

Tourism Intelligence Update – February 2019

February brought a lot to York this year; with the Ice Trail moving to this month, the 35th annual JORVIK Viking Festival and the second sunniest February since 1929. These factors resulted in notable growth in city centre and Visit York Information Centre footfall, web traffic to visityork.org and across social media channels, and visits to participating attractions.

There was a significant increase in footfall to the city (8% up) resulting in 13% more visitors through the doors of the visitor information centre. This is due to the change of date of the popular event, York Ice Trail, from December to February (held on 2 February, this year). The JORVIK Viking Festival (20 to 27 February 2019) and half term activities across the city has also delivered in a significant 40% increase in visits to small attractions (25,777 in February 2019 vs 18,413 in February 2018).

However, there was a different picture for the big attractions who saw polarised results ranging from -53% to +156% and everything in between. Overall, this gave a (provisional) decrease of 12% compared to February 2018 due to some attractions operating from later in the month than last year and a comparison with very successful exhibitions held in 2018.

After the decline seen in hotel room occupancy in January, February returned to having provisional hotel room occupancy levels on a par with last year, resulting in an overall gain in hotel room nights sold of 3% (almost 2,000 additional room nights sold). There was a slight decrease in the average room rate of 3% (£98.48 vs £101.60).

The new Visit York website continues to deliver positive growth, with sessions up by a huge 101% vs February 2018. However, it is fair to take into account that the website wasn't updated while the work for the new website launch went on between January and April 2018 and the work to draw more traffic to it was put on hold. This year, the York Ice Trail drew most of the traffic to the website and all Visit York social media channels.

Summary of tourism performance indicators for February 2019:

- 70.8% of hotel rooms occupied (*provisional*)
- £98.48 average hotel room rate (*provisional*)
- 66,014 hotel room nights sold (*provisional*)
- 224,581 visits to attractions (*provisional*)
- 4,624 visits to attractions using a York Pass
- 129,161 sessions on www.visityork.org (including on the mobile site)
- 1,793 new followers across Visit York social media channels (FB, IG, TW)
- 1,074,773 impressions on social media (FB, IG, TW)
- 27,890 customers through the Visit York Information Centre

To find out any more about our Research and Insights or to discuss your specific tourism intelligence queries, contact Make It York's Senior Research and Insight Executive, Zoe Rawson
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