



Campaign for a Yorkshire Parliament

Response to the UK2070 Commission Report

We are the Campaign for a Yorkshire Parliament.

We are campaigning for a referendum on the future of our county, with a devolved Parliament and administration at its heart.

We are not a party political organisation.

We believe that our county has a hugely untapped potential. To tap into that potential requires that the people of Yorkshire be empowered: empowered to make our own decisions; empowered to invent and innovate, and to nurture our county; empowered to invest in our infrastructure; empowered not only to protect but also to enhance both our built and rural environments for future generations.

We believe it requires a Parliament for Yorkshire: a Parliament where every citizen's voice is heard and where every citizen's vote counts. It requires a Parliament whose aim will be to transform Yorkshire into one of economic and social prosperity and inclusion; a Parliament fully committed to the ecological sustainability of our county.

We have set out some of our plans for the future of our county in response to your survey. We trust that you will find this useful in your future deliberations.

1. Your proposals for creating more effective and systematic local devolution of powers and responsibilities supported by new transregional arrangements

We totally agree that the current push for greater decentralisation and devolution must overcome the asymmetry between the representation of people in England outside London, compared with people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It must go beyond the current limited arrangements in England and instead apply to all areas. It must tackle the current piecemeal delegation of powers.

The obvious, fairest, and simplest solution would be application of similar arrangements to the traditional English counties as those enjoyed by Scotland, Northern Ireland and

Wales.

We also fully support your suggestion to decentralise those functions currently held by central government for England in terms of budgets and ministerial responsibilities.

We do not believe that relying simply on the transfer of powers and resources to a combination of mayoral and combined authorities would sufficiently enhance local devolution for England. Nor do we believe that establishing the four-transregional 'provinces' set out in your report would work well for the people of Yorkshire.

With a population of 5 million, and centuries' old identity, we believe that the county of Yorkshire is well placed to be a regional entity. We support the campaign for 'One Yorkshire' led by Dr Sentamu, Archbishop of York.

We believe, however, that Yorkshire should be governed by its own Parliament with similar arrangements to those in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

We do not support some imaginary, distant Northern Economic Executive Region. Nor do we believe that such a proposition would receive the popular consent of the people of Yorkshire, when put to them.

We believe that a Yorkshire Parliament is essential to allow Yorkshire to unlock its huge potential. Yorkshire has no voice, no central administration and no authority capable of delivering the projects and functions necessary to allow the county to thrive. Local authorities do not have the wherewithal to deliver them and the inept, dysfunctional central government seems incapable of doing so. A directly elected Yorkshire Parliament could and should fulfill these roles.

Under our plans, a directly elected Yorkshire Parliament would have the mandate to transform the county into one of economic and social prosperity and inclusion, and ecological sustainability by empowering people at every level of society and every background to participate fully in decisions affecting both their immediate communities' and the county's future. It would have defined authorities and responsibilities, be accountable, accessible and inclusive. No other form of devolved authority comes anywhere close in terms of true democracy, clarity of roles, responsibilities, lines of authority, visibility, accessibility and inclusion.

A Yorkshire Parliament would have overall responsibility for all public services delivered within the region based on the concept of subsidiarity, whereby responsibility and authority for actual delivery is delegated to the lowest level capable of delivering the service effectively. This means that the Parliament should have control over the finances, expertise and other resources necessary for service delivery. The Parliament would have responsibility only for Yorkshire so it could concentrate all its efforts and resources on Yorkshire issues and solving Yorkshire's problems. Currently, access to resources at this level is only available, as far as Yorkshire is concerned, at central government and EU levels. This is not good enough.

As in other devolved parts of the United Kingdom, the Yorkshire Parliament would work in co-operation and support of local authorities. As stated, these new governance arrangements would be based around the concept of subsidiarity, whereby responsibility

for actual delivery was delegated to the lowest level capable of delivering the service effectively, right down to community groups.

So some functions might be centralised, but local authorities might be given additional responsibilities. Most of the powers of the Parliament would come from central government.

Most importantly, a Yorkshire Parliament and other regional parliaments would be a unifying force that citizens recognise, identify with, participate in and feel proud of.

2. Your proposals for harnessing new and local economies

While we welcome any move to distribute wealth to the regions, we don't believe that the proposals set out in this document go anywhere near far enough to revive 'One Yorkshire' and that our citizens deserve better.

The needs and aspirations of each hamlet, village, town and city need to be brought together to ensure a much fairer and more even distribution of wealth and prosperity across the whole county,

We don't believe that any of the currently favored proposals for devolution and simple, further distribution of powers to local authorities are capable of this aim.

A Yorkshire Parliament would ensure Yorkshire could compete successfully in the national and international market places.

As the United Kingdom leaves the European Union and negotiations for new trade deals around the world get underway, a Yorkshire Parliament would be in a strong position to speak up for the interests of our companies and citizens, fairly across the whole county.

Under our proposals, full employment in a highly skilled and well-paid economy would be the responsibility of a Yorkshire Parliament.

Regeneration is drastically needed across the county, including in former mining and woollen areas, coastal towns, small villages and rural areas, along with parts of our major cities.

A Yorkshire Parliament would establish a dedicated economic development unit. On a local level, this unit would assist small businesses and entrepreneurs in growth and development. Nationally and internationally, it would be tasked with marketing Yorkshire as an excellent place in which to do business. This new economic development unit would be brought under direct democratic accountability and scrutiny in the interests of the whole of Yorkshire through its directly elected Parliament.

Yorkshire is home to some of the most magnificent countryside in the world, yet urban sprawl threatens to merge our towns and villages even further, ruining the historical character of Yorkshire and paving over green corridors.

Yorkshire exists for the benefit of its people. We are its temporary custodians, as such we wish to pass it on in at least as good, but preferably better, state than the one we inherited.

A Yorkshire Parliament is needed to protect Yorkshires greenbelt while investing in better public transport and cycle routes to help improve our environment and reduce the air pollution affecting many of our cities, towns and villages.

The Paris Agreement called upon us to think globally but act locally. A Yorkshire Parliament would be well placed to involve our companies and citizens in doing this. A Yorkshire Parliament would set its own responsible targets for reducing the regions carbon footprint by reducing emissions and encouraging the use of new and existing renewable energy sources.

This can be achieved only through a similar level of autonomy to that of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and not by a half-baked devolution deal for the rest of the United Kingdom.

3. Your proposal on national and sub-national spatial frameworks for England and their scope as set out in your main report.

Your report quite rightly acknowledges the differences between Scotland's, Wales' and Northern Ireland's devolved governments' success in shaping their regions future development. We will not accept anything less than similar arrangements for Yorkshire, with our own devolved Parliament.

What has proved to work well for other parts of the United Kingdom, will work well for us.

We welcome discussion by the commission and others realigning the spatial framework in England, but this needs cutting down even further, to a traditional county level.

The Campaign for a Yorkshire Parliament has already set out our own proposals for citizens' engagement in developing both a long and short-term investment in infrastructure and our public services.

Our proposals would enable a building-block approach to public policy, as local people would be engaged in identifying their community's immediate needs and longer term aspirations.

Any common themes emerging through this process would go onto inform local authority, regional and potentially national policy frameworks, empowering each citizen and involving them directly in governance.

Community organisations would be trusted with their own participative budgets to spend on what is most needed locally and where possible take over the management of local services at arms length.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss proposals for community engagement with you further as they form a large and we feel unique part of our plans for regional government and further spatial development in decision-making.

4. The scale of the UK Renewal Fund proposed and its purpose

We agree that to modernise and regenerate the United Kingdom, that the level of public investment in both the nation's infrastructure and the development of public services

across the board need to be far higher than is currently the case.

We also recognise that the national pot is limited.

If we are to be successful in the modernisation and regeneration of the United Kingdom, priorities need to change. Whatever limited funds are available must be invested in the poorest and most struggling regions and not automatically in the relatively prosperous South East and London

Investment in the poorer areas will bring them up to the standard of the more prosperous ones, and would, in the longer term, be of benefit to the whole nation.

We appreciate the need for a certain level of ring fencing and top slicing of local budgets in order to meet national priorities. This should be kept to a minimum.

The current level of national control over council and devolved budgets makes a total mockery of local democracy as locally elected members are increasingly put in a straight jacket as far as their decision making is concerned. A Yorkshire Parliament would not wish to be constrained in the same way.

To achieve this would require a complete review of how the Treasury and the Green Book system work.

5. The nature and measure of success that should be sought if we are to deliver a fairer and stronger economy for the UK

Any measures should look at the not just the immediate and short-term impact on the economy and standard of living based on the electoral cycle but more importantly the longer-term impact affecting our children, grandchildren and future generations.

It is folly, in our view, to lock social and economic trends into that of land and property prices, particularly house prices. These increases are a measure of the mismanagement of the economy in our view, helping a limited few beneficiaries.

It is imperative to the delivery of a fairer and stronger United Kingdom that any targets and measurements for success should be set and measured at a regional as well as national level.

Measures of growth should be counted on the basis of output, levels of quality employment, a favourable balance of trade - particularly in industrial output - educational attainment and improvements in general living standards.

Ecological standards should be used to measure industries and our day-to-day impact on our ecological sustainability, including air and sea pollution, global warming, the countryside, animal welfare, wild life preservation and the environment generally.

Other 'softer' indicators should used to measure improvements in the quality of life, community cohesion and inclusion.

We agree that the setting of national standards of access to services and living standards would be a good starting point, provided it contained a commitment and

sufficient resource allocation to raise the lowest to the best.

We also agree with your proposals for increasing local institutional capacity and leadership to take on the tasks required. It is important to us, however, that this should include a large element of community capacity building, enabling ordinary citizens to have their input into planning and the decision-making process, especially in the areas in which they live, work or learn.

Effective leadership now and at every level is essential to building a better Yorkshire for future generations.

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