

Developing York & North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative

Net Zero Tourism Session

7th June 2022

Attendees: Julia Barker (Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority), Ollie Braithwaite (Richmondshire District Council), Issy Burkitt (City of York Council), Harry Baross (Scarborough Borough Council), Simon Gibbon (Climate Action Stokesley & Villages), Jos Holmes (NYCC), Emma Hudson (Hambleton District Council), Julia Lumley (Destination Harrogate), Catriona McLees (North York Moors National Park Authority), Jake Morris (West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce), Craig Nattress (Ryedale District Council), Liz Smailes (The Fab), Adam Vaughan (Ryedale District Council).

Staff: Katie Thomas

1. Session purpose

- 1.1 Following the analysis of stakeholder feedback from York and North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative consultation, the session was focused on addressing key themes from the feedback in relation to decarbonising tourism.
- 1.2 The aims of the session were to:
 - (1) Develop a vision for a sustainable, net zero tourism sector in Y&NY;
 - (2) Agree further interventions required and scope; and
 - (3) Identify key barriers and potential solutions.

2. Key themes from consultation feedback

- 2.1 KT provided an overview of the key messages from the stakeholder consultation in relation to decarbonising tourism. This included:
 - Multiple stakeholders were concerned that there were **no interventions relating specifically to the tourism and hospitality industry**, which is a major sector for YNY. This was described as a missed opportunity.
 - Feedback around tourism being a key gap was primarily related to the **Business & Industry** and **Transport** sections within the Routemap.
 - For the business section, key messages from the feedback centred around tourism **SMEs needing tailored support to decarbonise**.
 - For transport, there was a recognition that we need a **green transport system to support visitor travel** to (and around) the area and **incorporate cross-boundary travel** through working with neighbouring regions. This included improving the **EV charging network** and a **greater emphasis on active travel for tourists**.

3. Co-creating a vision for a sustainable, net zero tourism sector in Y&NY

- 3.1 Overarching comments and questions from the group:
 - Tourism is a key part of the solution to reach net zero and beyond to carbon negative
 - How can tourists fit into our idea and vision for a sustainable York and North Yorkshire?
 - How can tourists fit into / contribute to the circular economy?
 - We shouldn't expect tourists to do anything different from what residents do.
 - We need a common understanding of sustainable and regenerative tourism.

- Potential to use the UN SDGs.

3.2 The group discussed a number of different elements that could be included in an overarching vision for a sustainable, net zero tourism sector in Y&NY. A summary of key themes discussed is included in the table below.

Key Themes Discussed	
1. Legacy Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could include planting trees and habitat restoration. • It would enable people to re-visit & for people to visibly see their contribution to tackling climate change, whilst creating a legacy.
2. Travel into the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have right entry points to the region and be encourage sustainable transport options (e.g., rail). • Do we need to develop a position around flights? Potential to take a similar approach to Visit Britain Campaign that encourages travel without flying.
3. Seamless multi-modal, green transport system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for seamless travel between modes – need to make sure the journey works from start to finish; critical to overcoming reliance on cars. • Need to ensure tourists are aware of green transport options – need to communicate messages to tourists before they arrive in the region. • Currently facing the reality of trying to improve active travel in a rural region – massive hills and scary roads make it difficult; E-bikes could be a potential solution. • Current lack of segregated cycling. • Greater scope in urban areas for active travel. • Public transport: opportunity to build on existing schemes such “moors bus” and for visitors to make buses more financially viable to run. • Current confidence issue around using public transport (national challenge). • Park & rides are currently under-utilised – how can we make better use of these? • Potential for zero emissions zones.
4. A better experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green transport options and other sustainability measures need to be a better experience for tourists than alternatives. • Trying to make the journey part of the experience e.g., Settle Bus.
5. Sustainable Accommodation & Other Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to use an existing sustainability accreditation or develop a new one for accommodation providers. Could have sliding scales dependant on progress – beginner version to regenerative tourism. • Potential to utilise and expand on Y&NY’s LEP Net Zero Business Toolkit. • We need to take businesses on the journey with us; businesses need to be supported through the process of getting to net zero. • Need to get businesses to promote what’s already out there – how do we facilitate this? • Businesses have a number of competing priorities – many businesses at the moment are just trying to keep their head above water. How can we get businesses to prioritise net zero and make it easy for them to make changes?
6. Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we encourage more local food to be consumed? • Importance of minimising food waste
7. Changing Mindsets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to embed mindset where green options come to mind first (e.g., green transport options) – infrastructure is needed to enable this.

8. Communities

- Currently, tourism is done to communities – it's important not to forget about communities. How can we better engage communities and ensure that changes also benefit the people that live there? If it's a better place to visit, then it's a better place to live.
- Tourists can support the financial viability of public transport & EV chargers.

4. Developing further interventions

- 4.1 It was discussed that we need to have a phased approach – identifying the quick wins and the long term plan to create a mindset shift and behaviour change.
- 4.2 The group discussed that the responsibility needs to sit with the tourism sector (i.e., private sector ownership, rather than public sector), and that the LEP can support achieving this.
- 4.3 There are a number of streams of work around tourism that the Routemap can tap into and align with. This includes tourism work through Local Government Reorganisation and York are currently writing a tourism strategy. At a regional level, the Yorkshire and Humber are currently scoping a new destination marketing strategy.
- 4.4 The group discussed how we need to think about different types of tourism – who we engage and benefits will be different.
- 4.5 Discussion around developing further interventions was focused around the following areas:
 - Need for further engagement with businesses and public consultation to develop an effective strategy for decarbonising tourism.
 - Mapping of popular hotspots – specific examples of how to get there using active travel & public transport.
 - Improving infrastructure for active travel – e.g., linking up existing trails, public transport and EVs.
 - Utilise existing resources e.g., NPAs Toolkit, [Sustainable Tourism Knowhow](#)
 - A green tourism business scheme, including:
 - Accreditation scheme (Note - If have an accreditation scheme & businesses had to pay to be accredited, there must be sufficient payback.)
 - A network of businesses at different stages of their net zero journey – share lessons learnt, best practice, case studies.
 - Signposting to existing funding e.g., for EV charge points
 - Recycling options for accommodation providers.
 - Opportunity to work with Chamber of Commerce Environment Group – sense-check ideas, pilot.

5. Key Barriers

- 5.1 The group identified a number of key barriers involved in moving towards a sustainable, net zero tourism sector in York and North Yorkshire:
 - Challenging to increase active travel in a largely rural, hilly region with limited segregation for cycling.
 - Low public confidence in public transport.
 - Need for significant funding to improve infrastructure for a green transport system.
 - Number of competing pressures for businesses make it difficult for SMEs to prioritise sustainability.
 - Critical need to change mindsets to create lasting behaviour change.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 It was agreed that decarbonising tourism would best fit within the Business & Industry section of the Routemap, and with key linkages between other sections made clear.
- 6.2 As such, the Y&NY LEP team will incorporate the elements of the vision discussed into the narrative of the Business & Industry Section of the Routemap.
- 6.3 The team will work with stakeholders to develop the further interventions that were discussed, ensuring clear ownership of actions by organisations.
- 6.4 Y&NY's Routemap to Carbon Negative will then be going to the LEP Board in mid-July for sign-off, followed by an official launch in October 2022.