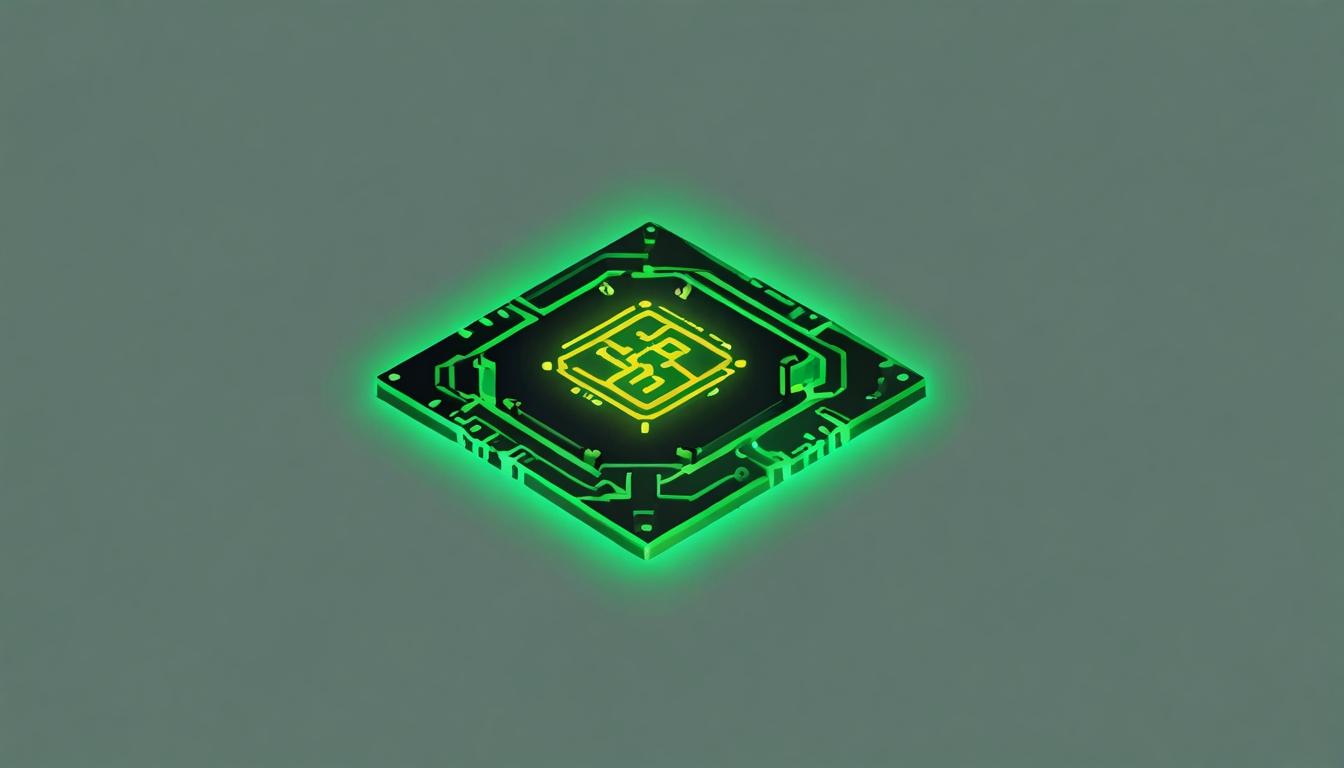
# York bid aims to make region a hub for responsible AI growth



The University of York is playing a central role in a bid to establish York and North Yorkshire as one of the UK’s new AI Growth Zones.

The initiative, part of the Government’s wider push to position the UK as a global leader in artificial intelligence, seeks major investment to build AI-enabled data centres and boost access to power through supporting infrastructure.

Led by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, the proposal is anchored in the University of York’s expertise in the responsible development and use of AI. “This is such an opportunity for York and North Yorkshire to be a beacon for responsible AI innovation,” said Charlie Jeffery, Vice-Chancellor. The plan combines economic ambition with a strong emphasis on ethical practices, reflecting the university’s leadership in AI safety, ethics and community benefit.

If approved, the Growth Zone could unlock an estimated £85 billion in economic growth across Yorkshire and the Humber. The bid is backed by regional partners including North Yorkshire Council, Drax Power Station and several universities. David Skaith, Mayor of York and North Yorkshire, described the submission as “ambitious” and aligned with the Government’s 'Plans for Change'.

A centrepiece of the proposal is the world’s first carbon-negative data centre, to be based at Drax as part of an AI and Clean Energy Campus. The facility is designed to address national priorities such as energy and food security and data sovereignty, while spurring innovation in sectors including life sciences, clean energy and the creative industries.

The Government’s AI Growth Zones programme aims to stimulate regional innovation and economic development through targeted investment. Regions have been invited to submit proposals that promote responsible AI development and support local skills, jobs and digital inclusion.

York and North Yorkshire’s submission places community empowerment at its core, using AI to bridge public and private sectors, drive industry-academic collaboration and maintain the region’s edge in AI advancement.

Successful bids are expected to be announced after the Comprehensive Spending Review on 11 June 2025, a key moment in shaping the UK’s AI future.

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2025/business/growth-zone-bid/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-announces-new-ai-growth-zones-to-boost-artificial-intelligence-innovation> - The UK government has announced the establishment of new AI Growth Zones aimed at boosting artificial intelligence innovation across the country. These zones will receive significant investment to develop AI-enabled data centres and supporting infrastructure, enhancing access to power and positioning the UK as a global leader in AI. The initiative seeks to drive economic growth and foster responsible AI development, with regions invited to apply for funding to become part of this transformative programme.
3. <https://www.yorknorthyorks-ca.gov.uk/york-and-north-yorkshire-stands-ready-to-deliver-pioneering-ai-growth-zone/> - The York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority has expressed its readiness to deliver a pioneering AI Growth Zone, highlighting the region's strong coalition of partners and its history of innovation. The proposal aligns with the UK government's 'Plans for Change' and aims to transform the economic future of Yorkshire and the Humber by fostering responsible AI innovation and creating new opportunities for growth and development.
4. <https://www.drax.com/press_release/drax-announces-worlds-first-carbon-negative-data-centre-at-ai-and-clean-energy-campus/> - Drax Power Station has announced the creation of the world's first carbon-negative data centre as part of an AI and Clean Energy Campus. This groundbreaking initiative aims to address national priorities such as energy and food security, data sovereignty, and environmental sustainability, while driving regional and national growth through the responsible application of AI technologies.
5. <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/centres/centre-for-assuring-autonomy/> - The Centre for Assuring Autonomy at the University of York focuses on ensuring the safe and ethical deployment of autonomous systems. It conducts world-leading research on the responsible application of AI, emphasizing societal benefit and trust, and contributes to global standards and regulations in the field of artificial intelligence.
6. <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/centres/institute-for-safe-autonomy/> - The Institute for Safe Autonomy at the University of York is dedicated to advancing the safe and ethical development of autonomous technologies. It collaborates with industry and academia to promote responsible AI innovation, ensuring that advancements in AI are pursued with a strong emphasis on societal benefit and trust.
7. <https://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2025/business/growth-zone-bid/> - The University of York is a key partner in a groundbreaking bid for York and North Yorkshire to become one of the UK's new AI Growth Zones. The bid aims to unlock an estimated £85 billion in growth across the Yorkshire and Humber region, positioning it at the forefront of the UK's digital economy. The proposal includes the creation of the world's first carbon-negative data centre as part of an AI and Clean Energy Campus at Drax Power Station.