very short amount of time with the facilitation of Make It York. We are now looking at further options to adapt this bid and whether relevant to other trusts/ foundations funding sources.

The CCP now includes representation from City of York Council, Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, Explore York, Converge (YSJU), Accessible Arts & Media, York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, National Centre for Early Music, York @ Large, York Museums Trust, York Theatre Royal, Make It York, Tang Hall Big Local, Arts for Health, York CVS, Pilot Theatre and York Archaeological Trust.

As part of the launch of the Culture Strategy in December 2020, through the Better Care Fund, Make It York and City of York Council awarded funding of more than £10,000 to seven social and cultural initiatives across the city – with the aim of easing loneliness, isolation and mental ill-health. Make It York is currently working with these projects to create case studies about the work this funding has enabled, which we are sharing on the MIY website and socials, to promote and raise awareness of these projects. Make It York has also become a partner on Live Well York, to further promote cultural wellbeing through their website.

Events

Planning is underway for the Rugby League World Cup this November, and RLWC are working with all bodies and taking advice regarding covid-safety.

The events team is working alongside the commercial team to plan potential options for a summer of sport city centre offer, and to start planning for the 2021 York Christmas offer.

We are working closely with York BID and City of York Council to plan potential activity for Yorkshire Day on 1 August 2021, and this is currently in the discussion and planning stages between our teams.

We will be releasing the dates for Ice Trail 2022 shortly to members for their involvement, and 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.

Commercial and Revenue Generation

- VIC has now reopened (reduced hours/days). Positive results post lockdown – encouraging engagement with residents linked to public transport. Footfall dropped the second week post lockdown
- Shambles Market was fully reopened and food traders continued to report strong results. Other traders reported mixed results – largely linked to product portfolio and target market.
- Membership showed positive results with above average new membership take up. Regular evening events continued to be popular – over subscribed, positive feedback. Excellent showcase for members to promote and support one another.
- Positive feedback received on the role our team played in highlighting needs for grants.
- City centre pop up created to alleviate congestion in market.
- Additional seating provided following collaboration with BID/CYC - particularly pleasing feedback from major businesses and independents. Welcomed as a safe way to encourage shoppers/visitors back in to the city.
- Shambles market sponsor identified. Excellent way to promote the market as an intrinsic part of city centre.

Business, Network Innovation and Inward Investment

Key Account Management

During the period there were **40** virtual conversations with key accounts and as it was in 2020 there was a lot of conversations around Covid 19 support; including the furlough scheme, social distancing and preparations for getting staff back into the workplace.

COVID – 19 – A popular topic with companies especially the impact of the lockdown and the preparations for returning staff and the drive to ensure a socially distant workplace. There was also concern about the impending end to the furlough scheme and the impact this may have on redundancies. Brexit was also a popular topic in that some companies were still

struggling with the new paperwork. As we got into February some companies experienced import delays that affected their supply chains.

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. As we got into March and April, business confidence increased largely due to the reopening roadmap where firms were able to plan for getting back to some sense of trading normality.

With much of the UK consumer services sector closed due to lockdown restrictions, sales in February/March remained markedly weaker than a year ago. Contacts in the travel and tourism industry reported a sharp pickup in domestic holiday bookings for the remainder of this year following the Government's announcement of plans to ease restrictions in the coming months.

Looking ahead, experts expect a gradual recovery in spending when currently closed companies are permitted to reopen, though demand could be tempered by consumer uncertainty about the economic outlook. Companies operating outdoor activities or venues were generally more optimistic about their near-term prospects than those operating in enclosed spaces. There is cautious optimism that conditions would stabilise from mid-2021, and a few expected a return to modest growth as the vaccination programme progresses and restrictions are loosened.

York Top 100 Companies

Make It York alongside The Press and York St John University, produced the York Top 100 Companies list 2021. The list, normally produced during Business Week in November, was delayed until April because of the Covid 19 delayed company reporting rules introduced during the pandemic. The raw data was collected at the end of January as the cut off point and the analysis carried out by York St John staff. The list was compiled by an algorithm looking at turnover, growth, profit and staff numbers.

The list showcased the city's biggest success stories with Pavers occupying the number one spot for the first time. The highest climber was Adva Optical, the One to Watch was the Vetpartners Group while LNER took the Newcomer of the Year award. Work is now ongoing to engage further with the companies on the list as part of the KAM initiative.

<https://www.makeityork.com/news-updates>

Business Support

Provided general business support via the Growth Managers to **93** 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.

- A marine business offering bunkering solutions and on-board ship blending systems, for the abatement of SOx, CO2 and NOx exhaust gas emissions is looking at developing relationships with Universities to attract talent and training and apprenticeships. They are looking for Capex funding for a new Water Treatment System and are looking to expand internationally.
- A security business is looking for training in team-leading and management, performance management, is looking at apprenticeships and internships and would like support with their business growth through coaching and mentoring.
- A lighting manufacturing company
- A Video production company
- A company supplying industrial equipment

Delivered **7** Connect over Coffee virtual business support events attracting approximately **123** delegates. Topics included but not limited to:

- Brand Collaboration Workshop – Holly Davies, Yorkshire Brand Stories
- SEO – How to wow with you content – Helen Reynolds, Ink Gardener Copywriting
- Winning public sector contracts - Sarah Dixon, Development Manager at Bid for Success
- Managing Stress to Improve Performance - Emme Langton
- Help to take on new talent - Marianne Hewitt, Business Partnership Adviser – Skills for Growth & Bob Watmore, City of York Council.

Growth Managers Observations

- There has been a noticeable increase in businesses wanting start-up support especially those business that trade B2C. The Ad;venture program only support B2B start ups so supporting these start-ups is proving challenging with the current level of resource. We are working closely with YNY LEP to help with this.
- The lack of capital grants is becoming a concern as businesses are no longer able to get any support with premises/unit fitout. 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.
- Some food outlets that want to supply more wholesale or B2B – butchers and cafes. Businesses are realising how important it is to have more than one route to market.
- Still seeing marketing as a business need – many don't have a strategy, time, and find it difficult or don't know how to do it and they are not always promoting themselves to the max.
- Spoken to a few businesses in the last week that are doing well – increased t/o and taking on more staff – they seem to be manufacturers, food related and ed tech or tech related.

Case Study - We Drifters - Make It York – a great example of York business support working together. We Drifters has landed in York and was supported by Christine Hogan, Ad:venture is supporting them as they are a fairly new business and they wanted help expanding to B2B, and Brian supported with initial retail advice.

Inward Investment

Handled **11** Inward investment enquiries for the period, including but not limited to:

- Engineering business looking for 4-6 hectares on which to locate a stone-crushing plant.
- London-based digital finance business looking for talent and flexible space.
- Activity leisure and start-up space provider looking for a site in York.

Indigenous Investments

Handled **29** indigenous investment enquiries for the period, including but not limited to:

- Expanding digital electronics business looking for co-working space to bring back workforce to office p/t.
- Start-up looking for city centre space in which to open a jazz club.
- Engineering company looking for industrial space to expand.
- Plant-based chocolatier looking for workshop and sales space.
- Logistic company looking for depot to expand. A planning application has been submitted and the company has committed to a £12M investment creating an additional 200 jobs in the city.
- Bosch subsidiary, ETAS Centre of Excellence for Embedded Software development, will be expanding in York. ETAS Ltd specialises in solutions to develop embedded systems for the automotive industry. Its newly expanded centre will develop the technology to support future generations of advanced autonomous and highly automated driving.

Foreign Direct Investment

Handled **6** Foreign investment enquiries for the period including but not limited to:

- Canadian business recycling horse waste - referred to stables in Malton.
- US carbon fibre manufacturer looking for 5 hectares to include building and parking for 40+ cars.
- Immersive tech business interested in relocating the business to UK, particularly interested in York owing to heritage sites and R&D activity.
- Indian-based company looking to set up a highly automated hydroponics business in the UK.

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).

There is ongoing work to develop pages on MIY website to promote York as a place to do business, and include sector focus and case studies, major sites information, publications (e.g. Living in York refresh), and a soft-landing section.

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.

HR and Operations

Staffing

There continues to be emphasis on realigning roles and reviewing assignment of projects, but any major changes are on hold until the SLA is agreed.

An employee who has been shielding since last March will be returning to work to provide weekend cover in Shambles Market from 15/16 May.

Recruitment

Recruitment for the new position of Shambles Market Manager took place at the end of March. The first-round interviews were conducted by MIY and representatives from the YMTF conducted second round interviews. The number of applications was disappointing and none of the applicants were successful. The vacancy has been re-advertised with first round interviews scheduled for 18 May. The YMTF will once again be involved in the interview process.

The key requirements for the new MD position will be agreed between MIY, CYC and stakeholders once the SLA is signed off.

Resignations

Sean Bullick the Managing Director, left the business on 28 March.

The Creative & Cultural Development Manager has resigned to take up a position at York St John University. The job description is being finalised so recruitment can start on a replacement.

Furlough

The furlough claim for April and future months will be reduced as a result of lockdown easing for non-essential businesses. Shambles Market reopened to all traders on 12 April and has been fully staffed 7 days a week since. The Visitor Information Centre reopened on 16 April and is gradually increasing its opening hours in response to footfall and demand.

Premises

Ongoing costs of occupation of the Museum Street building were presented at the 13 April Board meeting. Directors were supportive of the need to reduce costs by investigating alternative premises for the office staff, but were keen that a physical Visitor Information Centre was not lost. Museum Street cannot be vacated until the VIC is re-sited and various options are being reviewed.

In the short term, the office space at Museum Street will be modified to be COVID safe and to give staff access work and meeting space from June 21 (latest advice). This will be on a hot desk booking model and we will look to develop a more defined agile working environment.