
Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee

88 December 2020

Report of the Chief Operating Officer

York Climate Commission

1. The report sets out the rationale for the creation of a York Climate Commission (the Commission)

Recommendations

2. The Climate Change Policy and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:
 - Provide recommendations on the establishment of a York Climate Commission
 - Review and provide recommendations on the Commission's Terms of Reference

Background

3. City of York Council (CYC) announced a climate emergency in March 2019; subsequently setting an ambition for York to be carbon neutral by 2030.
4. The Council will demonstrate leadership in this area and produce a Climate Change Policy which will include a decarbonisation Action Plan for its own operation and the City.
5. CYC recognises that no single organisation has the power, authority, resources or ability to achieve the city-level change needed to deliver our ambition.
6. It will be necessary to bring together key partners across the city to create shared ownership and accountability, and also to benefit from the collective experience and expertise that exists within York.
7. In August 2020, CYC commissioned Leeds University to produce a Zero Carbon Roadmap for York (annex 1). One of the recommendations from this work was to establish an independent York Climate Commission to help draw actors together and build capacity to take and track action.

Role of the York Climate Commission

8. The Climate Commission will:

- i. Promote leadership in the city on climate change, encouraging stakeholders to take effective action now, while maintaining a long term perspective.
- ii. Provide authoritative independent advice on the most effective steps required to meet the city's carbon reduction target so as to inform policies and actions of local stakeholders and decision makers.
- iii. Monitor and report on progress towards meeting the city's carbon targets and recommend actions to keep on track.
- iv. Make the economic case for project development, implementation and investment in low carbon and climate resilient projects in the city; and promote best practice in public engagement on climate change and its impacts in order to support robust decision-making.
- v. Bring together major organisations and key groups in York to collaborate on projects that result in measurable contributions towards meeting the city's climate reduction target
- vi. Act as a forum where organisations can exchange ideas, research findings, information and best practice on carbon reduction and climate resilience

Membership

9. Membership of the Commission is open to individuals representing key organisations from the public, private and civic sectors across the city who can contribute to the development and delivery of a low carbon and/or climate resilient economy/society in York. The balance of membership of the Commission reflects the need for cross-city representation and for it to address both climate mitigation and resilience.
10. The York Climate Commission will comprise of the following founding members reflecting the desired representation of key organisations across the city:
 - i. City of York Council – Executive Member for the Environment and Climate Change
 - ii. City of York Council – Head of Carbon Reduction
 - iii. University of York – Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research
 - iv. Biovale – Chief Executive
 - v. Nestle – Head of Value Chain Sustainability
 - vi. Rollits – Partner
 - vii. First Group – Managing Director
 - viii. Joseph Rowntree Foundation – Group Chief Executive
11. Members of the Commission are recruited periodically via an open process. Individuals wishing to become members of the Commission are invited to express their interest in email to the current Chair.

Ways of Working

12. The Commission will be Chaired by the Executive member for Environment and Climate Change for an initial 12 months from formation. At which point, the Chair will be appointed from amongst the other Commission members, with the Executive member for Environment and Climate Change taking up the role of Co-chair.
13. Decisions within the Commission are made with a preference for a consensus-based approach to decision-making; however, when necessary a vote can be taken to secure the decision.
14. To ensure accountability and scrutiny of the work of the Commission and to report the progress that is being made by all sectors and partners towards the city's carbon reduction target, the Commission will discuss progress on a 6 monthly basis to CYC Climate Change Policy Scrutiny Committee.
15. Additional details are provided in the Terms of Reference (Annex 2).

Structure

16. The York Climate Commission will consist of the Climate Commission Group and Working Groups established around key topic areas.
17. The Climate Commission Group will comprise the Chair, a Co-Chair and representatives from key organisations or sectors across the city. The Climate Commission Group will meet four times per year.
18. Working Groups will comprise of Climate Commission Group members (who join Working Groups) and technical or subject specialists. Working Groups will concentrate on key areas of climate action; the Working Groups are under development and will be formalised within the first 3 months of the Commission.

Deliverables

19. The Commission will collate existing carbon reduction targets and measures for organisations across the city using an agreed methodology and will agree the strategic and shared priorities and opportunities for carbon reduction and climate resilience.
20. Collaborate with other organisations to identify effective carbon reduction and climate resilience measures, research and develop projects, and attract funding for project development and/or delivery.
21. An annual report monitoring project delivery and evaluating progress across the city.

Recommendations

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Consultation

23. This report and associated documents has been developed in consultation with the Place-Based Climate Action Network (PCAN), Leeds University, Leeds Climate Commission and York University.
24. The recommendations of this committee will be reported as part of a decision paper to the Executive Member on the establishment of the committee.

Council Plan

25. The project accords with the Council Plan 2019-2023 in regard to the following core outcomes of the Plan:
- A greener and cleaner city – Working towards becoming a carbon neutral city by 2030
 - Getting around sustainably – Cutting congestion, pollution and carbon emissions
 - Good health and wellbeing – Promoting active travel, healthy eating and improving air quality
 - Safe communities and culture for all – Supporting groups who are at greatest risk of climate change
 - Well paid jobs and an inclusive economy – Creating employment opportunities in the green economy

Contact Details

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Report approved: ✓

Date: 30.11.20

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

- Council Plan 2019-2023

Annexes

- Annex 1 – Zero Carbon Roadmap for York
- Annex 2 – York Climate Commission: Terms of Reference