

City of York Council Contribution to Science City York 2011/12

Introduction

Investment from the City of York Council has enabled Science City York (SCY) to drive the creation and growth of business and employment opportunities across York within 3 clusters: bioscience, IT& digital and the creative industries.

These business networks play a critical role in York's future business support plans and are central to new opportunities SCY is currently bidding for the City; such as the new "Business Coaching for Growth" programme, the UNESCO bid for York to be a City of Media Arts and the Technology Innovation Centre. With the imminent closure of Business Link Yorkshire and Yorkshire Forward, the ongoing development of SCY business networks in York is imperative. SCY has a critical role to play as the main innovation asset in the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership and York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

The ongoing contribution from the City of York Council (CYC) has enabled SCY to deliver significant value to York businesses. It is fundamental that the value of this investment continues to be recognised and the role of SCY understood by all Council members; and moreover, that the benefits of this investment are visible to local people and impacts on the local economy are tangible.

Overall Plans for 2011/12

SCY's vision is to become a leading independent expert organisation on how to create economic impact through innovation. To do this, over this next year, SCY will become a multi-revenue (public and private) organisation which develops and delivers programmes and services to drive economic benefit from science, technology and the creative sectors for a range of public and private sector customers. SCY will focus its core purpose on economic development of the science and technology in the York science and technology cluster. SCY will also look to extend the reach and capabilities of its services across the UK and develop a membership/partnership model to target delivery and benefit to its shareholders and partners across the Leeds City Region and beyond. The challenge is to secure revenues from businesses, sponsors and agencies to lead complex infrastructure bids, innovation programmes, consultancy services and specialist advice to replace income currently derived from the public sector. SCY is entering a challenging period, as it makes the transition to offer new services.

Network & Membership

SCY business networks provide businesses with the opportunity to share information with other members and organisations and access to a range of benefits including: Business promotion and improving business competitiveness through provision of value-added, sector-specific global market intelligence; building a network of contacts; developing skills in employees; and supply chain opportunities.

The current networks (with the exception of Bioscience) are heavily biased toward micro and proprietor businesses, with many lifestyle businesses featuring in the Creative network.

SCY is currently reviewing the business model and the board are considering a number of income generation ideas including the launch of a new fee-based membership service. This will extend the

penetration and number of relationships within Bioscience, Creative and IT& Digital, and will focus on larger SMEs. There is much scope for expansion of the service offer to the wider Leeds City Region.

SCY is also looking to expand the remit of the Bioscience York network to include a greater focus on biorenewables, as part of its ongoing strategy to develop York as a world class Centre of Excellence in Biorenewables research, education and commercialisation. This will involve building on the strong existing links that SCY has with other local and national networks within the growing biorenewables and low carbon sector.

SCY marketing strategy and communications plan will include wider dissemination of the value SCY is creating through the networks including strong PR, case-studies and success stories.

Specific work in relation to green jobs

In addition to plans to develop the biorenewables network which will support the creation and sustainability of green jobs in York, SCY has already invested significant efforts to develop opportunities around biorenewables for the City, and SCY has developed very strong relations with key industry figures in this sector.

SCY is now playing a very influential role in developing York as a world-class centre, and it is a priority area for SCY going forward. As part of this, **SCY is committed to support the development of green jobs in the City**. SCY has partnered with UK Coal to develop the former North Selby Mine with potential for up to 100 jobs.

SCY lead a Round 1 Regional Growth Fund bid to develop a biorefinery facility at Fera. If successful, the bid will fund the development of a biorenewables development centre at Fera, which will undertake commercial research and development, working with UK companies to develop industrial extraction techniques to produce speciality chemicals and products from plants. It is forecast the project will create or protect 1200 sustainable jobs in Bio-Based Manufacturing. The 'Green Factory' will upskill and train existing staff and new entrants to ensure they have the skills and experience to support the growth of the UK speciality chemicals sector.

SCY will continue to work with Higher York and the research base to achieve skills targets across York's green sector.

Specific work in relation to Leeds City Region

SCY is widely recognised as the innovation asset and lead body on the LCR Innovation panel and plays a major role within the LCR Innovation Capital programme.

SCY has recently received endorsement from the LEP to now lead on the development of the new 'Business Coaching for Growth Programme' bid which will be shortly launched by BIS.

As well as the expansion plans for the business networks within the LCR, and the ongoing delivery in West Yorkshire through the SCY Business Mentor programme, York is increasingly playing a very influential role within the LCR.

The business intelligence available through SCY business networks of York employers has also helped to inform the set-up and development of the Leeds City Region's Employment and Skills Board (ESB), and SCY has facilitated representation from York employers as part of the consultation

for this Board. It is important York employers from the SCY business networks have continued involvement and representation at the Leeds City Region level and SCY will continue to act as a conduit in order York employers have a voice and influence within the LEP.

Information generally on impact of SCY on the local economy

Over the last 12 months, CYC investment has enabled SCY to promote the network services to over a 1000 subscribers, and support 45 York based bioscience companies (113 in Yorkshire), 163 York based creative companies, (248 in Yorkshire), and 114 York based IT&Digital companies (225 in Yorkshire). Please see separate document for recent press releases.

Under the current 2010 service level agreement to deliver the networks, SCY has run 31 specialist events assisting business development across York. SCY business networks are widely recognised and referred to by other business support organisations across Yorkshire and the Humber as a niche and specialist provider with unrivalled expertise available within the Bioscience, Creative and IT& Digital sectors.

SCY has encouraged all of its business members to promote job vacancies through its website, and the vacancies pages are one of the most frequently visited pages on the SCY website.

Within the last year, the business network managers have engaged with more than 200 York businesses, and examples of business support activity include:

- Meeting organised and facilitated by Creative Network Manager resulted in the creation of a new business.
- Assisted young Creative entrepreneur to get significant publicity at VentureFest
- Collaboration between two York start-up Creative companies as a result of introduction from Creative Network Manager.
- Showcasing opportunity for 7 York companies in Innovation Showcase section of VentureFest.
- Two York Bioscience companies in discussion regarding potential shared use of facilities
- York Bioscience company helped with recruitment of additional staff thanks to Specialist Recruitment Event run by Bioscience York.
- New York IT&Digital business supported and taken on 4 interns from local HE/FE
- Significant volume of support from business, public sector and academia for formation of York TV channel.
- Continued existence of "TV Club" (networking group for TV/film folks) thanks to IT&Digital sponsorship following demise of Screen Yorkshire.
- North Yorkshire telecoms company in advanced discussions with regional University regarding a KTP.
- Two IT&Digital companies discussing potential future collaborative working
- Second round of York business who successfully applied to become occupants of the SCY Phoenix Centre (Businesses include a Communications Specialist, Film photography and digital imaging, media entrepreneurs). The Creative Network Manager has facilitated training, CPD and provided business development support to the occupants throughout the year.
- Made successful referrals for businesses to be assisted through the SCY business mentor scheme.