

NORTH: The news from where you live

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York named top cultural hotspot in UK



Picture by 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, which looked at 19 cities with a population of over 100,000 people, gave the city a podium spot thanks to its two World Heritage Sites, 43 museums and 24 city tours.

New mental health service

Plans have been unveiled for a new mental health service to be trialled across the north of the city.

The proposals would see treatment take place through appointments in the community, rather than at hospital.

The scheme could also see a mental health centre open – which would offer access to support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

A report prepared for a City of York Council meeting says the mental health pilot would be launched in the north of York at first – in areas including Clifton, Haxby, Wigginton, Huntington, New Earswick, Rawcliffe, Heworth and Strensall.

Cycle route diverted

An existing cycle route will be diverted to accommodate an upgrade to flood defences in Clifton and Rawcliffe.

Plans from the The Environment Agency (EA) will see the bank that runs alongside the cycle path - from behind Clifton Sports Club to the allotment gardens – raised and the embankment extended through the cornfield and Rawcliffe Country Park towards the Park&Ride.

The cycle route will be diverted through Clifton Ings while the work is carried out and will run along the bridleway on the river side of Ings Dyke meaning cyclists travelling from the city centre will continue straight on instead of turning right to go over the dyke.