

Report from Together Yorkshire 2020

Introduction

The Together Yorkshire Seminar was a series of sessions held on successive Thursdays in September. The event was organised by the One Yorkshire Committee supported by the Leaders Board and the Archbishop of York on the subject of 'Collaboration- What should be done at a Yorkshire Level?'. The seminar was chaired by Lord Kirkhope and John Grogan.

The Seminar examined how the Yorkshire Leaders Board can in association with other partners (whilst embracing the sub-regional devolution agreements) best pursue their remit in the following three areas of policy (and was divided into sessions accordingly):

- a) Post Covid and Post Brexit Economic Development.

Introduction and Scene Setting

Session Chair: Judith Blake (Leader of Leeds City Council)

1. Kersten England (Chief Executive of Bradford Council and Lead Chief Executive for Yorkshire and the Humber Local Authorities)
2. Lord Chris Haskins (Business Development Board, Humber LEP)
3. Arianna Giovannini (Associate Professor in Local Politics & Public Policy at De Montfort University and Honorary Research Fellow at SPERI (University of Sheffield))
4. Professor John Tomaney (Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, UCL)
5. Matthew Howarth (Chair, Policy Yorkshire)
6. Lord William Wallace (Member of the House of Lords)
7. Stewart Arnold (University of Hull Business School)

Post Covid and Post Brexit Economic Development

Session Chair: Carl Les (Leader of North Yorkshire County Council)

1. Jacqui Hall (Chair, Yorkshire and Humber CBI)
2. Bill Adams (Regional Secretary, Yorkshire and Humber TUC)
3. Delroy Beverley (Chair, Yorkshire and North East IOD)
4. Barry Sheerman MP (Co-chair, Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire APPG)
5. Richard Caborn (Strategic Advisor, Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre)
6. Madge Moore (Chair, Yorkshire Food Farming and Rural Network)
7. Dr Peter O'Brien (Executive Director, Yorkshire Universities)

- b) Towards Net Zero in Yorkshire.

Session Chair: Dan Jarvis (Mayor of South Yorkshire and Member of Parliament for Barnsley Central)

1. Baroness Sayeeda Warsi (Member of the House of Lords)
2. Gill Morris (Chief Executive, DevoConnect)
3. Professor Andy Gouldson (Professor of Environmental Policy, University of Leeds)
4. Baroness Natalie Bennett (Member of the House of Lords)

5. Melanie Onn (Deputy Chief Executive, RenewableUK)
6. Jon Gibbins (Director, UK Carbon Capture and Storage Research Centre)
7. Sarah Woolley (General Secretary, The Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union)
8. Richard Emmott (Director of Corporate Affairs, Yorkshire Water)
9. Jane Thomas (Yorkshire Bylines, Friends of the Earth)

c) The Yorkshire Visitor Economy and Cultural Industries.

Session Chair: Kevin Hollinrake (Co-chair of Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire APPG, Member of Parliament for Thirsk & Malton)

1. Steve Barwick (Director, DevoConnect)
2. Peter Box (Chair, Welcome to Yorkshire)
3. Susan Briggs (Director, The Tourism Network)
4. Professor Rhodri Thomas (Professor of Tourism and Events Policy, Leeds Beckett University)
5. David Kerfoot (Chair, North Yorkshire LEP) TBC
6. Sally Joynson (Chief Executive, Screen Yorkshire)
7. Matt Wanstall (Regional Organiser, Musicians' Union)
8. Syima Aslam (Director and Founder, Bradford Literature Festival)

Throughout the sessions the value of collaboration between key anchor institutions in Yorkshire and the Humber was constantly underlined. The role of Yorkshire Leaders over the last decade in supporting countywide organisations such as Welcome to Yorkshire and Screen Yorkshire was acknowledged. Encouragingly many speakers reported that the experience of 2020 in the county had generally been that under the pressure of the Coronavirus such cooperation had been enhanced. Others expressed the view that the best way for the Yorkshire Leaders Board to be widely recognised as a fulcrum of activity was to identify a small number of initiatives which could be readily implemented. To this end there were a number of suggestions made over the three sessions often by more than one contributor. In some cases, these have been expanded in correspondence after the event. For convenience nine themes have been identified:

1) Yorkshire Identity and Branding.

The county was said to have 'an amazing place and resonance in the international imagination', and a comparison was made between Bavaria's economic and cultural role in Germany and Yorkshire's in England. One speaker said that research indicates that consumers are cognisant of several intrinsic Yorkshire qualities. In descending order these were said to be: friendly, welcoming, honest, unpretentious, quality, good value, trustworthy, natural and quirky. The advertising campaigns of both Yorkshire Tea and Plusnet have been influenced by such considerations. The possibility of a Made in Yorkshire Brand which might have strong resonance for food and drink was discussed. A further report on branding and identity is to be prepared by the One Yorkshire Committee following the staging of a specific online session for interested parties

2) A Net Zero/Just Transition/Climate Change Commission for Yorkshire and the Humber.

The identity and scale of Yorkshire and the Humber were generally thought to give credence to such a project and also the possibility of leveraging in additional external investment. The creation of the Yorkshire Land Network (bringing together landowners and interested parties such as Yorkshire Water, the Crown Estates, Church Commissioners and the NFU) was cited as a precedent for an organisation which started with the aim of spreading best practices but is gradually widening its remit to look at carbon sequestration, biodiversity, eco-tourism and procurement. There appeared to be potential for the Yorkshire Land Network to work closely with any Yorkshire and Humber Commission set up by the Yorkshire Leaders Board. There was discussion as to the advantage of including in the initial work programme of the Commission a Yorkshire perspective on the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP26. This is scheduled to be held in Glasgow, Scotland from 1 to 12 November 2021 under the presidency of the UK Government, with assistance from the Scottish Government.

3) An annual Yorkshire Presentation and Reception in Parliament beginning in Autumn 2021.

This would be a celebration and projection of Yorkshire at Leader/CEO/Mayoral level aimed at bringing leaders of Yorkshire's institutions to the centre of power all at the same time in a show of intent. The One Yorkshire Committee and the APPG for Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire are to hold discussions and report to the Yorkshire Leaders Board.

4) A Yorkshire Expo/Exhibition/Annual Business Conference perhaps organised in association with the Department of International Trade Yorkshire and Humber Office based in Barnsley.

A paper to be prepared by The Yorkshire Society for consideration.

5) The staging of a Yorkshire Flooding Summit by the Yorkshire Leaders Board in association with partners.

This would cover the whole of the county. The idea would be to be forward looking as well as reflecting on past events. A Minister could be invited but the host would be the Board. Other participants might include the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Yorkshire and Humber Internal Drainage Boards, Yorkshire Water, MPs etc. The Select Committee on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are currently conducting an inquiry into flood management and an invitation might also be extended to the Chair of the Committee.

6) The potential for cultural/film/sports tourism.

This was highlighted particularly in the wake of Channel 5 programmes such as All Creatures Great and Small. Research indicates that one in four people make holiday choices based on what they have seen on screen. Welcome to Yorkshire and Screen Yorkshire are working closer together and a new [website](#) about Yorkshire on Film had received unprecedented levels of interest. Further ideas included the development of a calendar of Yorkshire Arts/Film Festivals. The example of Go Racing in Yorkshire was highlighted whereby the county's nine racecourses have formed an organisation which cross promotes and makes joint offers. This was thought to be a model which might be applied by Yorkshire's festivals and theatres. An [ongoing project](#) which was outlined is the production of a 15-minute

promotional video of the county of high cinematic quality. A number of councils are contributing to the £250000 cost.

7) Economic Recovery.

The work of sub-regional economic recovery boards and response groups was highlighted. Several speakers advocated coordination at a Yorkshire level particularly as regards lobbying of Government and consideration of a county wide initiative on skills as powers were devolved from central government. Some speakers advocated the further development of social partnerships covering particular economic sectors in the region such as manufacturing. The potential for a Golden Economic Triangle between Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester was heralded as was the prospect of the Humber becoming the Renewable Energy Estuary.

8) The creation of a University research institute/department bringing together academic research about Yorkshire.

This might involve consideration of culture, heritage & society; politics and government; environment and health; and economy & business. Elsewhere there is a Centre for Scottish Studies, one for Welsh Studies and a Centre for East Anglian Studies at Norwich. The idea will be discussed with Yorkshire Universities.

9) Future Governance of Yorkshire and the Humber.

Notwithstanding current progress and discussions on devolution agreements at sub-regional level in Yorkshire and the Humber, some speakers advocated the creation of a mechanism later in the Parliament to review whatever arrangements are eventually agreed. This would be timed for the second half of this Parliament and would consider proposals for a future Parliament. Reference was made to the Scottish Constitutional Convention in the 1990's. The One Yorkshire Committee will give consideration to this matter.

John Grogan

Lord Kirkhope

Co-Chairs Together Yorkshire Seminar 2020 and One Yorkshire