

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

Minutes of the meeting held at West Offices, York on Wednesday 2nd October 2024 commencing at 4.00 pm

Present: Mayor David Skaith in the Chair. North Yorkshire Councillor Carl Les OBE, City of York Councillor Claire Douglas, City of York Councillor Peter Kilbane and North Yorkshire Councillor Gareth Dadd

In attendance: North Yorkshire Councillors Lindsay Burr MBE and Richard Foster

Officers In attendance:

YNYCA - James Farrar, Rachel Antonelli, Mike Russell, Andrew Leeming, Liz Philpot, Sara Jeffs, and Paul Clark

NYC - Barry Khan and Elizabeth Jackson

CYC - Ian Floyd

CA24-46 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CA24-47 Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2024

The minutes of the meeting of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 6 September 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

CA24-48 Declarations of Interest

Rachel Antonelli declared an interest in Minute CA24-52 and left the meeting room during consideration of the item.

CA24-49 Public Participation

Two public questions had been received:

1. Question from Charlie Jeffery, Vice Chancellor and President of the University of York

I'm delighted to see the focus on food, farming and engineering biology in the first two sections of the Combined Authority's Strategic Growth Priorities. These areas are a sweet spot for York and North Yorkshire - where the technological opportunities opened up by a unique and powerful cluster of institutions in and around York hold the potential not only to transform and grow the rural economy of North Yorkshire, but also to drive the decarbonisation of the chemicals and energy industries on the Tees and Humber.

The case set out in the Strategic Growth Priorities is a strong one - but I think it can be stronger still, in two ways:

- First by stressing the unique cluster we have in the BioYorkshire partnership: a research capability at the University of York which has been at the global forefront of biotechnology research, and especially plant science, for at least two decades; FERA, the UK's most important lab complex for connecting agritech and environmental science advances to industry and government; and Askham Bryan College, one of the leading land-based colleges in the UK at the very forefront of training the rural workforce, especially in our farms, with the technological skills that will transform the rural economy. That group has drawn to it a powerful industry advisory group including some of the most important companies in the region, a new Venture Fund launched by Greensphere Capital to support start-ups, a keen interest by the York Central developers in anchoring biotechnology innovation in a large-scale facility on that site, and a strong inward investment pipeline. Nowhere else in the UK can offer all this - it adds up to a unique comparative advantage for the region which will make it stand out in what will no doubt be intense competition for resources as the new national industrial strategy emerges.
- My second point is about an Engineering Biology cluster connecting to the Tees and Humber. Our leadership in biotechnology research and its governmental and commercial applications is a precondition of the decarbonisation of the chemicals and energy industries. This is about replacing the fossil fuel 'feedstocks' of those industries with 'bio-based' feedstocks - derived in various ways from plants, whether directly grown for the purpose, or by repurposing what are currently waste products from the agriculture and food industries. In other words, the Tees and the Humber need York and North Yorkshire to decarbonise, they can't do it without our unique capabilities.

In summary, I think we run the risk of underplaying our unique strengths, with all the implications they have for food security, energy security and net zero. So my question is could we reflect further on these strengths to make sure we convey them as forcefully as possible?

Response provided by the Head of Strategy:

Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Growth Priorities. We welcome your support for our focus on food, farming and engineering biology.

Your reference to our unique research capabilities and our global reputation in this field is well made and will certainly help to strengthen these priorities.

In terms of our key role in the engineering biology cluster in terms of our leading edge research and commercial applications and how YNY is critical to our neighbouring areas of Tees Valley and the Humber again will help us strengthen this priority. Also the implications around food security, energy security and net zero are aspects that we will bring out more within the further narrative to government.

We will be developing these Growth Priorities over the coming weeks and months, working closely with Government but also local stakeholders to ensure we have the strongest narrative possible to ensure we can drive growth in York and North Yorkshire. This is currently being planned and the University of York, Bio Yorkshire and other key stakeholders will be involved in this process.

2. Statement from Allan Cook, Executive Director at York Central:

I would like to speak in favour of the priorities and direction being set out in the Local Growth Plan.

As these priorities are built out into action plans I would like offer our resources, our research and our energy to the Combined Authority so that we all - across the entire region - maximise the opportunities for the region and create economic and social advantages of a successful city.

At York Central we are committed to bringing £1.5bn of private investment to building a connected, sustainable community for people and for economic growth that will support all parts of the wider region and beyond.

We are shovel ready and in Q1 of 2025 we will submit the first and largest of the planning permissions required for the site. The timetable for this application and the timing for completion of the Local Growth Plan overlap - as I'm sure will be the case for other projects. So I would like to ask how we can best coordinate with the MCA all parties to maximise the advantages and opportunities of projects whilst the Growth Plan is being finalised and then move quickly to realise the ambitions in the plan as well as the immediate opportunities for jobs, training and supplying materials into the build programme - all of which are regional in their reach."

Thank you

Response provided by the Head of Strategy:

Thank you for your support in favour of our proposed growth priorities and the direction we are setting for our growth plan.

As you say York Central is a crucial development for York and North Yorkshire and will certainly contribute to addressing our proposed priorities and driving growth.

We have a good relationship with the York Central Team and this will certainly continue and strengthen as we develop further our growth priorities into action.

We are planning to undertake engagement with key stakeholders and partners during the coming months to help us develop the priorities are further. This is currently being planned for each priority and contact and invites will go to key stakeholders shortly.

CA24-50 York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Strategic Growth Priorities

Considered – A report of the Head of Strategy setting out the draft Strategic Growth Priorities that the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (CA) for submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as part of the development of the CA's wider Local Growth Plan.

Five draft Strategic Growth Priorities were proposed which would be used to develop a full Local Growth Plan and investment pipeline in collaboration with Government. The

Government would like to see Local Growth Plans finalised and published around Summer 2025.

Andrew Leeming, Head of Strategy, gave an overview of key points:

- Growth Plans were originally proposed in the Labour manifesto and were now a policy of the new Government and they were being included in new legislation. 3 to 5 strategic growth priorities were required to be agreed as the first stage of the local growth plan process.
- The CA's Economic Framework had been agreed in July, which would be further developed into the Local Growth Plan, identifying the needs and opportunities of the region.
- Section 6 of the report set out the five proposed priorities and the rationale behind each one.

CA Members thanked officers for their work on this which had involved extensive engagement to get to this point. Members welcomed the opportunity to develop the Growth Plan further and highlight the assets of the region.

Resolved (unanimously) – that:

- i) the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority approves the five draft Strategic Growth Priorities for submission to MHCLG:
 - Increase productivity and innovation within the Food and Farming Sector;
 - Maximise our science, knowledge, innovation and research strengths to drive growth in an Engineering Biology northern cluster;
 - Create economic opportunities through the need to transition to Clean Energy;
 - Enable technological and digital transformation through investment in Digital Infrastructure and Skills; and
 - Accelerate Place-based Sustainable Development.
- ii) authority is delegated to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive to agree the priorities with MHCLG, in consultation with the Mayor and Combined Authority Members, if any amendments suggested by MHCLG are required.
- iii) the transition of the Economic Framework, alongside the Strategic Growth Priorities, into the Local Growth Plan, is approved.

CA24-51 Mayoral Investment Fund - Project Funding Decisions

Considered – A joint report of the Head of Delivery and Head of Strategy which set out projects that have been proposed by North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council for funding from the Mayoral Investment Fund.

The report provided information on the confirmed pipeline of investible schemes requiring further preparatory and development work. The Combined Authority were requested to note the projects listed in recommendation 1, which were being funded from an amount of £500k for each constituent authority agreed by the Joint Devolution Committee on 15 December 2024. The report also gave details of proposed projects for which approval was requested.

Liz Philpot, Head of Delivery, gave an overview of key points:

- At the time that funding was approved for the projects detailed in Appendix 1 delegated authority was given to the Chief Executive and Director of Resources to sign off the schedule of proposals, and these were now being brought back to ensure there was awareness of the projects funded through that mechanism.
- Appendix 2 provided a schedule of projects for decision at the meeting brought forward by the constituent authorities. Once approved projects would be progressed through Grant Funding Agreements.

Resolved (unanimously) – that:

- i) the pipeline projects listed below be noted, that have been considered by Chief Executive (successor to the Interim Director of Transition) and Director of Resources (Section 73 Officer) and will be progressed, under delegated authority, following the allocation £1m (£500,000 for each local authority) at the meeting of the York and North Yorkshire Joint Devolution Committee on 15 December 2023:

North Yorkshire Council :

- Housing Revenue Proposition
- Ripon Connectivity
- Scarborough Town Centre Sites
- Skipton Wyvern Link Road
- Selby Abbey Quarter

City of York Council

- Our City Centre Regeneration
- Construction Skills

- ii) the following projects be approved for Mayoral Investment Fund grant as listed below and detailed in the report:

North Yorkshire Council:

- Harrogate A61 Major Junctions Improvements
- Selby Station Gateway Contribution

City of York Council:

- York Cultural Passport for Young People Programme
- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

- iii) all projects will be progressed through Grant Funding Agreements (GFAs) and any outstanding matters will be addressed through conditions to be included in the GFAs.

CA24-52 Appointment of Monitoring Officer

Considered - A report of the Head of Human Resources in which approval was sought for the final appointment to the role of Monitoring Officer (Head of Legal), following the recent recruitment process.

Sara Jeffs, Head of Human Resources, presented the report and advised that under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Combined Authority was required to appoint an officer to report on matters they believed to be illegal or amount to maladministration, to be responsible for matters relating to the conduct of Members and Officers and to be responsible for the operation of the Constitution of the Combined Authority. At the Combined Authority this role was discharged by the Head of Legal. Following a recruitment process Rachel Antonelli had been appointed to the role of Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer) and it was proposed that she now be formally appointed as the Monitoring Officer.

The Mayor thanked Barry Khan for his work to support the Combined Authority in the role of Interim Monitoring Officer.

Resolved (unanimously) –

That the Combined Authority formally appoints Rachel Antonelli as the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority's Monitoring Officer (Head of Legal).

(Rachel Antonelli left the meeting room for this item)

CA24-53 Novation of Contracts

Considered – A report of the Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer providing an update on progress around novation of agreements following the creation of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) and to seek approval for the novation of live agreements from North Yorkshire Council to the Combined Authority.

Rachel Antonelli, Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer, presented the report and advised that the statutory instrument creating the Combined Authority was silent on the novation of agreements. The report set out details of agreements which required novation to ensure continued operation. In taking on the agreements the Combined Authority would accept that it would be the contracting party taking on the obligations of the contract.

Resolved (unanimously) – that:

- i) approval be given for the Combined Authority and North Yorkshire Council to enter into novation and/or variation agreements to enable the following contracts to be transferred to the Combined Authority for 2024/2025 including the project variations as further detailed in this report:
 - a) Careers and Enterprise Company Limited and North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership Limited;
 - b) South Yorkshire Combined Authority and Digital Transformation Specialist;
 - c) Department for Business and Trade and DBT Northern Powerhouse Key Account Management (KAM) Programme.
- ii) approval be given for the Combined Authority and North Yorkshire Council enter into a grant agreement to passport £2.487m of Department of Education grant funding to the Combined Authority to deliver and manage Skills Bootcamps (Wave5) in North Yorkshire.

CA24-54 Committee Memberships

Considered – A report of the Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer providing an update on the outcome of recruitment to the Combined Authority’s Business Board, and to seek approval for a change in membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Paul Clark, Governance and Assurance Manager, presented the report and advised that there had been a high level of interest in the Business Board recruitment. Interviews had now concluded and candidates were being contacted. The Combined Authority were now asked to consider increasing the private sector membership of the Business Board to “no more than 15”, currently the Constitution allowed for 10 private sector members.

The Combined Authority had received notification from City of York Liberal Democrat Group of nominations to its vacant seats on Audit and Governance Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee and also that it wished to replace a member on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was also noted that Councillor Richard Foster had been appointed Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Lindsay Burr had been appointed Vice Chair.

Combined Authority Members were pleased with the sector and geographical spread that would be achieved by the Business Board and looked forward to working with these representatives of local businesses.

Resolved (unanimously) – that:

- i) the current position in relation to Business Board recruitment be noted
- ii) the private sector representation on the Business Board be increased to no more than 15.
- iii) the following Liberal Democratic Group committee appointments be approved:

Audit and Governance Committee

- 1. Councillor Andrew Hollyer (vacant seat)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 1. Councillor Andrew Waller (vacant seat)
- 2. Councillor Tony Fisher (vacant seat)
- 3. Councillor Emilie Knight (replaces Councillor Edward Pearson)

- iv) the election of Councillor Richard Foster as Chair and Councillor Lindsay Burr as Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

CA24-55 Forward Plan

Considered – The Combined Authority’s draft Forward Plan was submitted for approval for publication on the Combined Authority’s website. The Governance and Assurance Manager reported on new entries to the plan since the agenda was published.

Resolved –

That the draft Combined Authority Forward Plan be approved.

The meeting concluded at 4.41 pm