

Circular Yorkshire Month: York and North Yorkshire LEP and the Growth Hub

The initiative

A circular economy promises a more competitive, inclusive and low-carbon economy. It is an approach that encourages us to only use what we need, cutting waste by getting the optimal use of all our resources.

The aim of Circular Yorkshire is to achieve carbon neutral status by 2034 and carbon negative by 2040. The Circular Yorkshire campaign is a crucial component of the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Local Industrial Strategy communications plan.

Circular Yorkshire Month is part of the Circular Yorkshire campaign. It brings together stakeholders in Yorkshire to accelerate a transformation towards a circular economy. Throughout November businesses, local authorities, towns and communities around Yorkshire are engaged in activities as part of Circular Yorkshire Month with the aim of creating a flourishing, sustainable and robust economy that benefits business and the environment for all people both present day and in the future.

Governance

The campaign is a part of a raft of measures under the York, North Yorkshire and East Ridings LEP's Action Plan for Vision 2030, which envisions York and North Yorkshire "thriving as a competitive, carbon neutral circular economy that benefits businesses, society and the environment". Interactive governance and policy formulation and implementation has informed the action plan, which employs a set of three levers to help create behaviour and systems change:

- Collaboration
- Demonstration
- Policy formulation

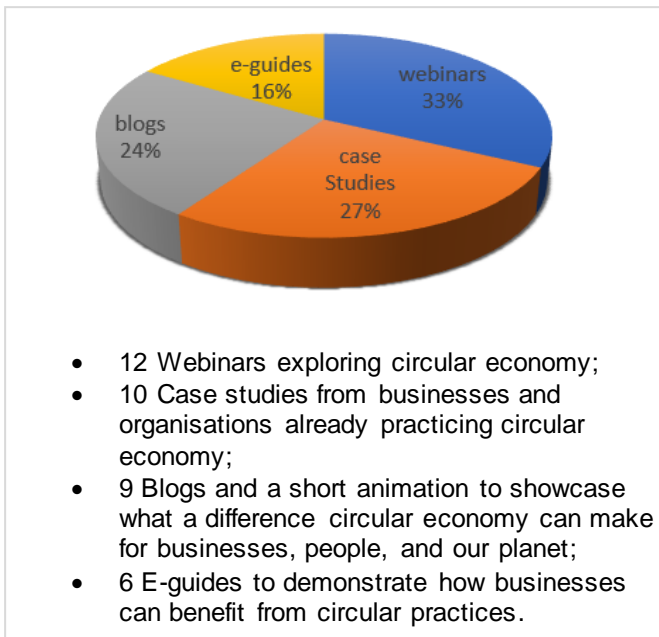
On the ground, the Circular Economy Steering Group has been providing strategic direction and deploys strategic tasks which include driving the campaigns and communicating key messages. They oversee the alignment of collaborating teams, businesses and communities and measure impact to create learning. Reporting to the LEP Business Board, the steering group initiated and supported local organisations to cultivate a series of stakeholder-led action groups based around specific challenges.



Circular Yorkshire Month

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions and lockdowns, the 2020 campaign had to be delivered online. Being online not only facilitated a wider number of events but also energised the regional network such as the Federation of Small Businesses to engage their contacts and businesses with the campaign. It became more of a joint campaign with 27 partners contributing actively. Collaboration with partners across the region promoted engagement with businesses that are innovative in the circular economy space, an invaluable resource.

Correspondingly, several digital resources were made available on the LEP website:



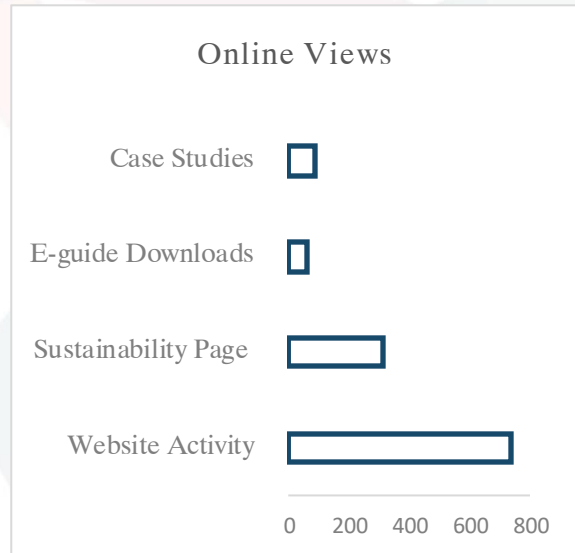
Circular Yorkshire Month first ran in November 2019, and the subsequent campaign evaluation informed the steering group that the 2020 campaign should have 'warm-up' activities in the lead up to November. It also suggested that stronger engagement & participation would be required, which was successfully followed up in 2020 with the growing partnership group.

2020 Campaign

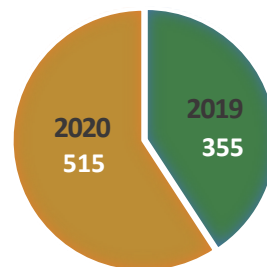
The first day of the 2020 campaign coincided with the imposition of the second national lockdown which saw many regional businesses shut down. The audience seamlessly migrated to online as the campaign gathered pace to become a Yorkshire-wide initiative as more people see circular economy as being a way to create a flourishing, resilient economy that benefits

business and the environment for all people now and in the future.

Of 20 webinars in total, 12 were held during Circular Yorkshire Month, with a masterclass on Circular Malton achieving 133 attendees, the highest number in the range.



The campaign benefited from a growing number of organisations singing up to learn how circular economy approaches can work for them and their communities.



Campaign sign-ups increased by 45% over 2019 at 515 sign ups

Circular Yorkshire Month captured the rising wave of interest in circular economy among regional actors



Key recommendations

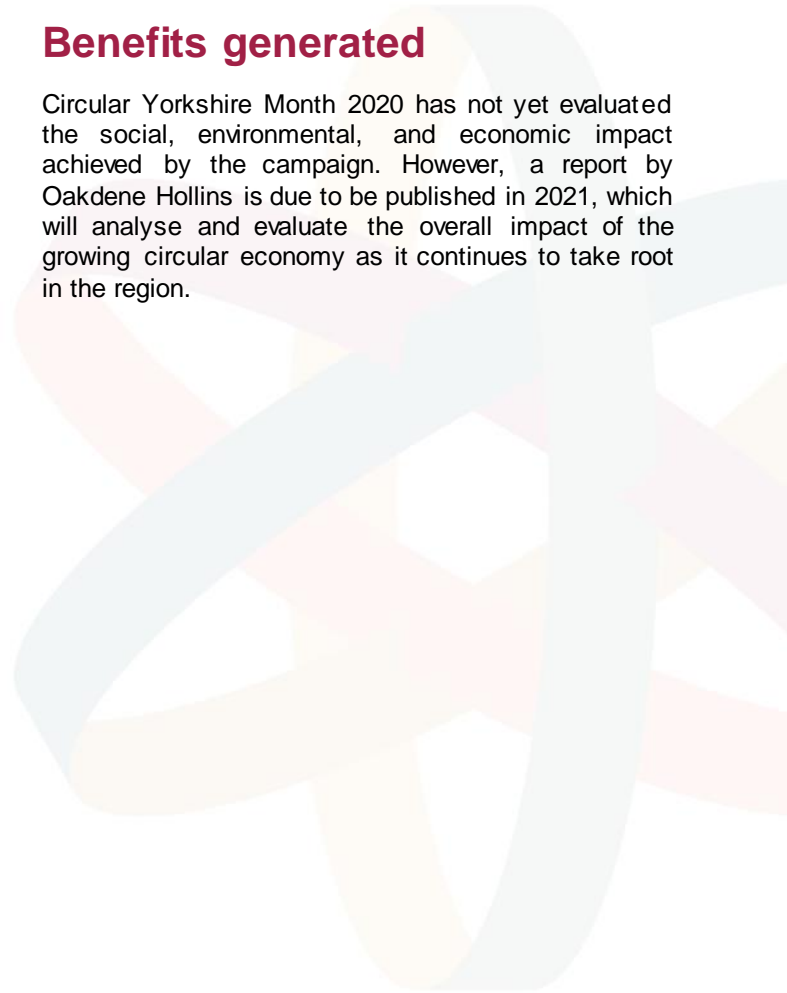
Erin Wheeler, the Circular Economy Officer for the LEP, suggests that others looking to replicate the success of Circular Yorkshire Month 2020 would benefit from: ***“Creating a realistic and inclusive plan of how to engage with businesses and communities in the circular economy, and ensure you offer concrete, actionable advice for how to take part.”***

“The circular economy can sometimes feel disconnected from everyday life and world of business but highlighting real-world case studies can help your audience realise the relevance and consider new ideas.”

She moreover recommended to: ***“Engage a wide range of stakeholders and case studies so you get a broad perspective of the different approaches needed and challenges faced. Sustainability is a complex problem and needs a holistic solution to ensure no one is left behind.”***

Benefits generated

Circular Yorkshire Month 2020 has not yet evaluated the social, environmental, and economic impact achieved by the campaign. However, a report by Oakdene Hollins is due to be published in 2021, which will analyse and evaluate the overall impact of the growing circular economy as it continues to take root in the region.



W: <https://circulareconomy.leeds.ac.uk/>

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 Yorkshire Circular Lab

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