

YCC Steering Group Meeting

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), 6th February 2025

Attendees: Henrietta Stock, Jennifer Potter, Jenny Kent, Sarah West, Katy Brooke (Minutes), Andy D'Agorne, Denise Craghill, Georgia Ramsay, Jamie Sims, Sam Perry, Adrian Lovett, Johan Kuylenstierna, Adam Myers, Vicky Blakey-Archer, Angela Purdham, Shaun Gibbons, Stephen Levett

Apologies: Kate Ravilious, Peter Roderick, Alex McCallion, Sarah Rafferty, Dael Robinson, Jonathan Dent, Louisa Page, Paul Kissack, Holly Hennell, Louisa Hood, Issy Burkitt, Liam Herringshaw

1. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

- Jenny welcomed the newly appointed Co-Chairs, Henrietta (Hetty) and Jennifer, and thanked everyone for organising a successful Annual Celebration Event in January.
- Johan supplied the link to the YPIP Communities fund: <https://y-pern.org.uk/ciy-fund>
- Shaun announced that the [Carbon Negative Challenge Fund](#) officially launched yesterday.
 - Eight million pounds will be made available to support projects that align with the region's carbon-negative ambition.
 - There are 2 funding strands, one for capital projects and one for revenue projects.
 - There is a match funding requirement for both. The match funding for revenue projects is 20% and the match funding for capital projects is 40%.
 - Deadline for project submissions for revenue projects is 4th April. Deadline for expressions of interest to capital projects is 21st March, with the deadline for full application in May.
 - Shaun said CYC would be happy to work with anyone interested in putting a submission together.

Actions:

- ALL:** Let Shaun know if you have any project ideas for the Carbon Negative Challenge Fund.

2. STRATEGY FOR THE YEAR

- Jenny emphasised the need to implement a governance structure for the YCC and set clear priorities.
- Hetty highlighted that defining the vision and purpose of the YCC is critical to ensure everyone understands the objectives and value.
- Important to engage widely by asking questions and listening to a diverse range of stakeholders. Should look to other climate commissions for lessons on effective strategies and pitfalls to avoid, recognising that York's unique context may require a different approach.
- Jennifer underlined that organising effectively and prioritising both internal and broader city communication and engagement is essential.

Actions:

- HETTY & JENNIFER:** Consult with stakeholders and other climate commissions to gather insights. Then present recommendations on strategy and governance at the next meeting.

3. UPDATES FROM WORKING GROUP CHAIRS

- Jamie provided an update on the **Buildings and Retrofit WG**.
 - Next meeting scheduled for 28th February.
 - Focus on finalising and launching the multi-year work plan.
 - Efforts continue to engage Council planners and building control representatives.
 - Shift towards a more outward-facing approach, aiming to support and add value to other groups across the city.
- Sam gave an update on the **Future Economy of York WG**.
 - Next meeting scheduled for late February to define the work plan for the year.
 - Previous work has focused on engaging businesses and organisations to assess the current landscape; discussions will explore necessary adjustments.
 - Improved coordination across working groups and better communications strategy identified as priorities.
 - Sam flagged his role as a Commissioner with Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission, offering a potential link to YCC's work.
- Adam provided an update on the **Connecting with Green Spaces WG**.
 - Next meeting scheduled for mid-February.
 - Last year's focus was inward-facing, with some outward engagement through the opening green spaces project (11 initiatives).
 - This year's plans are still in development but will focus on action-orientated goals.

- Georgia gave an update on the **York Educators for Climate Action WG**.
 - Held a Head Teacher's Breakfast this morning with the University of York's VC and 15 head teachers, highlighting the need for support with climate action plans.
 - Also met with the Council to map out what schools are already doing on climate action, identifying gaps and engagement challenges.
 - Schools Conference planned for early July (date TBC), focusing on climate action plans and school engagement.
 - Andy gave an update on the **Transport WG**.
 - Next meeting scheduled for next week.
 - Challenge in defining the group's distinct role within York's landscape of transport-related groups.
 - Focus areas include practical actions and supporting broader transport awareness initiatives.
 - York to host National Active Travel Conference (2nd-3rd July, Barbican Centre).
 - Discussions within the Cycle Campaign about parallel events for campaign groups unable to attend the main conference.
 - Adrian gave an update on the **York Good Food Alliance WG**.
 - Next meeting scheduled for next week.
 - Building alliances across sectors, as well as across York and North Yorkshire.
 - Group remains committed to a holistic food strategy that incorporates climate action rather than narrowing its focus solely to climate-related aspects.
 - Jenny met with George (Grow Yorkshire) and Bob (FixOurFood, University of York) to discuss regional food strategy alignment. Discussions are being led under the Mayor's leadership, with input from scientific and university partners.
- SHAUN, JAMIE & CYC TEAM:** Work with Georgia on supporting schools with climate action plans, with Jamie assisting on YCE and Solar for Schools contacts.

4. COMMS STRATEGY

- A press release announcing the new Co-Chairs will be issued, with CYC drafting the initial version.
- Clear positioning needed to reinforce that YCC is independent but works in partnership with the Council.
- Need to clarify YCC's structure, independence and responsibilities in relation to the Council and other stakeholders.
- Sam suggested revisiting the Terms of Reference to formalise roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes (including comms sign-off).

Actions:

- SHAUN:** Draft press release with input from Jennifer & Hetty.
- JENNIFER & HETTY:** Review the draft before circulating to the Steering Group for comments (with a clear deadline for feedback).
- ALL:** Check website content for accuracy before the press release goes out. Send required updates to Katy to implement.
- JENNIFER & HETTY:** Explore forming a Comms group and report back with recommendations.
- ALL:** Send relevant news or events to carbon.reduction@york.gov.uk for promotion through Council's newsletter.

5. PROMOTION OF YCC ACTIVITIES IN YORKSHIRE POST

- Joe Gerrard (Yorkshire Post journalist & Local Democracy Reporter) has expressed interest in covering YCC activities. His work is syndicated across multiple media outlets, increasing reach.
- Jenny highlighted the need for careful messaging when engaging with media to ensure YCC's message is accurately represented.
- It was agreed that, until a clear comms strategy is established, media interactions should be checked with the chairs before being issued.

Actions:

- SHAUN, JENNIFER & HETTY:** Send press release to Yorkshire Post to establish context for YCC before engaging further.

6. YCC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE INVITATION

- York City Council's Scrutiny Committees review various aspects of council work and can invite external bodies to participate.
- YCC was previously invited in December but declined due to the absence of co-chairs. Sean provided an overview instead.
- YCC is an independent body, and the Scrutiny Committee has no formal authority over it. However, YCC's link to the Council (via the Exec Member for Climate & Environment and some council support) provides grounds for engagement.
- Opportunity for YCC to review the Climate Action Plan and present its contributions and views ahead of any future engagement with scrutiny.
- It was decided that YCC will not attend the April scrutiny meeting but remains open to engaging at a later date if aligned with its priorities.

Actions:

- KATY:** Respond to Councillor Fenton confirming that the invitation is currently under discussion with the new chairs, who are open to a meeting to better understand the committee's objectives and explore potential future engagement but are not committing to attendance at this stage.

7. AOB

- Jamie suggested that each working group plan a session for York Environment Week (Autumn 2025) as part of its activities.
- Angela reported that the Sustainability Clinic offers student-led projects to support organisations with sustainability challenges.
 - Projects last 10 weeks and result in recommendations, reports or action plans.
 - Areas of focus include sustainability consultancy, biodiversity and education & communication.
 - Existing collaborations include work with CYC, York Civic Trust and schools (Georgia as an expert advisor).

Actions:

- WG CHAIRS:** Contact Angela to explore how the Sustainability Clinic could support your initiatives.
- HETTY & JENNIFER:** Look at the [PCAN website](#), as recommended by Shaun. The project officially ended last year, but it still has useful resources about the role of a climate commission.
- KATY:** Organise next Steering Committee meeting for after Easter holidays.