

North Yorkshire Council Election 5 May 2022

NY Climate Coalition survey of candidate views on key environmental issues

Candidate name	Party	Division
John Smithson	Liberal Democrats	Bentham & Ingleton

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?

By working in partnership with industry and educational (e.g. Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC) organisations and energy providers to provide educational and (hopefully) financial support

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?

I firmly believe we do not have time to spare - we need to take urgent action, not just spout promises. It is obvious the Government is not doing enough or offering sufficient support

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

1 No fracking 2. Concentrate more on tidal, not necessarily barrages but floating turbines - it seems to be overlooked that we are an island surrounded by sea with two tides per day, offering free power! 3 Re

solar farms, we need to be very careful with land use - we are the only major economic nation in Europe that cannot feed itself, so using agricultural land for solar farms needs to be minimalised, as does using land in National Parks and AONBs. 4 We need to support local communities launching community power projects.

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.

6. There are plans (in the [NY L HYPERLINK "https://www.ynylep.com/strategies/routemap-to-carbon-negative-consultation"](https://www.ynylep.com/strategies/routemap-to-carbon-negative-consultation)ocal Enterprise Partnership strategy) to double the current area of woodland in the region. Would you actively support this target?

Yes - and I have been out planting trees! We have the least woodland of European countries and need to change this as fast as possible.

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 will sign

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 - our local environmental group (BEST - of which I am a member and Energy Ambassador) are trying to achieve this in Bentham. We need to lead by example.

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?

1. I believe Hydrogen will become the future's major fuel, and we should encourage its production in NY.
2. The use of 'bio mass' at Drax should be replaced with an alternative fuel, particularly as it's imported from overseas - it is hardly environmentally friendly.
3. We need to encourage and support community environmental groups to educate and help their local populations to adopt energy-saving and environmental practices.

John Smithson, Liberal Democrat candidate, Bentham and Ingleton.