

NORTH EAST



Come and join us
Let's help North East England win

Manifesto 2017

The North East Party
STANDING UP FOR NORTH EAST ENGLAND

A bold vision for the future in Durham, Northumberland, Tees Valley & far beyond

Passion and Pride

The North East Party is the best news for North East democracy in the past 100 years.
We stand up fearlessly and independently for the best interests of North East Communities.
We are developing from the grass roots, from the ideas of North East people, funded by our members.

We are proud and passionate, speaking out for freedom and equality, fair funding and democracy and excellent local services accountable to local people.
No other Party can match us for principles, no Independents for our commitment to the people and doing things well.

At the moment our communities suffer the highest taxation, inadequate public funding, highest unemployment and worst social deprivation in England. The North East Party wants North East communities to be the best in the world.

All we seek is fairness – the same powers, the same resources as other parts of the same country and fair UK taxes based on ability to pay.

Our commitment to devolution within the UK strengthens our commitment to citizenship of the UK. It is a fundamental part of the State's commitment to its citizens that pension obligations are honoured.

We want a pension covenant for the people of the UK; an indelible guarantee, endorsed by the Head of State to the protection of pensions and to respecting the lifetime contributions and aspirations of working people whether in the public, private, voluntary or community sector.

North East people have made a magnificent contribution to UK Armed Forces over many generations. It is fundamental to our approach to the United Kingdom that we seek the recognition that our uniformed services have been denied for too long. We would re-instate immediate pensions to all members of armed forces and extend all benefits of serving personnel to staff of emergency services.
Every community in North East England can display magnificent commitment to the defence of this country in wartime. We will restore the DLI Museum and use this as an inspiration for the development of regimental and armed forces museums wherever they are relevant to North East communities.

Properly funded devolution to North East England would ensure that our region has similar opportunities as Scotland to subsidise Higher Education. In North East England subjects where there is either a skills shortage or a high demand will receive a subsidy for up to 100% of tuition fees. The subsidy will decrease as the demand for the skill lowers. Subjects will be reviewed annually by an independent body who will decide on subsidies.

Graduates are finding it harder to secure employment in a tight jobs market where employers want experience. We seek to strengthen ties between Higher Education and Industry by offering a 'Graduate Employment Subsidy' where we can subsidise the wages of a graduate by 25% to encourage companies to take on more graduates. To be eligible the graduate must be in their first employment after university and the role must be related to their degree.

With control of Education policy under democratic devolution we would upgrade Personal Social and Health Education within the National Curriculum including core subjects such as mental health, finance, life skills, support networks and democracy.

With the introduction of a core democracy topic with PSHE we will reduce the voting age to 16.
We would also establish a North East Young Persons Advice Line developing the remit of this service to ensure that every 13-19 year old has access to an advisor for face to face meetings.

Under democratic devolution we would have the power to integrate National Health Services with Social Care and ensure that local communities are well-positioned to insist upon world class services for all. Properly funded devolution will provide for a holistic service, provided 24/7, supporting our ageing population at home or in care.

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The North East Party

North East People

The North East Party started from a public meeting in November 2013 and was officially formed in May 2014. We have 100 members from across the region, have won and lost elections and currently have 15 Town Councillors in Horden, Shotton Middleton in Teesdale and Peterlee where we have recently gained a majority on the Council with our approach epitomised by 'make a difference, make change, support the local community, support local growth, be accountable to the tax payer'.

The North East Party is committed to real devolution for North East England, to replacing 12 ineffective local authorities with one elected regional government and replacing the outrageously unfair Council Tax with a Fair Property Tax and Land Tax on large landholdings.

Under the North East Party proposals, North East people would enjoy public funding at the same level as our fellow UK citizens one step over the Scottish border; with £500 million extra in the pockets of North East people and £1 billion extra for public spending every year.

Under democratic devolution, every community would enjoy world class public services, with Parish, Town and Neighbourhood Councils working with key officials to develop, integrate, support and challenge in order to ensure that their community receives nothing but the best in education, health and social care, economic and community development.



Come and join us in the North East Party. Let's help North East England win.

Elections 2017

In May 2017 the North East Party will be standing candidates in the Tees Valley Mayoral Election and in County Council, Town and Parish elections in Durham and Northumberland as well as standing in any Parliamentary and local bye-elections that may arise.

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Subject to a referendum of all the people of North East England, the North East Party would sweep away the Tees Valley Mayor and both Durham and Northumberland County Councils and would empower Durham and Northumberland Parish and Town Councils in order to create the powerful, democratic, fairly funded devolution that will bring most benefit to North East England.

In the meantime we are seeking election to these bodies in order to promote excellent value for money, first class integrated public services and the much greater participation of local people in local decisions about the future of local communities.

The other Parties are content with an elected dictatorship where less than half the people use their vote and politicians, taking their cue from London-based parties or unelected officials, thereafter do what they like for the next 4 years.

The North East Party is standing for election, seeking a new era of honest, accountable politics where we engage local people and local communities in making local improvement and where we work relentlessly to achieve positive change.

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Local people not local dictators

In Durham and Northumberland the North East Party will :

- Treat people as citizens, worthy of respect, with the rights and duties to be well informed, listened to and be allowed to participate.
 - Create a radical new citizen focus within the cultures of local government. Work together with staff at all levels and trade unions to insist upon public accountability and service excellence.
 - Require all County Councillors to produce a fully consulted ward plan within their first 6 months in office, evidencing public consultation and public agreement on priorities. Ensure that ward plans become key documents for planning and development of land and key services with a review in October 2020.
 - Require County Councillors and key officials to meet with Town and Parish Councils and public on a monthly basis to present information about key services and projects in the area and answer questions.
 - Community Bounty and Local Referendum : Where public land is developed for private gain a minimum of 10% of the accrued profit should be made available to the appropriate Parish/Town Council for investment for public good. When the accrued profit exceeds £1million and the Community Bounty is more than £100,000 the Parish/Town Council should put a list of priority schemes to the vote at a local referendum.
 - Establish a local and regional property ownership database, compiling information about all land holdings over one acre, 'beyond a house and garden' in order to prepare for the imposition of a Land Tax once revenue Support Grant ends in 2020.
 - Reduce the number of Councillors and Chief Officers and spend savings on front line services.
 - Encourage greater transparency and actively fight corruption in politics.
 - Only pay Councillors allowances travel expenses which are based upon public transport use.
 - Draw up regional plans for an integrated North East public transport service and an expansion of the universal Pop card system
 - Dramatically improve road safety with 'Target Zero' a continuous safety initiative for the North East region. An information and statistics driven system with the goal of Zero Accidents it would seek to create shared spaces the envy of the world with speed limits on residential streets reduced to 20 mph where the people of the North East can thrive.
 - Clean up environmental nuisance and eyesores and support local voluntary and charitable effort through North East Citizenship, an entirely voluntary opportunity for every person to donate time and skills to the community.
 - Encourage children and young people to lead the development of local children's centres
 - Encourage a 'safer schools and neighbourhoods policy' which actively combats discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexuality, race, religion and differing ability, countering bullying and encouraging young people to discover and define their own identity in their own way and own time.
 - Protect children and help them all to thrive.
 - Raise awareness of the importance of good mental health for children, young people and adults : mental health studies in school curricula, teaching life skills in schools, running a home, shopping on a budget, much greater awareness of services and support available to support good mental health and well-being.
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We will sit down and work together with people, listening carefully and developing joint solutions to problems through effective consultation and a pragmatic approach valuing local knowledge and experience.

We don't have a Party line handed down by others. Our priority is to put the people of North East England first.

Northumberland

In Northumberland we will initiate plans to :

- Make Arch the County Council's Development Company transparently accountable to County Councillors and the public with a new participative and listening approach to the communities where it operates.
- Scrap the new Northumberland County Hall in Ashington and instead turn the building into a centre for local sustainable job creation making Arch, the County's Development Company accountable for the development of new links with Higher Education and technological research in order to create new jobs and opportunities.
- Work consistently and coherently to ensure Government support for dualling the entire length of the A1 and A69 in the interests of road safety and stimulating economic development
- Oppose the proposed Combined Authority of Northumberland, Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside with all its extra posts and extra expense and instead amalgamate the three authorities, saving money through increased efficiency, the reduction of senior officer and CEO posts and decreased use of civic buildings.

Durham

- NEP will continue to support and promote, at the highest level, the absolute need for a devolved region.
 - NEP will support the adoption of the Durham Local Plan ONLY when provided with assurance (from a recognised professional/organisation) that the plan is sustainable and achievable.
 - NEP will support a review of the land and buildings portfolio of the authority.
 - NEP will seek a review of any 'partnership' arrangements with private individuals or organisations, in relation to 'land banking' and house building – to include individual councillors.
 - We will seek to aggregate demand for goods and services at town/parish and County levels to ensure maximum value for money is achieved for the benefit of the tax payers of County Durham.
 - NEP will reverse the decision to close the DLI and identify an accessible alternative site within the County (which could be the former site) to display the original related artefacts and memorabilia. We will re-call any items which have been loaned to other museums and have them returned to their rightful place in recognition and honour of The Durham Light Infantry Regiment.
 - In light of the previous decision to sack and re-instate teaching assistants across the county (to be reviewed in September); NEP will mandate a full and transparent evaluation of all personnel in association with the relevant trade unions; to ensure remuneration levels are representative and commensurate to the roles undertaken within the authority and pay inequalities will be addressed.
 - NEP will demand the publication of all businesses in which Durham County Council has an interest or shareholding and this information will be clearly visible and accessible.
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- NEP will promote and welcome public participation/consultation in the decisions it makes on behalf of residents.
 - NEP will demand the implementation of a 'use of reserves' policy. Whilst recognising the local authority must have a reasonable level of financial reserves; however, cost cutting in frontline service areas is wholly unacceptable while the authority has the ability to add an additional £102million to the 'reserve fund' – which currently sits at over half a BILLION.

Tees Valley Mayoral Election 'Change and improvement'

Our Chairman John Tait was the first declared candidate for the election of a Mayor for Tees Valley
John says:

The creation of an Elected Mayor for Tees Valley may be a step in the right direction towards the democratically elected, powerful and accountable regional government that our area needs. In order to make the most of this historic opportunity it is essential that we each use our vote and use it well. It would be a complete waste to elect someone from one of the usual Westminster political parties who as usual would put the interests of London and their Party above the needs and voices of the people of Tees Valley.

If elected Mayor of Tees Valley I will use our common history, heritage and culture, linked together by the railways, the river, steel, chemicals and coal to pull together the sometimes competing strands in the area and build an integrated and forward looking economic strategy. Specifically, as elected mayor, I want to ensure the opportunities presented by the electrification of railway lines from Northallerton to Tees Port are used to ensure that the whole Tees Valley benefits from improved transportation. For example, extending electrification through East Cleveland will ensure communities such as Redcar and Saltburn will benefit from the broader scheme. Equally, the opportunity should be taken to improve Hartlepool's connections with the rest of Tees Valley and the Country.

Devolution is an opportunity to reduce the cost of local governance as well as making it more effective. I will use the office of Mayor to encourage the Boroughs to work together to provide integrated services, managed across boundaries and reducing the number of highly paid senior posts with savings used to improve front line services. Above all I stand for change, not more of the same and change is always a precondition of improvement.

Come and join us in the North East Party. Let's help North East England win.

Come and join us



Membership of the North East Party costs £5 per annum and members decide on policy development at monthly members meetings and through participation in drawing up our annual manifesto.

The North East Party Executive is elected annually at our AGM.

We have a developing Branch structure.

We have no Party Whips. North East Party Councillors support Party policy which has been democratically decided by our Party members. North East Party Councillors are positively encouraged to represent the people who elected them well, to listen and learn from their constituents and to feed back and be accountable to the people they serve rather than being told what to do by the Party.

Above all we believe in democracy. We encourage people to use their vote, even if it is not for us, even if it is only to tell those who are standing that no-one reflects their views. We encourage people to stand for election, even if it is against the North East Party because we believe that the people must decide.

We hope to win every seat for which we stand in these elections but we will count it a victory if more people participate than usual. We are confident in our bold, bright message and confident that as the very best, most principled, democratic party we will continue to grow.

We stand by what is right, stand up for honesty and democracy and proper devolution for the people of North East England. Our day will come and the people of North East England will win.

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