

North Yorkshire Council Election 5 May 2022

NY Climate Coalition survey of candidate views on key environmental issues

Candidate name	Party	Division
David Chance	Conservative	Danby & Mulgrave

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?

Not an easy answer to this one, North Yorkshire is 300sq miles in area with a 6000+ mile road network. Communities are often miles apart and do not, unlike urban areas, lend themselves to commuter cycling. There is a great push to go electric, without the basic infrastructure to provide the power needed. This adds to the problems, with a requirement to dispose of the heavy metals used in batteries.

My own personal belief is in the development and use of Hydrogen technology for transportation of all types. I also support the establishment of smaller more versatile public transport vehicles and response request transport for our rural communities.

NYC can, with devolution of powers from Whitehall have more influence on transport policy. It can also develop an integrated transport policy, but whatever they do, there will still be great problems linking communities like Whitby with say Skipton or Selby. There is not even a rail link to Whitby from anywhere in North Yorkshire. Whitby's only rail link is from Middlesbrough.

There has to be greater consideration given to minimal-till farming and other methods of agriculture, recycling and bio digestion. Peatlands need to be restored and many hedgerows need to be reinstated.

Insulation for homes should be a priority consideration; however, one has to say that retro injecting cavity wall insulation does not suit all types of construction.

There should be incentives to encourage changes in heating methods. Given its price, electricity as an alternative to Gas and Oil is currently prohibitive. Attention needs to be given to mitigate the high cost of key meters for those in most need of help. Currently, the neediest are penalised by having the highest tariff imposed upon them by default. When in energy debt, separate arrangements should be made to repay that debt. This extortionate rate of collection of debt cannot be right. Key meter supplies should be priced at the same tariff rate as standard tariffs.

I have to say though, that what is right for our urban areas is often impractical for our sparse rural communities, which currently rely on Oil and bottled Gas for heating and cooking.

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?

There is no point in postponing the inevitable. Action is needed now to tackle Climate Change, delay is not an option, in my view, providing the technology is in place to achieve change, change should be encouraged. It could be argued that new technology will inevitably replace the jobs lost through the old.

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

I would not support wind farms in the National Parks, but I do support the establishment of solar farms, the non-intrusive use of wind and solar power for individual properties, as they are successfully in other countries.

There may be an argument for the selective development of fracking in appropriate areas. I think the arguments for and against fracking are evenly balanced, as part of a balanced energy strategy. I am not a supporter of fracking. The sooner we can get away from reliance on fossil fuels the better.

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?

Central Government not Local Government sets planning Policy. Local Authority Planning Committees are quasi-judicial and can only work within the guidelines and policy set by Government.

Local Authority Planning cannot go against Government Guidance; to do so is a futile gesture and any local policies require approval, as compliant, by the Planning Inspectorate.

Hence, North Yorkshire could not legally ban fracking, what it could and did do within its Minerals and Waste Plan was place strict legal conditions required of future applicants.

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. Years ago, North Yorkshire was a forested area and I would support the reintroduction of indigenous broad-leaved forests.

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."

This Council has divested much of its holdings in fossil fuels over the last few years, as it did in tobacco before that. However, the Pension Fund has a requirement in law to maximise its worth. I think the wording in the question is too prescriptive. I support the divestment of Pension Fund investments in fossil fuels over the period of the move to a Carbon Free Net Zero Council in 2030.

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

Yes, I have argued successfully that every Council decision should be measured, to achieve our aspirational Net Zero target date of 2030. However, not to the exclusion of our statutory spend areas of Adult Social Care, Child Care, and Education, Waste Collection and disposal and Highways.

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?

Many Local Authorities have done this to give lip service to pressure groups or for political expedience, without taking the matter further. It's all very well declaring a climate emergency but those local authorities need to then come up with a climate plan.

I think NYCC's position is quite clear by its action to move forward with a plan to achieve Net Zero by 2030.

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

There must be a move to prohibit non-recyclable plastics in their entirety. They are a disastrous modern phenomenon, used for convenience with little thought of their effect on the environment. We should return to Glass bottles, with deposits to encourage recycling and paper packaging.

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?