

# Our Future

Rebuilding the pride, purpose and prosperity of South Yorkshire

**PRIDE. PURPOSE. PROSPERITY.**



"Each shall strive for the welfare of all."  
Coat of Arms of South Yorkshire

**Under** the crest of South Yorkshire are written the words 'Each shall strive for the good of all'. I am asking for your support to be South Yorkshire's Mayor so that those words might once again be the foundation of our shared future.

South Yorkshire is a region in which the bonds of community were forged in the creation of our industries, and our shared prosperity was once the bedrock of our common purpose.

But as our industries declined, and our communities fractured, so our region was left behind. A decade of austerity has only served to compound the challenges we face here and increase the divide between the richest and least well-off parts of our country. Today, a baby born in South Yorkshire is expected to live a shorter life than someone born in Surrey or Sussex. One in three children in South Yorkshire are growing up in poverty. Working people earn around £250 less here every month than they would down South.

Devolution and so-called 'levelling up' was supposed to be the government's response to those challenges: the means by which our communities were restored and our faith in the future renewed. But so far devolution has not delivered on that promise, repaired the damage done by austerity, or responded to the very real challenges that we face here in South Yorkshire.

I don't want to wait any longer. There is an urgent need for change. That's why, rather than asking what

the government wants for our future, I want to build the future demanded by our own communities.

Because there is nothing inevitable about us being less well-off or less healthy than people in other parts of the country. There is no technical barrier to us overcoming the challenges of climate breakdown or fuel poverty, or to finding ways to move people around our region more efficiently. The solutions are well within our grasp.

Indeed, we have all the building blocks we need to restore the pride, purpose and prosperity of our region. We have world class universities, working with businesses at the cutting edge of innovation and change. We have landscapes and natural assets that both protect and sustain our communities, and cultural and heritage institutions that are globally recognised. We have dedicated and inspirational public servants. We have young people with ambition, not just for their own future but for the future of our region, and leaders across our communities working tirelessly to make life better for us all.

Those are the foundations upon which we can build a brighter future for South Yorkshire, and I want to be the Mayor who leads that change. But I cannot do that alone, and nor should I try.

We can only forge a new vision for the future of South Yorkshire together. Not only the Mayor working together with the four local authorities of South Yorkshire, but all of our communities working

together to unlock the potential of our region.

Throughout this manifesto are ideas for how we can work together to make our economy and communities stronger, and put control of our region back in the hands of the people of South Yorkshire.

Bringing about the change we need will not be easy. Bringing the buses back into public control, adapting to and fighting further climate breakdown, developing the industries of the future, reversing longstanding health inequalities; these are all missions that will require not just a detailed and comprehensive plan, but a commitment from government to the communities of South Yorkshire.

But we do know better than a government in London how to restore and renew our communities. We are simply asking for the tools we need to be placed in our collective hands; for the government to recognise and respond to our ambition with a commitment to invest in our future.

Without that investment and support from central government no one could promise to deliver the radical transformation we are capable of, but if you elect me as our Mayor I can promise to work every single day to build a South Yorkshire we can all be proud to call home.



Oliver Coppard

# My Priorities

as Mayor will be:

1. I will do politics differently. That means I will be the most transparent and accountable Mayor in the country, holding a Mayor's public question time every quarter, an annual public audit of office spending and income, and supporting new approaches to political engagement. Being South Yorkshire's Mayor will be my only paid job for the whole term of my office.

2. I will fight for a funding package from government that allows us to have a bus network that is affordable, reliable, accessible and sustainable; and work every day to bring the buses back into public control, where they belong. Public transport should be a public service; the clue is in the title.

3. I will take personal responsibility for driving our strategy for achieving net-zero carbon emissions in South Yorkshire by 2040, convening a South Yorkshire Citizens' Assembly so that everyone in our region has an opportunity to shape how we respond to the climate emergency. A retrofit task force, a clean energy strategy, active travel and ambitious nature targets will help to combat climate breakdown.

4. I will champion and invest in South Yorkshire's people and businesses working at the forefront of the technologies and industries of the future, as part of an ambitious strategy to create the jobs and support clean growth in key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, health technology, creative and digital.

5. I will continue to expand walking and cycling networks across South Yorkshire, so that active travel can be a practical and sustainable alternative to getting a car or bus. I will appoint and support a new Active Travel Commissioner.

6. I will work with our higher and further education institutions and skills providers to develop new routes to adult education that are more flexible and more accessible, and I will introduce a single point of access for adult skills and training opportunities across South Yorkshire.

7. I will work to create more liveable communities across South Yorkshire. That means a plan for revitalising our high streets and ambitious targets for nature recovery, as well as safer, better connected and more sustainable transport links across our region.

8. I will build a better economy not just a bigger economy, with support for co-operative businesses, a Better Business Challenge, and a Community Wealth Building Strategy that reinvests in and supports our local assets.

9. I will prioritise the health and wellbeing of our communities. My personal ambition is for South Yorkshire to be the healthiest region in the country, and I will bring together the assets and expertise we have in the region to address health inequality across our communities.

10. Perhaps most importantly, where possible I will work with the Government to deliver on their promises to South Yorkshire and the North, and challenge them to go further and faster in giving us the power, money, and control we need to create a region that matches the shared ambitions of our communities.

# Politics

putting power in the hands of our communities

## **POLITICS: PUTTING POWER IN THE HANDS OF OUR COMMUNITIES**

After 12 years of a Tory government, the challenges we face in South Yorkshire are significant. Our economy isn't big enough, our public transport system isn't fit for purpose, all too many of our young people feel like they need to move out to get on. We're facing a cost-of-living crisis.

But those challenges are neither insurmountable nor inevitable. We know how to build homes that are warmer and cheaper to run, and how to create a public transport system that's efficient and responsive. We have universities and businesses that work every day to develop the people and ideas that can power our region forward. We can create an economy that shares both wealth and power. We can be healthier and happier.

What we're missing is a deal with government that means we can realise the potential of South Yorkshire and the North, and the political structures that allow us to forge our own path and unlock the ambition of our communities. We know better than the government in London the potential of our communities, and what we need to do to overcome the challenges in front of us.

As Mayor I will work every day to establish not just a new political relationship between South Yorkshire and the government in London, but also a new way of doing politics here in our region. That's why I've said I'll fight to hold the government to account for the promises they've made to the North, but why I've also said I'll be the most transparent and accountable Mayor in the Country, and why I'll establish new ways for our communities to get involved in the big decisions we make.



## A NEW DEAL WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

I am asking for your mandate to deliver a new deal for South Yorkshire, and your support to challenge this government for the powers and resources we need to take control of our own future.

I have outlined elsewhere in this manifesto the devolution of powers required to take forward some of our priorities; from housing policy to post-16 skills, we want the powers and control to respond to the challenges in our region, that we know only too well.

Funding from central government is not the only thing that matters here in South Yorkshire, but money is certainly part of the problem.

Addressing poverty in our region will be at the heart of everything I do as Mayor. And we must be clear that decisions made centrally have pushed all too many families not just towards the brink of poverty, but over the edge.

As a priority, I will demand clarity on the Shared Prosperity Fund, and a deal that's just as good as that offered to any other region. The recent deal with Cornwall should be a floor not a ceiling. A majority of people across South Yorkshire voted for Brexit; to take back control of our future. We're ready to build a future beyond EU membership, but the government need to keep the promises they made to replace EU funding for our region.

The government's recent Levelling Up White Paper promised that 'by 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement'. We cannot wait until 2030 for this settlement: we need it now, so that we do not waste the next eight years, and instead work together to deliver a more prosperous and healthier South Yorkshire, with good jobs, public transport, and homes, with a renewed sense of pride in who we are.

The White Paper established a long list of targets that the government expects to be met by 2030, including closing the pay, employment and productivity gap, transport

connectivity comparable to that enjoyed by London, increases in healthy life expectancy, and restoring people's pride in their communities.

As this manifesto makes clear, these priorities are already South Yorkshire's priorities. We have known for a long time that our region has been held back. But we also know better than the government in London how to put things right here in South Yorkshire. That's why I will fight for the powers and resources our region needs so that we can shape our own future.

## **WORKING TOGETHER LOCALLY**

In this manifesto I have outlined my priorities for the next four years, and a series of ideas that will create a better, brighter future for our

communities. But this manifesto lays out a plan for a shared endeavour that will require support from across our region.

None of the priorities and plans laid out here will be possible without the support, energy and commitment of the staff of the Mayoral Combined Authority, the four local authorities of South Yorkshire, and the businesses, people, organisations and communities of our region. That's why I will not just work to lead South Yorkshire, but to bring South Yorkshire together behind a shared purpose and plan.

In addition, I will begin conversations with the office of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the four local authorities, so we can explore bringing the responsibilities

of the PCC into the Mayor's office and how to best align our shared work and priorities.

The South Yorkshire Renewal Fund – totalling around £500 million – is funded by advance payments on South Yorkshire's devolution deal funding for the mayoral authority. I will work with the four local authorities to invest the Renewal Fund in the projects and plans that support our shared, long-term strategic priorities.

## **REVITALISING OUR DEMOCRACY**

For all too many people, our politics are broken. If devolution means anything, it has to mean that we can do politics differently, taking back control of the decisions we make, and that we can begin to restore the

trust and faith people have in the politics that governs us.

That's why I'll lead from the front. I will be the most transparent and accountable Mayor in the country. That means holding a Mayor's public question time every quarter, an annual public audit of office spending and income, and no paid second jobs. In addition, I will strengthen the scrutiny and democratic accountability of the Mayor's office by submitting myself to the Scrutiny Board of each local authority in South Yorkshire every year.

Enabling young people to engage with the processes and decisions that will shape their future will be one of my priorities. I will oversee a new youth political engagement programme run in partnership with

our schools designed to increase young people's political participation. And I will also continue to support the Youth Mayoral Combined Authority and engage regularly with the individual Youth Councils across South Yorkshire.

I want every person in South Yorkshire feel able to make their voice heard, whatever their background, wherever they may be from. We cannot claim to be a region that work for everyone unless and until we recognise and understand the lived experience of our communities and the impact of the decisions we make on every part of South Yorkshire. That's why I will undertake an annual equality impact assessment of the work of the Mayoral Combined Authority so we can better understand the impact

of that work on disadvantaged and protected groups across South Yorkshire. And I will make sure people with lived experience of poverty and hardship are involved in making the policies designed to address these issues.

Transparency, accountability, equality and accessibility will characterise everything I do as you Mayor. This is who I am. And it is what I want politics in South Yorkshire to look like. We can have a better politics and a different approach here in South Yorkshire; a politics that better reflects the values we hold and the future we want for our region.

## MAKING BIGGER DECISIONS, BETTER

A big, urgent problem requires big, bold thinking. If we're going to get to net-zero and solve the challenge of climate breakdown, we're all going to have to change some fundamental things about how we live, work and move around South Yorkshire. But we can't simply impose those changes on our communities. Getting to net-zero is not only a challenge our community must meet together, but an opportunity to change our region for the better.

I want the collective energy, ideas and aspirations of our communities to shape the big decisions about the changes we need to make happen; a truly representative group of people from across South Yorkshire

influencing our plans and approach. That's why I will lead a citizens' assembly for South Yorkshire, so we can put the voice of our communities at the heart of the big decisions we need to make to achieve our net-zero goals.

The plan we will devise together will be radical – it must be – but it must also be rooted in the everyday experiences, perspectives, hopes and fears of the people of South Yorkshire. Our citizens' assembly will empower our communities and put people at the heart of the decisions we have to make about the most fundamental challenge we face: hitting our net-zero goal.

# People

Strengthening our communities

## PEOPLE: STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES

I couldn't be more proud to call South Yorkshire my home. We're a region that was at the heart of the industrial revolution, with industries and ideas that powered the world. Our pride will always be anchored in our history and heritage, but every generation must renew the foundations of our purpose, identity and place in the world. That is both the challenge and the opportunity facing us now.

I want South Yorkshire to lead the world again. From creativity and culture to advanced manufacturing and green technologies, we have people and businesses that are operating at the bleeding edge of innovation and the forefront of their industries.

Our challenge now is not simply to support those clusters and ideas, bringing in investment and funding that allows our brightest and best businesses to grow, but to spread the wealth and opportunity that those industries create.

Some of our poorest communities live within sight of the most advanced manufacturing facilities in the world. The people living in parts of South Yorkshire have a healthy life expectancy twenty years shorter than those people living just a few miles away.

And yet we have all the fundamental ingredients we need to overcome those challenges and thrive as a region; for our communities to be both prosperous and more equal, for South Yorkshire to regain its pride, purpose and prosperity. We can grow a better economy, not simply a bigger economy, and develop businesses that don't simply return income to shareholders but return value to our communities.

Alongside the people, businesses, thinkers and innovators across our region, that's the type of South Yorkshire and inclusive economy I want to help build.

## OUR INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH

If we're going to address deep-rooted inequalities, create wealth, and allow every part of South Yorkshire to share in the opportunity in front of us, we need more jobs, investment and growth.

We powered this country and developed technologies and ideas that changed the world. We built industries that did not simply offer people jobs, but created a sense of pride, purpose, and solidarity.

I want to renew that spirit of optimism and opportunity because the challenges we face are neither insurmountable nor inevitable.

We have two globally leading universities and businesses working at the frontier of digital, healthcare,

advanced manufacturing and green technologies.

But for all too long, our optimism has not matched our potential, or the very real desire of so many people across our region to restore our place in the world.

As we move forward as a nation beyond EU membership, I will champion South Yorkshire's economic strengths to a global audience – our innovative businesses, our cutting-edge research, the talent of our communities – so we can attract the inward investment we need to grow our economy and restore pride to our communities.

I will prioritise the further, faster development of an Innovation Corridor stretching from Doncaster

to Sheffield, working with the world-leading universities, businesses and the applied research facilities that offer a unique investment landscape and unrivalled opportunities to develop the ideas and businesses of the future here in South Yorkshire.

We are home to some of the most diversified and innovative tech clusters anywhere in the UK. Barnsley, for instance, is an increasingly important centre for education technology, so I will champion our region's rich tech sector nationally and internationally, to attract the investment that allows our businesses to thrive.

The advanced manufacturing, aerospace and healthcare industries are at the heart of my plan for our future and I will challenge both the

private sector and government to match our talent and ambition with a significant, sustained uplift in R&D investment in our region.

## **SUPPORTING CLEAN GROWTH**

South Yorkshire is already a leading player in renewable and low-carbon energy generation and storage, as well as translational research across hydrogen and the design of nuclear technologies. Building on those existing strengths, I will develop a long-term Clean Energy Strategy for South Yorkshire.

That strategy will support our efforts to deliver clean growth as part of our commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions as a region by 2040, offering us a path to energy security and ensuring that

South Yorkshire's industry has the energy it needs to develop and grow sustainably.

Working with our business community to reach net-zero will be an integral part of my Better Business Challenge, which will showcase and share best practice, as well as reward and support those business leading our region towards a more sustainable future.

I will work to attract investment from the 'environmental, social, governance' (ESG) investment funds now deployed by many institutional investors, to attract financing from beyond South Yorkshire into our region and to support our clean growth agenda, as well as exploring other financial mechanisms such as municipal bonds. I will leave no stone

unturned in pursuit of the investment and finance our economy needs to thrive over the long term.

South Yorkshire's own pension fund for local government workers has already committed to divest from fossil fuels, as part of a 2030 net-zero commitment, and I will ask the South Yorkshire Pensions Authority to use their funds to support our region's clean growth plans more directly.

## **SKILLS IN THE NEW ECONOMY**

South Yorkshire has two large universities that produce graduates with the skills our economy needs. We have exceptional further and technical education providers. Compared to many other regions, our private sector offers a significant



number of apprenticeships.

The 19+ adult education budget is already devolved to the mayoral authority and funds a range of training programmes across the region, from foundational employment courses to specialist skills support. I will work with our higher and further education institutions and skills providers to develop new routes to adult education that are more flexible and more accessible.

But provision is already fragmented and can be confusing for all too many people trying to access a route to better skills. I will introduce a single point of access for adult skills and training opportunities across South Yorkshire. I will also use my existing powers and resources to protect the

programmes supported by the Union Learning Fund (ULF), which offers workers a route to new skills, better jobs, and higher pay.

We also need to anticipate the skills needs of the industries of tomorrow, and indeed support the industries which can best make use of the talent being identified and generated in our education and training systems. Our skills strategy has to be combined with our industrial strategy.

That's why I will establish an Inquiry into the Future of Work in South Yorkshire. Working with local government, employers, academics and trade unions, that Inquiry will explore how the skills required by our leading industries will be shaped by trends such as automation and the growing use of artificial

intelligence. The inquiry will consider the challenge of productivity, how to provide relevant skills training, and how to drive-up employment and working standards in South Yorkshire while increasing jobs growth.

In addition I will review standards within the flexible economy, offering more support to those such as care workers and delivery drivers, recognising their status as key workers and the contribution they make to both our society and our economy.

What is already clear is that for so many jobs, foundational digital skills will be a basic requirement, which is why I will prioritise improving digital skills, particularly for those in our most disadvantaged communities.

Our region does not have all the

powers we need to build the skills we want for the future of our economy, and for the prosperity of our communities, but there is nobody better placed than local leaders to determine what our communities want and what our workforce needs to prosper in an ever-changing economy. That's why I will ask government for the full devolution of post-16 skills policy, so we can better design an education system that supports our communities to drive our economy forward.

## OUR CULTURAL ASSETS

South Yorkshire's cultural and creative industries are among the most valuable assets we have as a region. They not only make our communities happier, healthier, and more cohesive, but also attract

visitors from far and wide and help grow our economy too. The cultural, arts and heritage sector alone generates £100 million each year for South Yorkshire.

We are proud to be home to vibrant grassroots cultural venues, world-class events and facilities, and a talented workforce who amplify our voice on the national and international stage.

I want to harness the creative potential and ambitions of our whole region. I will lead a new creative, cultural, and digital strategy for South Yorkshire, to grow our economy, create good quality jobs and offer a real future for the next generation of home-grown talent. At the heart of that plan will be a South Yorkshire Culture Forum which will bring

together our creative and cultural sectors, the creative workforce, and the public to co-create a vision for our region's creative and cultural life.

I will be a proud cultural ambassador for South Yorkshire and make our case to organisations like the Arts Council, BFI, and Heritage Lottery Fund, staking our claim to more funding, recognition and support. Building on recent investments in Barnsley, Doncaster, and Rotherham, I will invite flagship national arts and cultural institutions to come and build deeper relationships here in our region to open up new opportunities for local people and create new centres of excellence.

I know the creative workforce continues to experience a high degree of uncertainty as we

navigate our way through pandemic recovery. I will sign the 'Creative Workforce Pledge' to make sure creative industry workers here in South Yorkshire know our region will support them into the long-term.

Bringing all these elements together, I will prepare our region to bid to become the UK's first truly pan-regional 'UK City of Culture', so we can show the country who we are and the talent we have.

But there is little point having world-class cultural and heritage assets here in our region if they are not accessible to everybody in our communities. That's why I will introduce a Culture Pass so that young people have access to cultural activities and events and consider similar initiatives for some of our most disadvantaged groups too.

## A HEALTHIER ECONOMY

The health of our economy is dependent on the health of our communities. In fact, good health is essential for the thriving economy and sustainable, prosperous communities we want in South Yorkshire. We are not intrinsically less healthy than people living elsewhere, but as a region we face significant health inequalities. On average we live shorter lives than people in some other parts of the country. The causes of those health challenges are complex and longstanding and were made much worse by government austerity policies. But alongside the personal and family costs in terms of ill-health, disability, and premature death, they create significant economic costs too.

The great news is that South Yorkshire is home to truly world-leading health and wellbeing research and innovation, not only within the NHS but also our universities, particularly the Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre and Healthy Lifespan Institute, and a thriving health tech sector. Achieving our ambition will of course require access on poverty as well as exceptional healthcare services.

The demand for better health in South Yorkshire is both a moral and economic mission. We can and should use our considerable assets to respond to the challenges we face; bringing together the work being done across our region with the communities most at risk of health inequalities, so that within a

generation our health outcomes can at least match those anywhere in the country. My personal ambition is for South Yorkshire to become the healthiest region in the UK.

That's why, within my first 100 days as Mayor I will commission an action plan outlining the path to that goal and the funding, organisation and political ambition required to meet that mission, and I will establish and personally chair a panel of experts drawn from across our region dedicated to driving that agenda forward with the urgency it demands.

## THE ROLE OF BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE

We have a business community to be proud of. They are not just the economic foundation of our region – our best businesses also recognise their role in the social mission and purpose of South Yorkshire. That's why I want the voice of business to be at the heart of our plans for the future of our region. The change we need in South Yorkshire will not happen without the private sector investing, innovating, creating jobs and contributing to our communities.

As Mayor, I will work to both support and reform our Local Enterprise Partnership, so it better reflects the full diversity of our business community, and promotes the innovation we need to see if we are

going to address the productivity challenges we face across our regional economy.

The business community can expect my support but I will also expect them to take responsibility for delivering positive social, environmental economic change across South Yorkshire. As noted above, I will establish a Better Business Challenge to recognise and reward South Yorkshire's best employers: those businesses who have a plan to meet the challenge of clean growth, pay their staff a real living wage, and work with trade unions to drive up safety, skills, and dignity at work. I will use the accreditation developed by the B Corp Certification and We Mean Business Coalition as a model for South Yorkshire's approach.

In pursuit of a better economy in South Yorkshire, not just a bigger economy, I will support alternative business models. I will continue to support the pioneering work of the Ownership Hub and champion the wider adoption of co-operative business models in South Yorkshire, learning from the success of companies such as surgical blade manufacturer Swann-Morton: employee-owned, and a world leader in its industry.

Co-operative businesses give people a direct stake in our region's business community, helping to shape our industrial future and create the type of stakeholder economy that promotes the sustainable and ethical businesses I want to make South Yorkshire their home.

## THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

But no part of our economy could work properly without the energy and capacity of our civil society organisations. They are a part of the fabric of our communities that we too often take for granted, but the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector is also a vital part of our region's economy. I will invest in nurturing the VCSE sector's innovation capacity, working with stakeholders to build upon the great work already being done across our region.

And to help our communities build resilience, I want to provide a forum for civil society organisations to work in collaboration with on our region's shared priorities. So I will explore

opportunities to better co-ordinate the public sector and VCSE's work on the cross-cutting priorities and longstanding challenges that we face as a region.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY WEALTH

Empowering and building the resilience of our communities will be a hallmark of my approach as Mayor. Our region is strongest when we work together.

There is no doubt we need more investment from central government, but we should also work together to better support our own home-grown economy, and the businesses based here in our region, offering opportunities to local people.

Community wealth building is a

new approach to local economic development based on making the most of the assets we already have in our region, and it reflects the relationship I want to build between the public sector, business and our communities in South Yorkshire.

I will build on the work and expertise of those places already taking a community wealth building approach, from Preston to Scotland, and use their experience to shape community wealth building approaches here in our region.

I will co-ordinate work on procurement by the main 'anchor' institutions in our region – large, locally rooted employers such as the universities and hospitals – so that more of their purchases of goods and services support our local economy. We should

also ensure that the mayoral authority supports businesses who pay their workers a real living wage.

But we can also forge a distinctive South Yorkshire approach. I will champion and support the creation of new co-operative firms to deliver local services through the Ownership Hub, and ask our local authorities and anchor institutions to prioritise co-operatives when procuring goods and services locally.

Our regional economy only works when there is a level playing field so I will also support businesses to achieve the Fair Tax Mark, awarded to businesses that proudly pay their fair share of tax.

# Place

Building our foundations

## PLACE: BUILDING OUR FOUNDATIONS

The foundations of South Yorkshire are to be found in the networks that keep our communities connected and safe, the natural assets that provide our landscapes and sustain our leisure, and the homes that safeguard our families.

But for all too many people in South Yorkshire those foundations are no longer secure; they've been fractured by a government that has consistently failed to invest in South Yorkshire or support the fundamental building blocks of our community's resilience.

The time to restore those foundations is now. We need a better, decarbonised public transport network that connects our communities, and natural assets that protect and grow our wildlife while offering environmental benefits long into the future. We need walking and cycling routes that give people a real alternative to using a car, and homes that keep us warm, dry and safe, while offering people the security and future prosperity promised by home ownership.

None of those things should be luxuries only accessible to a few, they must be the basics available to everyone in South Yorkshire. Those foundations are at the heart of a decent, more equal community, and they will be the building blocks of my time as Mayor.



## TAKING BACK CONTROL OF OUR BUSES

The deregulation of our buses has failed South Yorkshire. Right now, all too often our buses are unaffordable, unreliable, and inaccessible.

That's why improving public transport across South Yorkshire is a priority, not just for me but the thousands of people let down every day by a bus network that is no longer fit for purpose.

We need to meet that challenge not just because greater connectivity is the foundation of economic development, or because we have to reduce traffic on our roads if we're going to hit our net-zero targets and improve our air quality.

We must also meet that challenge

because it's a fundamental issue of social justice. Every one of us has a right to affordable, reliable, and accessible services that allow us to travel to work, see our families and friends, and access high streets, green spaces, and cultural activities. No one in South Yorkshire should need to own a car to access or sustain a rich professional, cultural and social life.

As Mayor, I will make it a priority to build on the progress we have made over recent years, and deliver a bus network that provides our communities with an efficient, accessible, reliable and sustainable means of travelling across South Yorkshire.

From day one, I will work every day so we can bring our buses back

under public control. A 'franchised' system would allow us to set routes and control fares based on what our communities need, while private operators will compete to run bus services, so we get the best possible deal for our communities.

Franchising will also allow us to explore smarter ticketing systems and continue the decarbonisation of our fleet, upgrading to hydrogen and electric buses.

But above all I want to also be honest about the challenge we face if we are to make that promise a reality. Bringing the buses back under public control will not be easy; it will take time and money, and we'll need the government to deliver on their promise for significant funding to make it work.

But we cannot carry on with an unreliable, expensive and polluting public transport system in South Yorkshire, which is why I will build a campaign that takes the fight for a better bus service to the government, on behalf of our communities. In their recent Levelling Up White Paper the government committed to supporting the delivery of public transport systems in the North that are more like the one enjoyed by London. I will work with our communities to hold them to account for their promises.

As well as fixing our buses, we need to make sure we have a long-term plan for the future of the tram network. A modern, sustainable tram network has the potential to take even more cars off our roads and move hundreds of thousands of people across our region, but

right now its funding and future is uncertain.

I will examine the ownership, funding and future of our region's tram network, so we can develop a long-term approach that integrates the future of the tram network into our wider plans for public transport across South Yorkshire, and outline a way forward that is acceptable and fair to all parts of South Yorkshire.

## **IMPROVING RAIL CONNECTIVITY**

The rail network in South Yorkshire and across the North has for too long been the poor relation of services in the South-East. While no expense is spared on rolling stock and services in and around London, we have faced years of underinvestment and declining services. Indeed,

over the last twelve years the North would have received £86bn more investment if we had received the same funding as our capital. This should not be a competition between the North and South, but our communities deserve the same investment and support as those in London and the South-East.

I will challenge the government to recognise the barrier to sustainable economic development that poor connectivity represents, both within our region, and between South Yorkshire and other parts of the North in particular. That means, as Mayor, I will fight for the public investment our rail network needs, but particularly the full delivery of Northern Powerhouse Rail once promised by the government, and the quickest possible delivery of the full

electrification of the Midland Main Line.

Over time, I will work with other leaders in the North to develop a wider plan for rail investment which enables all of our communities and regions to thrive, so we can create a long-term alternative to both cars and flights, which is essential to our climate goals.

Our public transport network must be accessible to every one of us. Ensuring that our transport network is accessible for those without full mobility will be central to this mission, and I will request additional funds from central government to achieve full accessibility across our regional rail network.

That network is essential to South Yorkshire's prosperity. But we should

also recognise the economic value of the rail industry to our region. I will throw my full weight behind Doncaster's bid to become the home of Great British Railways (replacing Network Rail in 2023) to reflect South Yorkshire's leadership in the industry. I will also enthusiastically support Doncaster's bid for city status, which would support the economic regeneration of Doncaster and attract more high-skilled and high-paid jobs to the borough and the wider region.

## **ENCOURAGING ACTIVE AND SAFE TRAVEL**

Active travel – greater opportunities for walking and cycling – is central to my vision of a better connected, healthier and more sustainable South Yorkshire. But we cannot

ask or expect people to get out of their cars without offering a safe, reliable and connected alternative. South Yorkshire has already taken giant steps forward and committed significant funding to make active travel a reality. There is still a long way to go, but we're on the right path.

I will continue to work with local authorities to overcome barriers to embedding active travel, and lead on the continued expansion and development of a connected network of safe, direct cycling and walking routes across South Yorkshire.

To drive those plans forward I will appoint a new Active Travel Commissioner to ensure that walking and cycling routes are prioritised when making decisions about planning and design of new

infrastructure and development projects, and to ensure that national design standards are recognised. I will also lobby government for the funding to bring all of our roads back up to scratch.

Our transport network must be clean, reliable, and affordable – but it must also be safe. Reports of increased incidents of harassment, especially of women, on our buses, trams and trains are unacceptable. Every passenger and transport worker has the right to complete their journey, and do their job, without fear. The importance of safety applies to walking and cycling routes too. I will work to make our transport network safe for everyone, introducing a zero-tolerance approach to harassment on our bus network, so we all feel safe no matter where, when or how

we are travelling, engaging with the police, passenger groups and local authorities to achieve that goal.

## **A NEW VISION FOR LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES**

South Yorkshire's city and town centres are often the vibrant hearts of our communities; they don't just offer access to local services, they help to create and anchor social, cultural and economic value, and provide the crucial glue that holds places together. That's why the South Yorkshire Mayor has previously supported schemes like the Glass Works in Barnsley.

High streets have suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, on top of the challenge of internet shopping and out-of-town retail centres.

Consumer trends are unlikely to reverse, but that doesn't mean high streets don't have a future. They simply have a different future.

We know that the future of high streets lies in mixed use spaces. Each area will require a distinct, local recipe of residential, leisure and retail spaces. As Mayor, I will work with the four local authorities to develop a regional strategy for our high streets.

My support for high streets will be part of my wider ambition for more liveable communities across South Yorkshire; local services and nature within reach, accessed via better public transport and safe walking and cycling routes. Access to electric car charging points will be increasingly important too.

Our urban centres can also offer

opportunities for new ways of working as the traditional office is challenged by technological change and shifting work patterns. Co-operatives and other community businesses will be encouraged to develop co-working spaces for remote workers, so we can attract a new generation of remote workers to South Yorkshire, bringing their skills and spending power to our region.

## **TACKLING HOUSING INEQUALITY**

Housing is a major concern for many people in South Yorkshire – and it isn't an issue that central government can fix from London.

We need more powers and control over housing here in our region. That's why I will challenge the government to devolve housing

budgets to the Mayoral Combined Authority, offering South Yorkshire the same opportunity as London when it comes to housing development.

I will also champion South Yorkshire's large and innovative construction industry in the process, and promote opportunities for co-operative and community led housing projects.

Homelessness is one of the most serious issues facing South Yorkshire's communities. Good housing is a basic human right, and we should adopt a broad definition of homelessness encompassing all of those without decent, stable accommodation. The Housing First model, whereby people experiencing complex and multiple needs are offered a home for life, is being

pursued by South Yorkshire Housing Association with individual local authorities, and I will support the work of South Yorkshire Housing Association to roll out the Housing First approach across the region, and lead on a Homelessness Strategy across South Yorkshire.

## **PROTECTING AND RECOVERING OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

South Yorkshire's landscapes and natural environment are an unrivalled and precious asset that need to be both protected and restored.

That's why I want South Yorkshire to be ambitious when it comes to nature recovery, turning around the loss of wildlife and improving the natural environment of South Yorkshire for

generations to come. I will invest in our 'natural capital' to improve our air and water quality, to help reduce flooding, lock up carbon and improve the health and wellbeing of our community through better access to the natural environment on our doorstep.

As Mayor I will ask the Mayoral Combined Authority to work with partners such as the Wildlife Trust to develop and deliver a South Yorkshire Natural Environment Strategy, so that we can protect and restore nature, and invests in our ecosystems.

To support that mission I will introduce plans to plant 1.4 million trees across our region: that is one tree for every person who lives here, making our communities greener,

safer, and better off.

Trees are not just a great way to take carbon out of our atmosphere and fight climate change, they also help to protect against flooding, promote biodiversity, and improve wellbeing. I will work with the Environment Agency to secure the investment South Yorkshire needs to make our communities more flood resilient and protected. We know the schemes that need funding if we are to protect our region from the changes to our climate, but we need the government to step forward and fund them.

## **MAKING OUR HOMES FIT FOR THE FUTURE**

One of the clearest problems in our region is the poor energy efficiency of most of our homes. Two-thirds of houses in the region have an Energy

Performance Certificate rating below C. Making our homes more energy efficient can significantly cut domestic energy bills, at a time of rising cost of living driven by a higher world price for fossil fuels, as well as contribute significantly to our ambition to achieve net-zero by 2040.

I will work with the four local authorities and South Yorkshire's construction and property industries to ensure that newbuild homes are built to the highest possible energy standards. But 90% of South Yorkshire's housing stock in 2050 will be made up of existing homes.

Therefore, I will work with the four local authorities to establish a Retrofit Task Force to drive forward improvements at scale, bringing



together key partners: businesses, housing providers, educational institutions, and community groups. The Task Force will be responsible for developing solutions to the multiple challenges of identifying, financing, and delivering the retrofit of properties across South Yorkshire at scale and at pace, including the possible development of Retrofit Co-operatives. Because we know fuel poverty, poor housing and health inequalities are closely linked, the Retrofit Task Force will be asked to prioritise areas where housing quality is lowest.

Upgrading properties at scale is prohibitively expensive. It's a huge challenge. But if we get our approach right we could not only help make homes warmer and cheaper to run, we could create thousands of new, high-skilled jobs in our region.

## **SUPPORTING THE CARE SECTOR**

Care workers are key workers in our communities, and as we age as a society, the demand for care will only increase. And yet despite those pressing needs, we know that social care is chronically under-funded. And all too many care workers – predominantly women – are poorly paid.

I will work with the four local authorities and academic institutes, such as Sheffield Hallam University's Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre and the University of Sheffield's new Centre for Care, to deliver on the aim of a higher quality and more accessible care service, while also supporting the further professionalisation of the care sector.

The health and care sector has over 4,000 employers in South Yorkshire and has established a reputation for excellence in the development of innovative healthcare technologies. I will promote the care economy as an essential part of South Yorkshire's economic future. In particular, I will champion the role of community-led businesses in the care sector and explore the potential to create our own social care co-operatives.



**Oliver  
Coppard** **STANDING TO BE SOUTH  
YORKSHIRE'S MAYOR**

OliverCoppard  
oliver@olivercoppard.co.uk  
www.olivercoppard.co.uk  
OliverCoppardSheffield

Promoted by Scott Hardy on behalf of Oliver Coppard both at Trades and Labour Club, Talbot Street, Sheffield, S2 2TG.  
Printed by Angus Print, Seacroft Industrial Estate, Coal Rd, Leeds LS14 2AQ