

**Mayoral Area:** West Yorkshire

**Party:** Liberal Democrat

**Candidate name:** Stewart Golton

**Twitter:** @GoltonStewart

**1. *If elected, how will you champion social workers in your area?***

By pressuring the Government to finally publish its Social Care Green Paper with its preferred proposals for reform and support of the future care system, so that it can be scrutinised and challenged before implementation as the basis for a sustainable care future. The role of Social Workers as creative professionals delivering bespoke solutions to individual members of the community will need to be recognised and enhanced in this model. In the meantime I will continue to offer my perspective as a Local Government Association Peer to emphasise this practice when delivering peer reviews to local authorities.

**2. *Directly-elected Mayors can use their position to effectively champion national issues on behalf of their constituents. If elected, will you use your influence to raise issues relating to social work with national Government?***

Yes, specifically in the area of Adult Education that the mayor has jurisdiction over, as we need to ensure that the service has access to the correct number of qualified social workers through universities, but also the associated careers that support social workers to allocate clients to suitable services. I will also challenge local authorities in their development of fit for purpose local health and social care economies.

**3. *If elected, will you (when suitable) make representations for the investment in social work recruitment, education, and retention initiatives?***

Yes

**4. *If elected, will you promote equality and diversity in your area?***

Yes

**5. *If elected, will you seek to tackle poverty and the causes of poverty in your area?***

Yes

**6. *If elected, will you seek to tackle homelessness and the causes of homelessness in your area?***

Yes

**7. Please write no more than 300 words on what you would like our members to know about your candidacy.**

“Our experience of Covid on top of the Climate Change Emergency calls for a complete refocus around the areas of transport, housing and economic development and adult education that the Mayor has responsibility for.

I will use my 20 years experience in local government to work with councillors and communities to develop ‘15 minute neighbourhoods’ to revive our town, district and village centres to harness the potential of homeworking to rebalance economic growth in our region.

I will end public transport spending that allows private bus companies to increase their profits, whilst doing little to address unreliability and rising prices for passengers. Let’s get more investment in local bus routes, and safer walking and cycling in our neighbourhoods instead of the obsession with city centre prestige projects.

HS2 is an overpriced white elephant, and I will not accept that our region should wait for the delivery of HS2 before we can benefit from better local rail services. I will work to get more carriages and greater frequency on our routes, and deliver the transpennine connectivity we deserve through Northern Powerhouse Rail.

If we are to tackle the Climate Change Emergency, we need to grow green jobs for the future. The West Yorkshire rural economy has been overlooked for too long. Let’s get more of our food grown locally, help farmers generate more renewable energy, increase our tree cover, and develop local leisure tourism. Let’s get more zero carbon housing built by local building companies developing homes that people can afford. We need to encourage new jobs outside of city centre offices and warehouse parks. The care of our vulnerable and elderly cannot be left to big corporate players, and I hope to develop a quantum growth in small and micro enterprises in community care.

Adult education will be a key influence on our local economic performance emerging from a Covid recession exacerbated by Brexit. I will endeavour that local education providers are prepared for the retraining of adults without work, and that capacity is increased to deliver qualifications in the green growth economy areas such as arboriculture, renewable energy, and construction.

I will also work with Councils to develop a scheme to maximise the confidence of parents with under developed literacy and numeracy skills to enable them to best support their children’s education, and ultimately, their adult outcomes.

This relates directly to my priorities on Crime and Policing that also fall into the jurisdiction of the elected Mayor. My overriding priority will be forward looking; to try and insulate as many

young people as possible from our region from being sucked into the criminal justice system in the first place. As mentioned above, I will work with local authorities to support young people to achieve at school, as children with more qualifications have more options. A supportive home environment must also be backed up by a safe community environment, and my oversight of West Yorkshire Police will concentrate on rebuilding the delivery of community policing, and tackling adult neighbourhood anti social behaviour effectively.

You will note that much of this is drawn in broad brush strokes. That is because the success of all of these schemes are dependent on finessing the detail to suit each community. I commit to working with partners to develop solutions that are bespoke and shaped by the communities they serve. That is my commitment as a Liberal Democrat mayoral candidate.”