

North Yorkshire Council Election 5 May 2022

NY Climate Coalition survey of candidate views on key environmental issues

Candidate name	Party	Division
Emma Scott-Spivey	Labour Party	Easingwold

Thanks for taking part in this survey. We hope you will see this as an opportunity to share your thoughts with voters on important climate and environmental issues. While we would ideally like candidates to answer the survey in full, we appreciate that some of the points are quite technical. Candidates come from many different backgrounds and may be drawn to local government because of a passion for other aspects of service delivery and community interest. Please feel free to focus on the questions you feel are most relevant to you. You can always add more information later if you wish.

1. The newly elected members of North Yorkshire Council (NYC) will be responsible for overseeing the county's net zero strategy. Would you support the provision of carbon literacy training (e.g. through the [Carbon Literacy Project](#)) as part of the induction programme for new councillors?

Yes.

2. Transport, agriculture and domestic energy are the biggest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in North Yorkshire. In your view, how should the new NY Council tackle these most effectively?

Demonstrating active support and initiative regarding sustainable farming, local nature and landscape recovery. Consulting with environmental experts and publishing recommendations (with an emphasis on transparency and accountability). Where permitted, incentivising sustainable and responsible targets with a view to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

3. Many politicians support net zero commitments, but some argue that "green" measures to protect the environment and climate are too expensive, will cost jobs and need to be delayed. Where do you stand on this?

Comments such as those stating that green measures are too expensive are not only untrue but also directly contradictory to recent evidence. Cutting green initiatives has in the last decade has added £2.5 billion to bills in the UK. Carbon Brief's analysis shows that previous slashes to climate policies are now costing the average household around £40 per year, expected to rise further when next winter rolls in.

The same Carbon Brief analysis shows that nearly 90% of the increase in bills over the last year is due to the rising price of gas, which has more than tripled over the same period. The abandonment of green policies has not just cost the comfortable tax payer, but has forced the single parent to choose between feeding and heating their children. That is neither cost effective or sustainable.

4. As we seek more energy independence nationally, what role do you see in our region for onshore wind, solar farms and fracking?

A draft Government report states that "shale gas development may transform a previously pristine and quiet natural region, bringing increased industrialisation". It also concludes in a description highly relevant to Easingwold and surrounding villages that "rural community businesses that rely on clean air, land, water, and/or a tranquil environment may suffer losses" from increased industrialisation. It says these include "agriculture, tourism, organic farming, hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation".

It is our duty however, in my opinion, that we must invest not just in green energies such as solar and wind but by proxy into the futures of our children who deserve to grow up in the same clean air that the previous generation experienced.

5. How could the future NYC use its powers under the planning system to promote sustainable development? Should there be a presumption against high-carbon development proposals in NYC's planning policies?

Developers should be actively dissuaded from high-carbon proposals, unless an offset in emission can be guaranteed via other means of clean energy investment.

6. There are plans (in the [NY Local Enterprise Partnership strategy](#)) to double the current area of woodland in the region. Would you actively support this target?

Yes.

7. Will you sign the UK Divest Pledge: "If elected, I pledge to support the council divesting its pension fund out of fossil fuels and redirecting those amounts into sustainable investments and the local economy over an appropriate time-scale. I promise to do everything in my power to make sure this happens within the first year of my term in office."

Yes.

8. Would you support net zero measures as a spending priority for the new council?

Yes.

9. Most districts/boroughs in NY and around 75% across the UK have declared a climate emergency. In your view, should the new NYC adopt a similar motion to underpin its decarbonisation and planning policies?

Yes.

10. Is there anything else you'd like to add on your environmental or climate views?

I'm passionate about any opportunity to identify areas of land that could be used to facilitate new allotments, community gardens or fruit growing areas – providing safe, educational and environmentally responsible community engagement whilst playing a part in the reduction of food poverty.

For example, what would your future priorities be in your division and more widely in North Yorkshire? Do you have any comments on more technical matters such as hydrogen as a fuel, Drax, grid capacity, energy-efficiency, retrofitting, peatland conservation, plastic pollution, waste, circular economy, nature recovery or the government's new energy security strategy?