

# DRAFT WEST YORKSHIRE: CREATING A FUTURE THAT WORKS FOR ALL

## OUR PLAN FOR CHANGE

### **Purpose** (section may not be required in final version)

The West Yorkshire Plan sets out an overarching vision for the region. The narrative brings together the shared objectives that we as a region must deliver.

The purpose of the document is to:

- Set the trajectory for the longer term.
- Ensure that government and wider local, national and international stakeholders are clear on the priorities and ambitions of the region.
- Ensure that all regional partners speak with one strong voice to government.
- Develop shared endeavour between the Combined Authority and the local authorities and clarify priorities building on the ongoing partnership work.

The primary audience is regional and national partners including government. Residents are a secondary audience. A separate narrative linked to investment has been developed.

The document is designed to be modular, with different elements used for different purposes, but enabling consistent messages to be used and heard by a range of partners.

### **West Yorkshire 2040 Vision**

**To be finalised once narrative has been agreed.**

West Yorkshire, the heart of the North, an engine room of ideas and creativity.

Together, we will grow a resilient, inclusive, sustainable West Yorkshire, that works for all. A place anyone can make home.

Our vision for the future is rooted in our region's extraordinary story.....

### **West Yorkshire Story**

Understanding who we are, and the pathway forward is the key to our future success.

We're already achieving so much; at this historic moment for our region we now, finally, have powers and money to implement the things we know will make a difference. Now is our chance to continue to work together to tell our story and make our vision a reality.

Here in West Yorkshire, we are pioneers, we're determined, full of ideas and not afraid to take on challenges. Traits that put us at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution making us the manufacturing powerhouse of the world.

We embrace our industrial heritage to innovate and collaborate, paving the way for the emergence of new industries at the cutting edge of health and technology, ideas and innovations that will tackle the climate emergency and help people live fulfilled lives.

Our brilliant universities mean our region has attracted talent from around the world and international businesses have flocked to our region to pioneer methods in transportation, health, and manufacturing to answer the challenges facing the world today.

#### Add Infographic/map

West Yorkshire is made up of five local authority areas: Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield.

#### Add Infographic

Our region is home to over 2.3 million people, a workforce of 1.1 million, around 95,000 businesses, and an economic output larger than nine European Union countries.

We're proud to be one of the most diverse parts of the UK with people representing many ethnicities, backgrounds, and lifestyles, connecting us to communities across the world.

The diversity of our region extends to our places. The globally competitive city of Leeds, the economic centre of the Pennines sits alongside lively towns and stunning countryside. West Yorkshire boasts an array of attractions from areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Kirklees, and

world class cultural assets such as the Hepworth Gallery in Wakefield, to vibrant market towns in Calderdale, and a World Heritage site in Bradford. Our countryside provides an asset for climate adaption as we tackle the Climate Emergency.

As a dynamic place to live, at the heart of the North, we attract highly skilled, knowledge-intensive businesses and workers. We celebrate our collection of cities, towns and villages, each community with its own story to tell, unique and magical.

This interconnected network of separate urban centres makes West Yorkshire genuinely distinctive. Our success is dependent on all places being supported to thrive, be recognised, championed, and celebrated.

And we're building on solid foundations. West Yorkshire has a long history of innovation and industry delivering economic success alongside social progress. Industrialists such as Sir Titus Salt had the vision and drive to support the people of our region out of poverty and into a skilled workforce. Benjamin Gott revolutionised the production of woollen cloth, investing large amounts in the cultural and civic life of Leeds, founding the City's Philosophical and Literary Society. We need to ensure that a new generation of diverse entrepreneurs continues that legacy with their ideas benefitting all communities creating a legacy of prosperity and business success.

Today, we gain strength from our success not being aligned to one or two sectors. We are blessed to have many and varied industries and businesses. This diversity means our resilient economy has weathered the economic crosswinds of the past and can drive prosperity for the future.

As a perfect representative of the UK's economy, we are poised to be a test bed of innovation and new ways of working. An idea can spark here, develop then cascaded to the rest of the country. We are perfectly positioned to be the key driver of economic growth not just in the North of England but for the whole of the UK.

#### Add Infographic

##### Key features of our economy include:

- Being a global leader in healthcare technology with six government health headquarters (including NHS Digital) and high levels of employment in the health-tech sector
- Advanced manufacturing - specialisms in textiles, furniture, and wearing apparel
- A fast-growing digital sector
- The UK's largest regional finance centre.

We have a history of ground-breaking discoveries and transformative practices. From firsts in the world of film and transportation, to the production of world-renowned video games and pioneering medical technologies such as Paxman Coolers work on cancer treatment. It was in our region that the invention of Cat's Eye technology transformed road safety across the world.

As innovators and makers, we also know culture and creativity is not just a nice to have, but a powerful driver of job creation, regeneration, skills and better wellbeing. And while we are admired across the UK and globally for our creativity, we know there's always more we can do. Towering figures across the arts

have been inspired by our places, from the Brontë sisters, the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage, to David Hockney and Barbara Hepworth, from the countercultural post-punk movement to the biggest pop groups in the world. Sporting success runs through our region, from unsung pioneers such as Beryl Burton, to world-beating Olympians like Nicola Adams, the Brownlee brothers, and Kadeena Cox achieving sporting firsts. These inspirational figures show the grit and determination of folk from West Yorkshire. With their eyes on the prize, they just don't give up. We know that the world can be our stage through the festivals and sporting successes showcased here. The region will rise to the occasion again when Bradford becomes the UK's national city of culture with opportunities spanning across all our communities.

Add Infographic – our top culture and creative strengths

Add Infographic – our top innovation strengths

Ideas and innovation are our bread and butter, powering the region's success. Pioneering textile technologies during the Industrial Revolution have developed to become cutting-edge techniques using recycled and recovered plastics. Weaving technology has been adapted to make super-strength jet engine parts. Our knowledge-based clusters and expertise in medical technologies and medical equipment manufacturers are some of the best in the world

The diversity of education assets in the region attracts international talent. It was at the University of Leeds that William Bragg's revolutionary research on X-ray crystallography changed the face of modern science.

Today, the Centre for Precision Technologies, Nexus and the 3M Buckley Innovation Centre build on that legacy, innovating and collaborating in energy, transport, health tech, medicines, medical devices, diagnostics, data and manufacturing.

But we won't deepen our understanding about what we're doing well or where we could improve without the data.

Luckily, our region is home to a vast array of internationally recognised research such as Born in Bradford bringing new insights into childhood health while empowering young people to control their own data. The Space Hub is a respected new initiative driving new satellite and geospatial data markets, bringing new collaborations for industry opportunities.

Over time, industries have evolved, and new ways of working have developed; the challenges we've faced have been tough, but we have weathered these storms and emerged stronger. When a global pandemic hit, our businesses had the strength and resilience to adapt, bringing new approaches and innovation to weather a uniquely challenging time.

Our region continues to grow and adapt. Our historic past is woven into our present. The Piece Hall in Halifax played a pivotal role as a centre of trade for the textile mills of West Yorkshire, today it attracts new visitors to the area with its mix of independent bars, restaurants, shops, music acts and cafés. When the Grade Two listed Majestic building in the centre of Leeds was almost destroyed by a fire, it wasn't left to decay, it was rebuilt and now hosts the national headquarters of C4. The decaying mills next to the Hepworth Gallery in Wakefield will now be home to one of the best recording studios and music engineer training facilities in Europe and the stunning but abandoned Templeworks building in Leeds is soon to be home to the British Library North.

As a region, working together as the West Yorkshire family, we have built new infrastructure, connected our towns and cities, attracted investment, developed land,

Add infographic

West Yorkshire is home to a cluster of seven higher education institutions hosting around 91,000 students and 30,000 graduates each year.

Along with excellent Further Education Colleges.

supported businesses to start-up, innovate and grow, brokered skills and training to power us through the tough times, ready for the exciting opportunities ahead.

Now is our opportunity to use all that knowledge to move to establish us as the go-to place for business, entrepreneurs, investors, developers and creative. To seize the opportunities to tackle the challenges we face, from the climate emergency to deprivation, fuel poverty and poor health outcomes that blight parts of our region.

As a partnership, we will lead the way, learning lessons from our industrial past to build an inclusive, fair, sustainable future. We have the knowledge, the expertise, and the will to build on these achievements, backed up by our evidence-based policy development that helped us ensure we have the right strategies in place for a brighter future.

We build on our past and celebrate our diversity to create a better future. We are home to the best and the brightest, in lockstep across the region to deliver a future-focussed West Yorkshire. The best place to live, raise a family, start a business and grow old.

A place to do well and be well.

**FOLLOWING SECTIONS TO BE FINALISED ONCE NARRATIVE HAS BEEN AGREED**

## Regional Priorities

West Yorkshire is key to growing and re-balancing the national economy and enabling the north of England to contribute fully to, and benefit from, national economic growth and prosperity.

In West Yorkshire we are a family with a long history of collaboration borne out of our shared priorities and strong partnerships. We recognise the value of working together and the benefits this brings. We know that we can't realise our vision in isolation and will continue to work in partnership to bring our ambitious proposals to life.

Working together to deliver our vision, we share **three regional priorities** that will inform all our work:

- Growing an inclusive economy
- Enabling equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Tackling the climate emergency

**These priorities represent a regional consensus on what is needed to realise the vision across key areas of public policy where collectively we have the ability, powers, and funding to act. They are core to everything we do.**

Using the powers and funding at our disposal we will work collaboratively to deliver projects to support these priorities.

## Our Aims

We will ensure that all people make the most of the opportunities our region has to offer. We will reflect the rich diversity of our region with equality at the forefront of our work. We will create an environment where people in deprived communities can access the skills they need to secure good work and lead healthy lives. We will ensure that housing needs are met in an affordable and sustainable way making the most of clean technologies of the future.

### **Productivity is above the national average**

We will create the right conditions to boost the economy in our region so we can see highly skilled people working in well paid jobs, able to access opportunities in a sustainable, carbon-free future and a great quality of life. An environment where entrepreneurial activity can flourish, where it is easy for businesses to start-up, grow, innovate, trade and invest. Where integrated infrastructure attracts the investment to create jobs in well-connected places with affordable homes.

### **A strong transport system founded on active travel and public modes**

We will develop an integrated, sustainable, transport system that connects all parts of our region, so everyone can access the places they need to live fulfilled lives. We will promote sustainable travel so that walking, cycling, and public transport are the easiest choice, where everyone can enjoy the benefits of good health, protecting the environment for future generations.

### **A zero-net Carbon economy by 2038**

We will deliver a net-zero economy where people have the skills and opportunities to access green jobs. Where transport is sustainable, and energy efficient homes ensure fuel poverty is abolished. Where businesses and industry use the resources they need to operate efficiently reducing energy consumption and boosting regional productivity.

Culture will be available to all We will put culture at the heart of our economy where creative businesses start-up and thrive. We will make sure that whatever your background, entry to the creative sector relies on your talent alone. We will ensure everyone in West Yorkshire can make the most of our world class cultural assets and enjoy the benefits of cultural engagement.

We will continue to be happy place to live where the wellbeing of our citizens is a priority. We will ensure that where you live helps to promote good health and wellbeing, that life expectancy in West Yorkshire aligns with the national average. We want to be at the heart of global health innovation with the significant health assets and the strength of the health technology sector of our region renowned.

Our region will be one of the safest places to live and work in the UK. We will do everything in our power to make West Yorkshire the safest place to be, ensure that our

streets are safe so our communities can thrive making the most of the opportunities our region has to offer. This involves responding to a range of complex needs and supporting victims of crime.

## **FOLLOWING SECTIONS TO BE FINALISED ONCE NARRATIVE HAS BEEN AGREED**

### **Draft Ambitions**

#### **Add graphs/infographics to this section**

To measure success, a series of ambitions have been developed these ambitions are aspirational, representing the ultimate vision for our region:

- No child grows up in poverty
- A net-zero Carbon economy by 2038
- Productivity is highest in the north
- A strong transport system founded on active travel and public modes
- All jobs paying at least the real living wage
- Skills levels exceed the national average
- Healthy life expectancy equalling the national average
- West Yorkshire's employment rate will be the highest in the north
- Neighbourhood crime is sustainably below the national average.
- **Place inc culture, heritage, tourism**
- **Investment in Research and Development**

The annual State of the Region report, provides a suite of indicators that map to the ambitions setting out progress against our vision for 2040.

### **What we need to achieve our vision**

Local Authorities play a significant role in driving economic growth and levelling up, yet core services continue to be under significant and increasing pressure, having lost nearly £15 billion of core government funding over the last decade. **Government must recognise the crucial role of councils play in growth and provide sufficient funding and certainty for councils in the long term.** This should include a long-term solution for funding adult social care and support for SEND. To ensure we can all work effectively to deliver our vision we require **greater certainty of secure, stable, and fair local government funding and public sector resourcing**, that enables confidence, long term planning, flexibility, and innovation.

The scale of the opportunities for our region, and the challenges we must seek to overcome will require additional funding and powers. Significant fiscal devolution would give our region greater freedom, certainty, and surety, with responsibility to ourselves and our partners to ensure our vision becomes a reality. This will empower our region to enact tailored solutions to boost productivity, tackle inequalities and drive inclusive growth. Levelling up will require systemic change, radical intervention, and significant investment to address poverty and inequality. It should aim to improve opportunities for all. This means we must:

- Have much greater cross-government engagement with West Yorkshire to shape understanding of local needs.
- Be able to deliver over the long-term and base our actions on robust evidence and clear accountability with sustained funding.

To level up West Yorkshire we need to:

- Enable disadvantaged groups and communities within the region to reach their potential and access opportunity; and
- For the region overall to increase its economic contribution (in terms of higher income, employment, and productivity) and close the gap with more prosperous regions.

Greater cross-government engagement with our region is needed to shape understanding of local needs. Further powers to delivery our vision include:

- **New powers and multi-year sustainable funding and incentives for achieving net zero and nature recovery at regional and local levels.** Without these freedoms and flexibilities local areas will find it increasingly difficult to deliver against their locally defined targets and to contribute to Government's own ambitions.
- We want government to **support an Innovation Deal** for our region that will enable us to prioritise investment in innovation that aligns to our regional challenges.
- Securing continued commitment to a West Yorkshire Mass Transit System.
- **100% Business Rate Retention** to reinvest in our town and city centres, strengthen our relationships with employers and businesses in all sectors.
- **Full devolution of all adult skills and careers funding** so people can gain the right skills needed for good quality work. We want a devolved system that can support local labour markets and accelerate inclusive growth with our local leadership accountable for ensuring investment provides for our communities.
- Greater investment in **transport** and **devolution of control of our rail stations** in partnership with Great British Railways.
- **Increase powers and funding to give greater regional control over rail** that facilitates the electrification of existing routes and progression of new rail schemes.



Our region has much to offer with abundant opportunities for growth. Through our strong partnerships we will harness our assets to realise these opportunities for the people and the places of West Yorkshire, the heart of the North and the best of all worlds.

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