

North Yorkshire Council Election 5 May 2022

NY Climate Coalition survey of candidate views on key environmental issues

Candidate name	Party	Division
Josie Downs	Green Party	Thornton Dale & the Wolds

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?

Definitely

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?

For transport, work towards providing Paths for Everyone (safe route for cyclists, horse riders, wheelchair users, walkers) and also get right behind the 20s Plenty campaign which seeks to normalise 20 mph where people and motors mix. More frequent buses and perhaps more routes. Have Car Free Days. Discourage holidays abroad by plane - by exhortation. Encourage the buying of electric cars when it's time to change cars. Ensure that there is a comprehensive county-wide system for re-charging electric cars.

For agriculture-related emissions, public information campaigns aimed at both farmers and consumers. Shortening the distance food travels should be an aim and the buying of fresh, local seasonal food should be encouraged.

For emissions related to domestic energy, a public information campaign which encourages insulation and retro-fitting (for energy efficiency) and gives information about switching to a Renewables provider and information on the merits of LED lighting. More financial help to poor households for insulation and energy efficiency.

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?

The real expense will come if climate change is not tackled. i.e. if we have the costs of severe flooding or drought to pick up. The trade unions have worked out that there are many thousands of jobs connected with addressing climate change. There should be no delay.

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

I believe that we could have more onshore wind in our region and solar farms also but fracking should not be allowed. It is damaging to local environments and produces greenhouse gases.

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?

Every policy and planning application should be examined for its likely climate change impacts. I would like to see a presumption against high-carbon development in NYC's planning policies.

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?

Definitely

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

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?

I would encourage onshore wind and particularly the setting up of local energy co-operatives. I believe all new roofs should have solar PV panels. I am a little worried that hydrogen is being unduly hyped up as a solution. From what I understand, there is still a fair bit of doubt as to the extent hydrogen is capable of providing the amount of energy we might need. Not all hydrogen is sustainably produced. Green hydrogen (produced by renewables) is OK but blue and grey hydrogen could end up being damaging.

Drax has been heavily criticised for encouraging unsustainable burning of wood. The power station sources a lot of its wood fuel from N. America where, according to local groups, its timber extraction is causing damage to the local forests.

Peatland conservation is hugely important because peat locks up carbon. When dried out, this carbon is released to the atmosphere adding to climate change.

I am in favour of circular economies and believe supermarkets should switch to recyclable packaging materials.

Measures that promote nature recovery usually boost climate resilience also. Re-wilding of some areas is worth looking at.