



Main Commission Meeting
10 July 2024 15.00 - 17.30
The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, S1 4FW

Minutes

Welcome and Introductions

- This is the first meeting of phase two. There is an acknowledgement of the need to take advantage of post-election momentum.

Apologies

Cllr Paul West, Deborah Harkins, Stuart Strathdee, Bruce Heppenstall, Ian Floyd, Andy Gouldson, Rachael Bice, Jack Hemingway, Martin Budd, Simon Pringle, Jatinder Singh Mehmi, Natasha Nauth, Alexis Percival, Cllr Paul West, Emma Bridge, Peter O'Brien, Kate Josephs, Polly Cook

Minutes from the last meeting

The minutes from the last meeting (March 2024) were approved.

Action Summary from this meeting

1. Future discussion on working with, and adapting, the 'growth narrative' to be arranged (RF)
2. Reflections & learnings on engagement approaches to be incorporated into future work planning (Core Groups, Flagship Projects, supported by Commissions Team)
3. Development of Terms of Reference to be done with the Leadership Group and brought back to a future meeting (Leadership Group & RF)

Reflections from Green Estate Tour

- Impressed by community engagement and revenue generation of the site. Generated from within the community
- Business modelling key to success and university partnerships (focus on tradable products/services).
- Important not to undervalue such community development skills.
- Challenge with biodiversity net zero work but Green Estate could serve as model.
- Many impressed by the sustainability/resilience of this model.
- A suggestion Green Estate could connect with Nature North.

Recruitment Updates

- Chair
- Commissioners
- Associates & Affiliates

An update on recruitment was provided by Rosa Foster with information provided in Paper 1 and the Commissioner Profiles pdf.

- Commissioners were encouraged to share the Associate / Affiliate recruitment in their networks.
- It was suggested to broaden the search outside of typical sustainability background or networks for some of the Associate/Affiliate roles. Many agree there is potential value in this. One idea is to identify people through skills projects.
- There were questions about specifying our core objectives for these positions, then targeting who could support this.
- There was concern that the Associate/Affiliate role doesn't become simply a 'rubber stamp' but a genuine position for change.

General Election results: Reflections & Implications

Rosa gave an overview of election results and possible consequences.

- Questions were raised about the impact of the overall Reform vote & connection between electoral turnout and green/climate vote. This needs further analysis to fully understand.
- Noted that the climate conversation was mostly avoided in GE run up. Highlighted the increasing need for the Brave Space blog and its value.
- Suggested we should dig into party manifestos to see what overlap/opportunities there are. Count 'friendly' MPs who are connected to our work. Big opportunities in this area (e.g universities, think tanks) networks.
- GB energy – discussion about what role Yorkshire/Humber could play (even though most jobs largely in Scotland). Appetite to present Yorkshire and Humber as organised and ready to do business with.
- Regional Devolution: Important to consider especially in terms of Yorkshire Mayors, suggested housing/energy big government priorities. YHCC needs to be a 'go to' as part of these discussions (through publications).

Update on publications & release dates (presented by Kate Lock)

- Our Carbon Story to be released on Yorkshire Day 1 August with a stall at the Yorkshire Day event in York.
- The external launch of the Climate Action Plan is scheduled for Thursday 26 September, but there will be a preview for attendees at the Whole Commission Day on the 18 Sep.
- The new website is due to be ready for the CAP launch on the 26 September.
- There will be a visit to Westminster for Parliamentary Evidence Week (poss. In November) to talk about our work.

Engagement strategies with MPs/representatives

- Agreement that there is a good opportunity to build our relationship with regional MPs, particularly those who now sit within the cabinet office, therefore need to engage ASAP.
- Suggestion to organize roundtable during post-election 'honeymoon' phase.
- Suggestion of pan-regional (Yorkshire) MPs key to bring together. Need to be a part of GB energy in some way. OCS could be the prompt for this discussion.
- Questions about whether MPs will defer up if climate discussions started separately with them

- Shift in way we work due to Labor majority. Need to cultivate local MPs and get them to influence government, working closely with Mayors & MCAs.
- Should collaborate locally and nationally. Think about parliamentary selection committees and who is on these?
- Consensus in the room that we need to focus on 3 key messages only. Keep consistent & be broad in engagement.
- Need to target transport secretary. Operational differences between Mayoral offices need to be recognised. E.g. Humber operating as a distinct economic entity.
- Highlighted planning & housing as a priority and be proactive in creating an 'offer' to avoid it being seen as a barrier to progress.
- Stress the need to coordinate the invitations with MPs (e.g. whether representatives should be engaged together or separately).
- Some Commissioners reflected on the need to frame the discussion in terms of 'growth' (as it's one of Labour's missions). Rosa raised point that focusing on 'growth' might be counterproductive in the long run, so there is a balance to be found, working with the current narrative whilst also constructively supporting a shift to a different approach. Consensus in the room that this merits further discussion, supporting the Commissioners to explore how to strike this balance and what the tangible alternatives are.
 - In the meantime, focus on co-benefits, mix in positive language; prosperity, health and wellbeing, thriving.

BREAK (15 mins)

Overview of current work programme

- Insight Papers (the DI Programme outputs)

(Support sought)

- Status of Core Groups & Flagship Projects

Rosa gave an overview to DI programme & papers timelines for the rest of the year, goals, topics. (info on Paper 2) Commissioners were asked if they have questions or are happy with this process. Support was given to the process presented, however there was wide acknowledgement that whilst it has been very beneficial in some key regards, it hasn't had the public engagement impact that was initially hoped for, and on some topics, engagement has been really low, despite a lot of work from the Commissions' Team. The Commissioners shared reflections on this. These are captured below to ensure we adjust and adapt our approaches based on what we have learnt and the professional experience of our Commissioners.

Public Engagement with DI papers

- The level of Commonplace engagement was questioned (low uptake overall)
- It was suggested to select the DI topics that deliver the biggest impact only, if audience engagement/reach low. Some DI papers will be prioritised given the new political landscape.
- Consider an offline approach to getting DI feedback. Be active in taking this to events. Also posed the question about ethics around paying people to complete surveys (has been used by universities) depending on socio-economic group. Something to discuss further.
- Reservations about Commonplace reach, as some Commissioners weren't aware of it. Questions about how to get the 'unengaged' audience involved.
- Some reservations about how we use Commonplace and whether there is a different way we could be using it. Suggested making it localised and framing questions around this.
- Agreed the potential issue with the platform but also discussed whether DI papers are best method of engagement. Stressed the need to identify target audience and create appropriate communications accordingly. The papers, whilst well written, cover a lot of

ground and could simply be too dense for easy engagement. They are certainly too long for that purpose. They are very valuable to the Commission, and to partners, but that doesn't make them, or Commonplace, effective engagement tools.

- What are the analytics? E.g. do the other methods of engagement get better returns.
- Can't rely on organic engagement so could potentially use paid advertisements/reach.
- The academic underpinning of the DI papers is important, but perhaps need to present them differently to improve engagement.

Commissioner Goals

- Group discussions finessing the Commissioner Goals section for the updated Climate Action Plan

Jon provided an update on the Climate Action plan (see paper 4) and asked Commissioners to reflect on goals section of the Climate Action Plan. Commissioners were split into groups to discuss the goals with a Commission team member on each table to take notes.

General headline points from each table:

- Commission is a midway point between academic/public, this should be reflected in our choice of language
- Personal narratives/stories arise from these goals
- Potentially too many goals – could reduce the number of them
- Need more about interconnectedness of nature and climate
- Missing a topline vision perhaps
- Could emphasise participation/democracy language
- Discussion of whether goals should be presented as the vision or the process

A discussion was planned on the Commission Model & Terms of Reference updates (for discussion and approval, and Paper 3 was circulated prior to the meeting), However, due to valuable discussions earlier in the meeting over-running, we didn't have time to explore this properly and the Commission agreed that this could be developed further with the Leadership Group and brought back to the Commission at a later date.

Date of the next Commission meeting: 23 October 3-5.30, online. Note this is a change of date.

Attended

Chair Liz Barber

Vice Chairs

North Yorkshire - Cllr Claire Douglas, Leader of York City Council

South Yorkshire – Cllr Ben Miskell (From 4.30pm)

Director

Rosa Foster, University of Leeds

Senior Officer Nominees

Commissioners

Adam Ashman, Yorkshire Water

Amandeep Kaur Maan, Eco-Sikh (sharing Commissioner role with Jatinder Singh Mehmi)

Charlee Bewsher, RYCA

Jonathan Oxley, CBI

Helen Slinger, Accounting for Sustainability (A4S)

Martyn Broadest, Connect Housing Association

Mel Taylor, Just Strategy

Mike Dugher, Environment Agency

Oliver Harmar, Natural England

Peter Cole, Transport for the North

Richard Beardsworth, University of Leeds

Roz Davies, Green Estate

Sajalu Greenall, Northern Gas Networks

Sam Perry, TUC

Sarah Clark, Aura Innovation Centre, University of Hull

Simon Bowens, Yorkshire and the Northeast Friends of the Earth

Siobhan Barton, Northern Power Grid

Steven Turnbull, Wakefield Council (sharing Commissioner role with Deborah Harkins)

Will Solomon, RYCA

Secretariat

Kathryn Lock, Policy and Communications Manager

Amelia Duncan, Policy Fellow

Kat Armstrong, Engagement and Impact Officer

Sam Herbert, Engagement and Impact Officer

Jon Kedward, Engagement and Impact Officer

Matt Gibbons, Communications Officer

Catherine Homoky, Communications Officer

Muriel Bonjean Stanton, Engagement and Impact Officer