



# FELICITY FOR MAYOR

YORK & NORTH YORKSHIRE

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## MAYORAL MANIFESTO

## GROWTH & PROSPERITY

### THE SUSTAINABLE ROADMAP FOR YORK & NORTH YORKSHIRE

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## **The Mayoral Role**

### **A Bright Future for York & North Yorkshire**

The election of the first Mayor for York & North Yorkshire is an opportunity like no other. For the first time, the region will have a chance to vote for an individual who will be responsible for delivering investment and growth, an integrated public transport system, an adult skills programme and improving the supply and quality of housing.

The new Mayor will have access to devolved central government funds, a significant source of investment that the region would not otherwise have access to. This includes the annual £18M/year Local Priority Fund and the Integrated Transport Settlement which includes an additional £380M over seven years. Other elements of the budget include the Adult Education Budget £11.8M, along with budgets for community safety, affordable low carbon homes and supporting green economic growth.

The role also takes on the responsibilities of the current Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. These are to hold the police to account, represent the community's needs, and monitor delivery of service and budget. With regard to the fire service, to set the fire & rescue objectives and be responsible for the service's budget.

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## **My Vision**

As your Mayor, my vision for the region is :

For the economy :

- To be a thriving hub for investment, research and skills
- To achieve its carbon zero target, be biodiverse and sustainable
- To get our fair share - for central government to level up its funding and commit to investing in our potential

And for all of us :

- To be able to live in a low carbon home each can afford,
- In a sustainable community
- On a salary that supports our own family life and wellbeing

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## Our Potential

The region of York & North Yorkshire is in a unique position.

It has a wealth of assets in terms of heritage, culture and natural capital. We recognise this and are fiercely proud of what we have. We wouldn't live anywhere else.

The region has an enviable mix of innovative enterprise, vibrant towns and cities, strong research sector and high quality food production. What makes the region unique is the combination of these elements and our landscape. The potential is significant for delivering growth, diversification and prosperity, and achieving net zero and green energy generation. This can be delivered sustainably and for the benefit of the community as a whole.

There is a bright future for York & North Yorkshire.

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## The Role

There is no ceremony to this role. This is a role for someone who is a strong and innovative leader, with a clear vision and proven record in business, commercial delivery and development.

In addition the Mayor will need to be a facilitator, collaborator and champion for the region. This is a chance for the Mayor, with the right skills, to form partnerships and share resources both within the region and across the whole of the North. This is York and North Yorkshire's chance to shine.

I am standing in this election because I want the region to achieve its full potential and I am the only candidate who has the relevant experience and key skills.

## The Best Candidate

**A strong analytical mind** : I practised as a commercial property lawyer in the City in the 90's. I specialised in development, finance and business acquisitions – several projects such as the London Eye were high profile.

**A good understanding of rural issues** : I grew up in a small farming and fishing community in South Devon. I have lived in the Yorkshire Dales for 24 years, where, as a working mother, I have raised three children and played an active role in the community. The family business, the Swinton Estate, operates large scale agriculture, forestry and conservation projects.

**Business acumen and drive** : On moving to North Yorkshire with my husband, we raised the finance to buy a derelict castle. We converted it into a hotel, Swinton Park, which launched in 2001. Since then 150 jobs have been created with a turnover of £6M. The hotel has doubled in size, and I have expanded the leisure portfolio to include a cookery school, country club & spa, self-catered cottages, retail shop, glamping campsite and the restoration of heritage assets including the Lake House and Deer House. Working with third parties, I have established the Bird of Prey Centre, Northern Fishing School and Clay Pigeon Shooting School.

**A hands on approach** : I roll up my sleeves and get things done. My ability to identify opportunity and to set clear and deliverable goals has been a key driver in my business.

**The right motives** : I am not a career politician. I have entered into politics for the right reasons : with my legal skills, the benefit of a business career, my experience as a county councillor and as an active member of the community. My ambition is to deliver the best for the region and for us all. I know what is achievable and how to get there.

# The Way We Live

## Safer & Stronger Communities

1. I will **regenerate our High Streets** to enable empty units above retail premises to be lived in, creating a community that will support the local shops and a mixed use public realm. I will support the Coney Street project in York to deliver this and beyond. Other measures will assist independent shops during the first six months of trading, to help each High Street establish its own vibrant identity.
2. I will address any **imbalance between second home/holiday let properties and permanent homes**. Where the balance is not right the community loses its vital services and fractures. I will lobby for the increase in business rates to remain within the region to benefit the communities impacted, and I will initiate a scheme that will licence and regulate the properties not permanently occupied.
3. I will **give more support to the voluntary, community & social enterprise sector**. These organisations should be recognised as valued contributors to building local communities, and as stakeholders who understand the needs and difficulties facing the most vulnerable.
4. I will **empower Community Led Housing schemes** which will enable communities to build the sustainable and affordable housing that they need – which the current system does not always address. This provide communities with permanent housing solutions for locals and long term rental income to reinvest.



5. I will **put Community Pay Back to work**. This will be used more effectively to assist with the rehabilitation of offenders, building connections and re-engagement with the community – from painting to litter picking and gardening, these schemes will also improve our environment.
6. **Residents will feel safer** : Working alongside the Police, I will call for resources to be reallocated to enable a stronger community police presence. I will introduce CCTV in crime prone areas, to enable better detection, act as a deterrent and to avoid reliance on doorbell camera capture (which not all residents feel comfortable sharing). I will also initiate a scheme enabling suspected driving offences to be reported (using dashcam footage) making our roads safer.
7. The causes of crime, and re-offending, will be properly addressed. This will run alongside police operations, to **reduce the incidence of crime** overall. **Victims of crime will be better supported**, and community engagement measures instigated to prevent low level crime escalating.
8. I will **support the circular economy** in our communities, from large scale AD plants to recycle waste and create green energy, to every day measures to recycle and reduce consumption.

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## Health and Wellbeing

1. Limited access to exercise and poor diet can have a profound impact on our long term health outcomes and our wellbeing. I will **initiate schemes that will improve our health**. As Mayor, I will support subsidised access to sport for children, establish allotment schemes on redundant ground in town and village centres, and ensure that school meals are nutritious and readily available to those in need – I will fund breakfast clubs in areas of significant deprivation.
2. There are significant mental health challenges facing many of us. In children we are seeing increases in absence from school and higher levels of self-harm and eating disorders. We need to stop this to give our young people the best chance in life. I will provide **support for parents**, and provide additional assistance and resources within schools to make early interventions and prevention, to **ensure support is in place in school when it is needed** not when it's too late.
3. The NHS dental care crisis is leaving many with poor oral health, which can cause infections and have longer term implications. I will instigate and fund a **daily toothbrushing scheme** within primary schools across the region.
4. Due to the lack of care workers in the region, many vulnerable and elderly are left feeling isolated and at risk. Hospital beds are used to provide care for patients who should be cared for at home, or relatives are leaving the workforce to provide care. My skills campaign will **train more care staff** in this sector, creating new career pathways with qualifications and skills that act as a passport to a range of opportunities in this growing sector.

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5. **I will address the inequalities in our region with a long term plan to enable all of us to achieve our full potential.** There are areas of significant deprivation in the region that need substantial support and funding. There is a 10 year life expectancy gap between our more affluent and deprived areas with an even bigger gap in healthy life expectancy. Issues cut across sectors and relate to housing, lack of skills, poor health, limited job opportunities and limited social cohesion. There is a complex mix of factors to address, and as Mayor my role would enable me to bring together all the agencies and stakeholders involved to ensure we all enjoy a level of health and wellbeing that enables each person to make a meaningful contribution to society.

## Transport and Travel

1. As Mayor, my ability to create a **single ticket integrated public transport** system will deliver a reliable and regular bus service with one timetable that connects the whole region. Connections will also link into train services and to services outside of the region to airport and ferry terminals. Those who would chose not to drive will have the option not to. My ambition is for mobility to increase, emissions to fall and bus services prosper.
2. I will **improve current provision for walkers and cyclists**, who need to feel safe on the road. Active travel goes hand in hand with public transport and I will improve the current network to enable active travel users safe routes to transport hubs. I will also drive funding into longer distance off-road routes aimed at those who chose to cycle or walk as a leisure activity – completing the Greenway into Nidderdale as an example – these routes are extremely popular in other parts of the country (Camel Trail, Monsal Trail) and deliver a boost to the rural economy.
3. I will **invest in the potential that the dualling of the York northern ring road creates** : new active travel routes, a key link for the public transport network, and the creation of logistics hubs at the the park and ride sites : hubs for delivery depots, large scale solar power generation, overnight parking for tourists staying in the city and as travel hubs for long distance bus routes.
4. I will **support the campaign to dual the A64**, there is not yet any indication of commitment from central government for it. I will also lobby for the upgrade section to be extended to Malton to deliver meaningful benefit. Reducing congestion will significantly reduce emissions and improve productivity, but to improve road safety and avoid pushing the

congestion further along the road it needs to reach the Malton junction. Should the scheme gain central government support, there will be a requirement of a “tangible contribution” towards these costs from the Mayor and Council. Based on anticipated costs of the current proposed section this could be over £50M. As Mayor I will commit to finding the sums required.

5. I will **address the impact of holiday season traffic**. Tourism comes at a cost in terms of increased congestion and emissions. My integrated public transport service will give particular focus to routes tourists are most likely to use, and to schedule routes where the tourism strategy requires. Many more tourists now choose sustainable and low impact destinations, and as Mayor I will ensure the regional tourism strategy engages with this.
6. As more of us are driving electric cars, there needs to be **adequate provision of EV chargers**. I am committed to the installation of chargers across the county, and will address the grid and power supply issues where they arise.
7. I want to see **better provision of rail routes within the region** - not just the routes to London, and for improving the service for freight as well as passengers. We need a faster and more reliable service across the North, this is key to delivering economic growth in the region, and I will lobby hard for this. Within the region, I will support Flaxby Parkway station and park and ride, the addition of a second platform at Malton, improvement of access at Thirsk and explore the viability of increasing the service on the York to Harrogate line. The Skipton to Colne line will provide a vital link to the wider region and I will push for progress on this, and a route to Ripon should still be considered. With the new station at Haxby now on the horizon, I will be monitoring the progress of this carefully to ensure the full potential is delivered.

## Housing

There is a housing crisis in our region. Not enough homes have been built that are affordable, the provision of social rented homes is too low and our poor quality housing stock is driving up emissions and impacting those most vulnerable to the cost of living crisis.

1. I will **bring down energy costs in the homes that are living in fuel poverty**. I will fund the installation of insulation, hydrogen ready boilers, heat pumps and double glazing to reduce emissions and make homes more efficient. I will also set up the funding required to enable many more of us to insulate or improve our home efficiency, as this needs to take place at scale across the region for us to achieve our net zero target.
2. I will **find solutions to the shortage of housing** : develop a Housing Investment Plan with Homes England to deliver more homes people can afford, deliver 700 homes on brownfield sites, and help fund more affordable low carbon homes.
3. I will lobby to **increase the provision of affordable housing in rural areas**. I will campaign to reduce the affordable housing threshold in rural developments, and to support the construction of Community Led Housing - to increase the delivery of affordable homes.
4. I will **increase occupancy of existing town centre dwellings** by opening up the High Street, enabling flats to be occupied above retail units.
5. I will **control the growth of second home and holiday let ownership** by lobbying for better regulation and a licensing scheme. Control of this sector will create more housing for locals.

6. I will **address the homelessness situation** – working closely with the voluntary sector and government agencies to resolve the underlying issues that cause homelessness, support the transition from homelessness to home and provide support to those who have lost their homes due to the cost of living crisis and need temporary assistance.
7. I will support the **installation of off-grid community hydro, heat and energy hubs** that will reduce emissions and provide community owned green power & cheaper heating and hot water.

## Our Waterways

We need clean water, we need it to maintain aquatic life and to improve biodiversity, and we need to control our flooding to help stop sewage spills and reduce damage to our homes and businesses.

1. I will implement a **catchment wide natural flood management system** for the rivers Nidd, Ure and Swale which will lower peak flows by holding back floodwater upstream. This will reduce flooding in York and other downstream towns and villages, and also improves biodiversity and increases agricultural yields.
2. I will work with Yorkshire Water, developers and planning agencies to **reduce the impact of new developments**. This includes designed flood resilience measures, with sustainable urban drainage schemes and better blue/green solutions such as green roofs, urban wetlands and rainwater harvesting.
3. I will **not let Yorkshire Water off the hook**. I want them to increase investment to accelerate their storm discharge measures and, as landowners, to invest more resource to optimise water quality with peatland restoration, tree planting, integrated wetland practices and sustainable farming measures.
4. By supporting the bioeconomy in the region I will enable the **reduction in use of fertilisers and insecticides** by funding further research and incentivising the use of more plant based solutions with the use of cover crops such as hemp, using organic fertilisers such as anaerobic digestates and using bio stimulants such as potash and seaweed. Precision farming will also be supported to this end.



5. I will **get to the bottom of the shellfish die back and ongoing sea water quality issues**. Establish the cause, find solutions and campaign for compensation for those affected.

# Creating Growth & Prosperity

## Skills

The skills challenge facing us is complex. We have a declining working age population, a “lost generation” in rural areas (equivalent to 45,000 fewer young adults than the national levels), falling numbers of apprenticeships, and anticipated growth in new sectors where skills are lagging behind.

1. **I will create more apprenticeship routes.** We need more Skills Villages. I will identify the sectors where the gaps are most significant (such as care providers, chefs, and green energy technicians) – and establish new course programmes to deliver this. I will improve communications between colleges and businesses to ensure the courses available and curriculum are delivering what employers need.
2. **I will support new courses to boost growth.** Skills shortages are holding us back. Directing the development of skills to the sectors where growth is anticipated, such as the off-shore wind support chain, green energy generation and the potash mine, needs to be addressed now – with incentives from the Mayoral fund, rather than wait for the market to catch up.
3. I will **create an Apprenticeship fund** to fund the gap between the apprentice wage and the minimum wage in the first year for those 19+yrs; I will incentivise employers to take on apprentices in the target sectors; I will extend the Apprenticeship Hub across the region to enable the levy to support smaller firms and prevent it returning to treasury.

4. I will **target and support retraining in the mature adult sector**. The apprentice model needs to be reviewed for this age group. The scheme needs to be fit for purpose with initiatives to drive more skills where we have shortages.
5. I will **challenge the procurement chain**. Too often we see the larger firms bringing in skills from outside the region, not using the smaller contractors and not supporting the growth of home grown skills. I will introduce incentives to address this.
6. I will **improve engagement levels between schools and businesses**, to improve the transition between education and employment. Young people leave school without adequate experience in business, which impacts ambition and decision making. Only 37% of businesses offer work experience. The process can be time consuming, especially for the smaller businesses and not all schools engage enough to assist with locating placements. I will support and streamline this.
7. We need **an honest conversation about the skills shortages**. In some sectors there simply aren't enough pairs of hands. We know, for example, that the care sector in England will require 440,000 more care workers by 2035 – with current vacancies numbering 152,000. For these sectors, the visa system needs to enable and encourage more overseas workers which I will be lobbying for.
8. The design of my integrated public transport service will be tasked to **deliver staff to the workplace**. Reviewing the shortages in the current system and getting the workforce to work.

## Enterprise

The SME sector is one of the region's key strengths and central to our resilience. They are more innovative and responsive to market conditions, but at the same time growth can be inhibited by lack of access to skills, confidence and funding, and this is required to invest in development, become more competitive and create more jobs.

1. I will help **establish more accessible sources of funding**. The Royal Commission has recommended the establishment of a mutual fund to enable SMEs to access funding more easily. I will consider this model, but also work with existing sources of funding such as the British Business Bank North of England – established to improve access to finance for smaller businesses – to drive funding to where it is needed most.
2. I will deliver **a clear strategy and vision for the region's business environment**. This clarity will create more certainty and confidence for entrepreneurs, and the conditions to plan and invest for growth.
3. I will **lobby for a review of the rates system**. This is in urgent need of review. The focus on revenue and not profit doesn't recognise the difference in margins between sectors, the multiplier calculation is not always fair.
4. Cashflow is king in small businesses, and we need to **end the 90 day payment terms** culture within larger contractors which can inhibit growth. This can be addressed within the Mayoral procurement function, and I will work with large businesses to highlight the damage that it causes and the impact that this has on their supply chain.

5. I will enable businesses to **generate green cheap energy**. The energy crisis has brought into sharp relief the exposure of businesses to energy cost increases, and the need to improve our energy security. I will fund and incentivise businesses, and business hubs, that generate their own off-grid energy using solar, wind, ground source and hydro.
6. I will **focus on the shortage of workspaces**. This impacts a number of sectors : with the rise in working from home, there is now a need for co-working spaces and more small offices; smaller light industrial units could be created in current redundant agricultural buildings; more lab space and incubators are needed to support research and innovation.
7. The regeneration of the High Street will **create retail opportunities**. My scheme will populate the empty units above the shops, to provide a resident community and create a new consumer base. I will also incentivise independent shops with rates holidays, to help establish a distinct and unique offer.
8. I will **challenge the current connectivity issues**. Connectivity levels are still not where they should be, with rural areas lagging behind and the hard to reach properties still without any connection commitment. I will source the funding to address this and also collaborate with our 6G research schemes to ensure that on implementation the region is taking the lead.
9. I will **boost Yorkshire produce with better market access**. Our produce is some of the finest in the country, and yet we aren't always able to buy it when we want. Suppliers have very limited direct access to the market due to abattoir controls and restrictions within the procurement chain. Some of our largest organisations such as the MOD, hospitals and schools, are unable to source local food due to their procurement terms. I will campaign for these conditions to improve, to drive down red tape to enable local abattoirs to survive and I will develop a quality Yorkshire brand for produce to drive up value and market control.

10. I will **initiate a thriving film industry hub in the region - next stop Yollywood!** York is a UNESCO City of Media Arts and we know it has a hotbed of creative talent. That skills base, combined with the region's excellent potential as a film base with locations and studios, represents a great opportunity as a growth hub. Working with Screen Yorkshire and other stakeholders I will identify the steps required to establish this.
11. I will support **growth in the bio-economy**. Our region has a unique potential for growth in this field, with the combination of our leading research programmes and natural capital to deliver it.

## Tourism & Hospitality

The Yorkshire brand is one that is known and recognised throughout the world. Our heritage assets, culture and landscape, combined with our authenticity and high standards of hospitality really set us apart. It also has potential to tap into the new travel trends, with tourists now seeking unique & sustainable experiences, health & wellbeing, and action & adrenaline. However, the sector is struggling in the current climate, and is at risk and needs support.

1. I will **deliver a clear and innovative tourism strategy for the region**. The new LVEP offers great opportunity for York & North Yorkshire to promote the region as a whole with its unique offer. This needs a strategy that recognises the opportunities and delivers a clear message. As Mayor I will drive this forward.
2. **The Yorkshire brand needs to be re-established**. This is our identity. Working with the other Yorkshire Mayors I will put Yorkshire back on the map.
3. I will lobby for **a reduction in VAT**. It's very disappointing that the recent budget has not cut VAT for the hospitality sector. Without this it is anticipated that the closure rate in this sector will double to 6% this year. The hospitality sector is one of the largest in the region's economy and I will support it.
4. I will help **resolve the skills and workforce shortage crisis**. The sector is particularly affected by the skills shortages and lack of affordable housing. Improving the visa status for these workers will be key to resolving this, along with training more chefs, improving public transport and improving the supply of affordable housing.
5. I will **boost the night time economy** with the provision of later buses and campaigning for later train services.

## Our Natural Potential

The region's reserve of natural capital is vast, and in some aspects is untapped. This is a resource that can provide us with the means to achieve food and energy security, reduce our emissions, sequester carbon, control flooding and improve biodiversity.

1. I will **drive forward growth in the bio-economy**. Supporting BioYorkshire, I will enable further research into bio-stimulants that improve plant resistance, and reduce the need for fertilisers and pesticides – improving yields and saving costs for farmers.
2. I will help **boost production of green energy**. Working with BDC and other stakeholders, I will support further research and development of green hydrogen produced by AD as a fuel source for boilers and vehicles. I will support development of both large, small and community scale wind, hydro, ground source and solar power generation. Careful consideration will be given to the suitability of sites and impact on productive farmland, along with solutions to the current limits within the National Grid infrastructure.
3. My natural flood management scheme will **improve biodiversity and water quality, and increase farm yields**. The scheme will fund (where required) the works required for farmers to install, plant and maintain and compensate them for reduction in land use.
4. I will help farmers **navigate and capitalise the potential of the carbon credit and BNG market**, and also assist with the transition to the SFI scheme.
5. I will create a fund to **help farms become off-grid energy generators**, using solar, wind and hydro to create electricity and hydrogen. These can be off-grid, not requiring a connection to the grid – avoiding delay and cost.



6. Supported by ongoing research and the GrowYorkshire pilot schemes, I will **enable innovation and growth in the agriculture sector** : supporting the use of precision equipment to reduce input costs; growing hemp to sequester carbon, be harvested as a plant based material and improve soil; growing feedstock to replace petro-chemicals; and to introduce cattle feed supplements to reduce methane emissions.
7. I will **support the costs of landscape management**. Recognising that farmers within the National Parks and National Landscapes have access to FIPL funding to assist with the costs of managing our landscape, I will help fund the other half who don't.
8. I will support **the preservation of our fishing stocks**. By supporting the Whitby Lobster Hatchery, the lobster population (along with other shellfish) on the Yorkshire coast can be preserved. The fishing industry is a significant sector, and these measures will help prevent over-fishing and ensure longevity.
9. I will engage with the seaweed project : the **potential of seaweed** to sequester carbon and also, as a crop, to act as a biostimulant and material is significant. Once trials are complete, I will support the identified opportunities.

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## There is a bright future for York & North Yorkshire

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