



# Annual Review 2021-22

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# A Message From our Chair

“The human connections between business owners, their employees and the wider business community provided as much support to many as the financial assistance available”



We have not had normal proceedings for a couple of years, so trying to write a foreword that reflects what businesses in York have had to contend with is challenging to say the least! I have heard and seen first hand many stories of resilience, so I would like to open by saying well

done to the business community for getting through 2020 and 2021. There were great examples of innovation and also a great commitment to protect and support staff.

The BID Company itself had to adapt very quickly. It relies on funding from levy payers and when the Board rightly decided to provide a payment holiday to normal billing, the BID Team had to employ financial due diligence to survive. The fact that many businesses still voluntarily paid their levy during the holiday shows to me how the BID is viewed in the city and this was of course backed up by the BID being voted in for another 5 years by an 86% majority, up 10% from the vote in 2016.

In the past two years, the BID team has found much of it's work shaped by Covid response and as a result has had a reactionary remit. Examples include the Street Rangers supporting hundreds of businesses by doing daily checks on their premises during the first lockdown. As the months went on, the office team worked with partners to signpost financial support and assisted hospitality businesses with

applying for street café licenses, whilst eating and drinking inside was prohibited.

Whilst the BID team is still undertaking Covid legacy projects where there is consumer demand e.g. outdoor seating in public spaces, the organisation is turning its attention to some of the more strategic challenges the city faces. For example, the rapid growth in e-commerce, especially in food deliveries, has created huge access challenges for the city centre. This will only be solved through partner working and the BID will continue to be a voice for business.

Whilst York has fared well compared to other cities and looks to enjoy another staycation summer, fallout from Brexit and the war in Ukraine is likely to hit both businesses and consumers this winter. If there are to be tough times ahead, let's take a lesson from the Covid years in that the human connections between business owners, their employees and the wider business community provided as much support to many as the financial assistance available.

Regardless of what 2022/23 may bring economically, the BID will continue to support York's city centre businesses and look to champion some of the exciting commercial developments that are in the pipeline.

Michael Hjort | Chair & City Restaurateur

# How York City Centre Bounced Back Post Covid

“At a government conference, York was described as ‘poster city’ for Covid recovery”



I have often said that understanding how York's economy performs is vital in order for us to ensure we focus our time and efforts in the right areas. Between York BID and City of York Council, we now have data on how many people visit our city, where they come from,

and also what they spend. During Covid, the BID used this data to build business cases as to how government support money should be spent e.g. hand sanitiser stations/ promotional campaigns to encourage local people to support the city.

Overall, York has bounced back well from Covid. Indeed, at a government conference I attended at the end of 2021, York was described as ‘poster city’ for Covid recovery. Certain factors have worked in our favour, York does not have the same reliance on its office sector compared to other cities where increased home working has had a big impact. Further to this, York's fantastic mix of heritage, leisure and independent retail/restaurants has been a draw for domestic visitors, who will hopefully be joined by international travellers during 2022. The following headings and graphs provide a top level overview of city centre performance in 2021.

Andrew Lowson | BID Exec Director

## Footfall - second half of 2021 points at strong comeback

In regard to footfall, figure 1.1 shows that after the Jan – March lockdown of 2021, it took a while for York's footfall to recover. However, the second half of 2021 saw footfall in York city centre trend just below pre-Covid (2019) levels. December is seen as a key month for retail and York's footfall was only -5% down on normal levels, compared to UK average of -22% down.

### Footfall - rolling 12 months

The figures shown below are calculated using weekly averages

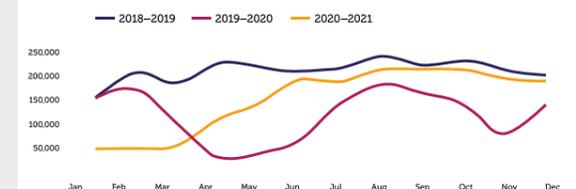


Figure 1.1 - Footfall Data comparing 2021 to 2020 & 2019; Source = Springboard

## Visitor origin - People from York were the city's biggest supporters!

We often read rhetoric that local people do not support our city. The data shows this not to be true, rather people from York make up near on a quarter of all visits. The heat map in figure 1.2 shows that in 2021 we attracted visitors from all over the country, but there were high levels of support from those in nearby locations, such as Harrogate, Selby and East Riding.

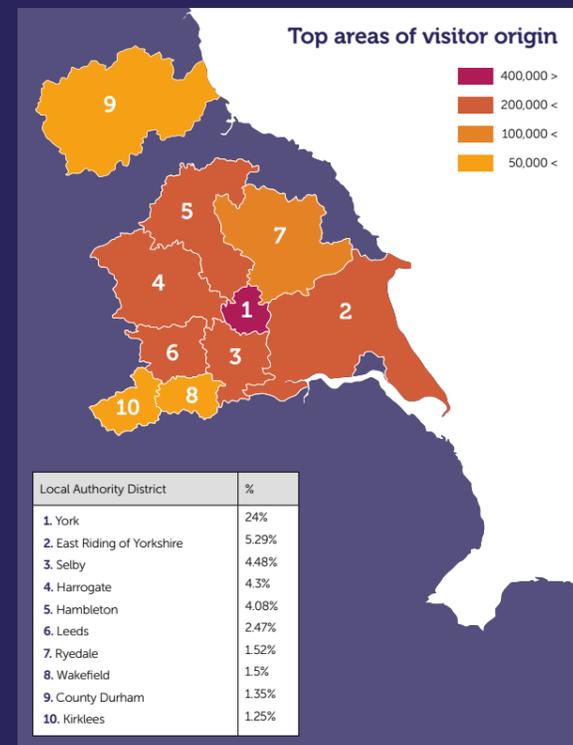


Figure 1.2 - Visitor origin for 2021; Source = Movement Insights (Q2 data)

## Net change in occupied units by business type (UK) 2013-21

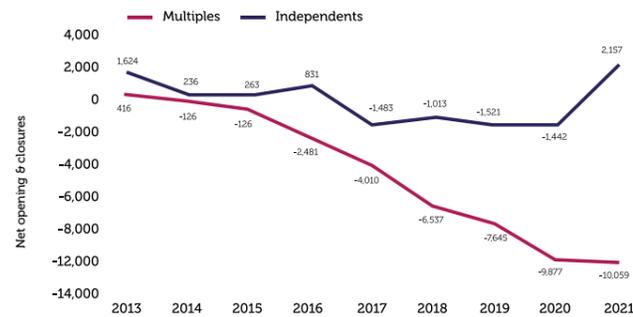


Figure 1.3 - Occupied Units by type; Source = Local Data Company

## Business type - The Independent sector is growing post Covid

York has one of the lowest shop unit vacancies in the UK. Where the national average is 14.4%, York's commercial vacancy rate stands at 8.8%. One reason for this is that York has a strong independent sector that adapted its offer quickly during Covid to not only survive, but compete in an increasingly digital age. Figure 1.3 is a chart that shows nationally, independent growth is its highest for years!

## Spend data - spend back to post Covid levels, with restaurants the big winners

Spend data from VISA in figure 1.4 shows that by quarter 4 2021, spending was near on back to pre-Covid levels (Q4 2019). Interestingly in Q4 2021, spend for both restaurants and retail in York was slightly up on pre-Covid times, showing positive signs that despite the undoubted growth of online shopping, consumers still value that physical experience.

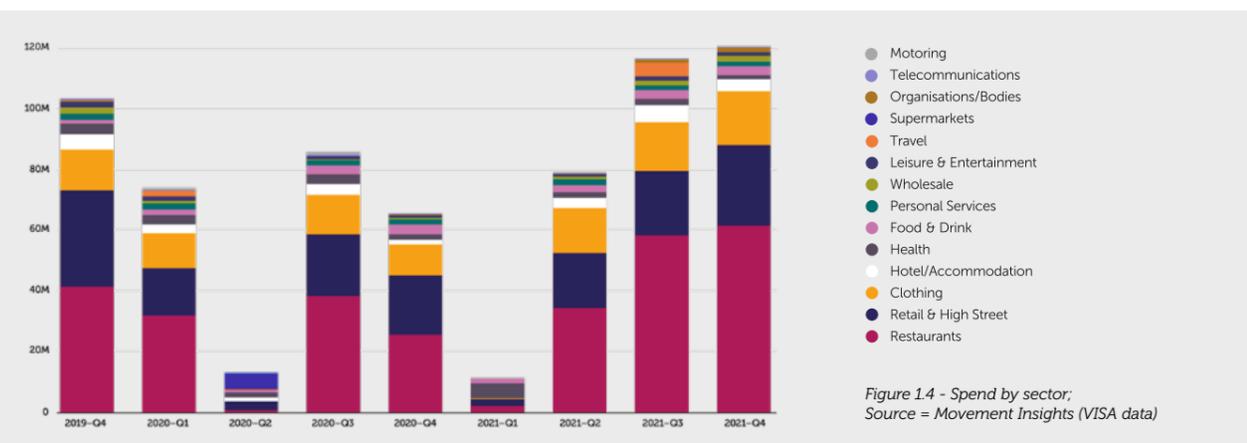


Figure 1.4 - Spend by sector; Source = Movement Insights (VISA data)

# Year 6 Key Statistics



160,000

Winter Lights scheme spans 16km of city centre streets consisting of over 160,000 LED bulbs



250

Additional seating for 250 people provided across 5 pop-up seating areas



£247,000

Over 18,000 vouchers downloaded during York Restaurant Week worth a monetary value of over £247,000 for hospitality businesses



£78,000

Over £78,000 worth of York Gift Cards sold



£135,000

Over £135,000 of additional funding secured from external partners for BID projects



84

84 levy payers received First Aid training



200

Installed over 200 planters filled with pollinator friendly plants



44,000

Jet washed over 44,000 meters squared of city centre pavements, paths and snickelways & cleaned away



£31,000

Street Rangers recovered over £31,000 of stolen stock for local businesses & prevented or detained



Guardians of York Street Art project shortlisted for national award

2639

reports of bio-waste (human/animal/food)

434

cases of crime &

285

cases of anti-social behaviour

# The Year in Review



Ghosts in the Gardens,  
Autumn 2021

## Winter Lights

*Adding sparkle to the city during the darker months*

Creating a special atmosphere during the festive season helps attract visitors to the city during a key trading period for businesses. The BID's dazzling light display consists of 160,000 LED lights stretching 16km, creating a magical setting for those who come to visit York over the festive period.

Recent additions include a giant illuminated Santa's Postbox and The Magical Tree of Light with its ever-changing display at the Eye of York.



## Street Rangers

*A reassuring presence in the city centre*

The Street Rangers are an essential part of the BID team. In 2021, we appointed a special Engagement Officer to forge closer ties between the BID delivery team and businesses. The Rangers offer an essential first line of support on a daily basis while patrolling the city centre.



## Street Cleaning

*Keeping our city beautiful & clean*

Our cleaning team are out early every morning visiting 'hotspots' to clean away the mess left from the previous day. This includes biowaste, drug debris, graffiti and homeless litter. The Rapid Response hotline is an indispensable service for levy payers, ensuring shop fronts are kept looking their best.



# Public Seating & Play

*Reimagining & reinventing public spaces*

It is now crucial for towns and cities to utilise their outdoor spaces to allow the public to dwell for longer and support the local economy. The BID has developed some of York's public spaces into popular places for visitors and residents to relax, rest and play.

Launched during the pandemic to support local hospitality businesses, these seating areas are now a regular seasonal feature with more creative elements being added each year.

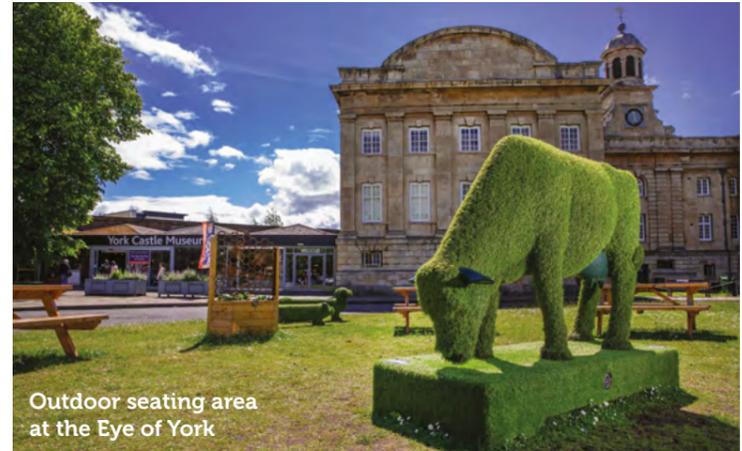
'Guardians of York Street Art Project'



The Magical Tree of Light, at the Eye of York



Outdoor seating area at College Green



Outdoor seating area at the Eye of York



Outdoor seating area at Exhibition Square

## Signage & Wayfinding

New wayfinding signage was installed across York as part of a joint initiative between York BID, City of York Council and York Civic Trust.

The multifunctional totems offer a contemporary, sleek form of wayfinding, which include orientation maps and have been designed by accessibility experts to ensure that they are accessible for all people.



Wayfinding totem, St Helens Square

## York Restaurant Week

After five successful events York Restaurant Week has become a popular and much-anticipated feature in the city's calendar. The event was set up to celebrate York's vibrant hospitality scene and encourage people to eat out during quieter times of year. During the last two events taking place in 2021/22, over 18,000 vouchers were downloaded worth a monetary value of over £247,000 for hospitality businesses.



## York Gift Card

York Gift Card supports city centre businesses by locking spend into the local economy. Since its launch in October 2019, the scheme has rapidly grown to become the largest of its kind in the UK.

All our levy paying businesses are eligible to participate, it's quick and easy to sign up and is completely free of charge.

To date over £140,000 of gift cards have been sold. Over 300 local businesses are currently signed up to accept the card.

The card is adorned by modern and stylish designs by local York artist Jonathan Williams.



Wildflower meadow at Exhibition Square

## Floral Displays

Every summer the BID fills the city centre with vibrant floral planters filled with pollinator-friendly plants. The floral displays include many colourful hanging baskets, free-standing flower towers, planters and a beautiful wildflower meadow.

The flowers add colour and beauty, create atmosphere and make a good first impression on visitors to the city.

# The Year Ahead

## Showcasing York's Commercial Developments

York has big investment plans. Once delivered, these developments will not only help attract the best talent and businesses but also create accommodation and public green spaces - making our city better for businesses, residents and tourists. The BID will look to showcase these plans so members can understand how they may benefit.

## Providing A Voice For Business

The autumn/winter of 2022/23 could be a challenging time for business across the UK. Energy prices and a general squeeze on consumer spending is bound to have an impact. We are confident York will remain resilient as always, but the BID team will be here to support you and ensure York's business community has a voice at a local and regional level.

## Promoting Green Issues

The BID is keen to support York's ambitions to become a greener city. In 2022/23 it will look to push green messaging to both businesses and the public and ensure levy payers have a voice on key environmental issues.

## Continue With & Improve 'The Basics'

Businesses are very clear with us that they value the Street Ranger and Street Cleansing services, reaffirming how crucial it is that York streets are kept looking their best. The BID re-rendered its street cleansing services in 2022 to achieve better value for money and as a consequence will have new hot washing equipment to tackle a wider range of issues.

## New Winter Lights Scheme

The BID first launched its Winter Lights scheme in 2017, which has proven successful with businesses, visitors and residents over the years, including the dark Covid winters. 2022 will see a new scheme put in place with our partners at Make it York, as we look to maintain the national accolades that sees York voted as one of the UK's most festive cities!

## Training & Development

Businesses have told us that training and development is important to them, now more than ever. This year the BID aims to work with local suppliers to provide relevant and subsidised training for levy payers.

## Enhancements For The Public Realm

Already the BID has built on its outside seating programme by adding elements of children's play and attractions. It will continue to look at ways to dress and animate the city, such as those seen during the recent Jubilee celebrations. As well as temporary installations, 2022/23 should see the completion of permanent public realm improvements for College Green at York Minster. The BID has ambitions to deliver more permanent public realm improvements for the city centre with a number of ideas already in the pipeline.



Artist interpretation of York Central regeneration project

# Financial Review

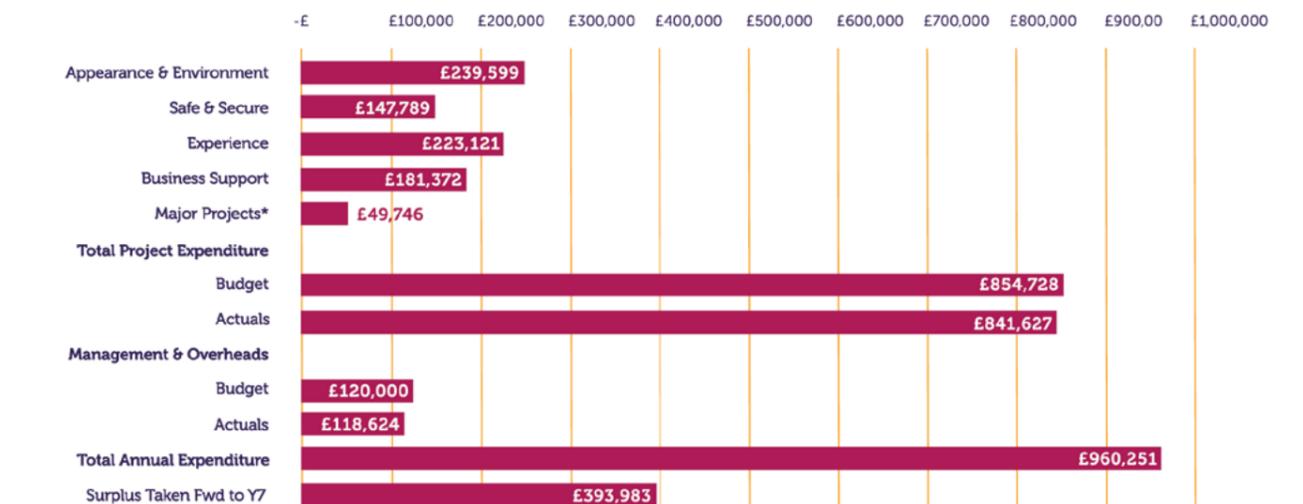
The financial year 2021-22 marked the sixth year of York BID's operations as well as the beginning of a new 5-year term. Despite the financial challenges posed by the pandemic, the BID board and executive team have been diligent in managing the companies cashflow and levy collection during this period. Out of understanding for business hardship caused by Covid-19, a 3 month payment holiday was offered on BID levy bills issued during 2020 and 2021.

Due to the pandemic, a high level of cash reserves were carried forward into year 6. These funds have since been spent and/or committed to projects aimed at aiding the city centre's economic recovery. We are extremely grateful to local businesses for their continued support and trust in the York BID to effect positive change in our city centre.

## Annual Income



## Annual Expenditure



The figures presented are accurate at the time of writing but maybe subject to change due to continued activity relating to the previous financial year.

York BID levy has remained at 1% since 2016 with no inflationary rise.

Year 6 levy collection has been impacted by the pandemic and currently stands at 95.2%.

\*Major Projects refers to expenditure for large scale projects spanning several years, namely 'Improved Signage & Wayfinding'.

Full company accounts are prepared by HPH Chartered Accountants and are available at [www.theyorkbid.com/downloads/](http://www.theyorkbid.com/downloads/)

# The York BID Board & Team

The York BID company is governed by a voluntary board of directors and advisors who oversee the delivery of the BID's 5-year business plan. The board is made up of influential representatives from key business sectors, partner organisations and levy paying businesses in the city centre.

The full board meet bi-monthly, as do sub-committees focused on steering each of the 4 programme areas. Levy payers and stakeholders are regularly invited to attend meetings and participate in specific projects. An annual general meeting is typically scheduled during Summer of each year where members are encouraged to have their say on the company's activity.

## York BID Team

**Andrew Lawson** – Executive Director

**Carl Alsop** – Operations Manager

**Chris Bush** – Business Manager

**Rachel Bean** – Projects & Finance Executive

**Jo Little** – Comms & Engagement Lead



## Year 6 Board Directors & Advisors

<b>Michael Hjort (Chair)</b>	Owner, Walmgate Ale House
<b>Robert Onyett</b>	Managing Partner, Harrowells Solicitors
<b>Neil Sanderson</b>	Director, York Minster Fund
<b>Frank Wood</b>	Owner, R.A. Braithwaites Jewellers
<b>Phil Pinder</b>	The Potions Cauldron (resigned February 2022)
<b>Neil Setterfield</b>	Store Director, Fenwick
<b>Sarah Czarnecki</b>	Strategic Partner & Director, Grays Court
<b>Angela Horner</b>	Associate Director, Browns Department Store
<b>Doug Winter</b>	Director, Isotoma
<b>Nicola Arthur</b>	Store Manager, Boots
<b>Rebecca Hill</b>	Owner, Galtres Lodge Hotel & Forest Restaurant
<b>Sarah Loftus</b>	Managing Director, Make It York
<b>Cllr Andrew Waller</b>	Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning, City of York Council
<b>Cllr Andy D'Agorne</b>	Deputy Leader/ Executive Member for Transport, City of York Council
<b>Lotte Inch (Advisor)</b>	Owner, Lotte Inch Gallery
<b>Alistair Graham (Advisor)</b>	City centre resident

# Thank you

Working with partners is key to the BID's success. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank our 900+ levy paying businesses and the organisations stated below for their ongoing engagement and support, working together for a stronger York.





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### Rapid Response Cleaning Hotline:

01904 900181

### Credits:

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