



27 October 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

Congratulations on your recent appointment. We welcome your passionate affirmation of the Government's commitments made at COP26, the ambitions set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan, and your ambition to pass on an environment in a better condition than we inherited, as stated at Prime Minister's Questions on 26 October. We want to work with government, and we are contributing to the Net Zero Review being led by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The Yorkshire and Humber region generates £142 billion a year in GDP and is home to 5.5 million people. The region is already being deeply affected by climate change – and the ways in which we respond to the challenges that climate change presents will play a vital role in defining the future security and prosperity of the region, and its potential for growth. Investment in climate resilience will protect economic investment and aid growth. If we do not respond effectively, this will undermine our ability to realise our development priorities and opportunities for growth, not only in the long term, but also in the here and now.

The Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission is a unique regional coalition of public bodies, businesses, industry groups, NGOs and academics acting in concert in Yorkshire and Humber and taking the initiative. We work across the political spectrum and administrative and sector boundaries to do everything we can within the existing policy and investment frameworks. We have produced a [Climate Action Plan for the region](#) and are now engaging collaboratively in an intensive programme of work to enable delivery of that plan.

However, we need policy certainty and stable regulatory frameworks to provide the conditions for investment, innovation, and delivery. This requires strong and decisive policy leadership from national government to enable effective action at the regional and local scales. We therefore call on you to:

1. **Accelerate the delivery of the Government's 25-year Environment Plan** by:
 - 1.1. Strengthening and implementing the Environmental Land Management scheme (ELMs) as a top priority.
 - 1.2. Supporting a regional pilot that enables us as a Commission to develop a land use strategy in line with the Climate Change Committee's Sixth Carbon Budget and the UK's Third Climate Change Risk Assessment. Such a strategy should put climate resilience, food security and nature

recovery at the heart of decision-making. It would also simplify the planning framework to increase investment and accelerate changes we need to see.

- 1.3. Clarify the regulatory framework for green private finance to ensure suppliers, investors and the public can be confident that investments will lead to genuine improvements in environmental goods and services.
2. **Actively support the development of 'green' jobs and skills.** Strong, stable policy environments – for example, that demand higher building standards, support buildings retrofit (including adaptation measures) or require enhanced environmental land management – will give sectors, companies, colleges, and individuals the confidence to invest in skills development. Greater skills availability will reduce costs and accelerate the rate of change.
3. **Develop and implement a longer-term national strategy that enables the retrofit of homes that builds on your near-term response to the cost-of-living crisis** – and adopt planning standards that require the building of new homes that will not soon need retrofitting. These measures are urgently needed to enable us to improve energy security and tackle fuel poverty in an effective and inclusive way that also reduces our carbon footprint.
4. **Review the Jet Zero Strategy and deliver a national aviation strategy that is consistent with the Sixth Carbon Budget.** This is critical to manage both the supply and demand sides of the aviation sector in a joined up way, whilst enabling a fair and regionally balanced approach that avoids costly and divisive planning disputes and creates the certainty needed for meaningful investment in sustainable aviation. We will be writing imminently to the Department for Transport to set out our position on aviation in more detail.
5. **Extend the national reporting framework under the current Adaptation Reporting Power** to include local authorities. As a Commission we are working with local authorities across our region to develop adaptation plans. Our learning to date highlights that the absence of this national framework means that sub-national action is variable and vulnerable, impacting on the resilience of the country.
6. **Commission the Treasury to review the costs and benefits of climate resilience** – and identify the appropriate balance between forms of public and private investment. Such a review would provide a foundation for a national ambition for climate resilience, as well as setting a clear direction for the National Adaptation Programme and creating a strong investment framework across all sectors.

Over the life of our Commission, we intend to gather and provide evidence and insight to support Government on these most pressing issues. To enable this, the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission has created a national policy forum to allow it to work with the region's MPs, national portfolio lead MPs, and civil servants in Westminster. We will be inviting your colleagues in Cabinet to actively explore these proposals with us, and we trust that you too, as our new Prime Minister and one of our regional MPs, will be supportive of such collaboration.

We look forward to your response on the above proposals.

Yours sincerely

Liz Barber
Chair of the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission

Cc: Cabinet Ministers, Shadow Cabinet Ministers, Liberal Democrats Party Leader, Green Party Co-Leaders, Yorkshire and Humber MPs, and the West and South Yorkshire Mayors.

Further information – Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission

Supported by the Yorkshire & Humber Leaders Board, the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission was created in 2021 to create an enabling framework that allows the region to respond to the challenges associated with climate change in a positive and constructive way. The Commission draws together the 22 combined and local authorities with key leaders from the public, private and third sectors from across the region. It provides a neutral space for a wide range of actors to come together to create new and powerful collaborations and capacities for climate action.

The Commission is working with business and public-sector leaders alike to promote actions that protect and create jobs, develop education and skills, secure finance and investment, and advance infrastructure and planning to create a resilient and climate-ready region. As well as supporting action on climate, the Commission also seeks to put nature at the heart of decision making and promotes a fair and inclusive transition to net zero.

<https://yorksandhumberclimate.org.uk>