



Wiltshire Deserves Better

Wiltshire Labour
Manifesto 2021

Wiltshire's Residents Deserve Better



When I was first elected to the former Wiltshire County Council in 1989 the Council delivered many good, directly managed, essential public services, that have since been privatised, sold off or lost. Following Local Government re-organisation in 1997 the controlling Lib-Dems and Conservatives began the push for more privatisation.

The aim seemed clear. It was to move the Council from being a “Provider” to becoming a “Commissioner” of public services regardless of the impact on the quality of the service, and the pay and conditions of the people providing the service.

The Lib-Dems already had a track record of selling off Council Housing stock, and they continued on that path with Adult Social Care - selling off Council Residential Care Homes and breaking-up the Council Home Care Service. The Conservatives took these policies relentlessly forward privatising Grounds Maintenance Services, Catering Services, Cleaning Services, Highway Management & Maintenance Services and most recently Refuse Collection Services.

By every available measure, the quality of those privatised public services has declined under that leadership and policy. Labour will end this dogmatic agenda of ever more privatised council services and assess each contract at its renewal point to determine where the best value lies for Wiltshire residents.

We are committed to a long-term programme to rebuild the quality and range of public services, create a dynamic and environmentally sustainable economy, and ensure open and accountable local government. To achieve this we will work in partnership with ethical and non-profit organisations and engage with the people of Wiltshire to set the priorities for change.

Cllr Ricky Rogers

Wiltshire Council Labour Group Leader

CONTENTS

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE LABOUR GROUP LEADER RICKY ROGERS	2
SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION	6
CHAPTER ONE CREATING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY	7
CHAPTER TWO CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND THE ENVIRONMENT	13
CHAPTER THREE EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES	20
CHAPTER FOUR MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS	26
CHAPTER FIVE DELIVERING CARE	32
CHAPTER SIX GETTING WILTSHIRE MOVING	37
CHAPTER SEVEN KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE	42
CHAPTER EIGHT CULTURE AND LEISURE	47
CHAPTER NINE OUR VISION FOR MORE OPEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT	51



SUMMARY

A decade of austerity under Conservative/Lib-Dem and Conservative governments has led to deterioration in public services, made worse by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Wiltshire deserves better.

A Labour-led Wiltshire Council will focus on improving services for residents, making our county fairer, more inclusive and enterprising, creating opportunities and encouraging participation from all.

This Manifesto sets out nine essential steps to delivering our vision for Wiltshire:

1. **Creating a Dynamic Local Economy** – a local economy that works for everyone allowing us to recover and grow together.
2. **Climate Emergency & The Environment** – action to address the Climate Emergency, the county's most serious challenge.
3. **Education & Youth Services** – giving every child and young person a chance of a better future.
4. **Meeting Local Housing Needs** – delivering homes that people can afford.
5. **Delivering Care** – social care that really cares, providing dignity and respect to our most vulnerable and supporting carers.
6. **Getting Wiltshire Moving** – creating greener transport options and improving road safety.
7. **Keeping Our Communities Safe** – reinstating neighbourhood policing to better serve communities.
8. **Culture & Leisure** – getting the best out of leisure, helping the creative sector recovery from the pandemic.
9. **Open Local Government** – open, transparent, accessible local government with meaningful consultation.

The programme set out in our Manifesto is ambitious for Wiltshire, but also pragmatic, achievable and essential. As far as possible, each part of our programme has been costed and is affordable.

The Coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the problems of inequality in our society. Action is imperative. Failure to act will only allow inequalities to get worse.

Labour has the vision to help Wiltshire, not just to recover, but to build back better and fairer.



INTRODUCTION

Since 2010, successive Conservative/Lib-Dem and Conservative governments have cut the funding of local government to the bone. This has significantly reduced the ability of local authorities to provide much-needed local services and respond to crises such as the Coronavirus pandemic.

Nevertheless, Labour-run councils up and down the country have shown that by innovating they have been able to maintain and improve the services they provide to local communities.

Wiltshire Labour recognises that resources are scarce. In this manifesto, we have therefore set out a programme that is ambitious about tackling the problems that local people face, but also pragmatic, with realistic approaches that place a strong emphasis on working in partnership with local businesses and the voluntary sector.

Under-pinning this programme are sensible proposals, set out in Chapter 1, to help the Wiltshire economy recover from the devastating effect of the Coronavirus pandemic. The growth that these policies will deliver will raise increased revenue to fund the modest spending commitments made.

At the Wiltshire Council Elections on Thursday 6th May 2021, the residents of Wiltshire have a choice: more of the same, or a Labour-led council that will:

Create a dynamic economy in Wiltshire that works for everyone.

Investment in economic growth and secure jobs throughout the county, building the wealth of communities in Wiltshire to allow us to recover and grow together.

Deliver a housing programme that is truly affordable.

Building at least 500 council homes each year, providing homes that local people can afford.

Achieve a greener, cleaner Wiltshire by 2030.

A serious, ambitious and achievable agenda to tackle the climate emergency, building towards the goal of making Wiltshire net zero carbon by 2030.

Provide services across Wiltshire that consider the needs of all.

Ensuring that policies and services across Wiltshire are able to meet the needs of and are accessible to all, especially those within our society whom COVID-19 has hit hardest.

Work for and with the people of Wiltshire.

Encouraging representation and involvement from all parts of the community.



CHAPTER ONE

CREATING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

CREATING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

Our local economy is built on the hard work of people across many different sectors, many of which have had a tough time in recent years and especially during the recent Coronavirus pandemic. We believe that Wiltshire Council needs to take a lead in helping our local economy recover.

We want an economy in Wiltshire that works for everyone. Whether it's tourism, agriculture, manufacturing or services, we want it to be dynamic, green, co-operative and skilled.

DYNAMIC

With targeted investment in growth, jobs and tourism in every town across Wiltshire.

GREEN

Growing the green economy and building a better environment.

COOPERATIVE

Making our enterprise agency work for all of us and bringing businesses together to do more.

SKILLED

Building training and supporting education providers to deliver the knowledge and skills that people need.

LABOUR WILL

- Invest in economic growth throughout Wiltshire, attracting inward investment and supporting businesses to provide good quality local employment.
- Support the Green Economy to create jobs and meet our Climate Emergency commitments through renewable energy and energy conservation.
- Deliver small-scale enterprise parks and business centres through local plans to support local employment.
- Deliver the support local businesses need to thrive in a competitive environment.
- Build Wiltshire's reputation as a tourist destination, bringing investment into the area.
- Help local communities to rejuvenate their high streets and retain vital local services.
- Ensure that Wiltshire Council procures goods and services to support local businesses.
- Invest in continuing education, training and skills to help local people get good secure jobs, including further and higher education.
- Support the MoD and military families as major contributors to the Wiltshire economy.
- Take a lead as a responsible employer, promoting jobs that provide good pay, secure conditions and training opportunities.

CREATING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

INVESTMENT IN ECONOMIC GROWTH

Labour will establish a Wiltshire Investment Fund. This will be delivered through a local Enterprise Investment Bank, to provide capital investment and training, and to champion the growth of community businesses and cooperatives.

We want a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) that is more accountable, and we believe all our communities should benefit from the millions of pounds spent in our region, not just those areas chosen by unelected LEP committees.

Labour will complement the large LEP growth areas (currently concentrated on the transport corridors of the A4, A350 & A303) with mini growth zones in every town. As large companies already do in the current growth areas, small businesses throughout the county will be able to access advice, support and funding to grow and to employ more people.

SUPPORTING THE GREEN ECONOMY

Labour will extend Wiltshire Council's investment in renewable energy, and will implement energy conservation and energy generation measures on all public buildings and on council houses, as well as develop renewable energy projects on council-owned land.

We'll ensure that the planning framework positively supports renewable energy developments. We will work with local communities and businesses so that these are in the right places to mitigate intrusion on the landscape. We'll work with parish and town councils to set land aside in neighbourhood or town plans for green energy generation.

Wiltshire Council must play an active role in providing expert advice and assistance in accessing funds for community energy initiatives to community groups, parish and town councils. So we'll establish a team to do just this. We'll also ensure that Wiltshire Council provides an accessible framework to promote awareness of home energy efficiency grants and helps to link homeowners with local suppliers.

PLANNING FOR LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

We will help provide the right planning framework to support the development of small-scale local enterprise parks and business centres, and work with partners, such as the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, to help establish these to provide the necessary spaces to support local employment and economic development.

Labour will ensure that land set aside for such commercial or employment use is marketed thoroughly by Wiltshire Council and the LEP before it is given over to more housing.

CREATING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

Ultra-fast broadband rollout for rural businesses is essential. No part of Wiltshire should be left behind.

Wiltshire has enormous potential to be marketed as a strong and recognisable brand. Labour will work with partners and local enterprises to establish a “Wiltshire” brand that consumers can trust, based on product quality, environmental sustainability, animal welfare standards and responsible employment. This will help promote and market Wiltshire produce and products (and reinforce the county’s image as a tourism destination).

We’ll bring together food producers who want to work with each other to establish a Wiltshire Local Food Network. This mutually owned co-operative, sharing the costs of marketing and distribution, will bring much needed scale and support to producers.

TOURISM

Tourism is a significant part of our local economy but could potentially play a much bigger role. We’ll increase funding support to ‘Visit Wiltshire’ to promote tourism. In return, we’ll also expect them to support town and parish councils in promoting tourism at a local level.

Labour will ensure that Wiltshire Council plays its part in promoting Wiltshire as a strong brand through its websites, roadside signage and public buildings. We’ll also ensure that Wiltshire Council plays an active role in working with partners to identify and create new developments and attractions, and to support those developments through the planning process.

We’ll support museums, the arts and festivals through increasing direct grants and also support them in bidding for funding from other agencies. This will not only help promote Wiltshire as a destination for leisure tourism but will also benefit local residents and help rejuvenate our town centres.

We will develop, expand and promote the network of trails, footpaths and cycle routes within the county, and support the promotion of active leisure tourism.

We will work with partners to promote all of Wiltshire as an attractive tourist destination. We will offer a ‘Wiltshire Card’ to provide tourists with free bus travel and free (or discounted) admission to attractions and cycle-hire.



CREATING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Town centres remain important as places where people shop, use services and socialise. Where successful, they attract investment and make people feel positive about where they live. Labour will ensure the regeneration of our town centres by supporting high streets, cultural, social and arts spaces.

To support our high streets, we'll transfer ownership of Wiltshire owned retail units to town councils so they can implement local lettings strategies, and support pop-up shops and arts initiatives. We'll support local Community assets such as pubs and shops through rate relief and planning protection and we'll actively promote the community's right to buy these assets if they are at risk.

RETAINING INVESTMENT IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

With an annual budget of £344M, Wiltshire Council is a major purchaser of goods and services within the County. A review of council spending for 2019/2020 showed that over 40% of that spend leaks out of the county and neighbouring areas. Much of this spending on goods and services could be provided within our local area, creating local demand and supporting local firms.

Following the example of Preston City Council, we'll put in place an initiative so that Wiltshire Council buys more goods and services locally. This will support local businesses and suppliers and will help the Wiltshire economy to thrive. We'll link up with other organisations in the county, such as Wiltshire Police and the Ministry of Defence, to encourage them to do the same.

CHAPTER ONE

CREATING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

INVESTING IN CONTINUING EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS

Labour will champion further investment in Wiltshire College building on the recent improvements made to the Lackham, Salisbury, Trowbridge and Chippenham campuses. We'll also work with the Further Education sector in Wiltshire and local employers and partners to ensure that the right vocational courses and apprenticeships are provided to support local growth sectors.

We will work with the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP to expand the availability of Higher Education in Wiltshire, through the further development of Wiltshire College's offering and potentially through partnership with an existing university institution to establish a local campus.

We will support apprenticeships for young people and those seeking a change in career and we will work with schools and colleges to improve the links between themselves and future employers. We'll use Wiltshire Council's network of 30 county farms to provide opportunities for new entrants into the farming sector and to support the promotion of best farming practice.

SUPPORTING THE MILITARY

Labour recognises the significant role that the military plays in Wiltshire's economy, both the Ministry of Defence (MoD), as a major employer and landowner, and forces personnel and their families.

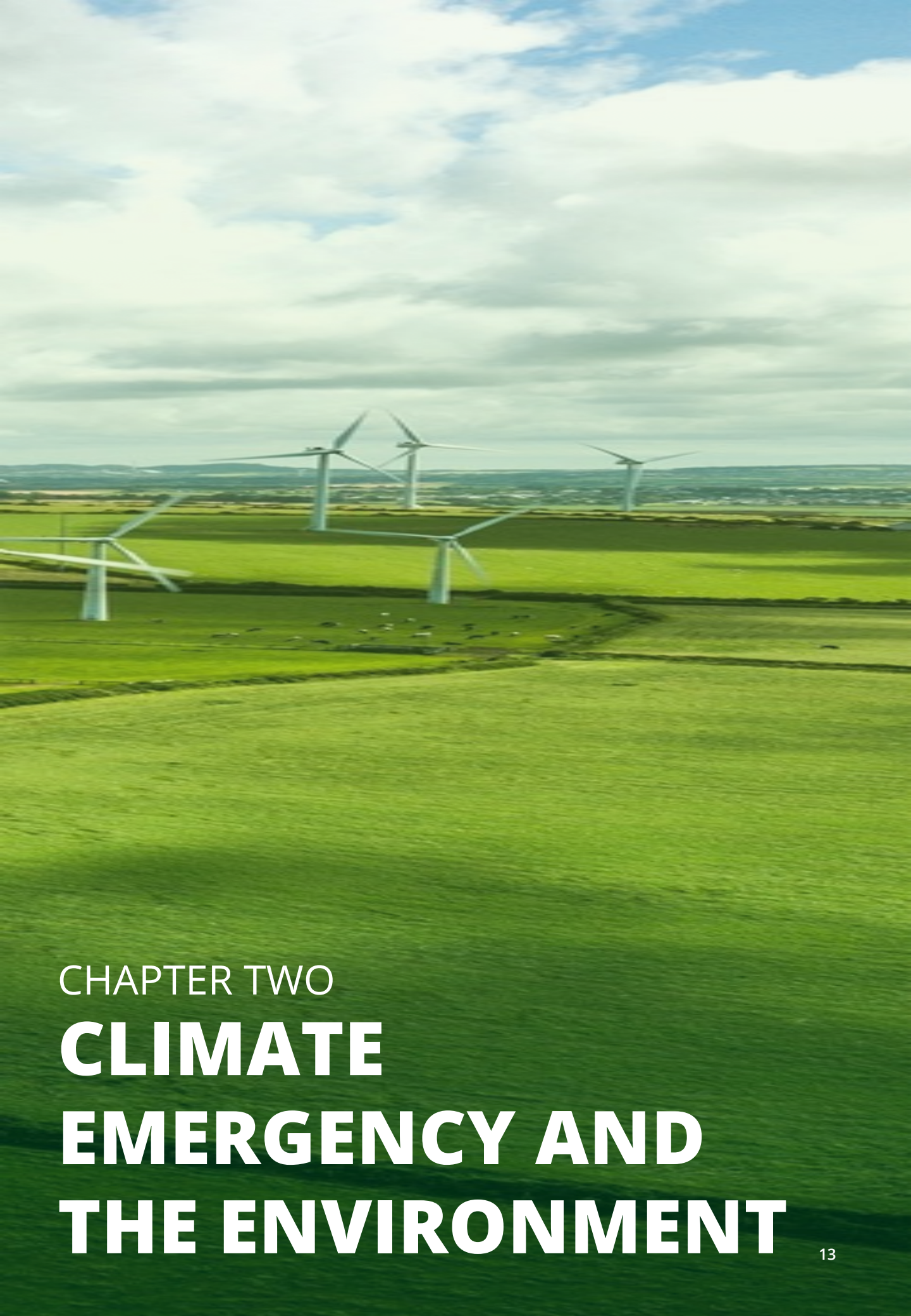
We will work constructively with the MoD to ensure that the Army Rebasing Programme is completed successfully, in terms of infrastructure, but also in the integration of re-settled families into their local communities. We will support British Forces Resettlement Services events and reach out to the families of military personnel to help them establish themselves in the area and find employment.

We recognise the skills that ex-forces personnel have to offer and will implement a Guaranteed Interview Scheme, so that any veterans applying for a job at Wiltshire Council are guaranteed an interview for any job that they apply for.

TAKING A LEAD AS A RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYER

We believe that Wiltshire Council should be an accredited Living Wage Employer, guaranteeing a Real Living Wage to all employees. We'll progressively require the Council's suppliers and contractors to become Living Wage Employers through its procurement policies. We will end Wiltshire Council's use of zero hour contracts and pay the Real Living Wage, and we'll similarly require the Council's suppliers and contractors to do the same.

We will work to improve employment conditions and skills in the social care sector by signing up to Unison's "Ethical care charter for the commissioning of homecare services", joining other councils like Cornwall and Plymouth in becoming an Ethical Care Council.



CHAPTER TWO

CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In February 2019, Wiltshire Council acknowledged the climate emergency and resolved to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030. It also committed to make the Council itself carbon neutral by 2030.

We fully support these objectives and will work hard to implement solutions to make these commitments a reality. This is not a political choice: this is a necessity. The scale and urgency of the problem, supported by extensive scientific evidence, requires decisive and consistent action by government, local authorities and other governmental agencies, utilities, businesses, communities and, indeed, us all as individuals.

Fortunately, many of the solutions will make our county a better place to live. Investment in the green economy will create jobs and provide new opportunities for people. Alternatives to fossil fuel-based transport will provide people with more choice and improve air quality, leading to better health. Energy conservation and green energy will help to lift people out of fuel poverty. Encouraging cycling and walking will improve the health of residents. Planting new woodlands will improve biodiversity and improve the amenity value of open spaces.

LABOUR WILL

- Provide the leadership and support that the county needs to reduce carbon emissions in the county to meet the 2030 target.
- Actively support the development of renewable energy in the county.
- Establish an accessible framework to support homeowners with improving the energy efficiency of their properties and with retrofitting green energy installations.
- Require all new homes to be zero net carbon.
- Develop public transport in Wiltshire so that it provides a real alternative to private car use.
- Upgrade the Council's transport fleet to electric vehicles and establish a county network of EV charging points.
- Invest in developing the network of cycle routes within the county.
- Set and achieve ambitious targets for waste recycling and landfill reduction.
- Put in place a strategy to reduce food miles and support local producers.
- Improve the biodiversity of Wiltshire.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP TO WILTSHIRE

Wiltshire Council is uniquely placed to provide the leadership and support that the county needs to reduce carbon emissions in the county and meet the 2030 target.

By taking an evidence-led approach, based on clear data and a baseline assessment of carbon usage to assist in determining priorities, we will establish a dashboard of measures to track progress. We will also provide the support and tools to enable town and parish councils, schools, businesses and other organisations to audit their carbon emissions and develop carbon reduction strategies.

We'll strive to raise knowledge and understanding of the Climate Emergency with councillors, officers, schools, employers and the public, and raise awareness of positive action that can be undertaken. We will engage with communities, young people, employers, farmers, technology companies and environmental organisations to harness their ideas and creativity.

Above all, we will provide leadership to stress the urgency and scale of the Climate Emergency in order to motivate and empower people to take action, and to act as a catalyst for change.

TOWARDS RENEWABLE ENERGY

Energy usage is estimated to account for over 50% of carbon emissions in Wiltshire. Reducing this through energy conservation and the development of renewable energy must form an important part of any carbon reduction strategy.

Labour will extend Wiltshire Council's investment in renewable energy, implementing energy conservation and energy generation measures on public buildings and on council houses. We will also generate renewable energy on suitable council-owned sites.

Labour will ensure that Wiltshire Council establishes a planning framework that supports renewable energy developments and works with local communities and businesses to ensure that these are located in the right places.

We'll also develop and implement a Community Energy Strategy for Wiltshire. This will provide expert advice and assistance to community groups, parish and town councils, who are seeking to develop Community Energy Initiatives. In addition to practical advice and support with grant-funding applications, this could potentially also include support with procurement, legal issues, financing and management of risk.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

MAKING HOMES MORE ENERGY-EFFICIENT

There is enormous potential to support homeowners in reducing their carbon emissions by improving the energy efficiency of their houses (through better insulation) and by retrofitting renewable energy installations (such as solar panels or ground source heat pumps).

Labour will establish and promote an accessible framework to support homeowners implementing these measures. This framework will include technical advice, support with accessing grant funding, and links to a trusted trader scheme.

We will support communities looking to establish Community Buying Schemes (such as the one run by Zero Chippenham), and offer discounts to private households for installing approved energy efficiency and renewable energy generation materials/devices.

BUILDING BETTER

In 2015, the Conservatives ditched legislation made in 2006 by the last Labour Government which would have required all new homes to be net zero carbon by 2016. This was short-sighted. Building better remains an important element of our commitment to address the Climate Emergency.

Labour will use planning controls to require all new developments to be net zero carbon. We'll make sure that Local Plans include robust targets for sustainable development and biodiversity (such as tree-planting), with greater transparency in the planning process to ensure that every developer delivers the environmental benefits they promised.



CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

PROVIDING ALTERNATIVES TO CAR USE

Transport is estimated to account for 40% of carbon emissions in Wiltshire. We will seek to extend and improve public transport in Wiltshire so that it offers a real alternative to car use. There are many challenges involved in making bus services economically viable in rural areas, but other councils have shown that, by taking innovative approaches in conjunction with local communities and commercial bus operators, and also by working with new technologies, these services can be made a success.

A Labour council will work closely with local communities through town and parish councils to understand demand for new or more frequent bus services. We will work with commercial bus operators to establish new routes to meet demand with both regular and demand-responsive services. We'll provide a Wiltshire Council IT platform with a mobile phone App to allow residents a simple one-stop service for finding bus routes and getting real-time information on bus movements.

Commercial bus operators are already investing in using lower emission and lower pollution vehicles and electric buses now operate the Salisbury Park-and-Ride service. We will work with commercial bus and coach operators in Wiltshire to support the transition to electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION TO ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The transition to electric vehicles will be a key element of decarbonising transport. While the range of electric cars is increasing, and prices are starting to come down, take-up is hampered by a lack of an electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

We'll establish a network of Electric Vehicle Charging points throughout the county, starting with town and village car parks, and then extending to on-street parking points. We will do this by securing funding from government sources, such as the Office of Low Emission Vehicles, and establishing a partnership with an electric infrastructure provider, either through an "Own and Operate" model or through a shared revenue model, whichever offers best value.

We'll progressively upgrade the Council's own transport fleet to electric vehicles through the routine replacement programme.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

PROMOTING CYCLING AND WALKING

Finding ways to encourage more active travel, such as cycling and walking has to be an important part of decarbonising transport.

Labour will work with town councils to ensure that all Wiltshire towns have a plan for developing pedestrian routes and safe cycle networks. We'll also work with other partners, such as Sustrans, to develop the national cycle network within Wiltshire. Crucially, we'll also focus on the development of an extensive county network of cycle routes, connecting villages with each other, and to the nearest towns.

We will increase investment in the development of this infrastructure through re-prioritisation within the overall highways budget, by accessing nationally available funds, and using planned highway maintenance programmes to build in improvements to road layouts to make cycling safer.

TOWARDS ZERO WASTE

Wiltshire currently recycles 45% of its waste. Although improving, this is still a long way behind the leading local authorities, which are achieving up to 65%. Wiltshire still diverts 19,000 tonnes of waste to landfill each year, so clearly there is much more that can be done.

We will undertake a thorough review of Wiltshire Council's strategy for waste reduction and recycling, and we will set robust targets, with an annual scorecard, backed up by strategies based on the hierarchy of: reduce, reuse, recycle, recover energy, and regard landfill as a last resort.

We anticipate that this strategy will include:

- Working with local businesses to reduce packaging and utilise alternatives to plastics.
- Promote re-use and up-cycling in conjunction with local charities.
- Trial and then expand the collection of food waste.
- Utilisation of new technologies working with local firms, such as Recycling Technologies of Swindon.
- Putting more effort into raising public awareness of recycling options, including working with schools to educate and motivate future generations.

We will oppose plans for the development of a waste incinerator at Westbury. This would be a significant source of pollution and will further increase traffic congestion through Westbury and nearby villages.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

REDUCING FOOD MILES

We will put in place a strategy to reduce food miles and support local producers.

This will include:

- Local branding - working with partners and local enterprises to establish a “Wiltshire” brand that consumers can trust, based on product quality, environmental sustainability, animal welfare standards and responsible employment. This will also help promote and market Wiltshire produce and products.
- Establishing a Local Food Network - bringing together food producers who want to work with each other to establish a Wiltshire Local Food Network. This will be a mutually owned co-operative - sharing the costs of marketing and distribution will bring much needed scale and support to producers.
- Collaborating with town and parish councils to establish and promote more outlets for small producers, such as farmers markets.
- Sourcing local suppliers for canteens and cafes run by Wiltshire Councils, and encouraging schools and other organisations in Wiltshire to do the same.

We recognise that there is also growing demand among people for allotments. Labour will work with town and parish councils to identify and establish more sites for allotments and community orchards.

BIODIVERSITY

Local authorities have a legal duty towards conserving biodiversity. We aim to improve biodiversity in Wiltshire by:

- Ensuring that all developments contribute towards enhancing biodiversity and habitat creation, and deliver a biodiversity net gain proportionate to their scale.
- Putting in place biodiversity management plans for each of the Council’s main sites.
- Promoting and supporting the implementation of biodiversity management plans with schools, parish and town councils, and other organisations.
- Improving management of highway verges to support biodiversity.
- Working in partnership with farmers to support their transition to more environmentally sustainable farming methods.
- Making available land for tree planting, re-wilding and other conservation initiatives.
- Supporting local environmental groups with grants and resources to deliver local improvements.



CHAPTER THREE

EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES

EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES

The Labour Party wants to make Britain the best place to grow up in. A Labour council in Wiltshire will work hard to ensure that every child in Wiltshire, from all backgrounds, has a fair chance and fair access to pre-school education, to technology, to transport, and to further education. And we'll campaign for increased school funding and greater investment in our children's future.

Labour also pledges to rebuild Wiltshire's youth services, which have been decimated by cuts under the Conservative government.

The Coronavirus pandemic did not create the problems of educational disadvantage, but it has exposed and exacerbated them. Wiltshire Labour will work to repair the damage and suffering. We will listen to young people, and start investing time and effort into making Wiltshire a better county to grow up in.

LABOUR WILL

- Ensure that all children and young people have access to appropriate Information & Communications Technology (ICT).
- Campaign for the Government to increase school funding and improve the accountability of Multi-Academy Trusts to their local communities.
- Ensure that there is sufficient provision within Wiltshire for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, to enable them to attend schools and colleges as close as possible to their home communities.
- Extend support to 16-19 years-old students with their travel costs.
- Support the development of continuing education in Wiltshire, both in the Further and Higher Education sectors.
- Take action to recruit and support more child-minders in the county and review the support that the county gives to all registered childcare providers.
- Maintain and, where possible, extend the provision of services through Sure Start Children's Centres.
- Begin the process of rebuilding youth services in Wiltshire.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES

SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOL CHILDREN

The Coronavirus pandemic has exposed how many of our most disadvantaged children have struggled with inadequate ICT equipment over the past year. The various government pledges to support these families came to very little and the resulting attainment gap for disadvantaged children has grown wider. This is not acceptable.

All our children, whatever their background, have the right to the same educational opportunities. We'll ensure that all children receiving free school meals are provided with a laptop. We'll do this by establishing a scheme to recycle redundant laptops from local businesses and organisations and will fund additional purchase of laptops to make up any shortfall. We will also work with Internet providers to establish a package of free Internet access for these pupils.

A Labour council in Wiltshire will campaign on behalf of our young people through national channels as well as locally. Spending per pupil has fallen by 8% in real terms since 2009-10. We will campaign for the government to redress this shortfall – investment in our children's future shouldn't be done on the cheap.

41% of schools in Wiltshire are now "academies". This means that they sit outside of local authority control, do not have to follow the national curriculum and can be run as a commercial business. Wiltshire's academies perform less well, with 69% rated as good or outstanding, compared to 83% of those under local authority control.

Labour will support our locally maintained schools to improve and remain accountable to the communities that they serve. We will resist further academisation of our education system.

We will further campaign for the Government to respond to issues raised within the July 2019 Ofsted report into Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) - specifically, the evidence that MATs lack proper accountability to the local community or to Ofsted. MATs should be accountable to their communities for the education they provide.

We will ensure that children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are supported within the most appropriate environment to their needs, either within mainstream schools or, where appropriate through local specialist schools. We welcome the decision of Wiltshire Council to open the new three campus Silverwood School. This reversed an original plan to close Larkrise School in Trowbridge and St Nicholas School in Chippenham and to move all provision in the area to a new build at Rowdeford School.

We will ensure that community assets and playgrounds are retained for children and young people, and not sold off and closed for good (as the campaign to save Oxenwood and Braeside outdoor education centres made clear).

EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES

SUPPORTING POST-16 EDUCATION

In a rural area like Wiltshire, there is little point in saying our young people have a “free” education if they have to pay the cost of their travel. We’ll lobby national government to properly fund this. In the meantime, we’ll extend the existing discounted travel-card system with bursaries to support disadvantaged students.

VAT is a poorly applied tax in education because it discriminates between different categories of 16 to 18 institutions for no good reason. Under existing rules, colleges - unlike schools and academies - are required to pay VAT on their purchases. We’ll lobby national government to provide consistency on financing of post-16 colleges and sixth forms by abolishing VAT charges.

Labour will champion further investment in Wiltshire College building on recent improvements made to campuses. We will also work with the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership to expand the availability of Higher Education in Wiltshire, through the further development of Wiltshire College’s offering and potentially through partnership with an existing university institution to establish a local campus, including continuing education support to young people with disabilities or with special education needs. This will provide local students with more options to study in Wiltshire rather than having to move away from home, and extend the availability of life-long learning within the county.

Labour is committed to providing continuing education opportunities that are accessible and meet the needs of all communities, ensuring that disabled people have access to educational opportunities that support life aspirations, independent living and career opportunities.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES

CHILDCARE

Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, Wiltshire had already lost a quarter of its childminders in the previous five years. Recent decisions to end the childcare business grant for new childminders, the registration delays at Ofsted, unnecessary bureaucracy, and lower income levels caused by reduced government funding, are combining to put more and more people off the profession. The number of childcare providers in the county is likely to further fall once the temporary support put in place during the pandemic ends.

Lack of adequate childcare further disadvantages the children who most need pre-school care and makes things so much harder for working parents. To allow families financial security and avoid entrenching disadvantage from the earliest age, all children should have access to pre-school and wrap-around childcare.

We will take action to urgently recruit more child-minders and support them through the process of getting established.

In 2010, Wiltshire had 30 Sure Start Children's Centres covering 22 towns in the county. By 2019, this had been cut to just 12 covering 10 towns, a reduction of 60%. Labour believes that these are a vital service making a significant contribution to supporting the parents of young children and are committed to maintaining, and, where possible, extending the services provided.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES

YOUTH SERVICES

Wiltshire Council used to employ 150 youth workers and run 24 youth centres - this staff number has been vastly reduced by cuts since 2014 and all of the youth centres closed. The Conservatives have left local young people without a much-needed source of support. It's time to put that right.

A Labour council in Wiltshire will rebuild our youth services by subscribing to the Local Government Association's vision for youth services, which follows 6 core principles:

1. A Youth-led focus
2. Inclusivity, equality and diversity
3. Respect
4. Quality, safety and well-being
5. Empowerment
6. Positivity

We will work with young people and partners to ensure that we genuinely respond to their wants and needs and we will make sure that we include the quieter voices and those who are harder to reach. This work will also include the local voluntary and community sector, faith groups, schools and employers, involving leadership from young people from the very start to ensure that their experiences help to shape the vision.

We will maintain support for existing youth projects through Area Board Grants, but we will also implement creative methods of funding new projects, outside the traditional model of local authority provision. The Local Government Association has recommended the seed funding model, whereby councils have "...an opportunity to invest smaller amounts in core funding for groups so that they can access further funding, and to coordinate funding bids, supporting smaller organisations to come together to deliver work that can contribute to the wider vision."

In other areas, we will seek to improve the use of existing Wiltshire Council and community assets, an alternative to financial support that can help us rebuild our youth services. We will find creative ways to share assets, such as buildings, funds, or facilities, or even volunteers and staff, between the council, community organisations, and private partners. We will use the council's role in the community as a tool to help secure investment from Wiltshire's private sector, to facilitate the rebuild of our much-needed youth services.



CHAPTER FOUR

MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

OUR HOUSING SYSTEM IS FAILING.

Rising property prices and mounting debt are pushing home ownership beyond the means of many people. The gap is being filled by an unregulated private rental sector, with insecure tenancies, high costs and varying conditions. We need a programme of council house building locally and nationally to reverse this trend.

We will use the powers available to Wiltshire Council to make a difference to the availability of affordable, environmentally friendly and energy efficient housing, and extend support to people renting in the private sector.

LABOUR WILL

- Require all new housing developments to deliver a 40% minimum level of social housing.
- Build new council homes, delivering at least 500 new homes per annum within four years.
- Increase resourcing to support tenants through advice and enforcement in the private rental sector, with a Private Tenants' Charter and a Register of Approved Landlords.
- Deliver new sites for housing through the planning system to keep up with local demand.
- Ensure that all new housing developments make a fair contribution to improving the infrastructure of the community.
- Require all new homes to be zero net carbon to address the climate emergency and help lift people out of fuel poverty.
- Ensure sufficient supported accommodation is available to provide pathways out of rough sleeping and implement best practice homelessness prevention in the county.
- Ensure Gypsy, Traveller, Roma and Boat-dweller communities have their needs for safe and adequate living conditions met.

MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

TACKLING UNAFFORDABILITY

Home ownership is beyond the means of many people as property values and debt continue to soar. The Government's own definition of "affordable housing" falls short of the reality for many people as it is linked to market value, not income.

In addition, the housing element of Universal Credit is capped at a value significantly lower than market rents, making the private sector unaffordable for people on benefits.

Labour will tackle this by:

- Working with partners to ensure that new housing developments include a minimum of 40% social rental housing, including new council homes.
- Building new council homes, delivering at least 500 new homes per annum within four years.
- Using Wiltshire Council powers to compulsorily purchase long-term empty properties for conversion to social rented homes.
- Opening up the Housing Waiting List to lower income households as the supply of social homes increases. We will review the waiting list criteria to ensure that it doesn't unfairly exclude returning ex-military personnel and their families.
- Lobbying national government to provide a social benefits system that reflects reality.
- Helping local people to get a foot on the housing ladder through promoting low-cost home ownership schemes.
- Working in partnership with charities and other not-for-profit organisations to provide housing choices for disabled people wishing to live independently or wishing to live within more community and support based provision.

ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

In 2015, the Conservatives ditched legislation made in 2006 by the last Labour Government which would have required all new homes to be net zero carbon by 2016.

We will counter this decision by:

- Requiring all new homes to be zero net carbon to address the climate emergency and help lift people out of fuel poverty.
- Campaigning for a national programme to bring all existing homes up to the same standard by 2035.

MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

REVITALISING PLANNING POLICY

Supply has not kept up with demand and market pressures have made homes unaffordable for local people. Wiltshire's "Local Housing Need Assessment" has placed challenging targets on the council to facilitate new developments.

It is currently failing to meet the requirement for a five-year housing land supply, increasing the ability of developers to challenge local plans. In addition, the piecemeal approach to developing housing on the edges of towns has put new pressures on local services.

We will address this by:

- Delivering sufficient new sites for housing through the planning system to meet the 5-year housing land supply requirement and keep up with the "Local Housing Need Assessment".
- Developing at least one new garden village development, incorporating local employment and services, sustainable transport links and a mix of housing types, reflecting the best in modern design.
- Ensuring that all new housing developments make a real contribution to improving the infrastructure of the community, including schooling, health and community facilities, and ensuring that developers comply with commitments made.
- Undertaking a strategic review of the Community Infrastructure Levy applied by Wiltshire Council to new developments to ensure that it is sufficient to meet the needs of each community, especially in towns such as Calne, Melksham, Trowbridge, Westbury, Warminster, Mere and Tidworth, where the levy is currently 25-35% lower than the rest of the county.
- Campaigning for councils to have compulsory purchase powers for sites with approved planning not built upon within 5 years (to ensure these are released into the community and are not land-banked by developers).



MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

SUPPORTING TENANTS

The availability of good quality, secure social housing has been eroded for decades, with adequate housing being treated as a commodity rather than a basic right or force for social good. This has pushed many to enter private rentals, a sector characterised by high costs, varying conditions and insecure tenancies. The private rental sector accounts for 20% of all households nationally and continues to grow in Wiltshire.

Labour will deliver change by:

- Increasing support for private tenants through advice and enforcement in the private rental sector.
- Establishing a Private Tenants' Charter and a Register of Approved Landlords.
- Providing advice and support for forces personnel and their families living in sub-standard MoD accommodation.

If the MoD progresses beyond the trial phase with its Future Accommodation Model, we will provide dedicated support to forces personnel placed in private rented accommodation.

MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

PROVIDING PATHWAYS OUT OF ROUGH SLEEPING

Although the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act placed a duty of prevention on local authorities, rough sleeping is on the rise in Wiltshire and vulnerable groups face huge difficulties getting on the housing ladder.

We will work to banish rough sleeping by:

- Providing sufficient supported accommodation is available to provide pathways out of rough sleeping in each of the four former districts of the Wiltshire Council area.
- Ensuring that a coordinated approach is taken to get the necessary support in place to prepare rough sleepers for moving into permanent accommodation through the “Housing First” model.
- Implementing best practice homelessness prevention in the county based on a framework of early identification, pre-crisis intervention and actions to prevent recurring homelessness.

SUPPORTING GYPSY, TRAVELLER, ROMA AND BOAT-DWELLER COMMUNITIES

Local authorities have a legal requirement to ensure basic provision for nomadic communities in terms of suitable sites and facilities to support their right to safe and adequate living conditions.

We will work deliver this by:

- Working in partnership with Gypsy, Traveller and Roma community representatives and landowners to identify suitable sites with access to water and sanitation, education, and healthcare.
- Working in partnership with canal boat-dweller community representatives and the Canal & River Trust to ensure arrangements are in place that reflect and respect nomadic lifestyles and ensure access to employment, education and healthcare.



CHAPTER FIVE

**DELIVERING
CARE**

CHAPTER FIVE

DELIVERING CARE

Before the Coronavirus pandemic took hold, the social care sector was in danger of being overlooked. It was the forgotten sector of the healthcare system, under-resourced and over-stretched. A decade of austerity has resulted in underpaid, under-valued and over-worked staff, the majority of whom are women.

The scale of the pandemic left the sector badly exposed and its staff faced an uphill battle to cope with the high levels of infection. What's more, they were sent into the frontline with insufficient training and inadequate PPE. In the circumstances, the care, love, time and attention that care home staff provided was a credit to their unsung profession. But such a situation should never have been allowed to develop, and Labour locally and nationally will campaign for a better deal for care workers and for those in their care.

The Labour Party will work for a better way forward in providing a system that gives dignity and respect to our most vulnerable and will ensure that workers in our public services are properly rewarded. Wiltshire Council must rethink social care to develop a professional, skilled, properly paid quality care service to meet the needs of elderly and vulnerable people in Wiltshire

LABOUR WILL

- Pressure national government to properly fund adult social care in England.
- Develop and implement a new Adult Social Care Strategy for Wiltshire to improve the provision of care for elderly and vulnerable people.
- Review the current out-sourcing of social care in Wiltshire and pilot in-house provision.
- Ensure that care services include key worker support to disabled people, enabling independent living choices.
- Make Wiltshire Council an Ethical Care Council by signing up to Unison's Ethical Care Charter, paying care workers the living wage and ending the use of zero hour contracts.
- Ensure that all care workers are properly equipped with PPE and every care home has a robust system of infection control.
- Raise the profile of care workers as "key workers" and raise the standards of training.
- Fully acknowledge and improve the support provided to Wiltshire's unpaid carers, including mental health and well-being support.

ADDRESSING THE CRISIS IN SOCIAL CARE

There is an adult social care funding crisis in England. Spending on adult social care has fallen in real terms since 2010 while, with an ageing population, demand has increased. Government spending on adult social care is just £324 per person per year in England, compared to £446 in Scotland and £424 in Wales. For years, the Conservative Government has been promising a Green Paper to set out a plan for properly funding social care, as recommended by the 2011 Dilnot Commission Report, but nothing has been forthcoming.

Labour will pressure the Government to address this to ensure that elderly and disabled people are given the support and care that they need. This solution must address the funding question, the eligibility criteria that are restricting access to support, and the question of social protection against catastrophic costs.

The recent Care Quality Commission Local System Review identified significant opportunities for improvement in the provision of adult social care services in Wiltshire.

We will undertake a full review of care services to deliver a new Social Care Strategy for Wiltshire. A significant part of this will include improving collaboration and integration within the health sector (including NHS Trusts, Clinical Commission Groups and GP surgeries) and the voluntary sector. The strategy will address how Wiltshire Council commissions services, look to improve skills, qualifications, working conditions and staff retention, provide support to Wiltshire's unpaid carers and tackle the mental health issues associated with loneliness and isolation of our elderly population.

As part of this review, we will work towards improving the connectivity between hospitals and care homes to provide an efficient and sensitive system for managing elderly care. We will limit the number of people allocated to each care worker, ensure that visits are regular and include the provision of meals so that clients can build a long-lasting relationship with their carers.

We will work in partnership with the voluntary and not-for-profit sector to ensure that care services include recognition of key worker support to disabled people to enable independent living choices. An important part of this will involve supporting self-advocacy for clients to help them determine the support they need.

The last thirty years have seen a continuing process of out-sourcing social care services in the UK, placing enormous reliance on a private sector that is fragile, unresponsive, puts profit ahead of peoples' needs and is dependent on poorly paid staff. Bringing services back in house gives us the opportunity to provide services that deliver better care, more flexible services, better integration with the health sector, improved staff training and retention, less bureaucracy and more accountability. We will reverse the process of privatisation with a review of current out-sourcing provision and pilot the development of in-house services.

We are strongly concerned about the way in which residential homes in Wiltshire have been, or are being closed, such as Fives Court Residential Care Home in Mere and Furlong Close in Rowde. These are not just facilities, but homes that are valued by their residents. We will ensure proper consultation takes place with all residential homes facing closure and will do everything we can to keep them open where that is the wish of residents and families.

SUPPORTING CARE WORKERS AND CARERS

Nationally, the adult social care sector employs 1.52 million people, the vast majority being women. During the Coronavirus pandemic, care workers displayed enormous commitment, dedication and courage in caring for people during challenging times. However, they still do not get the recognition that they deserve. The median hourly pay for care workers in the UK is just £8.50 an hour and 24% are on zero hours contracts. There is a huge issue with staff retention, with an annual turnover rate in the sector of 30.4% and approximately 112,000 vacancies at any one time.

Labour will take action to address this and will properly value and recognise the contribution to society of our care workers and carers. We'll improve employment conditions and skills in the social care sector by signing up to Unison's "Ethical care charter for the commissioning of homecare services" - joining other councils like Cornwall and Plymouth in becoming an Ethical Care Council. This will ensure that none of the care services commissioned by Wiltshire Council would be based on zero hour contracts, that they would all pay the Living Wage, and would also include adequate training and pay for the travel time of staff between visits. This will improve the experience of care-users by ensuring that time allocated for visits is appropriate for their needs, and that they see the same homecare worker where possible. It would also raise skills in the workforce and ensure that there is a clear, accountable procedure for following up staff concerns about their client's wellbeing.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, it became evident that the sector struggled to cope with the level of infection due to lack of personal protection equipment (PPE) and systems of infection control. Despite the best efforts of staff, many people lost their lives in care homes during the pandemic. We will ensure that this will not happen again and will require all care workers to be properly equipped with sufficient PPE and that every care home has a robust system of infection control.

Raising the profile of care workers is also important. During the pandemic, we celebrated their enormous efforts and their role as key workers and we'll continue this by ensuring that Wiltshire Council shares their stories, and publicly recognises and celebrates their contribution to society. We'll work with care service providers to ensure that sufficient training is provided for all care workers leading to recognised qualifications; and we'll work with the local further education sector to ensure that suitable courses are available to meet demand.

Much of the burden of care in Wiltshire is carried by unpaid carers: spouses, families, friends and neighbours. We'll work with the voluntary sector to improve the support available to carers, including advice, training, access to financial support, respite care, day-care centres and support groups.

Caring for other people can place an enormous toll on people's mental wellbeing. We will work to improve the mental health and well-being support available to carers and care workers in Wiltshire.



*The Labour Party created the NHS in 1948.
The NHS is a core value of the Labour Party
and of every Labour Party Candidate.
“We pledge Our Continued Support”*





CHAPTER SIX

GETTING WILTSHIRE MOVING

GETTING WILTSHIRE MOVING

Our overriding strategy for transportation in Wiltshire will be based around three core principles:

IT WILL PROVIDE CHOICE.

Over 70% of all journeys to work in Wiltshire are by car. We will seek to provide viable alternatives for residents and employers.

IT WILL BE GREENER.

We will seek to decarbonise transport in Wiltshire, in line with the Council's commitment on the Climate Emergency to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030.

IT WILL BE SAFER.

For decades, road casualties had been consistently falling, but there has been no improvement in Wiltshire since 2010. We will deliver improvements in road safety to restore the long-term trend in improving accident rates.

LABOUR WILL

- Work with local communities and bus operators to improve rural bus services.
- Where commercial bus services are not viable, we'll innovate to provide demand-responsive and community-based alternatives.
- Extend the network of cycle routes within the county.
- Establish a network of Electric Vehicle charging points throughout the county.
- Prioritise funding away from new highway projects and into public transport.
- Invest in road safety improvement schemes to improve accident rates.
- Extend the implementation of 20mph zones in residential areas.
- Increase resourcing for road safety education.
- Prioritise preventative maintenance over inefficient and reactive pothole repairs.

CHAPTER SIX

GETTING WILTSHIRE MOVING

GREENER TRANSPORT

We will extend the network of cycle routes within Wiltshire. We will do this through a range of solutions including the creation of new cycle lanes, way-marking routes along minor roads, and providing dedicated cycle tracks. As well as helping to make cycling a healthier and sustainable alternative to car travel, this will support our plans to encourage active tourism to boost the Wiltshire economy.

Labour will:

- Ensure that all Wiltshire's market towns have a cycle network development plan.
- Develop cycle routes to link our market towns with each other, and also develop cycle routes to link villages with each other and connect them to their nearest town.
- Work with other partners, such as Sustrans, to develop the national cycle network within Wiltshire.
- Ensure that all town centres have generous provision for cycle parking.

The transition to electric vehicles will be a key element of decarbonising transport. Whilst the range of electric cars is increasing, and prices are starting to come down, take-up is hampered by a lack of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Local authorities have an important role to play in addressing this limitation.

- Labour will establish a network of Electric Vehicle Charging points throughout the county, starting with town and village car parks, and then extending to on-street parking points. We will do this by securing funding from government sources, such as the Office of Low Emission Vehicles, and establishing a partnership with an electric infrastructure provider, either through an "Own and Operate" model or through a shared revenue model, whichever offers best value.
- We'll work with commercial bus operators that run subsidised routes in the county to establish a realistic timetable for replacing diesel buses with low emission vehicles.

Too much national funding is concentrated on major road improvement projects, which increase traffic flows and move congestion elsewhere. We will:

- Oppose major new highway improvement projects, such as the proposed £75M Chippenham Distributor Road, which will have a significant environmental impact and is likely to result in increasing congestion in towns like Calne.
- Lobby central government to switch funding from new road schemes and into public transport subsidies.
- Concentrate Wiltshire Council highways investment on pragmatic local schemes to address road safety issues or resolve localised traffic congestion and air quality issues by improving traffic flow.

We also need to make our streets more friendly for pedestrians. We will invest in pavement repairs, development of pedestrian routes and pedestrian-friendly town centres.

Labour supports the increased use of rail both for passengers and freight. We know when railway stations are re-opened people use them. Labour will work with Town and Parish Councils, and the communities they serve, to identify possible new railway stations. We welcome the feasibility studies into the re-opening of Wilton and Corsham railway stations and support the proposal for a rail link and railway station in Devizes.

GETTING WILTSHIRE MOVING

PROVIDING CHOICE

Labour will seek to extend and improve public transport in Wiltshire so that it offers a real alternative to car use. There are many challenges involved in making bus services economically viable in rural areas, but other councils have shown that - by taking innovative approaches in conjunction with local communities and commercial bus operators, and by working with new technologies - these can be made a success.

We will:

- Work closely with local communities through town and parish councils to understand demand for new or more frequent bus services.
- Collaborate with town and parish councils to raise additional funding to subsidise rural bus services through the town/parish council precepts.
- Work with commercial bus operators to establish new routes to meet demand through both regular and demand-responsive services.
- Provide a Wiltshire Council IT platform with mobile phone App to allow residents a simple one-stop service for finding bus routes, getting real-time information on bus movements, and booking demand-responsive services.
- Work with local communities to develop Community Transport options where commercial services are not viable.
- Take innovative approaches to open up school bus services to fare-paying passengers where possible.
- Re-invigorate Wiltshire Council's car-sharing scheme to increase up-take and ease rush-hour congestion.

GETTING WILTSHIRE MOVING

IMPROVING ROAD SAFETY

Following years of improving performance, road traffic accident casualty figures in Wiltshire have shown no improvement since 2010. In 2018, 228 people were killed or seriously injured on Wiltshire's roads.

We will take action to improve road safety by:

- Investing in road safety improvement schemes, informed by local data and evidence
- Prioritising improvements around high risk groups and areas, planned and delivered in consultation with local people and other agencies such as the police.
- Introducing 20mph speed limits around all schools in the county and ensure that they are provided with safe pedestrian crossing points.
- Extending the implementation of 20mph zones in residential areas in consultation with local communities.
- Support Community Speed watch Groups and coordinate enforcement with Wiltshire Police.
- Increasing resourcing of road safety education, training and publicity.

Currently, 40% of the local road network in England is classified as being in Amber or Red Condition. We will support the recommendations of the House of Commons Transport Committee for a national investment fund to bring the local road network back to a steady state where preventative maintenance can be effectively undertaken, rather than inefficient and reactive pothole repairs.



CHAPTER SEVEN

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE

Over the last ten years, the Conservative government has overseen a 20,000-officer reduction in police forces across England and Wales. In Wiltshire, a 16 per cent reduction to police numbers has left us with the country's second lowest number of officers per population. Today, many crimes in Wiltshire are left without meaningful investigation – including 72% of all vehicle crimes.

Our plan is to restore policing capacity in Wiltshire. In turn, this will enable the reinstatement of neighbourhood policing, with dedicated neighbourhood teams working within local communities. This is essential for gathering local intelligence and rebuilding public confidence.

We also believe that addressing the causes of crime is as critical as effective policing. This will require investment in the social fabric of our communities, restoring youth services, early interventions, and taking meaningful action to improve drug and alcohol services and to tackle unseen crime such as domestic abuse.

LABOUR WILL

- Recruit additional police officers and PCSOs to restore policing capacity in Wiltshire.
- Reinstate neighbourhood policing with dedicated teams working within local communities.
- Put a hold on the sale of police stations and undertake an operationally-led review of accommodation needs to support neighbourhood policing.
- Increase dedicated resourcing to tackle rural crime such as farm thefts.
- Improve support for victims of crime.
- Take effective action to tackle “County Lines” criminal drug networks.
- Make tackling Domestic Abuse a real priority.
- Rebuild youth services in Wiltshire.
- Increase support for much-needed drug and alcohol services.

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE

POLICING OUR COMMUNITIES

The Conservative Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has overseen the introduction of a cuts-driven “Community Policing” model. The programme has pulled together neighbourhood policing, response teams and local crime investigators into seven large Community Policing Teams.

What’s more, with the closure, or planned closure, of police stations in Wiltshire, many of our towns are being left covered by officers based far from the communities that they are serving.

Of course, we are pleased that the PCC has recognised these mistakes and accepted the need to reintroduce dedicated neighbourhood policing teams. We are also pleased that after 10 years of cuts, the Government is now committed to increasing funding to enable police numbers to grow back to the record levels achieved by the last Labour Government.

However, these welcome changes would be just the start of our action plan to rebuild policing across Wiltshire. As Police and Crime Commissioner, our candidate Cllr Junab Ali will:

- Recruit additional police officers and PCSOs to start the process of restoring capacity back to the Wiltshire Police Force. In rebuilding this capacity, we will ensure that this recruitment builds a police force reflecting the diversity of the communities that it serves in Swindon and Wiltshire.
- Use this increased capacity to reinstate neighbourhood policing, with dedicated neighbourhood teams working within the community, being visible, accessible, skilled and familiar. This policing model provides knowledge of community concerns, helps the gathering of local intelligence and enables prompt, effective and targeted action. It is a model that has been proved to work.
- Put a hold on the closure and sale of police stations and undertake an operationally-led review of accommodation needs to support the reinstatement of neighbourhood policing.

Rural crime, including agricultural, wildlife, environmental and heritage crime, requires specialist expertise. We will increase dedicated resourcing for this and work with partners through the Swindon & Wiltshire Rural Crime Partnership to determine priorities, develop strategies and build effective intelligence networks.

We will work with organisations that support victims of crime, including increasing support for women suffering from domestic abuse, and increasing access for vulnerable women to protected accommodation. We will improve the quality of information and support provided to victims to ensure that this is tailored to their needs.

We will be transparent about the performance of the police force against a range of leading and lagging indicators. Unlike the incumbent PCC, we will regularly publish a Scorecard with actual scoring against it. We will ensure that Wiltshire Polices works in partnership with town and parish councils, listening to the concerns and priorities of local communities and providing them with data on crime statistics in their neighbourhoods.

In 2018, there were almost 1200 people injured or killed on Wiltshire’s roads. We believe that the lack of enforcement of speed limits is a contributing factor to this: in the same year Wiltshire Police issued only 657 Fixed Penalty Notices for speeding (the second lowest in England) compared to 163,000 in Avon & Somerset next door. We will ensure the police address this and support the efforts of local community speed watch schemes with enforcement action.

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE

TACKLING COUNTY LINES

We will increase focus on tackling “County Lines” criminal drugs networks, which ruthlessly target and exploit children and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge the progress made in tackling County Lines gangs operating in Wiltshire and in the establishment of National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC). However, we think more could be done, including:

- Improving intelligence gathering and sharing processes with the NCLCC and other forces.
- Adopting a stronger emphasis on neighbourhood policing, improving contact and trust with the local community and gaining insights and intelligence through local presence.
- Building collaboration with other agencies involved in child protection, such as social services and schools. We also recognise that greater investment in front-line child protection through social services plays a critical role.
- Making greater use of existing sanctions to disrupt county lines networks, such as telecommunications restriction orders and serious crime prevention orders.

MEANINGFUL ACTION TO REDUCE DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic Abuse, primarily but not exclusively against women, has significantly increased during the Coronavirus pandemic. We'll ensure that meaningful action to tackle Domestic Abuse is made a priority. We'll continue to fund the Wiltshire Phoenix project, offering a single pathway for domestic abuse victims into the range of support services available in the county. We'll also ensure that Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Police take leading roles in ensuring an effective multi-agency approach is taken to reducing domestic violence, including:

- Ensuring sufficient protected accommodation and women's shelters are available.
- Improving training for police officers and PCSOs to recognise signs of domestic abuse and coercive control.
- Working with schools to raise awareness and challenge attitudes among young people, and equipping teachers with the skills to identify signs of domestic violence.
- Running campaigns to raise awareness of domestic abuse, enabling victims to identify the signs and know how to seek help.
- Providing a range of options for victims to disclose abuse and seek help.
- Making support available to victims to report abuse to the police and helping them engage with the criminal justice system.
- Getting support in place for victims to help them deal with both the emotional and practical issues of moving on.
- Ensuring a framework of training, awareness and effective liaison is in place across the various agencies involved, including police, courts, social services, health services, and schools.

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE

PREVENTATIVE ACTION

We also recognise that preventing crime is about investing in the social fabric of our communities. Wiltshire Council used to employ 150 youth workers running 24 different clubs and services for young people. Since 2014, these services have been decimated, and reduced to meeting statutory obligations only, such as the Youth Offending Team. We agree with the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee that “prevention is a far more cost-effective alternative to spending so much money on reactive and acute responses later on, which cost the taxpayer far more in the long term.”

We believe that Wiltshire Council can do far more on preventative action:

- We'll establish a Wiltshire Young People's Foundation to coordinate and grow services for young people. This will work strategically to bring different groups together from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors in order to develop partnership projects and share resources and good practice including:
 - Facilitating centralised fundraising based on a consortia approach aimed at accessing funding from multiple sources.
 - Providing a “Venue Bank” for groups to share and access available sites to run their projects.
 - Distributing seed grant funding to member organisations.
 - Organising capacity building within the youth services sector.

We will increase support for drug and alcohol treatment in Wiltshire. Funding for this has halved over the past six years while at the same time, the number of deaths as a direct result of drug misuse has risen by 109%.



CHAPTER EIGHT

CULTURE AND LEISURE

CHAPTER EIGHT

CULTURE AND LEISURE

Britain's creative industries are the envy of the world. Our writers, musicians, actors and athletes are a source of national pride and an important part of our national economy. Our libraries and museums enrich our lives with access to literature and local history. However, after ten years of Conservative cuts, our creative sector has now been devastated by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Labour in Wiltshire will do everything that we can to protect and develop culture and leisure in the county. Libraries, museums, theatres, sports facilities and music venues are not luxuries - they are at the heart of our community, vital to our physical and mental wellbeing.

LABOUR WILL

- Keep all current public libraries open, including mobile library services.
- Develop the wider use of public libraries as community facilities.
- Continue funding of Wiltshire museums and support new projects.
- Ensure that funding from new housing developments is used to improve the provision of sports facilities and playing fields throughout Wiltshire.
- Ensure that every secondary school student is taught basic cookery skills, including how to prepare healthy, affordable meals at home.
- Support our local music and arts venues, galleries and festivals through increased funding and promotion.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CULTURE AND LEISURE

LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS

Almost 800 libraries have been lost nationwide since the Conservatives came to power in 2010. Sharp cuts to funding have left many libraries understaffed, with outdated facilities and reduced opening hours. The Labour Party understands the value of libraries: they are an important community asset and a vital lifeline for many people who may otherwise have few sources of social interaction. Labour will keep all of our public libraries open, including mobile services, and will seek to employ more library staff and extend opening hours where possible.

We will promote the use of libraries as wider facilities for our communities, following the successful Calne Community Hub model. The library hall and meeting room in Calne is available for bookings by community groups and used as a base for services such as Citizens Advice surgeries. Libraries should host coffee mornings, charity events, film nights - any kind of event that brings people together and helps foster a sense of community. We will help our libraries to organise promotional events such as readings by authors.

Library finances can be bolstered by hiring out space for meetings: Labour's vision for Wiltshire relies not only on increased funding for our cultural facilities, but more intelligent use of the assets we currently have. Our campaign to promote library use will focus on building links with local schools, to promote library services with the younger generation.

We make a similar commitment to promoting Wiltshire's museums. Museums are a vital tool in protecting our heritage and passing on our shared history to future generations. We will back imaginative initiatives that bring social history to life using new technologies, such as the recent St Mary Street QR Code Trail run by Chippenham Museum. Every town in the county could have more historical information visible on the streets. QR codes with links to historical information are a great way of engaging the public.

SPORT AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a one-off payment by developers to support community infrastructure. Whenever new housing developments arise across Wiltshire, we will seek to use some of the money to improve the provision of sports facilities, equipment and playing fields.

We will support and promote sport in Wiltshire: from increased grants to sports clubs, to publicity campaigns encouraging participation; from giving children the chance to try new sports through to increasing the number of school visits from trained coaches.

We also recognise that small independent fitness centres have an important part to play in improving health and wellbeing. We see that Wiltshire Council has a role in helping these centres to establish and develop.

Physical and mental wellbeing relies on a balanced, healthy diet. A Labour council in Wiltshire will ensure that every secondary school age person is taught basic cookery skills, so that they can prepare nutritious, affordable meals at home for themselves and their family. We will work with secondary schools to make sure the curriculum includes more practical home economics information, such as how to plan and execute a balanced food shop.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CULTURE AND LEISURE

ARTS AND LITERATURE

Labour will help our creative sector recover from the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. We will support music and arts venues, theatres, galleries, festivals and cultural events as we come out of lockdown. We will do this, not just through funding, but also through publicity and promotion.

We value the important role that Wiltshire plays in being the host to military bases and are committed to helping forces personnel and their families feel more integrated with local civilian communities. We recognise the part that local festivals and events play in making this happen and will seek to foster stronger links between local organisers and bases.

We understand that a thriving cultural scene stems from the classroom. We will work hard to ensure that the arts are well represented in Wiltshire schools. We will establish new Drama Clubs in schools that do not have one, and we will organise school visits from authors and poets, in conjunction with our campaign to improve local libraries.

We will campaign for school visits by trained music teachers, and the provision of musical facilities in primary schools, so that every child gets the opportunity to learn an instrument before the age of eleven. We will put creativity back at the heart of the curriculum, working with secondary school teachers to make sure the arts are not sidelined from secondary education.

We will launch a creative careers advice campaign in sixth form and colleges, to demonstrate the range of careers and opportunities available, and the skills required in the creative industries: not just music, drama and literature, but also the tech sector.



CHAPTER NINE

OUR VISION FOR MORE OPEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

OUR VISION FOR MORE OPEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Labour believes in open, transparent, accessible government.

We believe that councils work best and achieve better results when they engage with the communities that they represent. To be meaningful, this engagement must reach out to all residents and communities, regardless of background, not just those with the time and energy to make themselves heard. The summer of 2020 saw the Black Lives Matter movement's expression of frustration in a number of protests and demonstrations. Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Councillors have a responsibility to reach out and listen to views from all of our residents, including minority voices.

Wiltshire Labour is committed to making local government more open and inclusive, more ambitious and productive, and more innovative and forward looking. We believe that Wiltshire Council has a duty to play its part in bringing people together and creating a shared ambition for the future of Wiltshire

LABOUR WILL

- Make Council business more transparent and minimise the amount of decision-making conducted behind closed doors.
- Remove barriers to public participation in Council business.
- Build social impact as well as financial impact into all decision-making
- Improve the quality of public engagement and consultation, making it genuinely meaningful and inclusive.
- Trial the use of Citizens' Assemblies to improve the engagement of residents in the democratic process.
- Encourage more participation in the democratic process, starting with school visits to promote better understanding of local democracy.

OUR VISION FOR MORE OPEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

HOW WE CAN DELIVER MORE OPEN GOVERNMENT

Labour will make local government more transparent by:

- Opening up more meetings to the public and minimising the amount of business conducted behind closed doors.
- Encouraging public attendance and engagement at council meetings, and making public attendees feel welcomed.
- Holding more meetings around the county, in town halls, community halls, schools or libraries.
- Avoiding the use of formal language, acronyms or procedural red tape to make Council business more meaningful to local people.
- Ensuring that Council meetings and material are accessible for people with disabilities.
- Continuing with making Council meetings available online following the lifting of lockdown restrictions.
- Allowing the public to propose agenda items for Council meetings.
- Making sure that all decisions take account of social impact as well as financial impact. This means taking account of the impact of a decision on people, taking care to include the impact on women, BAME citizens, other minority groups and the most vulnerable members of our community.

Labour will make sure that Wiltshire Council improves the quality of real engagement and consultation to reach out to and genuinely work in partnership with residents from all backgrounds.

This will require both traditional and social media to engage in two-way dialogue with residents, and the involvement of communities in decisions and funding choices affecting their local area. We will seek to involve people and organisations with expertise onto working parties.

We recognise that to have credibility, Wiltshire Council must ensure that consultation is genuinely meaningful. This means engagement needs to happen early and offers real choices. We will strive for best practice and seek to learn from other councils.

We will also trial the use of Citizens' Assemblies in which members of the public are selected at random to take part directly in the democratic decision-making process.

A healthy democracy is dependent on electing councillors who represent the breadth of their communities. Many councillors are comfortably retired and don't have enough understanding of the challenges faced by single parents, families just managing or by the most vulnerable in our communities. Very few are women, and still fewer are from ethnic or other minorities or have disabilities.

It is important that these voices are heard and properly represented. We believe that Wiltshire Council has a role to play in encouraging people to participate in the democratic process, at county, town and parish council levels. A starting point should be to undertake school visits to promote better understanding of local democracy with the next generation.



Wiltshire Labour Manifesto 2021

Vote Labour

Promoted by Steve Fear on behalf of Wiltshire Labour, both at Bevan House, 148 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 7QW.