

YCC Steering Group Meeting

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), 15th May 2025

Attendees: Henrietta Stock, Jennifer Potter, Jenny Kent, Kate Ravilious, Sarah West, Katy Brooke (Minutes), Andy D'Agorne, Denise Craghill, Jamie Sims, Sam Perry, Adrian Lovett, Johan Kuylenstierna, Vicky Blakey-Archer, Angela Purdham, Shaun Gibbons, Dael Robinson, Holly Hennell

Apologies: Peter Roderick, Alex McCallion, Jonathan Dent, Louisa Page, Paul Kissack, Louisa Hood, Issy Burkitt, Liam Herringshaw, Georgia Ramsay, Stephen Levett

1. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

- Several members submitted ideas to Shaun for the Carbon Negative Challenge Fund. Proposals included a circular city concept, housing retrofit projects and a solar scheme. The Combined Authority has not yet announced the outcome.
- Shaun has established a working group to coordinate support for schools across the city, including both internal council staff and external partners. The group will focus on ensuring every school has a climate action plan by the end of the year, and will then support implementation. Meetings will be held monthly.
- Angela has worked with Georgia on a template Sustainability Project brief for schools who would like a team of SC students to provide further support with their Climate Action Plans.
- Media announcements regarding the new co-chairs were completed and well received. More communications activity is planned.
- Jennifer and Hetty have created a [LinkedIn page](#) for the Commission. A LinkedIn advert has been posted inviting volunteers with communications or engagement experience to join the new Comms Working Group.
- Although Jennifer and Hetty did not attend the City of York Council Scrutiny Committee meeting, they held a separate and constructive meeting with the committee's chairs and are looking forward to future collaboration.
- Several Working Group Chairs, including Sam and Georgia, have contacted Angela to explore how the Sustainability Clinic can support their initiatives.

Actions:

- ☐ **ALL:** Contact Shaun if you're interested in joining the schools-focused working group.

- ☐ **ALL:** Follow the [YCC LinkedIn page](#) and share the volunteer call-out for the new Communications Working Group within your networks.

2. UPDATE AND PRIORITY-SETTING DISCUSSION

Presentation by Hetty and Jennifer (Co-Chairs):

The co-chairs [gave a presentation](#) on their emerging thinking for the future direction of the York Climate Commission, following input from Steering Group members and local stakeholders. They presented a draft vision and purpose using the “Golden Circle” model (Why / How / What), along with emerging priorities and ideas for re-organising the Commission’s work. They emphasised the draft nature of the proposals and invited feedback from all groups within one month.

Discussion:

- Sarah welcomed the streamlined group structure and suggested identifying any missing anchor organisations.
- Sam supported the vision and praised the “champion-collaborate-challenge” approach. He flagged poor engagement from anchor institutions with his working group and cautioned against relying too heavily on them. He suggested exploring a merged group involving both anchor institutions and wider stakeholders.
- Vicky asked for clarity on the proposed anchor organisations group – its purpose, membership and function within the Commission.
- Hetty and Jennifer explained that anchor institutions contribute significantly to York’s emissions and should be engaged via a dedicated group, while maintaining a citizen-led approach. Initial engagement will begin through the Sustainable Leaders Forum. They suggested keeping the anchor group and Future Economy group separate but collaborative.
- Holly supported the collaborative approach and suggested a joint event across all working groups for the York Environment Festival, possibly structured as a themed trail showcasing each group.
- Jamie welcomed the proposals and stressed the need for tailored engagement with York’s top emitters (e.g. Nestlé, York Hospital, University of York). He also highlighted SEI’s continued involvement as important.
- Adrian advocated for food to be embedded in the Council’s Climate Action Plan and stressed the need to build bioregional links with North Yorkshire, the Combined Authority and the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission.
- Jenny agreed and mentioned discussions with the Combined Authority and Bob Doherty about a local food hub and procurement strategy.

- Jennifer supported the idea of broader regional collaboration across climate commissions to avoid duplication and share best practice.
- Johan praised the clarity of the presentation and emphasised the need to balance celebrating progress with highlighting the scale of the challenge. He proposed webinars to contextualise progress, and encouraged the Commission to identify concrete actions it has enabled. He raised concerns about the City Council's capacity to implement the climate strategy and urged stronger advocacy for internal buy-in. He also recommended more effective business engagement through collaborative, outcome-driven initiatives rather than committee invitations.

Actions:

- ☒ ~~**Hetty & Jennifer:** Formalise new meeting schedule and establish dates for the rest of the year.~~
- ☒ ~~**Working Group leads:** Share the proposed YCC vision with your groups and provide feedback to Jennifer and Hetty within one month. Feedback should include what resonates strongly, what doesn't, and any missing elements.~~
- ☐ **Working Groups:** Develop a plan for the year ahead (if not already done).
- ☐ **Hetty & Jennifer:** Begin engaging anchor organisations to share best practice. Consider additional anchor representatives suggested by Jenny: York Central Partnership (inc. Homes England, Network Rail and National Railway Museum).
- ☐ **Jenny:** Put Hetty and Jennifer in touch with relevant contacts, including representatives from the York Central partnership, if helpful for engaging anchor organisations.
- ☐ **Jenny:** Identify the most appropriate contacts at the Combined Authority in connection with embedding food in York's Climate Action Plan.
- ☐ **Sam:** Share the NFU contact with Adrian to explore potential collaboration with the Food Working Group.
- ☐ **Shaun:** Include the YCC in consultation processes on new council climate policies, where appropriate.

3. UPDATES FROM WORKING GROUP CHAIRS

- Jamie provided an update on the **Buildings and Retrofit WG**.
 - The group's next meeting is in June, with Council officers attending to discuss planning and regulatory changes.
 - The group is developing a multi-year work plan, which includes delivering an event. Jamie is keen to collaborate with Sam and Holly's groups for the York Environment Festival to help manage capacity, while also noting the potential

for a separate buildings-focused event. YEF will run from 27 September to 2 November, with the public call for events opening on 1 June.

- Jamie also flagged the JRF Homestead Park Festival (5–6 July), which includes a call for workshop hosts as part of prototyping new uses for the space behind the pavilion: <https://wildrumpus.org.uk/creative-call-out/>
- Sam gave an update on the **Future Economy of York WG**.
 - The group will meet in a couple of weeks to plan an event, potentially linked to the Festival. They've continued engaging with local businesses and have now partnered with Angela through the University's Sustainability Clinic to co-develop a locally focused Sustainability Action Guide for SMEs, due by Christmas.
- Georgia gave an update on the **York Educators for Climate Action WG** (via email).
 - The group is hosting an event on 8 July to support schools in developing climate action plans. 22 schools have signed up so far, with registration open until the end of May. Georgia has secured funding from the University's Students' Union Development Fund, and several school support organisations will be attending.
- Andy gave an update on the **Transport WG**.
 - Their recent focus has been on upcoming events, including the Active Travel Conference (2–3 July), where Andy noted the lack of formal Commission representation as a missed opportunity. The group also hopes to contribute to the Schools Conference the following week.
 - Andy highlighted the need to develop a yearly plan, reflecting on city-wide transport activity and clarifying the Commission's distinct role.
- Adrian gave an update on the **York Good Food Alliance WG**.
 - He highlighted ongoing capacity challenges, particularly as the group is made up of volunteers and unfunded organisations. To ease coordination, they're trialling a WhatsApp group in place of regular meetings.
 - They recently met with Peter Roderick, Director of Public Health, to explore forming a small cross-sector group across York and North Yorkshire. The aim is to take a bio-regional approach to tackling the broken food system, covering interconnected issues such as climate, biodiversity, nutrition, health, food poverty and social justice.
- Dael thanked the co-chairs for the informative presentation and said he would share it with the **Waste and Circular Economy WG**. While they are still refining their positioning, he noted a solid plan is forming and the presentation will help shape their next steps.
- Holly gave an update on the **Connecting With Green Spaces WG**.

- The group met last week and decided not to run a Big Green Week event due to capacity, but are planning ahead for next summer and have contacted Dean's Park and Museum Gardens as potential venues. They hope to bring together different green space groups in one location to raise awareness of their work.
- They discussed creating a printed flier and suggested this could be considered more widely across the YCC. She asked if any resources were available for printing; Jamie responded that YEF has £4k in lottery funding for a resource guide.
- Liam gave an update on the **York Waterscapes** WG (via email).
 - The group is hosting its launch event, [York's Changing Waterscapes](#), on Wednesday 4 June, 10am–4pm at Rowntree Park, as part of the Festival of Ideas. The drop-in event, run in partnership with Friends of Rowntree Park, will explore how York's waterscapes have evolved and invite attendees to share their reflections and ideas for the future. The event will take place beneath the Reading Café (or indoors if the weather is poor). Direct any questions to yorkwaterscapes@gmail.com
- ☒ ~~**ALL:** Consider whether the York Environment Festival in September could be an opportunity for a joint event where all Working Groups and the YCC showcase their work — potentially in a large green space or other suitable venue.~~
- ☐ **Comms Working Group:** Explore a new YCC logo that better reflects the Commission's work, potentially via a schools design competition. Holly noted Dogeacog may be able to support with final design.
- ☒ ~~**ALL:** Share Georgia's event flyer with local schools and send her any suggestions for additional support organisations (before the end of May).~~

4. AOB

Actions:

- ☒ ~~**ALL:** Send any website updates, news or upcoming events to Katy, as work is beginning on both the YCC website and upcoming newsletter content.~~
- ☐ **Johan:** Check whether any funding remains from the YPIP community funding pot following the recent competitive tender process.