

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Executive

8 November 2022

### Progress since publication of the report of the North Yorkshire Rural Commission

Report of the Assistant Director Policy, Partnerships & Communities

#### 1. Aim of report

- 1.1. To provide the Executive with an update on progress since the launch of the Rural Commission report in July 2021.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1. The Rural Commission was assembled by the County Council in 2019.
- 2.2. The Rural Commission was an independent Commission, comprised of eight key figures from across the region. The Very Reverend John Dobson (DL), Dean of Ripon Cathedral, chaired the Commission. It was supported administratively by the County Council and by a Reference Group, chaired by the Leader of the County Council.
- 2.3. The main aim of the Rural Commission was to investigate the challenges faced by the most rural communities across the County and to identify actions to tackle the challenges.
- 2.4. The Rural Commission report: *Rural North Yorkshire: The Way Forward*, was published on 14 July 2021 and launched at the Great Yorkshire Show.
- 2.5. The report included 57 recommendations. Twenty-six of the actions contained in the report were allocated to the County Council. The Commission concluded that the 57 actions set out in the report would need to be implemented in the coming years in order to fulfil the Commission's vision for rural North Yorkshire: *Beautiful, connected, and embracing the future*.
- 2.6. The Commission's report also recommended that the County Council should establish an Advisory Task Force, chaired by the County Council Chief Executive, to advise how to take forward the recommendations of the Rural Commission.
- 2.7. The full report of the Commission is available at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/north-yorkshire-rural-commission](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/north-yorkshire-rural-commission)

#### 3. North Yorkshire Rural Task Force

- 3.1. Following a previous Executive Report on 21 September 2021, the Rural Task Force was assembled in October 2021.
- 3.2. The Rural Task Force is a strategic forum for key partners to work together to ensure that the vision and challenges identified by the Rural Commission are considered and taken forward.

- 3.3. Membership of the Task Force includes representation from the County Council and district councils, Local Enterprise Partnership, National Park Authorities, National Farmers Union, Yorkshire Agricultural Society, Community First Yorkshire, and Askham Bryan College. There are 15 core members on the Task Force and, in line with the recommendation of the Rural Commission, the Chief Executive of the County Council chairs the Task Force. The full list of people and organisations represented on the Task Force is available at appendix 1.
- 3.4. Since it was called together, the Task Force has met four times to share progress on the actions and activities that partners are taking in order to implement the recommendations made by the Rural Commission. Partners also support, advise and encourage each other in this work, which includes a number of additional smaller meetings and offline conversations on specific issues.

#### Rural Task Force Action Plan

- 3.5. In order to manage and monitor progress, the Task Force agreed at its first meeting to adopt an action plan approach. The action plan sets out the agreed actions and activity that the Task Force will take to ensure delivery of the recommendations made by the Rural Commission. Each of the core policy areas covered in the action plan is managed by a nominated lead officer (member of the Task Force) and is underpinned by a robust performance regime.
- 3.6. Actions within the plan are broadly (but not entirely) in line with the original actions recommended by the Rural Commission. Amendments to actions mainly include some rewording to ensure effective delivery and the merger of some actions in order to arrange them in a more practical way for implementation and monitoring. The Task Force also recognised that the challenges faced by the most rural communities across the County are long standing and deep rooted.
- 3.7. The amendments made by the Task Force have resulted in ten fewer actions overall, compared with the original actions that were recommended in the Rural Commission report – down from 57 actions in the original report to 47 actions in the agreed action plan. To provide assurance to the Executive, all reworded and merged actions can be tracked back to the original recommendations made by the Rural Commission.
- 3.8. Progress with delivery of the action plan since establishment of the Task Force is good. The table below provides a summary of progress on the 47 actions contained in the action plan. Most actions are currently ongoing and have a medium-term completion date of one-to-five years.

<b>Policy Area</b>	<b>Not started</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Total</b>
Economy	0	4	0	4
Energy	0	5	0	5
Digital	0	8	0	8
Farming	0	5	2	7
Schools	0	3	1	4
Housing	0	8	0	8
Transport	0	7	0	7
Cross-cutting	0	3	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>47</b>

- 3.9. The Rural Task Force Action Plan is available at Appendix 2.

## Key Achievements

### 3.10. Rural Economy:

- To ensure the right use of investment in the region, one of the Rural Commission's main recommendations called on the national Government to agree a devolution deal as a matter of urgency. The proposed £750m devolution deal for York and North Yorkshire was announced on 1 August 2022 and is currently going through a formal public consultation process. The devolution deal is historic for the county and will liberate York and North Yorkshire to make local decisions, exercise local powers and provide more funding for major policy areas such as local transport, housing, digital connectivity, education and skills development, and economic growth and business support.
- A further feature of the Rural Commission's recommendations urged the County Council and Local Enterprise Partnership to work with a range of public and private partners to encourage future investment within the region. The county continues to exploit a number of national funding streams in order to achieve this, principally the Shared Prosperity Fund, Levelling-Up Fund and Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund. A Shared Prosperity Fund Plan has been submitted to central Government for approval and the County Council has submitted a number of Levelling-Up Fund bid applications. Led by the Local Enterprise Partnership, a new Inward Investment Prospectus for North Yorkshire is also under development and will be published by March 2023. The new Rural England Prosperity Fund is another welcome boost, which includes an additional allocation of £5.4 million to support development in rural areas in North Yorkshire.
- A major aspect of the Rural Commission's recommendations proposed that the County Council and Local Enterprise Partnership should develop a clear strategic ambition for North Yorkshire and set out the strategies and policies needed to achieve the economic vision. The Task Force is pleased to report that a new economic policy framework is under development that will set the strategic direction for achieving growth in North Yorkshire in the coming years. Major policies include the York and North Yorkshire Plan for Growth, which will be published in line with the timeframe for devolution; a new North Yorkshire Council Economic Strategy, which will be published in line with the start of the new Council; and, the new York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative, which has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by Councillors. It is worth noting that the devolution deal also includes ambitions to publish a new Natural Capital Investment Plan and new Arts, Culture and Heritage investment Plan.

### 3.11. Energy Transition:

- In line with the Rural Commission's recommendation to advocate for investment in clean energy infrastructure, Local Area Energy Plans have been developed, which set out the level of cost and investment required in North Yorkshire. As the County Council and Local Enterprise Partnership continue to press the case for rural investment, it is worth noting that the devolution deal has already secured £7m for net-zero projects.
- Consistent with the Commission's recommendation to investigate and advise on upgrades to improve energy efficiency in traditional buildings, new pilot projects in Richmondshire and Scarborough will be completed by December 2022 and will be used to inform future retrofitting activity in older buildings, to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose.
- In keeping with the Commission's recommendation to prioritise the net-zero agenda and ensure that rural areas are not left behind in this space, a new project has been

commissioned to map development of community energy initiatives across the county and engage more closely with people and organisations on these agendas.

### 3.12. Digital Connectivity:

- In line with the Commission's recommendation to see more central Government investment in digital technologies in North Yorkshire, the Government's Project Gigabit continues to be rolled out across the country and in North Yorkshire. The County Council continues to work with a range of partners to compete for Government funding from Project Gigabit and the digital element of the new devolution deal will open up new opportunities in this area.
- With the intention to install digital technology in the hardest-to-reach rural places and in step with the Commission's recommendation that the County Council should work more closely with alternative, entrepreneurial providers, the Task Force is pleased to report that NYnet continues to work as a gateway for a number of alternative suppliers. This includes confirmed delivery from Zzoomm (Thirsk, Northallerton, Easingwold, Sherburn, and Stokesley), Swish Fibre (Sherburn), Full Fibre (Boroughbridge), Grain Fibre (Scarborough) and City Fibre (Harrogate).
- In keeping with the Commission's recommendation to promote digital inclusion and develop the skills agenda in this space, a new Digital Inclusion Group has been established to look at digital skills development in North Yorkshire, as the county's libraries have now resumed their digital support offer, which already provides a physical route for those with skills and connectivity. Also in keeping with the Commission's recommendation to utilise community facilities, such as village halls, to ensure rural communities are digitally connected and to promote rural inclusion, Community First Yorkshire have submitted a recent bid to equip a number of village halls with connectivity and technology equipment, in order to test how these services can be installed in future.

### 3.13. Farming and Land Management:

- In response to the Rural Commission's recommendations on the establishment of a new Farm Business Task Force and the establishment of Producer Groups, the Rural Task Force is pleased to report that much of the activity in these areas is already in progress and is supported and coordinated by the Yorkshire Agricultural Society and National Farmers Union. Moving forward, much of the activity related to these actions will be managed by Grow Yorkshire.
- In step with the Rural Commission's recommendations on business mentoring and support for farm businesses, new funding from Defra has been made available to support business resilience activity within the sector. This funding will be used to build local understanding of the farming industry and identify what types of support will be most useful for farm businesses in the future.
- In relation to the recommendation that Defra must have a more integrated approach to farming, land management and the environment, this work is ongoing, but clearly, this is a national piece of work relating to future environmental and agricultural policy for England. The Task Force and its partners will continue to promote this recommendation with Defra.

### 3.14. Rural Schools, Education and Training:

- In support of the Commission's recommendation that the Department for Education (DfE) must revise its National Funding Formula to provide a fairer allocation of funding for rural schools, the County Council has issued a number of letters and briefings to the DfE and MPs to press the case for increased funding. The Task Force is pleased to

report that the County Council has received a positive response on this issue from Government and a proposed increase in funding for super sparse schools is now part of a Government consultation process.

- In keeping with the Commission's proposition that the County Council should work with partners to promote and support effective careers guidance in schools, the Task Force is pleased to report on the regular engagement between the County Council and Careers Hubs, schools and colleges, which is now part of business as usual. It is worth noting the positive remarks from Ofsted since the requirement to comment on this issue in inspection reports.
- In step with the Commission's recommendation that the County Council should lead on a review of post-16 provision in North Yorkshire, analysis of the latest data is now underway which includes interrogation of the Council's Growing Up in North Yorkshire Survey and latest performance data. A dedicated resource will be assigned to undertake other aspects of the review, in relation to student choice and access, in due course. It is worth noting that the new devolution deal also includes new opportunities in this area.

### 3.15. Rural Housing:

- In response to the Rural Commission's recommendation that the County Council should be enabled to have the power to levy a charge on second homes, the Task Force is pleased to report that a recent decision was made by the Council's Executive to double the level of council tax paid by people with a second home in the county. This important measure recognises the pressure that local communities are under in certain parts of the county from large numbers of second homes and the difficulties for local residents to find affordable housing. The policy will likely raise much needed funding to help address the issue of affordable housing and may act as a deterrent.
- In line with the Commission's recommendation to build new affordable houses in every parish across the county over the next 10 years, the North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authorities have agreed housing objectives which are very much in step with this action, including small housing developments in very small villages over the next ten years. It is worth noting that North Yorkshire Council's new Housing Strategy will also cover this objective from April 2023 and will include actions to support essential and low paid workers to access affordable housing in deeply rural places.
- In relation to the Rural Commission's recommendation that the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) should work with the local planning authorities to encourage landowners to increase housing provision in estate villages, the Task Force is pleased to report that a planned event with estates from across North Yorkshire will take place on 17 November. The networking event has been organised by the Task Force and will take place at the Hovingham Estate. In keeping with the Commission's recommendation, examples of good practice will be shared and delegates will explore opportunities to increase housing provision in estate villages.

### 3.16. Rural Transport:

- In relation to the Rural Commission's recommendation on the installation of fast-charging infrastructure for electric vehicles, the Task Force is very pleased to report that a recent bid to the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund by the County Council's Highways and Transportation Service was successful. The service has been awarded £2 million which will go towards the installation of 70 new charging points in grid constrained rural areas across the county. In keeping with the Commission's recommendation, this piece of work will include an element of community car sharing and community ownership.

- In line with the Commission’s recommendation that the County Council should review the need for car parking spaces at train stations and invest in expanding provision where needed, the Council continues to work with the rail industry and landowners to explore opportunities where viable land could come forward for car parking in the future. Thirsk Station has recently increased its car park size and a landowner close by is looking to develop a private car park. There are also plans to increase car parking at Cattal, Scarborough, Selby and Seamer rail stations.
- In step with the Commission’s recommendation that the County Council should take up the opportunity to provide more innovative passenger transport, YORbus was successfully piloted and continues to operate across parts of the county. It is worth noting that as part of its settlement at the Spending Review, Defra has received funding to replace EU funding which allowed local communities to respond imaginatively to local needs around transport. Defra will set out over the coming months how the additional funding for rural areas can be used to deliver small-scale capital grants for businesses as well as rural community infrastructure.

### Challenge Sessions & External Validation

- 3.17. One key feature of the work of the Task Force has been a programme of external validation sessions to provide the appropriate level of external challenge and endorsement, in addition to the internal challenge provided by the Task Force. As part of the external challenge process, it was proposed that the Task Force should also engage with members of the Rural Commission.
- 3.18. Three challenge sessions took place in July 2022: Rural Housing (6 July); Rural Transport (12 July); Rural Schools, Education & Skills (20 July).
- 3.19. Challenge sessions were tailored to provide external stakeholders with a review of the actions and progress from Task Force representatives in key policy areas and provided plenty of opportunity for discussion and debate between all participants. Each challenge session included at least one member of the Rural Commission and between three and five other external stakeholders.
- 3.20. Outcomes from the challenge sessions have been positive and feedback was constructive. External partners stated that the actions and activities of the Task Force generally felt appropriate and suitable and were on track to be delivered effectively. For example, for rural transport, one participant stated, *“A really interesting session, I enjoyed hearing about the progress, which is considerable.”*
- 3.21. Stakeholders helpfully suggested a number of additional activities to support delivery of some of the recommendations in a more effective way - for example, for rural housing, the planned networking seminar with estates from across North Yorkshire on 17 November.
- 3.22. More sessions have been scheduled for the autumn and the work being undertaken by the Rural Task Force will be considered at a meeting of the Ripon Cathedral Rural Forum on 18 November.

## **4. Discussion**

- 4.1. Since the publication of the Rural Commission Report, the world looks like a very different place. The fast-changing world context does have an effect on the countryside economy and the communities situated in deeply rural places as much as in the towns and cities across the county.



- 4.2. The knock-on effects of the war in Ukraine continue to influence the rural economy in North Yorkshire, while the full implications of the UK's departure from the EU is still not clear as the country struggles to reset itself after the pandemic. Key Government strategies, such as support to farmers, taxation and public expenditure, are also under review.
- 4.3. The achievements and ongoing work of the Task Force take place against a challenging national backdrop of economic recession, rising prices (especially on food and fuel) and the continued energy crisis. New research on the rural cost of living highlights the lived reality of rising prices and the squeeze on household budgets on the day-to-day lives of thousands of ordinary families but especially the vulnerable. Rural residents working in rural economies typically earn significantly less compared with urban areas and face higher costs for housing, heating, food, transport and energy. Rural house prices are on average 39% higher than urban house prices (excluding London) and can be up to 55% higher in smaller rural villages and hamlets. Rural households spend around £114 per week on transport costs, compared with £76 for urban households, whilst the average estimated energy costs for predominantly rural dwellings is approximately 10% higher. Weekly food shopping for rural households is also 2% higher on average at £66 per week and is higher still for rural households where access to food shops or digital access to online shopping is an issue (Kovia Consulting, 2022).
- 4.4. Despite the higher costs of service provision and greater need for public services in rural places, current Government calculations on national funding allocations results in lower levels of public funding for rural areas. Rural areas currently receive 37% less from the national Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) grant, compared to urban areas (equivalent to £105 per head) and have less to spend on discretionary services, such as transport, which often provide a lifeline for rural communities (Rural Services Network, 2022). The County Council manages its own finances very well but the additional expenditure on energy, adult social care and increases in staff pay will cost the County Council an additional £51 million this financial year.
- 4.5. The Government's recent review of the Green Book process was the latest missed opportunity to level out the rural imbalance with proportionate funding for capital schemes in rural areas. Under this process, rural areas currently receive 44% less from Government capital funding, compared to urban areas (equivalent to £133 per head) (Munro and Pragnell, 2021). It also contradicts the national commitment to tackle regional inequality and level up the country.
- 4.6. Despite the changing and challenging context, the Task Force has responded successfully and effectively to the challenges laid down by the Commission and has built momentum to tackle the range of issues in deeply rural areas.
- 4.7. Moving forward, it is essential that the new North Yorkshire Council picks up and embeds this approach within its own organisational structures, strategy and delivery mechanisms and plays an enhanced role in tackling the long-standing and deep-rooted challenges faced by the most rural communities across the County.
- 4.8. It is also important that the new North Yorkshire Council continues to utilise the collective power of organisations within the County to engage more effectively with the Government and ensure that rural issues are at the forefront of national policy development.
- 4.9. It is anticipated that the membership and format of the Task Force will change over the next year, following the formation of North Yorkshire Council and the consequential restructuring of many partnerships in the County, for example by it becoming an integral part of a revised Chief Executives Group, which brings together chief executives of local public sector organisations and key representatives of other sectors.

- 4.10. The ongoing work still needed to tackle these types of issues also requires the Government to recognise the distinctive challenges experienced by rural communities and place the rural dimension and rural problems at the heart of the national policy framework.
- 4.11. The challenges faced by rural communities in North Yorkshire cannot be separated out from the national context and the development and direction of national policy. Government recognition and intervention is critical across all policy areas covered in this work programme. This ranges from electric vehicle charging infrastructure, to digital connectivity and digital inclusion, to school funding allocations, to support for farmers, and so on. In all these instances and more, increased funding, additional support and resource allocation and a genuine commitment to fairness and equality in rural areas are critical if the Government is serious about realising its own ambitions to level up the country. In the vein of the Task Force, the Government will need to actively support, lean in and put its own shoulder to the wheel.

## **5. Financial implications**

- 5.1. The action plan is a high-level strategic document that sets out the direction of travel. As such, it does not contain detailed information about specific policy changes or service delivery. The financial implications at specific policy or service delivery level has been and/or will be impact assessed as these are developed.

## **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1. The action plan is a high-level strategic document that sets out the direction of travel. As such, it does not contain detailed information about specific policy changes or service delivery. The legal implications at specific policy or service delivery level has been and/or will be impact assessed as these are developed.

## **7. Climate change implications**

- 7.1. The action plan is a high-level strategic document that sets out the direction of travel. As such, it does not contain detailed information about specific policy changes or service delivery. The climate change implications at specific policy or service delivery level has been and/or will be impact assessed as these are developed. The action plan aims to have a positive impact on the environment, to reduce carbon emissions and to increase the resilience of the County to climate change.

## **8. Equalities implications**

- 8.1. The action plan is a high-level strategic document that sets out the direction of travel. As such, it does not contain detailed information about specific policy changes or service delivery. The equalities implications at specific policy or service delivery level has been and/or will be impact assessed as these are developed. The action plan aims to have a positive impact for people who live in the most rural parts of the County by increasing access to employment, infrastructure, housing, education and other services.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 The Executive are asked to:
- i. Receive and consider the report on progress since publication of the report of the North Yorkshire Rural Commission in July 2021.



- ii. Integrate the challenges set out by the Rural Commission and the work undertaken by the Rural Task Force into the strategy and delivery of North Yorkshire Council.
- iii. Lobby the Government again on the need for it to recognise the distinctive challenges experienced by rural communities and place the rural dimension and rural problems at the heart of the national policy framework. In particular by the provision of fairer funding for super-sparse schools, more support for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, more support for the farming sector and additional resources to achieve digital inclusion in rural communities.

Neil Irving  
Assistant Director - Policy, Partnerships and Communities.  
28 October 2022

Author: Anthony Ruddy, Senior Strategy Officer - Policy, Partnerships and Communities.

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Membership of Rural Task Force.  
Appendix 2: Rural Task Force Action Plan.

**Background papers relied upon in the preparation of this report:**

- Kovia Consulting (2022) *Rural Cost of Living: Overview of key differences in cost of living between rural and urban locations*, July 2022. [New report shows devastating triple blow pushes rural communities into a cost-of-living emergency - Rural Services Network \(rsnonline.org.uk\)](https://rsnonline.org.uk/news/new-report-shows-devastating-triple-blow-pushes-rural-communities-into-a-cost-of-living-emergency)
- Munro, R. and Pragnell, M. (2021) *Towards a Greener Green Book Process: Delivering the promise of proportionate public funding for rural communities*, February, 2021, Pragmatix Advisory. [Towards a greener Green Book process \(cpre.org.uk\)](https://cpre.org.uk/towards-a-greener-green-book-process)
- Rural Commission (2021) *Rural Commission Report: Rural North Yorkshire: The Way Forward*, July 2021. [www.northyorks.gov.uk/north-yorkshire-rural-commission](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/north-yorkshire-rural-commission)
- Rural Services Network (2022) *Reducing Rural Inequalities: Impact of current approach on rural communities*, September 2022. [Rural Fair Funding Campaign - Rural Services Network \(rsnonline.org.uk\)](https://rsnonline.org.uk/news/rural-fair-funding-campaign)

## Membership of Rural Task Force

### Membership

Adam Bedford	National Farmers Union
Jane Colthup	Community First Yorkshire
James Farrar	York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership
Richard Flinton (Chair)	North Yorkshire County Council
Chris France	North York Moors National Park Authority
Mike Greene	Scarborough Borough Council
Dr Justin Ives	Hambleton District Council
Robert Ling	North Yorkshire County Council
Barrie Mason	North Yorkshire County Council
Amanda Newbold	North Yorkshire County Council
Allister Nixon	Yorkshire Agricultural Society
Liz Small	North Yorkshire County Council
Gary Smith	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
David Smurthwaite	Craven District Council
Tim Whitaker	Askham Bryan College

### Supporting

Vanessa Glover	North Yorkshire County Council
Neil Irving	North Yorkshire County Council
Paul Jeeves	North Yorkshire County Council
Rachel Linehan	Defra (observer)
Anthony Ruddy	North Yorkshire County Council

## Rural Task Force Action Plan

Policy Theme: Rural Economy | Lead Officer: James Farrar (LEP)

Key Structure / Delivery Mechanism: North Yorkshire Unitary Growth Plan

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
1	Devolution is critical to ensuring the right use of investment in the region and the Commission calls on the Government to agree a deal as a matter of urgency.	Ongoing	Medium term	National Government
2	The North Yorkshire Council must work with both public and private partners to encourage investment in the region.	Ongoing	Long term	NYC & YNYLEP
3	The North Yorkshire Council and LEP must ensure ambitious economic plans and strategies which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a clear strategic ambition for the region</li> <li>• Realise the potential of our natural capital in food, farming, forestry and renewable energy</li> <li>• Develop place plans for each of our market towns; and</li> <li>• Promote a carefully managed, sustainable tourism industry.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Medium term	NYC & YNYLEP
4	The Commission believes that greater business support is needed for small to medium enterprises. Mentoring, coaching, and skills, from accessing finance to marketing, are required. The LEP Business Support function must ensure support is available for rural and remote rural areas, working closely with local networks and partners.	Ongoing	Medium term	YNYLEP

Policy Theme: Energy Transition | Lead Officer: James Farrar (LEP)  
 Key Structure / Delivery Mechanism: YNYLEP Carbon Abatement Pathway

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
5	The LEP and North Yorkshire County Council must advocate for investment in rural electricity infrastructure to ensure new clean energy technology is a viable commercial enterprise for the County. Government investment must be measured and influenced. LEP & NYC to lobby for rural investment.	Ongoing	Medium term	YNYLEP / NYCC / NYC
6	The LEP and Councils must continue to develop the 'Routemap to Carbon Negative' with supporting integrated implementation plans.	Ongoing	Medium term	YNYLEP
7	The North Yorkshire Council and National Park Authorities should provide advice on measures and upgrades to buildings that can be undertaken to increase energy efficiency of traditional buildings to ensure a 'fit-for-purpose' future within the North Yorkshire Council area.	Ongoing	Long term	NYC / NPAs
8	North Yorkshire's Investment Plan for Shared Prosperity Funding must prioritise net zero ensuring rural areas are not left behind, whilst leveraging new investment to seed-fund new business opportunities and research behaviour change.	Ongoing	Medium term	YNYLEP / NYCC / NYC
9	The Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission will ensure the specific rural challenges and opportunities are fully reflected through invited representation on (1) the net zero working group and (2) the land and nature panel.	Ongoing	Medium term	YHCCC

Policy Theme: Digital Connectivity | Lead Officer: Robert Ling (NYCC)  
 Key Structure / Delivery Mechanism: Digital Strategy Group

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
10	North Yorkshire County Council's Digital Advisory Group should consider and agree national guidance and best practice (produced by DCMS and national park authorities) for integrating new digital infrastructure into protected landscapes.	Ongoing	Short term	NYCC / NPAs / AONBs
11	National government and Ofcom must understand digital connectivity as a human right. This is as much a human right for people in rural and remote areas as it is in urban areas. The Commission advocates that the Government begin by connecting its most remote citizens to avoid the typical lagging-behind model.	Ongoing	Long term	Ofcom
12	DCMS must place a higher priority on digital inclusion in rural communities and set out a strategic approach to address the issue for North Yorkshire and other sparsely populated areas. The Shared Prosperity Fund could be used as a vehicle to address this issue.	Ongoing	Long term	DCMS
13	The County Council must follow best practice and work with alternative providers that are committed to connecting remote and rural areas. The County Council must follow best practice and work with smaller, entrepreneurial providers, including those based locally within the County, to install digital technology in the hardest-to-reach rural places. Community facilities must be fully utilised and financially supported to promote digital inclusion.	Ongoing	Long term	NYCC
14	The County Council must work with village hall trustees and faith communities to develop a strategy to invest in and use their buildings to ensure remote rural communities are connected.	Ongoing	Long term	NYCC
15	The County Council must, as planned, lead on digital education, digital champions and ensure rural and remote North Yorkshire understands the benefits of superfast broadband. The County Council must ensure that a comprehensive training programme is delivered to ensure residents of all ages in rural and remote areas have the necessary skills to maximise the benefit of digital connectivity.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC
16	The Council must encourage businesses and industry to apply for the funding Project Gigabit has made available to encourage industry to use new wireless equipment, low orbit satellites or high-altitude platforms to connect remote communities.	Ongoing	Long term	NYCC
17	The Commission would like to see central government continue the investment into North Yorkshire utilising the capabilities within the wider partnership to run exciting and innovative digital trials.	Ongoing	Long term	National Government

Policy Theme: Farming & Land Management | Lead Officer(s): Allister Nixon (YAS), Adam Bedford (NFU)  
 Key Structure / Delivery Mechanism: Grow Yorkshire

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
18	Defra must have a more integrated approach to farming, land management and the environment, looking at the whole holding rather than just parts of it. It must recognise that farming and land management practices are central to achieving environmental targets. Working with Nature, rather than substituting for it, will deliver the most profitable farms in conjunction with the most sustainable Nature. NFU will continue to lobby Defra on these issues.	Ongoing	Long term	Defra
19	The County Council, in conjunction with the Yorkshire Agricultural Society, should facilitate a new Farm Business Task Force to direct the culture change needed for the farming future and to ensure changed business practice meets environmental targets. This should liaise closely with the national Agricultural Productivity Task Force.	Completed	Short term	NYCC / YAS
20	Defra must provide free business coaching and mentoring support to help farm businesses survive and restructure, whilst ensuring support is in place to help farmers exit the industry with dignity.	Completed	Short term	Defra
21	Defra business mentoring must be targeted at the farm family rather than a 'farmer' to achieve culture change.	Ongoing	Medium term	Defra
22	Land based colleges must review how they teach the curriculum and assess what skills might be needed in future.	Ongoing	Medium term	Land based colleges
23	The Yorkshire Agricultural Society must continue to lead by example and help establish producer groups that focus on the whole food cycle, its relationship to Natural Capital and not just an economies-of-scale production approach.	Ongoing	Short term	YAS
24	Defra, the Forestry Commission, landowners, interest groups and the public must work together to ensure North Yorkshire's trees, woodlands and forests meet the evolving needs and requirements of the region.	Ongoing	Long term	Defra / Forestry Commission



Policy Theme: Rural Schools, Education & Training | Lead Officer: Amanda Newbold (NYCC)  
 Key Structure / Delivery Mechanism: Economic Development Work-stream

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
25	The Commission believes that the Department for Education (DfE) must revise its National Funding Formula to ensure increased support for rural super-sparse secondary schools. The Commission fully endorses the County Council's request to consider providing a weighting of 3 to the sparsity funding level of small, rural, "super-sparse" secondary schools where the average sparsity road distance is greater than 9 miles (3 times the standard 3 miles distance). This would provide the necessary funding to ensure the future of these secondary schools. NYCC will submit another letter to the DfE before the end of the financial year - March 2022	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC
26	The County Council must work with ESFA and providers to lead a review of Post 16 provision in the county, ensuring a greater understanding of areas where there is limited choice for academic and technical provision and enabling providers to reflect and adjust their offers where possible. NYCC will lobby ESFA to support schools, colleges and training providers to promote choice of provision.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC / ESFA / Post 16 providers
27	NYCC should encourage schools and colleges to gain formal accreditation of their careers programmes. NYCC must work alongside the LEP, CEC and Careers Hub to promote and support effective careers guidance in schools.	Now integrated into normal business	Medium term	NYCC / Schools and colleges / CEC / YNYLEP
28	NYCC should lobby for fairer funding, new investment and opportunities that ensure greater access to suitable early years, school and Post 16 offer for all children and young people in NY, particularly those living in rural areas.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC

Policy Theme: Rural Housing | Lead Officer: Justin Ives (HDC)

Key Structure / Delivery Mechanism: Housing Strategy Board & LGR Housing Workstream (supported by NPAs and District Councils)

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
29	The formula for designating affordable housing must be revised by The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities so that it does not reflect market value in an area but rather average income in the area.	Ongoing	Short term	DLUHC
30	The local authority should be enabled to have the power to levy a charge on second homes which must stay in the County and be used to further affordable housing.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYC / DCs
31	To deliver 4,759 quality new homes per year, of which 1,326 each year will be affordable; with delivery spread across as many parishes as possible whilst targeting parishes with the most acute housing need.	Ongoing	Long term	Local Planning Authorities
32	A scheme must be developed which prioritises the access of essential and low-paid workers to affordable homes in rural and remote areas.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC / DCs
33	North Yorkshire Council will work with our partners to maximise and promote affordable housing products.	Ongoing	Long term	DCs / NPAs
34	The Country Land and Business Association (CLA) should work with the local planning authorities to encourage landowners to increase housing provision in estate villages. Examples of good practice must be shared.	Ongoing	Long term	CLA
35	Local authorities must work with estate owners to establish 10/20/50 year plans for estate villages.	Ongoing	Long term	CLA / NYCC / DCs / NPAs
36	The North Yorkshire Council will promote and deliver (directly and indirectly) energy efficiency advice and initiatives to improve energy efficiency in the housing stock and reduce fuel poverty.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC / DCs

Policy Theme: Rural Transport | Lead Officer: Barrie Mason (NYCC)  
 Key Structure / Delivery Mechanism: Rural Task Force Transport Group

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
37	The Commission believes that Defra must make it clear what rural fund will replace the loss of the EU Rural Development Programme funding which allowed local communities to respond imaginatively to local needs around transport.	Ongoing	Short term	Defra – reallocated to DfT
38	Until the devolved authority is established, the County Council must have the power to use Shared Prosperity Funds and Levelling Up Funds to design relevant schemes for rural and remote areas in North Yorkshire.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC / DCs
39	The Commission believes that the County Council should take up the opportunity to provide more innovative passenger transport such as demand responsive transport across the county, as outlined in the Government’s national bus strategy, Bus Back Better, opening up the travel choice options of rural and remote areas. The Bus Back Better funding must invest in these services and the technology required to support them, together with innovative improvements to promoting these and other services.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC
40	The Commission supports the installation of fast charging infrastructure for electric vehicles, with financial support to buy a number of electric vehicles which can be made available for community rental. The Levelling Up/ Shared Prosperity Fund must provide some seed funding to allow the raising of matched funding from business and industry.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC
41	The Commission recommends that the County Council reviews the need for car parking spaces at train stations and invests in expanding provision where needed.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC
42	The Commission expects large rural employers to work collaboratively with regional councils and communities to help identify innovative travel-to-work solutions in rural areas.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC
43	The Commission believes that the County Council should promote active transport where appropriate. To facilitate this, the County Council must examine and develop the necessary infrastructure: more cycle lanes, cycle routes and safe places to “park” a bike.	Ongoing	Medium term	NYCC

Policy Theme: Crosscutting

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
44	Devolution is critical to securing long-term investment into the region and the Commission calls on the Government to agree a deal as a matter of urgency. This will allow North Yorkshire to ensure best use of Levelling Up Funds for its remote and rural regions.	Ongoing	Medium term	National Government
45	The County Council must establish an Advisory Task Force to include civil servants, rural business, banking and industry, academic and scientific expertise, and communities. This Task Force will advise how to take forward the recommendations of the Rural Commission and advise on appropriate time frames when the capacity and budget of the devolved authority becomes clear. It will advise the County Council and the devolved administration. It must be chaired by the Chief Executive Officer of the County Council, and subsequently the Mayor.	Completed	Short term	NYCC
46	The Commission urges the Government to ensure Levelling Up Funds recognise the needs of sparsely populated northern regions as much as the needs of northern industrial regions.	Ongoing	Medium term	National Government
47	Community and social infrastructure are critical. The Government must ensure Levelling Up Funds protect social infrastructure in remote and rural regions.	Ongoing	Medium term	National Government

Abbreviations and acronyms used in action plan:

AONBs	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CEC	Careers & Enterprise Company (government established national body for careers education)
CLA	Country Land and Business Association
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (government department)
DCs	district and borough councils
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (government department)
DfE	Department for Education (government department)
DfT	Department for Transport (government department)
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; formerly the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (government department)
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency (government agency accountable for funding education and skills).
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
NPA	National Park Authority
NY	North Yorkshire
NYC	North Yorkshire Council (unitary council replacing NYCC and DCs in April 2023)
NYCC	North Yorkshire County Council
Ofcom	Office of Communications (regulatory authority for broadcasting, telecommunications and postal industries)
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (non-ministerial government department)
YAS	Yorkshire Agricultural Society
YHCCC	Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission
YNYLEP	York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership