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

14 April 2025

Report of the Chief Strategy Officer

Routemap to Carbon Negative Refresh

Summary

1. This paper provides an overview of the process to update “York and North Yorkshire’s Routemap to Carbon Negative”, led by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, including refreshing the evidence base, comprehensive stakeholder engagement and a public consultation.
2. The Routemap to Carbon Negative is currently under development with public consultation expected to be launched in June. Member views are sought to input into the development of the draft prior to consultation.

Background

3. In York and North Yorkshire, we have the potential to go beyond net zero and become England’s first carbon negative region. With 2 National Parks, 3 National Landscapes and over 70% of our geography being used for agriculture, we are uniquely positioned to use our natural assets to capture and store carbon. As a leader in decarbonisation and world class innovation assets, we can harness the economic opportunities of the transition, creating jobs and attracting investment to the region.
4. The ambition for the area to become a carbon negative region was an underpinning objective of the York and North Yorkshire Devolution Deal, and the Government confirmed their support for the ambition and “recognises the potential contribution it can make to national net zero goals”. As part of York and North Yorkshire’s Devolution Deal announcement in August 2022, the Government committed to provide “£7 million investment that will enable the area of York and North Yorkshire to drive green economic growth towards their ambition to be a carbon negative region”. Through Y&NY’s Net Zero Fund, the £7million

has been committed to 24 projects, and is on track to deliver by the end of June 2025.

5. Following York and North Yorkshire's Devolution Deal, YNYCA, CYC and NYC were invited to take part in two national demonstrator programmes:
 - Local Investment in Natural Capital (LINC) Programme: DEFRA-funded programme to support four pilot places attract investment to improve natural capital. Y&NY's £1million LINC project is designed to mobilise private investment through developing an investible pipeline of projects, investment vehicle and Natural Capital Investment Plan.
 - Local Net Zero Accelerator Programme: DESNZ-funded programme to support 3 pilot places accelerate net zero delivery. Y&NY's £2million pilot aims to test the feasibility of replicating the City Leap model in Y&NY, alongside exploring if other public-private partnership models would be more beneficial for the region.

York and North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative

6. In October 2022, the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) formally launched York and North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative. York and North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative sets out an ambitious pathway for local authorities, businesses, charities, academia and communities to come together to deliver carbon reduction at the necessary pace and scale to reach net zero by 2034, and net negative by 2040.
7. Since the launch of the strategy in October 2022, the CA, CYC, NYC and other partners have been working collaboratively to deliver the strategic actions set out in the Routemap. With the transition to the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and changes in national policy, it is an opportune time to review delivery to date and refresh the Routemap to Carbon Negative.

Process to Refresh YNY's Routemap to Carbon Negative

8. In May 2024, £100k was approved as part of the CA Emergency Budget to refresh the strategic priorities and actions within the Routemap to Carbon Negative, including:
 - Refreshing the evidence base;
 - Extensive stakeholder engagement; and

- Undertaking a public consultation.
9. At the same time, a regional Building Retrofit Strategy is also under development. To streamline the process and highlight the interconnections between the strategies, the Retrofit Strategy will follow the same timeline in terms of CA approvals and the public consultation.

Refreshing the evidence base

10. To develop the initial Routemap to Carbon Negative, the Y&NY LEP commissioned research in 2020 to establish the region's baseline emissions and develop potential decarbonisation pathways across the high-emitting sectors of power, transport, heat and buildings, industry, and land use and agriculture. This formed the evidence base for the scale of ambition, strategic priorities and high-level action plans set out in York and North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative.
11. To ensure there is a robust evidence base to inform the refresh of the Routemap, WSP have been commissioned to undertake a Carbon Abatement Pathways study that will:
- Establish the current baseline of emissions and assess progress made;
 - Considering progress made, review and adapt the carbon abatement pathway to achieve net zero by 2034 and be carbon negative by 2040; and
 - Identify economic opportunities and risks, alongside quantifying the socio-economic benefits from the net zero transition in York and North Yorkshire.

This study now near completion, and a finalised report is expected by the end of April. Initial findings and outputs from the study can be found in Annex A.

12. A Task and Finish Group has been established to provide strategic direction and oversight of the process to refresh YNY's Routemap to Carbon Negative. The Task and Finish Group is made up of public sector and private sector partners that have a key role in delivering the refreshed Routemap to Carbon Negative, including City of York Council, North Yorkshire Council, NPAs, Yorkshire Water, Northern Powergrid, Aviva, DEFRA, DESNZ and the National Wealth Fund.
13. The first draft will be completed by the end of April 2025. This will then be taken to the Combined Authority Meeting on the 6 June to seek approval to go out to public consultation on the draft Routemap.

14. The public consultation is expected to be launched on the 13 June, as part of the planned Net Zero Fund event, and will run until the end of July 2025.
15. Webinars will be held to raise awareness of the public consultation, alongside presentations at appropriate partners events.
16. Responses from the consultation will be reviewed and feedback will be incorporated into the final draft. Further 1-to-1s and workshop sessions will be held as necessary to address any issues and seek consensus.
17. The final draft will be completed by early September 2025. Following this, the finalised refreshed Routemap to Carbon Negative will be taken to the CA meeting on the 24 October to seek a decision on approval and adoption of the Routemap.
18. As a key partner in both the development and delivery of the Routemap to Carbon Negative, the CA are encouraging CYC to formally adopt the finalised Routemap document.

Consultation

19. Internal consultation and governance of the Net Zero Fund projects is provided by the Climate Change and Natural Capital Programme Board and Asset Management Programme Board.
20. YNYCA sponsored a series of Roundtable sessions in September 2024 to gain initial insights to shape the refresh process. Roundtables focused on:
 - Heritage Retrofit
 - Energy
 - Green Skills
 - Food
 - Circular Economy and AI
21. An online stakeholder engagement session was held in January 2025 to gain stakeholder input into the decarbonisation pathways within the CAP study. This session involved sector experts and partners to review the CAP study refresh and support the development of policy recommendations.
22. Utilising the updated evidence base, additional stakeholder engagement is underway to refresh the narrative, vision statements, strategic priorities and actions set out within the Routemap to Carbon Negative, including:

- Stakeholder face-to-face workshop on the 19th March – 80 stakeholder came together to co-create vision statements, strategic priorities and prioritising interventions for each sector.
- Establishing sector-specific working groups to refine the outputs from the large stakeholder workshop and provide support in drafting the document.

Council Plan

23. The York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative will be a key strategic document for the region, supporting the Climate and Environment Core Commitment of the Council Plan 2023-2027.
24. The Routemap to Carbon Negative supports the ambitions of the York Climate Change Strategy 2022-2032, directly aligning with the objectives to:
 - Improve energy efficiency of existing buildings
 - Build strong relationships and networks
 - Move away from fossil fuel heating systems
 - Grow the green economy
 - Increase resilience to climate risks
 - Increase renewable energy generation

However, it should be noted that the regional ambition for net zero by 2034 and carbon negative by 2040 is less ambitious than the City of York Council ambition for York to be net zero by 2030.

Implications

- **Financial** – There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations in this paper. Programmes and projects put forward within the refreshed Routemap to Carbon Negative will be fully costed, and business cases developed to assess value for money.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – No implications identified
- **Equalities** – Throughout the stakeholder engagement, equality and diversity will be considered to ensure that a range of voices are listened to and their views incorporated into the strategy. The Routemap will seek to ensure a just transition, ensuring that no one is left behind.
- **Legal** – The UK has a legally binding carbon reduction target of net zero emissions by 2050. The refresh and subsequent delivery of York

and North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative will support the Government achieve this target.

- **Crime and Disorder** – No implications identified
- **Information Technology (IT)** – No implications identified
- **Property** – No implications identified

Risk Management

25. Misaligned ambitions across the region could delay City of York Council's net zero ambition. Local policy and action must be supported by regional and national commitment.
26. It will be crucial to ensure that net zero and carbon negative are achieved at lowest cost to the region and done in a fair and equitable way. Wherever possible, net zero actions should support sustainable growth outcomes.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- i) Note progress in relation to the refresh of York and North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative and provide any feedback on the refresh approach and draft findings from the YNY Carbon Abatement Pathways (CAP) Study Refresh.
- ii) Consider the six different scenario pathways in Annex A and provide feedback.

Reason:

York and North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative will be a key strategic document for the region and early views are sought from City of York Council Members to shape the refresh process.

Contact Details

Author:

Shaun Gibbons

Head of Carbon Reduction
City Development

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Claire Foale

Chief Strategy Officer

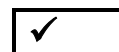
**Report
Approved**



Date 03/04/2025

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

North and West Yorkshire Carbon Abatement Pathways (2021)

<https://yorknorthyorks-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/York-North-Yorkshire-carbon-abatement-pathways-executive-summary-Element-Energy.pdf>

Annexes

Annex A: Summary of DRAFT York and North Yorkshire Carbon Abatement Pathways (CAP) Study Refresh 2025

Abbreviations

AI – Artificial Intelligence

CA – Combined Authority

CAP – Carbon Abatement Pathway

CNCF – Carbon Negative Challenge Fund

CO₂ – Carbon Dioxide

CO₂e – Carbon dioxide equivalent

CYC – City of York Council

DEFRA – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

DESNZ – Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
LEP – Local Enterprise Partnership
LINC – Local Investment In Natural Capital
NPA – National Park Authorities
NYC – North Yorkshire Council
NZF – Net Zero Fund
YNY – York and North Yorkshire
YNYCA – York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority