

# **HIGHER YORK** Civic Agreement 2023













## Higher York Civic Agreement

Higher York is a unique collaboration across two universities and two further education colleges. It provides York with a coordinated further and higher education ecosystem creating opportunities for educational progression across the city, region and beyond. Our universities and colleges drive economic innovation through their skills development, research and change capabilities, and the talent pipeline of their graduates. York has always been a city with a global outlook and a city that has embraced principles of social justice, sanctuary and public good. The Higher York institutions are proud exemplars of those principles.

The Higher York organisations open up access to economic opportunity by working with schools and employers to identify and develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to nurture a talented and dynamic workforce. The partnership engages with businesses large and small to collaborate in skills development, research, and innovation; which starts, accelerates and scales up new businesses. The Higher York partnership also supports the wellbeing of our community through partnerships with the cultural and voluntary sectors.

As a place-based partnership of institutions, the Higher York institutions are committed to the economic, social and environmental and cultural life of the York City Region. Higher York has a strong track record of collaboration and partnership with key City Region stakeholders to overcome the challenges facing our local communities.

Charlie Jeffery Vice Chancellor and President, **University of York** 

Tim Whitaker Principal and Chief Executive, Askham Bryan College

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Karen Bryan Vice Chancellor, York St John University

2

#### **Civic Signatories**





#### Sue Symington

**Chair, Integrated Care System** (ICS), Humber, Coast and Vale Health and Care Partnership

produce

Helen Simpson **Chair of York & North Yorkshire** Local Enterprise Partnership

3



#### Sarah Czarnecki **President, York & North Yorkshire** Chamber of Commerce

Simon Morritt

Chief Executive, York & **Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust** 

#### Brent Kilmurray

Chief Executive, Tees, Esk and Wear **Valleys NHS Foundation Trust** 



## Higher York Institutions



#### **University of York**

The University of York exists for public good. Our core ambition is to foster a' community without limits' - a community that has a vision that through the power of its research, teaching, partnerships (global and local) to deliver social benefit and change. Our founders endowed the University with a strong social purpose, drawing on a rich tradition of social justice and combating inequality in a way that is distinctive to the City of York.

Since these founding principles in 1963, this extraordinary mission has motivated our strong sense of shared purpose. The University of York (as a member of the Russell Group) is already regarded as one of the UK's best, with an outstanding reputation across the world. We're renowned for the quality of our teaching and the excellence of our research, which in turn enhance the prospects of our graduates, applying their learning for social benefit as 'citizens of the world'.

We work together across academic lines and disciplines, and we are bold and ambitious in the ways we create, share and apply knowledge through local and global partnerships. We do this to find better ways to research and to tackle the most pressing global challenges. We provide our students with the opportunity to encounter different ways of understanding the world around us, and new ways of shaping it. And it takes a lot of talented people to support this mission. We are very proud of our global community, including more than 14,500 undergraduate, 6,000 postgraduate students, 4,500 staff and almost 140,000 alumni in 180 countries.

Our community is working together to answer the biggest questions of our time and to offer opportunity for all. Because by doing things differently, we hope to find different things. That is the spirit of York.



#### Askham Bryan College and University Centre

Askham Bryan College is one of only eleven independent specialist land-based Colleges in England. Since opening in January 1948, the College has provided courses focussed on agriculture and horticulture, evolving over time to include numerous study programmes including animal science, conservation, wildlife and environmental management. With a clear mission to 'feed the world and save the planet,' the College develops talent to respond to current and future challenges for the economy and environment, a responsibility Askham Bryan is extremely passionate about.

The College provides technical and professional curricula which is high quality, industry-relevant and enhances student employability. There are around 3500 students studying across Askham Bryan's 5 campuses. There are around 1400 16 - 19 learners, 700 Apprentices and 500 HE students; the remaining 900 students are studying on adult, commercial and short courses.

Askham Bryan College is the only land-based college to have received foundation degree awarding powers meaning the College can create and tailor programmes and autonomously award its own named degrees up to, and including, Level 5. The College's provision in specialist subjects can be broadened thus preparing their students for careers in rapidly evolving industries that are vital for local, national and global economic growth.







#### York College and University Centre

York College and University Centre (YCUC) offers the widest range of courses in the region and combine expert teaching with world class facilities in one of York's most modern and recognisable buildings. YCUC has over 7000 students studying annually, with a diverse breadth of courses ranging from entry level through to degree and accredited professional courses to courses for business. YCUC is the largest provider of A Level, T-Level and vocational programmes for 16 - 19-year-olds in the region. YCUC also delivers over 30 different apprenticeship standards and works effectively with over 1,000 employers, helping them to recruit apprentices and provide bespoke training for their employees. The higher education courses as well as many accredited professional courses for adults aim to upskill, retrain or develop employees in their existing careers.



#### York St John University

York St John University is characterised by a strong commitment to social justice and deep link into communities. Situated in the centre of York, with a postgraduate campus in London's dynamic East India Dock, the University is making an important and lasting contribution to widening educational participation and enabling economic development across the region and beyond.

The University attracts students globally and nationally, with a significant cohort from the North of England. Over 70% of students remain in the city or region after graduating, sharing their knowledge and talent for the benefit of the communities in which they work and live. Many undergraduate and postgraduate programmes lead directly to professional jobs, and the university fosters a strong emphasis on developing skills for employability.

The Good University guide 2023 places York St John University as the top university in the North for Teaching Quality. York St John has a growing research profile, with the Institute of Social Justice internationally recognised for its research excellence. Our students and staff work in close partnership with local organisations, charities and businesses to address the challenges faced by our society, and, to contribute to the cultural and economic capital of the region.





## The Higher York Civic Commitment has four deliverable strands:

**Investing in Talent** Sustainable economic growth and jobs

**Creative and cultural economy.** Net zero



#### **Investing in Talent**

Higher York led the development of the 10-year skills plan for York with the Principal of York College chairing the Skills and Employment Board involving all stakeholders across the City region. That plan is now being delivered in partnership with the City Council, The LEP, the Chamber of Commerce, employers and schools. The Skills and Employment Board will also be a significant stakeholder in the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan led by the Chamber of Commerce. Higher York employs a project manager to ensure delivery of further and higher education focused aspects of the plan.

Higher York has been an active stakeholder in the development of the 10-year city Vision and the York and North Yorkshire devolution plan, which are now being delivered. This work demonstrates the convening power of the Higher York Institutions. Integral to all of these plans is the city's Further and Higher education ecosystem which is partners with over 200 local schools via the joint Higher York Uni Connect programme which is hosted by York St John University.

Progression routes within and across the Higher York institutions offer a choice for local students, as well as enabling those who wish to study outside York. All four institutions have contextual admission schemes, and extensive support packages, to level the playfield for those with disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to progress further in education.

University of York is a founding partner in the INTO University Centre in Marfleet, supporting an extremely disadvantaged area to support children's education. Although York is regarded externally as a relatively affluent, there are pockets of deprivation such that 25% of the City of York's children live in poverty. School attainment in the Westfield and Acomb area is significantly behind that of neighbouring areas. Higher York is working together to support the development of a centre for children in Westfield using the evidence based 'INTO University' model. Children will be supported to do homework, reading

practice, access nutritious food and access support services such as support to help non-attenders return to school. University of York is raising funding to convert former council premises and the four organisations will coordinate their input to the key primary and senior schools in the area, ensuring year-round educational support for children and families who will access the centre.

York St John University hosts the Inspiring Choices UniConnect programme on behalf of the Higher York Organisations. The Programme works with eleven additional partners including York and North Yorkshire Councils, FE colleges and the LEP careers and Enterprise hub. Inspiring Choices works with target schools in ten geographic areas where participation in higher education is low, and lower than GCSE results would predict. Although the attainment 8 results for York and North Yorkshire are above the national average, the gap between the top and bottom schools is huge (20 points in York and 38 points in North Yorkshire). Interventions are carefully targeted to meet the key challenges for individual schools and ensuring that each child gains more than one intervention per year. To give an example, an employability package resulted in 75.8% of children reporting that they were confident that they could work well with others. Similarly, a post-16 options package resulted in 76% of children agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the options for further study, and a pre-HE intervention including a campus visit to Askham Bryan resulted in 80% of the participants reporting that taking a higher education course in the future could benefit them. For 23-24, the Inspiring Choices package will be re-focussed to help to address worsening GCSE attainment levels post-covid. This change illustrates that the collaborative working across the Higher York Institutions enables the programme to flex to meet changing needs of the schools involved.

The Higher York organisations produce a work ready, diverse talent of post 16, graduates to postgraduates and postgraduate researchers. In addition, there is an extensive progression route infrastructure across the organisations including contextual admissions at both University of York and York St John University to attract more diverse students.

The graduate (and postgraduate) talent pipeline realised by Higher York is of vital importance to the City Region. 6200 undergraduates, 5600 postgraduates and 400 PhD qualified students graduate from the universities every year. 70% of York St John graduates remain within the York City Region. Approximately 20% of University of York graduates remain in the York City Region.





Extensive partnerships across the Higher York institutions with LEPS, Chambers of Commerce and employers enables new and emerging educational programmes to address employer needs. Examples include the development of specialist allied health professional education at York St John University in partnership with NHS providers to meet local and national skills shortages across the NHS. Expansion of computing, and cyber security provision across all organisations to meet employer needs identified through the Institute of Technology workstreams.

York Internships matches the skills, enthusiasm and talent of University of York students with the project needs of local SMEs. The programme supports businesses to adapt current requirements, such as the need for market research or a social media marketing strategy, into a practical project of six to twelve weeks duration. The University then advertises for, shortlists and then contracts the student intern, offering a payroll service as well to help keep administration to a minimum. In 2021/22 there were 68 internship projects with 63 organisations in and around the City of York. Each year the most impactful of these projects are celebrated at the 'Intern of the year' event. This year's winner was Ashley Loo, who worked with Experience Heritage to build, and test, a new app on behalf of the National Paralympic Heritage Trust.

Across the four institutions 8599 staff are employed making Higher York the second biggest employer in the City. The Higher York organisations have extensive staff development programmes to enable staff to realise their full potential.

#### Sustainable Economic Growth and Jobs

The University of York exists for public good and in that context believes passionately that their role as a research-intensive, global university offers major opportunities to contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the city of York. Their sectoral strength in areas of solutions-oriented research such as climate change, poverty, healthcare, biodiversity, clean energy, safety assurance of robotics, mental health, and digital and technological innovation all have significant potential to drive entrepreneurialism, inward investment, business growth, job creation, productivity and invention.

The Higher York institutions are all committed to working with partners across the city and region to shape, influence and contribute to an economic strategy that is inclusive and materially enhances the life chances and wellbeing of our citizens. We remain committed to ensuring that major brown field assets such as York Central evolve into world-class knowledge and innovation hubs that will support local employment opportunities as well as enhance the overall economic and cultural prosperity of the city.

BioYorkshire is a ten-year programme that will accelerate the translation and application of research discoveries into full scale biotechnology applications using the region's world class science base to deliver profitable bio-based production of chemicals, materials, and fuels, and productive, net-zero food, feed, farming and wider land use practices.

The ambitious programme is a partnership between the University of York, Fera Science, Askham Bryan and the burgeoning bio and agri private sector that will transform the UK's bioeconomy through world class research and translation facilities, a network of specialised business incubators, training and skills and entrepreneurial support.

BioYorkshire will act as a centre of gravity for the north of England and wider UK for the bioeconomy and a beacon for the UK to attract inward investment in new, productive, biobased businesses with high-growth export markets.

Crucial to delivery of BioYorkshire is the STEM skills pipeline which the Institute of Technology led by York College seeks to strengthen. Working across schools, colleges and York St John University, the Institute focuses on encouraging young people to study STEM subjects and to transition from School into College of University based STEM provision.





The University of York and Fera Science have a history of working together on research projects. A recent example is work on the potential of insects as a source of protein for animal feed. This collaboration combined the industrial biotechnology expertise of Prof Neil Bruce at the University with Fera's Insect Research Unit to develop cost-effective, environmentally sustainable, and safe sources of feed for the production of larvae.

Bio Yorkshire is seeking  $\pounds171$  m private and public sector investment over a 10year period which will yield a GVA of  $\pounds1.4bn$  - a return on investment of 8.3. This will support the creation of over 4000 high value jobs.

Support for new businesses in the City region has developed extensively as part of post-covid recovery plans for the City Region. Working with the LEP, the Chamber of Commerce and the City Growth Hub University of York has a Barclays Eagle Lab which works in partnership with the Enterprise Centre at York St John. New businesses are supported to start-up, develop and grow. University of York and City stakeholders are in the initial stages of planning for a business accelerator to complete the business development ecosystem by allowing successful start-ups to scale up and grow. Enterprise Works has a particular focus on supporting and nurturing inclusive entrepreneurial practice and outcomes working with a range of community and social enterprise activity and organisations.

Sustainable Scarborough is a pilot programme of specialist support to help 10 businesses from the Scarborough District to develop their products and processes. It is an excellent example of how BioYorkshire can support business development. The project is led by bioeconomy experts at Bio Vale, part of the University's Biorenewables Development Centre. The programme has been funded by Anglo American as part of their Social and Economic Development Plan.

York St John University is extending its allied health professional course provision to meet local and national workforce needs. Its newly opened health simulation facilities are used extensively by local public sector organisations for staff training and simulated scenarios to aid practice learning. The York St John Communities Centre offers free group counselling and low-cost individual counselling to local people. Referrals are made from the NHS and from third sector organisations. Appropriately supervised Counselling Psychology students provide the service with over 1100 people in 2022 benefitting from the service. In late 2023 the service will move into purpose-built accommodation with improved access for the public. Alongside its Communities Centre, York St John University is supporting local businesses and championing enterprise. The Business Consultancy Clinic, led by the York Business School, provides solution services to assist businesses in addressing and resolving organisational challenges. The University also offers a range of continued professional development masterclasses, developed in partnership with employers, to support businesses in upskilling their workforces for the future. The Enterprise Centre, based on York St John University's city centre campus, provides tailored support for micro and small sized enterprises. Support includes access office space, advice and specialist resources to enable growth and development. Student enterprise is championed in addition to employability support and guidance. The University's Kickstart Programme provides access to funding opportunities for entrepreneurial students during study and up to 12 months post-graduation. The programme also offers mentoring access to the Enterprise Centre's resources, helping students to develop their entrepreneurial ideas and turn them into viable enterprises which contribute to the local economy.

The DEFRA policy review (2020) acknowledges the need to increase skills and capabilities in the land-based sector in response to the transformational opportunities presented by technologies. The department recognises that 'access to a sufficient and appropriately skilled workforce is essential to continued industry growth, productivity and safety. Providing and recognising the need to upskill at entry, intermediate and higher levels is a priority. Askham Bryan College plays a significant role in identifying, supporting and working to facilitate the effective application of skills development and the application of knowledge in real-world business and commercial applications. Its curricula align with regional economic needs and prioritises, and the development of an appropriately trained and professionally skilled workforce. These priorities are expressed via a variety of organisations and statutory bodies in varying forms both locally, regionally and nationally. However, in summary the College aligns its curricula and business with these broad prioritises. These include the bio-economy, high productivity, high welfare and environmentally sustainable food production; and maintaining and protecting sustainable spaces and landscapes, enabling the continued development and enhancement of the natural environment. Innovative and sustainable workforce focusing on the retention and development of talent delivering appropriately to local, regional and national need; and supporting the retraining and appropriate reskilling of individuals. Inclusion and Knowledge, considering and overcoming barriers related to rurality and accessing quality specialist education; and building and enhancing the digital skills knowledge within society generally and the landbased workforce specifically.





### Net Zero

Higher York institutions are making a significant contribution towards the City Of York's aim to be a net zero City.

The University of York confirms within its strategic vision that it is an institution that exists for public good, stating that sustainability plays a key part of this as a guiding principle of its strategy. Within its Sustainability Plan the University commits to achieving carbon net-zero by 2030 for its campus operations and carbon net-zero by 2050 for its wider indirect emissions.

The University is taking a collective approach to addressing climate change across its whole community of staff, students, supply chain, alumni, local residences and business. Through research projects, formal sustainability courses, informal carbon literacy training, and initiatives such as the Environmental Sustainability Academy driving portfolio developments, its student-led Sustainability Clinic aiding local businesses, it is supporting its students and staff to make a real impact locally and globally.

The University is reducing its direct campus emissions by implementing a holistic approach to carbon management. Including improvements within behaviour change, space optimisation, technological building management, energy efficiency and infrastructure. In addition to its commitments to climate change the University is making great strides to enhance other areas of sustainability, specifically resource usage, biodiversity, education and health and wellbeing, as detailed in its Sustainability Plan

York College and University Centre has begun working with Askham Bryan College to re-wild the environment of the 'Forest School' site, a 10-acre area of woodland which is close to the main campus. This area, which is of significance because it has Great Crested Newts and two species of Orchids within it, is now being managed to enhance biodiversity and to use as an amenity for the local community. Another project to create a wellbeing area, close to the College building, has resulted in the planting of a grove of 35 native trees, and the start of a wildflower meadow.

York St John University is a sector leading Institution for sustainability and energy reduction. The University was named as joint first for carbon reduction in a study by People and Planet in 2022. This award demonstrates the effectiveness of the installation of roof-mounted photovoltaics on older buildings and solar carports leading to a reduction of 82 tonnes of Co2 emitted each year. Our newest building is rated as BREAM excellent and carbon neutral.

York St John University received a Green Gown Award for Tomorrows Employees in 2022 for its Living Lab Project. Living Lab involves students, staff and the City of York Council in finding innovative ways to solve air pollution. The project involved a Living Lab Street Festival and was included in the York Festival of ideas.

The grounds at York St John have been landscaped and developed to promote student and staff wellbeing and to encourage everyone to use outdoor space. The landscaping includes a valuable collection of trees and plants that contribute to biodiversity. At the York St John Sports Park on Haxby Road, university staff and students have worked with local community groups to plant hundreds of trees. The University has achieved a Gold Accreditation at the Hedgehog friendly Campus Awards for work to support the hedgehog population. A five-year project to grow tansy plants to attempt to increase the habitat for the ecologically vital tansy beetle has successfully seen the release of 48 endangered beetles onto the ecology site after two years. Allotments at Haxby Road provide outdoor opportunities for patients from Foss Park Hospital and an Occupational Therapy run project to help asylum seekers to grow vegetables has won several civic awards. All of these projects are accessed by our School Outreach Teams and community groups.

Sustainability and care for the environment are essential and integral elements of landbased learning at Askham Bryan College. Set within beautiful grounds, Askham Bryan encourages the use of its outdoor space which includes an established arboretum and wildflower planting, as well as rewilding schemes which not only promote biodiversity, but also promote staff and student wellbeing.

Strategic theme four of the College's Strategic Plan 'Sustainability and wider contribution to the Circular Economy' sets out the College's commitment to its climate change responsibilities and looks to achieve carbon reduction and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 by consideration and analysis of the environmental impact of its activities. The College is a member of The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education (EAUC) and is represented at regular FE Network meetings where latest information is made available & best practice shared.





Askham Bryan College is committed to sustainable development within all its future building plans and has already adopted several schemes to enable the effective reduction of carbon reliance including food waste recycling for electricity, a significant reduction in cleaning chemicals and sustainable contracts ranging from green energy to a zero-landfill waste contract across all of its sites. Existing energy requirements are partially served by four separate solar arrays with a desire to increase capacity. The College also has 12 recently installed EV charging points.

The College has taken significant steps towards achieving its vision for carbon neutrality by 2050 with the construction of its first carbon neutral building in 2021, alongside other developments rated as BREEAM very good. Solar PV - PV solar arrays producing electricity are located on a number of buildings and locations across the campus

The College farm is in a Higher-Level Stewardship scheme delivering valuable environmental benefits, current scheme is being extended and will transition to a Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier application in 2024. As a recent recipient of the Hedgehog-friendly Campus Award and a dedicated advocate and home of the Tansey beetle, the College has the conservation of the environment and native species placed firmly at its heart. The college is directly involved in delivering curriculum that challenges an existing culture of poor sustainable practices across land-based industries, driving change by educating the landbased workforce of the future.

#### Creative and cultural economy

The Higher York institutions have extensive community engagement. The University of York has taken on the management of the recently refurbished Guildhall in Central York providing a home for its Enterprise Works and Barclays Eagle Labs endeavours, shared research spaces, meeting spaces, and a cafe that acts as a venue for many community groups, as well as a venue to support civic occasions such as the annual. Remembrance Day Military parade. The Creative Centre at York St John included a full-size auditorium. This is used to support local schools with a professional theatre for children's productions. Local arts organisations also use the venue to showcase their work and to offer opportunities for students to work with third sector organisations.

Askham Bryan College has a Combined Cadet Force, and University of York has a Combined Cadet Force which is open to York St John students. Both universities are part of the Military, Air Force and Naval Education Committee for Yorkshire. Askham Bryan and YCUC are Ministry of Defence silver employers. York St John University is a Ministry of Defence Gold Employer, and runs a longstanding Military Human initiative which supports personnel leaving the military by training civilian staff in local councils, and NHS and social care to understand the experience and needs of those leaving the military. YCUC is a Ministry of Defence Bronze Employer.

The Higher York organisations make extensive contributions to the cultural life of the city, creating opportunities for the public and for students to learn, work as ambassadors and to gain access to world class materials. York St John is the main sponsor for the annual York Literature and Aesthetica Film Festivals and York Pride.

Askham Bryan runs a Wildlife Park which is open to schools and the public. The park attracts over 30,000 visitors annually and is awarding winning Trip advisor travellers choice award, and a Young Vikings Award. The College also hosts a Gardening Club, and their grounds are used to host regular sports events and holiday camps for local primary school aged children, including accommodating a 400-strong scout camp annually.





University of York is the founder and coordinator of the annual York Festival of Ideas and works annually with more than 100 local, national and international partners to deliver more than 200 free and accessible events on a wide range of topics. The University also hosts the York branch of the University of the Third Age. YCUC has a connected campus initiative which forges links between TV and film professionals, production companies, broadcasters and students. YCUC and York St John have close working links with York Theatre Royal. The University of York's School for Creative Arts & Technologies has a thriving concert programme and musicians from the School regularly perform in venues across York.

York St John staff and students have a long-running Dementia and Dance initiative, which has nineteen regular participants. YCUC is a key partner in the Yorkshire Schools Dance Festival. York St John hosts York Open Studios for the public in April, and host regular visiting artists from local companies such as Late Music, York Theatre Royal (our partner), STOMP, The Devil's Violin, Prototype Theatre, Y Street Band, Northern Rascals

University of York, York College and University Centre and York St John University are part of the York City of Sanctuary initiative. YCUC also offer ESOL courses and are part of the Purple Flag initiative. York St John runs a free Community Languages Group on Saturdays enabling local children to learn languages spoken by family members. Askham Bryan College has a bespoke programme to support care leavers to access provision at the College.

York St John University has invested in a Saturday Arts Club which offers free places to 20 primary school children in the City via partnership schools. YCUC runs a Saturday Arts Club funded by Merchant Taylor Hall for 14-16 year olds and is involved with a Fashion City York project. University of York hosts the York Children's University creating outreach opportunities for local children.

## Measurement and Impact

The Higher York organisations commit to rigorously evaluating their civic contribution aiming to achieve the following targets:

- Over 8500 staff directly employed across the Higher York organisations.
- Over 12,000 graduates and postgraduates added to the City region talent pool each year.
- Over 1500 apprentices studying in Higher York institutions each year.
- Over 350 gualified school teachers produced each year.
- Over 900 accredited medical, health and social care professionals produced each year.
- Continue to expand our work with the creative and cultural economy working with a wide range of community stakeholders.
- All Higher York institutions sustaining significant progress towards net zero in 2030.By 2030 BioYorkshire will create more than 4,000 high-quality jobs, and generate £1.5billion of GVA.
- Annual research income of over £100 million per year contributed to the city region.
- Westfield Centre established by autumn 2023.
- ▶ Higher York contributes £15,000,000 per year to supporting Schools and disadvantaged young people across the City Region to raise young people's aspirations and to support entry to any further or higher education institution.
- At least 2850 students per year recruited from Polar 1 and 2 postcodes across Yorkshire supported to study in the Higher York organisations.



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