

PROSPERITY YOU CAN BE PART OF

MANIFESTO FOR NORTH OF TYNE MAYOR 2019



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FOREWORD

THE CHALLENGE

As a region we have some great assets - a proud history of industrial innovation, beautiful scenery and people famous for their warmth and friendliness. But for decades now we've been ignored by central government, who think that the North stops at Manchester.

We need more highly-skilled, well paid jobs, and we need to make sure jobs in the foundational economy - such as hospitality and social care - are secure and are paying people enough to live on. Poverty is blighting lives - after 9 years of Tory austerity, we have thousands of children in our region needing food parcels every month, and workers of all ages unsure how much they'll be earning from week to week. In fact, 72% of children in poverty are from a working household.

Over a quarter of all adults under 35 live with their parents because houses are too expensive and rents are too high. Older people need more specialist accommodation so they can retain their independence. We need more homes that people can actually afford to live in - with secure tenancies so they can feel safe for the future.

Our transport infrastructure is lagging behind, we're letting our young people down with a lack of clear pathways into work, and behind all this is the spectre of climate change, which requires urgent and radical action.

I've laid out five key policies that all interlink to address these challenges. There is a raft of detail behind them - and a comprehensive evidence base. Everything here has been successfully implemented elsewhere. This is about bringing all of the best common-sense solutions to the North of Tyne and implementing them all, together, to create **prosperity we can all be part of**.



THE POWERS

The North of Tyne is joining regions like Manchester and London in having a Mayor. This is not a ceremonial Mayor, but a directly elected Mayor who will be a voice for our region and have a remit for economic development.

The Mayor won't control any existing council services but will have:



£20 million a year
to fund economic
development initiatives



£23 million a year
to fund skills training
and adult education



Powers to set up
development corporations



The ability to raise
compulsory purchase orders
to buy land for homes

The Mayor will sit on the North East Joint Transport Committee along with the local authorities from south of the Tyne.

The Mayor will also have a leading role in attracting investment to our region, influencing policy, and negotiating with government.





FIVE PRACTICAL POLICIES THAT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO OUR REGION

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

✓ *Keep Money In Our Region*

Our global economy is broken. It serves the few, and not the many. Too much of the wealth we create here is extracted by global corporations who do not pay their taxes. The money we spend here, needs to stay here.

Community Wealth Building is a set of specific policy interventions that work together to make sure that we spend more, locally, to create more jobs and higher wages. And it works - it's been tried in this country, in Preston, and made it the most improved city in the UK by a wide margin. I've already been working with the architects of this approach, so we're ready to hit the ground running if and when I get elected.

ENABLE SMALL BUSINESSES TO WIN PUBLIC SECTOR WORK

As a country we spend £268bn a year buying goods and services from the private sector. Small local businesses are frozen out of this process because of the way procurement tenders work. We can break contracts down into smaller parcels, so small firms can bid for them. Often tenders go to huge corporations like Carillion or Interserve who fail to deliver, and need bailing out by the government. Worst of all, their profit comes from driving down pay and conditions of the workers who deliver them, and they take this money out of our region.

I'll create a Procurement Framework to level the playing field for local businesses, and keep those profits here. We will use legal powers in the Social Value Act to prioritise firms who pay the Real Living Wage, train local workers, have secure employment practices (no zero-hours contracts) and sustainable transport plans. And we can address the scandal of small firms not getting paid on time by rewarding points for firms who maintain high ethical trading standards.

As Mayor I'll encourage local public services such as councils, hospitals and universities, to join this framework, and encourage large private sector firms to join up too. We will build on the pioneering approach of Preston and other councils in working with employers to ensure they prioritise local small businesses and local employment when buying their supplies and services. Rather than spend the region's money with large corporations headquartered outside of the region, we can create local contracts and see money spent locally.

For every pound spent with a small or medium sized business, 63p is re-spent in the region, this drops to 40p for every pound given to a large or multinational company. And corporations are less likely to pay a fair amount of tax. In Preston in 2013, 5% of the public procurement budget money spent by the council, was spent in the city. By 2018 this had risen to 18% of the budget. Preston has returned over £275m to the local economy and seen unemployment fall from 6.5% in 2014 to 3.5% today. PricewaterhouseCoopers called Preston the 'UK's most improved urban area'.

Only 22% of central government expenditure is with SMEs, and the Procurement Framework will help local firms win work from central government, by helping them through the tendering process.

SET UP A PEOPLE'S BANK TO INVEST IN LOCAL BUSINESSES

Prosperity requires money. In the past, too many of our banks have behaved irresponsibly, causing a global financial crash. I will establish a regional People's Bank, owned by its customers, with an explicit remit to do business only with people and organisations in the North East. The People's Bank will operate to the highest ethical standards to rebuild trust and direct relationships - there will be no "computer says no", but direct relationships with personal customers and SMEs. It will have a full range of services - current accounts, mortgage lending, and business banking, with physical branches and 24 hour automated services. There will be no casino banking, just solid, ethical trading with local people and businesses.

The bank will operate on a pay ratio maximum of 10:1 - meaning the highest paid will never earn more than ten times the lowest paid member of staff. All profits will be retained in the region - by customers, and through supporting a Charitable Foundation. It will be owned by its customers, and run on a one-person-one-vote co-operative basis, and legally asset locked so it can never be privatised.

It will take approximately two and a half years to complete the regulatory process. The first stage is a due diligence investigation costing approximately £40,000 to look over the business plans, then an initial investment of £700,000 to recruit the necessary professionals and navigate through the regulatory period. Once a banking licence is granted, the core capital requirement will be £20 million. This can be raised from ethical investment funds, including public sector funds, and any private citizens wanting to invest. The Mayoral Authority will remain a non-voting shareholder and once the bank is mature, will gain a return from its initial investment - this is a money maker for the tax payer in the long term.

Over 40% of Germany's banking system is made up of similar independent, locally managed banks - which is why their manufacturing base is so much more robust. Regional banks of this nature across the world weathered the financial crisis far better than the large banks we taxpayers had to bail out. It's the safest model of banking there is.

SUPPORT SMALL AND WORKER-OWNED BUSINESSES

Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy. The North East has 162,755 businesses, of which 162,540 are SMEs. That's 99.87% of them. 95% of businesses employ fewer than 10 people, yet in total employ 487,000 jobs.

I will provide support for those wanting to set up on their own, and especially employee buy-outs and start-ups by innovative groups of workers. This can unleash a wealth of knowledge and skills working people have, providing a valuable addition to the well being of communities. Studies show that worker-owned businesses create more stable employment in better-paid jobs, and tend to be more productive than businesses with conventional ownership structures. Worker-owned businesses, or co-operatives, can also fill in the gaps in the local economy, and are more resilient in times of economic downturn. We'll work with existing organisations like Co-ops UK, The Chamber of Commerce and others, to provide training, mentoring and legal advice.

I'll directly support businesses by taking part in export events and trade missions, and supporting our region's business people - it's the personal testimony that will get us work abroad. I'll support local firms who need to navigate the legalities of exporting, so businesses large and small can seize global opportunities. My personal commitment as the Mayor to driving up our exports will help us all.



BOOST WAGES AND PROVIDE SECURE JOBS

New, local and secure jobs will be created as a result of stronger local procurement, better access to finance for businesses to expand, and inward investment, especially in low carbon sectors.

Under my leadership, the North of Tyne Combined Authority will be an accredited Living Wage employer, meaning that everyone who works there gets the Real Living Wage, and all suppliers staff too. As of May 2019, this figure is £9 per hour - the amount people actually need to live on without getting into debt. I will work with Trade Unions to promote the very best in employment practices across the region, and drive an Employment Charter to promote high standards of employment across all sectors.

The Procurement Framework will be used to steer the entire local economy in this direction, by favouring employers who pay the Real Living Wage. When a billionaire gets more money, they tend to invest it in assets or property portfolios. When a working person gets a pay rise, they spend it in the real economy, which creates more spending power locally, and creates more jobs; which in turn creates more local spending power, and so it goes on, in a virtuous circle. The seeds of a fairer, as well as a more prosperous, economy will be planted.



GREEN INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

✓ *Declare A Climate Emergency*

Climate change is considered by a United Nations report as ‘the single biggest threat to life, security and prosperity on earth’, and we need to start tackling climate change locally and immediately. As Mayor, on day one, I will declare a climate emergency.

I will convene a Climate Change Liaison Group (CCLG) immediately to develop a plan to make the North of Tyne a net zero-carbon region by 2030. This will not be a paper exercise - I will allocate funds to provide skilled staff to support the work of the CCLG, involving Councillors, residents, businesses, young citizens, civil society groups, and experts from our Universities and other relevant parties. Over the following 12 months, the CCLG will produce the strategy. The Mayoral Authority will not invest in fossil fuels, arms manufacture or other unethical funds, and will actively support divestment from fossil fuels across the public sector within 3 years, including pension fund divestment.

It is important to note the Green Industrial Revolution is not simply some environmental policies, it is about a large coordinated set of policies to create environmental, economic and social sustainability together. All of the policies in this manifesto contribute - local procurement, local banking, better housing, community hubs and better education.

CREATE A COMMUNITY OWNED GREEN ENERGY COMPANY

As we migrate to more electric vehicles and electrically powered public transport, it is essential that we do not generate the electricity from fossil fuels. I will set up community owned energy companies to cover both generation and supply. Supply is where consumers buy their electricity, generation is where suppliers buy their electricity to sell on. The Conservative Government has severely damaged the UK solar industry by removing the Feed In Tariff, and the Export Tariff - in effect, new solar installations have to give their energy away free to energy companies.

A supply company, owned by its customers, can save households money on their bills and keep money in the local economy instead of being pocketed by the owners of the “Big Six” energy companies. For instance Nottingham has set up a local authority owned company - Robin Hood Energy, which turned a profit for local council tax payers in just three years from start-up, and protects customers from energy rip-offs; Cooperative Energy and Octopus energy all compete successfully in this market. My policy team have already explored licensing and partnerships to get IT and operational systems in place quickly and at low risk, with encouraging responses from potential partners. This company would have a legal form known as an “asset lock” to prevent it ever being privatised.

In addition to supply, there are several models available for generation. As a branch of local government it is possible to access capital grants and very low cost borrowing to develop generation infrastructure. For example, it is possible to set up low cost solar farms on existing buildings, in effect leasing roof space, and buying electricity from people who already have solar panels. As we change planning rules to require greater solar generation, we can greatly expand solar generation in this way. In time, this company will look to invest in large scale renewable power generation - which is already cheaper than fossil fuel generation. The North Sea alone can develop enough offshore wind to power the whole of Europe. A large amount of business planning is already in place, and I'll commission the due diligence reports immediately upon taking office to determine which approach to begin with.

TACKLE FOOD WASTE AND FOOD POVERTY

The UK wastes 10 million tonnes of food each year, of which 60% could be recycled. Under a Labour Mayor, supermarkets in the region will be encouraged to reduce food waste by using better inventory management, and distributing unsold food to combat food poverty, including supporting existing charities and community cafes in this sector.

We can also reduce food miles in public sector catering by supporting local food producers, and providing advice and engagement with private sector suppliers, and giving those who engage a competitive advantage by awarding food sustainability marks. Local food growing and urban gardening will be encouraged as will food cooperatives. Harmful plastic usage will be discouraged, particularly single use plastics. This will not just be a publicity exercise - I will fund the staff to make it happen.



IMPROVE BUS AND RAIL SERVICES INCLUDING JOINT TICKETING

Effective, affordable and well managed public transport is the bedrock of sustainability - economic, social and environmental. People need to access work, training and social life. When people can move around freely, it increases prosperity - every trip taken on the Metro generates £8.50 for the local economy. Yet people in rural Northumberland face isolation unless they can afford a car and the fuel to run it.

I will work through the Joint Transport Committee with Labour Authorities south of the Tyne to deliver a joint ticketing system. Like the system in place in other cities, this will be a simple tap-in, tap-out system that calculates the cheapest fare and puts a price cap on the total journey, with the smart ability to alter fares for certain categories of passenger - apprentices, for example.

In other cities, joint ticketing has led to an increase in public transport use of up to 40%. The technical systems are available - all that is needed is the will to make it happen.

I will develop an integrated public transport app, with a “Google Maps” style intelligence to calculate your best public transport route, and real time information on bus, train and Metro locations so you’re not waiting at the stop wondering when the next one’s coming. Similar systems exist elsewhere, and we’ll look at public-public partnerships - licensing technology from other cities in order to save costs.

At present the North of Tyne is unlike other Mayoral Authorities in not having bus franchising powers. Gaining these powers will be my first priority for further devolution, and I’ll work with the Labour Authorities south of the Tyne to make this happen. This will allow much better influence over bus companies, who naturally enough like to cherry pick profitable services. The current Conservative government made it illegal for local authorities to set up bus companies, but I will lobby for a change in the law. In any event, it is likely to change with an incoming Labour government during the Mayoral term of office.

I’ll commission a study into On Demand Transport, specially for rural Northumberland. Even with the best will in the world, you can’t have frequent buses to every village, or most of them will be empty. On Demand Transport allows people to, in effect, book-a-bus; a low emission vehicle fleet, connected to a smart software system, can then plot routes to get people to where they want to go. I’ll explore partnerships with existing transport operators, new cooperative businesses, or do it directly when we have either bus franchising or the legal right to set up bus companies. I will explore funding for promotional “free travel days” to encourage those who are not public transport users to leave their cars at home.

I will fund a bid, in conjunction with the other authorities that make up the Joint Transport Committee, for funding to expand the East Coast Main Line capacity so we have faster, more reliable trains to London and Edinburgh, and expand the Metro. This will include links to Washington, the Metro Centre, and as a priority, the Newcastle to Blyth and Ashington line. For technical reasons, this will in practice be different rolling stock, but integrated into the Metro operation.

HS2 is currently not planned to run full speed services to Newcastle. We cannot be left out of the high speed rail network. I have already begun lobbying to reverse this plan, and will fund the business case and development work to have dedicated high speed rail connections to the rest of the country, including north to Edinburgh.

I'll lead by example. Under my leadership, there will be no Mayoral car or driver. I'll get to work like everyone else - cycling or using public transport whenever possible, and when I need to drive at work, I'll use a pool car like the rest of the staff, which will be a locally produced electric Nissan Leaf.

CREATE AN INNOVATION STRATEGY TO SUPPORT THE LOW-CARBON ECONOMY

We have world-leading industries in the low-carbon economy, but central government policies have crippled them, causing massive job losses, and leaving the UK as one of the only countries in the world where solar deployment is dropping. Yet we still have solar panel and battery manufacturers in the North East, and world leading facilities like the Offshore Wind Innovation Hub at Catapult, NAREC Distributed Energy, and Innovation Hubs at the Helix in Newcastle and in Northumbria and Newcastle Universities. We have the possibility of being the first Smart Grid in the UK, and I'll fund the planning for this project, to give us energy independence and end fuel poverty.

By actively pursuing funding, and coordinating all the other policies in this manifesto - skills training, access to finance, increased solar and wind deployment, negative carbon house building, and world-class environmental education - we'll create the capacity and demand locally to accelerate and scale up industries, ready to be national and international leaders in the green economy. This will provide the highly paid, skilled jobs of the future.

SET UP COMMUNITY HUBS

✓ Revitalise Local Life

The places we live are constantly changing, but the importance of community remains.

Community hubs based in designated multi-purpose buildings should be at the centre of communities, providing safe spaces for people of all ages, so everyone, toddler, teenager to the retired can participate in education, economic and cultural life.

Just as every town and village is different, every hub will be different - your community will get a real say in how this is implemented in your area, through direct participation and discussion with me personally and the Mayoral Authority staff.

TURN UNDERUSED PUBLIC BUILDINGS INTO COMMUNITY HUBS

Every city, town and village has its underused public buildings often in need of care and renovation. Communities will be supported to utilise and improve these premises for the general well-being of the community. This may involve transferring the building to a trust set up by the local residents, or local third-sector, non-profit organisations. Community hubs would be a focal centre of the community providing a wide range of activities and services including community businesses required to meet a local need.

Each community would be able to involve different organisations - public, civic or commercial, and able to generate income as long as it was in keeping with principles of economic, environmental and social sustainability, and the local ethos.

RUN PUBLIC SERVICES AND ADULT EDUCATION COURSES IN LOCAL PLACES

Many public services are under threat with, for example, the closure of much needed locally based GP surgeries and libraries. The nearest alternative provision, can for many people, be out of reach. Community hubs can provide the location and administration needed to keep services local. They will be located in the community, with a citizen's desk offering advice on worker and consumer rights, guidance on trade union organisation and activity and advice on community action on the environment and climate change.

A community hub can also be the place where existing and new adult education providers offer their services, giving people access to training and personal development without the need to travel long distances.

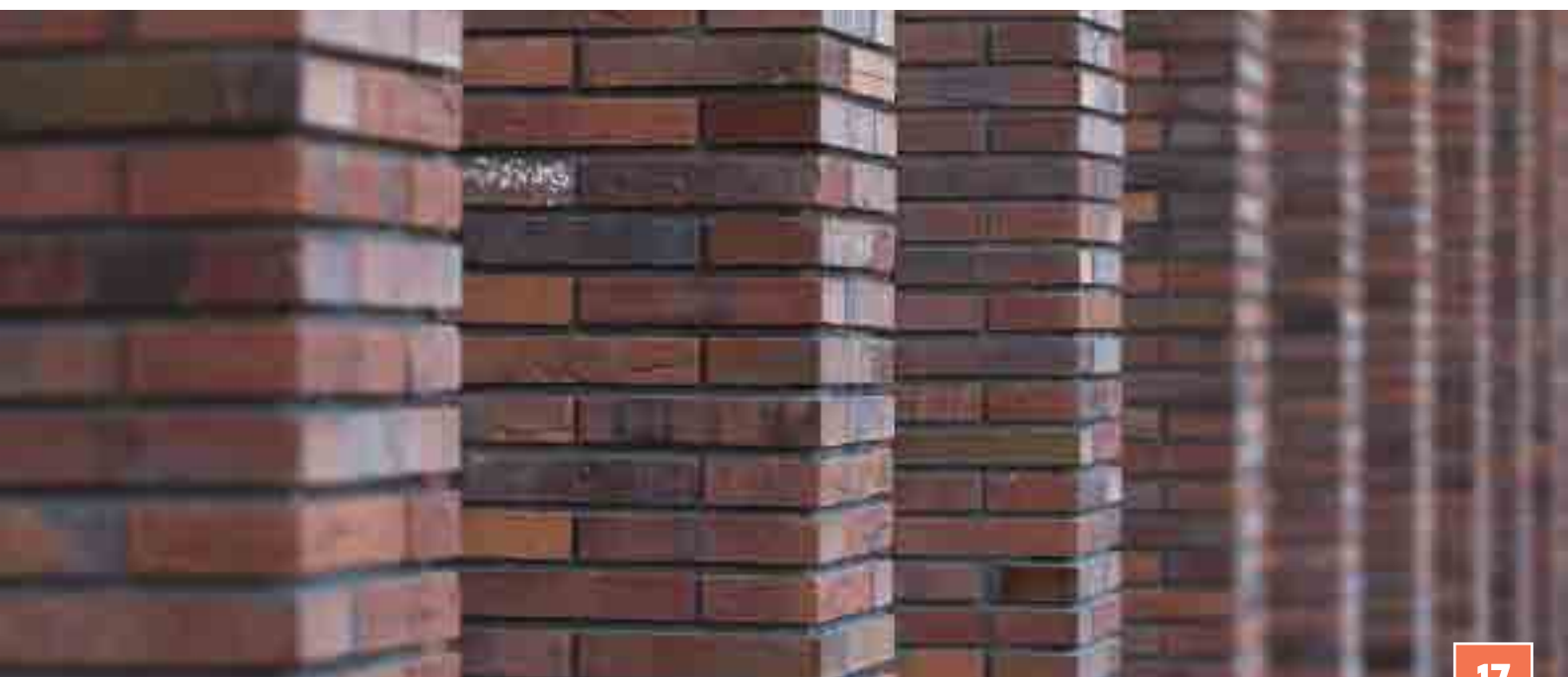
Where it is appropriate, the People's Bank could run an automated satellite branch from the hub, to bring a vital service to small towns and villages.


PROVIDE HIGH SPEED BROADBAND, OFFICE AND WORKSHOP SPACE

New start-up businesses require help with resources. Community hubs can provide office and workshop space with the added advantage of a location at the heart of a community, and the benefits of networking with local residents and other start-ups. Other facilities, essential for success in the modern world, such as a high-speed broadband connection, free wi-fi and high quality video conferencing, can be provided. These facilities will also be available for individuals and local community groups to use.

SERVE AS A VENUE FOR COMMUNITY AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Community hubs will providing a formal space for community meetings and a site for a range of activities including a much needed location for young people to congregate and engage in cultural activity necessary for a cohesive and healthy community. Loneliness and social isolation can be mitigated, and the knowledge that there's a high-quality, community venue available makes community organisations more sustainable. Where the community chooses to, we'll work with FairShare and other food waste groups, to support community cafes, run on a pay-as-you-feel basis, to make the hub a real centre of the local community, and tackle hidden food poverty with dignity.





BUILD AFFORDABLE HOMES

✓ Secure Places To Live

Britain has a housing crisis. The cost of new homes is out of reach of the many with rents at record highs and homelessness increasing. Over a quarter of adults under 35 live with their parents, and too many private rented homes substandard. We need more specialist housing for older people, who want to retain their independence.

As with the climate crisis, remedial action can start locally. This is already happening with Labour Mayors in London, Manchester and Liverpool. If elected Mayor, I will have broad powers to acquire and dispose of land for house building enabling the region to build a range of new homes. I'll lead a Housing and Land Board that gets all the local authorities working together to make sure we build the kind of homes we need.

BUILD CO-OPERATIVE SOCIAL HOUSING THAT CAN'T BE PRIVATISED

I will build publicly owned housing to be offered at a fair rent. These community housing cooperatives will be owned collectively by the people who live in them rather than the state, and will be exempt from right-to-buy and privatisation. People will have long term, secure tenancies, so they know their home is secure, unlike the private rented sector where they can be moved out with almost no notice.

Officers from the Mayor's Authority will assist with management functions and common support systems, and profits from the rent will be used to pay for services the residents choose - whether communal gardens or youth workers. Managed cooperatives across the UK have the lowest level of rent arrears of any form of housing - below 1%. In Scandinavia, 15% of housing is cooperative.

BUILD AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR SALE WITH PROPER LOCAL AMENITIES

Houses that are genuinely affordable will be built using such mechanisms as community lands trusts (CLT). A CLT is a non-profit company that develops and manages the land in the interest of the community. People can own their own home on it, but the land remains owned by the community, and the equity is shared if an owner sells or moves on, keeping a supply of affordable housing available to buy.

In London, Start Haringey was formed and is building 800 homes on land purchased using the Mayor of London's Land Fund, with half being classed as 'genuinely affordable'. Similarly in Liverpool, Granby Four Streets is a CLT renovation of Victorian terraces with disused shops converted into a community retail and creative hub which also provides local jobs.

CONSTRUCTED TO HIGH ECO-FRIENDLY STANDARDS WITH BUILT-IN SOLAR PANELS

New homes will be built with low to zero carbon emissions and have less environmental impact than in the past. They will be more energy efficient and consideration given to green methods of construction. In line with our community wealth building ethos of keeping money in our region, they will be built using local firms and workers. Solar panelling will be a feature of the properties reducing homeowner energy consumption and costs, whilst at the same time helping to tackle climate change.

They will be constructed to a high standard, using modular construction of advanced timber technologies that are extremely durable, and which lock away carbon in their construction. With integrated solar panels and the highest quality insulation, these homes are warm and very cheap to run. A huge proportion of homes in Scandinavia, Canada and elsewhere use these methods - the UK is lagging behind.

I will fund a business case with the aim of setting up a publicly owned company or partnership to establish a modular homes factory in our region, providing high quality, unionised employment, reducing the ecological impact of home building, and accelerating the rate at which homes can be built. Modular eco-homes can be built in days compared to the months of traditional construction methods. All the while keeping the money we spend in our region.



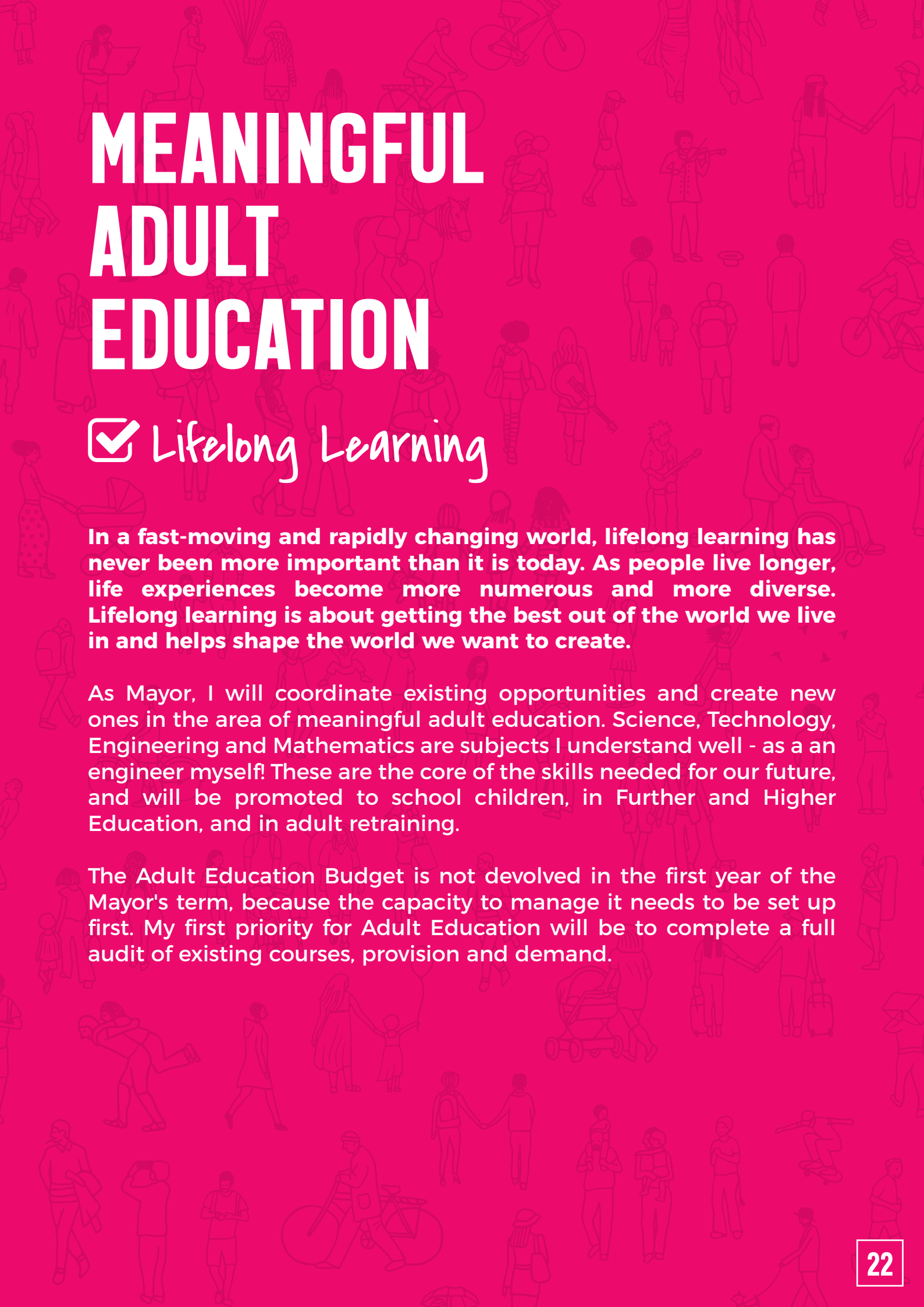
IMPROVE PLANNING - PLANT TREES AND PROVIDE GREEN SPACES

We don't just need more sustainable houses, we need more sustainable housing estates, where green space is designed in, along with active transport - walking and cycling - to local services and workplaces. Not all local authorities have the robust plans in place that they should, leading to unbalanced new-build developments with inadequate schools, health services, community buildings and access to public transport.

One worrying concern is that some new estates have inadequate electrical infrastructure - if in future electric vehicles and solar generation become the norm, these new build estates cannot handle the electrical load through their cables and substations. I will lead the Housing and Land Board to support local authorities to plan their housing developments to these high standards, including the requirement to have high capacity solar generation on all new homes.

A programme of tree planting will accompany house building. Trees provide a range of ecological benefits, removing carbon from the atmosphere, enhancing air quality and reducing the risk of flooding. Trees enhance the visual environment when situated in well designed green spaces and enhance shared places of leisure and recreation. I'll support schemes for children and communities to participate in tree planting, and support access to fruit trees to increase habitats for bees and other insects, and encourage urban food production.





MEANINGFUL ADULT EDUCATION

✓ Lifelong Learning

In a fast-moving and rapidly changing world, lifelong learning has never been more important than it is today. As people live longer, life experiences become more numerous and more diverse. Lifelong learning is about getting the best out of the world we live in and helps shape the world we want to create.

As Mayor, I will coordinate existing opportunities and create new ones in the area of meaningful adult education. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics are subjects I understand well - as an engineer myself! These are the core of the skills needed for our future, and will be promoted to school children, in Further and Higher Education, and in adult retraining.

The Adult Education Budget is not devolved in the first year of the Mayor's term, because the capacity to manage it needs to be set up first. My first priority for Adult Education will be to complete a full audit of existing courses, provision and demand.

TAILORED TO JOB CHANCES, LIFE OPPORTUNITIES AND CULTURAL LIFE

Lifelong learning equips people of all ages to acquire new skills and knowledge, and encourages a sense of enquiry that can increase job chances and enhance life opportunities. Linking learning to employment can help people find jobs, enhance their working knowledge or change occupation. This will include addressing low levels of employer engagement in training, particularly in low paid sectors; delivering greater access to training for those in work, such as negotiating time off for workers to attend training; making training more accessible to those seeking routes back into work, with distributed provision through community hubs and online training; and working with unions and employers to agree learning and retraining partnerships.

Lifelong learning, whether alone or in the company of others, is also about self development, equipping ourselves to take part in the widest form of cultural life. The Mayor's Authority will work with third sector organisations who provide skills and cultural learning opportunities, especially for those who have missed out on education earlier in life.

I'll boost not only formal training in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, maths), but also support public engagement events and lectures, in conjunction with our excellent regional institutions and professional bodies, such as our Museums, Universities, and the Mining Institute.

RUN TRAINING ON SETTING UP COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND CO-OPERATIVES

An important aspect of lifelong learning is to provide people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to set up their own community projects. Community hubs alongside education organisations will play a part in providing technological, financial and business training alongside legal and advocacy skills tailored to specific communities and the projects they wish to undertake. I intend to work with the Cooperative College to establish a campus of the Cooperative University, in order to provide continuing education and support for those wishing to set up worker or community owned businesses.

WORK WITH INDUSTRY, SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO PROVIDE CAREERS ADVICE

If elected, the Mayor's office will work closely with a range of organisations in industry and education, including the Local Enterprise Partnership, to promote the best possible careers advice to young people leaving school, college or university. People in work wanting to take their careers in different directions or change occupations will be advised on education, training, and financial support available and how to approach relevant institutions.

In schools I will evaluate the success of pilot projects where schools have had embedded careers advisors. If positive, I will roll this project out to significantly improve the liaison between schools and employers, to provide a better experience all round from workplace placements, so school children have a much clearer idea about work, can make more informed choices, and employers are better able to support young people when they start work.

I will involve trade unions to make sure young workers are aware of their legal rights before starting out in the world of work.



PROVIDE WORLD-CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

If elected Mayor I will, in conjunction with other organisations, tackle climate change immediately. Environmental education will be central to this.

I will recruit a team of dedicated educators, who can inspire and enthuse school students about environmental issues. This will include mentoring them in hands-on projects about environmental sustainability, from engineering projects such as designing and building a working wind turbine, to planning and maintaining a sustainable, high yield, urban garden. This will develop STEM skills alongside practical work skills, providing a sense of satisfaction and meaning for the participating school students, and develop the initiative that future employers love to see in young people. I will work to make sure this course gets accreditation points for university entrance. I will also make similar courses available to adults via community provision and partner organisations.

Environmental education is also about encouraging a considered respect for nature and how people can live sustainably. Environmental programmes will encourage critical awareness and promote the individual and collective development of creative solutions to environmental problems. Social and mainstream media will be utilised to create regional educational campaigns informing the public about environmental issues.



POLITICAL APPROACH

HOW I WILL DELIVER MY POLICIES

All of these policies are practical, pragmatic and achievable, and have a sound evidence base from similar successful projects elsewhere, or from academia - this is not about reinventing the wheel. We already spend money on banking, procurement, transport and housing - this is about spending it better, so more of the benefit stays here, in our region. In all cases, I will commission a due diligence report before fully committing funds to a project - the numbers have to stack up.

I WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS

The current North of Tyne area cuts our city region in half. My policy programme is ambitious, but we'll get even more benefit if we collaborate with the local authorities south of the Tyne - Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham. There is only one Mayoral candidate who can work closely and productively with all four of these Labour authorities - and I will invite them to participate as associate members of the North of Tyne Combined Authority.

In many cases, I would hope to be able to work collaboratively to deliver these policies across the whole of our region, North and South of the Tyne, and in Tees Valley. My record of working cross-party is exemplary - as a Newcastle City Councillor, the opposition backed my Community Wealth Building policy to the extent that they brought a motion to council and credited me for the policy.

Heading North, I will also work with the Scottish government, both for the benefit of North Northumberland Borderlands area, and to persuade central government and HS2 to invest properly in transport links from our region to Scotland.

I WILL WORK EFFICIENTLY

The Mayoral Authority does not come with a great deal of money - it doesn't begin to compensate for the scale of funding cuts we've experienced under austerity. By working with other bodies, we can leverage in much more funding - but we need shovel-ready schemes. For example, it's no good wanting more government transport funding unless you have a sound, costed plan to present to treasury officials. A reading of the manifesto will show I'm already working on delivering these policies. Where others have slogans, hopes or aspirations, I have detailed plans and have forged many of the necessary partnerships. We need a Mayor who can hit the ground running.

I WILL WORK INCLUSIVELY

And everything has to be about inclusion - community and democratic inclusion - whether that's the Climate Change Liaison Group, local communities getting to decide how they want their hubs, or school students getting to choose which environmental project they want to pursue.

For this reason, I'll establish a communications team to promote engagement with the public and stakeholders to ensure that everyone knows about the work of the Mayor, the plans, and has a chance to participate in shaping them. This will include traditional, online and social media, and direct community engagement, including a People's Survey and face-to-face events where you can talk directly to me.

Our national media is far too London focused. The communications team will support community and alternative media, and promote our region and local community stories. We'll engage with young people, such as school and student media, and support those studying media and journalism to get experience.

I WILL WORK TO RESPECT DIVERSITY

Diversity will run through all my work as Mayor - to the extent that I will establish and fund an Equalities Unit. This will be a team of paid dedicated staff whose aim is to undertake research, develop policy, and work up interventions to challenge inequality in all forms. The Equalities Unit will work with the public sector, businesses, trade unions, employers' organisations and civil society to address overt and institutional inequalities. This work will be informed by an approach to equalities that takes on board the lived experience of groups, focusing on how gender, ethnicity, disability, work, poverty and other aspects combine to create inequality.

The Equalities Unit will facilitate a bi-annual Equalities Assembly, chaired by the Mayor, at which communities and organisations will be invited to express and debate their concerns with the aim of finding new approaches to issues they are facing. Mechanisms will be established to ensure that the work of the Equalities Unit is mainstreamed into the policy making processes of the Mayoral Authority and across the region.

Under my leadership, the Mayor's authority will be a great place to work - so we attract talented and committed people to drive forward this manifesto. Staff will have training budgets, opportunities for secondment to learn best practice elsewhere, and workplace support to minimise stress and mental health pressures. We'll be a family friendly employer, with full paternity and maternity support. There will be zero gender pay gap at the Mayoral Authority.

I'm proud, as a Newcastle City Councillor, that it is ranked by Stonewall as the 5th best employer in the whole country. I'll sign up the Mayoral Authority to be a Diversity Champion.

I'll support the work of all those championing diversity and tackling hate crimes, including Show Racism The Red Card and Citizens UK.

I WILL WORK TO RESTORE PROSPERITY TO THE REGION

Taken in isolation, any of these five key policies is bold, ambitious and will make a real difference to the well-being of our region's people. Combined, they reinforce each other, and can give us the opportunity to be the most improved region of the UK - reducing inequality and improving everyone's life chances - that's my aim. It will take a Labour government to adequately restore lost funding to our creaking public services, but with a strong regional plan we can refocus our economy, and bring prosperity we can all be part of.



JAMIE DRISCOLL

Labour Candidate
for North of Tyne Mayor



 Labour

**#JD4
MAYOR**