

Report of the interim Director of City Development

## **Update on York Climate Commission**

### **Summary**

1. This report provides an update on the York Climate Commission since the previous report to Scrutiny in 2022.

### **Background**

2. York Climate Commission ('the Commission') was established in December 2022, by the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change, in response to City of York Council's climate emergency declaration.
3. The Commission was established following a recommendation in the 'Zero Carbon Roadmap for York (Leeds University, August 2020), that an independent York Climate Commission could help draw actors together and build capacity to take and track action towards our climate change ambition.
4. York Climate Commission is part of the Place based Climate Action Network (PCAN); an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) supported team of researchers with a remit to create impact, engagement and knowledge sharing that delivers local climate action.
5. Recognising that no single organisation has the power, authority, resources or ability to achieve the city-level change needed to deliver our climate ambition, it is 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.
6. For two years, membership of the Commission was 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 society in York. The Commission

comprised of the following members reflecting the desired representation of key organisations across the city:

- i. University of York – Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Chair)
- ii. City of York Council – Executive Member for the Environment and Climate Change & Head of Carbon Reduction
- iii. Nestle – Head of Value Chain Sustainability
- iv. York & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce – Vice President
- v. First Group – Managing Director & Strategy Director
- vi. Joseph Rowntree Foundation – Group Chief Executive
- vii. York NHS Foundation Trust – Head of Sustainability
- viii. York Minster - Director of Works and Precinct

7. During this time, the role of the Commission focussed on:

- Promoting leadership in the city on climate change, encouraging stakeholders to take effective action now, while maintaining a long-term perspective.
- Providing 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.
- Monitoring and reporting on progress towards meeting the city’s carbon targets and recommend actions to keep on track.
- Making 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.
- Bringing 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.
- Acting as a forum where organisations can exchange ideas, research findings, information and best practice on carbon reduction and climate resilience.

8. Following council elections in 2023, a York Climate Commission refresh event was hosted on 11 January 2024 at Merchant Adventurers Hall. Over 100 individuals attended the event, representing public, private and voluntary sectors.

9. The agenda for the event covered case studies, an exploration of what a climate commission is, reflections on the previous 12 months from the current Chair of the Commission and a series of workshops to identify future priorities and ways of working.
10. From the refresh event, 8 working groups were formed covering:
  - i. Future Economy
  - ii. Health and Climate
  - iii. Educators
  - iv. Transport
  - v. Connecting with Green Spaces
  - vi. Buildings and Retrofit
  - vii. Energy
  - viii. Waste and Circular Economy

Each working group has a nominated working group lead, who sits on the Commission Steering Group. The Steering Group has met quarterly and updates on activity of each working group and other initiatives relevant to the activity of the Commission.

11. In March 2024, the Chair of the Commission made clear their intention to step down from this role. The Commission continued to operate without a Chair. In November 2024, the Commission began recruitment for a new Chair.
12. The York Climate Commission provides updates on activity through the council's climate change e-newsletter and also provides updates, events and latest news via the website: [www.yorkclimate.org.uk](http://www.yorkclimate.org.uk). The Commission can be contacted using the email address [carbon.reduction@york.gov.uk](mailto:carbon.reduction@york.gov.uk).

### **Consultation**

13. As an update report, no consultation is required.

### **Options**

14. As an update report, no options are required.

### **Council Plan**

15. The Council Plan 'One City, for all', directly references working with the Commission in the section, 'Cutting carbon, enhancing the environment for our future'. The Council commits to: "Working with York's Climate

Commission and partners deliver the Climate Change Strategy 2022-2032”; with an action to “Expand the Climate Commission membership to enable businesses to support each other and work together to meet York’s net zero commitment.”

- 16. The work with the Commission since May 2023, directly supports this commitment.

### Implications

- 17. As an update report, no implications are listed.

### Risk Management

- 18. As an update report, no risks are noted.

### Recommendations

- 19. Members are asked to consider the content of this report on York Climate Commission

Reason:

York Climate Commission is an independent organisation promoting leadership in the city on climate change.

### Contact Details

**Author:**

Shaun Gibbons  
Head of Carbon Reduction  
[shaun.gibbons@york.gov.uk](mailto:shaun.gibbons@york.gov.uk)

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Claire Foale  
Interim Director of City Development

**Report Approved**



**Date**

28/11/24

**Wards Affected:**

All

For further information please contact the author of the report.