

Convention 
of the North
2024



A Manifesto for the North

2024



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Poems from the North

My North

By Alina Brdar

My north, we love a cuppa at three,
With a biccie, especially at three,
Scarborough, Whitby and Filey,
All my summers at the sea
Love to use a Mayors fare,
To get to Millennium Square,
Shop around if you dare,
Trinity Horse, can't help but stare!
So much to explore, great cities and green,
Bolton Abbey, York cobbles and castles the best
I've seen.
Many Mills and textiles that have been,
Rich in culture history and cuisine.
Must have a Yorkshire roast with a pud,
Gravy and trimmings yes we would,
Yorkshire mix, scones and butties – yes you should,
Fish and chips with bits all day...yes we would !!!

Poem by Alina Brdar Year 5, delivered on stage
at the 2024 Convention of the North

Where does the North begin

By Isabelle Walker

Where does the North begin?
Gods own country
Watford, Sheffield, Mansfield
Pride, the countryside, brass bands
But we are not defined by lines in the land but
rather culture, attitudes, and accents
The countryside is our religion
Days of dark satanic mills are gone
We are spun into the light
Hills fall into silent, watchful prayer
The animals our angels
Watching, soot fall, suffocate, only to rise again
We are green again
But besides the countryside
We are so much more
buildings that protect us
Buildings that provide for us
We are our own capitals
The blueprints of the future
A knot held together by humanity
One small knot in the fabric of the world
Let the independence pulse through us
Let the smouldered coal warm us
What's not to be proud of?

Poem by Isabelle Waker Year 11, delivered on stage
at the 2024 Convention of the North



Our Manifesto

All roads to growth lead through the North

The biggest issue for the new Parliament will be how to build long term sustainable and inclusive growth for the UK. This is about boosting productivity, increasing average earnings, and transitioning to a net zero future. There is no route to achieving this that does not lie through catalysing the North's economic potential. Our Manifesto sets out how this can be achieved.

The North of England has all the fundamental assets for a thriving, 21st century economy, competing on the world stage and delivering prosperity for all its citizens and enabling all of our citizens to contribute to that economic success. Our North's cities and towns represent huge pools of human potential; our coasts and uplands are already powering a clean energy revolution, our ports and fibre-optic cables set to trade with the world, our research centres and clusters are driving innovation, and our institutions and culture exert a global reach and draw.

A partnership to unlock the North's potential

Despite our potential, the North has been held back by persistent under investment, in infrastructure, skills and high value clusters of future growth opportunity. We have so much promise, and so much has been promised to us. Now is the time to deliver on this. Our Manifesto sets out the propositions and ideas that can drive economic rebalancing, levelling up and national renewal. It is a call for a new partnership between institutions and people across the North, and between the North and central government. Some of the power to make this happen rests in Westminster, some with local leadership, and much of it lies with the people, businesses, and institutions of the region.

Our commitment is to work in partnership with the new government, and with our communities, businesses and institutions, to deliver our four game changers – driving Trade and Investment, leading the Net Zero transition, connecting the North through our Transport system; and unlocking the potential of our People and Places. If we take the right action to mobilise our collective assets, **we will grow the North's economy by £118bn p.a by 2050.**

Speaking with a unified voice for the North, and developed through the most extensive programme of co-production the North has ever seen, this manifesto sets out our offer to work with government to build long term sustainable and inclusive growth for the British economy.

Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin
and NP11 Chair, Clare Hayward

The manifesto on a page: Our ambitions

Our vision for the North: Catalysing our industrial strengths, our delivery capacity and our scale of impact to drive sustainable and inclusive growth for the UK.

Trade and Investment

A North that invests in our productivity, retains our talent, and promotes inclusive growth, by growing our clusters, knowing our strengths, and leveraging our global identity.

Net Zero

A North that powers the UK as an international Net Zero leader, builds thriving communities, and provides green jobs and a high-quality natural environment for future generations.

Transport

A North that puts our people and places at the heart of an integrated and reliable transport system, delivering safe, inclusive, and affordable connections.

People and Place

A healthy, green and future-facing North, leveraging our diverse culture, heritage and the potential of our places to unlock inclusive growth.

Underpinned by devolution

A North that is fully empowered to achieve its inclusive growth potential, further deepening and broadening devolution to bring more powers, funding and decision making to all our places.

We will deliver these ambitions through the following **game-changing policies:**

1. Promoting Northern sectors by developing investable “Northern products” for our internationally distinctive sectors, such as Clean Growth or Life Sciences.

2. Funding and support to co-develop a Northern Trade and Investment Strategy, strengthening the North’s evidence base on our role in the international economy.

3. Embedding the role of the North in national Trade and Investment policy by formalising the relationship between the North, DBT and the Office for Investment.

1. Developing the North’s unique energy opportunities with revenue and capital support to build an internationally-facing project and investable proposition pipeline.

2. Tackling energy grid constraints by properly resourcing and aligning regional energy planning, and rolling out Local Energy Area Plans.

3. Leveraging our Natural Capital through government working in partnership with the North to champion private investment and collaboration.

1. Devolving further powers and multi-year budgets for local transport, and supporting bus re-regulation with wider powers, transition funding and streamlined legal processes.

2. A transformed rail system connecting the North, including Northern Powerhouse Rail in full and HS2 land safeguarding.

3. Rebalancing inclusive growth through a Northern Appraisal Framework, supporting fairer transport investment decisions by recognising wider impacts.

1. Building a One Creative North, through a £50m pan-Northern Investment fund and the development of a life-long approach to training and creative talent.

2. Piloting a Place-based Visitor Economy through a £6.75m roll out of Destination Development Partnerships and explore regenerative tourism options.

3. Collaborating on Health Inequalities across the North through cross-border pilots and best practice sharing on Women’s Health and Family Hubs.



The Manifesto and the 2024 Convention of the North

The 2024 Convention of the North took place on the 29th of February and 1st of March 2024 in Leeds. At the Convention, leaders from Northern institutions, businesses and civic society assembled to debate the policy opportunities and barriers faced by their region. Since the establishment of the Convention in 2018, we have gathered in Gateshead, Liverpool, Rotherham, Manchester and now Leeds. In that time, the Convention has grown and matured, not just as an annual event, but as an institution and a powerful voice for the North as a whole.





The Manifesto, the Convention, and our partnerships

The Manifesto showcases the North's strong partnerships with business, universities, science, civic and voluntary sector organisations. This collaboration is reflected in the cross party and cross sector partnerships that have shaped the priorities and work of the North. These include the NP11 partnership, the N8 group of research-intensive universities, Transport for the North, the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, the People's Powerhouse, the Northern Health Science Alliance, and ongoing pan-Northern collaborations such as Nature North and the Northern Place and Culture Partnership.

The 2024 Convention was the first to take place across two days, making it the most extensive and collaborative to date. The intention behind this was to ensure delegates attending from across the North had the opportunity to co-create our collective priorities, through a series of workshops. The outcome of this is a Manifesto that sets out the North's ambitions to the new government, collectively built by Northern policy experts, leaders, businesses, and young people.

Young People at the 2024 Convention of the North

For the first time at the 2024 Convention of the North, young people were invited into the centre of the event; three of the four panel workshops kicked off with a presentation from young people and two students opened the second day of the Convention with a keynote address in the main hall to 800 delegates. Their presence was facilitated by Citizens UK North, who supported the attendance of 64 young people across 8 schools. The team of young people engaged with powerful figures including MPs, Mayors, business leaders, third sector professionals, academics, and policy stakeholders. They focused on negotiating change and asked for meetings to further their campaign work.

The students from schools across the North of England (including Dixons Academies in Leeds, Bradford and Manchester, Carr Manor Community School in Leeds, Belle Vue Girls Academy in Bradford and St Thomas More Catholic High School in North Shields) had been working alongside Citizens UK chapters for several months to run a series of listening campaigns in their schools centred around three of the policy areas; Net Zero, People and Place, and Transport. This formed their campaign asks to bring to the convention, which they raised at the relevant workshop session.

Our North

Our principles



A strong sense of identity

A positive vision

Actions, not just words

Partnership: Working together

Devolution of power

Our assets



Proud people

Phenomenal natural assets

Distinct economic strengths

Connecting the union

A unique capacity to deliver

Our place



80 towns (and 4420 settlements)

33% of England's forests

31 higher education institutions

18 cities

11 national parks/landscapes

Our people



15.3m residents

7.8m women

7.5m men

3.5m children

1m students

Our economy



£371bn annual GVA

£98.4bn exports

1.1m businesses

50.7% of England's renewable energy

Our culture



68,693 listed buildings

1064 libraries

345 museums

317 registered parks/gardens

6 world heritage sites

Our offer of partnership



The North of England is a proud region, with a powerful and distinctive identity, rooted not in nationality, language or religion, but in history, culture and place. We have been shaped by the industrial revolution that began here; from the great industrial cities to manufacturing towns and the ports and resorts, the canals and railways, the farms and the power plants, that together built the North into the production and trading powerhouse of the world. This shared identity and heritage is a huge asset to the North; it can galvanise partnerships, exert political sway on the national stage and motivate action from our citizens and civil society.

The Manifesto we have built sets out both our commitment to deliver on the North's promise and our offer to work with government on this. We have focussed here on where, through working together at pan regional level we can add the most value. That is why we have identified four key areas for collaboration across the North –

Trade and Investment

Net Zero

Transport

People and Place

– and an overarching ambition for each theme.

These ambitions were arrived upon through detailed discussion across thematic workshops, and through further collaboration with the workshop chairs and their panel members, and formally presented to the Convention plenary. In addition, this Manifesto presents a 5th ambition, aimed at boosting local empowerment through devolution across the North, and inspired by feedback from the Convention delegates.

We are very clear that these ambitions are not exhaustive, and that the North faces other significant challenges, such as skills shortages as well as imbalances in research and innovation, which are critical to inclusive growth (and where more work is needed to understand the emerging Northern picture), but which are often best addressed at more local levels through further devolution. In this way, the Manifesto works with the grain of the 'subsidiarity' principle of developing policy at the most appropriate geographic footprint, and where a Northern approach to the issues makes most sense.

We look forward to working to deliver this Manifesto alongside the communities, institutions and businesses of the North, and alongside the new government.



The North's offer to the UK and to our people

In partnership with national government, with our people, businesses, and institutions, and with each other, we want to work together to achieve the shared ambitions that can enable the UK to grow through the North achieving its potential.

Our offer to work with the new government to build long term, sustainable and fair growth for the UK is based on three core foundations:

- 1 Economic potential**
The North's economic potential to power the UK's future economy, leading on digital technologies, renewable energy, and artificial intelligence and automation.
- 2 Scale**
The scale to make a significant impact on national priorities.
- 3 Capacity**
The institutional and organisational capacity through devolution to deliver our shared ambitions.

These foundations are the core of our Manifesto for the North; a Manifesto setting out our commitment to work to deliver against our shared national goals.

1. The North has the economic potential to power Britain's sustainable growth

There is a growing consensus that the economic underperformance of the UK's regions lies at the heart of our national prosperity challenge. In recent years, several key interventions have helped to inform the national debate. The previous government's **Levelling Up White Paper** set out a theoretical framework for regenerative regional growth based around six capitals. The Harvard Kennedy School has identified **binding constraints** on regional growth in the UK, including transport, STEM-degree shortages, R&D spending and housing shortages. And the work of the **Resolution Foundation** has highlighted the role of the UK's investment shortfall, both public and private, in low growth and high inequality.

The North's economic potential is laid out in the **Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review** (NPIER), recently refreshed in 2023.

Commissioned by Transport for the North and NP11 on behalf of the North as a whole, it renews the case for the North's 'Prime Capabilities'. These are the four distinctive 'super-sectors' which represent the North's comparative advantage, driving trade with the world and filtering prosperity through our economies; **Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, Health Innovation and Digital**.

These sectors remain at the core of the North's growth strategy and our contribution to the UK's international competitiveness. However, the **review of the North's capabilities** also found that the North has strong specialisms in non-urban tradeable sectors; Chemicals and Materials, Textiles and Foundational Industries, Engineering and Construction, alongside the enabling capabilities of Financial and Professional Services, Logistics and Higher Education.

The North, driving innovation, and building the UK's future economy

Our economy and industrial base has seen, and will continue to see, substantial change driven by innovation, the adoption of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, advanced robotics and biotechnology such as genetic editing.

The North is contributing to the UK's leading position in these emerging technologies. For example in the North East, the National Innovation Centre for Data is working with businesses across the North to support the adoption of AI-related skills and make more effective use of their own data. These emergent disciplines and practices will be foundational to

future growth, and a more prosperous and inclusive Northern economy.

Nurturing these sectors and technologies requires tailored packages of support, combining consistent and long-term public funding for research and innovation for universities and research institutions, with wider business support, all underpinned by better housing and transport. Doing this well requires a long-term approach, working across administrative borders to support emerging clusters, with innovation policy linked in to future devolution policy and driven by local partnerships between research institutions, leaders and businesses.

The NPIER: A Transformational Scenario for the North

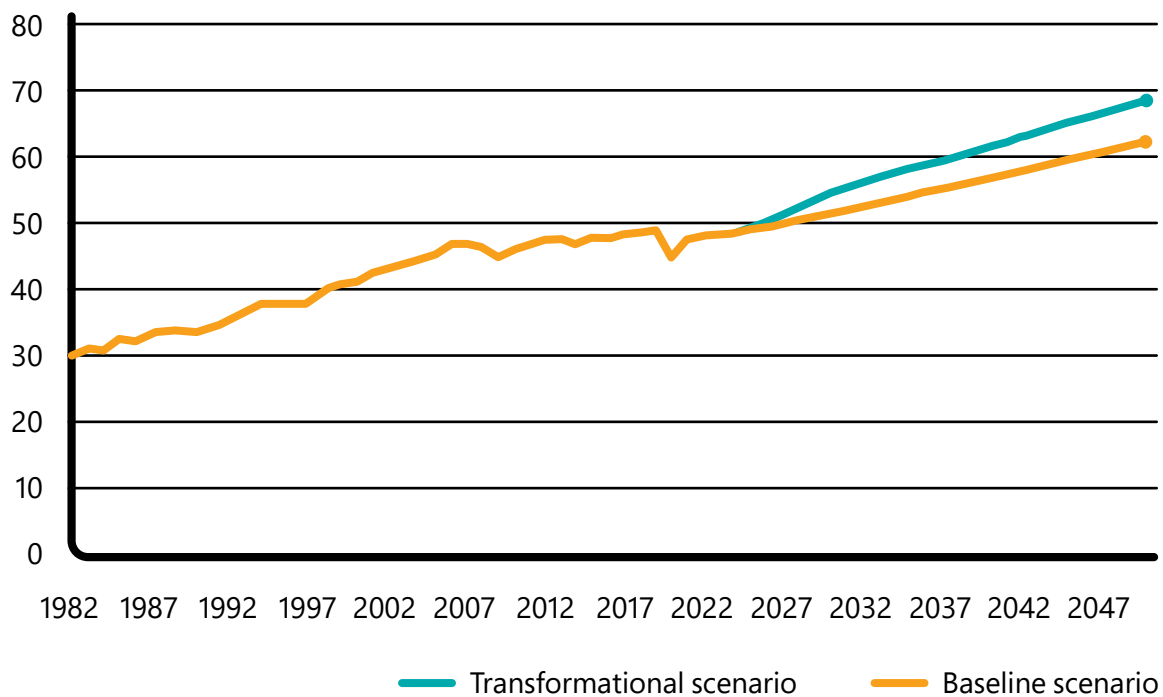
Recent and substantive modelling carried out as part of the **NPIER Refresh** has highlighted the potential to boost long-term growth in the North. The NPIER assessed four policy levers:

- Investing in **technology and innovation**
- Improving **development supply** (including housing, transport and connectivity)
- Investing in **Net Zero**
- And **inclusive productivity** (including skills, health and prevention)

If all of these investment levers are taken together, the outcome is a **transformational scenario** for the North, growing the economy by an additional £118bn a year by 2050.

The transformational scenario below represents the **impact of closing the £1,500 per capita gap in public funding** that exists between the North of England and elsewhere. Targeted with the right co-ordination across interventions, these four policy levers could grow Northern GVA by £118bn by 2050 and halve the productivity gap with the rest of the UK.

Modelled productivity per job, (£000s, 2019 prices)



Modelling data produced by Cambridge Econometrics on behalf of TfN and NP11.

2. The North has the scale to impact national economic priorities

Unlocking the potential of the North has been recognised as a priority by successive governments – from the Northern Way to the Northern Powerhouse to Levelling Up to the new government's stated mission to restore economic growth.

This is because there is no plausible route to moving the dial on national productivity and growth challenges that does not run through the North.

The transformational scenario from the refreshed Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review makes this clear. By **closing the investment gap with the rest of the UK**, by 2050 the North would see substantially improved outcomes across key indicators, that would help to meet national goals.

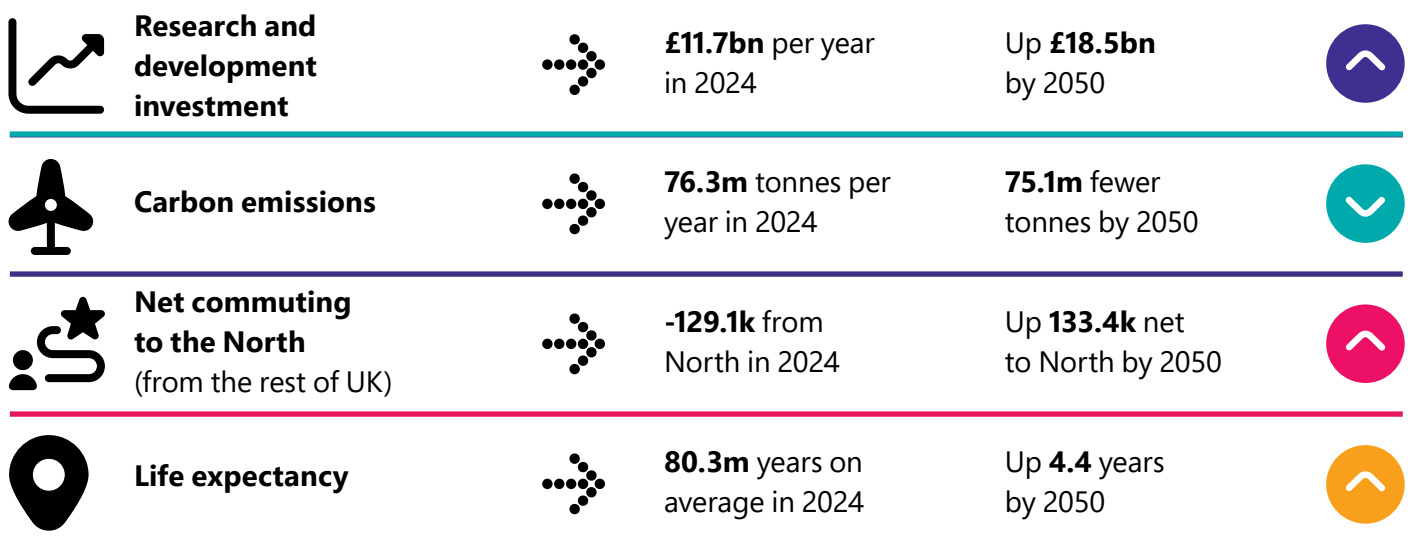


Figure 1. NPIER modelling on the implications of a Transformational Scenario

NPIER modelling carried out by Cambridge Econometrics on behalf of TfN and NP11, 2023.

The crucial role of local government in Northern prosperity

Local government is the foundation for devolution across the North. Combined Authorities are based on local authority collaboration, working alongside the business community and academic institutions across functional economic areas. Councils not only provide essential services, they have a core role in delivering inclusive growth and public service reform.

While new strategic capacity is being built at the city-region and pan-regional level, local authorities retain the primary delivery responsibility, yet their budgets face increasing spending pressures, and high levels of uncertainty. A continuation of current trends risks undoing much of the positive work of devolution, undermining the viability of county, city and town governance.

In the new Parliament, local government must be put on a longer-term, sustainable and equitable financial footing, if the places of the North are to deliver against their potential.

3. The North has a unique ability to deliver

Relative to the rest of England, the North has a uniquely well-developed ecosystem to drive forward policy. The North is at the forefront of the devolution agenda, with six well-established Mayoral Combined Authorities and four further devolution deals struck within the last couple of years. Meanwhile, local

government reforms have gradually consolidated governance across the North, notably with establishment of the Cheshire unitary authorities in 2009, and the 2023 establishment of the Cumbrian and North Yorkshire unitary authorities.

As the map below makes clear, the North is visibly driving the devolution agenda. When all negotiated deals take effect, 90.4% of the North's population will live in a devolved area.

Devolution coverage as of summer 2024

- Existing Combined Authority
- Devolution deal negotiated
- Upper tier local authority



Figure 2. Progress on devolution within England, as of March 2024

Devolved powers and the increasing institutional maturity of sub-regional governance has given most places in the North the ability to increasingly shape their own economic destiny. But the North's institutional strength is also about strong partnerships with business, universities, science, civic and voluntary sector organisations. This is reflected in the cross party and cross sector partnerships that continue to shape the priorities and work of the North, including: the NP11 partnership, N8 Research Partnership, Transport for the North, Northern Powerhouse Partnership, and Northern Health Science Alliance.

The Convention of the North is a manifestation of this institutional and partnership based capacity. By coming together to build a **Manifesto for the North**, the Convention serves as an opportunity to highlight our collective opportunities, and our willingness to work together.

Working together across the North: infrastructure and the devolution dividend

The UK has a national problem with **infrastructure delivery and cost**, highlighted recently by the Financial Times and the campaigning group Britain Remade. Part of the problem is that the UK's infrastructure is largely delivered centrally, subject to political churn and national fiscal considerations. This results in a narrow and unstable pipeline of projects, deterring private sector investment in the capacity of the sector, and incentivising bespoke solutions over standardised methods. All of this increases costs.

The North is increasingly working closer together to share expertise on bus franchising, where lessons learned from Greater Manchester's experience are being shared with other Combined Authorities. Similarly, the Liverpool City Region has established an approach to the procurement of new hydrogen powered trains, and the North of Tyne Combined Authority has pioneered voluntary land value capture approaches to help finance investment in the Northumberland Line. Building on this approach could help to deliver a **devolution dividend**; joint procurement and long-term project pipelines, standardisation of projects, growth led infrastructure financing, and capacity and expertise sharing between contracting authorities, to push down costs and deliver the investment the North and the UK needs.

The experience of other European countries, like France, that have moved from highly centralised systems to ones with a bigger share of regional infrastructure investment and delivery, is that this investment is more consistent and cost-effective.



How we built a Manifesto for the North

A key ambition of the 2024 Convention was to build a Manifesto, a cross-party, multi-sector, pan-regional document that sets out our collective priorities for the North. This is about what can be done by and with the North to drive national inclusive growth. Of course, we want our propositions to be adopted by the new government. But our four headline game changers are also collective priorities, those that we will aim to deliver ourselves working with partners, communities and businesses. They have been developed as investable propositions, ready to form our prospectus for growth.

Developing the policy inputs

The Convention of the North Policy Officers Group brought together policy experts from across local and regional government, thinktanks and the private sector. In the build-up to the 2024 Convention, the Policy Group worked across four workstreams to develop three headline policy propositions per workstream, in the form of short policy propositions. The full papers for each theme were uploaded to the **Convention website** and shared with delegates ahead of the Convention.

How we co-created the Manifesto

At the Convention, a series of workshops were held on the first day on each policy theme. Using interactive polling software and facilitated panel discussion, attendees debated and iterated the policy propositions, and co-created headline ambitions for the North in each of the four respective policy areas, all of which were reflected in this Manifesto.

How delegates describe the current state of the North

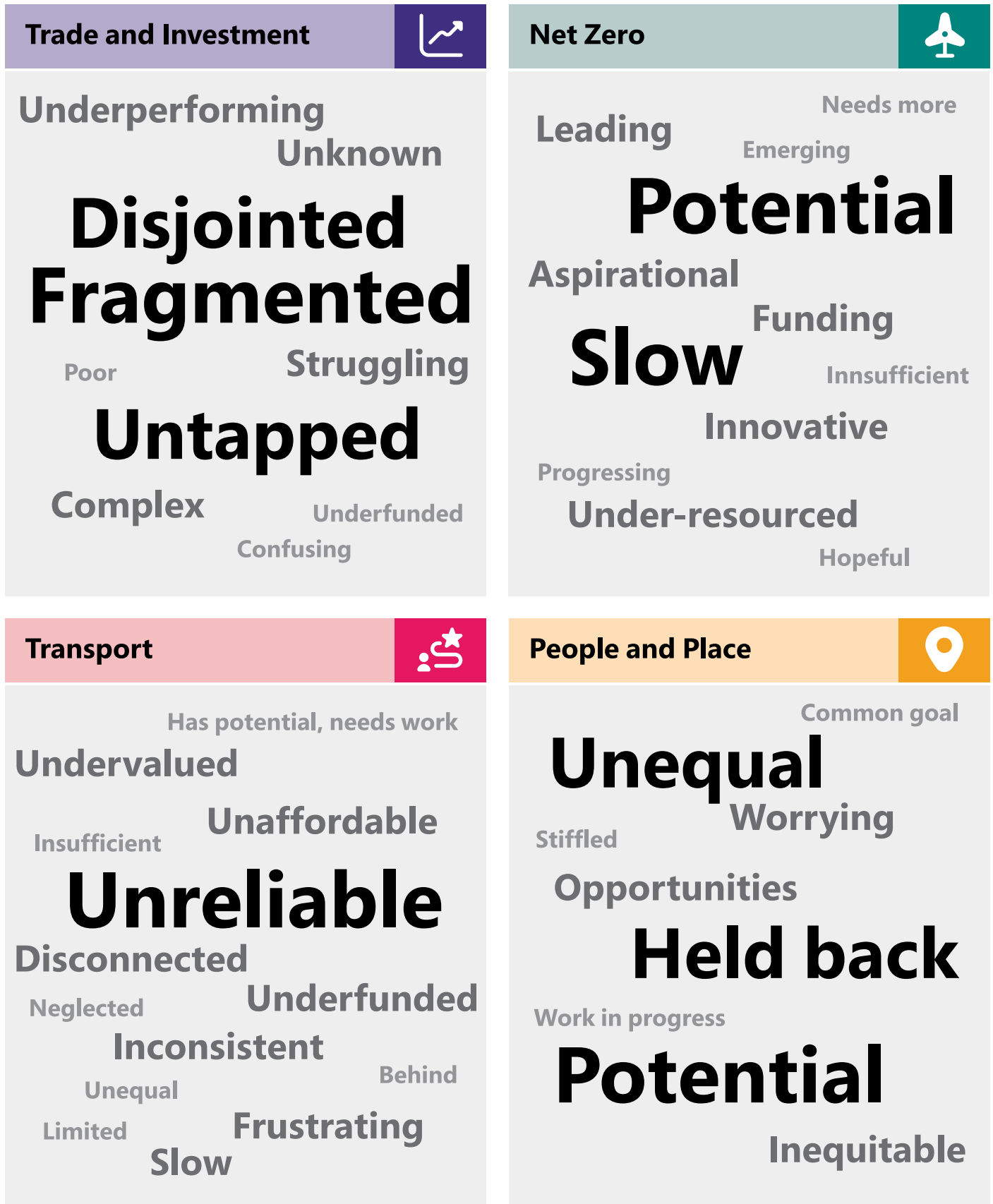


Figure 3a. Polling outputs as part of the 2024 Convention

What does success for the North look like?

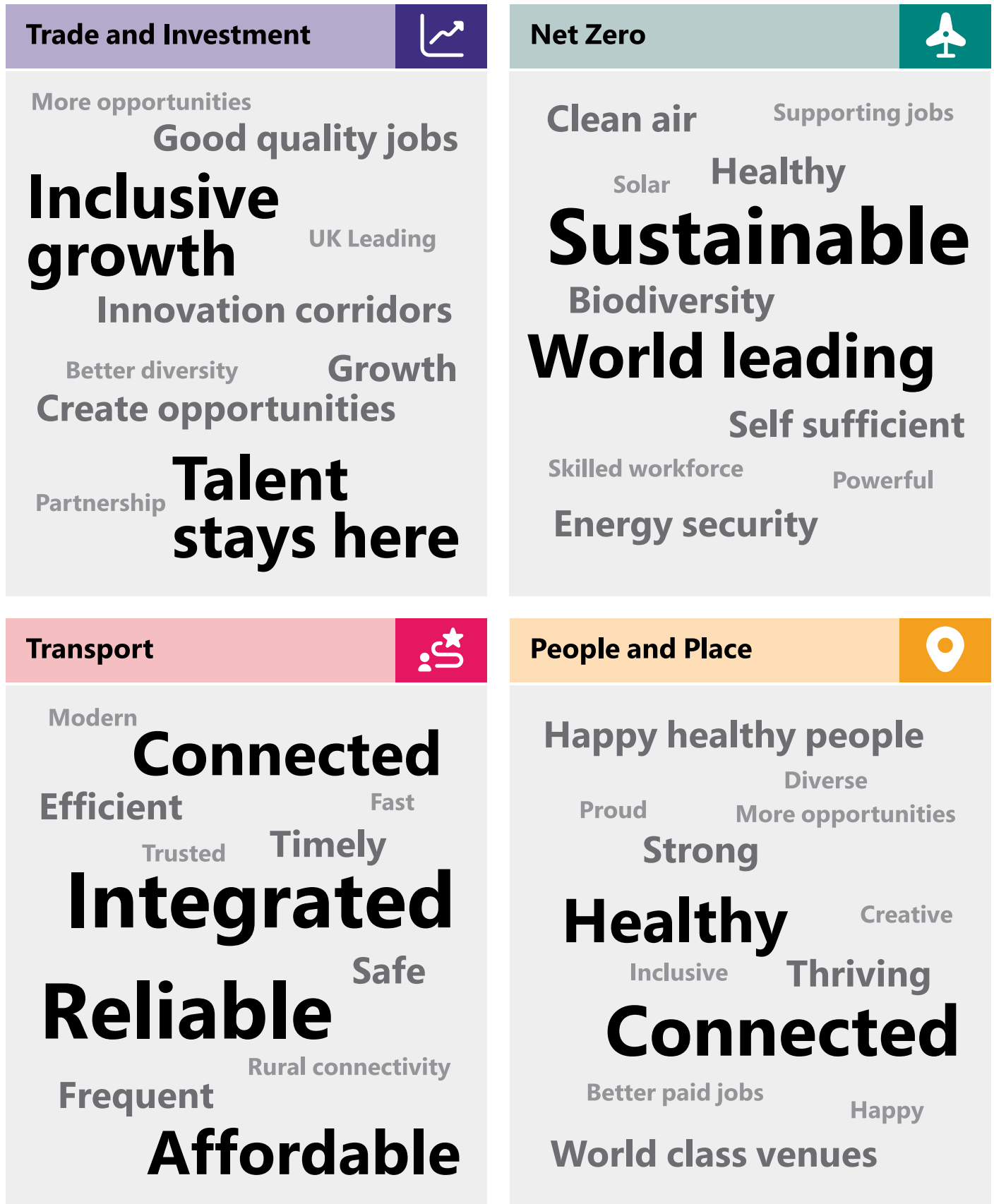
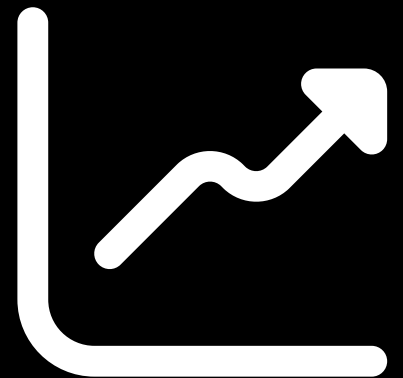


Figure 3b. Polling outputs as part of the 2024 Convention

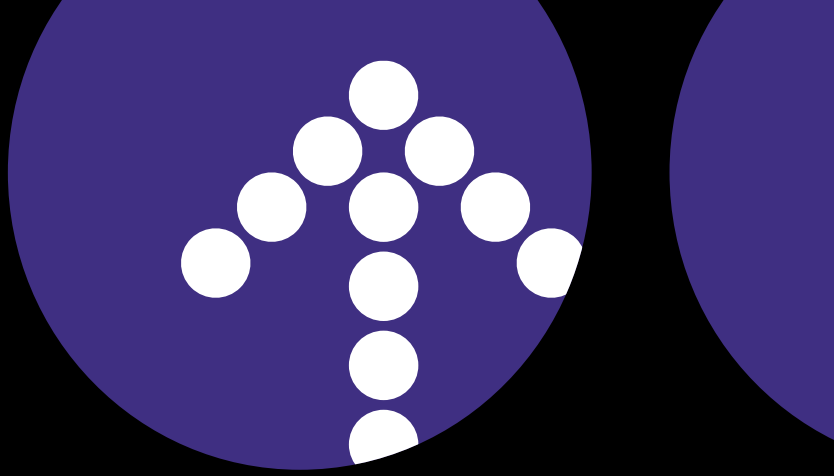


Delivering for the North

Trade and Investment



The North's opportunity in Trade and Investment



The North can and should act as an international trading and investment powerhouse. Recent data suggests that the North has a huge opportunity to attract inward investment and maximise exports:

The size of the prize in Trade and Investment

The current GVA of new and safeguarded FDI jobs in the North for 2022/23 is £492m. On the North's current growth trajectory, this value will reach £634.8m by 2030.

On an accelerated growth trend of a 5% increase on the current trajectory in jobs per year, the North has the potential to reach over £800.6m by 2030.

If the North increases its value of exports as a percentage of GVA (27.1%) to meet the UK average of 31.7%, this will equate to £16.7bn in additional export value.

However, the North underperforms our potential in Trade and Investment. Between 2018 and 2021 total goods and services exports were valued at approximately £381bn. Although significant, the North has underperformed in export growth compared to the UK average and its service exports are drastically lower than London and the South East. In particular, the following barriers hold back the North from achieving against our potential:

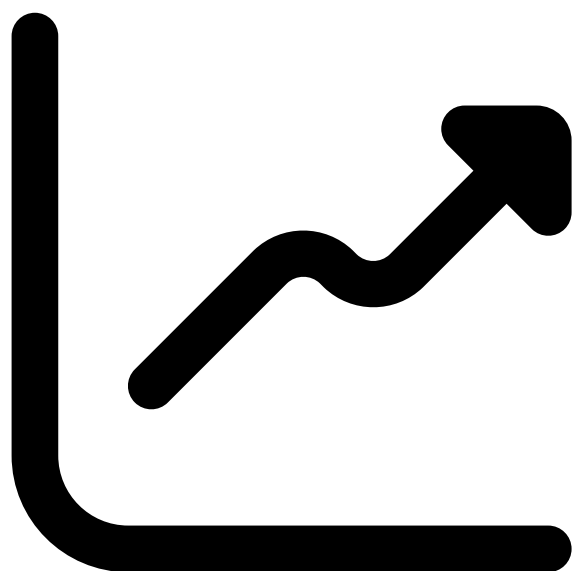
- **Limited ownership over National Trade and Investment activity.** Lack of coordination and oversight limits the North's ability to lead investment and trade activities, which challenges the potential to drive export growth and inward investment. The Office for Investment (OFI) has a critical role to play in supporting the North to identify and unlock strategic sites that can deliver a strategic economic shift.
- **Limited understanding of performance and impact.** Recent work to review trade and investment performance in the North has again highlighted a lack of reliable and robust data on which to measure performance and impact, and to shape activity.
- **A lack of co-ordination around key Northern products and specialism.** A lack of co-ordination means that opportunities in key sectors and others are not always well reflected in national promotions, which limits the North's ability to compete on the global stage. Greater collaboration would position the North, and the UK, to address the lack of globally competitive, top tier, investment-ready sites.



Our ambition for Trade and Investment

A North that invests in our productivity, retains our talent, and promotes inclusive growth, by growing our clusters, knowing our strengths, and leveraging our global identity.

This ambition was collectively shaped within the 2024 Convention workshops and launched on the main stage. Within the lifetime of the new Parliament, we want to deliver against this ambition through the three following game-changing policies:



1: Promoting Northern Sectors through investable 'Northern Products'

The North and government should work together to develop distinctive 'Northern Products' for each sector. This will require:

- Support to develop sectoral investable propositions (for example, jointly developing and promoting a competitive Clean Growth or Life Sciences 'Northern Product').
- Significant promotional campaigning in key markets and a concerted effort and relevant funding required to attract industry conferences in relevant sectors.
- Fast tracking support from OFI to address investment barriers (e.g. infrastructure, skills, planning).
- Maximising the distinct opportunity of Freeports and Investment Zones for improving the investment pipeline by raising the profile of the programmes in key international markets.



2: Co-developing a Northern Trade and Investment Strategy

The North should co-develop with government a Northern Trade and Investment Strategy and evidence base. As part of this, the UK Government should work with the North to:

- Review Northern T&I performance and role in **global value chains**, working to address the limitations of existing sub-regional data for understanding export markets and trade policy development.
- Develop a shared outcomes and performance framework aligned to national priorities and the North's transformational capabilities.
- Enable closer working on the joint design and delivery of the Northern Strategy and specific T&I programmes.
- Ensure T&I is considered in parallel with wider policies – e.g. R&D, business support and skills.

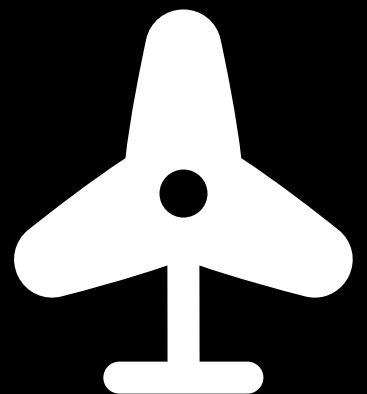
3: Embedding the North's role within national Trade and Investment policy

The North has a key role to play in shaping national trade and investment policy. We propose that this importance should be recognised through collaboration to:

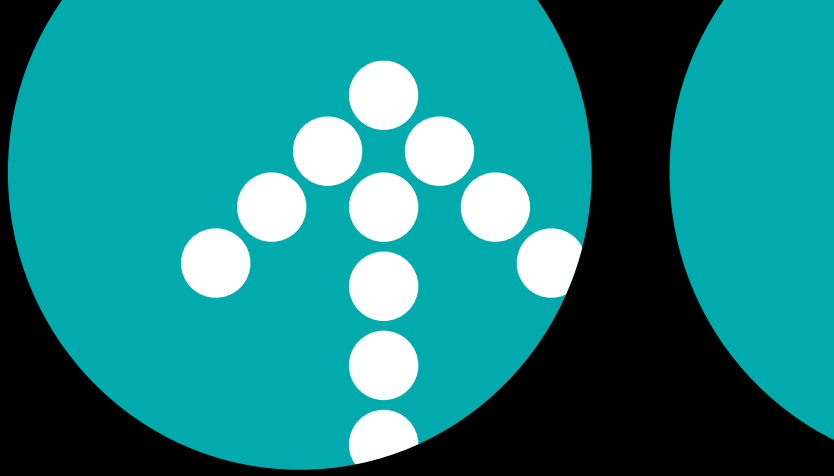
- Formalise the relationship between the North, the Department for Business and Trade, and the Office for Investment and co-develop a framework for national and sub-national collaboration.
- Back the North's role to grow its global trading and investment footprint with support, resourcing and responsibilities for any Northern pan-regional partnership.
- A clear route and timeline to the new Ministerial Investment Group outlined in the **Harrington Review**.
- A clear role for the North influencing any proposals to increase UK-wide investment, such as Sovereign Wealth Funds and institutional investment vehicles, to ensure a place-blind approach is not taken.



Delivering for the North
Net Zero



The North's opportunity for Net Zero



The North has the capacity to lead the UK's green industrial revolution. It generates 40% of UK's electricity, 50% of England's renewable energy, provides 36% of jobs in low carbon goods and services, and is leading the way in at-scale nature-based solutions. In R&D, the North has world class capabilities across our universities and in wider institutions.

The North can make a huge difference to national Net Zero progress. In 2024, the North contributes 76.3m tonnes of CO2 annually. Modelling from the NPIER Refresh has shown that with transformative investment in Net Zero opportunities, this could fall to 1.2m tonnes by 2050.

However, the North faces barriers to achieving our potential:

- **Three of the six largest industrial clusters by emissions** are in the North and supporting these clusters to transition to a net zero position whilst maintaining competitiveness is a significant challenge.
- **A need to strengthen the project pipeline to unlock capital investment – Meeting Net Zero** across the UK would require around £50bn per year of low carbon investment. Given the scale of the decarbonisation challenge in the North, it is vital that the region finds a way to unlock capital and projects to support demand.

- The opportunity to attract green finance into nature recovery – reversing the UK's depletion of biodiversity – in the North is currently limited by **a lack of integrated policy around nature-based solutions, and insufficient capacity in the sectors delivering nature recovery.**

Young People's Voice at the 2024 Convention of the North: Net Zero

At the Convention Net Zero workshop we heard from young people (aged 14-16), who set out their experiences, barriers, and priorities:

"I feel restricted that I can't have an impact on how my future will turn out because people in power won't let me talk."

"I think that we aren't often properly educated on wider environmental issues – only on small issues. This means we can't form better opinions."

"Will you agree to commit to working with us to deliver more green job opportunities for young people in the North of England, with clear career pathways and guidance?"

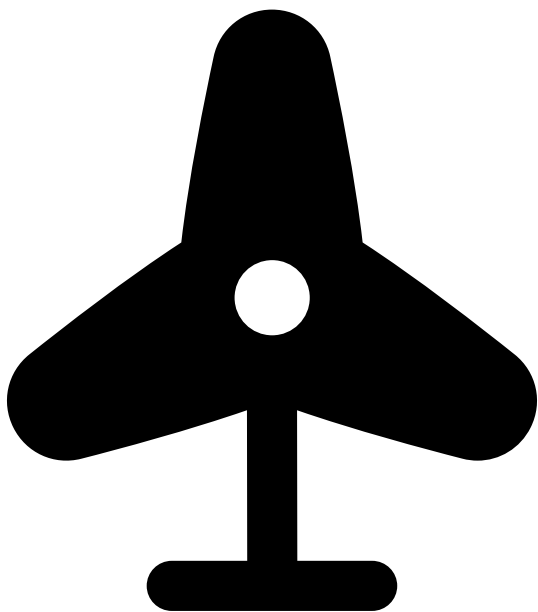
"Will you agree to commit to working with us to run better public consultation with young people on Net Zero Policy areas, including more face-to-face consultations in which young people play a key role?"



Our ambition for Net Zero

A North that powers the UK as an international Net Zero leader, builds thriving communities, and provides green jobs and a high-quality natural environment for future generations.

This ambition was collectively shaped within the 2024 Convention workshops and launched on the main stage. Within the lifetime of the new Parliament, we want to deliver against this ambition through the following three game-changing policies:



1: Developing the North's unique energy opportunities

The North and government should work together to support emerging opportunities within the North, capitalising on our unique geography of opportunity for energy generation – in offshore wind, nuclear (including Small Modular Reactors), tidal and geothermal and industrial decarbonisation including hydrogen and carbon capture – through dedicated revenue and capital support to develop an internationally facing project pipeline of investable propositions.





2: Tackling energy grid constraints through regional planning

The North and the Government should work together support Ofgem's proposals for the introduction of **Regional Energy Strategic Planners** (RESPs) by:

- Producing clear guidance as to government expectations for Local Area Energy Plans, including responsibility for development and a common national framework to ensure standards and consistency across plans.
- Tasking the national network of **Net Zero Hubs** with adopting Local Area Energy Plans as strategic documents informing the development and delivery of net zero pipelines within their geography – and enabling this by aligning RESP areas with Net Zero Hub geography where appropriate.
- Providing devolved and flexible funding through Net Zero Hubs and Combined Authorities, where they exist, to develop a pipeline of investible energy propositions which meet local energy and economic need, and appropriate delivery vehicles for the implementation of Local Area Energy Plans.
- Offering resourcing and guidance for community engagement activities supporting the delivery of these pipeline projects, and streamline channels to engage with investors.

3: Leveraging our Natural Capital

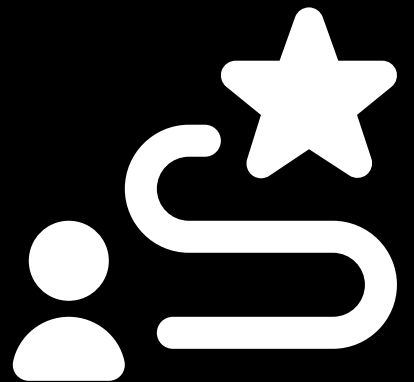
Government should work with the North to:

- Adopt an integrated and cross-Whitehall approach to addressing barriers to nature recovery and nature-based solutions.
- Optimise the use of public funds for nature recovery through specific support for collaboration including with key landowners and utility companies, and cross-sector partnerships that are working to leverage private finance.
- Provide funding for capacity building and pipeline development for nature recovery.
- Invest in skills, education and training for green jobs, enabling people in the north to take advantage of this rapidly developing sector.





Delivering for the North
Transport



The North's opportunity for Transport

Transport is a key enabler of economic growth. A scenario for a transformed Northern economy, as set out in the updated NPIER (developed by the North's statutory transport body TfN alongside NP11), projects that by 2050 the economy of the North could be some £118bn GVA a year larger and support an additional 1m jobs than in a baseline economic scenario. To realise this huge potential, the North's transport system needs to be transformed.

However, the North faces transport related barriers to achieving our potential:

- The North's transport system today is characterised by **poor reliability and low frequency** of public transport services, severe congestion, unreliable journey times on key parts of the strategic and major road networks, and poor conditions for active travel.
- **Businesses in the region are held back by relatively poor inter-regional connectivity**, which restricts access to a wider pool of skilled labour, the frequency and efficiency of business interactions, as well as the movement of goods and services within the North. Only 27% of the North's population can access 500,000 jobs in under an hour by rail – significantly less than other parts of the UK.
- **Wider connectivity challenges to the rest of the UK.** Our connections to the Midlands, to London and to Scotland are highly important but of varying quality. Extending the reach of the North's people and businesses to wider

opportunities, markets and investors via transformed transport connectivity represents a huge opportunity.

Young People's Voice at the 2024 Convention of the North: Transport

At the Convention Transport workshop we heard from young people (aged 14-16), who set out their experiences, barriers and priorities:

"My sister got a scholarship to another school and so has to take a bus to sixth form. However, the bus connections are really bad. There are no direct buses so she has to take two buses – one into town and then another towards school. On top of that, the buses are always late or they don't turn up when they are supposed to, so she is often late. It's not fair because she leaves early and on time."

"Will you ensure more frequent buses at peak times, such as the beginning and end of the school day?"

"Will you remove the postcode lottery on fare deals for young people across the north?"

"We need real accountability for our bus and train services. Will you give real scrutiny with young people guaranteed places on panels? And will you give these panels to power to set fares and required service levels on frequency and reliability."

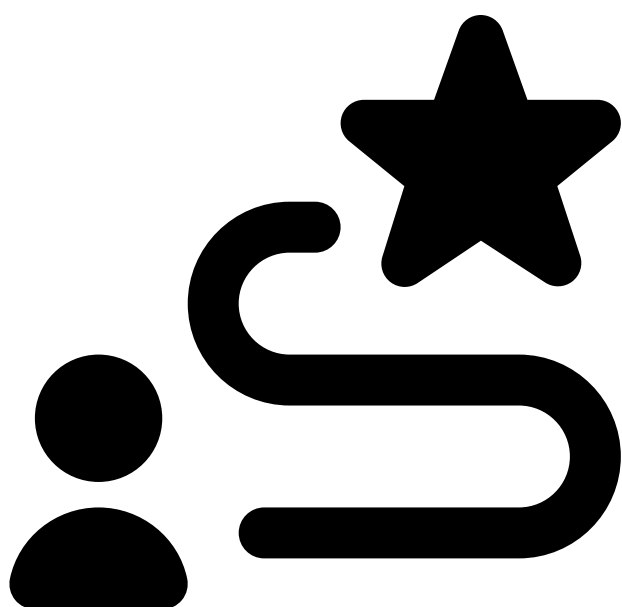
Our ambition for Transport

A North that puts our people and places at the heart of an integrated and reliable transport system, delivering safe, inclusive and affordable connections.

This ambition was collectively shaped within the 2024 Convention workshops and launched on the main stage. Within the lifetime of the new Parliament, we want to deliver against this ambition through the three following game-changing policies:

1: Devolving powers and budgets for local buses, rail and trams

There should be greater devolution from government of transport funding on a multi-year basis and revenue raising powers across the North, to provide longer term certainty over budgets and ensure that decisions are made closer to the people they affect. Devolved funding should be paired with increased freedoms and powers around local transport, particularly around bus re-regulation, with adequate short-term transition funding, streamlined franchising and legal processes, and an expansion of bus franchising powers to all areas including those without a metro Mayor.



2: Connecting the North through a transformed rail system

The Government and the North should work together to deliver **Northern Powerhouse Rail** in full, including restoration of the Leamside line. The **Co-sponsorship Arrangement** for Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) needs to be updated to strengthen the role of regional partners across the whole of the North. And until such a time as alternative HS2 proposals are found, land associated with the HS2 route north of Birmingham should be safeguarded.



3: Rebalancing investment and supporting inclusive growth through a Northern Appraisal Framework

Current approaches to planning, appraisal and decision-making relating to transport investment do not adequately recognise all the significant impacts that transport investment can have on our people and places. Central government decision making prioritises the **Green Book's** emphasis on a monetised Benefit Cost Ratio. Despite the flexibility in its framework, this puts the North at a disadvantage when preparing business cases for investment in the region which seek to stimulate demand to unlock the unrealised potential of the North's people and places.

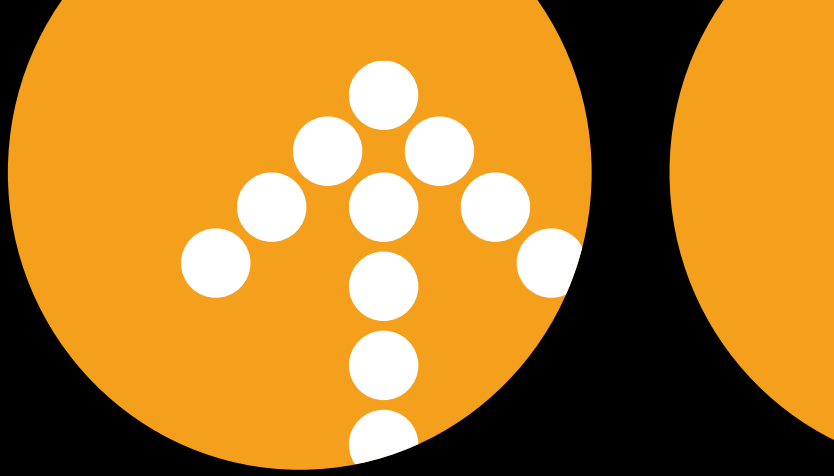
We therefore need to change the way we plan, develop, and deliver investment, adopting a long-term, strategic approach which is focused on a clear set of economic, social and environmental outcomes, while also being firmly place-based and people/community-centred. There is a need to recognise transport not simply as a facilitator of mobility but as a driver for wider outcomes such as sustainable and inclusive economic growth, housing delivery, and improved public health. This new approach is also embedded in the revised **Strategic Transport Plan** for the North of England, which provides a framework for providing advice to government on investment priorities for the North, and for the development of Local Transport Plans. Partners across the North are also working to develop a Northern Appraisal Framework that, whilst consistent with Green Book requirements, better reflects the wider benefits of investing in unlocking potential of the North's people and places.



Delivering for the North
People and Place



The North's opportunity for People and Place



The North of England, with its rich culture, heritage, and stunning landscapes, is the **ideal place to live, work, invest, and study**. This contributes to a total £10.4bn from the arts/cultural/heritage sectors, 170,000 jobs across the creative sectors and a £3.4bn annual spend by international and domestic holiday makers across the North. These assets also act as a crucial enabler for wider economic growth, attracting and retaining talent and investment.

There are a strong range of partnerships and delivery arrangements in place across all areas of the North, which bring together local civic, business and provider leaders.

However, the North faces barriers to achieving our potential:

- **Scarce resources and investment in the creative sector:** Lack of access to finance, attention and retaining talent holds back our potential; as evidenced by the fact that the North's creative industries are only a third of the size of share of the economy of the Greater South East.
- **A low profile relative to the potential of our tourism assets:** Our visitor economy in particular is held back by an overcrowded and fragmented landscape, reducing our ability to make an internationally compelling pitch rooted in our Northern assets.
- **Poor health outcomes.** The North suffers from poor health outcomes among children, children in the North have a 27% chance of living in poverty compared to 20% in the rest of England.

Improving health would reduce the £4 gap in productivity per person per hour between the North and the rest of England by 30% or £1.20 per person per hour, generating an additional £13.2bn in UK GVA.

Young people's voice at the 2024 Convention of the North: People and Place

At the Convention Transport workshop we heard from young people (aged 14-16), who set out their experiences, barriers and priorities:

"In a world that prioritizes productivity and success, we neglect the thing that sustains us – our health... Where are the support systems that help us with our wellbeing? And why is it that the ones which exist are not known to any of us? It's a failure of power-holders that we can recite historical dates and mathematics formulas but remain clueless about our health."

"Every child or young person who needs it should have access to professional counselling in a suitable place for them, preferably in school. Will you work with us to help fund this?"

"We need better transport in order to access culture. We can't even get to free events as buses are too expensive for families. Will you give transport passes to families so they can access cultural activities?"

Our ambition for our People and Place

A healthy, green and future-facing North, leveraging our diverse culture, heritage and the potential of our places to unlock inclusive growth.

This ambition was collectively shaped within the 2024 Convention workshops and launched on the main stage. Within the lifetime of the new Parliament, we want to deliver against this ambition through the three following game-changing policies:



1: Building a One Creative North

Creative and cultural activities can not only drive economic opportunity in the North, but can also drive improvements in people's health, mental wellbeing and the broader social determinants of health outcomes.

By working together, we can unlock finance, train and retain talent, support wellbeing and capture national attention to become a new supercluster: **One Creative North**. One Creative North would seek to unlock the potential of Northern creative industries through two initiatives:

- CreaTech North Investment Fund - providing finance for Northern enterprises working at the intersection of the creative industries and technology and fostering pan-regional collaboration, through a £50m fund matched 4:1 with private capital.
- CreaTalent North – a co-ordinated, pan regional and life-long approach to training and retaining creative talent in the North, from classroom to career.

Alongside the targeted opportunity around the creative sectors, there is clear potential to connect cross-sector support, workforce and leadership development and investment-readiness support across the North's place-focused sectors.



2: Piloting a Place-based Visitor Economy

The North is the most advanced area for Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) coverage in the UK. Working across the Northern LVEPs, Nature North and the wider partnership, with a £6.75m investment from government, there is opportunity to:

- Create Destination Development Partnerships in full coverage across the North.
- Scope the development of a 'Northern Super-pitch', working alongside the Northern Place and Culture Partnership NP11.
- Develop a shared, three-year initiative around 'Regenerative Tourism North' in collaboration with Nature North and the pan-Northern partners.

3: Collaborating on Health Inequalities across the North

We call on the Government to work with the North to develop a programme of place-based working to tackle ill health and benefit the economy, including collaboration and knowledge sharing between upper tier and regional authorities across the North on addressing health inequalities through the wider determinants of health, in particular housing, environment, and early years. As a test case for this approach, we propose pilots supporting collaboration and best practice-sharing across Women's Health Hubs and Family Hubs in the North.

Tackling ill health will benefit the northern economy and addressing the wide determinants of our children's poor health is key to mitigating economic impacts – through early investment, reducing inequalities, raising aspirations and attainment so everyone can fulfil their potential and lead a happy, healthy, and productive life.





Next Steps

The 2024 Convention of the North was built around the core ambition of co-creating a statement of shared priorities in the form of a Manifesto for the North.

Our Manifesto reflects the identification of the game-changing ambitions and policy propositions from the Convention workshops and plenary sessions. Co-created by hundreds of Convention attendees, the Manifesto stands as a collective marker for the North's shared priorities.

However, the Manifesto is not the end of the Convention's work. In early 2025, the Convention will reconvene, and set out our plans to deliver against the policy priorities over the term of the new Parliament, in partnership with the recently elected government.



Annex

The Convention Steering Group

The Convention of the North brings together people from across the North, including businesses, trade unions, elected leaders, and community and faith groups, to speak with one voice on pan-Northern issues. Its Steering Group includes the following:

Clare Hayward

NP11, Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington

Mayor Tracy Brabin

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Mayor Andy Burnham

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Mayor Steve Rotheram

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Mayor Oliver Coppard

South Yorkshire Combined Authority

Mayor David Skaith

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

Mayor Kim McGuinness

North East Combined Authority

Mayor Ben Houchen

Tees Valley Combined Authority

Cllr Carl Les

North Yorkshire Council

Cllr Stephen Houghton

Barnsley Council

Cllr Philippa Williamson

Lancashire County Council

Mayor Chris Cooke

Middlesborough Council

Cllr Tom Hunt

Sheffield City Council

Cllr John Merry

Salford City Council

Cllr Liam Robinson

Liverpool City Council

Cllr Nick Kemp

Newcastle City Council

Cllr Claire Douglas

City of York Council

Cllr Amanda Hopgood

Durham County Council

Cllr Bev Craig

Manchester City Council

Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Cllr Mike Ross

Hull City Council

Cllr James Lewis

Leeds City Council

Cllr Jonathan Brook

Westmorland and Furness Council

Henri Murison

The Northern Powerhouse Partnership

Edna Robinson

People's Powerhouse

Patrick McLoughlin

Transport for the North

Martin Tugwell

Transport for the North

This paper has been produced by the Convention of the North and NP11, with support from Metro Dynamics. It was informed via an extensive consultation process with the Convention of the North Steering Group members, with policy development support provided by the pan-regional Convention Policy Officers Group. We would like to thank all of those involved for their time and support for this year's Convention.

