



**Annual Report November 2021 – November 2022**

Advancing the region's climate leadership

Accelerating climate resilient, net-zero development through an inclusive and just transition

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## **Executive Summary**

The Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission was launched in March 2021, with phase 1 of the Commission set to last for 3 years through to March 2024.

The Commission brings together public, private and third sector actors to support, guide and track the delivery of ambitious climate actions across the region.

The Commission's aims are to promote climate resilience, the transition to net-zero emissions and the protection of nature and biodiversity in a positive, constructive and evidence-based way. Crucially, the Commission seeks to promote actions in a fair, inclusive and just way so that no-one and nowhere is left out or left behind.

The Commission has been working with a budget of c.£110k a year drawn from the Yorkshire Leaders Board, the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, Northern Powergrid, Northern Gas Networks, the Yorkshire Building Society and the University of Leeds. The Commission also has active buy-in from the 40 Commissioners and c.100 organisations that are regularly engaged in the work of the Commission.

Highlights achieved thus far include the publication of an extensive regional Climate Action Plan, the development of multiple local, regional and national policy engagements and the organisation of two regional Climate Summits with the Yorkshire Post.

Activities underway include the development of a Local Authority Climate Adaptation Programme, the launch of a regional Climate Action Pledge for businesses and organisations across the region, and the introduction of a series of 'Delivering Impact' sessions supported by an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement.

For the future, it is important that we acknowledge the scale and the urgency of the challenge we are trying to address. Just in economic terms, climate change is forecast to generate impacts on the region amounting to £4.6bn a year by 2050 and the regions needs investments of £1.4bn a year if it is to successfully work towards net zero.

We therefore need to develop a clear plan for what happens after the first phase of the Commission finishes in March 2024.

We have in-principle agreement for c.£3m of funding from the University of Leeds for the period through to 2030, and we are in the process of developing applications for significant extra funding. However, to unlock and extend this funding we need active buy-in and support from the Yorkshire Leaders' Board.

We therefore recommend close working between the Leadership Group of the Commission and the Yorkshire and Humber Leaders Board to make the case, including aligning and confirming the key areas of focus, and so secure further funding for the Commission to continue its work.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. At the request of the Yorkshire Leaders Board, the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission was set up and formally launched in March 2021, with phase 1 of the Commission set to last for 3 years (i.e. through to March 2024).
- 1.2. As well as receiving support from the Yorkshire Leaders Board, the creation of the Commission was supported by diverse organisations including the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, Northern Powergrid, Northern Gas Networks, the Yorkshire Building Society, the University of Leeds, the CBI, the TUC and Yorkshire Universities.
- 1.3. The first task for the Commission was to prepare a regional climate action plan in time to be launched at the same time as the UN climate talks (COP26) in Glasgow in November of 2021. Following extensive stakeholder consultations, the [Climate Action Plan](#) was successfully launched at a regional climate summit organised in collaboration with the Yorkshire Post. It sets out 50 actions for the region, and identified a further 23 actions that the Commission itself wanted to deliver.
- 1.4. This annual report marks one year after the launch of the Climate Action Plan and is 17 months before phase 1 of the Commission and the current funding arrangements are due to come to an end.
- 1.5. The Commission is playing a critical role in enabling the region to plan for and respond to the many cross-cutting social, economic and environmental challenges that are related to the climate emergency. However, whilst considerable progress is being made, the scope, scale and complexity of the challenges that we face and the pace of change we need to see means that our work is really just beginning.

## **2. Review of current arrangements**

### **2.1. Aims and Objectives**

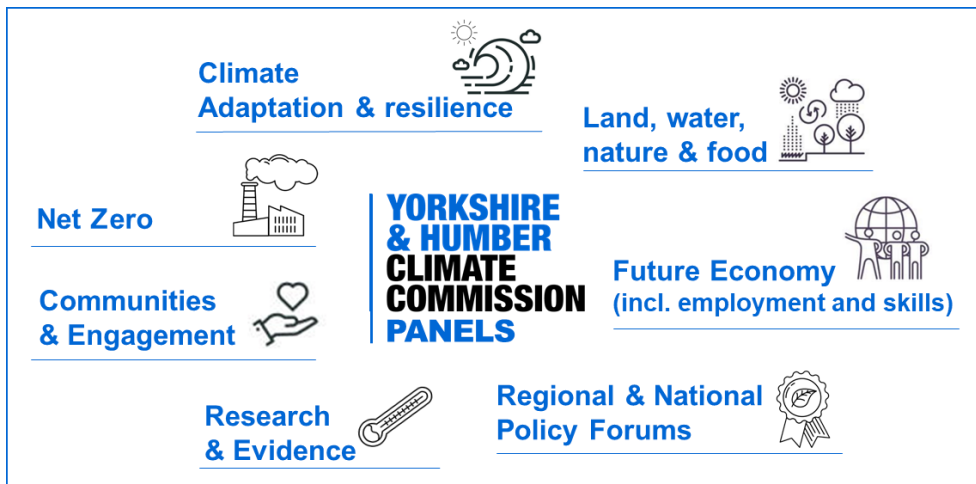
- 2.1.1. The Commission brings together public, private and third sector actors to support, guide and track the delivery of ambitious climate actions across the region.
- 2.1.2. The Commission promotes climate resilience, the transition to net-zero emissions and the protection of nature and biodiversity in a positive, constructive and evidence-based way. Crucially, the Commission seeks to promote actions in a fair, inclusive and just way so that no-one and nowhere is left out or left behind.
- 2.1.3. By operating at the regional scale, the Commission supports, facilitates and emboldens leadership within and across the region whilst also seeking to

collaborate with government on national policy issues and promoting Yorkshire and the Humber in national and international forums and debates.

- 2.1.4. The Commission is an independent entity that informs and works with initiatives across the region (including other local climate commissions and the Yorkshire Climate Action Coalition – a private sector network) to support climate action.
- 2.1.5. The Commission is there to build capacities and to enable cross-sectoral, cross-regional collaboration and transfers of good practice. It is not there to duplicate existing efforts, to act as a platform for campaigning or marketing or to deliver climate actions itself.
- 2.1.6. The Commission is non-hierarchical and has developed a strong inclusive and collaborative culture working effectively with existing and emerging partnerships and organisations.

## **2.2. Structures and membership**

- 2.2.1. The main Commission is made up of an independent Chair; four Vice Chairs who are chosen political representatives for North, South and West Yorkshire and the Humber; 40 Commissioners and two Co-Directors. Four of the Commissioners are senior local/combined authority officers nominated by the authorities in North, South and West Yorkshire and the Humber to represent them. The four officers have geographic lead responsibilities for climate change or related areas within their sub-regional frameworks and are tasked with connecting the Commission to the work of the range of authorities within their area. The lead Chief Exec for Climate within the Yorkshire & Humber Chief Exec forum is also a Commissioner, providing critical leadership that helps ensure strategic alignment within the regional collaboration framework.
- 2.2.2. The 40 Commissioners have been drawn from across the region to represent different areas, groups and organisations, with a balance between the public, private and third sectors. Commissioners will be appointed as individuals on the basis of their experience and knowledge, and also have the support of their employer, organisation, community or network.
- 2.2.3. Membership of the Commission has been subject to some churn during the first 18 months so the secretariat team are reviewing the representation to ensure gaps that have arisen are filled e.g. land management, and links with key sectors are strengthened e.g. health & wellbeing.
- 2.2.4. The work of the main Commission is then complemented by the work of six panels (see Figure 1) and two policy forums. All the panels and forums are supported by a Leadership Group, a secretariat team and a cross cutting steering group for the Climate Action Pledge (see Figure 2).



**Figure 1:** The panels and forums of the Commission



**Figure 2:** The governance of the Commission

2.2.5. The Commission itself meets on a quarterly basis, with each meeting normally being followed by a public engagement event. The Panels each have their own rhythm. Most meet at least twice a quarter, in addition to the Delivering Impact sessions that they host (see Section 4 below). The Regional Policy Forum, Co-Chaired by Wallace Sampson (CX of Harrogate and Y&H CX lead for Climate) and Cllr Jack Hemmingway (Wakefield) meets quarterly, and the National Policy Forum meets annually. It is our ambition that the National Policy Forum will be Co-Chaired by the West and South Yorkshire Mayors.

2.2.6. Altogether, nearly 100 organisations and partnerships are actively and regularly engaged in the work of the Commission and its supporting panels, all giving their time for free. The level of buy-in to the work of the Commission is testament to the significance of the climate agenda within Yorkshire and Humber.

## 2.3. Resources

2.3.1. The Commission was established in March 2021 with financial support from the Yorkshire and Humber Leaders Board (£40k per annum), the Environment

Agency (£15k per annum), Yorkshire Water (£15k per annum), Northern Powergrid (£15k per annum), Northern Gas Networks (£10k per annum) and Yorkshire Building Society (£15k per annum), totalling £330k for the initial three years of the Commission.

- 2.3.2. The secretariat for the Commission is hosted by the University of Leeds. Until September 2022, the Secretariat Team constituted c.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, including two part-time Co-Directors (one of whom is on secondment from the Environment Agency), two part-time researchers and four part-time communications and organisational support staff.
- 2.3.3. Since September 2022, further financial support from the University of Leeds has enabled the team to recruit four Engagement and Impact Officers so that the Secretariat Team is now running with c.8 FTE staff.
- 2.3.4. The University of Leeds has waived all staff overheads associated with the above funding (equivalent to c£100k p.a. for the first 3 years), as has the Environment Agency for their staff contribution to the team (one Co-Director). From September of this year, Leeds University has also funded four extra posts for 18 months (equivalent to c£400k in total inc. overheads) as part of its leadership commitment to invest in climate change and in civic and regional engagement.
- 2.3.5. The Commission has also received support covering some of the co-director's time and the development of its website from the ESRC Place-based Climate Action Network ([PCAN](#)).
- 2.3.6. In-kind contributions have also been made by the TUC, supporting the Future Economy panel (including employment and skills), and by Yorkshire Universities, supporting the Research and Evidence panel.
- 2.3.7. The Chair, Commissioners, Panel Chairs and Panel Members have also made significant in-kind contributions, giving their time, sharing best practice, highlighting issues to investigate as well as access to facilities to host face to face events, and access to their networks, further strengthening the Commission's standing.
- 2.3.8. Any funding is only accepted on the basis that the Commission is an independent entity. All funding support will be fully acknowledged and an explanation of what any funds were spent on will be provided.

2.3.9. An annualised spend and forecast is provided below.

**Expenditure Year 1** April 2021 - March 2022

£105,000 (salaries and £10K towards YHCC Climate Action Plan)

**Expenditure/ Planned expenditure Year 2** April 2022 - March 2023

£119,000 (salaries and £24K for Commonplace Digital Platform)

**Planned expenditure Year 3** April 2023 - March 2024

£106,000 (salaries and £10k for YHCC Climate Action Progress Review)

**Total expenditure (Years 1-3)** **£330,000**

## **2.4. Governance and reporting**

2.4.1. As illustrated in Figure 2 above, the Commission is supported by a Leadership Group that oversees the governance and resourcing of the Commission and ensures that its different activities are coordinated and joined-up. The Leadership Group includes the Chair and Vice Chairs, the Co-directors, the Senior Officers and one of the Chairs of each of the panels and the Climate Action Pledge Working Group. It meets at the mid-point between the quarterly Commission meetings.

2.4.2. The Chair is responsible for approving Commission meeting agendas, with the support of the Vice Chairs and the Co-Directors. The agenda will be based on the agreed forward work programme consistent with the aims and objectives of the Commission.

2.4.3. In order for the Commission meeting to be recognised as an authorised meeting, and for any recommendations or decisions to be valid, a quorum must be present. A quorum shall be defined as a minimum of ten Commissioners plus the Chair and one Vice Chair.

2.4.4. Decisions within the Commission will be made jointly with a preference for a consensus-based approach to decision-making. If a vote is taken, each member of the Commission (including the Chair, Vice Chairs, Co-Directors and Commissioners) will be entitled to one vote, with a two-thirds majority being required for decisions to be approved.

2.4.5. Minutes from main Commission meetings and notes from Panel meetings are all publicly available and the Commission operates on the principle of full transparency wherever possible.

2.4.6. It is accepted that all members of the Commission are likely to have other roles and responsibilities that will often be linked to the activities of the

Commission. Therefore any potential conflicts of interest which arise should be identified to the Chair at the earliest opportunity.

- 2.4.7. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest arising from the agenda are requested at the beginning of each Commission meeting. Declarations of such conflicts are recorded in the minutes of the meetings. The agenda and the meeting are then managed to ensure that these issues are managed appropriately.
- 2.4.8. Commission outputs, such as policy statements, will normally be approved by the Commission as a whole, but where there are differences of opinion that cannot be resolved, these will be acknowledged with a statement that although the majority of the Commission support the output, it cannot be taken to reflect the views of every member of the Commission.
- 2.4.9. The Commission is supported by the Y&H Chief Executives, and as such has links with both the Net Zero & Climate Working Group, led by Wallace Sampson (Harrogate) and the Regional Flooding Group, led by Damian Allen (Doncaster). The Commission, via a Co-Director, also provides annual updates to the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.
- 2.4.10. The Commission is affiliated with the [PCAN Network Plus](#) to enable it to collaborate and learn from the wider network of local and regional climate commissions that are established or are emerging around the UK. [PCAN](#) (the Place-based Climate Action Network) is funded by the [UK Economic and Social Research Council](#) (ESRC).

### **3. Review of key activities and events to date**

- 3.1. The Commission, including the secretariat team, is leading, supporting and enabling a broad range of activities. This section shares three highlights to date to provide a feel of the breadth of impact the Commission is having across the region.
- 3.2. **Highlight #1:** the Climate Action Plan
  - 3.2.1. The Commission prepared a [Climate Action Plan](#) for Yorkshire and Humber, which was launched at the [Climate Change Summit](#) on 10 November 2021. This summit was hosted by the Yorkshire Post and developed in close collaboration with the Commission.
  - 3.2.2. The Climate Action Plan was prepared through a process that depended on intensive collaborations across the Commission and its panels, and extensive stakeholder consultations across the region, with over 500 stakeholders being involved in the generation of the plan. This process of collaboration and consultation helped to ensure that the climate action plan captured the best ideas and built awareness and legitimacy across the region.



- 3.2.3. The 50 recommendations made in the Climate Action Plan deliberately adopt a joined-up, systems-based perspective that recognises the need for cross-cutting changes, especially maintaining focus on a fair and just transition, as well as specific actions on resilience, net zero and nature recovery and the importance of all actors in the region playing an active role in delivery.
- 3.2.4. To improve accessibility and engagement around the plan, we also prepared a [short animation](#) and published summaries of the plan in Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi, Polish and Bengali.
- 3.2.5. Crucially, the Climate Action Plan includes 23 actions where the Commission identified it should play a leading role as we move forward. Appendix 1 illustrates how the 23 actions contribute to the 50 broader actions in the Climate Action Plan.
- 3.2.6. The work programmes of the Commission, facilitated by the Secretariat, includes delivery of these specific actions. It is important to note that from the outset each action was categorised as (a) actions that the Commission will pursue within existing resources, (b) those what will be pursued through collaboration and partnerships and (c) those where additional resources will be needed to enable delivery.
- 3.2.7. The progress on their delivery, as reported to the Commission in September 2022, can be found in Appendix 2. Delivery is on track for all actions committed to within existing resource, and the majority being delivered in collaboration are also progressing smoothly.
- 3.2.8. The Research and Evidence Panel, supported by Yorkshire Universities, have achieved a major success to secure funding to deliver one of the actions that required additional funding:  
"On Research & Evidence: seek to develop a regional climate observatory that will assess risks, analyse policies, scan for best practice and that will develop a Sustainable Progress Index for the region".
- 3.2.9. We are delighted that Yorkshire Universities, in close collaboration with the University of Leeds, has secured £3.8m from the Research England Development Fund to establish a Yorkshire Policy Engagement Research Network (Y-PERN).
- 3.2.10. The Commission, via the Research and Evidence Panel, will now work to ensure that the emerging structures and work continue to be aligned to the actions in the Climate Action Plan, the development of a 'Vitality Index' (an evolution of the Sustainable Progress Index cited above) and supports the Regional and National Policy Forums.

### 3.3. **Highlight #2:** Local, regional & national policy engagements

3.3.1. **Local:** The Commission has been building links and connections into the existing climate and community support/development networks. For example, a co-director and a commissioner presented at the Yorkshire Local Councils Association (YCLA), which represents over 500 town and parish councils across most of the region. As a result, we are exploring with the YLCA how we can best support their members to take climate action, and plan to extend this to include the East Riding, North Lincs Local Councils Association. The Communities and Engagement Panel are also developing a Faith & Climate event that will be held in spring 2023. This will be a multi-faith event, bringing together faith-based communities from across the region to reflect on what they have in common and their role(s) in climate action.

3.3.2. **Regional:** The Commission has developed a Regional Policy Forum (RPF). The forum is open to Exec Board members and portfolio holders from local authorities across the region, as well as lead officers and key partners. There is a clear flow of information from the discussions held within the panels and the main commission into and out of the RPF. The forum provides a space to learn and challenge each other, to do more and be more ambitious. An example of the type of impact this forum has is following a focussed session on Climate Adaptation and Planning the Commission is working with planning leads to develop a set of regional planning principles, based on exemplar best practice in the region, so that all planning authorities can work towards the same higher standard. A second example is a focussed discussion on the Cost of Living Crisis and Carbon Reduction where sessions have been held to examine short-term steps that could be to limit the impacts of energy price rises, especially on fuel poor households. This discussion has also fed into subsequent Commission activities on retrofit and energy efficiency.

3.3.3. **National:** working with the Commission, the secretariat team have developed and made publicly available three nationally relevant products:

- a) A [letter to Prime Minister](#) Rishi Sunak MP that sets out 6 key policy areas where we as a region need more support from national government if we are to achieve our climate ambitions;
- b) Our [regional response](#) to the Net Zero Review (aka the Skidmore review) led by the Dept for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy where we emphasise that achieving net zero is fundamental to the future of the economy;
- c) Our [position on aviation](#) where we have written to the Secretary of State in the Dept for Transport, drawing their attention to the recommendations we make, particularly on the need for a regionally balanced national aviation strategy consistent with the 6<sup>th</sup> Carbon Budget.

### **3.4. Highlight #3 – Yorkshire Climate Summit**

- 3.4.1. The second [Yorkshire Climate Change Summit](#), hosted by the Yorkshire Post and developed in collaboration with the Commission, was held at the Royal Armouries on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The event was a sell out, with all 250 in person tickets being taken, with a broad range of c.110 businesses and organisations including Royal Bank of Scotland, Chambers of Commerce, Mayoral Authorities, UK Infrastructure Bank, NHS, NFU, Deloitte and Walker Morris, all contributing to the discussions on the day.
- 3.4.2. The sessions held through the day covered all four of the pillars of the Commission’s work: adaptation, future economy & skills, supporting progress to net zero including green energy and a focus on a just and fair transition.
- 3.4.3. The Summit highlighted the pressing need for cross-sectoral collaboration across the region, and was a great opportunity to showcase not only the work of the Commission, but of many businesses and organisations.
- 3.4.4. We also used this event to launch the [Yorkshire and Humber Climate Action Pledge](#), see section 4.4 below for more information.

## **4. Review of current and planned activities**

- 4.1. The Commission, including the secretariat team, is leading, supporting and enabling a broad range of activities across all aspects of the Climate Action Plan. This section shares three highlights of work planned during 2023 to provide a feel of the breadth of impact the Commission will continue to have across the region.
- 4.2. **Highlight #1**: LA Climate Adaptation Programme
  - 4.2.1. The [YHCC Climate Action Plan](#) sets out 50 Actions for the Region, 15 of which are focussed on climate resilience and adaptation. Many Local Authorities in the region have already included climate change in their priorities<sup>1</sup>.
  - 4.2.2. However, informal and anonymous feedback, structured using the actions identified in the Climate Action Plan and gathered via the Commission’s Regional Policy Forum (RPF), indicated that most are unsure about how to start their climate adaptation journeys, particularly beyond flood and coastal erosion risk mitigation.
  - 4.2.3. Following a discussion at the RPF in June 2022, a small task and finish group formed to develop a programme to support Local Authorities to become

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<sup>1</sup> Yorkshire and Humber councils website; From: <https://www.yhcouncils.org.uk/our-priorities/> [Accessed 26/07/2022]

confident to develop and implement adaptation actions to reduce their vulnerabilities to current and future climate risks across all their services.

4.2.4. This programme has been supported by the Y&H Chief Executives, and thirteen authorities across the region are taking part (see Table 1 below). We believe this shows critical and strong leadership, will provide evidence and insight for national government to start to set a common vision and standards, and understand the scale of investment, change and support needed to be more resilient to climate change.

4.2.5. The programme launches on the 23 November and will run through 2023. The aims of the programme are:

- a) Support LAs to better understand and manage the impacts of a changing climate on their organisations and services they provide,
- b) Develop a new multi-service & collaborative network of LA climate leaders across the region, generating momentum and action,
- c) Gather robust evidence that can be used to develop tight and attractive cases for investment in adaptation actions across the region.

Calderdale Council	Leeds City Council	Sheffield City Council
Doncaster Council	North East Lincolnshire Council	Wakefield Council
East Riding Council	North Lincolnshire Council	York City Council
Hull City Council	North Yorkshire Council (acknowledging the transition phase NYCC is going through)	
Kirklees Council	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	

**Table 1:** Local Authorities taking part in the LA Climate Adaptation Programme

### 4.3. **Highlight #2** – the Climate Action Pledge

4.3.1. The Commission has just launched the [Yorkshire and Humber Climate Action Pledge](#) that invites organisations in the region to commit to the development and delivery of ambitious actions that are aligned with the Commission’s goals.

4.3.2. We aim to secure commitments from the biggest companies and public sector bodies in the region as well as from SMEs and community groups, with all signatories also being invited to support their suppliers and customers, and their employees and communities, to match their commitment to climate action in the region. The promotional flyer is appended to this paper for reference and use (see Appendix 3).

4.3.3. The Commission is building a connection with the private sector network – the Climate Action Coalition – run by Deloitte and Walker Morris, so that

signatories are supported by that network. The Commission is also developing an on-line climate leadership programme.

4.3.4. We are delighted that several organisations and businesses had already taken the Climate Action Pledge prior to the launch, and these included Hull City Council, the Environment Agency, Greenhead College and the West Yorkshire Health & Care Partnership.

**4.4. Highlight #3 - Delivering Impact sessions and on-line consultations**

4.4.1. The Commission has recently embarked on a programme of 'Delivering Impact' sessions that will now run until November 2023.

4.4.2. These sessions will identify practical actions that can be taken across the region in order to establish or accelerate action on climate resilience, net zero, nature restoration and protection, and moving us towards a sustainable future economy.

4.4.3. The Commission is using the sessions to focus on key issues such as addressing the cost-of-living crisis, promoting retrofit, strengthening adaptation planning, promoting green jobs and skills investment and creating the basis to develop a regional approach to land use.

4.4.4. In every session, insights are drawn from leading national experts, policy and planning measures are explored and practical experiences from within the region are evaluated. Outputs from each session will propose practical next steps appropriate for the topic at hand.

4.4.5. Outputs from these sessions and consultations will be reviewed by the Commission and will form the basis for extensive stakeholder engagement, primarily (but not exclusively) via the online Common Place platform to ensure that diverse groups from across the region are able participate in the process.

4.4.6. The programme of Delivering Impact sessions is also supported by the Commission's Research and Evidence Panel. This panel is hosted by Yorkshire Universities, and we are delighted that they, along with the University of Leeds, have been successful in securing £3.8m for Y-PERN. This funding will provide much needed resource linking the academic experts in our region into policy shaping and decision making, including on climate and nature.

4.4.7. All of the outputs will then be drawn together in a 'Climate Action Progress Review' report and promoted at an event that is being planned for March 2024, marking the end of Phase 1 of the Commission.

## 5. Planning for the future

- 5.1. The Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission is the largest such body across the UK. However, as the Commission was only established to run until March 2024, we must now start to plan for what happens next.
- 5.2. The scale of the challenge we are trying to address is immense and the need for action is increasingly urgent. The review of progress on emissions reductions at COP27 puts us on track for a global temperature increase of 2.7°C – this is well into the temperature range that will trigger dangerous and run-away climate change. This is incredibly serious and means we must accelerate our leadership and investment in climate adaptation and resilience, alongside continuing to drive down emissions from the region.
- 5.3. Below are some key points and statistics help to bring the scale of the challenge to life.

### 5.3.1. **Adaptation and a Just Transition:**

- a) We are currently at 1.2°C of average global warming – when compared to pre-industrial levels. This is still under the threshold of 1.5°C where the climate science predicts the impacts of climate change will accelerate and considerably under the 2.7°C of warming that will occur even if countries across the world fulfil their current commitments. Even with 1.2°C of warming, across the UK:
  - there were 3,271 additional deaths from the heatwaves this summer (official estimate from ONS), up from 2,566 in 2020 (official estimate from PHE), and a Level 4 heatwave alert was issued for the first time in the UK in 2022;
  - food production is already being impacted: average potato yields in England and Wales were down 20% following the hot, dry 2018 summer. Wheat yields in 2020 were down 40% due to the wet winter in comparison to 2019;
  - in 2022 we had 3 named storms hit the region within a week (a national first); had temperatures soar over 40 degrees in July with a Level 4 heatwave alert issued by the Met Office (another first) and major incidents declared due to wildfires. Our region was one of several with hose pipe bans issued and there remains serious concern regarding drought impact on public water supply for 2023.
- b) Future summers are projected to be even hotter and drier than previously estimated, with temperature extremes warming 15-48% faster than the UK summer mean annual temperature. In Yorkshire we can expect 0.30 - 0.35m of sea level rise in a 2°C warmer climate and the third Climate Change Risk Assessment states that winter extreme rainfall is projected to be around 40% more intense than previously projected in CCRA2. Extreme flooding, such as that seen on the Humber in December 2013, will occur more regularly and with growing consequences. New evidence on frequency of rainfall exceeding

30mm/hr for some UK cities show such events are twice as likely by 2080.<sup>2</sup>

- c) The independent assessment of the UK's third Climate Change Risk Assessment published in 2021 states, "at the national level the scale of action does not meet the scale of risk. In neither nation [Scotland or England] are there sufficient plans in place for ensuring adaptation is underway for even a 2°C scenario, let alone a 4°C scenario" and that "only four out of 61 risks and opportunities in the risk assessment are deemed to be managed sufficiently on the basis of planned adaptation actions".<sup>3</sup>
- d) Economically, it has been predicted that climate change could lead to impacts with a value that will rise to 3.3% of GDP by 2050<sup>4</sup> – which at current prices would mean climate impacts increasing to an annual value of £4.6 billion within the region in the next 28 years. Building resilience and promoting adaptation to address climate risks and minimise these costs could therefore have a massive economic impact in the region.

### 5.3.2. **Net Zero & a Just Transition:**

- a) It has been estimated that collectively we need to invest c.1% of our GDP – which in Yorkshire and Humber would mean £1.4 billion a year<sup>5</sup> - on the transition to net zero. The question of how to stimulate this level of investment – not only from government and local authorities but also from businesses and householders – is a major priority.
- b) There are pressing social and economic reasons for investing in net zero:
  - The energy-price spike could put 70% of our households in fuel poverty in January of next year:
  - Although 11% of our regional workforce (e.g. 250,000 people) could see demand for their skills grow as we transition to net zero, 10% of our workforce (e.g. 240,000 people) could see demand for their skills fall.
  - Our total regional energy bill has grown from £10bn to over £18bn a year as a result of increasing energy prices, but we could save £2.4bn a year and create 32,800 years of extra employment in the region just by investing in cost-effective low carbon and energy efficiency measures.
- c) The latest data suggests that we are currently decarbonising at a rate of 3-4% a year. This speed at which we are decarbonising has accelerated in recent years, and some initiatives have yet to generate results that show up in the data, however this rate of change needs to be doubled or even trebled if we are to achieve our target of reaching net zero by 2038.

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<sup>2</sup> [Independent-Assessment-of-UK-Climate-Risk-Advice-to-Govt-for-CCRA3-CCC.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Independent-Assessment-of-UK-Climate-Risk-Advice-to-Govt-for-CCRA3-CCC.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [Independent-Assessment-of-UK-Climate-Risk-Advice-to-Govt-for-CCRA3-CCC.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Independent-Assessment-of-UK-Climate-Risk-Advice-to-Govt-for-CCRA3-CCC.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/publication/what-will-climate-change-cost-the-uk/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf>.

### 5.3.3. **Nature:**

- a) Biodiversity underpins our wellbeing and all economic activity in the UK, yet declines continue.
- b) For example, in upland areas there is a predicted decline in the suitability of the climate for 75% of present-day upland species by 2100. The uplands provide significant & vital ecosystem services for the rest of the region, from carbon sequestration to water regulation. Such drastic declines would have significant economic consequences for not only the region but the country.<sup>6</sup>
- e) Nationally, 60% of all the SSSI land in 'Unfavourable Recovering' condition is in the uplands - 335,000 hectares. Which means 85% of upland SSSI land needs ongoing recovery, and 32% of upland blanket bog is not protected as a statutory nature conservation site.<sup>7</sup>
- f) Warmer winters are influencing outbreaks of pests and pathogens. The predicted changes in England's climate could create increasingly favourable conditions for many invasive, non-native species. These are one of the top five threats to England's natural environment, with an estimated economic cost of £1.3bn per year.<sup>8</sup>

## 5.4. What happens after March 2024?

5.4.1. In our view, there are three main options:

### **Option 1 - The Commission ceases to operate when existing funding commitments run out in March 2024.**

- We hope that the importance of the issue, the scale of the challenge and the progress that has been made by the Commission to date would make this option highly undesirable.

### **Option 2 – The Commission continues to operate on the same basis as now.**

- Until recently, the total direct budget for the Commission amounted to c.£110k per year or c.£330k for three years. With support from the University of Leeds and the Environment Agency in waiving overheads on staff employed using this money, and with further staff time supported by the ESRC Place-based Climate Action Network (PCAN), the effective value of this funding has been significantly increased.
- Whilst valuable work can of course be done with such a budget, we will also clearly continue to fall behind the pace of changes we are trying to mitigate and adapt to. Therefore, trying to address the scale of the

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<sup>6</sup> [Independent-Assessment-of-UK-Climate-Risk-Advice-to-Govt-for-CCRA3-CCC.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [National Upland Outcomes: A framework to help develop local partnership outcomes \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Independent-Assessment-of-UK-Climate-Risk-Advice-to-Govt-for-CCRA3-CCC.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](#)



challenges, with the pace and ambition needed on a budget of this scale is not recommended.

- Furthermore, it is not clear whether existing sponsors will renew their support for an extended period, and as we are all aware, the current economic situation is challenging.

**Option 3 – The Commission continues – with some evolution – and an increased and more sustainable funding model is established.**

- We estimate that for the period March 2024 - March 2030 c.£10m funding is required to enable the Commission to continue to grow and evolve to meet the needs of the region in the face of the challenges outlined above.
- We have secured in principle commitments from the University of Leeds that amounts to c.£3m for the six-year period from April 2024 to March 2030. We are also in the process of applying for a share of £5m for further funding that will enable us to retain key staff and build on the work already underway, with a focus on how to stimulate the levels of investment needed to promote climate resilience, the transition to net zero and nature protection across the region.
- To unlock the funding mentioned above, we require active buy-in - including continued and extended financial support - from the Yorkshire & Humber Leaders Board and other key sponsors.
- It is important to note that such support will enable Yorkshire and the Humber to avoid or minimise some of the major costs that climate change will impose on the region, and to stimulate the significant levels of investment in net zero that are needed to unlock significant social and economic benefits in the region.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 6.1. As demonstrated through the actions highlighted in this report, the Commission is playing a major role in building capacities for effective climate action across the region.
- 6.2. The Commission is:
  - a) facilitating both cross-regional and cross-sectoral climate action, enabling collaboration, pooling scarce resources and sharing best practices across the region
  - b) bringing people from different sectors together to engage in positive, constructive, evidence-based debate, and in so doing changing the nature of the conversation, engaging with the practical realities of how to effectively deliver ambitious climate actions
  - c) actively seeking engagement from diverse communities, promoting a fair and inclusive transition and demonstrating the contribution that climate action can make to enhancing people's lives especially at a time when there are obviously other pressing priorities

d) connecting to national government, showcasing the region's leadership whilst also making the case for the national policy support that we need to tackle this key agenda.

6.3. We recommend close working between the Leadership Group of the Commission and the Yorkshire and Humber Leaders Board to secure further funding for the Commission to continue from 2024-2030. We recommend that this is done in line with Option 3 presented in section 5.4.1 in order to enable the region to respond to climate change at the pace and scale required, and that through this close working we align and confirm the key areas of focus for the next phase of the Commission.