

Our North East



The Home of Real Opportunity



Kim
McGuinness

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Introduction

Where you live matters – it’s a huge part of what makes us who we are. But right now, where you are born can also hold you back. That’s why I’m standing to be the North East Mayor who makes this region the home of real opportunity.

I love the North East, it made me who I am. I grew up here, I studied here, I forged a career here and I’ve had the honour of representing the people here. My family are here and my husband serves in the RAF in Northumberland.

Like the more than two million people living in the North East, I choose to call this region home. I’m really proud of it and I see that pride reflected back at me when I talk to people here about our future. Despite that pride we’re famous for, the system punishes too many of us for choosing our North East life. Time and time again we see government prioritise London and the South for transport investment, job creation and decision-making.

Changing that system is the theme you’ll find running through my plan for a better North East.

This plan isn’t about me.

It’s about the people of this region having a voice and reversing England’s London-first approach.

If the first North East Mayor is to be a success, they have to be someone who stands for all that is good about our region, but never stops fighting for more.

As Mayor, I will commit to running the greenest public transport in the UK, with buses taken back under public control. Together we’ll create more well-paid local jobs, make sure everyone has a good home, reimagine our struggling high streets and put our proud North East culture at the centre of our economic plans.

These polices, and others in this manifesto, will create an infrastructure for opportunity

across the North East. To make sure everyone feels the benefit of these plans I’ll have a simple measure of success – reducing child poverty in the North East.

We need real devolution that allows us to seize power back from London and give the people of the North East a real say over their future.

That’s the way we step out of the shadow of Manchester or Leeds and show the world that the North East can be the real Northern powerhouse.

The elections on Thursday 2nd May offer a fresh start for the North East as we demand more power and control over our future. No more going to London to beg for funds or permission to act - and no more letting the Tories get away with giving us the crumbs from the table.

Let’s elect a mayor prepared to fight for our North East and radically change our place in the United Kingdom.

Kim McGuinness

“I love the North East, it made me who I am. I grew up here, I studied here, I forged a career here”





“I’m standing to be your first North East Mayor because I love our region. I think it’s the best place in the world and I think everyone here deserves to succeed”

About Kim

I’m standing to be your first North East Mayor because I love our region. I think it’s the best place in the world and I think everyone here deserves to succeed.

For me, it’s personal. I grew up on a council estate in the West End of Newcastle. Now, I live in Northumberland with my husband David, a serving RAF officer, and our dogs Errol and Iris. My Dad was a scaffolder. He worked on the shipyards, offshore and at Blyth Power Station but work wasn’t always stable. My Mam worked part-time in low paid, insecure jobs - we knew what it was like to live without enough under a Conservative government.

My parents shielded us from how hard it was and made sure we had a carefree childhood. The benefits system, then as now, was paltry and my Nana and Granda helped us – and the community on our estate always pulled together, because that’s what northern families and neighbourhoods had to do as a result of Thatcher and Major’s Tories.

With the Labour government in 1997 we felt the change. My teenage years were full of hope, with more opportunities and investment for our region. I became the first in my extended family to go to university, just like so many other working-class kids of my generation. I realised it matters who forms the government, and I learnt that life is better with Labour.

After a career in business and charities I am now proud to serve the North East as the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, and before that as a Councillor for Lemington and Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Public Health on Newcastle City Council.

As Northumbria’s PCC I’ve focused relentlessly on delivering for our region. I became the first in the country to make fighting the effects of poverty and deprivation central to our plans to prevent crime.

I’ve used money recovered from criminals to fund services in our hardest hit neighbourhoods, because removing barriers to opportunity is at the core of my Labour values.

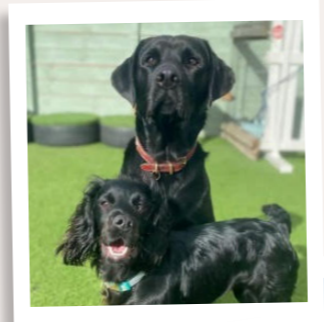
I’ve delivered hundreds more police officers, invested in young people, backed youth services providing healthy role models and funded the community hubs that are bringing back Sure Start by stealth. I’ve led a police force that has become one of the best in the country. I know how to use the limited funds the Tories give us to invest in communities. I know how to run a public service.

That’s why I’m standing with a plan to create real opportunity, to turn our rivers and ports into the home of green energy and to finally put our regional pride, our culture and sports, back on the global stage.

We need this plan because for too many working-class people, those dark Tory days are back. By the time of the next General Election, we will have seen 14 years of Tory chaos culminating in their cost-of-living crisis.

Our North East knows how to stand together in the face of an uncaring Tory Government in London.

With a new Labour North East Mayor we can write the next chapter on our own terms.





Our economic foundations

Our North East has incredible potential, but after years of Government neglect it is under-performing. Growth in Britain is not evenly spread.

As Mayor my investment decisions will be guided by the need to create well-paid, secure jobs across all our region. That means ensuring there are skilled jobs within reach for the majority of people, an economy that works for all. Ending disparity within the North East is just as important as ending the North South divide.

What do we mean by an economy that works for all?

The North East has the potential to lead the way in green energy, in advanced manufacturing, in biosciences, in media and creative industries and the digital economy. But for thousands of families, those employment opportunities are unachievable today. If we want people to feel the benefit of devolution, the skills we invest in and our job creation mix has to offer something for everyone.

I'll create thousands of highly qualified green jobs in those key sectors to fuel our economy, but I won't forget that not every job can or should be a senior, graduate level job.

This approach is crucial in the fight to end child poverty in our region. A family on the breadline today can't feed their kids with the promise of a highly-skilled digital future in a city centre miles away. They need help to improve their lives now.

That's what I'll work to create. I'll turbo-charge our advanced manufacturing base and make sure we lead in green energy, whilst working with local people to reimagine the high streets and public services that make our towns and villages a great place to live.

This approach - a focus on the people, jobs and local services that support us day to day - has been missing from the devolution story so far.

There is increasing evidence that the link between economic growth and increased productivity on one hand, and wellbeing and wage growth on the other is broken. Continually targeting growing GDP is failing to translate into a real wage rise for low-income workers.

I'll change that by ensuring the region's investment supports the Foundational Economy and that we deliver an inclusive industrial strategy. Focus here, on the day-to-day reality of employment in the North East, with funding backing this

approach, can reverse the deterioration of employment conditions for thousands and prove the benefits of devolution.

And instead of using the increasingly discredited measure of GDP when we look at how well our investments have done, it's time we started to look at household disposable income as an equally important measure.

If we do not get the foundations of the economy right, we will never deliver change on behalf of the people of the North East. We need to create new jobs in the sectors of the future but we cannot allow the glamour of the new to detract us from the needs of the many. We need to ensure the people who support our day-to-day life are a growing and well-paid part of our economy.

As Mayor I'll look to the example set by the Welsh Government in implementing policies which grow the Foundational Economy. I'll introduce a unique North East programme that supports local business, a green jobs revolution that is built around upskilling local workers, the apprenticeship and pre-apprentice training that invests in our young people and a New Deal for North East Workers to make sure the jobs we create work for the people doing them.



As Mayor I will deliver...



Green transport that works for all

Quite simply, the North East deserves better. I want to make the North East the best connected and greenest region in the UK. From the most environmentally-friendly buses to the largest electric vehicle charging network in the country and a joined-up walking and cycling network that helps people make an active, but safe choice. As Mayor I'll ensure we have a publicly-controlled public transport that works for passengers not profits, infrastructure that fits alongside the improved rail and road arteries we need to power our economy.

The 'Angel Network' – your buses back under public control

I will introduce a publicly controlled, green, joined up North East transport network for our villages, towns and cities. Whether you travel by bus, metro, train, cycle, walking - and even our ferry, accessibility will be at the heart. Our 'Angel Network' will rival that of London or Greater Manchester. The ambition is that our network will be the yardstick that all other networks are judged on.

By urgently bringing buses back into public control, I'll make sure you can have a say in the shape of our network, so buses go where we need them, not just where is profitable. Work will start on day one and we'll have public control of buses before 2028 – sooner if we're working with a Labour government.

To support people to choose public transport instead of their car, we need to get to the point where transport is free for young people. I'll ensure the popular 'Take the Kids Free' scheme is universal on buses and Metro in my first year as a first step towards free travel for all under-18s, which will be introduced when we take control of our buses. And because transport and the economy are both vital tools to creating opportunity, I'll introduce free travel passes for bus and Metro for those getting back in to work or training.

A fully integrated public transport system will mean you can make one payment, either through your card or an app, to travel from Bishop Auckland to Berwick, by whatever mode you choose. It will mean real-time data online and on a new North East travel app will mean you can better plan your journey. I will make the Pop Card currently available on Metro work across local rail services in the region within my first year in office. It will bring new routes and new, safe bus stops, a vital addition that is too often overlooked. It will join up the timetables for smoother journeys and ensure there is sufficient electric vehicle charging points and bike parking at key stations and interchanges. This is especially vital for services from rural areas where we need to ensure buses meet trains to reduce journey times. And it will connect public transport with key public services so you don't need a car to get home from hospital or college.

The North East will set the highest standards for the new fleet of green buses, and I'll work with Government to ensure that capital grants are available to take carbon out of the transport network.

As part of my transport mission I'm already campaigning for public control of train stations. Neither the operating companies nor this Tory Government put passengers first. We saw that with their failed plans to close ticket offices. Mayors should have the option of taking key train stations back into public ownership to run them as the public services that they are and to support local economic growth.

And while we prepare for a new era for local transport, I'll work with our councils to support and maximise existing bus routes, making the economic case for subsidising key services now rather than waiting until they disappear.

In Tyne and Wear we've seen historic under-investment in our public transport. This means safety simply isn't built in. I'll expand the Metro system into Washington first of all and then plan for future expansion. I'll prioritise safety in these plans. You'll see more gates at stations, as well as the staff

that can help passengers and make them feel safe.

“As Police and Crime Commissioner I've secured more than £1 million to make our public transport safer.”

As Police and Crime Commissioner I've secured more than £1 million to make our public transport safer. I've delivered and increased police presence, security staff on Metros and youth workers to prevent disorder before it starts. As Mayor I'll grow this. This is especially important for the one million women and girls in our region who have the right to feel safe when they travel. Harassment must be made a thing of the past on our network. I've taken steps and campaigned to challenge this before and I'll keep doing it. If we make it safer for women, we make it safer for everyone.

Infrastructure fit for purpose

I'll make sure we deliver the rail and road arteries we need for our region to thrive – the Leamside Line and Northern Powerhouse Rail in full to Manchester and Liverpool. We'll continue to develop the Northumberland line with more stations and future expansion plans. I'll back the much-needed Bowburn Bypass and continue the fight to finally secure the backing we need to dual the A1 to Scotland. Some of these projects deal with major national infrastructure and on this, I'll be the voice our region needs.

Our Metro system needs investment to expand, so I'll oversee projects such as the new Washington Loop extension while at the same time working with Government to secure the multi-million pound investment needed to upgrade the vital Metro signalling system.

Our region has some of the most sparsely populated parts of the country. In some areas it's simply not realistic to think public transport will be the only option. For those who can't always rely on a bus I want to charge up the North East. Working with industry and our councils, I'll deliver the modern EV charging infrastructure we need across our villages, towns and cities. We will introduce more on-street charging as well as supporting rapid charging hubs on major routes and visitor destinations.

I'll work to expand our cycle network and introduce an electric bike hire scheme

and appoint an Active Travel Champion to deliver improvements across our region, making sure bike and walking routes are joined up and active travel hubs are introduced. I'll work with cycling groups to help them design a region-wide campaign to get people out of their cars and on to their bikes -- we'll start by working with local authorities to make sure it's safe for families to walk or cycle to school.

Our public transport network only works if it works for everyone, so I'll request a full review of our accessibility on day one – ensuring the elderly and those with disabilities are no longer excluded. I would expect such a review to set out how we will make sure all bus and Metro stops are accessible to disabled people, for example, and that transport staff are provided with Disability Equality Training.



New deal for North East Workers

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I'll create thousands of new jobs for North East workers and make the North East the home of real opportunity.

Getting the foundations right

My vision for the North East economy is one where all sectors grow, not just the ones that make headlines. We have to invest in the everyday Foundational Economy, in the working-class jobs and local services which do so much to support families across our region.

That means more jobs for the local plumbers fitting new heating systems that make a house more environmentally friendly, for example.

It means training and support for the carers who enable our economy.

And it means investing in tourism so we create local jobs in our cities, on the coast and in the countryside.

As your Mayor I will ensure people know that working class manual jobs are just as important as the hi-tech manufacturing and creative jobs are to our North East.



Our Rivers and Ports Powering our Region

Working with our councils, I'll create thousands of well-paid green jobs, green housing, environmental projects and a new tourist economy on our rivers, ports and coastline. I'll do this by joining up our ports and rivers through a new Mayoral Development Corporation to boost our reputation as world leaders in renewable energy.

The offshore economy has the potential to once again drive the North East, and we can't afford to lose the lead while others secure investment. The sector is crying out for leadership.

To create a new generation of highly skilled, well-paid green energy and manufacturing jobs for the people of our region the Mayoral Development Corporation I create will have improved governance and accountability to co-ordinate investment along our rivers and ports in Blyth, Tyneside,

Sunderland and Seaham. We urgently need this focus to incentivise investment here, to unlock much-needed land for development and to take the practical measures needed to grow these vital industries in our region.

We can see the vast potential for economic growth here in many projects already championed by our council leaders. In Gateshead, for example, I'll work with Gateshead Council to make sure we build a new flagship convention centre along the river bringing investment, jobs and the long-term ability to showcase our region.

Along the banks of the rivers that define our region are extensive brownfield sites that could be turned into new affordable and social housing. I'll ensure we're making these places ready for development.

Our ports also play a vital role in supporting the region's electric car industry and supply chain. I will prioritise the automotive industry to attract more Investment Zones in our region and ensure that we are known globally for battery production.

Our ports have great growth potential, especially when it comes to our tourist economy, so I'll ensure our growth plans look at how we maximise these assets as a gateway to our region.



Skills

If we're to keep the energy industry growing, we need to ensure the world's biggest firms see the North East as a place to recruit high-skilled workers, both now and for future generations.

So I'll build on the success of our colleges and universities with a Green Energy and Engineering Super Academy, training a minimum of 1,000 people a year to take on the jobs of the future – that means local working-class kids breaking in to the careers normally reserved for graduates. To make sure young people see themselves leading this industry, I'll support the great businesses leading on this with a region-wide online campaign to inspire young people.

To create jobs across the whole region, I'll open dedicated North East Careers Hubs in villages and towns as well as cities to deliver skills training that people know how to access. I'll work with trade unions to set the standard for a great job and great training.

Skills and training are at the centre of our vision for creating real opportunity in the North East, and it is clear we need Job Centres to be devolved along with careers advice and skills training from a younger age.



These hubs will help to remove barriers such as travel costs and issues around housing, benefits and banking. I'll introduce mental health support workers and support with physical health in hubs, rather than penalise those who can't access work or training because of their health. People using them will be able to work with someone to create a plan, whether that be a route back to work or to change careers.

We've seen a similar model to this perform well in North Tyneside with the council's Working Well hubs. As Mayor I'll expand this success across our region and make our skills work truly accessible.

Support for all

We know that some people feel removed from the workforce later in their working life even when they have more to contribute, so I'll ensure we have a skills investment system that's open to all.

Alongside Careers Hubs, I'll ensure our adult skills training is fit for the future, working with business so we can flex quicker, and to

train those needed in the key sectors in our industrial strategy so businesses can help our region's economy grow.

Public transport is key to creating real opportunity. That means free travel for young people in education and training and those leaving care. And I'll create thousands of travel passes for jobseekers to get to interviews and afford their first weeks at work or in training.

Local jobs, green jobs

House building must be at the forefront of the region's efforts to tackle climate change and improve people's lives. As Mayor I will work with local leaders to set higher standards for new developments, so we build the greenest homes using modern methods to improve affordability and reduce emissions. If we want to make housing more energy efficient, cut people's bills and tackle climate change then we'll also need a major retrofit programme for social housing. This will create jobs locally. To make sure we have the skills in our region we'll establish a Green Construction Academy to train a local, skilled workforce.

Our green economy also has the potential to benefit from a local, social carbon offsetting fund. Many firms which are on the path to lower emissions offset their carbon cost by investing in tree planting or other measures, often not in the region, sometimes not even in the UK. A North East Social Carbon Offsetting network delivered through Net Zero North East will give businesses and organisations the opportunity to use this investment to help create green jobs, support green housing, biodiversity projects and innovation in the North East. This could mean the private sector funding solar panels on council houses that are fitted by a locally trained workforce. We'd provide well-paid green jobs and help households struggling with bills. We'll set high standards to ensure any firm using our services for carbon offsetting is genuinely on the path to greener business.

Cutting edge work taking place at the

Durham Energy Institute at Durham University is proving that our region could run on green energy. I'll back this work to create a green energy opportunity map showing how, with the right investment and commitment, we can as a region transition to locally produced green energy.

Under my leadership the North East will lead the UK as a green economy. Our response to the climate crisis will be built on greener jobs, better transport and warm homes. That means protecting jobs as we decarbonise and transition to green energy. My plan for a new Mayoral Development Corporation will boost our reputation as world-leaders in offshore wind and green hydrogen. I'll work with an incoming Labour Government to ensure our North East is central to our national energy action plan, as we upgrade our energy supply to be greener, more secure and meet future demand. I'll ensure a just transition that considers increases, not reduces jobs. I'll support business to generate their own power, and those communities that wish to develop their own local renewable energy projects.



“Skills and training are at the centre of our vision for creating real opportunity in the North East”

Until then, these dedicated hubs will ensure everyone, whatever their starting point, can access training and development. The system will be simplified with a new central website so people know what opportunities are available to them and how to access training, jobs or advice.

3 Good quality, green homes

Our region is an outstanding part of the world – and everyone here should live in an outstanding home.

Renting made better

For many people, a good home is a rented home. We need to be bolder about standing up for renters.

To make renting better for more people we'll set the standard for a good home and I'll push for the power to seize properties from irresponsible landlords and hand them to councils and social housing companies. To make sure failed landlords don't simply move on to another property and make life a misery for others, I'll work with our councils to create a landlord and letting agent fines-and-prosecutions database.

We shouldn't have to ask London for permission to defend someone from a rogue landlord in Blyth. And few things

providing a good home for families.

Social housing should be the gold standard and working with councils and social landlords we'll make sure it is. That means retrofitting more homes to make them cheaper and warmer, it means floor coverings and a bed for every child.

A plan to build

A good home is the bedrock of good health and success. As Mayor I'll work to ensure everyone has a good home, not just those who can afford to buy an expensive house. Right now, there are 40,000 people on the waiting list for a home in our region. I'll support our councils to make sure the land required is ready and available and we're able deliver the next generation of affordable and social housing because more people should have access to a great social home.

In the coming years we need to build thousands of new homes on brownfield land across our region. With local authorities I'll develop a Regional Spatial Plan that maps what housing, transport links, job creation opportunities and green space is needed and where and we'll work together to deliver.

I want homes built with the support of the Mayor to set the standard for what a new home can be. We will build the greenest most sustainable homes in the UK and ensure we are retrofitting existing social properties to make our existing housing stock greener, warmer and, cheaper to run.

I'll ensure those most in need of retrofitting come first, with priority work for families in hardship, those with disabilities and those retired households struggling with bills.



Local spaces matter

People should have more access to local green space to support their health and wellbeing. This means new developments will have to deliver beyond the minimum requirement. I'll also work with our councils to ensure the North East is planting more trees than it cuts down.

We all need to commit to tackle the climate emergency head on. By using the latest developments in technology, respect for nature and a commitment to creating and preserving biodiversity our housing goals can be compatible with our climate change goals.

As well as creating great places to live, house building schemes provide the opportunity to grow our regional economy. Net zero targets, affordable energy projects and new, green methods of construction will all need a skilled local workforce. As far as I'm concerned, our housing targets are intrinsically linked to our skills and job creation plans.

I'll deliver thousands of houses on brownfield land by the end of my first term, but to make the best possible impact we need more local control over how we spend money on housing. I'll lobby hard to ensure the funds controlled by Homes England are handed to the Mayor and elected representatives in the North East so we here can choose how best to improve people's lives.



Stronger neighbourhoods

In too many parts of our North East, life has got harder and devolution means nothing. We've seen 14 years of Tory austerity attacking public services and more and more decisions taken "for us" by Government in London.

It's time we reversed that and said where you live matters. As Mayor I'll invest in all parts of the North East, not just city centres.

I'll do that because it's how we'll reverse our region's child poverty crisis, a crisis that should shame this Tory Government.

Fighting child poverty

Child Poverty has increased as wages have declined. The most recent figures show that almost 190,000 children live below the poverty line – that's more than a third of our region's young people.

Incredibly, that's a 51,000 increase since 2015.

If a bank failed, we'd rightly hear Tory ministers pledging action. When these child poverty figures emerged there was complete silence from officials in London – we're simply too far North for them to care.

So, just like we have under previous Tory governments, our region has to unite and help each other.

I'll be the Mayor who measures every investment decision against its impact on child poverty and who measures our success in the number of children we lift out of poverty.

The long-term solution to child poverty is structural but there are big things we can change; we need more well-paid jobs in the Foundational Economy, we need to make sure we support households to maximise

their income and we need better early childhood services.

Educational and other outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds are critical and largely influenced by early childhood experiences. That's why the last Labour government introduced Sure Starts, and why it was criminal that the Tories closed them down.

I want the North East to see a renewed approach to childhood support as a way of tackling poverty and removing barriers to work, as part of a regional childcare strategy. I will bring back Sure Start style services. From support for new parents near home, to after-school clubs that deliver pre-apprenticeship training, to youth clubs and music lessons for those in the hardest hit neighbourhoods, we'll support families and create real opportunity.



Support for young people

If we invest in specialist youth provision we can hand young people employment skills, while supporting families who cannot afford to work and pay for childcare.

Young people in the North East have borne the brunt of austerity and the pandemic. Since the Tories took over in 2010, more than £32m a year has been cut from youth services in Northumbria alone. There are teenagers with no idea what a youth club is. In the hardest hit neighbourhoods, criminal gangs prey on kids with no healthy role models.

As Police Commissioner, I've made crime prevention a priority, especially when it comes to diverting young people away from criminality. As Mayor, I'll continue this work to ensure the North East does not suffer the consequences of a lost generation.

I will fund special after school clubs that give a pre-apprenticeship training to young people and offer a fun way to learn new skills. For this, we'll need new powers and funding from Government to train younger people, not just those over 19. I'll lobby for this to secure our young people's futures.

Support for families

I'll remove the financial barriers to work faced by too many, mainly women, by trialling a Mayor's Childcare Grant for those getting back into work or skills training. This will transform lives, but will enable many people who are currently either blocked from the workplace or underemployed to maximise their potential and that's great for the economy too.

A strong economy that works for all is the key to ending child poverty, and that means spreading the benefits of devolution to all parts of our region. In some homes, the cost of getting a job outweighs the benefits.

From child care to public transport, even just learning new skills – sometimes the path to a good, well-paid career seems overwhelming.

So I'll change that.

I'll make sure training programmes are accessible and built around the needs of women, carers and families and delivered in places they're able to get to safely and learn comfortably in. When they're ready to look for work, I'll make sure the support is in place to help with confidence, clothes and travel.

It is only by radical intervention in the lives of these hardest hit households that we will ensure all parts of the North East benefit from our devolution journey.

We have to accept that for some families more work just simply can't be the answer. I'll expand schemes run with local authorities that put benefits support in schools across our region and into early years settings to make sure we aren't leaving people struggling.

Iconic but empty

At too many locations across the North East, high streets are closing down and community focal points disappearing.

As part of my plan to ensure all of our region feels the benefit of devolution,



I'll create a new High Streets Commission to advise the Mayor on the holistic changes we need to support towns and villages, and ensure we all get the best out of them.

That will include looking again at what services and housing can be built around our high streets and public transport network to help them thrive, as well as the support for the small businesses, entrepreneurs and community organisations that keep our local economy going.

We know how important our high streets are for more than just the economy – they are often home to community hubs which are essential focal-points for families and the elderly.

That's why I'll work to devolve power down to our communities and support their efforts to revitalise high streets.

I'll take the lead from organisations that work, such as the Sacriston Youth and Community Project which runs after-school and holiday clubs in a former Co-Operative building. This service supports the community and removes barriers to work, especially for mothers. We'll make this support integral to our job creation plans. Community ownership like this should be more widespread in our region. I'll work with local leaders to make sure it is.

The Co-Operative Party are fighting for more powers to help communities save high streets and services. I'll back those efforts with a local Community Infrastructure Fund to make it easier for communities to take control of public services such as leisure centres and libraries or to save empty public spaces and create local jobs and opportunities.





great north run®

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TalkTalk
For Everyone
GYM COFFEE
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1926 - 2022

Our Northern voice matters. It's time we built an economy around it. For too long, culture and the arts have been viewed as an add-on, something to be cut when times are hard. But from music to sport, theatre to the big screen, our region has a creative genius that can power job creation at all levels of the economy. We will consign the days of the struggling artist to the history books.

Culture can and will create jobs and I want that opportunity to extend across the region. Talent is classless, but not everyone gets to develop it. I'll ensure opportunity reaches all. We are rightly proud of our Northern identity, now it's time we got back on the national stage.

5

World-class arts and culture

Music

Music can do for the North East economy what comedy did for Edinburgh. I'll end the days of people thinking they need to go to London to make it in the creative economy.

As Mayor I'll grow the music industry in our region. I'll back region-wide music events that drive the economy, especially at those local music venues that keep the scene thriving. And I'll ensure the skills budget is used to equip young people with a career, be that in event management or digital publicity or any of the many technical behind-the-scenes jobs that keep the music industry going. I'll back the organisations that help us attract major labels and production companies to our region so the talent that thrives here can stay here.

America has seen the phenomenal success of South by Southwest, showcasing skills from music, literature, production and so much more. We can replicate that success at a North by Northeast level.



Screen

I'll ensure the new, world-class film studio being built in Sunderland gets the full backing of the North East Mayoral Combined Authority and I'll ensure it is our unique Northern voice that powers its films



and scripts. I'll support the skills for the 8,450 creative, technical and foundational jobs that will be created there. Because if you want to work in a thriving, global industry you should be able to do it here.

In addition to that, I'll back plans to boost our economy by £88m in my first term by creating 1000 film jobs.

The value of such investment is clear. The North East production fund is currently worth just £3.8m over 5 years. In Northern Ireland they have seen production companies put £330m million directly into the region's economy since 2018, and it's growing. They put in £17m last year and they're getting back hundreds of millions of pounds.

Our North East was once a regular feature of cinema and television, and yet we lost that representation. We'll get it back and grow jobs as a result.

Writing

Almost the entire British publishing industry is in London, with people from London too often deciding if a northern writer deserves support. Whether it's a novel or the next Netflix hit, I believe our region should have its creative voice heard. I'll ensure we have a thriving creative sector and invest in the support services which develop talent and

skills including writing, publishing, talent, and creative content commissioning and production.

I'll work with the sector to widen participation by creating more opportunities for people of all ages to advance their creativity and literacy skills, from young talent in our classrooms to 'older but new' writers.

And I'll ensure we showcase this work through awards, festivals and events.

Tourism

Tourism jobs are a key part of our foundational economy. In our countryside, along our coast or in our cities, tourism means jobs at the local level, so I'll ensure tourism is a key part of our growth plans.

And to power it further I'll lobby for a new tourism levy, by adding just £1 a night to the bill of those visiting and staying in our region, we'll fund the culture, events and infrastructure that will bring in more visitors.

As Mayor I'll back the events and festivals which bring tourism to our region. But I'll also ensure we're promoting the North East nationally and globally and growing the infrastructure we need to accommodate visitors to our beautiful region, including hotels and accommodation, transport and information.

And I'll make the green economy a feature of our tourism plans, by substantially increasing the amount of forest cover in the region while recognising the importance of our farming economy and the need for food security.



The next steps...

The people of the North East need more of a say over how key decisions are taken. Even with the devolution currently available, far too many decisions about the North East are made by people in London.

As Mayor I'll fight for real devolution and a new era of real political power being held by the people of the region, implemented via the ballot box.

I believe we need to end the days of unelected quangos such as Homes England or Arts England picking the winners and losers in our region.

I believe the North East should have full control of post-16 education, careers services and Job Centres.

And I believe mayors should be able to come together and kick out failing train operators while also taking control of key train stations.

But this is just the start. We need a fundamental rethink in how we as a country hand back political agency to the villages, towns and cities which feel removed from London and power.

Labour's Taking Back Control Bill will be a crucial step towards this, setting the country on the next steps of its devolution journey.

I'll be the Labour Mayor who leads the way in showcasing the benefits of devolution under a Labour Government.



Ways to keep in touch



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 You can follow me on Twitter [@KiMcGuinness](https://twitter.com/KiMcGuinness)

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**Kim
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