

Exploring the challenges and opportunities for North Yorkshire in the current post-pandemic social, economic and environmental climate

A North Yorkshire County Council and University of York partnership



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Following a successful partnership between North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and University of York (UoY) in 2020/21, to support the council in developing new policies to address the economic and social impacts of Covid-19 in North Yorkshire, the University was invited

to work with the council on a second co-funded project.

This second project sought to further explore the challenges and opportunities for North Yorkshire in the current post-pandemic social, economic and environmental climate. Against the backdrop of

the Covid-19 pandemic, the research paid particular attention to changes in the workplace, including wellbeing and digital access, as well as the economic and environmental impact of new technologies, helping inform NYCC's strategy development and implementation.

Summaries of five of the policy briefs, four led by academic teams at the University of York and one led by a University of Edinburgh researcher, are highlighted below.

Reducing Energy Consumption in North Yorkshire County Council Offices

University of York Colleagues:
Dr Gary Haq, Howard Cambridge

Stockholm Environment Institute

This research, delivered by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) was focused on the reduction in carbon emissions and in understanding the attitudes and behaviours of NYCC staff, to climate change and approaches to reducing energy consumption in the workplace.

[Reducing Energy Consumption in North Yorkshire County Council Offices](#)



Strategies for Low Carbon and High-value Economic Sectors

University of York Colleagues:
Dr Luisa Huaccho Huatuco, Dr Graciela Zevallos Porles, Mr Juan Ramon Candia and Dr Ruby Christine Mathew

School for Business and Society

Recommendations		
Awareness	Sectoral analysis	Financial support
Share best practice	Understand their particular challenges and opportunities	Publicise sources of funding
Bring stakeholders together	Communicate policies to sectors	Provide training for SMEs to access funding
Net Zero goals office	Provide customised sectoral support	Provide incentives
Net Zero awareness campaigns	Be mindful/Capitalize on interactions between sectors	Link with Communities of Practice

This work sought to explore progress by businesses towards net zero goals. It encompassed current practices, opportunities and challenges faced, enablers and barriers as well as divergences in understanding, when aiming towards a low carbon and high-value economy.

[Strategies towards achieving low carbon and high-value added from the economic sectors in North Yorkshire](#)

Artificial Intelligence and Automation

University of York Colleague:
Professor Miles Elsdon

Institute for Safe Autonomy

This work sought to establish the range of current and future technologies that might have application in the NYCC target sectors.

Particular focus was given to agri-tech, manufacturing and the visitor economy. Against the pillars of social, environmental and economic sustainability, this research was focused on economic development. It explored the benefits of exploiting AI and Automation to deliver wider impacts across a range of key sectors in the region.

[AI and Automation](#)



continued on next page 

Mobile Access North Yorkshire: Wider Impacts

University of Edinburgh Colleague: Dr Mark Graham

Data Driven Innovation

This work sought to assess the opportunities and economic impact that could be realised from enhanced digital connectivity in rural areas, including increased applications of artificial intelligence and automation for business.

[Mobile Access North Yorkshire: Wider Impacts](#)



Increasing Affordability and Sustainability of Housing

University of York Colleagues:
Professor Nicholas Pleace and Samir Belgacem

Centre for Housing Policy

This work examined the challenges and opportunities in addressing the needs for affordable



and sustainable housing in North Yorkshire. It highlighted the significant barriers of land supply for new build, capital investment needed to develop new affordable and social homes and most challenging of all, retrofitting the existing housing stock in North Yorkshire.

[Housing Futures in North Yorkshire](#)

New PACE fund for staff working with industry Now open for applications

We are pleased to announce the launch of the Partnership Acceleration and Commercial Engagement (PACE) Fund. The fund has been developed through the Building Industrial Engagement & Income (BIEI) Transformational Initiative to offer between £60k and £150k per project per year over the next few years to support projects that will drive long term income generation and develop commercial relationships with external partners.

You can find all the information about the new fund including how to apply on the [PACE web page](#) [available here](#).

You can also visit the new [BIEI webpages](#) for more general information about support available for working with external partners and business.



The Curiosity Partnership: building a research partnership with local authorities

As we tentatively emerged from the pandemic in 2022, work was picking up pace in the School for Business and Society on an exciting and innovative research project – *The Curiosity Partnership*.



The **Curiosity** Partnership
Researching together | Informing care | Supporting older people

Led by Professor Yvonne Birks, the Curiosity Partnership is a four-year project, funded by a £1.3 million investment from the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR), which aims to build research capacity and – as the name suggests – curiosity within local authorities. Specifically, the project focuses on adult social care and how research can play a role in improving the delivery of care for older people.

Working with four partner local authorities – City of York Council, City of Doncaster Council, Hull City Council and North Yorkshire Council – and three other universities – University of Hull, Newcastle University and

University of Sheffield – our team here at the University of York spent the initial phases of the project building relationships with adult social care practitioners and setting the partnership's priorities.

Our launch event – a Curiosity Partnership Adult Social Care Research Festival – took place in June 2022 and was attended by almost 100 people including local authority partners, people with lived experience, researchers and community group representatives.

At the launch, we announced our priority themes (engagement, isolation, place, prevention and workforce) which emerged from a

series of workshops with our partners. We are now in the process of building research communities around each of these themes, bringing together researchers and practitioners to discuss the challenges and where there are opportunities to work together with the intention of improving social care for older people. We are supporting current priority areas in practice including loneliness and the potential introduction of the care cap and assessments.

Since the launch, we have co-productively built our activity and brand. In addition to establishing our research communities, work is underway to deliver a social care academy to boost research skills and confidence and a digital platform to enable research-curious colleagues across the partnership to network, share knowledge and build skills. We are supporting colleagues in adult social care to engage with opportunities to apply for fellowships, attend academic conferences, use existing research and highlight the areas that require most urgent attention within their area of practice. We are also planning our next Adult Social Care Research Festival which will take place in September 2023 which will showcase research from across the partnership and beyond....

Curious to find out more? Watch our *animation*, view our *project infographic* and please get in touch – curiosity-partnership@york.ac.uk or follow us on Twitter [@YHCuriosity](https://twitter.com/YHCuriosity)

Professor Yvonne Birks, Curiosity Partnership Director
Dr Mark Wilberforce, Curiosity Partnership Manager
Laura Haviland, Curiosity Partnership Network Coordinator



An introduction to working with external partners



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How to create opportunities and build relationships.

A training and information session for academic and professional services staff who have an interest in working with external partners (organisations such as businesses and charities) took place in March.

- Universities increasingly expect academic staff to help diversify income streams, build pathways to impact, offer courses to partners and support knowledge exchange. However, academics are busy and often don't have the experience or confidence to build relationships and engage effectively with business or other external partners. It is often easy to make new contacts but much harder to turn these into valuable, long-term, productive relationships that provide benefits to both sides.

The National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB) Report (2005-2021) 'The Changing State of Business- University Interactions in the UK' reaffirms the fundamental importance of effective engagement and

collaboration between companies and universities. The target for total government investment in Research and Development by 2027 is 2.4% of GDP.

It is clear that industry wants to work with Universities for many reasons, including commercialising or developing existing research or skills and capacity building. Industry wants to be agile and innovative and respond quickly to the latest technologies. Working with trustworthy and rigorous Universities and having access to cutting edge knowledge, expertise and research resources helps them to achieve speed to market and expanded opportunities for the funding or investment needed to deliver the change they are looking for.

Praxis Auril led the 1-day training course aimed to make this process more straightforward and efficient and gave delegates tools to help them create opportunities and build relationships.

Specifically, delegates learnt:

- The different ways in which Universities interact with partners, what they really think of these services and how to improve them
- How to frame the value proposition
- How to ask the right questions and hold productive conversations to develop new opportunities.

A one hour online follow up training and information session for academic and professional services staff on the same topic took place shortly after the one day event and covered the key points to keep in mind when identifying, engaging and building productive relationships with these organisations.

For more information on courses please search for 'knowledge exchange' within the University's Learning Management System; check the *Building Research and Innovation Capacity (BRIC) team website.*

Internally-distributed Funding (IDF) Spring 2023 Call

The Internally-distributed Funding (IDF) Spring 2023 Call for funding applications was launched on 2 May 2023. The *call webpage* is now live. Funding is available across a wide range of disciplines – full details are on the website.

The call will close on **Friday 26 May at 12 noon.**

University Research Priming Strategic Capital Internally-distributed Funding (URP Capital call 2023):

The Internally-distributed Funding (IDF) URP Capital Call 2023 launches on **15 May 2023**. The purpose of this call is for funding applications for the purchase of strategically important capital assets (e.g. equipment or non-equipment items such as large databases), to be supported by the University Research Priming fund/Internally-Distributed Funding. The call will close on **7 July 2023, noon**. Further details will be on the Internal Funding website shortly.

A *schedule of future calls* is available on the Internally-distributed Funding webpage. For call alerts and updates, *sign up to the IFT mailing list here.* If you have any questions please email *re-internal-funding-team@york.ac.uk.*