

Economic Development & Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee

18 May 2016

Report of the Managing Director of Make It York

Make It York – One Year On

Background

1. Make It York (MIY) became a legal entity as a 'destination Management Organisation' on April the 2nd 2015. It is a company limited by guarantee and is wholly owned by the City of York Council (CYC). The remit of MIY is to (a) remove duplication and improve efficiency and (b) to provide a cohesive promotional voice for the city – as a great place to live, visit, study, work and do business.
2. The company has a board of 12 with representatives of both the public and the private sector. The board is chaired by Jane Lady Gibson.
3. York, business support, inward investment, city centre management and events and festivals. The specific outputs and outcomes of these activities are detailed in a service level agreement (SLA) between MIY and CYC. The SLA is currently being reviewed by CYC.
4. The company has just over 50 staff (though many are part-time), works from 1, Museum Street and has a turnover of over £4 million.

Scrutiny/governance

5. Scrutiny of MIY in its first year has been intense. A high level of accountability has been achieved by the following controls and measures :
 - 7 board meetings
 - A stakeholder launch event in May 2015

- 4 CYC shareholder meetings
- Detailed performance reporting against the SLA
- Attendance at 2 separate scrutiny committees
- An 'open day' to which all councillors were invited
- Regular meetings with the CYC 'client'
- Monthly meeting with the Chief executive of CYC and the Council Leader
- Various ad hoc meetings with Councillors
- Regular meetings with finance officers at CYC
- The publication of a 2015/16 annual review document (available from May the 17th)

Budget

6. The budget for MIY was set well before the management team was put in place, was subject to a reduction in previous budgets held by CYC and brought together budgets from 3 separate organisations : CYC, Visit York and Science City York.
7. On budgeted turnover of £3.8 million, MIY was targeted to achieve a small 'surplus' of £15k. The actual 'surplus' achieved should come in slightly ahead of this. The accounts for the year will be audited in early June.
8. MIY has placed the highest priority on financial prudence and stability. As a new company, it was essential that the numbers for the first year were achieved and that a solid base for year two (as CYC funding starts to reduce) is created. A lot of emphasis has been placed on opening up new revenue streams and this has been a feature of year one. Part of the rationale behind MIY is to create a more commercial organisation that can raise additional revenue to invest back into the city.

Achievements Year one

9. Some of the things that MIY has achieved in the first year are the following :

- A commercially successful Christmas Festival with new content and an additional £170,000 invested in Christmas compared to the original budget
- The launch of the 'York Hive', a new crowdfunding website for community projects in the city
- Management of the flood funding procedure for businesses. MIY helped 162 businesses access funding of £487k
- The setting up of a £350k promotional fund to help restore external confidence in the city as a tourist destination
- The business support team have assisted over 400 businesses and have facilitated access to finance of £398k
- A new Easter family friendly festival was established, working with partners in the city
- The business tourism team processed 449 enquiries with an estimated value of £2.5 million from conferences and events. This represents a massive increase on the previous year. It included the Liberal Democrats conference in the spring
- More than 100 media visits were hosted in the city, generating media exposure in excess of £6 million
- Organised Illuminating York, attracting an audience of 50,000
- The re-writing of York's inward investment 'story' and the publication of a new detailed guide to the city
- Assisted with the first 'Great Yorkshire Fringe' Festival
- Taken over responsibility for Yorkshire Venturefest, an event that will take place in November 2016 and will attract over 1,000 delegates
- Poised to secure a funding programme for Agri-food businesses in partnership with FERA
- Started work on the GAMBIT project, a £700k funded gaming 'app' designed to enhance the visitor experience
- Organised events, seminars and dinners that have attracted over 750 business people
- Launched a new Culture Awards initiative for the city that will culminate in a big event on December the 1st. York born Mark Addy is the patron.
- Led the setting up of the new Guild of Media Arts which already has over 150 paid-up members
- Established a new cultural/education partnership from the platform of the UNESCO City of Media Arts designation

- Begun work on trying to established a big, international arts festival in the city – a Mediale – in the autumn of 2018
- Helped set up a new ‘business hour’ with Vale radio
- Worked with traders in Acomb, Micklegate and Fossgate on ‘Bishy Road’ type initiatives
- Partnered Hiscox on the setting up of the new Hiscox Business Club
- Through the Visit York brand, welcomed 450,000 visitors through the Visitor Information Centre, sold 10,000 York Passes, published 100,000 Destination Guides and 1 million ‘mini guides’, attracted over 2 million visitors to the Visit York website and attended international travel trade shows in Australia, Berlin and the Netherlands, funded by the Visit Britain Northern Tourism Growth Fund
- Organised the residents festival, attended by around 20,000 people
- Launched a new, weekly ‘7 Days’ weekly newsletter for residents and students
- Helped to establish Film York
- Ran Small Business Saturday in December
- Worked with over 750 Visit York members
- And lots more besides!

Priorities year two

10. Ten strategic priorities have been set for 2016/17 and have been agreed by the board. They are as follows:

- Maximum **business support** to be given to York’s high growth sectors, start-up businesses and small business clusters
- Work with the Business Improvement District to enhance the quality and quantity of **festivals and events** in York
- From reactive to proactive **inward investment** work
- Provide tangible support and encouragement to the **cultural sector**
- Support the new **Guild of Media Arts** to deliver the Mediale and the education partnership
- Make a step-change in the image and the performance of the **Shambles Market**

- **Science City York** activity to be focused on 4 key projects in support of the bioscience, IT/digital and creative sectors
- Work with the universities and colleges to assist both student recruitment and to enhance the **student experience** in York
- Concentrate **business tourism** activity –conferences and events – on York’s core industry sector
- Maximise the **leisure tourism** opportunity through ongoing, exceptional marketing

11. Some key, specific things to achieve include :

- A best ever **Venturefest** for Yorkshire – November the 16th, York Racecourse
- A successful inaugural **York Culture Awards** event - 1st of December, Central Methodist Hall
- A funding plan to enable the **Mediale** to become a reality in 2018
- A meaningful role in the effort to bring **York Central** to fruition
- Additional activity at the York St Nicholas **Christmas Festival** to support specifically small York traders
- The **York Hive** to become a significant resource for community fund-raising projects
- A new marketing campaign, “**York – the original city adventure**”, to be at the heart of tourism promotion for York and the surrounding area
- The creation of a new **ambassador programme** to help promote inward investment
- The overhaul of the **Visit York website** to make it fully responsive and a world-class online destination guide
- The launch of a new **student guide** to help enrich their experience in York : “100 things you must do while in York”.

Summary

12. Not everything has gone according to plan, but Make It York has come through its first year in good financial shape, has delivered a number of new projects and initiatives and has worked collaboratively with a vast range of partners across the city. The company goes into its second year with very clear plans and a much better sense of what needs to be achieved. There are still lots

of possibilities and opportunities for MIY and the potential for the company is huge – particularly if it retains the full support and backing of key stakeholders across the city, particularly CYC.

13. Finally, the MD would like to place on public record how hard the staff have worked – 6 previously separate teams of people coming together to form one, cohesive unit. They have adapted superbly and worked exceptionally well and positively for the city.

Steve Brown

Managing Director