

 Labour

Manifesto
for
REBUILDING
NORTH
SOMERSET

2019



This Manifesto for Rebuilding North Somerset is the work of those living in North Somerset who want fairness, equality and opportunity for all – and are not afraid to ask those who have the most to contribute the most.

We believe -

- North Somerset should be run by the people, for the people.
- Well-funded services are vital because sickness and poverty can happen to us all.
- The people of North Somerset are an asset rather than a liability.

We are **Labour** – and we want to rebuild North Somerset to work for the many, not the few.

With your vote on 2nd May, we will.

Labour's vision for North Somerset

North Somerset's a great place – for some. But it could be much better for all without the failings of the Tories who've enjoyed power here for so long.

The Conservatives – in government since 2010, firstly with their Liberal Democrat allies – have stripped our Council of a whopping £100 million. The Tory-dominated authority's choices – cutting services to the elderly and young, hard-working families and people with disabilities – are imposing hardship on those who can bear it least.

There's greater inequality in North Somerset than almost everywhere else in the UK: North Somerset is the third most unequal local authority in England (English indices of deprivation 2015, gov.uk).

What does that mean for us locally? Fifteen per cent of young people live below the poverty line. There's a third less affordable housing available for local people than the government's own estimate of the minimum needed. And we've taken our share of police cuts – 116 fewer community support officers and 659 fewer police officers across Avon & Somerset.

**Labour sees things differently.
We believe there's another way.**

For decades local tax money has gone to profit-making private companies providing Council services. But it was once normal for councils themselves to run the things residents need – enough public toilets, beautiful parks for locals and tourists, affordable housing, well supported social care services for children and adults, reliable rubbish collection and so on.

We say that, wherever possible, North Somerset Council must run its own services or provide them through not-for-profit organisations such as social enterprises and co-operatives, making them better and more affordable – and saving the profits that would otherwise go to shareholders in private companies.

We will build on North Somerset Labour's Alternative Budget (2019). This means taking a fresh look at Council spending and doing all we can to bring in more money. We will look at possibilities such as taxing empty properties, cutting costs of North Somerset Life and trimming councillors' expenses.

We also believe it's worth borrowing to invest in the future of North Somerset – to make a start, for example, on building the council housing that local families need.

This local manifesto for District Council elections in May 2019 contains practical policies to improve the lives of all residents and create a more equal and prosperous community in North Somerset.



Protecting the planet – Labour's pledges on the environment

Scientists warn the world must take urgent and drastic action during the next 12 years to limit the damage wreaked by climate change. We can't wait for central government to act. Every council needs to do as much as they can locally now. Labour supports the Climate Emergency Motion 2019 and will ensure that the Council is held accountable for meeting the 2030 carbon neutral commitment. We welcome investment at Bristol Airport provided that it is balanced with the needs of the environment through regular auditing and reporting of its environmental impact on noise and air pollution, and on transport routes within North Somerset.

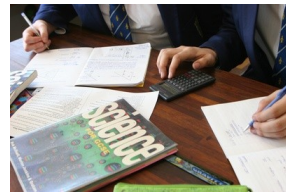
Labour locally would safeguard the environment by:

- opposing fracking in North Somerset;
- boosting renewable energy options, including solar and both offshore and onshore wind, and exploring the potential of the Severn Barrage tidal power station;
- working with local businesses to invest in deposit machines for plastic bottles;

- opening local tips for longer to minimise flytipping and give people, especially those in flats, better solutions for recycling;
- working with businesses to channel otherwise wasted food to food banks - which should not be needed - and to providers of community meals.

Making the most of your abilities – Labour’s pledges on education & learning

Education is about helping individuals of all ages develop their talents and abilities so they can make the most of their lives and contribute fully to their communities and society.



Labour locally would help everyone by:

- investing in children's crucial early years through services like Sure Start and specialist centres that have been shown to make a real difference;
- giving young people with special needs and disabilities a better deal;
- boosting partnerships between schools and mental health services so young people facing challenges can participate fully in educational opportunities open to them;
- enabling people of all ages to enjoy lifelong learning;
- protecting our threatened libraries.

A decent home for us all – Labour's pledges on housing

Everyone needs a decent, safe home. But right now that's just a dream for many. Spiralling house prices are denying more and more young people a home of their own. Private renters are sometimes forking out over half of their wages on a home that's too often of poor quality. And the scandal of sleeping on the streets is still with us.



Labour locally would tackle the broken housing market by:

- building council housing, borrowing against the secure assets these homes would be for decades to come;
- using the Council's powers to ensure that housing developers pay in return for planning permissions and that the money raised is spent locally on essentials like schools and play areas that make communities better;
- cracking down on rogue landlords and introducing 'landlord licensing' to ensure the quality of privately rented homes;
- investing in schemes to put a roof over everyone's head such as supported housing and, as long as there are people who are homeless, a permanent night shelter.

Getting out and about – Labour's pledges on transport

Public transport should be exactly that – affordable and reliable trains and buses for all who need them. It's there so we can get to work, so that young people can travel to school or college and that people generally can get out and about. It's not there to line shareholders' pockets.



Labour locally would make North Somerset more mobile by:

- ending the nonsense of public transport only running if it makes a profit, by subsidizing services – and working with community transport organisations on better bus routes to lift the curse of isolation from people stranded without cars in all towns and rural areas;
- investing in cycle routes to widen travel options and improve the health of the community;
- exploring how electric buses can be used to protect our environment;
- investing in our roads to keep traffic and freight running smoothly;
- demanding the government finally put its money where its mouth is and re-open the long-awaited passenger line to Portishead.

Keeping well and attacking social isolation – Labour's pledges on health and social care

Everyone has a right to help and support to stay physically and mentally healthy through social care services together with services provided by the NHS - which must be protected from the Tories' creeping privatization.



Labour locally would safeguard your wellbeing by:

- continuing to find ways to keep a 24-hour A&E unit at Weston Hospital – and until then working with Bristol Royal Infirmary so patients discharged at night can get home safely;
- reducing the need for GP visits and hospital admissions by encouraging the use of tried and tested initiatives – for example, ‘social prescribing’ activities such as walking and gardening that link to social care;
- promoting lifelong health and cutting social isolation by increasing funding for setting up - and providing ongoing support for - projects that bring people together in shared interests and activities;
- working directly with voluntary sector partners to support carers of all ages, to prevent them from becoming isolated and to ensure that they have access to respite services and to educational and social opportunities.

Jobs and living standards – Labour’s pledges on the economy

Earning a living is fundamental to everyone's quality of life. People look to our Council to take a lead on action on the economy by, at the very least, using local businesses when possible, and insisting they treat workers decently and protect the environment.



Labour locally would go further by:

- learning from other councils who are nurturing prosperous economies (in which more people can work where they live and don't have to commute miles) by linking community, cooperative and public assets into a mutually supporting network that creates wealth and keeps it local;
- boosting start-ups and small businesses by setting up hubs with superfast broadband and shared resources such as printers;
- encouraging heritage and tourism projects which will make full use of North Somerset's rich assets;
- supporting our high streets to focus on their local communities, and use empty shops for projects which will attract more people to the area;
- setting a good example by paying all staff directly employed by the Council (whatever their age) at least the real Living Wage (currently £9 per hour);
- requiring all Council contractors do the same with their workers.

Keeping you safe – Labour's pledges on crime & security

We all want to live safely – free from crime and anti-social behaviour. More police on our streets will deter criminals and vandals.



Labour locally would strengthen our communities by:

- working with town and parish councils to employ more Police Community Support Officers on our streets and give them local premises to work from;
- launching neighbourhood crime prevention schemes so local people, community groups and the police can work together;
- supporting initiatives linked to mental health services and drugs programmes to encourage users to cut down/come off, and so minimize, drugs-related crime;
- investing in projects such as youth clubs that steer young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour by encouraging them to do something worthwhile with their lives.

A welcome for all – Labour's pledges on diversity & equality

Everyone has a right to a fulfilling life. We're all different in a range of ways – our ages, our physical and mental abilities, our genders, the colour of our skins, our religious beliefs, our sexual orientations, our identities. These differences add up to a community whose diversity we should celebrate for its rich mix of talents, experiences and contributions. We should also do all we can to lessen economic inequalities and help the poorest in our society.

Labour locally would welcome, celebrate and help everyone by:

- using existing powers to cut the council tax our poorest residents have to pay;
- supporting those waiting for Universal Credit payments to come through;
- tackling the bullying some young people face because of their sexual orientation or identity such as being lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, by working with schools, colleges and local organisations to improve teacher training in this area;
- making North Somerset 'disability friendly' by working with local businesses, charities and organisations led by disabled people to make everyone more aware of the barriers disabled people face – and how to get rid of these barriers;
- working with those helping migrants to contribute their skills to the local economy and wider society.

Giving your Council back to you – Labour's pledges on local democracy

It's right and fair that local people have a say in running their public services.

Labour locally would give your Council back to you by:

- making sure you have the right to get answers to the questions you're entitled to raise at Council meetings;
- scrapping the current system which gives a handful of senior councillors the power to take all the important decisions;
- giving all 50 of your councillors a bigger role.



Notes

Contact us:

North Somerset Constituency Labour Party
www.northsomersetlabour.co.uk
info@northsomersetlabourparty.co.uk
Telephone: 01275 219171

Weston-super-Mare Constituency Labour Party
www.westonlabour.org.uk
info@westonlabour.org.uk
Telephone: 01934 621956

For more information about the policies of the Labour Party:

For the Many, Not the Few

The Labour Party Manifesto

<https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/labour-manifesto-2017.pdf>



Promoted by Angela Everitt and Annie Higgs on behalf of the Local Campaign Forum of North Somerset Constituency Labour Party and Weston-super-Mare Constituency Labour Party. Printed by Aqueous UK Ltd, 315 High Street, Worle, Weston-super-Mare, BS22 6JR..