

Foreword

Like all York businesses, we are hopeful we can move away from the reactionary planning to Covid and focus on the long term aims of our business plan, which was shaped by you. The good news is York bounced back from lockdowns much better than other UK cities – we have the spend data from VISA to demonstrate this. That is not to say the York business community does not face continued challenges, whether that be around skills and staff retention or servicing loans that were taken out during the past two years. Regardless of this, you can be assured the BID team will continue to support you and your business through spending levy payers' money on projects that improve the city centre.

A Look Back at 2021–22

Alongside our baseline projects such as Street Rangers, Rapid Response Cleaning and Winter Lights, the BID has delivered a variety of new initiatives during the last year aimed at driving footfall in the city centre and aiding the post pandemic recovery.

Supporting businesses through curating public space

From April until the end of September 2021, we worked with partners to provide additional outdoor seating for a number of public spaces. A substantial number of colourful tables, benches and decorations were positioned in areas such as Duncombe Place, College Green and Exhibition Square to encourage alfresco eating and drinking and support local hospitality businesses.



Celebrating York's key workers through street art

During April 2021 the BID collaborated with Art of Protest Projects to create the 'Guardians of York' street art exhibition aimed at celebrating keyworkers who helped keep York moving during a time when the city (and the world) came to a standstill during Covid-19.

Driving footfall via York Restaurant Week

York Restaurant Week ran twice during the last year with the most recent event achieving a record-breaking boost in trade for the hospitality sector worth over £152,000. Moving forward the BID has committed to running the event twice a year.



Animating the city during Halloween

During the months around Halloween our 'Ghosts in the Gardens' and 'Dark Fiction' projects generated a lot of attention. Museum Gardens hosted a number of ghostly sculptures including Vikings, Roman knights and monks for the public to explore and discover. York Station provided an immersive experience, inviting families to venture through an empty unit full of themed props and decorations.

Up-coming Programmes

The BID will continue to deliver its core programmes such as Street Rangers and Street Cleansing and hopefully enhance these e.g. we are tendering for a new Winter Lights scheme ready for Christmas 2022. Businesses have told us they would like the BID to build on its first aid training offer, so we will look at developing subsidised training courses that businesses want.

The summer staycation market will be another important one for retail and hospitality, so the BID will continue to provide outdoor seating that the public enjoy and also animate the city for celebrations such as the Queens Jubilee. This year we also aim to work on strategic ambitions. Two examples are how to better highlight York's commercial offer to investors; as well as working with the local authority on trials regarding green deliveries.



Tree of Light, Eye of York

York's Economic Recovery

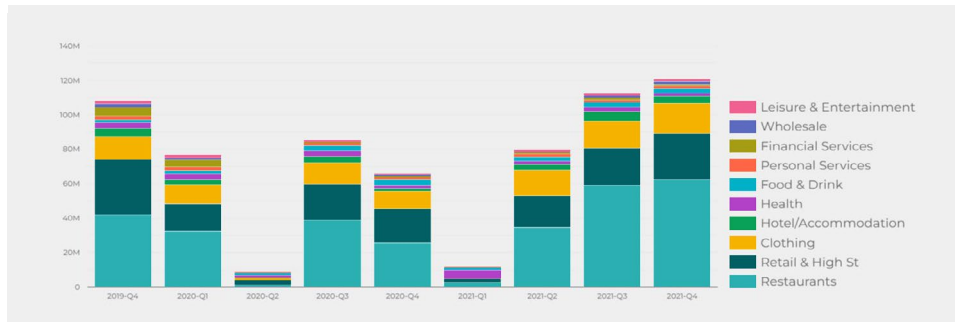
At the beginning of 2020 York BID invested in technology that brings together data provided by O2 and VISA to generate insights on how York city centre is performing.

Visitation

Following the reopening of non-essential retail and hospitality businesses back in June 2021, York city centre witnessed a dramatic increase in footfall, outperforming other UK cities. The staycation market was strong, with York particularly popular for day trippers. At the same time, the city maintained strong support from locals, with 28% of all visitors being York residents.

Spend

VISA data (supplied quarterly) showed that during quarter 3 of 2021, spend on card in city centre business increased by 38%, when compared with the 3 months previous. The hospitality sector benefited the most with merchant sales increasing by over 70%. The graph shows that in Q4 of 2021, spend levels in the city centre were almost back to pre-pandemic (Q4 2019), with the restaurant sector actually growing.



VISA data sourced from Movement Strategies

Levy Collection (2022–23)

York BID has just entered into its 7th year of operations and is currently working to deliver a 5-year business plan which will conclude in March 2026. All businesses in the city centre with a rateable value over £17.5K pay a levy equivalent to 1% of their rateable value and as such are automatically a member of the BID.

There are currently 900 existing BID members who collectively help to raise around £800,000 every year which we use to deliver essential investment and improvements for York city centre and its business community. Please refer to our website for more details:

www.theyorkbid.com/about/the-bid-levy

You should find your levy invoice for the period April 2022 to March 2023 attached to this letter. Details of how to make payment can be found on the reverse of your bill. An electronic copy of your bill can be provided if needed. If you would like to find out more about how we can deliver return on your investment or have any specific questions you are welcome to contact our team on **01904 809970** or info@theyorkbid.com.

Kind regards,

Andrew Lawson,
Executive Director of York BID

