

# Maidenhead Labour Manifesto 2019

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**MAIDENHEAD FOR THE MANY, NOT THE FEW**

## A message from the Constituency Labour Party chair

Labour in Maidenhead is asking for your support in these crucial local elections – as the outcome will decide the future of our town for the coming years.

As residents prepare to cast their vote, we must remember that the Conservatives have consistently cut the budgets of local authorities – including ours – and that is set to continue.

This complete unwillingness, or inability, of RBWM council to stand up to central government is applying increasing pressure on our area – making it more difficult for the council to carry out essential services from waste collection to the maintenance of our parks and upkeep of our town centre.

Labour will take a two-fold approach to stand up to central government and to overhaul the way our local economy is managed.

To do this a Labour-run RBWM council will, finally, oppose damaging cuts imposed on local authorities by Conservative governments in the pursuit of austerity.

To begin rebuilding our communities and reverse the damage done in recent years, we will then start work to champion local people and enterprise – facing down the short-term profiteering that has led to so much wealth-extraction.

Our plans are set out in these pages and include bold proposals to: make sure the Borough's purchasing power back into our community; take back control of local services; foster sustainable development and support decimated youth and social care services.

We must also urgently begin a local fightback against the fragmentation of our health, education and childcare services – as well as spiralling poverty and homelessness.

School budgets are at breaking point, but the system of academies and free schools ushered in since 2010 has dismantled local accountability and allowed the government to shrug its shoulders in the name of “parental choice” and “innovation” – while local NHS services, and their providers, are increasingly compartmentalised as parts of it are handed over to private companies.

This manifesto marks a step-change in local politics – with our priorities driven by plans to bring power back into the Borough so that local people make decisions about the infrastructure we all collectively share.

**Labour needs your support on Thursday, May 2nd to build the confident, thriving and fairer Maidenhead we need, and all want to help deliver.**

# An inclusive economy in Maidenhead

A Labour council will:

- Create the right climate for business and people to thrive – ensuring fair and attractive business rates and improving road, cycle, pedestrian and disabled-access in our town.
- Secure Living Wage accreditation for the Borough to give working people more disposable income.
- Encourage local small- and medium-sized businesses to thrive – borrowing from the successes of the Labour-run Preston City Council – by overhauling the way contracts are awarded to ensure work is procured locally.
- Develop a local authority-run energy company across the Thames Valley and would encourage investment in energy storage – as Nottingham City Council has done successfully.
- Invest in infrastructure to improve connectivity for local businesses and better-maintain roads and footpaths – using proven environmental technology.
- Oppose the sale of prime assets for private sector development.
- Create a publicly-owned, local transport solution – as nearby councils in Reading and Slough have – to offer reliable, affordable and environmentally-friendly travel around the Borough.
- Encourage a social business model wherever possible to provide for social renting at prices that do not drive people to destitution or homelessness.
- Conduct a full review of parking provision – complementing this with a local public transport plan.

# Future-proofing education in Maidenhead

At national level, Labour Party policy is to create a unified National Education Service (NES) for England to move towards cradle-to-grave learning free at the point of use. To complement this locally, a Labour council will:

- Help our schools to lobby central Government for more money – the Institute for Fiscal studies says our school budgets have fallen by 8% since 2010, and that is totally unacceptable. No more crowdfunding for toilet rolls.
- Vehemently oppose the introduction of new grammar schools – advocated by Theresa May – as this will create a two-tier education system that will have a detrimental effect on the education of the vast majority of our young people.
- Support our schools to navigate the difficult system of accountability that often leaves school leaders in a bureaucratic maze between the local authority, academy schools, the Department for Education and Ofsted – often resulting in no support for local teachers who deserve better.
- Improve connectivity between schools, further education and higher education to maximise the availability and quality of provision to all young people.
- Defend the vital work of dedicated Special Education Needs Coordinators and counsellors in all Borough schools.
- Fight for extra resources for Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to reduce the waiting period for assessments.
- Seek to implement a better-connected and environmentally-friendly network of improved school bus services and cycle paths.
- Explore the feasibility of setting up a local network of supply teachers to drive down costs to local schools.

## **A fair deal – and a Living Wage**

A Labour council will:

- Be a Living Wage Employer and work to encourage all other direct and indirect suppliers to the council to pay the Living Wage.
- Conduct a review of the use of zero-hour contracts by all suppliers to the council – minimising their use except in specific circumstances.
- Prioritise the revitalisation of social care, health and education as poor working terms and conditions create immediate problems for those employed in these professions and store up longer-term societal problems.
- Encourage trade union membership among all council employees.
- Keep, or bring back, the provision of all local authority services, including waste management and processing, to the council.

## A secure, more affordable future

A Labour council will:

- Set up a tenants' union – as many other areas have done successfully – to fight for the rights of people living in rented accommodation, and clampdown on rogue landlords.
- Provide adequate resourcing and training to help council staff support people struggling with Universal Credit reforms – underpinned by emergency relief funding where needed.
- Review all Council tax bands to ensure a relevant audit is completed so that lower-income members of the community are not overburdened financially.
- Increase the number, and quality, of affordable social housing stock – reducing, significantly in the long-term, reliance on private landlords. This will be done by using the council-owned company the Borough already has, but misuses, to build sustainably on our own land.
- Increase resources available for planning and building regulation – to improve compliance and ensure that all housing development is completed with adequate infrastructure.
- Protect, and improve where necessary, the standard of assisted-living and care homes in the Borough through regular audits – exploring public ownership models for future care facilities.
- Work with local charities to end rough sleeping in the Borough and support the adequate provision of a permanent shelter and community day centre hub with necessary support services for the homeless and vulnerable.
- Conduct a review of all emergency housing across the Borough including a headcount of local homeless people and a full investigation into temporary, but often long-term, hostel accommodation.
- Ensure the development of housing occurs on brown belt land before any green belt development is approved.
- Develop a greater network of electric vehicle charging points across the Borough.
- Remove the Green Bin charge and champion community-based recycling and composting.

## Fighting for social care and the NHS

The Conservatives are slowly privatising the NHS – one of the cornerstones of our country – and only Labour can stop them from further dismantling free healthcare. A Labour council will:

- Encourage local health and social care services to be provided by public sector bodies.
- Carry out meaningful consultation on health and care services with local people.
- Bear down on financial waste and mis-spend in the Borough through an audit of all Health and Social Care private finance initiatives.
- Work with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in the Integrated System to improve access to GPs for residents.
- Support the integration of Social Care with the NHS to focus on prevention and rehabilitation.
- Support investment in drug and alcohol harm reduction through programmes offered at local treatment centres – building on a successful programme delivered by Wigan Council to help young people overcome addiction by treating such issues as a matter of public health rather than criminal justice.
- Work with local professional bodies and NHS providers to improve and increase the provision of mental health services, adult social services and disability services across the Borough.
- Explore how best to provide transport to those who cannot independently access treatment – and ensure all healthcare facilities are accessible.
- Reinstate a free bus pass programme that includes companion passes.

# A stronger, fairer community in Maidenhead

A Labour council will:

- Lobby central government to reverse deep cuts to policing – calling for greater resourcing of community policing teams to ensure a visible presence across the Borough.
- Restore adequate funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau in the Borough so that everyone has access to appropriate and accessible assistance.
- Urgently seek to reinstate a network of youth centres in the Borough.
- Restore the library to a library, rather than a council business unit, and encourage its use for a range of community activities.
- Uphold and promote equality and human rights of all residents and visitors to the Borough – by appointing an equality and human rights to hold the council to the Human Rights Act 1998.
- Drive down the gender pay gap that exists at the council, and within any service providers the council employs, by introducing new hiring practices and training on unconscious bias.
- Ensure all contracts issued by the council adhere to the 2010 Equality Act.
- Work with local community groups and national sporting bodies to improve sporting infrastructure.
- Ensure the provision of recreational space for the Arts, increasing support for Norden Farm, and provide an adequate site for the Heritage Centre.
- Help to maximise the ecological and leisure benefits of the Waterways project.
- Champion community groups to offer a forum for people to discuss local issues, face-to-face, and reach solutions to common problems.