

INFORMATION FOR LICENSING ON TOURISM ISSUES 2010

York maintains its status as one of the UK's top visitor destinations – the most popular destination for overseas visitors in the whole of Yorkshire, for instance, and winner of many awards from travel journalists and visitors.

Latest figures for the economic impact of tourism (incorporating for the first time the full impact of business tourism) suggests that York gets 7.1mn visitors, spending £443mn in the city and creating directly and indirectly 23,000 jobs.

Visitor surveys show eating and drinking are “enjoyed” second only to the ambience of the city and strolling around.

York's prominence as a lead visitor destination has been reinforced by a series of major investments this year.

- i). A state of the art Visitor Information Centre to transform the promotion of the city and the region (opened 27 May 2010)
- ii). £1mn investment in improvements to the famous Jorvik Viking Centre, with new displays and animatronics (opened on 13 February 2010)
- iii). £2mn investment in the Yorkshire Museum, particularly showcasing the Roman and medieval periods, and a new AV introduction to the history of York (opening on 1 August 2010)
- iv). Hotel investment plans:
 - A £25mn Cedar Court Grand Hotel, looking to be the city's first five star hotel which opened in May 2010.
 - A new £9mn 86 bed Premier Inn (April 2010)
 - Proposal for a £10mn, 120-bed hotel in Toft Green
- v) Newly refurbished and reopened Micklegate Bar Museum

Similarly the events and festivals hosted in the city are bring in big audiences and generating their own economic benefits:

- Festival of Food and Drink 2009 - 46,000 visitors (c100,000 attended the festival altogether, 46% visitors) – estimated spend of £4.4mn from visitors alone
- St Nicholas Fayre 2009 - 150,000 people, £10mn + benefit (put on by City Centre Management, promoted by VY)
- Illuminating York 2009 – 16,000 people, £1.5mn spend
- Festival of Angels 2009 - 46,000 people, c£2.3mn spend
- Residents Festival 2010 - 44,000 people through Parliament Street, attendance at attractions at the highest level in the 15 year running of this event

More recently (and with further analysis still to come) the 2010 Festival of Food and Drink saw a 16% increase in the Parliament Street footfall count over the 2009 Festival, while the

2010 Illuminating York event has seen huge audiences and the best ever international coverage.

One reason why York is considered a welcoming place by visitors is the perception that York is a safe place. This view was reinforced at the Visit York AGM and Conference in Oct 2010 by Superintendent Lisa Winward who highlights many falls in crime figures in York in recent years.

Forthcoming issues in 2011 and beyond include:

- The reopening of the Barbican Centre (spring 2011) will substantially ramp up York's potential as a venue for great concerts, events and for major conferences.
- York is bidding for UNESCO World Heritage Status – Visit York is supporting the city's bid which is likely to be assessed early in 2011.
- York is also bidding for UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts status, building on the excellence of the city's creative and cultural history and events. This will complement the World Heritage bid by throwing a different light on York as a city, and again Visit York is assisting with this work.
- The £9.7mn Heritage Lottery Fund success of York Minster should allow further progress on York Minster Revealed, their ambitious plans to restore the East Front and carry out other important interpretation and public realm works.
- Finally and significant for Licensing is a potential bid by York in summer 2011 for Purple Flag status – an awards scheme run by the Association of Town Centre Managers which promotes cities that offer "great entertainment and hospitality at night", i.e. places that offer a positive experience for night time visitors and users, all judged against a set of criteria. York is likely to apply for this award – Visit York working with the Council licensing and city centre teams.

Ian Tempest
External Relations Manager
Visit York