

Reaching further

# YORK



Summary 2011– 2015

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**CITY OF YORK**



# Foreword

Peter Kay, Chair of York Economic Partnership, and  
Cllr James Alexander, Leader of the Council.



Peter Kay  
Chair of York Economic  
Partnership

I am pleased to present this final version of the York Economic Strategy. Having consulted for three months with the wider business base and community, we feel we have a vision that the city can get behind and drive forward.

The strategy will be regularly reviewed but is designed to guide the economic aspirations of the city for the next four years and beyond.

The current economic climate is one of the toughest we've seen for generations. The impact of the recent recession has had an effect on us all. Above all, it has sapped our confidence. In this state, it is too easy to overlook the enormous advantages that York has and upon which it can capitalise. Recession reminds us that our advantages can be lost. Our complacency has been shaken. It is time to shape our future fortunes.

Ambition is what this strategy is all about. It says where we want to be in comparison to other cities, both nationally and internationally, and it identifies how we get there. It is a challenge and a call to businesses and residents of the city for support through concerted action - an invitation to join the partnership. This strategy will enable us to work in new ways to unlock the potential of our residents, our workforce and our businesses, and in so doing, make this city fulfil its true potential for the benefit of all. We will be doing again what York has done so well in the past – reinventing itself, whilst bringing forward in a sustainable way, both its unspoiled heritage and knowledge capital.

I welcome your thoughts and input over the coming months, and I am committed to working closely with partners to realise this ambitious plan.



Cllr James Alexander,  
Labour Leader of City of  
York Council

York is a great city with significant potential. Over this past year alone, the city has collected a seemingly endless list of accolades including being the most resilient economy in the North of England (Ekosgen, 2011), Britain's most beautiful city (Bing, 2011), to one of the most skilled cities in the country (Centre for Cities, 2011).

However, we cannot become complacent; we must rise to the challenges presented by the most significant downturn for a generation. Indeed, I hope to work with partners across the city through this strategy to build on the assets we have to become a truly internationally competitive economy, whilst ensuring the benefits of that prosperity are shared with as many of our residents as possible.

I look forward to working with partners, residents and businesses to make this city the international and enterprising city that we have the potential to be.

# Executive Summary

## Context

With the recent global recession and associated credit crisis, the international economy has become increasingly competitive – for individuals, for business and for governments around the world. Economic growth has slowed and there is less public money available.

The result is an uncertain and volatile economic climate with increasing competition between cities around the UK and globally for investment, talent and jobs.

## Challenge to the city

As the third fastest growing city in the country<sup>1</sup> and one of the most attractive places to live and visit<sup>2</sup>, York has the potential to be both a nationally competitive and an internationally leading city economy.

Over a number of years York has successfully re-invented itself from a railway and confectionery manufacturing city into an international destination and hub for science and technology, and a national centre for financial and business services. Today, the city is home to internationally competitive industry and research expertise in the biosciences, healthcare and medicine, biorenewables, the environment, IT and digital, and creative technologies. The city now supports more than 110,000 jobs and contributes £3bn to the national economy.

York offers a quality of life and place that is distinctive and unique – with unprecedented heritage assets and cosmopolitan retail and leisure facilities that attract 7 million visitors a year.

However, current forecasts show the city growing at a much lower rate than pre-recession<sup>3</sup>, and it is clear that the city is “punching below its weight” both nationally and internationally.

According to the Huggins Competitiveness Index 2010, the city ranked 13th out of 64 UK cities on measures including productivity, employment rates, business stock, high level skills and CO2 emissions. The city’s relatively poor performance on competitiveness is due to a number of factors:

- With a higher than average proportion of residents employed in the public sector (33% of total employment), the city could see unemployment rise as public budgets become increasingly constrained.
- The city has a lower than average rate of business start-ups, which means our business base is growing slower than other cities. Further, productivity of existing businesses is lower than average.
- Physical space for commercial activity remains at a premium, and sustainability in development is increasingly challenging.
- Whilst the city is aiming to reduce carbon emissions by 20% by 2020, in reality it is set to increase these emissions by 31% by 2050.
- Although the city is one of the most equitable in the country<sup>4</sup>, the city still has pockets of deprivation, with some residents unable to enjoy the benefits of its prosperity and success. Current economic conditions could make this problem grow.

These issues present a challenge to the city to “raise its game” - to solve the different problems and then to build on what we have to become an internationally leading, enterprising and competitive city.

<sup>1</sup> When measuring population growth, Centre for Cities (2012). Cities Outlook 2012.

<sup>2</sup> According to Lonely Planet ranking of top 200 places in the world to live

<sup>3</sup> Statistic from Yorkshire Forward Chief Economist Unit, August 2011, based on Regional Econometric Model data.

<sup>4</sup> Centre for Cities (2012). Cities Outlook 2012.

# A new approach

## The Strategy

This strategy has been developed by the York Economic Partnership (YEP) as a **new and different approach to unlocking the full economic potential of the city**. Unlike our previous economic development strategies, it is not for any one organisation alone to deliver but is about businesses, residents, partners and the City of York Council working together to a common vision and strategy. Everyone will need to play their part.

The strategy will work **across city boundaries where appropriate** – where action is best taken locally, it will be; where there are efficiencies or other reasons for working with neighbouring authorities, the city will work in partnership with the Leeds City Region Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and/or York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP. Where there are national and global opportunities, the city will seek to work with partners across the UK and abroad.

The strategy contributes to the Without Walls Partnership City Strategy (2008 - 25). It also contributes to the Leeds City Region LEP Plan as well as emerging York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP strategies. It sits alongside and works with the local planning policy framework and builds on the *New City Beautiful* vision developed by Professor Alan Simpson.

### The Vision

Our **simple economic vision** is for the City of York to become an **international and enterprising city**, and in time, the most competitive city of its size, not only in the UK but globally, leading to increased sustainable and inclusive growth in the overall economy and jobs.

On the way to achieving this vision, by 2015, the city will aim to become a **top 5 UK city economy that sustainably delivers both Gross Value Added (GVA) and jobs growth**, and a **top 10 European city**, as measured against comparator cities.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Top 5 UK ranking as measured by the Huggins Competitiveness Index, and top 10 European city by comparison against similar sized cities.

**In order to realise this vision, the city will achieve the following five ambitions:**

**1. A flexible and relevant workforce for the future**, by unlocking the potential of our existing and future workforce, building on residents' skills to provide fairer opportunity for employment, whilst attracting new skilled individuals to meet the needs of businesses today and in future.

**2. A growing and dynamic business base competing on a global stage**, by encouraging entrepreneurship and the growth and internationalisation of existing business, as well as attracting new businesses.

**3. A globally connected, locally integrated knowledge base**, by strengthening the city's higher and further education base, its international connectivity and its connection to the wider city economy and business base.

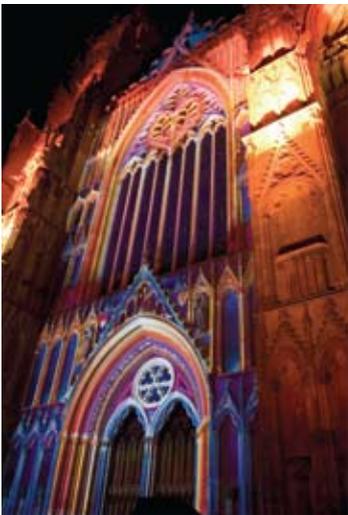
**4. A world class place for business, communities, students and visitors**, by facilitating both better use of existing developments and infrastructure and the development of new spaces where necessary.

**5. A coordinated and efficient approach to attracting and retaining investment in the city**, by building on these pillars to attract and retain investment from local, regional, national and international markets.

### Themes

Underlying themes to each of these ambitions are:

- **International** – Through the strategy's five ambitions, the city will build links with international markets.
- **Enterprising** – Achieving the strategy's ambitions will require an enterprising approach – where possible being as industrious and efficient as possible.



## Overview of Ambitions and Objectives

1. A flexible and relevant workforce	2. A competitive business base	3. An integrated knowledge base	4. A world-class place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide skills to match employers' needs</li> <li>• Connect people to jobs and opportunity</li> <li>• Expand apprenticeships and workplace training</li> <li>• Attract and better use the talents of graduates and postgraduates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the city's culture of enterprise</li> <li>• Help new and existing businesses to grow and access new markets</li> <li>• Ensure a more business-friendly council</li> <li>• Strengthen supply chains in growth sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and better connect higher and further education institutions into the city economy</li> <li>• Continue to expand the Science City York offer</li> <li>• Strengthen links between businesses and further/higher education</li> <li>• Promote innovation and creativity across sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the right environment for businesses and individuals to reach their potential</li> <li>• Enhance the city centre and its opportunities for business and leisure</li> <li>• Integrate economic priorities with the physical and infrastructure development</li> </ul>



## 5. A coordinated and efficient approach to attracting and retaining investment in the city

### Investment

- Develop a coordinated approach to building the city's share of global GVA
  - Retain and encourage indigenous investment
  - Promote the city to and follow up leads for inward investment



**Top 5 UK city**  
**Top 10 European city** (against comparator cities)

### Principles

Fundamental to achieving the economic growth to which we aspire are two principles that will underpin the delivery of this strategy, and which the city will champion in the process:

**Inclusive:** The strategy will be delivered with the aim of ensuring that all York residents have the opportunity to contribute and benefit from its success.

**Sustainable:** The strategy will be delivered with the aim of ensuring the growth we achieve is sustainable - environmentally, economically and socially.

# Deliverables

## The city will deliver the following:

### What to expect...

- A coordinated offer of skills training for city residents
- A coordinated offer of business support, including a streamlined business portal and mentoring matching service
- Designation as a UNESCO City of Media Arts
- An annual business conference
- An International Trade Fair and Leeds City Region Summit in 2012
- Improvements to the council's relationship with business
- A strategic approach to coordinating marketing the city to national and international markets
- A refreshed York Economic Partnership and Business Forum to ensure effective engagement

### By Nov 2015

### The city will have achieved the following outcomes:

- be recognised as an international and enterprising city
- made positive progress toward our goal of ranking in the top 5 of UK city economies and top 10 of European cities of similar size
- 1000 new jobs a year
- 75 new businesses starting each year
- 70% of businesses surviving three years
- 15% of businesses in the city exporting

## Who will deliver it

The strategy has been developed, and progress against its objectives will be monitored, by the YEP. However, partners from across the city – whether formally constituted or informal networks – will be crucial to delivery of the objectives and actions identified.

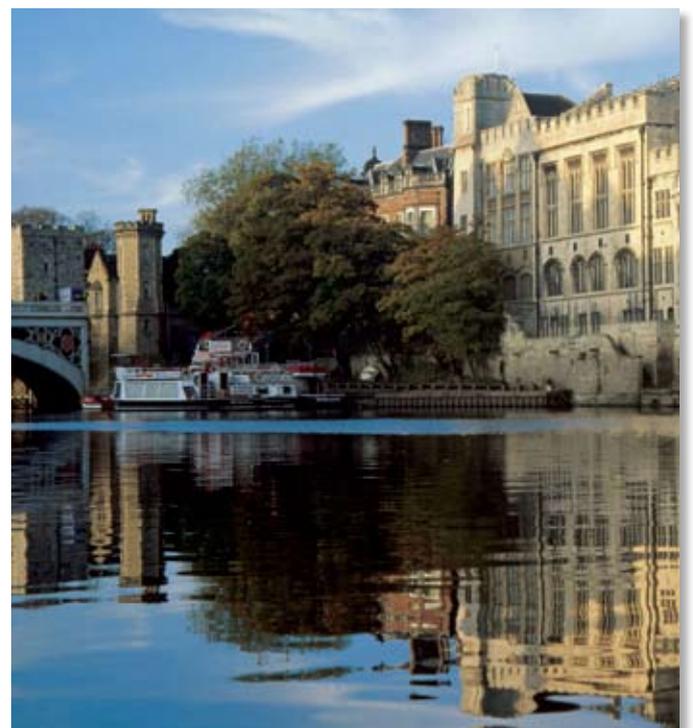
The City of York Council will manage the strategy on behalf of the YEP.

These objectives will be monitored on a bi-monthly basis and the objectives and strategy on a yearly basis by the YEP.

## Monitoring success

### We will measure success in achieving the strategy using:

- a. Statistical indicators to assess progress towards the Vision and Objectives.
- b. Tracking delivery of actions in a transparent manner against a published delivery plan that is updated quarterly.
- c. Regular engagement with partners and the wider community and business base on progress toward our ambitions, principally through the York Economic Partnership and York Business Forum, with a formal review of the Strategy on an annual basis.



# Your chance to have your say

We want to hear your views and ideas on how we can do more to achieve our ambitions.

You can have your say by contacting us in the following ways:

**By email:**

Please let us know your views at the following email address [economic.strategy@york.gov.uk](mailto:economic.strategy@york.gov.uk). If you do not have access to a computer or the internet, the following alternative methods of providing feedback are available:

**By post:**

York Economic Partnership, c/o Economic Development Unit.  
9 St. Leonards Place, York YO1 7ET.

**By attending the York Business Forum:**

Register your interest in coming along to the next York Business Forum event by contacting York Professionals who manage the Forum on behalf of the city. You can register your interest at [admin@york-professionals.co.uk](mailto:admin@york-professionals.co.uk).

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## York Economic Partnership

