



- Why we set it up
- Who was involved
- What it was (and what it wasn't)
- How it worked
- Key recommendations
- Next steps

Full report at www.northyorks.gov.uk/ruralcommission



Rural economy

- 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.
- The County Council must encourage investment in the region. This could be pursued through a mutual bank, with supporting funding from the Levelling Up Funds or the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- The Commission sees a role for North Yorkshire leading in green employment including food, farming, forestry, and renewable energy. The Levelling Up Funds or the Shared Prosperity Fund must provide seed funding support to be match funded by industry.



Energy transition

- The Government must invest in an electricity structure that does not overlook rural and remote areas.
- The LEP and the County Council must advocate for investment in rural electricity infrastructure.
- The National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty should execute an enabling strategy to permit the essential infrastructure and upgrades to buildings to be undertaken, to ensure a 'fit-for-purpose' future within these protected landscapes.

Digital connectivity

- The National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty must establish a Digital Inclusion Group to advise on a digital infrastructure that will be acceptable for these protected regions.
- The 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.
- 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.

Farming and land management

- Defra must have a more integrated approach to farming, land management and the environment. 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.
- 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.
- 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.



Rural schools, education and training

- The Commission believes that DfE must revise its National Funding Formula to ensure increased support for rural super sparse secondary schools.
- The County Council must lead on pioneering a two-stream educational system post GCSE in rural and remote areas, with one stream focusing on vocational education while the other remains academic.
- The County Council and the LEP must strengthen the offer for post-16 education and provide a better sense of future for young people.

Rural housing

- The formula for designating affordable housing must be revised by MHCLG so that it does not reflect market value in an area but rather average income in the area.
- Local authorities should have the power to levy a charge on second homes, which must stay in the county and be used to further affordable housing.
- Each parish in rural North Yorkshire should build five houses over a ten-year period. 40% of this housing stock must be affordable or available for rental.



Rural transport

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Cross cutting themes

- 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.
- The County Council must establish an Advisory Task Force to include civil servants, rural business, banking and industry, academic and scientific expertise, and communities to take forward our recommendations.
- 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.
- Community and social infrastructure are critical. The Government must ensure Levelling Up funds protect social infrastructure in remote and rural regions.



Next steps:

- Report has 57 recommendations to 17 organisations
- Substantial interest from press and influencers
- Report broadly supportive of our ambitions
- Response from NYCC agreed by Executive on 21 September
- Opportunities to open new, or to reinforce existing, discussions with government and others