



A SUSTAINABLE YORK: FUNDING THE FUTURE THROUGH A TOURIST LEVY





Tom



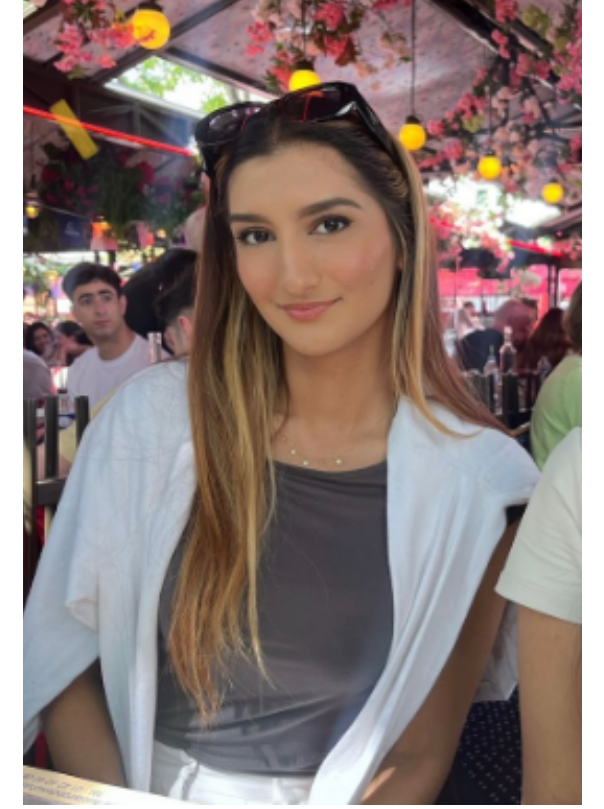
Ali



Caden



Findlay



Jasmine

TEAM INTRODUCTION





PROJECT INTRODUCTION

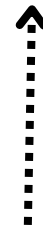
York is a city shaped by history and sustained by a thriving tourism industry, with approximately 9 million visitors annually (reference).

While this influx provides significant economic benefits, it also places increased pressure on local infrastructure, the environment, and residents' quality of life.

In this presentation, we will look at a sustainable option already in place in many cities worldwide: a tourist levy. We will draw on international case studies, primary research, and multiple analytical tools to propose how York can introduce a fair, effective, and future-focused visitor levy.



**CLIMATE EMERGENCY:
DECLARED IN 2009 - URGENT
NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE ACTION**



**TRANSPORT:
28% OF EMISSIONS - NEED FOR
BETTER PUBLIC & ACTIVE TRAVEL
OPTIONS**



**BUILDINGS:
62% OF EMISSIONS - LOW
ENERGY EFFICIENCY; MANY
HOMES NEED RETROFITTING**



YORK'S CHALLENGES

**TREE COVERAGE ONLY
10.8%:
LIMITED NATURAL CARBON
ABSORPTION (0.8%)**



**TOURISM IMPACT:
HIGH VISITOR FOOTFALL ADDS
PRESSURE ON TRANSPORT, WASTE
& PUBLIC SPACES, WITH A 43:1
RATIO OF TOURISTS TO RESIDENTS.**



**WASTE & RECYCLING:
CIRCULAR ECONOMY NOT YET FULLY
DEVELOPED, MORE ACTION NEEDED
TO LIMIT LANDFILL EMISSIONS**



**SLOW RENEWABLE UPTAKE:
BIG RELIANCE ON TRADITIONAL
ENERGY; GREEN PROJECTS NEEDED**



OUR SURVEY RESULTS

To assess public opinion on a proposed tourist levy in York, we conducted primary research by surveying key stakeholders in the city centre; this included:

- **20 tourists; to understand how different levy charges might impact their decision**
- **20 residents; to gauge public sentiment on tourism's impact and potential benefits**
- **10 business owners; to evaluate how businesses perceive the levy's potential economic benefits**



Our survey questions focused on attitudes towards three proposed levies::

- **£2 per night accomodation charge**
- **£5 daily tourist fee**
- **£12.50 ULEZ fee for drivers**

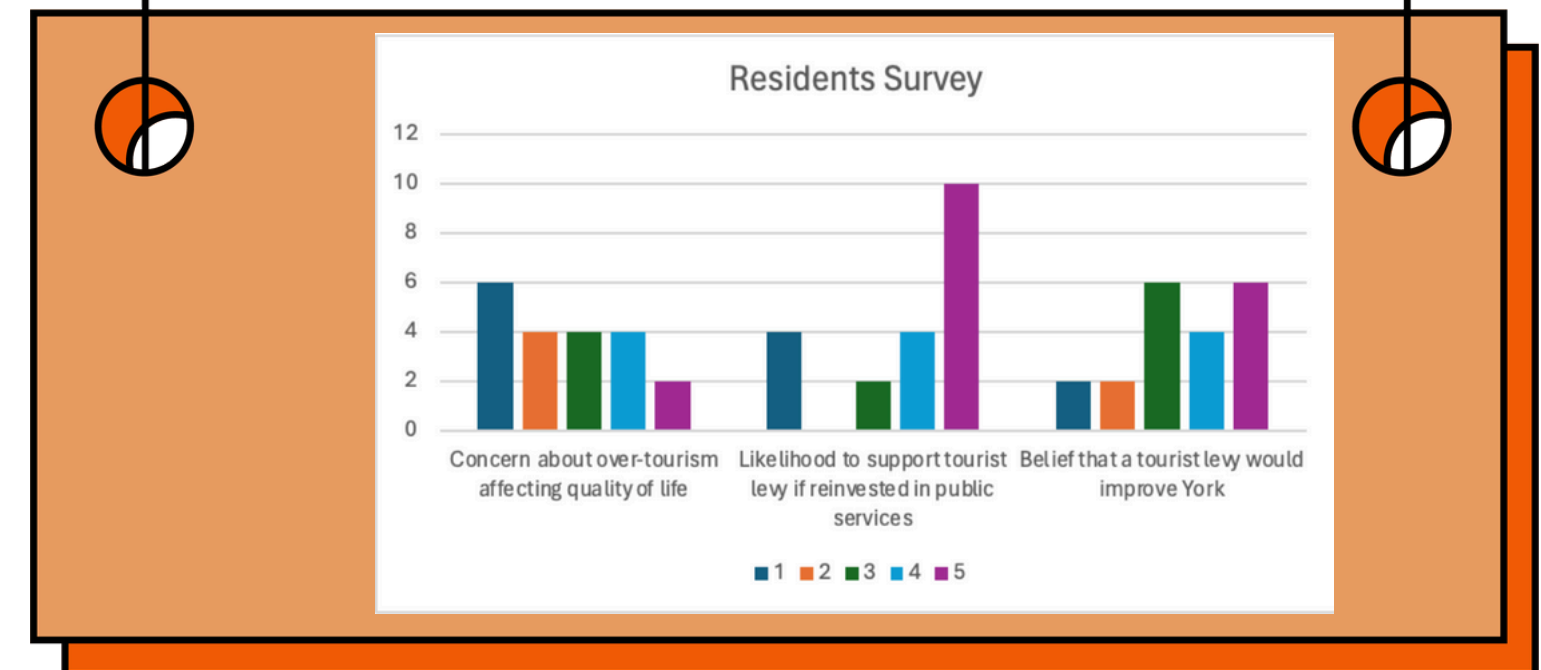
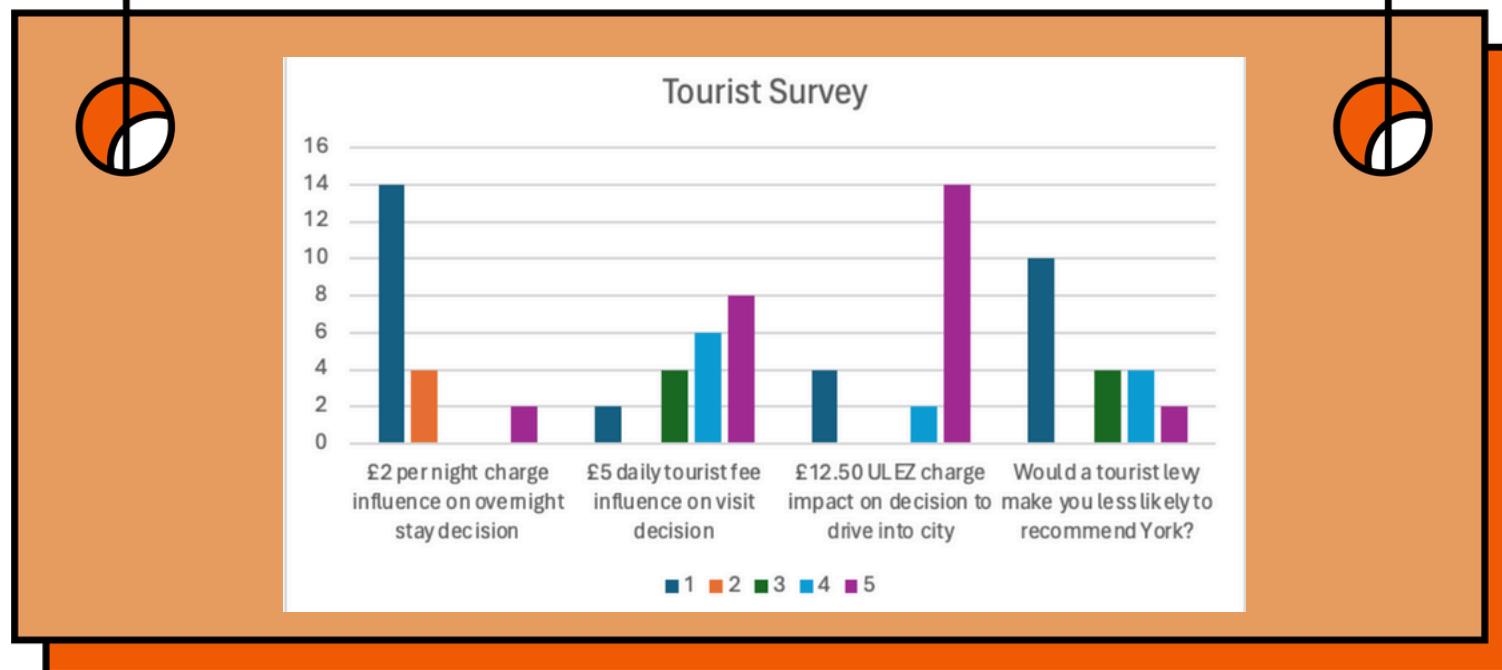
We used a 1-5 ranking system to measure impact, plus Yes/No and open-ended feedback

TOURISTS VS RESIDENTS



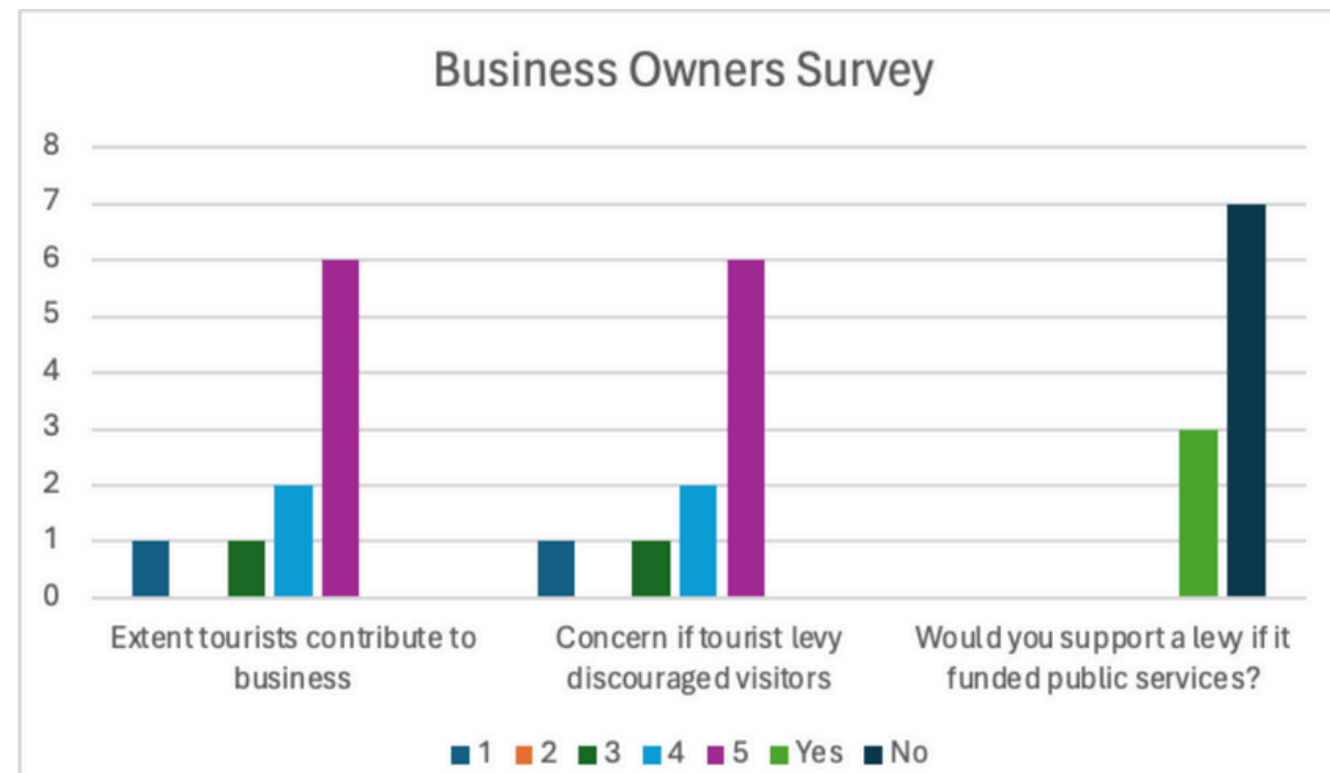
- **Minimal resistance to a £2 per night charge**
- **Mixed views on the £5 daily tourist fee - although some saw it as a deterrent**
- **ULEZ charge (£12.50) was the most impactful, with many drivers indicating it would strongly influence their decision**

- **Low concern over tourism and its effect on York's quality of life**
- **Strong support for a levy if revenues fund public services (eg. transport, waste management)**
- **Preference for re-investing funds into transport improvements and heritage conservation**



BUSINESS OWNERS

- **Tourists are essential to business revenue**
- **Many concerned a levy might deter visitors, especially the daily fee**
- **Majority opposed the levy, unless it was proven to directly benefit tourism infrastructure**





“The cost of parking is already ridiculous, why would I then pay extra for driving in?”

WHAT THE PUBLIC HAD TO SAY...



“How can we trust the council will spend the money where they say they will?”



“The car parks are rubbish!”

OPTION 1: £2 OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION FEE



AS IMPLEMENTED BY CITIES SUCH AS LONDON, BOURNEMOUTH AND MANCHESTER

✓ PROS:

- LOW IMPACT ON TOURIST DECISION
- SIMPLE TO IMPLEMENT
- PUBLIC SUPPORT



✗ CONS:

- POTENTIAL FOR NON-COMPLIANCE
- ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEXITY



EXPECTED TOURIST IMPACT:

- AVERAGE COST INCREASE OF £6.40 PER TRIP (2%)
- PREDICTED 1% DECLINE IN OVERNIGHT STAYS



FEASIBILITY: HIGH



OPTION 2: £5 DAILY TOURIST FEE



INSPIRED BY VENICE'S DAY-TRIPPER MODEL



✓ PROS:

- TARGETS YORK'S LARGEST TOURIST GROUP (DAY TRIPPERS)
- HELPS MANAGE PEAK DAY CROWDING



✗ CONS:

- OPERATIONALLY COMPLEX FOR AN OPEN-ACCESS CITY
- CURRENTLY NOT LEGAL UNDER UK LAW

EXPECTED TOURIST IMPACT:

- FOR DAY VISITORS: 11.6% COST INCREASE, LEADING TO AN 11.6% DECLINE IN TOURISTS
- FOR OVERNIGHT VISITORS: 5% COST INCREASE, LEADING TO A 2.5% DECLINE IN TOURISTS



FEASIBILITY: MEDIUM



Daily tourist entry charge

	Visit York data	Impact	Forecast
Day visitor days	7.3m	-11.6%	6.5m
Overnight visitor days	5.6m	-2.5%	5.5m
Total visitor days	12.9m	-7.6%	11.9m
Entry charge			£5.00
Collection rate			75%
Annual income			£45 m

OPTION 3: £12.50 ULEZ CHARGE



AS SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED BY LONDON

✓ PROS:

- ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS
- ENCOURAGES SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT
- REVENUE GENERATION



✗ CONS:

- LARGE DETERRENT FOR CAR BASED TOURISTS
- IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES
- NEGATIVE PERCEPTION IF POORLY COMMUNICATED



EXPECTED TOURIST IMPACT:

- FOR DAY VISITORS: 29% COST INCREASE, LEADING TO 29% DECREASE IN CAR-BASED DAY TRIPPERS
- FOR OVERNIGHT VISITORS: 3.9% INCREASE IN COST, LEADING TO A 2% DECREASE IN CAR BASED OVERNIGHT TRIPPERS

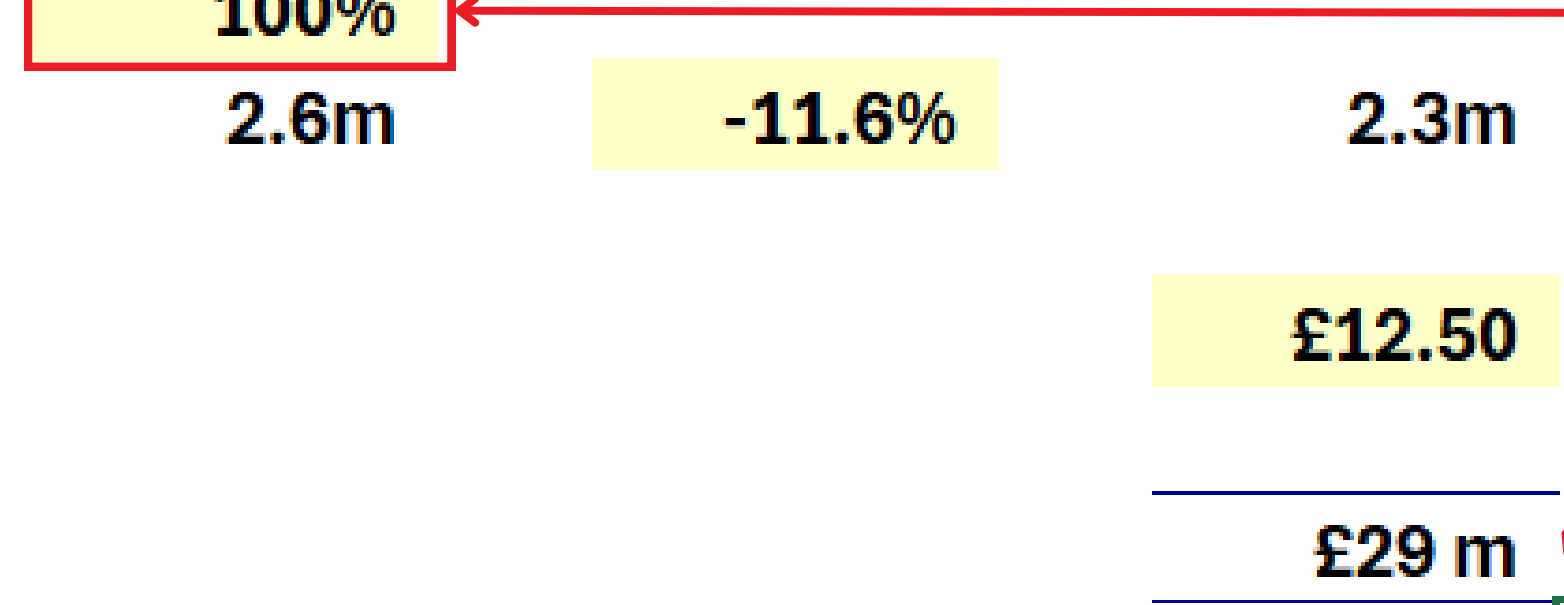


FEASIBILITY: LOW



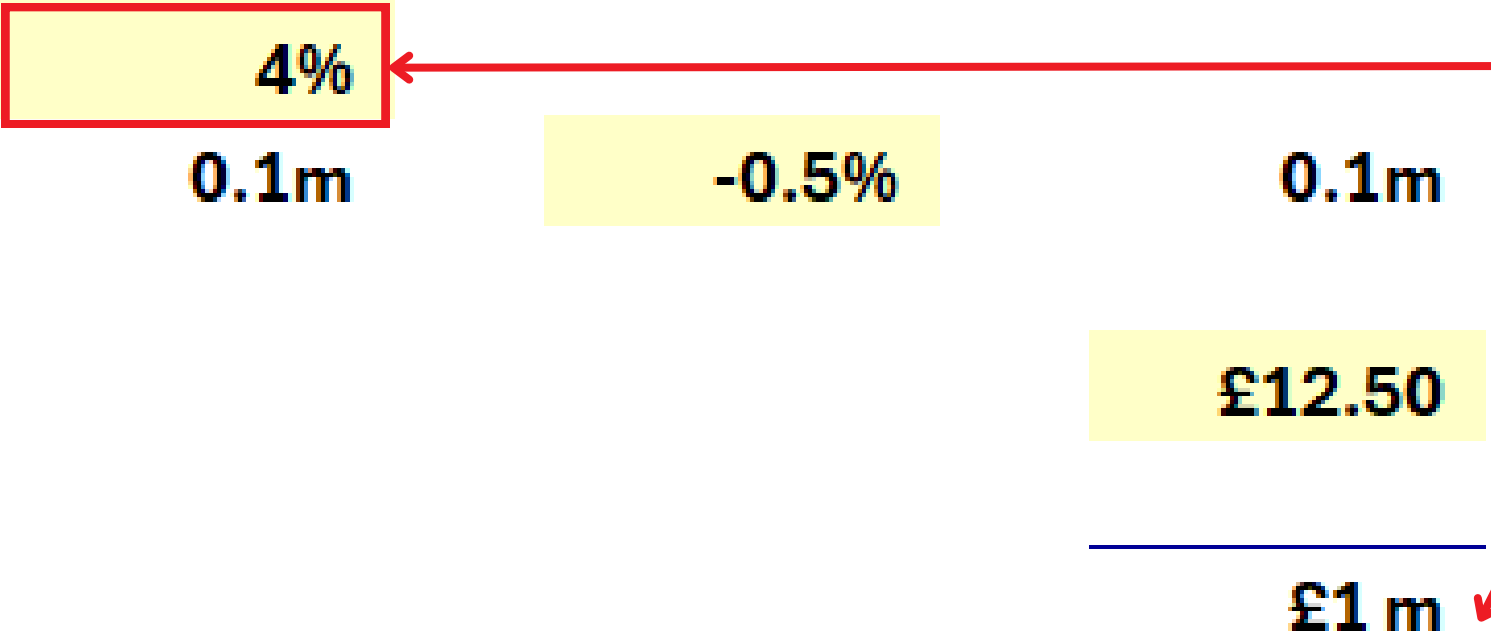
Car entry charge - Congestion

	Visit York data	Impact	Forecast
Visitor days	12.9m	-5.3%	12.2m
Visitors by car	46%		
Average no. of occupants	2.25		
% of chargeable cars	100%		
Chargeable car days	2.6m	-11.6%	2.3m
Entry charge per car			£12.50
Annual income			£29 m



Car entry charge - ULEZ

	Visit York data	Impact	Forecast
Visitor days	12.9m	-0.0%	12.9m
Visitors by car	46%		
Average no. of occupants	2.25		
% of chargeable cars	4%		
Chargeable car days	0.1m	-0.5%	0.1m
Entry charge per car			£12.50
Annual income			£1 m



OPTION 4: THE “DO NOTHING” OPTION



Consequences of inaction:

- **Overcrowding and public service strains**
- **Environmental degradation**
- **Declining quality of life for residents**
- **Economic instability**

Reccomendation for New Waste Management Ltd:

- **“Do Nothing” is NOT an option**
- **York needs to take action NOW**
- **Support a tourism levy and sustainable waste strategies**

FEASIBILITY: LOW



MODEL 1

Venice charges €5–€10 to day-trippers at key city entry points during peak dates, aiming to reduce overcrowding and support maintenance.

Pros: Captures day-trippers; discourages peak-day congestion

Cons: Not enforceable in York's open layout; no legal mechanism in England

UNFEASIBLE

MODEL 2

From 2026, **Edinburgh** will add a 5% tax to hotel bills, collected automatically through accommodation booking systems.

Pros: High revenue yield; easy for visitors to understand

Cons: Only permitted under Scottish law; not legally available to York

UNFEASIBLE

MODEL 3

Manchester's hotels apply a £1 per room charge at checkout, agreed through a Business Improvement District vote among accommodation providers.

Pros: Legally viable in England; York has an existing BID base

Cons: Needs majority business support; excludes day-trippers

FEASIBLE

MODEL 4

Siena collects fees from tourist coaches via a city permit system at coach entry and parking zones, with discounts for overnight groups.

Pros: Targets high-impact transport; legally implementable via traffic regulation

Cons: Doesn't apply to most tourists; relies on tour operator compliance

MODERATELY FEASIBLE

RECOMMENDED MODEL: VOLUNTARY BID-STYLE LEVY

York already has a city-centre BID that funds cleaning, events, and public safety. York can introduce a small, legally compliant visitor charge by expanding this or forming a dedicated Accommodation BID.

 **TOURIST BOOKS A STAY** →  **CHARGE ADDED PER NIGHT** →  **COLLECTED BY ACCOMMODATION PROVIDER** →  **POOLED BY BID** →  **REINVESTED**

Why This Works for York

Legally viable under current English law — no need for national approval
Builds on York's existing BID infrastructure and strong city-centre delivery
Locally controlled and ring-fenced — funding goes back into city
Proven and accepted model — already successful in Manchester with no visitor backlash



Potential Challenges & Mitigations

Business Buy-in: Smaller providers may worry about admin or competitiveness
→ Mitigation: Ensure consistent city-wide rollout and show ROI through shared benefits
Revenue Use Concerns: Some fear funds won't meet local priorities
→ Mitigation: BID board includes accommodation reps, ensuring funds are sector-led

OUR RECOMMENDATION



WHY OPTION 1?

- **FEASIBILITY**
- **LOW TOURIST IMPACT**
- **STEADY REVENUE**

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:



- **SMALL INDIVIDUAL COST = BIG ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**
- **REDUCES YORK'S TOURISM FOOTPRINT**
- **ALIGNS WITH SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS SEEN IN OTHER MAJOR CITIES**





Thank you!
Any Questions?

