

Report to the Yorkshire Leaders Board

Report title: Zero Carbon update

Date: 7 January 2021

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To update Leaders around the progress to establish the Regional Climate Commission as previously agreed at the Yorkshire Leaders Board.

2. Background

- 2.1. Zero carbon/climate change is one of the key priorities of the Yorkshire Leaders Board, and work is led through Wallace Sampson, Chief Executive of Harrogate.
- 2.2. A Zero Carbon sub-group has been established, which includes Sharon Kemp (Rotherham), Janet Waggott (Selby) and Martin Budd (Hull). The group meet virtually every 6 weeks and are supported by a small number of local authority and LEP officers from across the Yorkshire and Humber region as well as the regional secretariat.
- 2.3. While the group has been meeting for the last 12 months, its original ambitions have been reviewed to not only inform the Yorkshire and Humber business plan, but also to take into consideration capacity constraints arising from the pandemic. The sub-group has agreed a number of workstreams as follows:
- National lobbying and policy development – *Sharon Kemp (Rotherham)*
 - Shared learning and communications – *Martin Budd (Hull)*
 - Decarbonisation of the schools estate – *Janet Waggott (Selby)*
 - Decarbonisation of the wider public estate – *Sharon Kemp (Rotherham)*
 - Collaborative opportunities emerging from LEP energy strategies – *Wallace Sampson (Harrogate)*
 - Expansion of Circular Yorkshire – *Wallace Sampson (Harrogate)*
 - Regional climate commission – *Wallace Sampson (Harrogate)*
- 2.4. The activity that will take place around these workstreams will focus immediately on what is achievable in the short-term – for that reason, the group will not place too much focus on progressing the decarbonisation of the wider public estate which was felt to be a longer-term priority.

3. Regional Climate Commission

- 3.1 At its meeting on 23 October 2020, the Yorkshire Leaders Board confirmed their support for a regional climate change commission following an initial proposal developed with Andy Gouldson at the University of Leeds, with a £40,000 initial investment agreed from the Board.
- 3.2 Further scoping has taken place to set out the role of the commission, its structure and membership, resourcing and an indicative work programme, and this has been sense checked with the Yorkshire and Humber Chief Executives group. The start-up proposal

containing this information and next steps is attached at Appendix A, with a number of recommendations set out at the end of this covering report.

- 3.3 At the end of November a meeting was held with a number of representatives from the TUC, Norther Power Grid, Northern Gas Networks, Environment Agency, Yorkshire Universities and Together Yorkshire (One Yorkshire Committee) to discuss the draft start up document and to seek their input. Their views are reflected in the updated appendix.
- 3.4 It should be noted that work has also been undertaken to align this work with other workstreams through Together Yorkshire and the Just Transition work being led by the TUC to reduce duplication of effort. They are supportive of a single approach through the regional climate commission.
- 3.5 Leaders are invited to comment on the start-up document and the specific recommendations.

4. **Recommendations**

- 4.1. In relation to the climate commission Leaders are asked to:
- Comment on the start-up proposals set out at Appendix A;
 - Agree to the name as “Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission”;
 - Endorse an announcement in January on the intention to create the Commission to enable commissioners to be recruited in time for the first meeting in March;
 - Confirm nominations of a vice chair for each of the four sub regions;
 - Support an email being sent to all regional MPs, Leaders, Chief Executives, Portfolio Leads to advise of the set-up of the commission and invite them to:
 - Save the date for the launch event in March prior to the January announcement;
 - Sign a letter of support.

Appendix A: Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission Draft start-up document

Overall aim

Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission
Advancing the region's climate leadership
Accelerating climate resilient, net zero development through an inclusive and just transition.

What it is

An independent Commission, bringing together public, private and third sector actors to support, guide and track the delivery of ambitious climate actions across the region, with an equal focus on promoting climate (including flood) resilience and working towards net zero emissions.

To do this, the Commission will act:

- a) in a positive, constructive and evidence-based way;
- b) in a fair, inclusive and just way so that no-one and nowhere is left out or left behind;
- c) in a sustainable way, including by supporting climate actions that also protect nature and biodiversity.

By operating at the regional scale, the Commission will support local actions whilst also promoting Yorkshire and the Humber in national and international debates.

The regional Commission would work with and learn from/support the activities of any more local Climate Commissions and Coalitions that have been established or are emerging within the region.

What it isn't

The Commission is not there to duplicate existing efforts, to act as a talking shop or as a platform for campaigning or marketing, or to deliver climate actions itself.

Timing

To be established for 3 years in the first instance, with an announcement and call for applications in January 2021 and a first meeting in March 2021, with a review of its contribution and value-added in year 3 to establish whether it should continue.

Basic structure and working patterns

- A main Commission meeting quarterly (on a rotating basis in the Humber, South, West and North Yorkshire), supported by a small number of standing panels and a rolling schedule of temporary working groups.
- To aid engagement and ensure visibility across the region, each quarterly meeting to be followed by a public engagement event presenting and seeking feedback on completed work and future activities.
- To prepare and publish position papers/policy briefs on key topics, along with an annual report to feed into local and combined authorities and the Yorkshire and Humber Leaders Board.

Main commission structure

- Independent Chair
- 4 Rotating Vice Chairs (one each from Humber, South, West and North Yorkshire), to be nominated by local authorities from the respective parts of the region and approved by the Yorkshire Leaders Board.
- Director

- Commissioners drawn from the public, private and third sectors (see below)
- Two part-time analysts to help collate evidence on net zero and climate resilience.
- Secretariat providing engagement and communications and administrative support.

Possible structure of representation on the Commission

Public	Private	Third Sector
Local/combined authorities	Water	Unions
LEPs	Energy	Business/employers groups
Environment Agency	Infrastructure	Environmental groups
Natural England	Transport	Wildlife groups
NHS	Construction and housing	Community groups
Homes England	Food and agriculture	Consumer groups
Universities and colleges	Resources, waste, circular economy	Land owners' groups
	Tourism, leisure, cultural	Youth groups
	Finance/legal	
Cross-cutting thought leaders (x3?)		

Roles

- Independent chair there to provide leadership and continuity over time. Expectation that they would give c10 days a year to the role.¹
- Vice chairs each to co-chair a quarterly meeting and to ensure the Commission connects to (i.e. informs and is informed by) elected officials and policy makers across the region. Expectation that they would attend quarterly meetings.
- Commissioners asked to champion and be the main contact point for their sector/group, to attend quarterly meetings of the main Commission and participate in (and potentially co-chair) one of the standing panels or working groups. Expectation that they would give up to 10 days a year to the role. Commissioners there as individuals but with the support of their employers/organisations.
- Director there to oversee the effective organisation of Commission activities, and to manage the analysts and the secretariat. Expectation that they would give c1 day a week to the role.²
- Analysts team to include two 2-day-a-week roles, one focused on net zero and the other on climate resilience.
- Secretariat to include communications and engagement support (2 days a week) and administrative support (1.5 days a week).

Work schedule, with standing panels and working groups

- There is a wide range of areas that a regional Commission could be expected to address to promote the delivery of both net zero and climate resilient activities across the region and to ensure that activities respect the principles of a just transition.
- Obviously with limited resources the Commission will not be able to address them all at the same time, but it is reasonable to address key issues/challenges in many of these areas over the first 3 years.

¹ It is not presently envisaged that this role would be remunerated.

² Funding has been secured to support this time input.

- Some areas would be cross-cutting and important enough to warrant a standing panel or working group – employment and skills, finance and investment or research and education might be candidates here.
- A top priority in the first 6 months would then to prepare a regional submission to the UN climate (COP) talks that will take place in Glasgow in November 2021.
- Focusing on this could be a perfect way of getting the Commission moving. It would also generate a high-profile output, and show that the Commission can make a valuable contribution.
- Other topics could then be addressed on a rolling basis, identified strategically by the Commission in advance or more responsively as they emerge.
- Suggestions for such topics already received relate to employment and skills, the circular economy, consumption and scope 3 emissions, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions.
- These could be addressed through the creation of temporary task and finish working groups – convened by the Commission, possibly chaired by one or more of the Commissioners, and asked to report back in 3-6 months.
- Working groups could be asked to bring together key actors and stakeholders to prepare a neutral, evidence-based assessment of the key issues, opportunities, barriers etc. and to propose a way forward for the region.
- Outputs from each group could then be a short (c5 pages) position paper and/or policy brief for the Commission that could be published and presented at a public event after one of the Commission meetings.

Outputs

- Web-site and social media engagements including suite of success stories to create positivity/celebrate progress and highlight the range of activities underway in the region³. Could also include a clearing house of key initiatives, documents, data etc. from across the region.
- Position papers, published with a note saying that although the position papers represent a consensus view of the Commission as a whole they may not represent the views of all individual members.
- Policy briefs enabling the region to speak more clearly to Westminster on the policy changes it needs to allow it to become a net zero, climate resilient region.
- Annual report offering a progress review and stock-take on the main issues and challenges and the activities of the Commission, to feed into local and combined authorities and the Yorkshire Leaders Board.
- Bespoke outputs such as an outline Yorkshire and Humber Climate Action Plan as a submission to the UN Climate Talks.

Resources and fund raising

- Start-up funding - £118k secured from national government research funding via the University of Leeds.
- Year 1 funding commitments are £95k – £40k from the Yorkshire Leaders Board, £15k from the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water and Northern Powergrid, £10k from Northern Gas Networks. In-kind contribution of c£70k from University of Leeds, assuming the UoL hosts the analysts and secretariat.
- Years 2 and 3 commitments currently £45k, with fund-raising to get to £95k the University of Leeds would maintain its in-kind contribution.
- Budgets to be held and administered by Leeds City Council.
- Significant opportunities for wider fund raising – e.g. through research grants, national lottery funding, sponsorship/philanthropy – guidance needed on this.

³ With extra resources this could potentially turn into a public/business engagement initiative (Yorkshire Climate Week?) and/or an award scheme.

Next Steps

January

- Confirm name for the Commission.
- Appoint Chair and Director.
- Ask for nominations for 4 Vice Chairs.
- Announce creation of Commission
- Define process for the appointment of Commissioners.
- Advertise for the appointment of Commissioners
- Set date the first meeting of the Commission.
- Appoint analysts and secretariat.
- Start to collate evidence for a regional submission to the COP.

February

- Appoint Commissioners.

March

- First meeting of the Commission to:
 - Agree governance structures and terms of reference.
 - Agree structure for standing panels and working groups.
 - Agree work schedule for Year 1.
 - Establish scope and structure for the regional submission to the COP.