

# ***a fresh start***

**The Labour Manifesto  
North Yorkshire Council Elections  
May 2022**

**North Yorkshire**  
 **Labour**

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## ***Introduction***

**North Yorkshire** is England's largest county, stretching from its Eastern coastline and the towns of Scarborough and Whitby to within ten miles of Morecambe Bay on its Western boundary. From the market town of Hawes in the North to Selby in the South, including the large commercial centre of Harrogate, more than a million people live in North Yorkshire. With its two National Parks and Heritage coastline, for many people North Yorkshire is a beautiful place in which to live, work and play.

However, despite its beauty, North Yorkshire faces significant challenges, and after more than a decade of Tory austerity alongside the impact of the Covid pandemic, those challenges have been brought sharply into relief.

With 85% of North Yorkshire classed as 'super-sparse', issues such as affordable housing and inadequate public transport are already making life tough for our rural communities.

The route to success, the basis of a successful and happy life, is a sustainable, affordable, good quality home. Good quality, safe and truly affordable homes must become the norm both for first-time buyers and our ageing population. Local people need to have more powers over the building that takes place in their communities, rather than everything being stacked in favour of developers.

North Yorkshire has more rural schools than anywhere else in England yet, despite efforts to secure a better deal for our rural schools, eight have closed in the last three years and many more have significant budget pressures.

Many of the schools are facing significant financial difficulties; finding it harder to recruit and retain staff. Our teachers and, more importantly, our children deserve a better deal than they're getting now.

There are also significant levels of deprivation in the county: more than 85% of North Yorkshire's most deprived residents live in Scarborough and Whitby, with some areas amongst the most deprived parts of England. Residents living in the poorest areas can expect to live between 7 and 11 years less than those living in the least deprived areas of the county.

A higher proportion of households are classified as being "fuel poor" than the national average and, with high levels of personal debt and average levels of pay being significantly lower than the national average, things need to change.

Our health and care services, particularly adult social care, need urgent help. Local Government has seen its budgets cut by 50% since 2010 and many of us

will have witnessed the dramatic effects on North Yorkshire's care homes on national TV as care home providers struggle to cope with increasing demand and less money; and make no mistake this was a serious issue before the Covid pandemic struck.

We need to do more to protect our environment. There is little point in local authorities passing motions that recognise a climate emergency if they are not then resourced and prepared to do something about it.

Underpinning all our manifesto pledges is our vision for North Yorkshire and the opportunities the new authority will bring for creating a new North Yorkshire.

***In the New Authority, we will:***

- Respect and value elected community representatives on Parish and Town Councils as they deserve, devolving as much as possible the control and necessary funds for local services and decisions.
- Devolve power and funding to local parish and town councils so together we can work in partnership to address key issues and tackle the long-standing inequalities that hold our people and our region back.
- Ensure that the number of Councillors and the size of the area they represent are practical, ensuring workloads are manageable and help increase diversity of the Council.
- Create strong links with local areas by making sure all senior staff and all the authority's structures have an area focus as well as service responsibilities.
- Use the skills and expertise of the staff on the wider new council to reduce reliance on external, often costly, consultants.
- Put *Best Value* rather than the lowest price at the heart of our procurement and use local suppliers and contractors wherever possible.
- Value and protect the natural environment and aim for green, low carbon options for all council developments.

**This manifesto sets out Labour's approach in North Yorkshire to tackling the big issues of our time. It urges you to Vote Labour on May 5th, 2022. Labour's candidates are ready for the challenge**

## Section One

### **SECURITY**

*Everyone has the basic right to feel safe in their own community  
We all need to know that the NHS is there for us when we need it  
And if we work hard, we should also have a right to job security*

**Housing**

**Food Security**

**Health and Wellbeing**

**Social Care**



## ***Housing***

We believe that there should be good quality homes for all. The links between poor housing and negative outcomes across health, education, self-efficacy and income are well established.

Access to a decent home is an important element in both helping to address wide health and social inequalities in our region and in promoting economic prosperity.

To ensure we have a good mix of homes, a mix of types and tenures including homes that meet the needs of all ages including those with disabilities, we need a whole system approach.

There is an increasing reliance on the private rented sector, nationally by the end of 2021 1 in 4 households will be in the private rented sector, in some areas of the County this is as high as 40%

### ***We will:***

- Produce a North Yorkshire Housing Development Strategy and full set of up-to-date Local Plans with full public consultation as a matter of urgency.
- Increase the supply of homes to meet predicted local housing need.
- Use the land the council holds to work with developers and registered social landlords to provide more affordable homes that:
  - are affordable to rent or own
  - are affordable in perpetuity to meet the needs of local residents.
  - are affordable to run by using green technologies for power and water conservation
  - maximise design and build quality, including meeting or exceeding planning guidance in space standards
  - are homes for life, fully adaptable for future needs
- Improve the quality of private rented accommodation by:
  - using selective licensing to drive up the quality of private rented accommodation
  - taking tougher enforcement action against poor standards and rogue landlords
  - making it easier for private renters to raise concerns
  - developing a private renters charter
  - establishing a private tenants' association to give private renters more security



- Develop policies to prevent the growth of second homes and holiday lets by:
  - requiring owners to pay a significantly higher level of council tax
  - using planning powers to require owners to demonstrate a material occupancy of the property
  - lobbying hard to extend local planning powers to require local consultation and planning permission for residential properties to be converted into holiday lets
- Develop a Rural Housing Enabler scheme supporting organisations such as Local Housing Co-operatives and Housing Associations who understand the needs of their local communities to build many small-scale housing developments in village locations across the County.

## **Food Security**

*We believe everyone has a right to food*

North Yorkshire is one of the wealthiest counties in England and is undoubtedly a great place to live. However, we have high levels of food poverty and ever-increasing food bank usage.

The definition of food poverty, or household insecurity, includes both affordability as well as the availability of food within local communities. It has multiple negative impacts on an individual's health and wellbeing. It is really important that we ensure a healthy diet and people have sufficient certainty about how they will secure a healthy diet for themselves and their families.

Clearly there needs to be national policy changes to lift people from poverty and improve access to food, but whilst we lobby for that change we can take action to tackle food poverty locally.

### **We will:**

- Work to reduce food poverty across the county and work to ensure no family goes hungry.
- Designate a lead member for food poverty.
- Draw up a detailed and comprehensive food action plan.
- Take an active role in food redistribution to areas of need working with existing initiatives and supporting development of new ones.

- Work with our food banks and businesses to establish food partnerships on a locality basis.
- Ensure all our children entitled to free school meals have alternative provision during school holidays.

## ***Health and Wellbeing***

There are shocking health inequalities across our county and residents living in the poorest areas can expect to live between 7 and 11 years less than those living in the least deprived areas of the county, spending more of their later years living with ill health.

We want people in North Yorkshire to live in good health for as long as possible and to live happy and fulfilling lives. We will commission a range of public health services to help do that, so that self-care and signposting is available to all.

The NHS is a key strategic partner and as the NHS restructures yet again, into Integrated Care Systems, it is vital that North Yorkshire Council is at the heart of decisions that are made.

Access to NHS Care in North Yorkshire, because it is rural and sparsely populated, can be challenging. There are no large teaching hospitals within North Yorkshire and specialist care often involves travel outside of the area.

Decisions about how services are arranged should be made as close as possible to the communities that need those services and involve those local communities

### ***We will:***

- Invest in Public Health across the County.
- Demand fair and equitable access to all our residents for the services they need.
- Lobby to grow the services provided by our local hospitals.
- Encourage new technologies and service redesign that must deliver the care that our residents need closer to home.



## **Social Care**

We must ensure that everyone who needs care can access the right care, in the right place at the right time in a way that reflects their personal needs and requirements. That means addressing national issues around funding but also being imaginative and collaborative on how we work locally.

### **We will:**

- Put people and their families at the heart of all decisions made about their care and develop a person centred approach based on need rather than available resources.
- Provide support for people with all forms of need to ensure Independence and dignity and ensure that the assessment process is fair, accessible, timely and transparent.
- Work with Health, the Independent and Third Sectors to commission services which promote choice, personalisation, social inclusion, early intervention and prevention.
- Commit to the principle of 'home first', to help people live as independently as possible for as long as possible.
- Ensure that people have the adaptations they need to their homes, including new monitoring technologies which can make a major contribution to supporting people to be able to live safely, confidently and independently.
- Organise early help, such as shopping, cleaning and visits to tackle loneliness.
- Explore alternative models of care provision including co-operatives.
- Take home care service provision in-house, so all staff are employed centrally on terms and conditions negotiated with trade unions.
- Develop plans to provide residential care in areas where there are shortages of private sector provision.
- Be the Leaders in developing a career structure for care workers that values their skills and ensure they are trained, supported, paid a decent wage and have career progression.
- Improve support for unpaid carers by providing families with proper information, advice, drop-in centres, good quality respite care support and readily available carer's assessments, so that unpaid carers can better balance their work and family lives with their caring commitments.

- Bring together all the different staff into one team – care workers, district nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists – to focus on keeping people at home and so families don't have to battle their way around the system.

## **Section Two**

# **PROSPERITY**

*Everyone should have the opportunity to thrive  
To realise our ambitions and make a good life for ourselves*

***Our Local Economy***  
***Transport***  
***Employment and Skills***  
***Education***



## ***Our Local Economy***

Over a decade of Tory austerity has seen massive cuts to local services and a lack of the inward investment needed to tackle pressing social issues such as:

- Low wages, especially in rural and coastal communities
- Training and opportunities for young people
- Long-term unemployment
- Poor health
- Reduced life expectancy in deprived areas

We need to grow our economy, develop new businesses and crucially keep money in our local economy.

Councils often have contracts with outside organisations needed to help them deliver essential, statutory services. However, much of this spending may go outside the local authority area, in the form of profits, management costs and shareholder dividends, and does not benefit the local economy. We aim to change this situation and keep business local, allowing money to be reinvested in North Yorkshire to grow our economy.

### ***We will:***

- Introduce a programme of Local Wealth Building to harness the power of council spending on goods and services, so that local people benefit when public money is spent in the private sector.
- Work with contractors to deliver additional community benefits along with value for money, for example requiring them to:
  - recruit and train local labour.
  - use local suppliers and sub-contractors who share our values including paying UK tax.
  - contribute to the achievement of environmental goals
- Make other appropriate council contracts more easily available to local companies.
- Encourage the formation of worker-led co-operatives to address un-met needs.
- Continue and develop a commitment to ethical sourcing.
- Improve access to crucial finance for our local small businesses to grow by setting up a Regional Mutual Bank.
- Encourage investment in the region especially in new emerging

technologies around the climate change agenda such as:

- local renewable energy generation initiatives
- retrofitting our homes
- carbon capture

## **Transport**

The current provision across North Yorkshire is disjointed and un-coordinated. It is left mainly to the private sector to run profitable routes, leaving communities underserved with poor to non-existent public transport links.

### ***We will:***

- Ensure people in the smaller communities all have community transport facilities which enable them to get to essential services every day of the week.
- Lobby hard to ensure that existing rail services are maintained and improved as they are vital links across the County.
- Work with neighbouring authorities to facilitate public transport across the wider Region.
- Require all public transport road vehicles operating in the area to be electric by 2030.
- Ensure all our own vehicles are electric by 2030.
- Establish a good network of easily accessible electric vehicle charging points across the area.
- Encourage and facilitate walking and cycling, especially for short journeys.
- Develop a network of cycleways, meeting the Sustrans safe design standards and connecting every settlement in the County.
- Ensure pedestrian and bicycle access and routes are part of every new development.
- Ensure our paths and public rights of way are well signposted and maintained.
- Consult with communities to rollout 20 mph speed limit zones in all built-up areas - *Twenty is Plenty*.

## ***Employment and Skills***

North Yorkshire has, historically, shown an unemployment level below the national average. But we have a below average wage that, coupled with the lack of affordable housing, has led to in work poverty and the associated issues.

The largest employment sectors in North Yorkshire are health and social services, accommodation and food services, and retail. Some of these areas have been the worst affected by the pandemic, but also have the characteristics of low productivity, low-skill, and insecure employment. They offer jobs rather than careers. Re-skilling of unemployed workers and the upskilling of those in employment are essential elements of an economic recovery plan for North Yorkshire.

### ***We will:***

- Work towards an effective local employment policy to provide well paid quality jobs locally and help offer careers for our young people so they can choose to stay in their own areas rather than leave for work.
- Work with employers, Trades Unions and all other local agencies to upskill the workforce, attack areas of deprivation and higher than average unemployment, and create a hi-tech, green and dynamic economy.
- Identify growth sectors within the local economy and actively intervene where possible to provide an appropriately skilled workforce to meet employers' demands.
- Develop an ethical investment strategy which disinvests in high-carbon industries.
- Encourage inward investment and maximise the share of central government funding for local employment initiatives.
- Promote training and skills enhancement. Our colleges should be at the forefront of enhancing the skills of the North Yorkshire workforce.
- Work to foster responsible tourism, alleviating adverse local impacts, promote local independent businesses and creative professionals for whom tourism provides a livelihood.



## **Education**

Over the past 11 years of Tory rule independent think tanks such as the Resolution Foundation, the Institute of Public Policy Research and the Institute of Fiscal Studies have confirmed that funding cuts have damaged the provision of public services and especially education. North Yorkshire County Council was not immune from these financial cuts and its education service has been severely damaged over the past 11 years.

Over this period the County's school budgets have been cut by 9%, Sixth Form Colleges budgets cut by 23% and Further Education Colleges budgets cut by 12%. The funding per pupil in the county's private run schools is circa £15,000 compared with circa £5000 that our state funded County schools receive. This level of educational inequality is just unacceptable. All children who attend our schools deserve a much fairer deal.

During this period 30 primary schools across the County have been closed. The children whose education has been most affected are the very vulnerable. Especially those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities [SEND] and those who are in Care. Further, Covid has impacted disproportionately on SEND children in all schools with the result that the achievement gap between these pupils and their peers has widened significantly. It is estimated they are at least 3 months behind in their learning. Consequently much work needs to be done to support these young people in helping them to close this gap in their learning.

Only a Labour led North Yorkshire Unitary Authority can mitigate the damage that has been done to the education of all the young people that attend the Authority's education settings and also to robustly advocate to secure the level of funding that will achieve continuous improvements to the education service that is the entitlement of all pupils/students.

All elected Labour Councillors to North Yorkshire Unitary Authority pledge to work tirelessly to seek continuous improvements in the education provision provided for all of our young people.

### **We will:**

- Advocate for year-on-year real term increases in school budgets for all our schools and Early Years settings.
- Proactively support the recruitment and retention of school leaders, teachers, and all school support staff, by ensuring that they have a good work life balance and pay and terms/conditions of employment that are commensurate with their professional standing.

- Ensure that all young people who attend our schools and Early Years settings are afforded a wide and balanced curriculum that equips them to maximise their academic achievement, and personal and social development.
- Seek constant improvements to the learning environment that will support the learning of all our young people.
- Advocate for all our Early Years settings, schools and colleges to be under the care and management of their local communities that recognise the need for them to integrate with the range of local services that support the needs and aspirations of all of our learners.
- Ensure SEND provision is available locally.
- Work hard to identify and support children with Special Educational Needs by prompt assessment for Education Health and Care Plans and classroom support.
- Protect schools in our rural communities.

## Section Three

### **Respect**

*Everyone has the right to live in places we care for and to have our lives and ambitions taken seriously, to be valued for who we are and what we do*

**Equality**  
**Communities**  
**The Environment**



## ***People, Places and Communities***

We respect and value the people and communities that we represent, the places where we live, and the natural environment that surrounds us.

We value the diversity of our communities - people and places - and will work to help them thrive through supporting equality of access and opportunity for all. We believe in collaborative and partnership working at all levels, towards a fair and inclusive North Yorkshire.

## ***Equalities & Diversity***

### ***We will:***

- Ensure that an impact assessment is made for each local policy proposal to take account of potential barriers to access for all our residents.
- Celebrate the diversity of our communities, and encourage collaboration and sharing within and between them to build a more cohesive society.
- Recognise and respect the existing skills in individuals and local organisations, by actively supporting them to develop, sustain, and invest in their local areas.

## ***Communities***

### ***We will:***

- Respect and value elected community representatives on Parish and Town Councils as they deserve - devolving as much control as possible over local services and decisions.
- Ensure an open and transparent annual budget-making process, with timely and accessible community consultation feeding into the process.
- Encourage a community led planning process, not a developer led one.
- Support community ownership of community assets such as the local shop or village pub and work to revise the Council's assets disposal policy accordingly.



## ***The Environment***

North Yorkshire is a beautiful county with dramatic and varied landscapes and habitats. Residents are justifiably proud of what our environment offers.

North Yorkshire Labour believes strongly that urgent action must be taken to halt climate change and to work towards achieving net zero carbon emissions across the whole of the county by 2030. We also believe that every effort must be made to protect our natural environment, to support bio-diversity, and to halt the decline in flora and fauna occurring within the natural world.

We want to see North Yorkshire equipped with excellent forward planning for a range of climate scenarios, strategies and investment to give us a better sense of preparedness for the future, with the involvement of communities county-wide.

### ***We will:***

- Campaign for a consistent approach to carbon budgeting and ensure that the environmental impact is taken account of in every decision made by NYC.
- Support renewable energy initiatives using wind, solar, biomass and water, and encourage community ownership as well as community and co-operative energy procurement to reduce household costs.
- Take a progressive approach towards community and domestic generation of renewable, clean energy.
- We will ban extraction of gas and oil via 'fracking'.
- Support investment in energy efficient homes, and in retrofitting of buildings that reduce energy consumption.
- Campaign for flooding mitigation strategies to protect vulnerable homes and businesses, and for adequate investment in flood defences.
- Encourage greater use of natural methods of flood mitigation where appropriate.
- Support good practice that encourages pollinators.
- Identify areas of land where allotments, community gardens and fruit growing areas can be established.
- Invest in returning residential streets to safe environments where families can live, walk, cycle, work and play.
- Develop policies to reduce litter and fly-tipping.

- Pursue the principle of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle at every opportunity, and support the principles of the circular economy.
- Establish local resources-recovery parks which re-use and repair waste material and create green jobs and provide for more items to be recycled at recycling centres.
- Campaign to protect our marine and natural environment and increase biodiversity, reduce habitat loss, and encourage tree and wild-flower planting to increase bees and other pollinators.
- Develop a Coastal Code and relaunch the Countryside Code to encourage respect for our special places.
- Promote best practice in farming aimed at reducing the impact that agriculture has on climate change.
- Work closely with North Yorkshire Police to drive up reporting of wildlife crime.
- Ban all hunting and shooting on Council land.