

## North Yorkshire Council Election 5 May 2022

### NY Climate Coalition survey of candidate views on key environmental issues

Candidate name	Party	Division
Matt Burton	Labour Party	Monk Fryston & South Milford

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, this sounds like an excellent idea. Having a grounding in carbon literacy would be invaluable for me and fellow councillors in being able to understand and appreciate the environmental impacts of any policies and initiatives we pursue.**

**Having Carbon Literacy Training as part of the induction programme would not only increase the knowledge of councillors, but improve their ability to communicate environmental issues to the public. Another benefit of this training being part of the induction would be that all councillors would/should be equally aware of carbon dioxide costs, aiding councillor collaboration on environmental policies.**

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?

**In my current role as a Parish Councillor, I have been campaigning for lower speed limits in villages and have been vocal in my feelings about the decline in public transport quality (I was very recently quoted in the *Selby Times* on the subject of bus services in the area. I am motivated not only by road safety, but by the environmental benefits of slower traffic, greater public transport usage, and the facilitation of cycling that comes with safer roads.**

**Since 2019 I have followed a purely plant-based (vegan) diet, primarily for environmental reasons (the greenhouse gas emissions caused by livestock farming are very significant). I would look to pursue policy which promotes and encourages plant-based diets founded on environmentally-friendly, sustainable agriculture.**

**As a Labour Party candidate, I am proud of the pledges we have made on electric vehicles, improved cycleways, 20mph speed limits, disinvesting in high-carbon industries, supporting wind/solar/biomass/water energy, banning fracking, and investing in energy efficient homes.**

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 can be no reasonable argument for delay when it comes to environmental policy. The scientific community is very clear on the urgent need to act. I am highly sceptical that introducing green measures will cost jobs. If we invest in green industries, the sector will thrive and bring with it many employment opportunities and economic benefits.**

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

**As I mentioned above, we are very clear in our manifesto that we would seek to ban the extraction of gas and oil via fracking.**

**We would also support renewable energy initiatives using wind, solar, biomass and water and encourage community ownership.**

**I am a patriotic person. Proud of my country and proud of the area I live in. I would like nothing more than to see North Yorkshire be a real national and global leader in terms of energy production and self-sufficiency. Energy independence is also (clearly) a priority for foreign affairs given the situation in the Ukraine (related to the Russian gas industry).**

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?

**Yes, there absolutely should be a presumption against high-carbon development proposals in our planning policies and I would be a vocal advocate for that approach. As our manifesto says, I would support investment in energy efficient homes and the retrofitting of buildings that reduce energy consumption.**

**Again, there is an opportunity for North Yorkshire to show leadership in its approach, demonstrating to the rest of the country how to promote sustainable development – something we could all be very proud of!**

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?

**I was not aware of these plans, but would wholeheartedly support them. We live in a beautiful county with many lovely woodlands. Only a few weeks ago I was in Dalby Forest with my family.**

**Woodland not only has environmental benefits, but is great for wildlife, beauty, and leisure.**

**Doubling the current area of woodland sounds like an ambitious target, but a good one to aim for!**

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, I would sign that. We are committed to disinvesting in high-carbon industries.**

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

**Yes, I would proudly and vocally support that approach.**

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, absolutely.**

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

**The environment should be a priority, and it should be as easy as possible for people to live their lives in an environmentally friendly way. I believe very strongly that those in government should pursue policies designed to make environmentally friendly living the obvious choice.**

**For example, most people currently travel in petrol/diesel cars. People choose this option because (a) electric cars are far too expensive still, (b) electric vehicle charging points are not widely accessible yet, and (c) public transport (especially here in the north) does not receive the investment it needs in order to be the most convenient choice for consumers. All of this is within the power of government to solve.**

**The division that I'm hoping to be elected in suffers from flooding, particularly in the Fairburn area and also between Birkin and Beal (and other areas too!). Environmental issues such as flooding will only get worse if we don't support green policies, and I am committed to doing so.**