



 **The Mayor's Vision:**
Healthy and Thriving Communities

The Mayor's vision to make **healthy and resilient** communities, that are **connected to opportunity**, where people live in **warm and affordable homes**, where people are **connected to the outdoors** and where there are **safe places for all**.

Introductory Letter

I am incredibly proud to be your Mayor and to champion our fantastic region every day. Over the past six months, I have been out across the region meeting people, businesses, charities, and other organisations, listening to their hopes for their communities and the challenges they face.

In my first six months I have been able to support projects to get them off the ground or ensure they are delivered. I have used funds to ensure that over 1,100 new homes will be built on brownfield land, over half of which will be affordable; local authority projects have gotten off the ground, such as York's Cultural Passport programme and the Selby Station Gateway scheme.

Our region is unique amongst Mayoral Combined Authorities. We are three-quarters rural, which presents great opportunities but also enormous challenges. We are home to historic cities, thriving market towns, coastal communities, and rural villages. There is so much to be proud of about York and North Yorkshire. It is a vibrant, and largely prosperous, place to live, work and visit.

However, that vibrancy and prosperity are not felt universally across our region, with many communities that have been left behind or face some of the worst levels of deprivation in the country. As Mayor, I can and should do something about this. That is why I am setting out my vision to create **healthy and thriving communities** across York and North Yorkshire.

This vision will inform the direction of my work and provide focus on what I am delivering as Mayor. It will see that in all the work we do we are always working in the interest of all our communities across York and North Yorkshire.

I am looking forward to continuing working for York and North Yorkshire and moving forward with this vision over the remainder of my term.



David Skaith
Mayor of York and North Yorkshire

Find below a summary of each theme underneath the Mayor's Vision, and the priorities within these themes.



Healthy and Resilient

York and North Yorkshire has a lot to shout about, we have a world leading research industry, we are home to the highest concentration of food production businesses, our farmers are world class, we have incredible small businesses, and we're home to incredible heritage, culture, and natural scenery. Harrogate was voted the happiest place to live in Yorkshire.

Our region should be a place of aspiration and ambition for all, however for many people this is not the case. Opportunities and life expectancy vary drastically from one area to another. In York, healthy life expectancy varies by 11.3 years between neighbouring council wards¹, and in North Yorkshire, the former Scarborough and Whitby Area Committee area has a lower-than-average life expectancy for both men and women².

In North Yorkshire our coastal and rural communities are ranked lower for resilience than the rest of the country, meaning they are less able to withstand and recover from crises, like Covid and the cost of living. These communities are also more likely to experience both social and digital isolation.

I want to see a York and North Yorkshire where we bring together all those organisations that are taking on these challenges. Where we can work together to ensure no matter where someone is born, they can achieve whatever they set their minds to and where all our communities share in the benefits of growth and investment.

That's why I'll bring together our partners to make sure we are all working towards the same objectives, to identify the gaps in provision, and to co-create a long-term plan for our region.

I'll leverage the tools available to me to bring services closer to the people that need them. Ensuring they work for the communities they serve. I'll work to create schemes like York's 'Spark' project in Scarborough and Selby.

I'll champion our food and farming sector and work to put more locally produced food on plates in our schools. Supporting the health and wellbeing of our children by bringing them healthy, nutritious food produced locally.

¹ ONS - Healthy life expectancy statistics for Rural West York (70.8 years) and Westfield (59.5 years).

² ONS - Life expectancy in Scarborough, Male - 77.9 (England - 78.9), Female - 81.9 (England - 82.3)

Collaboration and Convening

The Mayor will convene roundtables with major funders, the VCSE sector, and wider partners to map and coordinate support for community projects and organisations.

Local Growth Plan

The Mayor will work with Combined Authority Members and wider stakeholders to produce a local growth plan that delivers on our region's potential and invests in communities across York and North Yorkshire.

Supporting Access to Skills

The Mayor will champion skills provision and work to connect employers with skills providers. Ensuring that children and young people can realise their aspirations.

Improve our food systems

The Mayor will work to improve productivity and innovation in our food and farming sector. The Mayor will work to get locally grown food into our schools, improving the nutrition offered to our children and young people.

Champion Investment

The Mayor will champion our region and highlight investment opportunities. Developing proposals for investment across York and North Yorkshire.

Drive Growth in Co-operatives

The Mayor will ensure support and advice to double the size of the co-operative sectors.

Support for Local Businesses

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, The Mayor will support thriving high streets through the High Street Fund.



Connected to Opportunity

Connecting people to opportunity is vital to ensuring growth in our region, this means getting people where they need and want to go, helping people to develop the skills they need for work, and supporting people into work.

Improving our transport system is fundamental to ensuring people are connected to work, leisure, family, and important appointments. The current system is not working for people. In our urban areas buses are trapped in congested streets and in rural areas residents are stranded by irregular services.

I'll create a transport system that works for York and North Yorkshire, one that puts passengers first and reduces dependency on the car. A system that works closely with our neighbours in Yorkshire and Teesside to ensure people have options to get where they need to go.

Franchising remains the best option to achieve our transport aims, however our region is unique and complex, so I will explore all options and ensure that whatever path we take it is sustainable and delivers for passengers, residents, and visitors across York and North Yorkshire. I will also ensure that active travel is a core part of an integrated transport network and appoint an Active Travel Commissioner to champion active travel across our region.

Rail connectivity is vital to the growth in our region and across the North, ensuring people are connected to work, leisure, family, and tourism is vital. We will work with partners, such as the rail industry, Department for Transport, and Transport for the North, to identify barriers to rail connectivity, supporting and putting forward the case to unlock the potential of our rail network.

To be connected to opportunity also means supporting people to find long-term employment, making sure our communities are digital connectivity, and have access to local employability support and careers advice. Working with our partners we will identify the areas which need this support the most and get people working.

Integrated Transport System

Taking a region-wide view of transport, ensuring all modes of transport in our region work together.

Unlocking barriers to rail connectivity

The Mayor will identify barriers to regional and national rail connectivity, and work to unlock these with our partners.

Rail Improvements

The Mayor will champion a 30-minute service between York-Scarborough, and for improvements to stations in Thirsk, Seamer, Sherburn-in-Elmet.

Mayor's Pothole Fund

The Mayor will deliver a pothole fund, supporting councils to fix the worst streets in our region.

Appoint an Active Travel Commissioner

The Mayor will deliver progress on Active Travel schemes across our region, appointing an Active Travel Commissioner to champion walking, cycling, and wheeling.

Connecting Communities across Yorkshire

The Mayor will work with Mayors and Leaders across Yorkshire and the North to ensure residents can get where they need to go, regardless of regional boundaries.

Employment Opportunities

The Mayor will ensure employment support is working for people in our region and getting people into work.

Digital Transformation Strategy

The Mayor will develop a strategy to improve digital connectivity in rural communities, opening opportunities for work.

Skills Provision

The Mayor will ensure skills provision is supporting people with the skills they need to get into work and that provision is targeted in the areas with the highest need.

Decarbonise Our Bus Network

To meet our carbon negative targets, the Mayor will support efforts to decarbonise our buses.

Culture, Heritage and Tourism

The Mayor will work to champion our cultural and heritage sectors, seeking investment to support this vital sector for our region.



Warm and Affordable Homes

Everyone should be entitled to a safe, warm, and affordable home. Doing this creates a sense of belonging, place, and community. Access to housing is a huge challenge for so many people across our region. Many people who want to stay in their local area have not choice but to move elsewhere.

We need to fix this, that is why I will work closely with our local authority members, government, and partners to deliver the housing that we urgently need in York and North Yorkshire. I will prioritise development of affordable and social housing to ensure local people can afford to live in their local communities.

Rising energy costs have put a strain on many family's finances. To ensure we address these challenges and to meet our net-zero and carbon negative targets, we will work to increase the work being done across York and North Yorkshire to take on the challenge of decarbonising our region. I will ensure we work innovatively and that we support retrofitting of homes and our region's public estate.

A catalyst for housing developments

Working with government, stakeholders, and investors to identify sites for affordable and social homes, utilising all the powers available to me to remove barriers to development and get the homes we need across York and North Yorkshire.

Holiday Lets and Second Homes

The Mayor will work to ensure that holiday lets and second homes do not hollow out our communities, particularly our coastal communities.

One Public Estate Strategy

Convening partners to leverage the public estate and seek innovative solutions to build affordable and key worker housing – particularly in our rural communities.

Deliver net-zero by 2034

We will ramp up our efforts across York and North Yorkshire to ensure we deliver our target to be net-zero by 2034, such as by accelerating retrofitting.

Housing Investment Plan

We will deliver a Housing Investment Plan that prioritises affordable and social housing, ensuring local people have choice about where they live.

Close working with Government

We will work closely with Government to identify barriers to housing development and advocate for the powers and changes we need to deliver the homes we need in York and North Yorkshire.

Spatial Plan

We will develop a Spatial Plan that gives a bold and ambitious vision for the future of housing, business, and our natural landscape.



Connected to the Outdoors

York and North Yorkshire is home to beautiful outdoor space, whether that is our beautiful urban parks, countryside walks or the two national parks. We should aim to have open spaces that are safe, affordable, and accessible.

An active lifestyle and spending regular time in outdoor green space improves physical and mental health outcomes. Developing a programme, particularly focussed on children and young people, to encourage participation in sport and activity is a first step to improve outcomes.

I'll work together with the National Park Authorities to champion our stunning natural landscape and encourage people to get out there, looking to increase engagement from our urban schools.

Our region raised sporting greats – champion teams and gold medal winning Olympians. I will assemble sporting bodies and local sports teams and clubs to collaborate on broadening access to sport – ensuring no matter your background you can go on to achieve great things in the world of sport.

Flooding has a huge impact on our region, I will work with partners, like the Environment Agency, to push for investment in flood defence and alleviation schemes. I will also look across regions and work with other Mayors and local Leaders to ensure a joined-up approach to flood defences.

Mayoral Active Programme

The Mayor will develop an programme to encourage participation in sport and active lives, particularly focussed on early intervention.

Championing National Parks

The Mayor will work closely with the National Park Authorities, developing projects to encourage residents to visit.

Mayor's Sports Council

Work with Sport England and North Yorkshire Sport, and partners to champion our regions great sporting capability, and to broaden access to sport to break down barriers to participation and opportunity.

Flood Defence

The Mayor will work with partners to push for investment in flood defence and alleviation schemes.

Enhance Nature Recovery

The Mayor will work to enhance our natural landscape and natural recovery.



Safe Places for All

Everyone deserves to feel safe in our region, whether they are at home, work, or in public.

We will prioritise early intervention, tackling violence against women and girls and domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, retail crime, and rural crime. We'll develop a police and crime plan and a fire plan that listens to community's needs.

Working closely with Jo Coles, Deputy Mayor of Police, Fire, Crime and Commissioning, the Mayor will ensure North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service are responsive to the concerns and priorities of the public, local organisations, and businesses.

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will ensure tackling violence against women and girls is a priority for policing.

Early Intervention

The Mayor will, at least, double early intervention commissioned services.

Police and Crime Plan

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will create a Police and Crime Plan that considers the priorities of residents, organisations, and businesses.

Tackling Anti-social behaviour

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will prioritise keeping streets safe by tackling anti-social behaviour and retail crime through policing priorities and early intervention and prevention services.

Enhance the Rural Crime Taskforce

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will enhance the Rural Crime Taskforce, to ensure action is taken for our rural communities.

Fire Plan

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will create a Fire Plan that prioritised public safety and firefighter safety.