

SOUTH: The news from where you live

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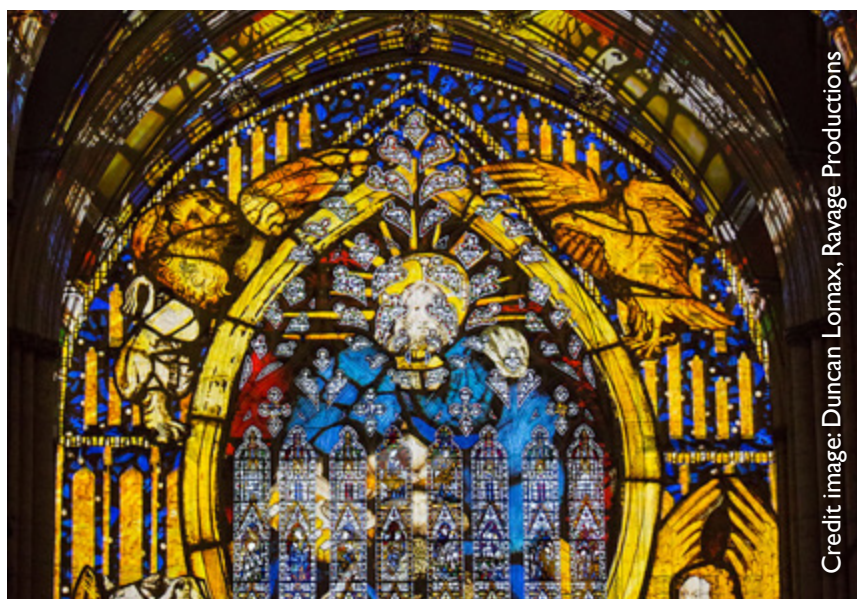
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York named top cultural hotspot in UK



Credit image: Duncan Lomax, Ravage Productions

YORK is the UK's most culturally vibrant city, according to a recent study by the European Commission.

The city has been listed first in the UK for cultural vibrancy by the commission's cultural and creative cities monitor, in the medium city category.

The monitor takes into account the number and variety of cultural venues in a city together with participation levels and the number of jobs held in the creative sector.

The latest ranking puts York 7th in the list of EU cities, with 100,000 – 250,000 inhabitants, ranking it above cities such as Bruges, Granada and Maastricht for cultural vibrancy.

Talking about the city in its report, the monitor said: "Over the past decade, York has championed investment in its cultural institutions, initiating several iconic activities such as the Illuminating York Festival and the revival of York Mystery Plays.

"Through these initiatives, York has emphasised the value of culture in the city's hospitality, education and marketing sectors and media arts are the engine of York's continued development."

In 2014, as recognition of York's commitment to combine technology and art to breathe new life into the city's heritage, York became the first UK city to be designated a UNESCO City of Media Arts.



A new chapter for York libraries

The council has agreed plans to invest £4m in York's libraries.

In October members of the Executive agreed to appoint a project manager to push forward an extensive investment programme.

The council will work with Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual (Explore) - the organisation which runs the city's libraries and explore centres on behalf of the authority - to co-locate the city's libraries with other community amenities, moving away from stand-alone library buildings. Extra facilities such as cafes, will also be added to encourage non-users to visit the centres.

Set out in the new, £34.25 million, 15 year library service contract agreed in April, we will take the lead on developing Explore Library Learning Centres in Acomb and Clifton and Explore will lead on the future development of the nine Gateway Libraries.



An amazing history

York has been named the most historical place in England with its wealth of ancient buildings, museums and gardens to explore.

The award, put together by TransPennine Express, ranks the city as the most historic city in England and the third-most in Britain.

The train company said that the city takes a podium spot thanks to its two World Heritage Sites, 43 museums and 24 city tours.

Transpennine added that the company looked at 19 cities with a population of over 100,000 people, as well as incorporating the criteria which were based on a city's listed buildings, gardens, parks, museums, scheduled monuments tours, and historic sights.

School funding approved

PLANS have been given the green light to allocate £4.4m towards the expansion of a York secondary school.

The funding for a new block to be built at Archbishop Holgate's School will help meet rising pupil numbers.

The new three-storey building would include a library and classrooms - and could be ready before the start of the next academic year.

Under the proposals, areas of the existing school building will also be refurbished and expanded to allow the number of pupils in each year group to increase from 240 to 300.