

North Yorkshire Council Election 5 May 2022

NY Climate Coalition survey of candidate views on key environmental issues

| Candidate name | Party | Division |
|-------------------|--------|--------------------------------|
| Christopher Thorp | Labour | Glusburn, Cross Hills & Sutton |

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?

Integrated public transport of trains, buses, bus on demand, taxi.
Encourage cycling and walking where appropriate.

Domestic energy in two parts. Adequate insulation of houses to minimise heat loss. Replace gas with heat pumps. Other alternative heating may become available, like hydrogen.

It could be worth encouraging local communities to make their own proposals. I'm sure all sorts of viable low/zero carbon heat sources are available locally, like hydroelectric or biomass.

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?

This is like dealing with a cultural change. People are stuck in an old way of thinking, and it takes a generation of impact from the need to change before the population catches on. It needs to be managed as a cultural change with lots of examples, discussion, etc. The problem to be faced is, for example, a lot of jobs will be lost and a lot of jobs will be created. To smooth this transition is expensive. We do not want

wages for the new jobs being artificially high because of skills shortage while people redundant from the old jobs are on benefits. This is a political and management problem that can be overcome.

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

Big for onshore wind.

I am not as touchy as some over fracking, but I would have to see a compelling argument for it.

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?

Does the planning system have powers to promote? The example given is of something to ban.

This is a serious question because I believe we should have a vision for North Yorkshire and we should be promoting things in line with that vision.

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."

If "an appropriate time-scale" and "within the first year" are compatible or reworded, then yes.

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

It must be a high priority, but I must see what impact this has elsewhere.

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

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?

Based on my fuel bill I use four times as much gas energy as electric energy. That gas energy goes on heating, and air pumps get 3 units of heat energy for one unit of electrical energy. So, I need more than twice as much electricity. And I still must recharge my electric car. That is all I know about grid capacity. We will need a lot more. (Unless we get green hydrogen through the gas mains)

There is an assumption that we must pay for net zero as if it is another thing to be added to council tax. But there is a lot of money to be made in net zero. Land that is not highly productive can be used for forestry, peat bog, or anything else that will take carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and lock it away. That carbon sequestration can be sold as a negative carbon certificate to airlines, cement works and other industries to balance their high output of carbon dioxide. If the council does not own the land, it should tax the owners.

On this subject, I do not want North Yorkshire to be smothered by forests owned by far off carbon traders. I want local landowners to run carbon sequestration through their own co-operatives and to develop skills of forestry and carbon trading in the local population. The NYC could be a facilitator and should benefit from tax.