



Green Party



A GREENPRINT FOR NEWCASTLE

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Newcastle Green Party have been drawing attention to climate change for years and the City Council's 2019 declaration of a Climate Emergency was a step in the right direction. Yet the scale of the climate and ecological crises facing us demand more urgent action and we have little time to make the changes needed. At the same time, we are facing a cost of living crisis, increasing inequalities and worsening health outcomes across Newcastle. The best way to ensure that local issues, social justice and the environment are at the heart of all decisions made by the council is through electing Green Party Councillors.

We believe in bold ideas and a change from 'business as usual'. Newcastle Green Party has the vision to make our city greener and fairer for all, reducing inequality and raising the standard of living for everyone. To achieve this, we propose a serious **Green New Deal for Newcastle:**

Travel and Transport

We will prioritise improvements to public transport, improve air quality and fully commit to an active travel infrastructure which enables people to walk and cycle safely.

Energy, Housing and Waste

We will enable the shift to renewable energy and reduce fuel poverty across the city. We will ensure affordable housing is available, maximise the energy efficiency of all new housing and retrofit existing homes with energy-saving measures. We will collect food waste, increase recycling and work hard to reduce waste across our city.

Local Economy and Democracy

We will encourage investment in Newcastle's future; fighting for more investment in our communities rather than financing a few large, expensive city centre projects. We will build the trust with communities by increasing the visibility and transparency of council activity and making sure consultations are meaningful.

Wildlife and Habitats

We will control development, protect biodiversity, increase our green spaces and and strengthen our green belt. We will expand wildlife corridors and encourage the transformation of the Town Moor into a nature and wildlife haven.

Education, Health, Food and Agriculture

We will encourage accessible, lifelong learning which changes lives. We will support the integration of health and social care services, tackle health inequalities, encourage the purchase of local produce and increase support for healthy eating.

We also propose the **Green Quality of Life Guarantee:**

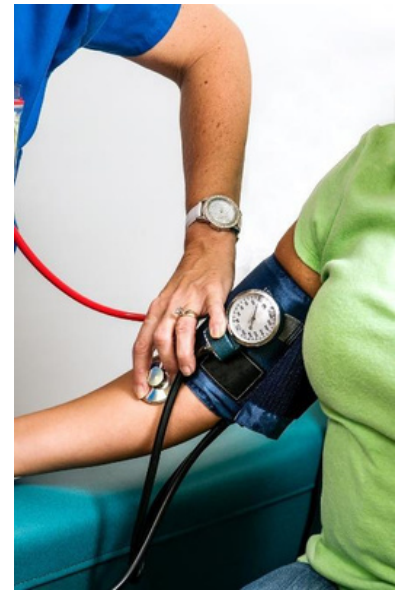
We will support people and give them what they need to thrive. By valuing the health and wellbeing of our bodies, minds and our environment rather than that of the economy, we will strengthen our economy and live happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Our region has some of the worst life expectancy and health outcomes in the country. Collaboration between health, social care providers, the local council, the third sector and communities is critical to prevent illness and improve healthcare. Newcastle Green Party sees this as a priority; improving lives both now and into the future.

COLLABORATION

We will collaborate with NHS services, especially by supporting public health initiatives within the health service:

- Integrate GP surgeries, specialist outreach clinics and council facilities more widely, as happened with the Sure Start programme.
- Promote sustainable health and social care services, for example, buildings being well insulated and with solar panels, recycling as much waste as possible, and the bike-to-work scheme.
- Make exercise available on prescription – support people to improve their health in specific ways, in a guided, social environment and using local council facilities where available.
- Promote social prescribing, using link workers to help improve physical and social wellbeing using a wide range of facilities.



SOCIAL CARE

Better social care helps people and their family around them to have better and more fulfilling lives. We will emphasise council-run or social provision (rather than private), of both residential and non-residential care:

- Improve information and support for people with long term disabilities, and their carers.
- Make public facilities disabled-accessible wherever possible including transport, leisure facilities and workplaces. We will increase the number of public conveniences, as the lack of these often discourages people from going out.
- Promote social and exercise facilities for people with disabilities - e.g., facilities at leisure centres, as well as the loan of appropriate equipment.

PUBLIC HEALTH

A shift away from car use is better for drivers and for the areas they pass by - so we will encourage people to use public transport, cycling and walking (see other sections) which will lead to less air pollution, CO2, noise or particulate matter, and physical danger. We'd also:

- Enable community no-drive-through zones and reduced parking, with traffic restrictions near schools at busy times.
- Encourage other local provision for exercise and sports.
- Discourage further fast-food and alcohol sales licenses and also enforce restrictions on alcohol sales.
- Promote warm housing and solar panels in new-builds.
- Maximise green space and tree planting, both in small patches or larger areas, where possible.
- Increase the availability of allotments, incentivise healthy food shops and cookery classes, and encourage meat-free Mondays at council, NHS and school canteens.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Where and *how* we live affects our mental wellbeing. The North East has some of the highest health inequalities in the country, contributing to increased levels of psychological distress, illustrated most starkly by high rates of suicide. The Cost of Living Crisis has reinforced these regional disparities, placing even greater strain on families and communities fighting to recover from the effects of the pandemic and over a decade of cuts to vital public services.

From volunteers at foodbanks and Mutual Aid Groups to those working in health and social care, the people of Newcastle have proudly stood against these threats to community. Building on this, Newcastle Green Party policies prioritise equality, health, wellbeing and the natural environment. These policies will:

- **Improve both the physical and mental health of Newcastle residents;**
- **Reduce differences in mortality rates between different wards (on average a person born in Gosforth lives 12 years longer than a person born in Elswick);**
- **Reduce the premature mortality of people with severe and enduring mental ill-health;**
- **Create a society to which all feel they can belong and contribute to, and in which all can develop a life that is meaningful and rewarding.**

INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES

A healthy, connected local community improves the wellbeing of all. As Newcastle councillors we will prioritise making changes to how we live alongside each other to foster solidarity and compassion, and to make it easier to reach out when in need:

- Tackle health inequalities affecting everyone.
- Encourage and role model kindness and empathy and tackle the scourge of racism and discrimination in our society.
- Support opportunities for co-housing, allotments, and other ways of accessing shared spaces that can bring our communities together.
- All services that aim to provide support for mental wellbeing must be co-produced and designed with people accessing those services.
- Promote local volunteering schemes, particularly those linked to green space, nature and health.
- Help people to access social contact, meaningful activities and nature-based therapies in their community which match with people's interests and values, as part of an informed choice process.
- Promote cultural diversity as a way to encourage varied and informative activities that allow people from different communities to connect and learn from each other.
- Increase support for refugees to allow them to thrive and feel welcome in their local community.

REGULATORY CHANGES PRIORITISING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Ensuring the local authority makes full use of local powers, as Newcastle councillors we will:

- Improve the local Access to Healthy Assets and Hazards (AHAA) index score.
- Seek to incentivise local catering businesses providing healthier food choices and restricting the number of fast-food outlets.
- Include metrics of wellbeing and social capital in how we measure mental health in the community.
- Promote the positive impact that nature/green spaces have on mental wellbeing and aim for everyone to be within ten minutes' walk of a nearby green space.
- Urge the council to comply with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11.7, which is “by 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities”.
- Promote the mental health benefits of green spaces by creating more opportunities for people to spend time in these spaces for work and leisure.
- Ensure that support for psychological distress isn't conditional on engagement with programmes designed to address other outcomes such as employment or substance dependency.
- Advocate for a participatory budgeting approach, so the council can be better enabled to listen to the impact of policies on those who are struggling and advocate for change in policies.
- Encourage public institutions and businesses to promote mental health and wellbeing.
- Work with local health services to ensure that every child or adult is able to access mental health support at the point of first referral.

CREATE HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

The environment in which we live can increase the chances that people will have poor diets, experience obesity, and become dependent on smoking and drinking as a way to cope. As Newcastle councillors we will:

- Promote physical health activities and provision, particularly outside.
- Move away from advertising campaigns for junk food and sedentary activities, and create an energy around shopping locally, eating healthily and staying active.
- Consider ways of providing additional support who are less able to be active.
- Support and promote health campaigns, allotments and food growing schemes, particularly in areas where there are currently higher levels of poverty.
- Recognise the high levels of mortality and psychological distress in those who are experiencing homelessness by taking a housing first approach.
- Create safe spaces across the city and in neighbourhoods to ensure streets and businesses are more accessible for those struggling with mental health and disabilities.
- Improve air quality; illegal levels of air pollution cause more than 225 deaths per year. We will:
 - Campaign to dramatically increase the number of trees and green spaces across the city and prioritising more deprived areas.
 - Encourage more “active travel” by foot or bicycle, making it easier for people to travel locally without the use of a car. This means taking difficult decisions at a time when more people are forced to be reliant on the car.
 - Promote awareness campaigns highlighting the links between air pollution and conditions such as asthma, COPD, heart disease, dementia and the impact on unborn children.

‘Transport as usual’ is damaging our health, our economy, and our environment. In Newcastle:

- Road transport makes up a third of CO2 emissions
- Air pollution is above legal limits in many places
- Over 100 people are killed or seriously injured on our city’s roads each year
- 40% of households have no access to a car yet public transport routes have been cut and fares increased

The Green Party has a bold vision for transport that is good for us and good for our planet; favouring investment in sustainable transport that benefits everyone.

AVOIDING JOURNEYS

We aim to eliminate as many motorised journeys as possible by shortening distances to access everyday necessities. We propose an approach that focuses on providing our daily needs in local areas accessible on foot or by bike. A ‘15-minute walk’ neighbourhood, with localised shopping, education and services will reduce the pressure on our transport networks. It will:



- Boost local shopping centres, keeping money in the local economy.
- Improve school transport (e.g. using walking school buses and widespread school streets).
- Limit out-of-town retail or business parks and car-dependent greenbelt housing.
- Return our residential streets to local people.
- Free space for pop-up parks, and areas for children to play safely outside.
- Reduce congestion so those who have to drive will have quicker journeys.

SHIFTING JOURNEYS - A GREEN LIGHT FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Newcastle Green Party want to shift as many journeys to walking, cycling, or public transport as possible. Nearly 50% of all journeys in urban areas are under two miles, a distance that could be easily cycled in 15 minutes if safe infrastructure existed. We will seek to enable:

- A shift to higher levels of cycling, with segregated, protected cycling infrastructure that is suitable for all ages.
- The use of safe and affordable e-bikes (and e-cargo bikes) for those less able to pedal themselves.
- For longer journeys, improved and subsidised public transport.
- The introduction of workplace parking levies, as has been successfully done in Nottingham.
- New park and ride facilities.
- The reintroduction of trams to Newcastle's streets, as has been achieved in Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester and Nottingham.
- The introduction of an electric shuttle service in the city to ensure no-one is left behind because of their mobility.
- Shifting the transport of goods to more sustainable methods. The local distribution of freight around the city could be done by cargo bikes or by smaller, electric vans.
- Invest in more, safe cycle storage across the city and encourage employers to provide more.

IMPROVING JOURNEYS – THE TRANSITION TO GREENER TRANSPORT FOR ALL

- Improve the Clean Air Zone (CAZ). Appropriate tolls and charges should be used to encourage the uptake of sustainable transport and reduce the number of high polluting vehicles on our roads.
- Ensure taxis, buses, and delivery vehicles make the shift to electric or hydrogen more quickly.
- Work to ensure car sharing becomes the norm.
- We will invest in much more electric vehicle charging in residential areas and the city centre, with car parking given over to electric charging.
- To encourage lasting changes in travel behaviours, young people need to be able to travel cheaply and safely. To do this, we will:
 - Create Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and School Streets to encourage more parents and children to walk and cycle to and from school.
 - Offer heavily subsidised bus passes for sixth-form, college and university students.
 - Ensure that there are safe cycle routes both between popular student areas (Jesmond, Heaton, Sandyford and Arthur's Hill) and from these student areas to the universities.

With both the cost of living and climate crises we need green energy more than ever. Zero-carbon energy should be at the core of Newcastle's future. We want Newcastle decarbonised, which means providing its electricity and heat from renewable energy (RE). Renewable energy sources, like wind power and solar, do not require the burning of fossil fuels. If Newcastle switches to RE, it will reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. By not burning fossil fuels, we can improve our air quality and reduce pollution. We need to consume less energy by implementing efficiency measures that reduce overall consumption. In addition to technical solutions, Newcastle should be less reliant on fossil-fuel burning to secure the wellbeing and happiness of our residents and businesses.

But we should also think about our economic growth. We propose appropriate growth strategies, which include local sourcing of our energy needs. This will keep financial resources, the money generated, in the NE region and create new jobs. The council should be proactive when it comes to energy, building on the country's democratic traditions and collaborative principles. We should invest in energy education and build people's awareness about energy consumption. Our vision for energy is based three core areas: (1) reduction of energy consumption, (2) energy efficiency for homes and buildings, and (3) shifting to zero-carbon electricity.

REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Newcastle City must reduce energy consumption (which can cut costs and carbon emissions) in street lighting. This can be achieved by:

- Avoiding excessive and bright street lighting, ensuring they turned on only during the night.
- The council is replacing street lighting with more efficient LEDs. But brightness levels and performance are also important to reduce light pollution too whilst maintaining the safety and friendliness of our streets at night.
- In residential areas, street lighting could be turned off for part of the night. Other councils, e.g., Devon County Council, have introduced part night lighting, switching off street lights between 00:30 and 05:30.

IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF HOMES AND BUILDINGS

With more than 17,000 fuel poor homes in Newcastle, energy efficiency should be prioritised to eliminate fuel poverty. Fuel poor households spend more than 10% of their income on heating and electricity. To help these families, we need a major programme of retrofitting homes (e.g., installing insulation and other energy saving solutions) to improve home energy performance.

This will reduce energy consumption and lower the bills so that households can move out of fuel poverty. The city council could develop partnerships with charities and organisations such as National Energy Action, Fuel Poverty Action. It should also engage with energy experts and researchers, as well as following the example of other towns such as Kirklees's Warm Zone programme.

SHIFT TO RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY AND LOW CARBON HEAT

Shifting to renewable energy (RE) and low-carbon heating for homes and business can be done in different ways. For Newcastle, we need to:

- Create council-owned, not-for-profit energy companies. These are essential to drive local and community-based efficient heating and electricity projects. Projects can include district heating and city-owned renewable energy generation on public and council-owned buildings, which can become sites for community energy generation schemes.
- Implement renewable energy technologies such as solar panels (PV). Solar panels should be installed on buildings and low-carbon heat pumps should replace boilers where appropriate.
- Impose energy storage (batteries, storage heating) as a requirement for all new-build projects to decarbonise heating.
- Adopt higher standards for EPC ratings. These should be imposed on new landlord registrations (including HMO, Selective and Additional Licensing schemes).
- Procure the City Council's energy for its public buildings from 100% renewable energy suppliers.

Importantly, energy conservation is not just important for addressing climate change but have important co-benefits. By being more energy efficient, we can have warmer homes which is better for our health and well-being. Green investments in renewable energy technology projects create jobs and generate income that can be invested back in local communities. A green energy agenda means better development and growth opportunities for the people of Newcastle.

At first glance, Newcastle upon Tyne appears to be a green city thanks to the 400 hectares of Town Moor and the beautiful Jesmond Dene, among others. But in 2018, Newcastle was crowned the ‘tree-felling capital’ in the UK, having seen the loss of almost 8,500 trees in the three preceding years. The loss of trees is more than a loss of greenness, it also means that our wildlife has lost habitats and that less CO2 can be absorbed and stored.

PROTECT OUR GREEN BELT AND GREEN SPACES

- We will strengthen our Green Belt, only allowing development there in exceptional circumstances.
- We will not allow any mineral extraction within the city’s boundaries.
- Immediately stop the use of the most harmful pesticides on public spaces, such as parks, schools and pavements.
- Where new developments are permitted, use planning controls to ensure that wildlife corridors are kept and create zones around Local Nature Reserves and similar, to ensure that they remain.
- Identify potential areas for future development which would have the least impact on wildlife and habitats.

EXPAND OUR NETWORK OF WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

Newcastle’s few wildlife corridors are typically isolated. As new developments cut off habitats from one another, the need for wildlife corridors becomes even more crucial.

- We will aim to increase the number of Local Nature Reserves and would enlarge existing sites, where possible.
- We will join up wildlife corridors by planting and conservation projects in their vicinity.
- We will work with conservation organisations and communities to audit and safeguard wildlife in our city.
- Central to our network of wildlife corridors is the Town Moor. We will work with the Freeman to develop the Town Moor into a safe haven for wildlife.



The Town Moor gives an illusion of nature as being integral to our city. In fact, it is a desert; a large area with few trees and little wildlife. Much of the Moor could be given over to the planting of native species of trees and wildflower meadows. These would attract more insects which would in turn attract a wider variety of birds, bats and other mammals.

- 20 of the 26 wards in Newcastle have below average levels of publicly accessible green space. We will seek to improve the number of green spaces in every ward.
- Very few wards in Newcastle have above-average levels of tree-cover. We intend to encourage planting so that every ward in the city meets the average.
- Work towards becoming a '15-minute walk' city, where everyone lives within a 10-minute walk to a green space.
- Encourage the creation of pocket parks and community planting schemes.
- Discourage the paving-over of front gardens by using the planning framework.
- Work closely with Urban Green to encourage wildlife and tree planting in the areas they manage.
- Encourage greater participation in community gardening schemes and creating wildlife-friendly gardens through incentives, such as free seeds for community groups and free gardening courses.
- Minimise regular cutting of grassy public areas and verges with a "no mow May" initiative to enable wildflowers to flourish there instead.

Education can and should unlock creativity and enable self-expression across all ages. The Green Party wants to see an education system built on the principles that learning must be:

- **Lifelong;**
- **Liberating;**
- **Accessible to all.**



LIFELONG LEARNING

Having access to learning throughout our lives is vital for people to develop, to live more fulfilling lives and to reach their potential. To enable this, we will:

- Create a Newcastle Early Years Programme to ensure the health and wellbeing for all children from conception to age five.
- Promote adult education as a right.
- Invest in the Adult Education programme to ensure a wide range of courses across the city.
- Ensure that our residents are able to learn the skills (especially digital) needed for new, green industries.
- Create Community Learning Hubs throughout the city, e.g., introducing computers and social media to older people to allow them to easily stay in touch with friends and family.
- Work with primary and first schools to provide shared learning sessions for parents and carers with their children. The sessions would cover topics of value to all ages, such as climate change, local history and healthy eating and fitness.
- Jobs are changing and we will ensure support for our ageing workforce, so that people are not left behind.

LEARNING AND SHARING OF IDEAS

Helping people come together to learn and share ideas and information improves health and wellbeing and reduces inequalities. As Newcastle councillors we will:

- Influence local schools - holding education leaders to account on teaching about nature, growing food and healthy eating, understanding their emotions, the impact of climate change, encouraging children to be outside as much as possible.
- Increase public health awareness campaigns using ideas that bring people from different parts of our communities together to learn from each other.
- Encourage varied and informative activities that allow people from different communities to connect and learn from each other.
- Encourage collaborations with schools and forest schools.

LEARNING ABOUT THE WORLD AROUND US

For life on Earth to survive, we must tread lightly upon it and live within our means.

To achieve this, we need to reconnect with nature and to better understand how we rely on the Earth's resources.



- We will work with schools throughout the city to encourage provision of more outdoor lessons, where children will learn more about nature, animals and the environment.
- We will work hard to ensure that all children receive the basics of a good childhood: a decent place to live, safety and security in their community, time and space to play, as well as opportunities to learn and develop inside and outside of school.
- We will provide financial support for more school trips to different local areas, such as woodland, beaches, wetlands etc, more children will be able to experience the world outside our city.
- We will improve poverty proofing measures, including rethinking uniform requirements, improving access to wraparound care / after school clubs, and providing impartial advice and assistance to help parents claim child benefit and other benefits they are entitled to.

The Green Party's aim is to build a safe, green, and prosperous city based on the future needs and challenges of the 21st century. Our dedicated City Policy will fit within National and Regional parameters of Green economic policies while also responding to the changing nature of Newcastle.

ADDRESSING FUTURE NEEDS FOR A HEALTHY ECONOMY

The impact of the cost of living crisis on the North East has been considerable, increasing demands on households and communities still reeling from the impact of the pandemic and a decade of cuts to vital public services. The Green Party recognises that we need to act urgently in order to protect against economic turbulence caused by geopolitical instability and climate change.

Our approach will respond to the shape of future society and its priorities, and recognise that the greening of the local economy will require a complete reshaping.

Current initiatives consist mainly of large-scale projects that focus on existing trends and thinking e.g., large scale retail, science park development, office building, airport associated expansion. This model will exacerbate both the existing Climate Crisis and the current discrepancy in earnings and lifestyle between, for example, high-end workers in the science park and low paid retail staff.

Current trends suggest that in the future:

- Retail will be mostly on line with less need for outlets of High Street names in the City Centre.
- Increased home-working and home-learning will mean less City Centre shopping and travel.
- Parts of the entertainment and hospitality industry are likely to undergo significant change, such as streaming resulting in a reduction in cinemas, concerts, sports attendance.
- Health and social problems may result from the increase in homeworking, an ageing population, higher unemployment, and distant online services.

INVEST IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- If we're to maintain healthy local economy during difficult circumstances, we must put the right infrastructure into place, now.
- We must rebalance our economy away from city centre prestige projects towards local small/medium ventures that revitalise local communities by supporting local enterprises and using small and medium-sized companies.
- Smaller scale projects will better meet people's needs and are more flexible, allowing for timely adaptation. Support small and local businesses to thrive in the city centre and in local neighbourhoods by enabling a circular economy which promotes health and solidarity over competition and precariousness.
- We will promote the 'right to repair', providing incentives for enterprises and charities that provide repairs, upcycling and restoration services that help to promote the circular economy.
- We will encourage local communities to set up 'time bank' schemes.

A SUSTAINABLE WAY FORWARD— A GREEN REVOLUTION

Our vision for the future is green and sustainable, responding to the longer-term trends in society.

The arrival of national /regional green new deal initiatives will result in large scale project opportunities such as:

- Renewable wind and solar industries.
- The production of electric vehicles and associated battery production.

This would dovetail into the larger regional developments and include:

- The refurbishment of poorly insulated properties with loft and cavity wall insulation and double glazing.
- The rollout of new heating technologies such as heat pumps helping to reduce fuel poverty which is driving too many people into debt.
- Turning the road-building budget into a fund for investing in fully accessible, 21st-century transport where pedestrians, cyclists and electric vehicles can move safely and cleanly around their communities, opening our city up to all citizens.
- Building an electric vehicle charging network.
- The conversion of housing to shared services and facilities to create more affordable homes. and the reconfiguration of dwellings to respond to the requirements of an ageing population.
- Fully developing a green transport system including bike lanes & electric buses.
- Drawing up Ward Economic plans for every ward and establishing funding arrangements to attract direct investment.
- Creating local High Street Services Hubs in every ward that would include shared office and other facilities, including health care provision.
- Constructing a coherent social care provision to accommodate the growth of the older generation.
- At the city level taking the lead in developing the region as a focus for energy research and technology development and attracting sustainable jobs and energy companies.
- Using the local authorities' powers of planning and investment to direct and create training and skills programmes to support these initiatives.

Newcastle is one of the major cities in England and is still growing. With around 37,000 more people over the next twenty years, Newcastle will need new housing. Most of the recent housing developments are in areas with no Metro services and they are too far from the city centre for walking. The design and construction of new housing and its location are important in meeting our carbon commitments.

LOW-CARBON HOMES

The Green Party call for:

- All new housing to be built to new high energy standards, which will see them use 90% less energy for heating than the average house uses, saving money and the planet.
- Use of the planning framework to ensure that all new homes incorporate solar panels as standard.
- All new homes to be fitted with triple-glazing as standard.
- Work with private landlords and housing associations to bring properties up the standard by offering grants for insulation and other improvements.
- Work with Your Homes Newcastle and Karbon Homes to bring council properties up to new energy standards.
- Use the Local Authorities' powers of planning and investment to create training and skills programmes to support these initiatives.



HOUSING FOR EVERYONE

We believe that healthy, happy communities comprise a mix of people from across society and housing should be developed with this in mind.

- Councils should have the power to cap rents.
- All new developments should comprise a mixture of housing types to accommodate young adults in their first homes, families and older people.
- New developments should suit a range of budgets to encourage greater diversity.
- We will encourage the creation of shared ownership and other imaginative developments.
- We will provide assistance for people who would benefit from downsizing by helping to find appropriate accommodation and with the house-moving process.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

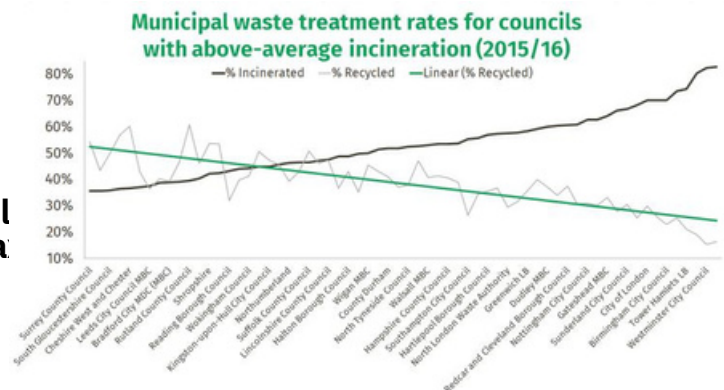
To achieve balance between urban and rural, new housing must:

- Not be built on green belt nor in buffer zones around important habitats.
- Be located away from wildlife corridors.
- Not be designed to be car dependent, with safe pedestrian access to local shops and schools and within 500m of a bus service.
- Have shared, green spaces and lots of trees and hedgerows to encourage greater biodiversity.
- Be located close to shops, medical facilities such as a doctor's surgery and school if part of a larger housing development.
- Include allotments and community gardens as standard.



The ‘hierarchy of waste controls’ has been established best practice for decades, and at the top of the priority list is waste Reduction and Reuse, with Recycling as the last resort. Currently, the Council’s policies fail to address these areas, but Greens will champion Reduce and Reuse as the best way to deal with our growing waste problems. Recent figures show that Newcastle could do better, with performance currently in the bottom half of the national recycling league table (217th of 314).

Relying on burning rubbish as a solution to our waste disposal needs is at odds with Newcastle’s declaration of a Climate Emergency and does nothing to help to decarbonise our city. It is also consistently associated with lower recycling rates (see graph). The Green Party would urgently support the proposed national carbon tax on incineration. This would make the proposed giant incinerators on Teeside unaffordable, and would throw light on the overcapacity of incineration in North East England.



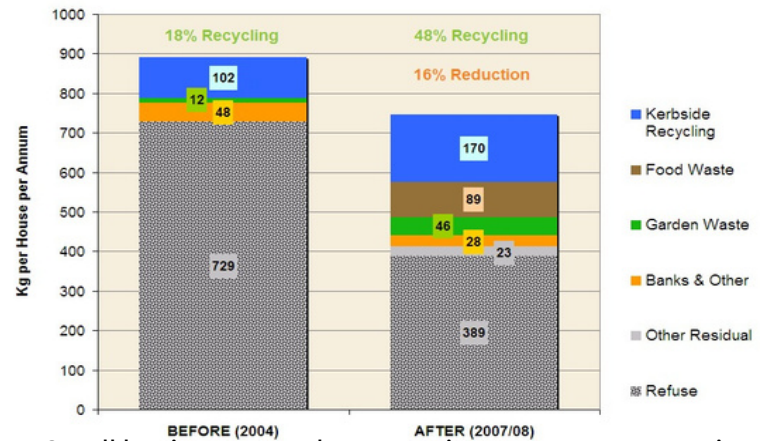
Years of austerity have caused significant cuts to services. The result is that recycling rates have reduced, levels of contamination have risen, costs to the Council from those processing our recycling have increased and engagement from residents has reduced. Reversing these trends is possible and would put our waste and recycling services on a more sustainable financial footing long-term, but involves a focus on quality rather than quantity. We will also aim to avoid long contracts, which tie the next generation into yesterday’s technology.

REDUCE

- Reduce waste overall so that less spills onto our streets.
- Encouraging reduced consumption (regenerating our city centre with housing and cultural venues, not new shopping districts).
- Work with retailers to reduce the amount of packaging on their products and where it is necessary, encourage the use of recyclable materials.

REUSE

- Rolling out food waste collections throughout the city from 2023. Food Waste collections have been shown to reduce waste overall and boost recycling overall (see graphic from Somerset)



- Incentivising localised re-use initiatives. Small businesses and community groups are recognised as more effective than city-wide solutions for Reduction and Reuse projects.
- Supporting a 'Reuse Hub' to showcase reuse, repair and upcycling. This was a key recommendation of the Newcastle Waste Commission, which the Council has failed to take forward.
- Create reuse hubs in residential areas where items which are functional, but no longer needed, can be swapped. This could be done through a 'credits' system where people receive credits for donations and they can spend them on 'new to them' items.

RECYCLE

- Support local recycling initiatives.
- Collect materials separated at source (on the doorstep), instead of different wheelie bin collections. Our materials could then be sold direct to local markets - 'creating wealth from waste'.
- Extensive engagement programmes with residents, working face to face not just online or with leaflets.
- Ensure that there is adequate local provision for recycling, with more household waste recycling centres.
- Work with landlords and students to ensure that 'end of tenancy' property clearances do not result in reusable items from being dumped.

The food we eat is damaging to us and the planet. Our reliance on industrial agriculture, a meat-heavy diet, and cheap carbohydrates leads to the destruction of our natural environment and a huge burden on the NHS. By changing what we eat we can enhance nature, support local food producers, and lead healthier lives. The EAT-Lancet commission showed how a diet based within planetary boundaries is better for us too.

STRONGER AND SHORTER FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

Our food supply currently relies on long supply chains, with products often criss-crossing across Europe or even the globe on their way to our plate. The Green Party believes in more resilient and shorter food supply chains. A local food system is about the maximum production of those foods which can be suitably grown and produced close to Newcastle. A short supply chain allows re-connection between consumers and producers and an improved understanding of the source of our food. Newcastle Green Party will:



- Support expansion of Newcastle's Farmers' Markets
- Encourage more local markets in our district shopping centres so that people can buy more food from regional producers.
- Promote the fact that regional and local produce keeps more money in our local economy.
- Encourage more people to grow their own food by increasing allotment provision.

A SLOWER FOOD SYSTEM

The 'Slow Food' movement aims to raise the status of food in society, to celebrate local cuisine and produce, promoting the skill of cooking and artisanal food. We are lucky to have some incredible local food businesses in Newcastle who use local ingredients, create inspirational local produce, and support our local economy. The Green Party believes that local food producers should be supported to provide an alternative to the complicated globalised food system and ubiquitous fast-food culture. The food traders in the Grainger Market, for example, can provide an alternative to the casual dining available elsewhere. The money that is generated by such local businesses will help maintain employment within the local economy. We believe business rates should be set to ensure local independent food producers are given priority over multinational or national food chains.

THE NEWCASTLE CITY CENTRE FOOD LANDSCAPE

The Grainger Market is a great example of food supply in our city centre. The market provides a wide range of fresh fruit and vegetables sold at competitive prices and is therefore an important way for the public to affordably meet their dietary needs especially during our current cost of living crisis.



Covered markets, such as the Grainger Market, generally operate an economic model of perfect competition. The stalls operating in the Grainger Market are smaller businesses which make a 'normal' profit for their owners. Also, retained profits in the Grainger Market means that market traders can employ more people than the supermarkets do for the same level of turnover. Stallholders are also likely to have greater autonomy, as small business-owners, compared to workers employed in the supermarkets.

The Green Party believes that true democracy needs not just elections, but full involvement in discussions about the issues that affect us all. We must build back trust.

PUT PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY; THEIR VOICES MUST BE HEARD – AND HEEDED

All too often, people comment that public consultations are a waste of time. They feel that the City Council has already made up its mind.

- Greens believe that there should be public involvement at every level as this will improve public services, lead to better outcomes and lower costs.
- Elections – before voting people should have the opportunity to influence the policies that are promised.
- Areas include education, planning, health and social care, the environment, economy, transport and
- policing, and many others.
- Involvement can take many forms – meetings in person or online, talks, surveys and questionnaires.
- Increase voter registration to improve voter turnout and more representative elections.

INCREASING VISIBILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

We will put people back into the heart of local democracy, by providing sufficient opportunities for understanding and debate about local matters and ensure that the public is fully informed. Council meetings should be open and accessible to all members of the public.



As the future is digital, Newcastle Greens will work hard to improve access to online documents, meetings and consultations.

- Organisations such as schools, shops and fitness facilities, have all succeeded in finding new ways to involve people online. Political parties, local authorities and local groups all need to put out more dynamic and interactive content to ensure wider participation.
- We will use Zoom and other tools more frequently to enable interactive meetings, presentations, Q & A sessions, voting and recording of meetings.
- Formal council ward meetings and ward budgets have been reduced in frequency. Public attendance has also plummeted – could this be linked?
- We will arrange meetings on ward matters, which highlight proactive ideas for improvements, such as on local transport, walking and cycling, jobs and facilities for children, as these will draw up priorities for the ward.

BUILD BACK TRUST FOR GENUINE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We will increase confidence in local democracy by:

- Steady, ongoing work to engage deprived groups and communities.
- Developing social media to bring rapid and two-way communication between residents and the council.
- Holding regular council e-bulletins and Zoom meetings on key issues.
- Conducting online participatory meetings, and decisions, on ward development budgets.
- Asking residents before, not after making decisions.
- Taking decisions at the lowest practical level, involving local groups.
- Councillors prioritising engagement with residents to gain their views on local matters.