

A local manifesto created by Labour members of West Berkshire

West Berkshire Council elections
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Please print responsibly

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An economy that works for all

A Labour council will always seek to create the right climate for businesses to thrive, including ensuring business rates revenue is used to improve infrastructure for roads, communications and attracting complimentary business, whether start up or well established business.

A Labour council will look to encourage Small & Medium sized Enterprises as per the work in this area by Preston Council.

A Labour Council will aspire to develop a local authority energy company and would invest in energy storage. (Business Case: Nottingham City Council)

A Labour council will invest in proven environmental technologies for highways and parking areas to assist in improving infrastructure for residents and business.

A Labour council will protect against selling-off prime assets including buildings and land for private sector development.

A Labour council will improve the connectivity of local business forums.

A Labour council will enhance environmental protections while maintaining trading standards.

A Labour council will support the creation of connected transport solution to allow all residents an efficient and low carbon impact system of travel into town centres to access vital services.

A Labour council believes all council funded service providers should be based in the local area, and where possible will grant contracts to those who benefit local people and the local economy.

A Labour council will review the allocation of council funds to ensure an efficient but fair distribution of resources across the whole West Berkshire area.

A Labour council will encourage a social business model in places like the Kennet centre to provide provision for social renting.

A Labour council will balance the provision of parking in high impact areas such as Pangbourne, Thatcham, Newbury & Hungerford between residential parking, commuter parking & business parking.

A Labour council will ensure that local businesses are monitored for compliance to business trading standards set by local & national laws.

A Labour council will make a commitment to the Living Wage Foundation, both as an employer and to actively encourage local businesses. This includes outsourced service providers to ensure Council finances do not contribute to "Zero hours" contracts.

A Labour council would ensure that Council Tax is aligned to annual inflationary figures and the required finances needed to provide vital council services.

Towards a National Education Service

A Labour council supports the national Labour campaign to create a unified National Education Service (NES) for England to move towards cradle to grave learning free at the point of use.

A Labour council will work to protect the provision of dedicated Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) in all West Berkshire schools

A Labour council will improve the provision of resource around Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to reduce the waiting period for assessments

A Labour council will prioritise funding for counsellors within schools

A Labour council will investigate how to implement a better connected & environmentally low impact School bus service & cycle paths.

A Labour council will work with government to lobby for the simplification of the current bureaucratic processes for schools, too often taken on by over-worked head teachers.

A Labour council will ensure that every school, no matter its size, has a dedicated head teacher.

A Labour council will ensure funding is available to combat the ever-increasing numbers of local schools in West Berkshire closing early on Fridays.

A fair deal at work

A Labour council will be a Living Wage Employer and work to encourage all other local businesses and employers to pay the Living Wage.

A Labour council will encourage membership of the appropriate Trade Union for all council workers to ensure representation of all employees in the workplace for Local Pay Reviews and terms and conditions of employment.

A Labour council will ensure that services provided by the Local Authority, including waste management and processing would be maintained within the control of the council.

A Labour council will better support council staff and their clients who are transitioning from housing benefit to Universal Credit (UC). This would come in the form of adequate resourcing, training and ongoing coaching by empathetic and experienced management, and fast and efficient use of emergency relief funding for clients while transitioning.

A Labour council will look into the issue of where rent payments for housing benefit and UC are being made and ensure all processes are fair and correct.

A Labour council will review all Council tax bands to ensure a relevant audit is completed to ensure the most vulnerable in the community are not over burdened with debt.

Secure homes for all

A Labour council will build up social housing stock. Therefore, removing a sole reliance on private landlords.

A Labour council will convert, where feasible, empty office blocks to social housing alongside private homes to be able to pay for the development.

A Labour council will bring the provision of council Housing back in-house to boost the social housing stock. The in-house service will include the maintenance as per the successful example in Gateshead Council.

A Labour council will ensure an appropriate level of accessible housing and assisted living housing within social and private development.

A Labour council will encourage the building of houses that local people can afford to rent or buy, which will mean a review of the current "Affordable" housing definition.

A Labour council will look to increase the provision in resource to ensure planning conditions are able to be monitored and where necessary corrected. This will bring greater transparency & accountability to the development and maintenance of the area.

A Labour council will ensure that all housing development was met with adequate infrastructure upgrades, or the development will not be able to proceed, for example, recent residential development proposals in Hungerford.

A Labour council will ensure the efficient and effective use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds to provide infrastructure upgrades. This should be supported by the Council, for encouraging Town & Parish Councils to develop their areas.

A Labour council will protect against further closures of care homes, and ensure that the standards of assisted living and care homes in West Berkshire are regularly audited to maintain a high standard of care for all.

A Labour council will work with local charities to end rough sleeping in West Berkshire and support the provision of both a permanent night shelter and a community day centre and hub for support services for the homeless and vulnerable in West Berkshire.

A Labour council will conduct a review of all emergency housing across West Berkshire, including a headcount of local homeless, the reports of breaking up families, and a full investigation into current hostel accommodation provision.

A Labour council will ensure the development of housing occurs on brown belt development before any green belt development is approved.

Healthcare for all

A Labour council will audit all Health and Social Care private finance initiatives (PFIs) in West Berkshire to identify and eliminate financial waste.

A Labour council will investigate and where possible, introduce the Buurtzorg model of care for people who need both nursing and home care.

A Labour council will work to ensure that the aged population of West Berkshire do not wrongly feel they are the problem or a burden.

A Labour council will work with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in the Integrated System to improve access to GPs.

A Labour council will support the integration of Social Care with the NHS to focus on prevention and rehabilitation.

A Labour council will invest in drug & alcohol harm reduction through programmes offered at local treatment centres.

A Labour council will follow the example made by Wigan Council with regard to the way young people with substance abuse problems and exposure are treated as a public health issue and NOT a criminal justice issue.

A Labour council will improve and increase the provision of mental health services across West Berkshire.

A Labour council will increase the provision for Children's and Adolescents Mental Health Assessments (CAMHS) to reduce multi-year waiting times.

A Labour council will prioritise the support of the vulnerable such as providing care contributions and by supporting the disabled children's team and Mencap

A Labour council will look at creative solutions to reduce waiting times for specialist intensive therapies.

A Labour council will encourage health and social care services to be provided by public sector organisations or the 3rd sector.

A Labour council will look to provide transport to those who cannot independently get to treatment facilities and ensure all treatment buildings are accessible.

A Labour council will reduce the tax on disabled people by reinstating free bus pass programme that includes companion passes.

A Labour council will focus Adult Social Services to help people integrate back into work

A Labour council will carry out meaningful consultation on health and care services with users

Safer Communities

A Labour council will lobby for greater resourcing of community policing teams to ensure a visible presence in all of our communities across West Berkshire.

A Labour council will work to bring back village wardens across West Berkshire where they have been removed and introduce where there has been none. And to re-invigorate and support a network of Neighbourhood Watch teams.

A Labour council will restore adequate funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in West Berkshire so that all have access to appropriate and accessible assistance.

Leading richer lives

A Labour council will declare a climate emergency and back policies aimed to transition West Berkshire Council to operating on a carbon neutral basis by 2030.

A Labour council will return waste services to in-house control and management with the aim to increase against the current levels of recycling.

A Labour council will enter discussions with Reading council with a view to enable residents in the eastern urban area of West Berkshire, renewed access to the RE3 facility at Smallmead. This Labour policy would be a part of a wider recycling economy which benefits all sections of the community.

A Labour council will investigate the present recycling services available and compare against the Reading RE3 centre.

A Labour council will reopen the discussions around the Park and Ride proposal at Junction 12 of the M4.

A Labour council will develop a greater network of electric vehicle charging points across the area.

A Labour Council will support the removal of the Green Bin charge but look to work on community-based composting.

A Labour council will oppose the development of Pincent's Hill.

A Labour council will work with local community groups and national sporting bodies to improve the community sporting infrastructure with financial support as part of the Council's responsibilities to provision of sporting facilities to the community.

A Labour council will ensure the community football ground at Faraday Road is re-opened for organised 11 a-side matches for men's, ladies and children's teams along with the relevant facilities needed.

A Labour council will ensure the provision of recreational space for the Arts, including music and theatre, working in conjunction with volunteer and charitable organisations.

A Labour council will reopen the former Waterside Youth Centre in conjunction with Berkshire Youth to ensure a wide range of activities and services are available for all the youth of West Berkshire. This should be connected to the transport services which the council provides to ensure youth in rural areas have easy access to the centre.

A Labour council will ensure local libraries are utilised for a range of activities including those which benefit the babies & toddlers as well as the senior citizen activities.

A Labour council will champion Community Forum groups where rural and town communities can come face to face and discuss topics relevant to their areas and when possible find solutions to any local issues which arise. These could be subjects which include but are not exclusive to: wildlife protection, dog walking parks, tree felling, local open spaces litter picking, traffic speed monitoring, greener living etc.

A more equal society

A Labour council will uphold & promote equality and human rights of all residents and visitors to West Berkshire.

A Labour council will appoint a lead on equality and human rights to ensure that the highest standard of behavior and policy as per the Human Rights Act 1998 is adopted by the council.

A Labour council will hold all West Berkshire Councillors accountable with a zero tolerance stance to any form of negative prejudicial bias against any person.

A Labour council will ensure any gender pay gap that exists at the council and within any service providers the council employs, is addressed and corrected in a timely manner.

A Labour council will ensure that all contracts issued by the council include relevant wording to ensure the council only operates with contractors who respect the Equality Act 2010.

A global Britain

A Labour council will not invest in any company which benefits from practices which violate International Human Rights.

A Labour council will actively take part in programmes which support the settling of refugees in West Berkshire.