

# Potential visitor economy impacts of The Yorkshire Icon Summary Paper June 2024

This summary paper has been prepared by Dr Nicola Palmer, Sheffield Hallam University on behalf of The Yorkshire Icon project. The paper is concerned with estimating the potential local economic impacts of The Yorkshire Icon landmark sculpture for the Sheffield City Region. The focus differs from previous economic reports provided in 2014 and 2019 due to the removal of the visitor centre aspect of the proposed development.



The proposed location of The Yorkshire Icon is such that the potential audience extends beyond the community it reflects. It has been estimated that in terms of passing traffic (and visibility), an average of 100,000 vehicles per day pass over the Tinsley viaduct carrying the M1 between Rotherham and Sheffield<sup>i</sup>. This yields a potential audience of at least 36.5 million per year for the landmark<sup>1</sup>. Approximately 30,000,000 visitors per year are estimated to visit Meadowhall shopping centre<sup>ii</sup>, Yorkshire's premier shopping destination and one of seven super-regional shopping centres in the UK. This equates to 560,000,000 visits since 1990<sup>iii</sup>). The 30,000,000 visitors to Meadowhall are not all travelling across the Tinsley Viaduct thus the potential audience for the Yorkshire Icon is greater than the existing Meadowhall visitor numbers.

The Yorkshire Icon offers a potential visitor stopping point, incentivising existing day visitors to the region to extend their visits, and encouraging visitors in transit to make a stop at its location. In the early stages of the development of the Angel of the North, approximately 416,000 visitors per year were estimated to stop on their journeys along the A1 (from the 90,000 vehicles estimated to pass each day)<sup>iv</sup>. **On this basis, at the outset, up to 462,222 visitors per year might be expected to stop to visit The Yorkshire Icon sculpture (dependent upon ease of**

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**signposting, access, and infrastructure).** We also note that drivers of visitor numbers include the location of the attraction, its nature and market position and its long-term development strategy. The creation of additional visitor numbers and spend should be understood, primarily, in terms of retention of visitor spend/ avoidance of economic leakage from the local visitor economy rather than in terms of absolute growth and additionality for the wider surrounding regions.

Based on the Tinsley Viaduct and Meadowhall numbers together with statistics based on a new combined online survey that replaces the separate Great Britain Tourism Survey and Great Britain Day Visits Survey<sup>v</sup> it is possible to provide indicative values of the potential size of the day visitor market associated with The Yorkshire Icon development. It has been reported that day visitor numbers for Sheffield totalled 14,091,000 in 2022<sup>vi</sup>. We have erred on the conservative side and calculated indicative values based on longer term annual visitor numbers for the Angel of the North (150,000) rather than the reported higher visitor numbers in its early stages of development when approximately 416,000 visitors per year were estimated to stop on their journeys along the A1 (from the 90,000 vehicles that are estimated to pass each day)<sup>iii</sup>. **We calculate the potential value to the local visitor economy associated with The Yorkshire Icon to be:**

- **£5,550,000 for domestic 3 hour+ leisure day visits (based on average spend of £37 in 2023<sup>v</sup>).**
- **£6,600,000 for domestic tourism day visits (based on average spend of £44 in 2023<sup>v</sup>).**

This compares with the reported £68.19 average economic impact per day from day visitors reported in the STEAM Tourism Economic Impacts report for Sheffield City Council<sup>vi</sup> which would produce an estimate of **£10,228,500 economic impact per annum.**

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#### References:

<sup>i</sup> Booth, 2019 see: [Major upgrade works to start soon on Tinsley Viaduct in the Don Valley \(thestar.co.uk\)](https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/local-news/major-upgrade-works-to-start-soon-on-tinsley-viaduct-in-the-don-valley)

<sup>ii</sup> Cumber, 2023 see: [Meadowhall Sheffield: How did Meadowhall shopping centre get its name? \(thestar.co.uk\)](https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/local-news/meadowhall-sheffield-how-did-meadowhall-shopping-centre-get-its-name?)

<sup>iii</sup> Meadowhall, 2023 see: [Meadowhall is Green | Meadowhall - Popular Shopping Venue in Sheffield](https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/local-news/meadowhall-is-green-meadowhall-popular-shopping-venue-in-sheffield)

<sup>iv</sup> Ellis, 2011 see: [www.gateshead.gov.uk/angel/](https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/angel/)

<sup>v</sup> Visit England, 2023 see: [Great Britain Day Visits Survey](https://www.visitengland.com/great-britain-day-visits-survey)

<sup>vi</sup> Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd., 2022 see: [STEAM 2019 Sheffield Infographic](https://www.steamtourism.co.uk/infographic)