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**Corporate Services, Climate Change and  
Scrutiny Management Committee**

**14 April 2025**

Report of the Assistant Director – Housing

**York and North Yorkshire Retrofit Strategy Development Update**

**Summary**

1. This report seeks feedback on the draft York and North Yorkshire Retrofit Strategy. Key issues are:
  - a. The approach for City of York Council involvement in delivery of the strategy
  - b. Governance for implementation of the strategy
  - c. Measurement of the performance in implementation of the strategy
  - d. Strategy draft gaps, comments and suggestions

**Background**

2. York and North Yorkshire have the ambition to be net zero by 2034, and carbon negative by 2040. The refresh of York and North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative will provide the overarching strategy to achieve these ambitious targets.
3. Heat and buildings is a key area for net zero, as current emissions from buildings account for 23% of total emissions in York and North Yorkshire. Yorkshire and the Humber also has the second highest fuel poverty rate in England. To support the heat and buildings sector, York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) has been developing a Retrofit Strategy for York and North Yorkshire. The Retrofit Strategy will form the basis of the "heat & buildings" section of the refreshed Routemap to Carbon Negative, with the Retrofit Strategy providing greater depth and

detail around the strategic priorities and actions required to increase the pace and scale of building retrofit.

4. The draft strategy reflects the ambitions of the council's Climate Change Strategy<sup>1</sup> and Retrofit Action Plan<sup>2</sup>, in addition to the council's own housing retrofit programme as reported to Executive in March 2025 (Item 7)<sup>3</sup>.
5. Apart from reducing carbon emissions, retrofit offers an opportunity to:
  - Improve comfort levels in homes (and reduce the related health impacts)
  - Grow the economy and provide local jobs
  - Reduce energy bills and operating costs of buildings

## **Consultation**

6. In May 2024, £50k was approved as part of the CA Emergency Budget to develop a Retrofit Strategy for York and North Yorkshire, with additional Shared Prosperity Funding secure to support research. This funding has contributed to the development of the Strategy so far, including an area assessment and stakeholder engagement.
7. The area assessment aimed to get a better understanding of our retrofit system, including the current state of our supply chains, the data held about buildings across the area, and key stakeholders. Several pieces of work have been undertaken to improve this understanding, to help shape the Retrofit Strategy, including:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.york.gov.uk/ClimateChange10YearStrategy>

<sup>2</sup> <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=13293>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/%28S%28aw2b23jofoyuejfc1asnI055%29%29/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=14506>

- Retrofit Skills Assessment - Focus Ltd and Amion consultants were procured in August 2024 to deliver a Retrofit Skills Assessment. The aim of the work was to provide a comprehensive picture of the supply chain and skills gap in York and North Yorkshire. Key findings from this research include:
  - Over 300 retrofit businesses are operating in the region, with the most common being solar PV installers, and there is a labour force of approx. 500 people;
  - Most training provision is concentrated around York, and there are specific gaps around air source heat pumps, battery storage, insulation and heritage skills;
  - To deliver all the required retrofit measures by 2034, the peak labour requirement is 13,000 people, with a peak year of 2031;
  - However, 25,000 potential employees have been identified in other industrial groups with similar skills profiles to retrofit.
- Data Platform - Understanding the buildings in York and North Yorkshire is crucial for measuring progress on retrofit, targeting delivery and accessing funding from central government for retrofit delivery programmes. To better understand what information we have in the region and what gaps there are, YNYCA employed an Energy Efficiency Data Intern via the Summer Internships Programme at the University of York to complete a scoping exercise. This work has been continued by a Net Zero Analyst, who will also develop a specification for a data platform that could be used to consolidate data in the region. Key findings from this exercise so far are:
  - There is a substantial amount of data related to buildings across YNY and across domestic and non-domestic buildings, and from the public and private sectors;
  - There are different approaches to building data across YNY – most stakeholders store their data in spreadsheets, but there are variations, including the level of granularity;
  - Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) would be required to consolidate the more granular building data, as there is sensitive information such as names and addresses;

- Stakeholders are interested in the possibility of consolidating datasets in York and North Yorkshire to produce an accurate record of buildings in the area.
8. YNYCA has been engaging on the strategy with a range of stakeholders. A workshop took place on the 24th of October with roughly 50 attendees. The workshop focused on:
    - Creating a joint vision for retrofit in York and North Yorkshire;
    - Reviewing the strategic priorities;
    - Creating a prioritised wish list of potential projects;
    - Creating momentum and buy-in with stakeholders.
  9. Further to this, three online workshops took place on the 12, 13 and 14 of November to review the outputs of the in-person workshop and narrow down the projects and priorities.
  10. The YNYCA has now set up a Task and Finish group to support the co-design of the strategy and ensure stakeholder buy-in. This includes organisations like City of York Council, North Yorkshire Council, Historic England, and the York and North Yorkshire Housing Partnership. A key output for the group will be a governance plan for the strategy, to ensure that it can be delivered.

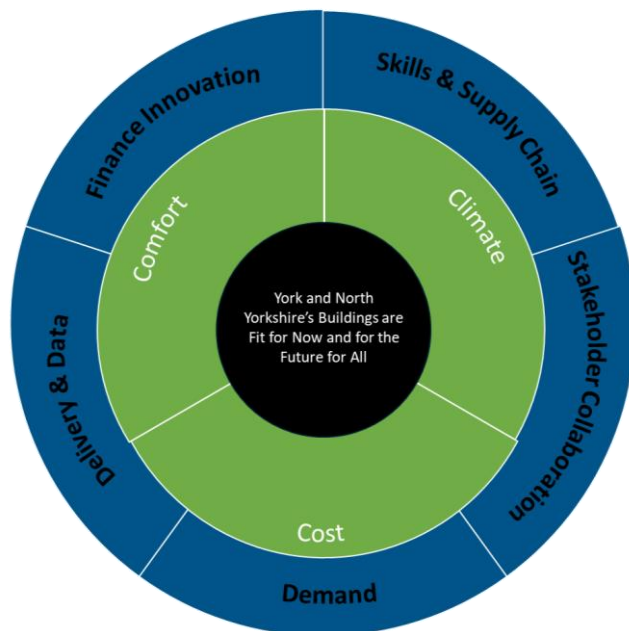
## **Options**

11. Option 1: It is recommended that City of York Council adopt the York and North Yorkshire Retrofit Strategy, subject to review of the final document, and continues to engage with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority with recommended next steps set out in this report.
12. Option 2: Alternatively, City of York Council could choose not to adopt the York and North Yorkshire Retrofit Strategy. This is not recommended as the council has been engaged in the development of the strategy, it aligns with our objectives and it is recognised that successful delivery of building decarbonisation retrofit relies on some actions being undertaken at a regional scale.

## Analysis

13. The current working draft of the Retrofit Strategy is included at appendix A, but an overview is provided to analyse the Options presented above. A first draft of the Retrofit Strategy is expected by the end of April 2025. This will be taken to the Combined Authority meeting on the 6 June for approval to go out to a public consultation over the summer. Following feedback from the consultation, the strategy will be redrafted and taken to a Combined Authority meeting in October or November 2025 for approval and adoption. Other regional organisations will also be encouraged to adopt the strategy.

*Figure 1: York and North Yorkshire Retrofit Strategy Framework*



14. The strategic framework summarises the vision, outcomes and strategic priorities for the Retrofit Strategy, which can be seen in Figure 1. The elements of this are described below.
15. York and North Yorkshire's Retrofit Vision is the long-term goal for retrofit in York and North Yorkshire. The vision is that 'York and North Yorkshire's Buildings are Fit for Now and for the Future For All'. All interventions included in this strategy should be aligned to at least one element of this vision.
16. The key outcomes of the strategy should be felt by people across York and North Yorkshire. All activity under the Retrofit Strategy will aim to fulfil these outcomes. The outcomes are:

- **Comfort** - Buildings are comfortable to be in all year round. Comfort looks different for everyone, but generally people should be warm enough in cold weather and cool enough in hot weather. Crucially, this comfort level should not be blocked by high energy bills or leaky buildings.
- **Climate** - Climate change is mitigated against by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and we adapt to our changing climate. This may look like improving the resilience of our buildings to flooding, storms and extreme heat, as well as reducing the amount of energy we use and switching to renewable energy.
- **Cost** - Cost is reduced as a barrier to retrofit and does not hold back progress, and economic benefits of retrofit are felt locally. Currently, cost is a huge barrier for communities and businesses looking to undertake retrofit, so removing this barrier is important to ensure that everyone has access to a more efficient building. Additionally, there is a huge opportunity for businesses in the region to scale-up to meet retrofit demand, even if they're not currently in the industry. This will allow the economic benefits of retrofit to stay within York and North Yorkshire.

17. There are five strategic priorities, which are the areas of focus for activity and span our whole retrofit system. They must all work together to transform the retrofit system. These strategic priorities are broken down into further detail alongside their accompanying action plan which details the interventions needed to deliver them. The five strategic priorities are:

- Demand
- Skills and Supply Chain
- Finance Innovation
- Delivery and Data
- Stakeholder Collaboration

## **Council Plan**

18. The York and North Yorkshire Retrofit Strategy offers a significant opportunity to progress the Council Plan Core Commitment,

“Environment and the climate emergency”, in addition to the other commitments, Health, Affordability and Equalities and Human Rights.

19. Priorities a) Health and wellbeing, b) Education and Skills, c) Economy: A fair, thriving, green economy for all and f) Sustainability: Cutting carbon, enhancing the environment for our future are all supported by the system wide approach proposed in the regional strategy.

## **Implications**

- **Financial**

There are no financial implications in developing a Retrofit Strategy. However, there will be costs associated with the actions within the strategy which will be outlined and reassessed prior to any strategy adoption.

- **Human Resources (HR)**

There are no HR implications.

- **Equalities**

Throughout the refresh of the Routemap and development of the Retrofit Strategy equalities will be considered to ensure that a range of voices are heard and reflected in the strategy. This may be by utilising community groups or specific council groups.

- **Legal**

There are no HR implications.

- **Crime and Disorder**

There are no Crime and Disorder implications.

- **Information Technology (IT)**

There are no IT implications.

- **Property**

There are no Property implications.

- **Climate and Environment**

The refresh of the Routemap to Carbon Negative and development of a Retrofit Strategy will outline an approach for retrofitting buildings across York and North Yorkshire which will reduce emissions and contribute towards mitigating against climate change. Adaptation is also included as a key consideration.

- **Other**

There are no other implications.

## **Risk Management**

20. No new risks have been identified in the York and North Yorkshire Retrofit Strategy development. Existing risks in the council's housing retrofit plans are set out in the March 2025 report to Executive<sup>4</sup>.

## **Recommendations**

21. Members are asked to provide feedback on the draft Retrofit Strategy. Feedback is sought in particular on:
- How the council would like to be involved in delivering the Retrofit Strategy
  - How the Retrofit Strategy implementation should be governed, such as by a steering group, and who should be involved
  - How the implementation of the Retrofit Strategy should be measured
  - Any gaps in the draft strategy content, and suggestions for additions.
- Reason: To inform the development and delivery of the retrofit strategy.



## Contact Details

### Author:

Andrew Bebbington  
Housing Strategy Officer  
Housing and Communities  
01904 554351

### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Michael Jones  
Report of the Assistant Director –  
Housing

*Note: Drafted with support  
from Lucy Allis, Local  
Authorities Climate Action  
Coordinator within the York  
and North Yorkshire  
Combined Authority*

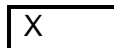
### Report Approved



**Date** 4/4/2025

### Wards Affected:

**All**



For further information please contact the author of the report.

### Background Papers:

1. “Residential Retrofit – grant funding opportunities to accelerate delivery”:  
Report to Executive 11 March 2025  
[https://democracy.york.gov.uk/%28S%28aw2b23jofoyuejfc1asnI055%29%29/  
documents/s181924/Housing%20Retrofit%20Update.pdf](https://democracy.york.gov.uk/%28S%28aw2b23jofoyuejfc1asnI055%29%29/documents/s181924/Housing%20Retrofit%20Update.pdf)
2. “City of York Retrofit Action Plan” – approved at the Executive Meeting of  
December 2022  
[https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s164357/Annex%20A%20-  
%20Retrofit%20Action%20Plan.pdf](https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s164357/Annex%20A%20-%20Retrofit%20Action%20Plan.pdf)

### Annexes

**Annex A:** DRAFT York and North Yorkshire Retrofit Strategy