



# STRATEGY 2040

**YORKSHIRE & HUMBER  
CLIMATE COMMISSION**

# INTRODUCTION

## **We are already living with climate change here in Yorkshire and the Humber.**

Climate change is impacting our homes and communities, our businesses and infrastructure, our agriculture, water and wildlife. It is also affecting our health and so our economy. In the years ahead, these impacts will happen more often and will hit harder. They will increasingly shape daily life: the air we breathe, the food we eat, the jobs we do, and the green spaces and natural landscapes we love and rely on for our wellbeing, livelihoods and security. The greatest impacts are, and will be, felt by people and places already under the most pressure.

Yorkshire and the Humber has a proud and long history of innovation. The region has often led the way. It needs to do so again, now and consistently, to protect the essentials of a good life: warm, secure homes, clean air and water, nutritious food, good work.

This is an opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities, generate good jobs and economic opportunities, restore our natural environment, and build the resilience we need to live well in a changing climate. A prosperous society is only real when people feel it in their health, security and everyday lives. The best, most resilient and sustainable outcomes will be achieved by working alongside families, communities and businesses across the region, and acting in step with the evidence.

Many of the changes that are needed will bring rapid health benefits to families and communities that are most disadvantaged and most at risk. These changes mean they will benefit from warmer homes, lower bills, cleaner air, better food, and better access to healthy travel choices and thriving green spaces. Preparing for a changing climate means protecting what matters most. Strengthening local resilience will reduce long-term costs and will enable the people, economy and nature of the region to be stronger, safer and fairer now and for future generations.



**This is an opportunity for community health and wellbeing, for good jobs and the economy, and for resilience and the natural environment**

## Building a climate-resilient region, together.

The challenges Yorkshire and the Humber face are significant. However, by coming together and applying our renowned grit, determination, and deep-rooted pride in community and place, a secure, thriving, climate-resilient and low-carbon region is possible. We're here to help make it happen. This strategy sets out our vision for 2040, our role, what we do and how we do it.

The Commission exists to inspire and accelerate joined-up climate action that is informed and led by the people and places of Yorkshire and the Humber. As the sole independent and politically supported collaboration working on climate action across the region, we balance here-and-now pressures with future-focused thinking.

We bring together communities, businesses, local and devolved government and anchor institutions, helping ensure that the evidence, knowledge and skills needed to keep people in work, create good jobs, strengthen local services, build climate resilience, restore nature and cut emissions are shared across the region and used effectively. We can't directly set policy or mandate action – that accountability lies with elected and organisational boards and leaders.

Strong national government action – clear legislation, consistent policies and sustained investment – has greatest impact when it's matched with local partnerships that bring people, leaders and organisations together to shape solutions rooted in a deep appreciation and love of our places. When decisions are made in true partnership and dialogue with those most affected, climate action is a positive and powerful way to boost local livelihoods, strengthen pride, improve health, restore nature and prepare for the future. Collaboration on climate action protects the people and places we care about while strengthening our economy, public services and security.



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# OUR VISION FOR 2040



## **Yorkshire and the Humber will have a fairer and prosperous society**

because secure transition pathways for workers, sectors and communities will be developed with the people most affected and will be successfully implemented. People will have fulfilling work, be healthier for longer and experience fewer preventable illnesses, creating a stronger economy. New development and investment in places will help reduce inequalities between neighbourhoods, improving access to essential services, quality green and blue spaces, affordable healthy food and safe, sustainable ways of travelling.



## **Yorkshire and the Humber will be a nature-rich, thriving and resilient region**

because nature's full value will be recognised and embedded in decisions made by councils, businesses, landowners and investors. By treating nature as more than a resource and reconnecting with the living systems that support us, people, communities and businesses will benefit from vibrant green spaces and healthier lakes, rivers and coastlines that provide cooler air, cleaner water and thriving landscapes, as well as sustainable and resilient food supply chains and better mental and physical health. The region will also have reduced exposure to drought, flood and wildfire risks as fragmented habitats are connected and restored, increasing natural resilience.



## **Yorkshire and the Humber will be prepared for a changing climate**

because our homes, infrastructure, places and services will be planned and designed for long-term resilience to a changing climate, adapting to at least two degrees of warming and preparing for four degrees. This is fiscally responsible because failing to act now is likely to lead to far higher costs later, including damage to homes, infrastructure, health and local economies. Good preparation means fewer people will be harmed by heat, flooding and storms, and poor air quality. Supply chains for essential goods, food and businesses will remain stable and secure so that critical health and care services, communities and local economies can continue to function. Where you live or how much you earn won't determine how safe you are from climate impacts.



## **Yorkshire and the Humber will have a secure, sustainable and clean energy and transport system**

because our energy and transport systems will be clean, secure and affordable, helping people to live healthy lives and breathe cleaner air whilst actively contributing to the economy. Low-carbon, healthy and accessible travel choices will support everyday wellbeing and help reduce inequalities. Communities and businesses will benefit from stronger circular supply chains, renewable energy and warm, healthy homes, enabled by ambitious retrofit and planning policies that prioritise those most affected by cold, damp and inefficient housing.



# OUR ROLE AS A COMMISSION

**We inspire, accelerate and guide ambitious, joined-up action on climate and nature across critical sectors in the region.**

**We put impacted communities and the natural systems they depend upon front and centre, to help create a thriving, resilient, prosperous and low-carbon Yorkshire and the Humber for people and places now and in the future.**

## WHAT WE DO

**We shape and drive shared ambitions by setting out evidence-based priorities on climate, health and inequalities through the region's Climate Action Plan and shared policy principles.**

We support early, informed decision-making by providing clear evidence and policy briefs, and responding to consultations. We raise awareness to help leaders, communities and investors understand risks, choices and opportunities, unlocking action.

**We inform and inspire by building a strong sense of how the future could be.**

We show that progress is achievable, drawing in learning from others and sharing our insights widely. We celebrate successes, showcase the stories of local changemakers, especially where climate action is improving health and reducing inequalities.

We track and communicate regional progress, challenging inaction appropriately. We help share evidence, learning and innovation from across the region nationally and internationally. This strengthens our collective agency and the region's appeal to partners and investors.

**We connect and convene people, communities and organisations, building trust.**

We do this through the projects, initiatives and forums we run, supporting and connecting networks and partnerships. We foster innovation, maximise the impact of new research and help accelerate action that leads to long-term, systemic change.

# HOW WE DO IT

## Our guiding principles

### Act with urgency and determination

We do not have much time: we are close to dangerous levels of warming, and environmental and community health are at risk of severe breakdown. Progress depends on people talking to one another – individuals, communities and organisations working together across sectors and places to shape the changes we need.

We will prioritise high-impact actions and move quickly, using rapid, good-enough-to-try pilots, reviewing regularly and seeking to scale what works, and learning from what doesn't.

### Use evidence, challenge business as usual

In our region we have world-class universities with global networks and a strong track record of innovation and regional collaboration. We also have leading practitioners, community leaders and land custodians with deep knowledge of our sectors, industries, places and people.

We bring this knowledge and evidence together to balance immediate pressures with future-focused thinking and to challenge business-as-usual approaches. Drawing on robust research and local, often tacit, place-based insight allows us to replace generic, top-down methods with context-specific approaches that foster innovation, reduce risk and build confidence in decision-making.

### Value nature

We ensure the natural world – which we are part of and depend upon – is represented and accounted for in our decisions. We recognise its full ecological, cultural, social and economic value and act to restore and sustain the living systems that support the region's livelihoods and economy.

### Care for current and future generations

The decisions we make now will profoundly affect the quality of life and health of those yet to be born. We will consider and incorporate the needs of future generations in our decisions and actively include young people in our work.



# OUR CULTURE AND VALUES

**As a Commission that brings together people from diverse sectors, places and backgrounds, having a strong, shared culture is essential.**

**Our values provide the foundation that enables us to work effectively together, build trust and inspire meaningful action.**



## Connection

Climate action succeeds when people feel connected to one another and to the places they care about. Building and creating connections means valuing and welcoming all voices – rural, coastal, urban, young, old and from all backgrounds and industries, with and alongside the needs of nature. We create honest, respectful spaces where people from our culturally rich and diverse region can listen, learn, find common ground and work together.



## Motivation

Our motivation comes from seeing how collective action creates lasting change and from the future we know we can shape together. We meet big challenges by focusing on the region's strengths – its communities, industries, landscapes and creativity. By enabling people and showing how everyone can contribute, we build the momentum needed to create a thriving, resilient and low-carbon Yorkshire and the Humber for communities now and in the future.



## Curiosity

Being curious keeps us open to new ideas, new voices and new perspectives. It pushes us to look beyond familiar approaches and explore what might be possible. It helps us question assumptions and explore better ways forward, guided by evidence, lived experience and the deep knowledge of our region.



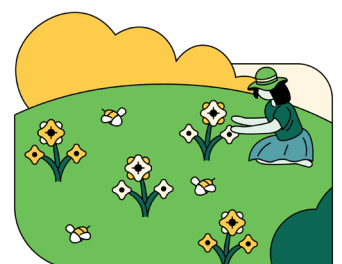
## Integrity

We are guided by what our region needs – its people, places and natural environment – rather than what is convenient. We speak plainly about risks, trade-offs and opportunities, and we hold ourselves accountable to the communities we serve. Trust is essential to climate action, and integrity is how we earn and maintain it.



## Ambition

Preparing for and reducing the impacts of climate change demands more than incremental progress at business-as-usual pace. It requires ambition that matches the scale and urgency of the challenge. We set high standards for ourselves and for the region, striving for outcomes that are transformative, not merely adequate. Our ambition is rooted in possibility and the belief that Yorkshire and the Humber can lead the way.



# OUR 2040 GOALS

We have taken great care to set ourselves robust, clear 2040 goals. They are our North Star. The very nature of the work of the Commission means that our ability to succeed relies on our partners having the time, skills and resources to engage. The reality is that changes in national direction and investment plans could either reduce or significantly enhance the impact of our convening role.

We are not currently resourced to deliver all of the work that is needed to support the realisation of these goals. We will need to prioritise and seek to grow, securing appropriate funding. Our approach to these issues will be set out in our five-year strategy (2026–2030).



## A climate transition that supports a fairer and prosperous society

**1. Just transition principles are embedded early and by default** across policy, planning and investment, so that climate policy improves everyday life in the places that need it most. Measures include enabling better housing quality, creating good secure jobs, increasing access to services and green and blue spaces, and supporting healthier lives.

**The Commission’s role:** We convene partners, broker data and evidence, and help embed fair-work and fairness checks across policy, planning and investment. We work with thought, sector and community leaders to develop good-enough-to-try pilots, testing and developing best practice.

**We will step back when** public bodies and businesses apply these principles automatically in statutory plans, business cases and procurement without external prompting.

**2. Transition planning is holistic, place-based and supports those most affected** including workers, young people, communities and businesses, while protecting livelihoods and creating good, green jobs that improve health. The plans directly address how a low-carbon, nature-positive transition shapes the way people live, travel, work, eat, care and connect.

**The Commission’s role:** We develop shared metrics, convene universities/ statutory partners, share methods for meaningful participation, broker shared frameworks for place-based or sector-based transition planning and design a transparent “state of the transition” approach. We pilot viable transition plans (place and/or sector), supporting rapid learning and adoption.

**We will step back when** combined authorities, statutory bodies and businesses routinely produce, publish and use transition plans and metrics without our involvement.

**3. Communities, local institutions, SMEs and households are able to shape, participate in and benefit from climate action**, because they have the capabilities, resources, confidence and power they need.

**The Commission’s role:** We convene partners to strengthen local capability, broker evidence on engagement and participation, highlight gaps in community capacity, and help embed investment in social foundations across policy and planning.



**We will step back when** public bodies and anchor institutions routinely invest in social foundations and community capacity, and participation from those most at risk is embedded, valued and continuous.

**4. Independent monitoring and evaluation of fairness, nature, resilience, health and emissions is in place** for the long term, and informs local and regional decision-making in public and private sectors.

**The Commission’s role:** We build, align and quality-assure an independent regional monitoring system with open data and consistent metrics. We develop trial regional “state of the transition” reports, refining indicators, storytelling and improving adoption rates.

**We will step back when** independent monitoring and evaluation functions are fully established, self-sustaining and routinely inform decisions across the region.



## A nature-rich, thriving and resilient region

**1. Nature is back on the path to recovery at landscape and seascape scale** (30x30 is secured and the region is confidently progressing to its ambition of 50x50).

**The Commission’s role:** We convene land, marine and regulatory partners, align local nature recovery strategies and catchment evidence, and help secure durable governance and funding.

**We will step back when** nature recovery partnerships, institutions and funding cycles operate independently and consistently deliver, monitor and report progress.

**2. Nature-based solutions are embedded at scale in everyday places** creating climate-ready blue-green networks that improve health, reduce risk and support sustainable food systems.

**The Commission’s role:** We bring planners, public health and NHS services, utilities and land managers together; support evidence and prioritisation; and mainstream nature-based solutions into spatial and economic decisions, using pilots to integrate into everyday settings, emerging learning and insights from delivery organisations to accelerate adoption.

**We will step back when** nature-based solutions are routinely designed into plans, infrastructure and investment decisions, with durable cross-sector governance overseeing delivery.

**3. More people have frequent, meaningful contact with nature**, improving mental and physical health and driving a societal shift in how nature is valued.

**The Commission’s role:** We connect health, community and environment partners, share evidence, and support innovative and proven approaches that improve access and equity, encouraging focus in nature-deprived neighbourhoods, schools and health settings.

**We will step back when** health systems, councils and community partners routinely deliver and track nature-based wellbeing programmes without needing our convening role.

**4. The region has transitioned to a regenerative, sustainable and resilient food system** that is climate-adaptive and resilient to current and future challenges.



**The Commission’s role:** We convene food system actors, connect evidence on climate, land, health and resilience, and support region-wide planning and preparedness.

**We will step back when** food resilience, procurement and local supply-chain plans are standard practice across councils, local resilience forums and industry.

## Being prepared for a changing climate

**1. The region is well adapted for two degrees and preparing for four degrees of warming** with climate risks fully built into how places, services and businesses are planned, designed, managed and operated.

**The Commission’s role:** We align evidence, support risk assessment capability, and convene planning, infrastructure and business actors and communities to embed climate risk.

**We will step back when** climate-risk standards and assessments are routinely applied, audited and used across local plans, infrastructure and business operations.

**2. Neighbourhoods and buildings are climate resilient, cool, dry and healthy** with retrofit, blue-green infrastructure and inclusive design delivered at scale.

**The Commission’s role:** We align retrofit, planning, health and nature-based solutions partners around shared evidence, prioritisation tools and integrated investment approaches.

**We will step back when** councils and partners deliver resilient retrofit and blue-green infrastructure at scale using established, routine processes.

**3. Climate and health risks and opportunities are built into all major decisions** across critical sectors, places and investments, reducing health impacts and driving equitable, place-based resilience.

**The Commission’s role:** We broker open data and develop regionally consistent risk methods with pilots and pathfinders, supporting the integration of climate-health evidence into investment decisions.

**We will step back when** public bodies and businesses systematically screen decisions for climate-health risk, report progress through established processes, act on their findings and routinely reassess and evaluate their risk exposure and the effectiveness of actions.

**4. Governance is joined up across national, regional and local levels** enabling coordinated, long-term adaptation that protects health, reduces inequalities and includes private operators and supply chain partners.

**The Commission’s role:** We work to coordinate and align evidence and standards across government tiers and support coherent adaptation governance across levels including through innovation and rapid learning and pilots (with communities) where appropriate. Coherence in climate adaptation across government tiers (national, regional, local) is critical to avoid policy conflicts and duplicated effort.

**We will step back when** governance mechanisms are formalised, routinely used and harmonised across the different tiers of government, ensuring that overarching national goals are translated into actionable funded local measures that can be monitored.



**5. Communities and organisations are prepared for shocks and long-term change** with resilience embedded in homes, services and skills, and capacities to continue to adapt over time.

**The Commission’s role:** We connect partners across the region and work with them to strengthen their capacities to assess and mitigate climate risks, enabling them to recover effectively from climate shocks and to plan for long-term change, with priority given to the most vulnerable communities.

**We will step back when** communities, services and organisations maintain and update preparedness plans independently and demonstrate improved recovery and readiness.

## **A secure, sustainable and clean energy and transport system**

**1. Emissions are reduced by more than 80% by 2038** guided by clear local pathways and carbon budgets that align with the region’s net zero commitments.

**The Commission’s role:** We support shared carbon accounting, convene analysts and authorities, and ensure transparent, region-wide pathways.

**We will step back when** public bodies and other key emitters operate shared inventories, publish annual pathways and use them in decisions without our involvement.

**2. Cleaner air, warmer homes and healthier neighbourhoods** mean the benefits of low-carbon living are widely felt.

**The Commission’s role:** We bring together public health, NHS services, transport, housing and environment partners to design dual carbon reduction and air quality improvement approaches. We support innovation and development of best practice that enables effective integrated delivery (via transport schemes and housing retrofit programmes, for example).

**We will step back when** air quality and carbon metrics are routinely integrated into policy and investment, with health benefits tracked by default.

**3. Industrial decarbonisation secures the region’s role as a global clean industry leader.**

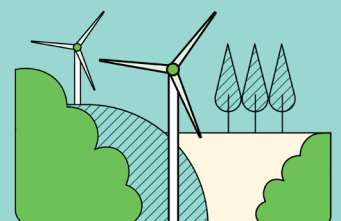
**The Commission’s role:** We connect industry, skills, energy and place partners, share evidence, and support fair transition processes.

**We will step back when** industrial and manufacturing clusters deliver and monitor transparent (published) decarbonisation plans, workforce plans and community benefit plans independently.

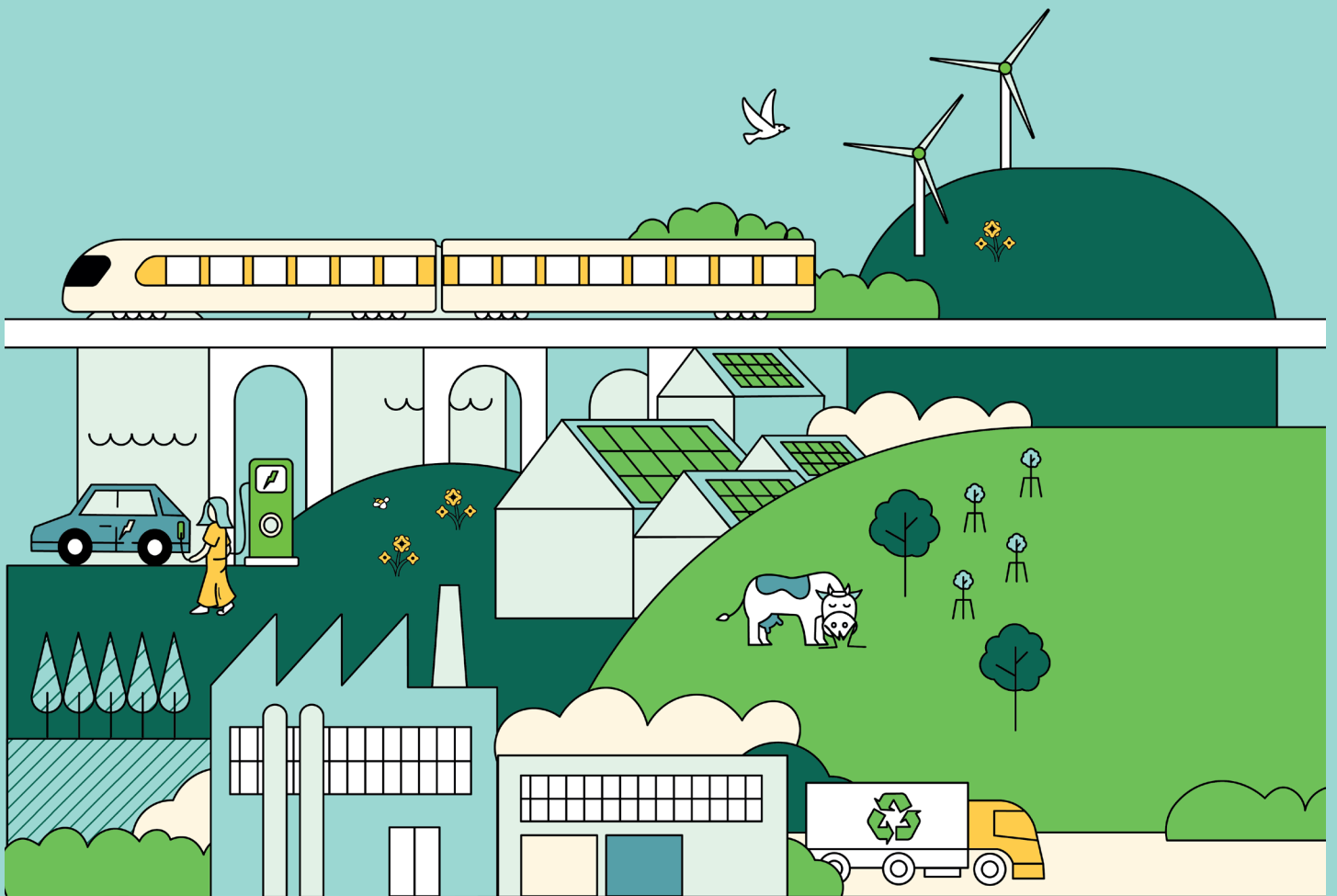
**4. The region’s energy system is clean, secure and locally beneficial, with decarbonised supply chains and a circular, low-carbon economy** that improves health and reduces inequalities.

**The Commission’s role:** We convene system operators, councils, communities and industry to accelerate clean energy, local benefits and circular supply chains. We build collaborations that help test and trial community energy participation/benefit models, and work with thought and sector leaders to evidence local economic and health benefits.

**We will step back when** local energy planning, investment and supply-chain development are coordinated and self-sustaining through established institutions.



# YORKSHIRE & HUMBER CLIMATE COMMISSION



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