York City Centre Insights Report September 2026

This monthly insights report brings together a range of data sources to highlight the key trends shaping **York city centre's economic performance**, helping local businesses make informed decisions.

For further insights and more detailed analysis, visit the York Economic Data Hub, our free and accessible online resource.

Please refer to the Glossary for definitions of the terms and abbreviations used in this report, along with maps outlining the geographic coverage of each dataset.

Latest Monthly Insights - September 2026

Metric	Monthly Total	Growth vs 2025	UK Benchmark	YTD Jan-September 2026	YTD Growth vs 2025	YTD UK Benchmark
Sales	£37.8m	-4.1%	-3.8%	£378m	-1.2%	-2.5%
Customers	467k	-4.1%	-3.7%	4.4m	-2.9%	-3.0%
ARPC	£80.93	+0.0%	-0.2%	£84.96	+1.8%	+0.6%
Transactions	2.1m	-3.2%	-3.3%	19.9m	-3.0%	-3.2%
ATV	£18.30	-0.9%	-0.6%	£18.97	+1.9%	+0.7%
Footfall	2.8m	-5.8%	n/a	24.4m	-6.8%	n/a

Headline Summary

- 📉 Sales were down -**4.1%** in September versus 2025, slightly behind the UK benchmark **(-3.8%).** However, York's YTD sales are down just -**1.2%,** outperforming the UK **(-2.5%).**
- 🛍️ Customer numbers are down -**2.9%** YTD, broadly in line with national trends. However, higher spend per customer is helping York outperform the UK on overall sales.
- 📍 York continues to compare favourably with nearby cities, although out-of-town shopping centres are regularly outperforming the city centre.
- 🎄 November and December typically generate around **22%** of annual sales, making the 2026 festive period a crucial opportunity to recover lost ground and strengthen full-year performance.
- 🍽️ Food & Drink accounts for **38%** of monthly sales, making it the largest contributor to York city centre's sales economy. Year-to-date Food & Drink sales are **0.9 percentage points** ahead of the UK Benchmark.
- 🏠 York residents remain the largest customer group, generating **41%** of September sales, followed by visitors from elsewhere in Great Britain at **31%.** York Resident spending is down -**1.0%** YTD, reinforcing the importance of local loyalty.
- 🚶 Footfall fell -**5.8%** in September and is down -**6.9%** YTD. Visits are also becoming shorter, with the share lasting over an hour down **1.2 percentage points.**
- 🏬 Shop vacancy remains low at **6.9%,** well below the national rate of **13.4%,** despite reaching its highest level since February 2025. This suggests continued confidence in York city centre as a trading location.

Spending Insights

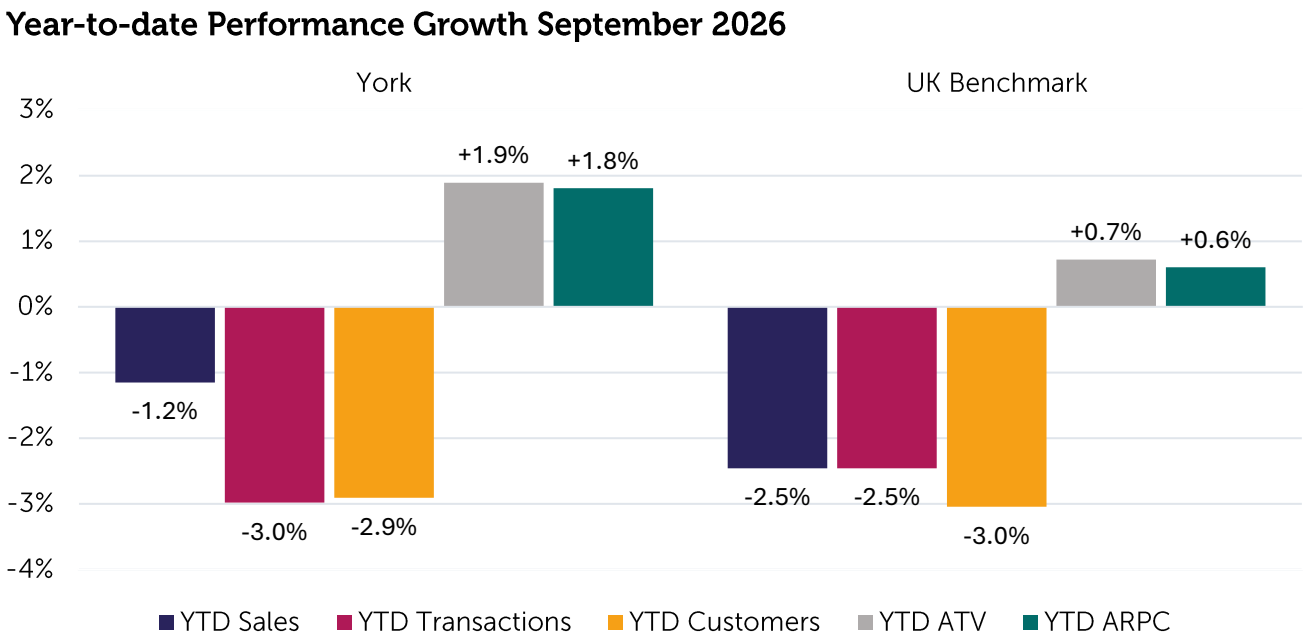


Figure 1. *Comparison of year-to-date (YTD) growth across key spending metrics in York City Centre vs the UK Benchmark, as of September-2026.* ***(Source: Beauclair)***

Year-to-date (YTD) sales in York City Centre are -1.2% lower compared to the same period in 2025. However, York is outperforming the UK sales benchmark by +1.3 percentage points.

YTD Customer numbers are broadly in line with the UK benchmark, so York's stronger relative sales performance has primarily been driven by higher growth in average revenue per customer (ARPC).

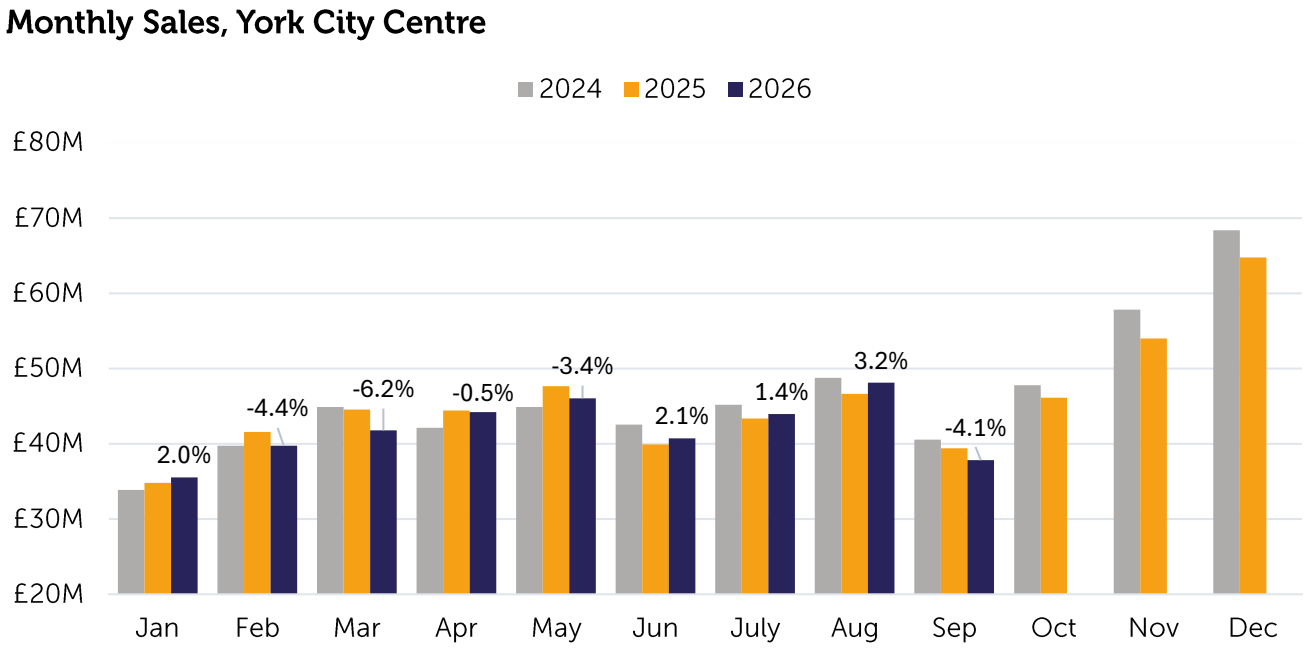


Figure 2. *Total monthly sales recorded in York city centre from 2024 until present. Data labels show year-on-year (YoY) growth, comparing each month in the current year with the corresponding month in the previous year.* ***(Source: Beauclair)***

Monthly sales performance in 2026 has been mixed. Steep year-on-year declines were recorded in February, March and September, interrupted by a brief period of positive growth between June and August.

Data from the past two years indicate that around **22%** of York's annual sales are generated in November and December, highlighting the importance of the festive trading period.

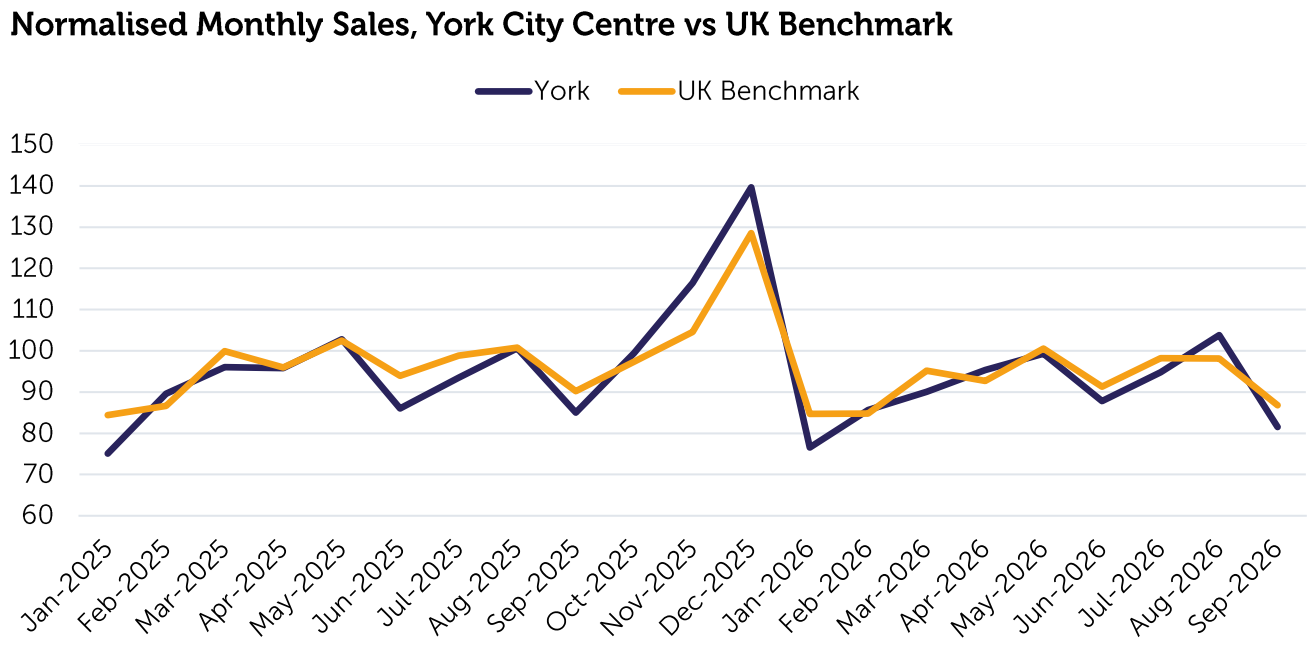


Figure 3. *Comparison of normalised monthly sales - York City Centre vs UK Benchmark, Jan 2025 to present.* ***(Source: Beauclair)***

As shown in figure 3, York's sales broadly track with the UK benchmark, although the city centre experiences more pronounced seasonal peaks and troughs. Historically, York has performed strongest relative to the UK benchmark between October and December, and weakest during January, June and September.

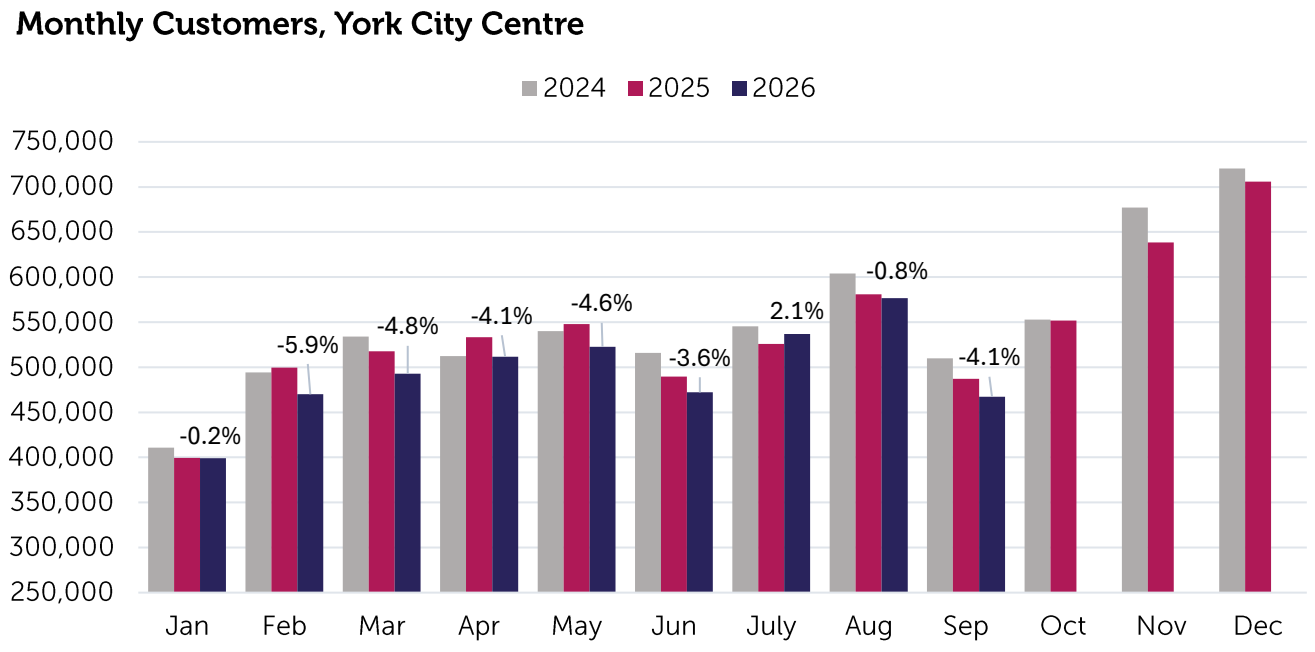


Figure 4. *Total number of account holders linked to monthly debit card transactions, recorded in York city centre from 2024 until present. Data labels show year-on-year (YoY) growth, comparing each month in the current year with the corresponding month in the previous year.* ***(Source: Beauclair)***

Falling customer numbers remain the main driver of lower sales in York city centre, reflecting the wider UK trend. July 2026 was the only month in the year to date to record positive sales growth, at **2.1%**.

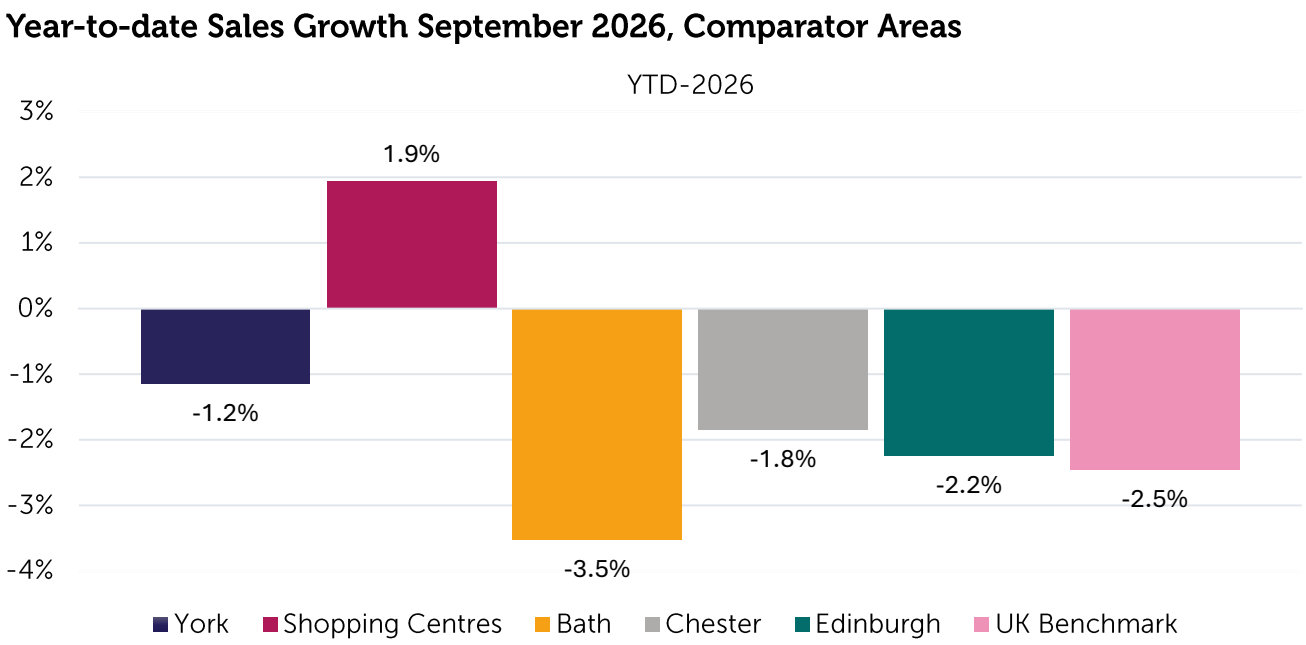


Figure 5. *Comparison of the year-to-date (YTD) sales growth across comparator areas. 'Shopping Centres' refers to collective metrics for Monks Cross, Clifton Moor and York Designer Outlet. Data labels show year-on-year (YoY) growth, compared to corresponding month in the previous year.* ***(Source: Beauclair)***

York's sales growth compares favourably with comparator and nearby cities. However, the city's out-of-town shopping centres, including Monks Cross, Clifton Moor and York Designer Outlet, have consistently outperformed the city centre in recent years.

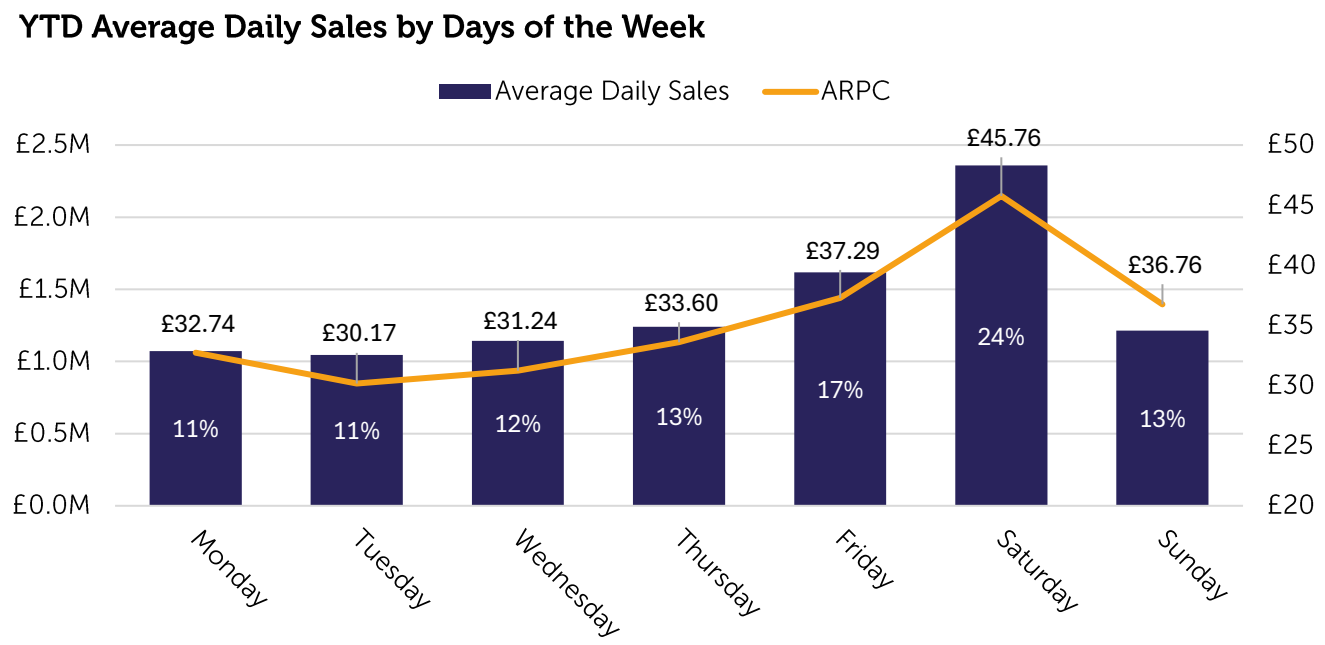


Figure 6. *Average daily sales recorded in York City Centre during 2026 year-to-date, segmented by days of the week. Data labels show the respective share of average weekly sales.* ***(Source: Beauclair)***

During 2026 to date, Saturdays have generated the highest level of sales, accounting for **24%** of average weekly sales and more than twice the amount recorded on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Saturdays also recorded the highest average revenue per customer (ARPC), at nearly **£46**. By contrast, Tuesday is the weakest-performing day, with an ARPC of just **£30**.

Sector Insights

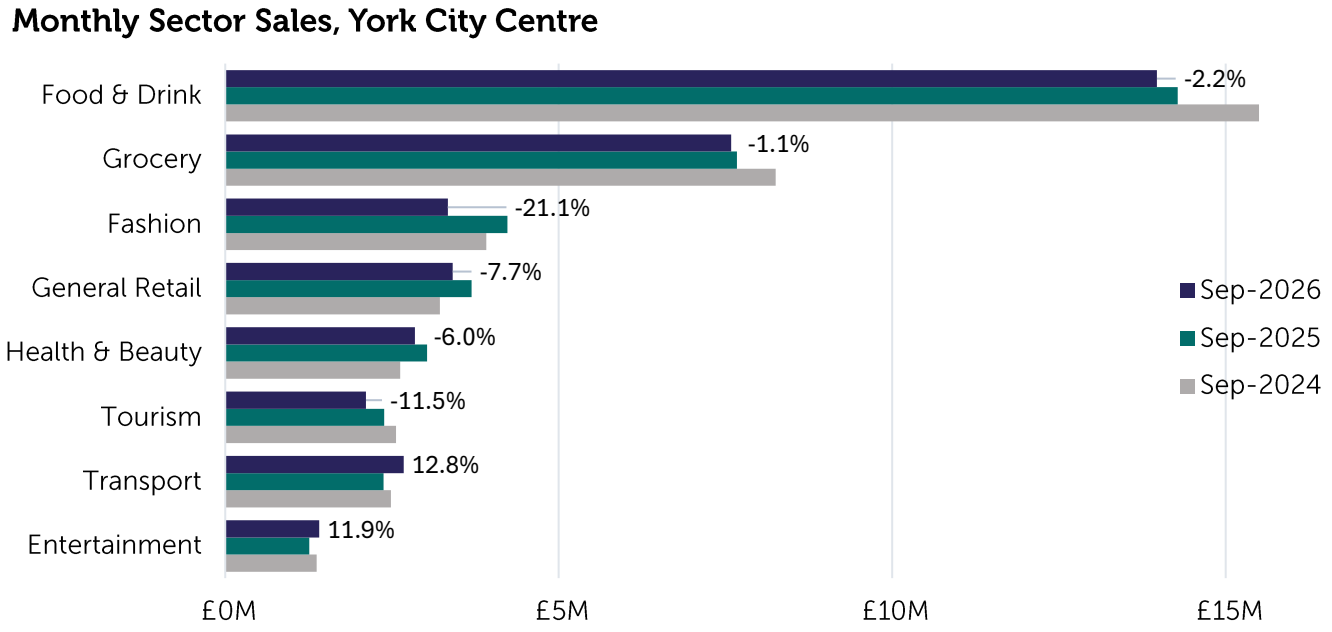


Figure 7. *Total monthly sales across sectors, recorded in York city centre, during September. Data labels show year-on-year (YoY) growth, comparing each month in the current year with the corresponding month in the previous year. Use the slicer to explore different months across the year. For sector definition, please refer to the Glossary of Terms.* ***(Source: Beauclair)***

Food & Drink is the largest contributor to sales in York city centre, consistently accounting for **38%** of monthly sales.

Figure 7 shows how each sector performed in September 2026 compared with the same month in 2025. For a more detailed historical breakdown of sector performance, visit the York Economic Data Hub.

Catchment Insights

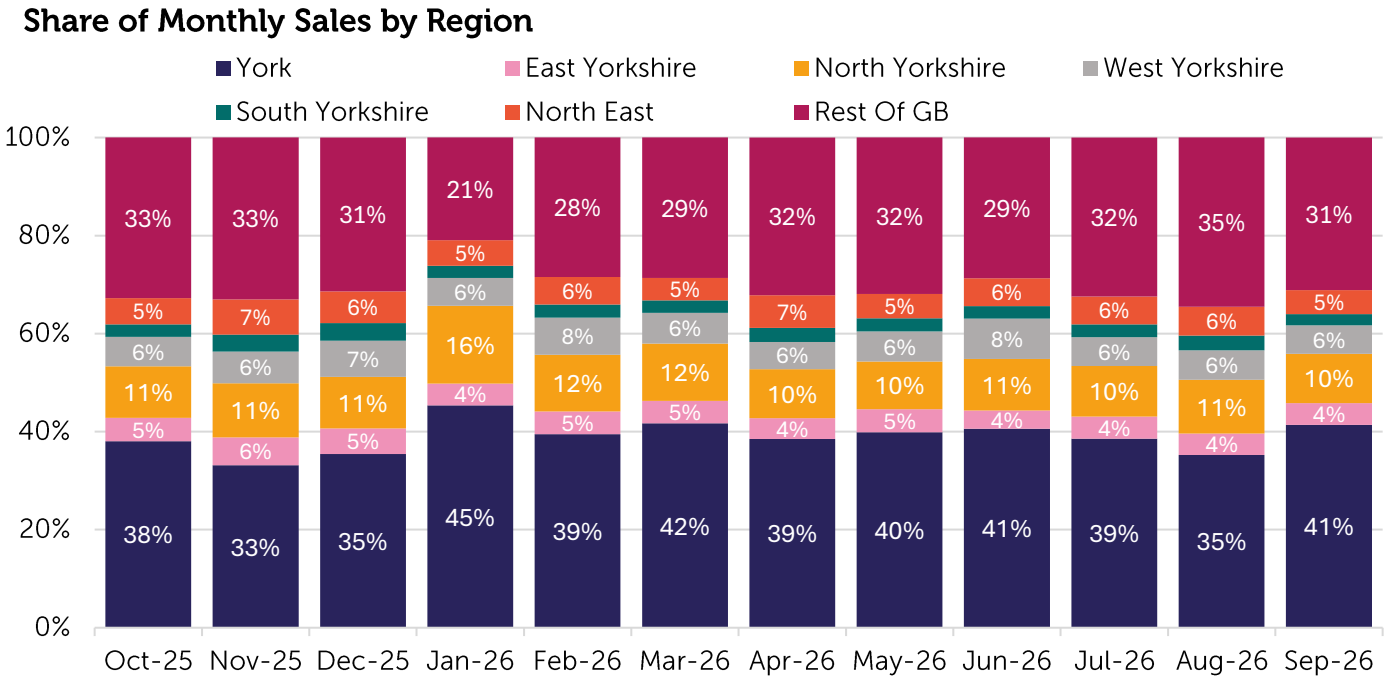


Figure 8. *Distribution of monthly sales by customers' region of residence. Data labels show the percentage share of total sales associated with customers of each region, recorded in York city centre during the last 12 months.* ***(Source: Beauclair)***

York residents remained the largest contributor to city centre sales in September, accounting for **41%** of total spend, up **0.5 percentage points from** September 2025. In the last 12 months, local residents have generated on average **40%** of monthly sales, making them the largest regional customer group. Visitors from beyond York's hinterland (the Rest of Great Britain) accounted for a further **31%** of total sales.

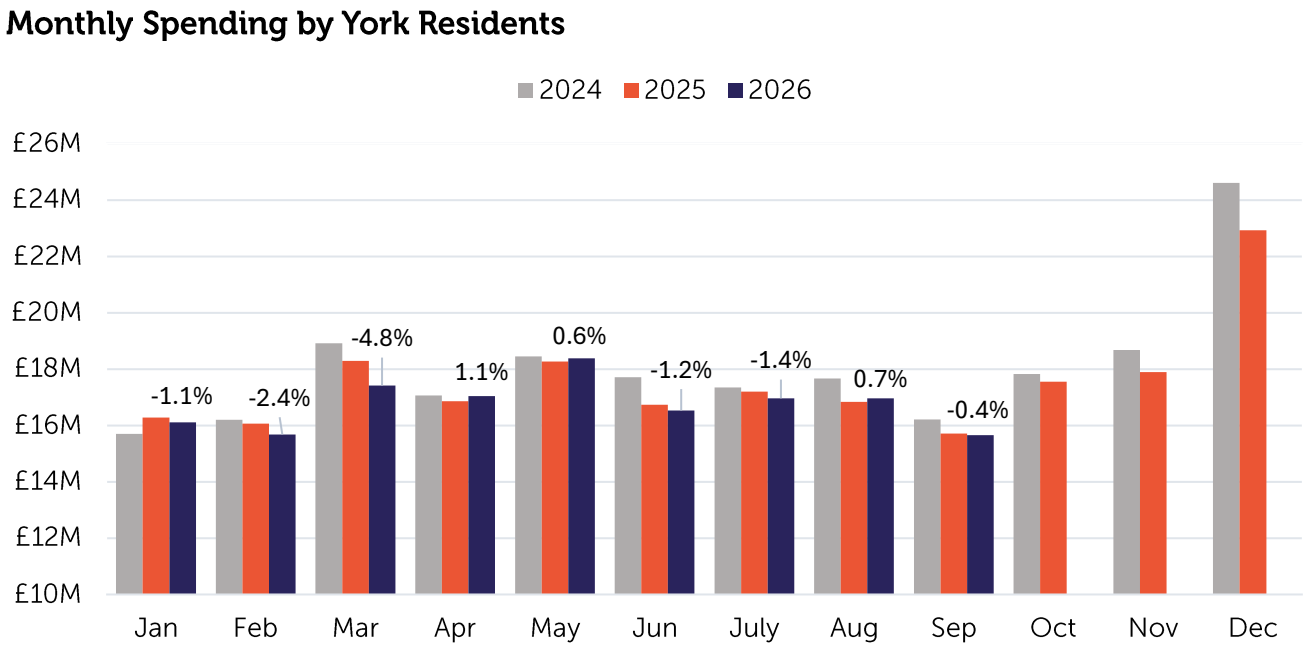


Figure 9. *Total monthly spending by customers residing within the York Local Authority Area, recorded in York city centre between 2024 and 2026. Data labels show year-on-year (YoY) growth, comparing each month in the current year with the corresponding month in the previous year.* ***(Source: Beauclair)***

Monthly spending by York residents has fluctuated during 2026, with no clear correlation to overall city centre sales trends. The strongest year-on-year growth was recorded in April, when resident spending increased by **1.0%** and accounted for **39%** of total monthly sales, despite overall sales declining by **-0.5%**. Year-to-date spending by York residents is currently **-1.0%** down compared to 2025 and **-2.9%** down compared to 2024.

Visitor Insights

- Monthly Footfall, York City Centre

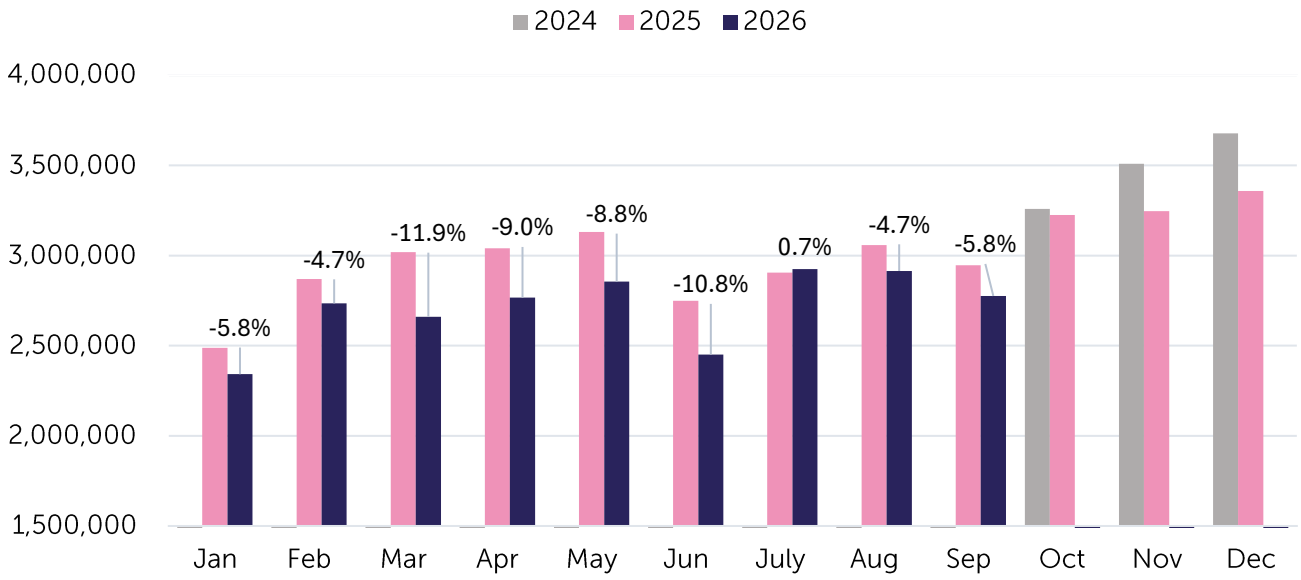


Figure 10. *Monthly totals of cumulative daily visitors to York city centre from October 2024 to present. Data labels show year-on-year (YoY) percentage change, comparing each month with the equivalent period in the previous year.* ***(Source: BT Active Intelligence)***

According to BT Active Intelligence data, York city centre footfall fell by -5.8% year-on-year in September. So far, July is the only month that has produced positive footfall growth this year at 0.7%. The sharpest annual declines in footfall were recorded between March and June, ranging from -9% to -12%. Across the year to date, footfall is -6.9% lower than during the equivalent period in 2025.

Monthly Dwell Time, York City Centre

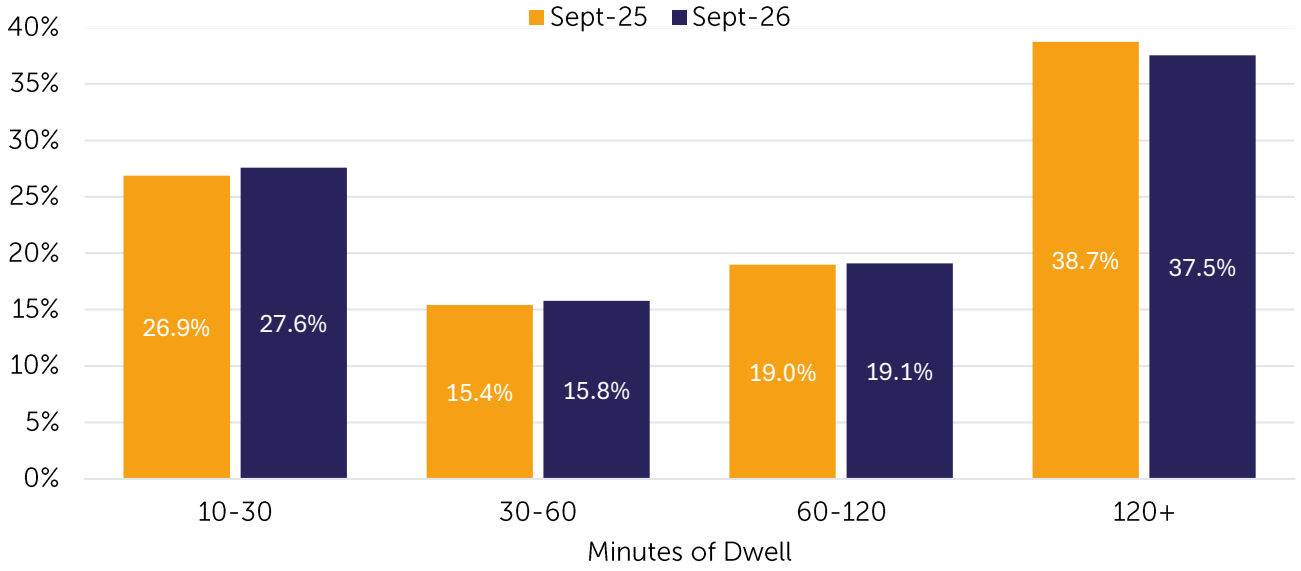


Figure 11. *Percentage distribution of monthly visitors to York city centre by dwell time (in minutes) during September 2026. Visitors present in the retail area for fewer than 10 minutes are excluded.* ***(Source: BT Active Intelligence)***

September saw a moderate shift towards shorter city centre visits. The proportion of visitors staying for more than an hour fell by -1.2 percentage points year-on-year, whereas the share of visitors staying for 30 minutes or less rose by 0.7 percentage points.

Shop Vacancy

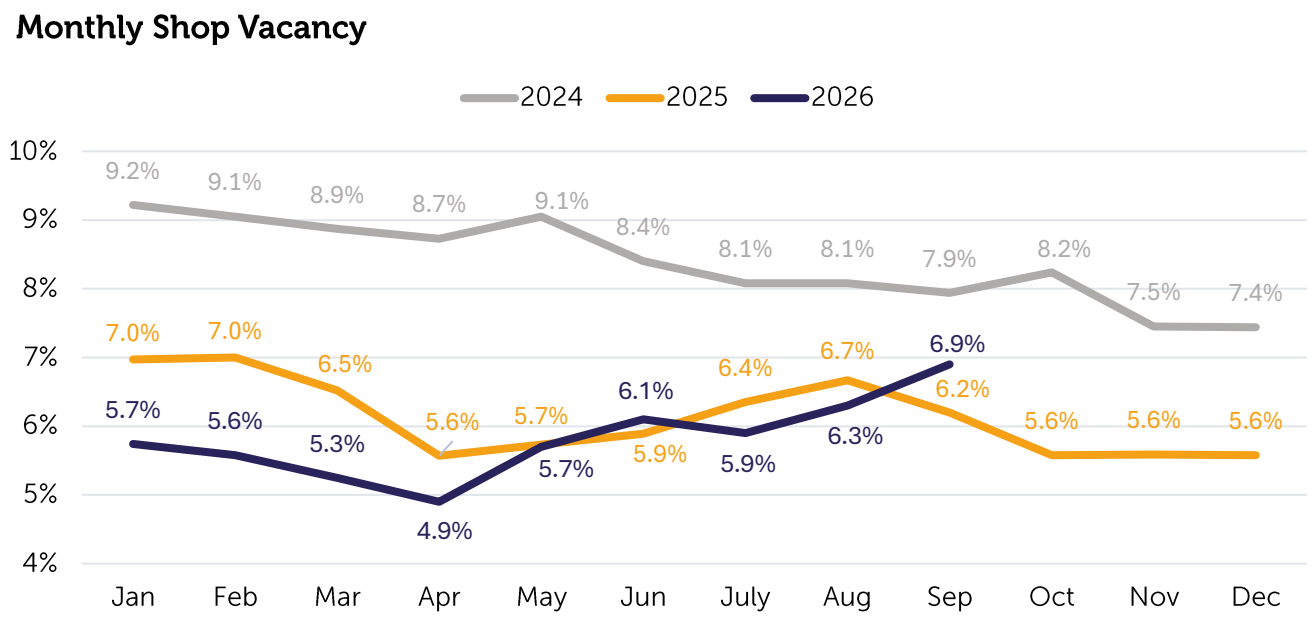


Figure 13. *The average monthly percentage of vacant retail units recorded in York city centre, since the beginning of 2024.* ***(Source: York Open Data)***

Shop vacancy rose modestly to **6.9%** in September, its highest level since February 2025. Despite this increase, York city centre continues to demonstrate strong occupancy resilience, with vacancy remaining well below the estimated national rate of **13.4%**.

About The Hub

York Economic Data Hub is a free, easy-to-use online resource designed to provide York's business community with clear, accessible insights into the economic performance of York city centre over time. Historical insights reports, news articles, and webinar recordings are available via our Insights Archive.

Please refer to the Glossary of Terms for definitions of the terms and abbreviations used in this report, along with maps outlining the geographic coverage of each dataset.

If you have any questions or queries about the data, feel free to contact the York BID at info@theyorkbid.com.

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