



The Red House,
1 Duncombe Place,
York, YO1 7ED
info@theyorkbid.com
01904 809970

FAO CYC Executive Team
City of York Council
West Offices
Station Rise
York
YO1 6GA

7th May 2026

Dear Members,

York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact

I am writing further to my previous submissions to Executive in March and April 2026 regarding the York Christmas Market and the wider approach to city centre events, accessibility and security. Having reviewed the latest report on York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact, I wish to reiterate several continuing concerns on behalf of York BID and our levy-paying businesses.

York BID supports ongoing dialogue with the Council and partners to improve accessibility and inclusivity in the city centre, and we recognise the complexity of balancing this with economic vitality and public safety. We have welcomed engagement through task and finish work and remain committed to constructive partnership working. Our core concerns regarding the Christmas Market remain unchanged.

The Christmas Market is a cornerstone of York's winter economy. It supports not only market traders, but a much wider network of independent retailers, hospitality businesses, accommodation providers and attractions that rely on increased footfall during this period. These businesses are already operating under significant pressure from rising costs and fragile consumer confidence – this was noted by business speakers at the last Exec. Against this backdrop, reducing the Market to six operating days introduces a material risk to business viability during the most important trading period of the year.

The report itself acknowledges that the Christmas Market drives substantial footfall and spend, with November and December accounting for a significant proportion of annual city centre trade. Even under cautious assumptions, a weekly market closure could lead to several million pounds of lost spend over the event period. While some displacement may occur, for many businesses lost trade on a closed day cannot simply be recovered elsewhere, particularly for those with fixed staffing and supply commitments.

As raised previously, there is also concern about who ultimately benefits from a one-day closure model. Will a one day weekly closure substantially benefit residents or blue badge holders? It will not deliver the consistent, long-term accessibility improvements many disabled residents have sought, while creating disproportionate economic harm.

There are also reputational risks. Visitors plan trips to York well in advance, often including overnight stays. Experience has shown that even changes to opening hours have caused confusion and frustration. A full closure day heightens this risk, despite planned communications activity.

Finally, I would reiterate a concern I raised at March Executive regarding the late involvement of police and counter-terrorism specialists in earlier stages of this work. The subsequent deferral of decisions following late advice underscores the importance of embedding all key partners from the outset.

York BID supports continued work on long-term, sustainable access solutions that operate consistently throughout the year. We do not believe removing a trading day from one of the city's most significant events represents the right balance.

I trust Executive will give careful consideration to the economic, operational and reputational impacts before reaching a final decision. Most importantly, I hope it recognises the limited partner working that has led to late decisions and looks to address this going forward.

Yours Sincerely ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Lowson', enclosed within a hand-drawn, irregular oval shape.

Andrew Lowson
Executive Director