

THE **YORK** NARRATIVE

Making the Benefits Case

As we know, York needs as many organisations and groups as possible to adopt the narrative in what they do. The more our activities and communications reflect our shared values, the more quickly the perception of York will change.

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the story behind the narrative at [The York Narrative website](#). This will help to explain why it matters, how the narrative was developed and what difference it can make to our city.

At the time of preparing this, York faces a level of challenge due to the Covid-19 crisis that we haven't experienced before in our lifetimes. The impact across all aspects of life has been significant, changing the way services are delivered, testing health systems and putting our economy on hold. The tourism, cultural and academic sectors are at significant risk of facing a sustained threat with potentially huge market, business and jobs losses - with massive repercussions for the rest of the community and related business sectors.

That these sectors need preserving and supporting in the immediate crisis and to adapt to deliver in very different operating circumstances is in no doubt at all - they are essential to York. However, the pandemic has magnified the need for York to be recognised and valued for all its strengths.

Perhaps more than ever it brings into sharp focus how important it is to protect, support and promote the city's less visible economic and social strengths.

Covid-19 hasn't singled York out of course. Cities and towns around the UK are all facing similar challenges. The battle for recovery is highly competitive. How quickly we accelerate economic recovery to improve residents' lives is a challenge all cities are experiencing. The York Narrative provides a shared framework based on the things residents, visitors and businesses value, to guide recovery, investment and renewal - a framework to not only talk about the city but to adopt a 'build back better' approach, with decisions taken to deliver support right now, and looking ahead to future sustainability and resilience.

By working together we can achieve so much more for our city: to lobby for and invest resources; to recover and rebuild; to talk with a shared voice about what makes York so special provides us with a unique competitive advantage.

On the following pages are a few examples about how and why the York Narrative is useful to your business, network or community group during the COVID-19 crisis:

1

To strengthen applications for government funds and support.

York's economic and social wellbeing relies on some of the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic including tourism, culture, retail, hospitality and academia). Many organisations, festivals and programmes may not survive and the impact on York will be substantial and long-lasting. The narrative will help us to better articulate why these sectors (and individual organisations) require investment support. It provides a framework on how to communicate about crisis response and broader community support.

2

As a framework to communicate city centre and high-street recovery plans to locals and visitors.

All three values, and in particular the concept of 'prioritising human experience', have been used to plan for the safe return of key target markets to the city. The narrative will help us determine who we prioritise, how we ensure access for vulnerable residents, approach to public safety, transport and the phrased reopening of our city.

3

Redesigning tourism for York.

Using the place brand values, York is showing national leadership to redesign the tourism blueprint for heritage cities, which focus on quality and depth of the visitor experience, contemporary storytelling, the relationship with local residents and the environment. The narrative ensures that our tourism offering remains broad and demonstrates how heritage assets can be used outside of the heritage market.

4

Resident engagement.

York has a strong history of resident consultation and engagement with Our Big Conversation taking place right now. The narrative helps us to ensure that local residents are as valued as visitors and have a real say in the future of their place.

5

Transport infrastructure.

Using the values shows us that pedestrianisation, one-way systems, public transport hubs, parking, schemes to encourage more cycling and walking are part of York. This supports safe recovery with a focus on being less crowded and less congested, greener, more locally dispersed with clear, accessible and digital information.

6

UNESCO City of Media Arts.

How are the CoMA capabilities and capacities enabling York's cultural sector to export its cultural offer to the world? During lockdown, streaming digital performances, concerts, exhibition tours and hosting online collections helped to bring arts and culture into the homes of local people. The York Narrative supports and encourages these initiatives and helps to communicate how York has responded, what it has learned and what will be retained once cultural attractions reopen.

7

York's role in protecting people from the impact of COVID-19.

The narrative provides a framework in which to raise the national and international profile of how York is supplying solutions, thought-leadership, research and innovations. This includes things such as The Joseph Rowntree Foundation which is publishing recommendations for government on how to protect people living in poverty from the economic impact of coronavirus, and directly funding community initiatives in York.

8

Talent attraction and retention.

Recognised as a key issue for many sectors, the York narrative helps to promote York as a great place to work for young, bright, talented people who may be looking to move away from bigger urban centres, especially as home working becomes more prevalent.