

## **Improving Evening Culture Scrutiny Review Report**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report presents information in support of a proposed night time economy related scrutiny review, and asks members to formulate a work plan and timeframe for dealing with this particular review. The remit was revised and agreed by Learning & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20 November 2013, as set out in paragraph 8 below.

The review supports the Council's corporate scrutiny theme for this municipal year to improve the city's night time economy.

### **Background**

2. In early June 2013 this committee received a number of introductory briefings on possible scrutiny topics for this municipal year. This included a briefing report on "improving the quality of the heritage and arts offer in the city provided by the Head of Culture, Tourism and City Centre. It suggested the proposed topic would support the Council's aim to continue working with its partners to ensure the city attracts more cultural tourists by supporting improvements in the quality of the heritage and arts offer in the city.
3. The committee were informed that given the Council's budget restrictions any improvements to the heritage and arts offer in the city would have to be delivered in partnership with other creative and cultural organisations across the city. They also learnt that the Council was already working actively with its partners to flesh out a new high level tourism strategy for the city, which included the creation of a cultural tourism programme. And, that an application for the necessary funding for the programme was in the process of being drawn up for submission to Visit England/Arts Council England in July 2013.

4. The committee therefore agreed to postpone their consideration of the suggested scrutiny topic until the second half of the municipal year when the outcome of the funding application would be known.
5. Subsequently, at a meeting of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC) on 24 June 2013, members agreed a corporate scrutiny theme for this municipal year around the city's night-time economy, noting its connection to a number of the Council's current key priorities in its Council Plan 2011-2015.
6. CSMC agreed it would be possible for each overview & scrutiny committee to identify an appropriate night time economy related topic which would support their individual terms of reference. They tasked each committee with completing its night time economy review in time for the presentation of their review final report to the meeting of CSMC in March 2014. In turn, CSMC agreed they would collate the findings and recommendations arising from each review and present them to Cabinet by the end of the municipal year.
7. In July 2013 the Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed the proposed topic on improving the quality of the heritage and arts offer in the city would be appropriate as their contribution to the night time economy themed corporate review. They considered a report which gave an introduction to Tourism in York and detailed the ongoing work of York Consortium (evolved from the city's cultural partnership forum, York @ Large) and highlighted a number of issues/factors i.e.:
  - York does less than it could to show off its strengths in the cultural and creative sector.
  - Statistics show York appears to have a particularly strong appeal to family parties (37%) and about one in four visitor parties include children (27%).
  - A fresh approach to presenting culture would attract younger visitors who currently complain of 'nothing to do after 5pm' (whilst it is not easy to generalise about the age groups predominating amongst cultural tourists in York there is evidence of this view)
  - Only about 4% of staying visitors mention a specific festival or event, suggesting that there is room to extend the offer to encourage more overnight stays.
  - One of the suggested actions identified within York's Tourism Strategy Interim Document shown at Annex A is to 'Grow the

- evening offer, e.g. initiate a 'First Fridays' concept as the initial step in encouraging new entertainment choices'
- York Consortium's planned 'Red Letter Nights' project will aim to improve the coordination and coherence of York's 'cultural offer' and offer 'family friendly' activity in the right time and the right place

8. The Committee set up this Task Group to carry out the review on their behalf, and in an effort not to duplicate the ongoing work of York Consortium, agreed the following aim and objectives for the review:

Aim:

To identify an improved cultural offer up to 8pm in order to extend the tourist day and encourage more tourists to stay for longer or overnight, with a particular emphasis on families.

Objectives:

- i) Identify best practice internationally and nationally
- ii) Investigate barriers to increasing the availability of York's existing family based cultural and entertainment offer
- iii) Identify other new cultural and entertainment activities suitable for York and investigate the possibility of their introduction in York
- iv) Investigate how best to signpost tourist activities, and encourage those providers to work with accommodation providers to jointly promote their offer.

**York's Current Cultural Offer**

9. York's historic setting and contemporary vitality provide the riches of a truly cultural city. The streets surrounding York Minster, King's Manor and St William's College have been a place of historians, of archaeological and religious study, of choristers, of book publishing, of scholarly endeavour - for hundreds of years.
10. Today, York is full of bookshops, antique dealers and little independent art galleries. Its cultural offerings range from Mystery Plays performed on the streets, to challenging drama, world music and innovative venues and showcases for new artists of all kinds.

11. The National Centre for Early Music on Walmgate is a place of musical study, research, performance and innovation. Concerts feature folk, jazz, 20th century and world music. Early music was its creator, however, as it was established to provide a base for Britain's premier festival of early music every year. Events and festivals reflect the cultural nature of York. The University of York Concert Series, the Music Live Festival every May, York Minster services, concerts and medieval music, a thriving jazz and folk scene all make York a perfect place for music lovers.
12. York's museums and galleries (The Yorkshire Museum, York Castle Museum and City Art Gallery) display the wealth of historical and artistic treasures that belong to the city, from Roman times through Anglo-Saxon and Viking eras to the Middle Ages – the Wars of the Roses, the Civil War – and on to York's genteel Georgian days. The Art Gallery is remarkable for its collection of important European paintings spanning seven centuries, with works by Bellotto, Reynolds, Lowry and York-born William Etty, whose statue stands outside the gallery. York St Mary's church, now York's leading contemporary art space in Coppergate displays solo exhibitions by contemporary artists and sculptures, and is a lovely place to stop by.
13. There is also York's Chocolate Museum providing an entertaining and informative guided tour through the history of York's most famous chocolate-making families and their finest creations, York Dungeon, a thrill-filled fun journey through 2000 years of York's most horrible history, and the Jorvik Viking Centre the site of one of the most famous and astounding discoveries of modern archaeology, where visitors can journey through the reconstruction of Viking-Age streets, as they would have been 1000 years ago.
14. The Theatre Royal and Fairfax House are symbols of York's prominence as a cultural centre in Georgian times. And whilst Fairfax House has become one of the best preserved Georgian townhouses in Britain and a wonderful museum piece, the Theatre Royal is as busy today as it was in the days when Georgians such as the Fairfax family came from London to entertain and be entertained in fashionable York. The packed programmes at the Theatre Royal and the Grand Opera House range from grand opera and classical ballet to Stomp and Soul Explosion.

15. At City Screen York, arthouse, independent and quality mainstream films are screened, and the Basement Bar hosts diverse music, poetry, and comedy events.
16. The city centre itself is honeycombed by a maze of hidden alleyways, all with colourful stories. These Snickelways enable you to travel back in time through some of York's most picturesque backwaters and further explored on one of the many Ghost Walks. The city walls and river also provides a picturesque backdrop to those that like to walk and there are boat trips available to take you further afield.

### Residents Survey

17. In support of the night-time economy corporate scrutiny theme an online survey was undertaken in late 2013 focussing on 'York after 5'. The survey included a number of generic questions to support all of the reviews, and a number of questions specific to each of the individual scrutiny reviews (except the health review as the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee carried out its own survey). The relevant survey findings are detailed below.

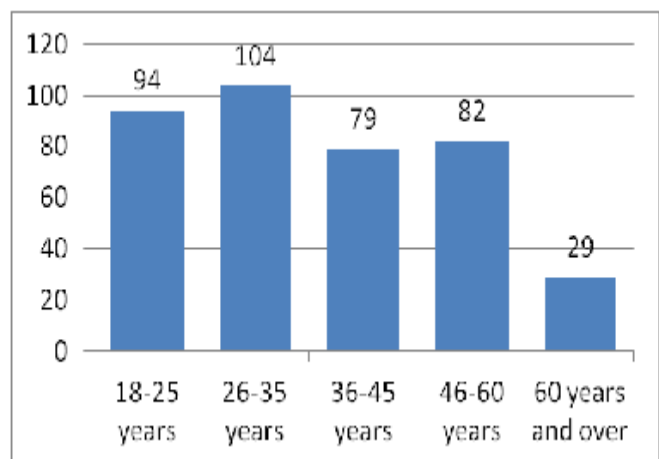
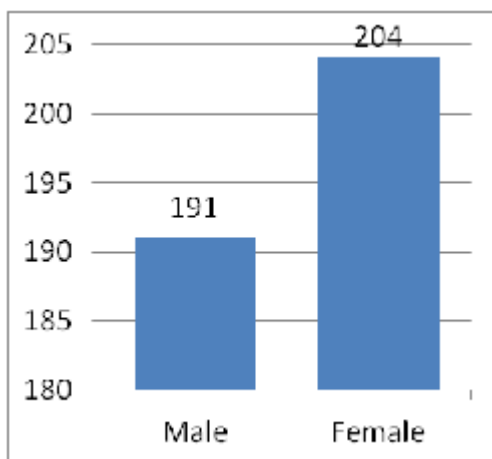
### Initial Information Gathered

#### 18. Findings from 'York After 5' Survey

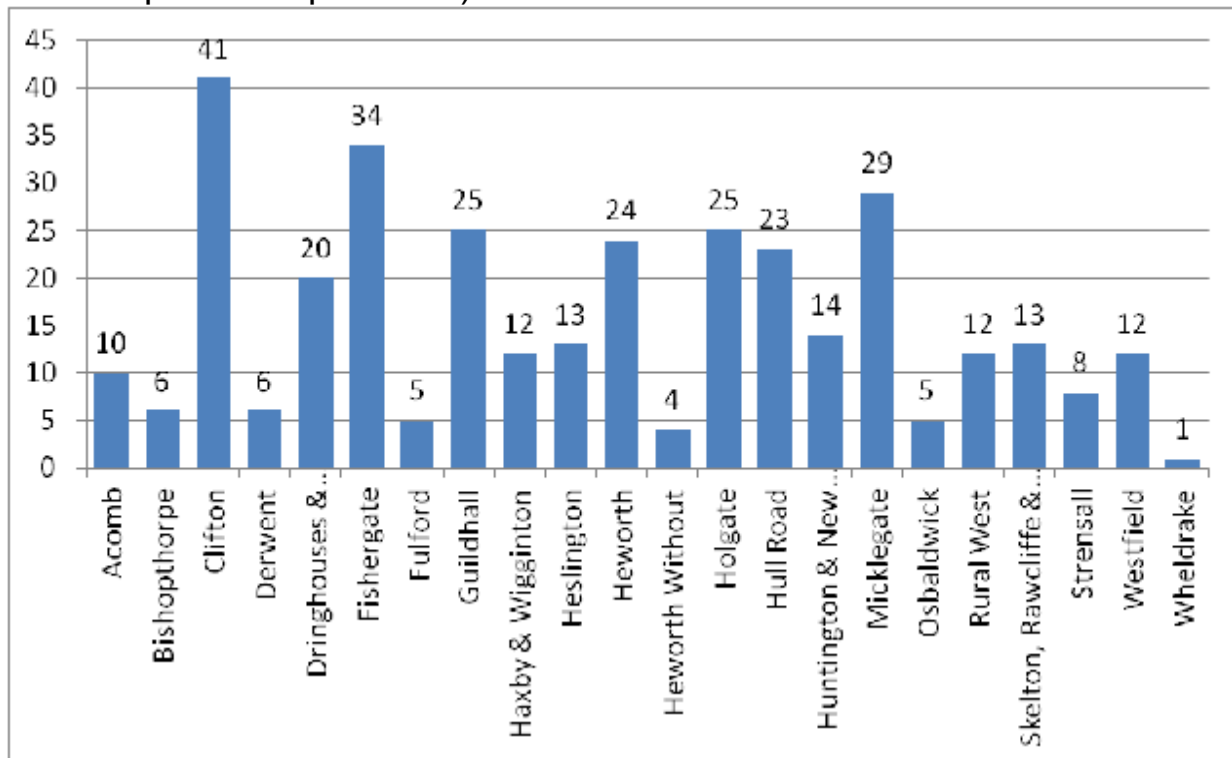
There were a total of 472 responses to the 'Yorkafter5' survey. For those we have the following equalities breakdown:

**Gender:** 395 provided their gender  
(77 did not respond)

**Age:** 388 provided their age  
(84 did not respond)



**Ward:** 342 provided a complete postcode which can be matched to a York ward. An additional 53 respondents provided a partial postcode which can be identified as York but not to a particular ward (77 did not provide a postcode).



19. Questions 1-2 and 20-21 were generic questions. Feedback on those questions is shown below:

20. Qu.1 - Do you use the city centre after 5pm?

There were 469 responses to the question. Of those, a majority indicated that they use the city centre between 5pm and 11pm, with 44% using the city centre at some time between 11pm and 5am.

	<u>5-7pm</u>	<u>5-8pm</u>	<u>8-11pm</u>	<u>11pm-5am</u>	<u>Do not use</u>
Overall	51%	75%	89%	44%	6%
Male	48%	75%	84%	51%	5%
Female	56%	78%	80%	38%	4%
18-25	54%	64%	85%	84%	1%
26-35	55%	75%	85%	43%	5%
36-45	48%	84%	79%	38%	6%
46-60	56%	80%	77%	26%	7%
60+	31%	83%	83%	0%	3%

21. It should be noted that a proportion of the people who responded positively to using the city centre between 5pm and 7pm and 5pm and 8pm may be making their way home from work in the city centre.

22. Qu.2 – Why do you to visit the city centre after 5pm?

There were 452 responses to question 2. Responders were given a number of options and asked to tick all that applied:

	<u>No.</u>	<u>Social</u>	<u>Cultural</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Other</u>
Overall	452	92%	72%	16%	8%
Male	186	89%	69%	19%	11%
Female	198	93%	79%	12%	6%
18-25	93	98%	67%	19%	8%
26-35	101	94%	76%	17%	8%
36-45	77	94%	78%	12%	5%
46-60	78	92%	74%	14%	12%
60+	28	57%	79%	18%	11%

23. In regard to the 8% (35 responders) who indicated 'Other', the following reasons were indicated:

- Shopping/banking
- Live in the city centre
- Commuting
- Work
- Attending Meetings
- Fishing
- Transporting others in and out of the city centre

24. Qu.20 - In your opinion, what is good about the city centre and the activities in York after 5pm?

There were 284 responses to question 20 - specific feedback is shown at Annex A.

25. There were many positive comments about the city centre including its attractiveness, its compact nature, the large variety and good quality of its restaurants and bars, its safe and friendly atmosphere up to 8-9pm, and its uniqueness. Whilst specific annual one-off events were mentioned, some negative comments were made regarding the city centre's lack of evening activities for families, lack of evening coffee bar culture, and the limited number of alternative activities outside of visiting bars and restaurants. Some respondents liked the fact that the shops were closed after 6pm highlighting that it

resulted in a more relaxed atmosphere in the city centre. Whilst others thought shops opening later would encourage city centre workers to remain in the centre and partake in the rest of the evening offer. A small number expressed the view that there was little or nothing to do in the city centre in the evening and that the city centre was dying. Also that the current offer is mainly aimed at tourists and not residents.

26. Qu.21 - Suggestions for what might improve your use or enjoyment of the city centre?

There were 286 responses to question 21 – specific feedback is shown at Annex B. Many responders suggested similar improvements –see summary list below:

- Less drunk people
- Shops opening later
- More non-alcohol related things to do
- Later Park & Ride services
- More open air activities
- Transport improvements including cheaper buses and free central parking in the evening
- Improved lighting
- Cleaner streets
- More visible policing
- Attractions open later
- Coffee shops and cafes staying open later

27. The following questions were included in the survey to specifically support this scrutiny review:

28. Qu.3 – What social and cultural activities/events would encourage you to visit the city centre after 5pm?

There were 258 responses - specific feedback is shown at Annex C. In summary, many of the responders suggested the following would encourage them to visit the city centre after 5pm:

- Open air events including theatre performances, film screenings, live music events, street entertainment
- Evening markets and festivals
- Museums and galleries closing later
- Coffee shops and cafes (non-alcohol venues) open in the evening
- More evening cultural / arts centre activities



29. The responses also highlighted a number of issues that discourage/limit their visits to the city centre after 5pm:

- Poor advertising of evening events
- Cost of bus fares and parking
- Poor lighting at cycle parking sites

30. Qu.9 -12 Concerning taking children into the city centre after 5pm?

There were 442 responses to question 9. Of those, 67 (15.2%) said Yes they would take their children into the city centre after 5pm, 70 (15.8%) said No, and 305 (69%) of responders confirmed they had no children. Of the 137 who responded to say they had children, 115 provided information on their children's age range as follows:

0-7 years – 56 (40.6%)  
8-11 years – 37 (26.8%)  
12-16 years – 45 (32.6%)

31. Of the 67 (15.2%) who answered yes to taking their children into the city centre after 5pm, many gave their reasons for visiting:

- Eating Out (43)
- Cinema (20)
- Theatre (20)
- Festivals / Organised Events (14)
- Entertainment / Tourist Attractions (9)
- Illuminate York (5)
- Shopping (4)
- Church Events (2)
- River Walks (1)
- Markets (1)
- Library / Learning Activities (1)

32. A number of those who answered yes also raised issues around safety, the price of some events e.g. Illuminate York, and the limited number of things you can do with children in the city centre after 5pm.

33. The following reasons were given by the 70 (15.8%) who responded saying No they would not take their children into the city centre after 5pm:

- Anti-social behaviour and safety issues (38)

- Age of children (11)
- Lack of family-friendly evening activities and venues (7)
- Nothing for children to do (7)
- Vehicle restrictions and Cost of Parking (2)

34. Objective (i) – Best Practice

Information is currently being sought from the tourist organisations in the following similar cities to evidence what if any success they have had at improving their evening cultural offer:

- Edinburgh
- Chester
- Bath
- Durham
- Oxford
- Stratford

35. The Task Group should also note that a new city marketing organisation is currently being developed to build on the way York is promoted as a visitor destination and business location. Further information on this will be provided at a future Task Group meeting, together with any feedback from the cities listed above.

36. Objective (ii) – Barriers to increasing the availability of York’s existing family based cultural and entertainment offer

The latest visitor survey shows that the average spend of a visitor party with children is less than the spend of a party without children so purely in economic impact terms family groups are less valuable. However there are lots of arguments why we should target families.

37. Other barriers are more product based i.e. a lack of activity/retail/attractions etc. in the 5-8pm window, and the perception of York as a pub/drinking centre.

38. Objective (iii) - New cultural and entertainment activities suitable for York and the possibility of their introduction in York

The cultural and entertainment activities current available in York are detailed above in paragraphs 9-16. It is the view of Visit York that the city needs to identify a new concept which will attract a significant number of visitors and be of equal interest to locals. The view is that the new concept/event would need to take place regularly over a longer period of time (rather than in one week of the year) to build up a guaranteed influx of visitors which all providers could benefit from.

The knock on effects from this approach can be evidenced from initiatives in the USA and elsewhere. For example, it has been shown that retailers swiftly respond by arranging for later closing times.

39. Clearly the right new concept for York needs to be identified, but that is only part of what will be required. Others in the Leisure and Culture sector and other commercial sectors would need to be involved and kept fully informed throughout the planning stage and the event running. These conversations could be facilitated through Visit York.
40. A coordinated and coherent approach by leisure and culture providers, transport providers and retailers would benefit all and this has proved successful in the past e.g. for the Mystery Plays the city's Park and Ride service made changes to allow for later departures from the city. The same happened for Illuminate York, additional buses were provided, the park and ride service ran for longer and a number of city centre shops remained open for longer.
41. It is also suggested that the new event be run over a number of weeks (rather than on consecutive nights) as this would help create a precedent for visitors and locals to stay in the city centre in the early evening, one evening a week. Once the event had run its course, the other attractions and shops could continue to remain open in the early evening on the same evening each week (possibly a Friday to encourage visitors to start their weekend visits to York earlier) which in turn, the transport providers could continue to benefit from.
42. Objective (iv) – Signposting tourist activities and encouraging joint promotion by their providers and accommodation providers  
Visit York already does this type of cross-selling. They also host events at the various museums when a new exhibition is about to open, to which hoteliers etc are invited. This is seen as a positive way of networking and building relationships, and encourages those invited to promote the exhibition to their clientele.

### **Consultation**

43. The Head of Visit York will be attending this meeting to assist the Task Group in their consideration of the initial information gathered in support of this review.

## **Way Forward**

44. It is expected that the result from the York Consortium bid will be known by the time this meeting is held (the decision is due on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014). The decision either way will have an effect on the city's current cultural provision, so the Task Group may wish to examine those effects.
45. The Task Group are also asked to agree a workplan for progressing the work on this review and identify a number of additional Task Group meeting dates.

## **Council Plan 2011-15**

46. The review supports the 'create jobs and grow the economy' priority within the Council Plan 2011-15, in that a successful York will have an enhanced reputation as a respected European and international city, with a visitor economy recognised for its high quality, bringing financial benefits to the city and its residents.

## **Implications & Risk Management**

47. The remit shown at paragraph 8 above will also help mitigate the risk of tourism in York becoming less sustainable and valuable to visitors and residents.

## **Recommendations**

48. Having considered that information within this report, the Task Group are recommended to:
  - Formulate and agree a workplan for dealing with this review
  - Identify a number of suitable meeting dates to progress the work on the review

Reason: To ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures and protocols, and support the Committee's workplan.

**Contact Details**

**Author:**

Melanie Carr  
Scrutiny Officer  
Scrutiny Services  
Tel No.01904  
552054

**Lead Officer Responsible for the report:**

Charlie Croft  
AD Communities, Culture and Public Realm

**Report Approved**



**Date** 9 January 2014

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** N/A

**Wards Affected:**

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** N/A

**Annexes:**

- Annex A** – Response to Survey Question 20
- Annex B** – Responses to Survey Question 21
- Annex C** – Responses to Survey Question 3
- Annex D** - Abbreviations