

## **BUSINESS PLAN OVERVIEW**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Going in to year 3 of the agreement with CYC, the overall purpose of Make It York remains unchanged: to develop and promote York as a great place to live, visit, study, work and do business. The values of the company also remain unchanged: to be respectful, ambitious, collaborative and entrepreneurial.

In Year 1 of Make It York, 2015/16, the focus was on establishing the company in a professional way, integrating 4 teams of people who had previously been working separately, ensuring that key events and activities were maintained and, above all, running the business in a financially prudent way. At the year end, Make It York made an operating surplus of £72k against an original budget of £25k.

Year 2 has been more ambitious and progress in 7 key operational areas can be summarised as follows:

### **2016/17**

#### **VISIT YORK**

The priority for the Visit York team in 2016/17 has been supporting the tourism sector following the floods of Christmas 2015. A promotional fund of £150k was secured and intense effort went in to reassuring visitors that York was 'open for business' and still a great place to come to. A 6 month long marketing campaign, ongoing PR and good partnership working with the sector turned performance round. A dismal set of figures in Q1 of 2016 were transformed by the year end to the point that all the main indicators for the full calendar year of 2016 were ahead of 2015. Despite the flooding issues, hotel occupancy was up 4% year on year with room rate yields up by more than 4%. Visitor attraction figures were on a par with 2015 but significantly improved through the year. A new Head of Visit York, Sally Greenaway, was appointed to replace Kate McMullen who left to join English Heritage.

#### **BUSINESS SUPPORT**

Business support in 2016/17 was concentrated on assisting companies with accessing finance, putting on events to help with training and personal development and advising start-up businesses. To date, 382 businesses have been assisted, 81 of them start-up businesses. 18 of the businesses have been helped with investment financing totalling £339,000. In addition, 69 companies have been introduced into the LEP skills service securing total funding of £166,000. A new and well attended food and drink conference was launched in September in support of a fast growing sector in and around York.

## **BUSINESS PLAN OVERVIEW**

### **INWARD INVESTMENT**

Make It York has limited inward investment resource so has focussed activity in 4 key areas : working closely with both LEPs to assist with their inward investment enquiries; helping existing York businesses with their property expansion plans; managing all commercial property database enquiries and launching a business ambassador scheme. 23 senior business people in York are now equipped to help tell the York inward investment story. An initiative to encourage new retailers into the city has also been launched. 287 commercial property enquiries have been fielded.

### **SCIENCE CITY YORK**

Reduced funding for Science City York (SCY) has led to a focus on some core projects and 3 were advanced in 2016/17. First, SCY took over the management of Venturefest with a brief to reinvigorate a 10 year old event. Over 800 delegates, 127 exhibitors, 60 speakers and more than £1 million of business generated on the day combined to make it a successful event. Second, SCY supported the development of the UNESCO City of Media Arts designation. A new Guild, with now over 200 members, and the establishment of a biannual media arts festival, the York Mediale, are two tangible outputs from the UNESCO work. Third, SCY has partnered with the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) on a £1.7 million 3 year project to support businesses and to encourage innovation in the agri-food sector.

### **EVENTS AND FESTIVALS**

The role of Make It York is both to lead on certain festivals and to support the work of other festival organisers. In 2016/17, the main highlights were the introduction of a new family friendly Easter festival into the calendar, a much improved Illuminating York and, by all accounts and measures, the most successful Christmas programme yet seen in York.

### **CULTURE**

Make It York supports rather than leads on culture in the city with York@Large and the Cultural Leaders Group having more responsibility for strategic leadership. The main development in 2016/17 has been the establishment of a new 'Culture Awards' event designed to showcase cultural excellence in the city and to celebrate the achievements of the sector. 130 entries into the awards and an audience of nearly 300 at the event got the initiative off to an encouraging start.

## BUSINESS PLAN OVERVIEW

### CITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT

The biggest challenge for Make It York remains the commercial development of the Shambles Market. Year 1 of Make It York had a concentration on improving and modernising basic systems and procedures. 2016/17 was about trying to change the perception and direction of the Market, most notably with a £25k investment in removing some stalls and creating a more contemporary food court space. This is a big step forward in transforming the Market into something that is more dynamic, fashionable and with ongoing events and activity.

Other significant developments for Make It York in 2016/17 were the appointment of a much needed Head of Finance, Manju Ghimire, the establishment of a good, collaborative working relationship with the new Business Improvement District and the launch of an innovative new student booklet and app in partnership with York St John University.

Substantial progress has also been made against the CYC Service Level Agreement (SLA) agreement. This is detailed in a separate document.

### 2017/18

The operational budget for 2017/18 has set a surplus target of £23k despite a £100k reduction in the CYC contribution to Make It York and cost increases for auto enrolment pensions, rates, insurance and other expenditure. Allowance has also been made for a significant (£50k) investment in the Visit York website. A more detailed financial narrative is presented alongside the budget summary.

The operational plan for 2017/18 is an evolution and progression of the plan for 2016/17 as is the delivery of the CYC SLA. The main additions to the SLA are the following:

- MIY will produce a cultural framework for the city identifying priorities, strategies and funding models for the city's cultural product to deliver on the York Economic Strategy To Do: *Make a fresh loud statement of cultural and visual identity*. MIY will lead and resource this activity, working in collaboration with the Council (through Charlie Croft) and the Cultural Leaders Group. The framework will seek to provide practical co-ordination of the sector as well as a clear statement of the city's strategic priorities for the benefit of external funders such as Arts Council England.
- MIY will produce an events framework. This will mirror the cultural framework, focussing specifically on the development of events for the city.

## **BUSINESS PLAN OVERVIEW**

The main objectives and plans for each operational area are as follows:

### **VISIT YORK**

- to upgrade significantly the Visit York website
- to introduce a new approach to online hotel bookings
- to develop further the benefits package for Visit York members
- to seek new alliances with adjacent district councils
- to work more collaboratively with Welcome to Yorkshire
- to improve customer relationship management (CRM) and online marketing
- to refresh and update the long-term tourism strategy

### **BUSINESS SUPPORT**

- to continue working with the LEPs on a 'joined-up' approach to supporting business
- to run quarterly business talks with nationally important speakers as part of the key account management programme
- to deliver a quarterly business 'health-check' report reflecting key account management meetings and general business activity in the city
- to develop a York 'business angels' network

### **INWARD INVESTMENT**

- to support fully the continued development of the York Central project
- to increase the number of business ambassadors from 23 to 50
- to assist with the Guildhall development project

### **SCIENCE CITY YORK**

- to play a key role in supporting the Guild and the York Mediale
- to deliver the targeted outputs on the 'Stimulating Innovation in the Agri-food Sector' (SIAFS) project
- to deliver a fresh events programme aimed at supporting the bioscience, creative and IT/digital sectors

## **BUSINESS PLAN OVERVIEW**

### **EVENTS AND FESTIVALS**

- to introduce a new city wide events framework/strategy
- to create a new horticulture/garden festival to celebrate 250 years of the York Florists Society, the oldest horticultural society in the world
- to improve further the Christmas experience in York
- to plan and prepare for the York Mediale in October 2018 and, working with Welcome to Yorkshire, the World Cycling Championship in September 2019

### **CULTURE**

- to create a new cultural strategy/framework for the city working through the Cultural Leaders Group
- to engage fully with the new Cultural Education Partnership
- to develop further a cultural benchmark measurement system for the city

### **CITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT**

- to prioritise the commercial development of the Shambles Market
- to introduce new events and activities into the Shambles Market space
- to be much more proactive in the selling of city centre space

In addition, Make It York will also:

- lead a piece of work to create a common contemporary narrative for the positioning and marketing of the city with the collaboration of a number of partners
- engage with the development of the Northern Powerhouse/Industrial Strategy initiative and the ongoing devolution debate
- develop closer links with collaborative partners

## **BUSINESS PLAN OVERVIEW**

### **2018/19 and beyond**

The 3 year agreement with CYC ends in March 2018. It is imperative that discussions about a future agreement begin early in the new 2017/18 financial year to enable proper planning for the future.

The outcome of the Yorkshire devolution discussions could also have implications for the future.

Crucial to planning for the future of Make It York is the issue of sustainability. Finding new revenue streams is fundamental if the ambition of the company is to be realised. Four areas need to be fully explored and actioned:

- further commercial development of tourism and business activity
- offering Make It York services to adjacent local authorities
- maximising the return of Shambles Market and city centre activity
- securing additional responsibilities from CYC and other public bodies e.g. the marketing of York Central

Future Capital expenditure requirements are likely to focus on the Shambles Market, particularly an improvement in key services that are available e.g. electricity supplies. Detail on the requirements will be worked up to fit in with the Council's capital expenditure process.

The city's delivery of the York Mediale in October 2018 is crucial to the positioning of the city and to its international reputation as a UNESCO City of Media Arts.