

Building a Better Barnet

Barnet Labour Party
2014 Local Election Manifesto

Vote  **Labour** on 22 May
labour.org.uk

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Building a Better Barnet

Labour's manifesto for the Local Election 2014

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Building a Better Barnet

- Introduction by Cllr Alison Moore

Dear Resident,

After 12 years of a Conservative council in Barnet many people are angry.

Whether it's increasing parking charges for residents by up to 300% while Tory councillors claim free parking across the borough, or library and children's centre closures or mass-privatisation of council services, local residents feel let down and not listened to.

The Conservative council has lost £3 million in High Court battles since 2011 because they either failed to consult residents on major service changes or because they did not comply with legislation.

They gambled £27.4 million in failed Icelandic Banks and have wasted many more millions of pounds on expensive consultants while critical front-line services are cut or sold-off.

And few will forget that one of the first things the Barnet Tories did after the last local election was to vote themselves a bumper pay rise of up to £20,000 each.

The Conservatives say they are 'putting the community first' but many people are asking whose side are the Tories really on.

We want a council that listens to local people, cares about the things that they care about, and that works to achieve a better Barnet for everyone - even in these challenging financial times.

At the moment this is not happening, and we want to change that. Over the last year we've been asking thousands of residents through surveys and events what your priorities are so we can put you at the heart of everything we do.

In this manifesto we set out how we would work with you to restore democracy and fairness, help with the cost of living crisis, protect frontline services and make our borough safer, cleaner and greener.

We know that there will be tough decisions ahead because of the Conservative government's cuts to local councils. We believe that in tough times when resources are stretched it is even more important to talk to and work with local residents, so above all a Labour council will be a listening council.

I know that together we can build a better Barnet.



Cllr Alison Moore

Leader of the Barnet Labour Group and of the Opposition.

Our Key Pledges to you

✓ We'll listen and put residents first.

Barnet's Tories didn't listen on parking, library closures and mass privatisation. We'll give you a say over local budgets, introduce Public Question Time, and establish a Fairness Commission to restore democracy and fairness in Barnet.

✓ We'll give you at least 30 minutes free parking in all town centres & cash-enable meters.

Barnet's Tories hiked up parking charges and removed cash meters while claiming free parking themselves. We'll scrap the free councillors' parking perk and make parking fairer.

✓ We'll agree 20mph limits and safer crossings where residents support them.

We'll fix potholes and pavements to improve travel and keep people safe and put more money into street cleaning.

✓ We'll build more genuinely affordable homes.

Housing is extremely unaffordable in Barnet. We will stand up to developers, bring more empty homes back in use and set-up an Independent Barnet Housing Commission.

✓ We'll cut waste & help families with the cost of living.

We'll introduce a free bulky item collection service, help those unfairly hit by the Bedroom Tax and under a Labour government will increase free child care for 3 and 4 year olds. We'll cut waste on consultants, spin and councillor's allowances to help us keep council tax down.



Your Labour candidates from across Barnet

Restoring democracy and fairness

- » We will be a listening council and put residents first
- » We will consult on major decisions
- » We will establish a Fairness Commission to set out how we will make the Borough a fairer place
- » We will ensure your voice is heard in Council meetings by displaying your comments live in the Chamber at #mybarnet
- » We will give you a say on how neighbourhood budgets get spent
- » We will continue to support Resident Forums, and strive to ensure they are open and participatory
- » We will open up Full Council meetings to a half hour of Public Question Time and webcast council meetings so decision-making is open, transparent and we are fully accountable
- » We will look at best practice around establishing consultation groups and forums to get residents' and service users' on-going input in the co-production and designing of services
- » We will ensure that a representative of the service users is included in the membership of the Your Choice Board
- » We will scrap the Conservative councillors' free parking permits that Labour councillors refuse to claim as a point of principle
- » We will reduce the overall bill for councillors' allowances
- » We will invest in signs and lines to ensure parking enforcement is fair

Many people feel there is something profoundly wrong with the way our Borough is being run. Some people feel it's about putting up parking charges too high, others feel it's about cutting cherished services like Sheltered Housing wardens, and Children's Centres, closing Libraries or mass-privatisation of council services.

What all these things have in common, however, is the way that people feel they have been treated by the Conservative council. With each of the policy decisions listed above, either residents made it clear in the council's consultation that they were overwhelmingly against the proposals or residents were just not consulted at all. The council has proceeded regardless each time, and on four occasions - sheltered housing wardens, parking charges, library closures and 'One Barnet' mass-privatisation - it has landed the council in court. On 'One Barnet' the High Court judge ruled that the council had broken the law by failing to consult.

At the same time the public's rights to speak at council committees have been cut back.

This demonstrates a chronic failure by the council to listen to local people, and it is partly what is causing the feeling of unease amongst a growing section of our community about the way the council operates.

Councils across the country have had their funding from central government cut by more than a quarter, and by the end of the next spending period Barnet council's budget will have been reduced by half.

We believe that at a time when local government has to make very difficult decisions about resources it is more important than ever that councils work in partnership with local residents.

That's why we are proposing a package of pledges to ensure that a Labour council is a listening council, that we consult people on all major decisions, and that we introduce ways that people can more easily engage with the council including opening up Full Council to Public Question Time, webcasting all council meetings and giving local people a say on how neighbourhood budgets are spent.

And we need to ensure that everything the council does is fair. The Barnet Tories have presided over a litany of decisions that people feel are unfair – they hiked parking charges up by 300% for residents while claiming free parking across the borough themselves; they've cut hundreds of jobs and services to the vulnerable, the disabled and the elderly but voted to give themselves large pay increases of up to £20,000.

Labour will scrap the Tory councillors' free parking permits – if residents have to pay for parking then so should Conservative councillors, and we will reduce the overall councillors' allowances bill.

Under the Conservative-led coalition government local councils have faced unprecedented cutbacks. We know resources are limited and that further savings need to be made. However we will put fairness and transparency at the heart of our decision making. One of our first tasks will be to start work on getting our independently chaired Fairness Commission up and running.

Our independent Fairness Commission will set out what the council will do to make Barnet a fairer place. It will be made up of councillors, partner organisations and leading experts with a proven track record in tackling inequality, and its work will be used to help shape the council's corporate plan and policies and the budget that underpins them.

We will look at how we deliver the best outcomes for local people, organisations and employees – particularly those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged and who may experience discrimination. When money is tight and spending has to be prioritised, it's even more important to put those in greatest need at the heart of what we do.

Above all, we will put local residents first.



Helping with the cost of living

- » We will give you at least 30 minutes free parking in all town centres
- » We will introduce free parking in all town centres on all weekends in December
- » To achieve a reduction in fly-tipping and save council tax payers' money spent on landfill tax we will provide free collection of bulky waste items
- » We will scrap the Bedroom Tax under a Labour government
- » We will make greater use of Discretionary Housing Payments to assist those unfairly hit by the Bedroom Tax - the Tories have not used all the funds made available to them
- » We will use all available powers to stop the proliferation of pay day loan companies and betting shops on our high streets, and look at best practice from other local authorities in tackling the effects of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals and gaming machines
- » We will support and promote the North London Credit Union, and work to ensure access for everyone
- » We will work with a Labour government to increase free child care for working parents with 3 and 4 year olds from 15 hours a week to 25 hours a week
- » We will build more genuinely affordable homes to buy and rent
- » We will continue to campaign for a fair deal on fares
- » We will continue to pay directly employed council staff at least London's Living Wage, and work towards at least London's Living Wage for all contracted out staff
- » We will promote paying at least London's Living Wage across Barnet to other employers, making steps towards becoming a Living Wage Borough
- » We will continue to support and be a member of the Big London Energy Switch
- » We will keep council tax down

We know residents are facing an ongoing cost of living crisis. Under David Cameron the average Londoner's wages have fallen more than £3,000, energy bills are up by almost £300, and commuters in outer-London boroughs like Barnet have been hit by year-on-year inflation busting fare rises.

We believe the council should be doing all it can to help our hard-pressed residents. Barnet's Tories hiked up parking charges by up to 300% in one year - we'll introduce at least 30 minutes free parking in all Barnet's town centres, and we'll make parking free in all town centres on all weekends in December to help residents and traders.

We're also in the middle of a housing crisis. Rents in Barnet are the most expensive in outer-London and house prices have rocketed beyond the reach of those on an average salary. The Conservative-led coalition government cut Labour's affordable housing programme by 60%, and Barnet's Tories have not built enough affordable homes for rent or purchase. And they have only built 3 new council homes in the last 12 years. We will stand up to developers and build more genuinely affordable homes, including at least 300 new council homes over the next four years.

We will introduce a free bulky item collection service to help households dispose of bulky waste and reduce fly-tipping. The service will save residents money, and reduce the cost to the council of dealing with fly-tipping and landfill tax. We will continue to support and promote the use of the Barnet Furniture Centre for residents who want to give unwanted furniture to others who can use it, and also the 123 Recycle for Free service to help dispose of electrical goods.

A Labour government has pledged to scrap the unfair bedroom tax that is causing so many disabled, elderly and vulnerable residents to fall into debt. Until then, a Labour council will make greater use of hardship funds like the Discretionary Housing Payment to help those unfairly hit by the bedroom tax.

We will use all available powers to stop the proliferation of pay day loan companies and betting shops that blight our high streets, and we'll support and promote the North London Credit Union and work to ensure it is easily accessible to those who need it.

Child care costs have spiralled by 30% making it harder for parents to return to work. Under a Labour government we'll increase free child care for working parents with 3 and 4 year olds from 15 hours a week to 25 hours a week.

And we'll help those struggling with energy bills by continuing to support the Big London Energy Switch - which the Tories only signed up to after we campaigned on it for over a year. This will help ensure residents have access to the lowest energy rates. A Labour government will freeze energy bills for two years and review the way the energy market works.

We believe everyone deserves a fair day's pay for a hard day's work, and the dignity of paying their way in life. We will continue to pay all directly employed council staff at least London's Living Wage, and work towards paying contracted out staff at least London's Living Wage. We will promote paying the Living Wage to other employers in the Borough so we can move towards being a Living Wage Borough.

Council Tax is one of the largest household bills, so to help residents we will cut waste on fat cat consultants, council propaganda and councillors' allowances to keep council tax down.



BUDGET LATEST

FAMILIES

£1,600

WORSE OFF

Vote Labour
labour.org.uk

N.B Figure of £1600 is the national average for UK families, Londoners are on average £3000 worse off under Cameron's Tory / Lib Dem Coalition

An ambitious Borough

Town Centres & Traders

- » We will introduce at least 30 minutes free parking in all town centres
- » We will introduce free parking in all town centres on all weekends in December
- » We will cash-enable all current card-only parking meters
- » We will introduce an Oyster-style 'Barnet Card' as an additional method for paying for parking, which residents will receive with their council tax bill
- » We will develop the functionality of the Barnet Card for other council services and work with traders to include discounts in local shops and restaurants to support our town centres
- » We will be a business-friendly council
- » We will establish a properly functioning Business Forum for local traders to create a meaningful relationship
- » We will work with traders where they want to establish Business Improvement Districts
- » We will look at using powers available to restrict the proliferation of Pay Day Lenders and Betting shops that are blighting our high streets
- » We will introduce extra street sweeping on weekends in town centres
- » A Labour government will freeze business rates at 2014 levels for 3 years for businesses with a rateable value of less than £50,000

We are ambitious for our borough, and want to encourage and stimulate growth. We believe our town centres and high streets are part of the lifeblood of our community, each with their own character and individual sense of place. We want to create vibrant places to be in our major town centres, and protect and enhance smaller town centres and high streets to ensure their sustainability with the growth of out of town shopping centres like Brent Cross and the rise of online shopping.

Our town centres and traders have suffered through a lack of support, the mess that has been made of parking policy, and little strategic co-ordination in town centres or engagement with traders and businesses by the current council.

A Labour council will be a business-friendly council and will engage with traders and local businesses through a properly functioning Business Forum in order to improve and sustain each of our town centres and high streets.

We will sort out the mess the Tories have made of parking with our package of parking pledges including a 30 minute free parking period in all town centres, free parking at weekends in December, cash-enablement of current card-only parking meters, and the roll-out of an Oyster style 'Barnet Card' as an additional parking payment method. We will seek to develop the functions of the Barnet Card as a method of payment for other council services, and work with traders to see if discounts could be offered in local shops, cafes and restaurants on a loyalty scheme basis. We will also ensure that signs and lines are properly maintained so parking enforcement is fair.

We will use available powers to stop the proliferation of betting shops and pay day lenders on our high streets to help sustain our town centres.

We will also increase town centre street sweeping on weekends to keep them clean and attractive, and support our vibrant local markets.

Jobs, skills and the local economy

- » We will work in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, Barnet & Southgate College, Middlesex University and other organisations to ensure that local people have the right skills for the right job
- » We will take steps to encourage owners of empty offices to bring the buildings back into productive use
- » We will use vacant council office space to help business start-ups and to establish a kick-start programme
- » We will support and encourage co-operative solutions to the Barnet economy
- » We will promote lifelong learning
- » We will continue to pay all directly employed council staff at least London's Living Wage, and work towards ensuring all contracted-out staff are paid at least London's Living Wage also
- » We will make keeping jobs local a priority in our procurement policy
- » We will include use of local businesses in our procurement policy
- » We will sign-up to the Sustainable Communities act, and submit proposals to improve the well-being of our local area
- » We will bolster the Community Right to Bid and Challenge powers and actively promote social value as a criterion in the procurement and commissioning of local services

Through our Business Forum we will work with owners of empty shops and offices to bring these buildings back into productive use, and we will use vacant office space to help business start-ups.

We believe mutuals, co-operatives and social enterprises can be vehicles for economic development, and will encourage the growth of these types of businesses to help generate jobs and provide services.

Under the Conservatives' 'One Barnet' mass-privatisation programme hundreds of jobs have been lost to the Borough, and as a result money has been lost to the local economy. We called for keeping jobs local to be part of the procurement criteria in the letting of these massive contracts. The Tories refused. We will ensure that social value is considered as part of managing procurement, including a reference to keeping jobs local in the council's procurement policy, and we will ensure the council's procurement strategy recognises the benefits of procuring from local small businesses and that local economic development strategies take account of the needs of and support the growth of the local economy.

We will continue to value and support a flourishing, dynamic voluntary and community sector in meeting the needs of our diverse community.



Whetstone High street

Education, Schools and Early Years

- » We will work with local education providers and employers to ensure that all young people have access to education, training or a work placement according to their needs
- » We will work to reduce the educational attainment gap between children on free school meals and those not on free school meals, and to ensure all our schools are schools of choice for parents
- » We will encourage schools to remain within the family of Barnet schools, or form along co-operative lines rather than become part of a private Academy chain
- » We will work with schools to ensure a ballot is taken of parents and staff at all schools that are considering becoming an Academy

We want to ensure that all children get the best start in life and the best education.

We will continue to support our Sure Start children's centres and other early years provision to help parents and their children. The government has cut funding to children's centres resulting in the closure of 8 children's centres by the current Conservative council. We will continue to oppose and campaign against cuts to children's centres and early years provision.

Barnet continues to have some of the best schools in the country. A Labour council will seek to work with every school to ensure all are schools of choice for local parents, and are delivering the best possible education for every child.

We will work in partnership with all council-run schools, academies and free schools to ensure that school standards continue to improve, and that the running of all schools is transparent and accountable.

We will work with schools to ensure that resources are targeted to reduce any attainment gap.



A Labour administration would deliver more affordable childcare

A clean, green Borough

- » We will provide extra funding for street cleaning in residential hotspots
- » We will provide a hotline for reporting environmental crime
- » We will crack down hard on fly-tipping and introduce a free bulky item collection service
- » We will invest to ensure we reach 50% re-cycling by 2020
- » We will empower officers to issue fixed penalty notices for a wider range of enviro-crime
- » We will work with local communities and 'Friends of' groups to enable them to take decisions that affect their parks

Many people like living in Barnet because of its green and open spaces. In recent years we have received more and more complaints about the state of some of our parks and green spaces. We believe some need to be maintained to a better standard, and we'll work to improve this if elected in May.

We will also work with current 'Friends of ...' groups and help support residents who wish to become more involved in or form new 'Friends of ...' groups to help restore pride and maintain improvements to local parks.

The Conservative-led coalition government has eroded protections of the greenbelt through its planning reforms, but we are committed to protecting the greenbelt and will not allow further development of any greenbelt land in Barnet.

We are committed to protecting our conservation areas.

We also hear on the doorstep about the poor state of some of our streets, and about the blight of fly-tipping in particular areas. In order to tackle this we will provide a hotline for residents to report environmental crime, extra funding for residential street cleaning hotspots, and also a free bulky item collection service of up to three items three times a year per household to help prevent fly-tipping.

Anyone who fly-tips can expect enforcement action to be taken against them or to be prosecuted where appropriate.

We will also empower officers to be able to issue fixed penalty notices to anyone caught carrying out enviro-crime such as graffiti, fly-tipping and littering.

We will continue to oppose the use of Pinkham Way as a waste treatment plant and depot, and believe that more could be done to increase re-cycling rates to ensure that Pinkham Way never needs to be used as a waste treatment plant. We will invest and work with residents to ensure that we reach 50% re-cycling by 2020.



Labour will protect Barnet's green spaces

Transport

- » Labour will fight for better public transport for a cleaner, greener Barnet including suburban rail services and orbital rails links
- » We will continue our campaign for better bus access to local hospitals, including a bus service to Finchley Memorial Hospital
- » We will support the use of local car clubs to help reduce congestion and pollution

Barnet is one of the largest boroughs in London in terms of square km, and has problems with traffic congestion and pollution in some areas. A report from Public Health England released in April this year shows that Barnet had the highest estimated number of deaths in London (162) attributable to pollution in 2010 for those aged 25 and over.

We believe that improved public transport, including better bus links, rail services and cheaper fares will encourage more people to get out of their cars and use public transport to help alleviate congestion on our roads and reduce pollution. A Labour council will work with partner organisations, the Mayor of London and Transport for London for improvements to public transport, including suburban rail services and orbital rail links.

We will maximise the take-up of available funding for cycling to ensure it is supported and promoted.

We will also support and promote the use of car clubs to help reduce congestion and pollution, and continue our campaign for better bus access to local hospitals, including a bus service to Finchley Memorial Hospital.

Public transport fares in London are now the most expensive in the world and this affects outer-London Boroughs like Barnet even more. A zone 1-6 travelcard is now £536 more than when Boris Johnson first became Mayor of London, and a single bus journey has gone up by 61%. We will continue to campaign for a fair deal on fares.



Labour will fight for better public transport across Barnet

Housing

- » We will establish an independent housing commission to listen to you and report back within six months on possible housing solutions to help fix the housing crisis
- » We will build more genuinely affordable homes to buy and rent
- » We will bring more empty homes back in use
- » We will use best practice to crack down on rogue landlords and lettings agents
- » We will investigate establishing a not-for-profit lettings agency
- » When developing new homes for rent or purchase, we will work with local residents to develop lettings plans so community needs are taken into account
- » We will introduce a private tenants' rights charter

Barnet has a housing crisis. Rent levels in the private rented sector and house prices are amongst the highest in London. Home ownership is falling with more and more forced into renting privately and a woeful undersupply of council housing.

In this year's Resident's Perception Survey the lack of affordable housing was in the top three issues that people are most concerned about in Barnet. Affordability of housing affects everyone - not just the very poorest.

The council's record on this is simply not good enough - far too little has been done to address the issues. It is time for a fresh approach - to look at best practice elsewhere and challenge the council to find solutions for all those in Barnet struggling to find an affordable, decent place to live.

A Labour council will establish an independent Housing Commission to give a real focus to and a step change in tackling the housing crisis in Barnet.

Commission members will include leading figures from across the housing sector - from housing association heads, construction and regeneration experts, developers, private rented sector experts, councillors, local government experts, finance experts, academics and voluntary sector representatives. Housing Commissions have been successful in other London boroughs with records on housing far better than Barnet. It's time housing was taken more seriously in Barnet.

The Commission is expected to report its findings within six months and will cover issues such as what can be done to improve the choice and quality in both private and social housing; what policies would encourage the building of more social rent homes, how the council can use its resources following the Housing Revenue Account reforms to maximise the delivery of social/affordable housing, what else needs to be done to build successful and sustainable communities (for example to encourage apprenticeship schemes), how can we encourage decent and fair standards in Barnet's private rented sector, how can we promote affordable home ownership; how can we meet the needs of the elderly and the young, how we ensure a fair deal for Barnet tenants and leaseholders, and finally whether there are other solutions that need to be looked at - for example mutual/co-operative home ownership and community land trusts.

A Labour council will build more genuinely affordable homes, including at least 300 new council homes over the next four years.

Other pledges include helping people unfairly hit by the Bedroom Tax, bringing empty homes back in use and championing private tenants' rights.

Culture and the arts

- » We will ensure Friern Barnet Community Library has a lease long enough to secure funding for a sustainable future
- » We will support community Libraries as part of the network of Barnet Libraries
- » We will continue to support arts and other organisations including artsDepot, local museums, Finchley Youth Theatre, and Community Focus
- » We will consult residents on how we can work together to improve the local culture offer
- » We will support the registering of local pubs as community assets where residents support it

We believe supporting culture and the arts is an important part of creating a vibrant borough, and also an important part of economic regeneration.

A Labour council will do all it can to support and promote local arts and cultural events, including community festivals.

We will work with local people on a framework to improve and sustain the local culture offer.

As part of that offer, we will continue to support our local libraries - both council-run and community-run - including ensuring Friern Barnet Community Library has a lease long enough to secure external funding to sustain its future.

We will not close libraries, and we will look at best practice and other models such as the Friern Barnet Community Library to strengthen and continue providing library services throughout the borough.



Labour will protect Barnet's libraries

BARNET
LONDON BOROUGH

Putting the Community First

Childs Hill Library

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	10 - 1 and 2 - 5
Wednesday	10 - 1 and 2 - 5
Thursday	10 - 1 and 2 - 8
Friday	10 - 1 and 2 - 5
Saturday	9.30 - 1 and 2 - 5
Sunday	Closed

T 020 8359 3900 **W** www.barnet.gov.uk

Protecting frontline services

- » We will make sure every penny of council tax payers' money is being spent on what matters through a zero-based budget review
- » We will cut waste and expenditure on fat cat consultants, agency staff, pointless propaganda and councillors' allowances
- » We will seek to increase income through trading to reinvest in frontline services
- » We will halt further moves to privatise services on a mass scale
- » We will seek to protect and improve in-house and frontline services
- » We will look at innovative service delivery options and best practice in other local authorities to protect local services
- » We will conduct robust options appraisals of any key service changes
- » We will consult local residents and service users on any key service changes
- » We will review the two Capita contracts at the earliest opportunity allowable under the contracts, and hold all contractors to perform against their contract promises, including NSL
- » As good employers we will restore Trades Union facility time to ensure the best workplace relations
- » We will improve customer services for residents, making it more accessible

In a time of austerity when the council is facing huge funding cuts from central government it is even more important to make sure that every penny is being spent wisely in order to protect frontline services.

Under the Barnet Conservatives' 'One Barnet' programme, the council has cut crucial frontline services and sold-off services to large corporations to run without conducting proper options appraisals, in-house benchmarking and without consultation.

At the same time they have wasted millions of pounds on expensive consultants, agency staff, and have increased allowances for Conservative councillors.

We will look at how every penny is spent to make sure that it is being spent on priorities for Barnet residents and where it is most needed, and we will cut spend on consultants and reduce the overall councillors' allowances bill.

We will work to restore some core principles about how we believe a council should deliver public services. Underpinning our approach will be our strong belief in a public service ethos. We will seek to provide services in-house where that is best, and after will explore options to commission services from not-for-profit trading companies, mutuals and co-operatives, and the voluntary sector. Any future outsourcing of council services will be done in line with our social value procurement strategy, and only following robust options appraisals to ensure outsourcing really is the best option.

We will use best practice in working with other councils and public sector organisations to keep costs down and achieve value for money, including by sharing services and working towards more joined-up solutions to local problems.

We will review the two Capita contracts at the earliest possible opportunity allowable under the contracts, and hold all contractors to account against their contract promises.

We will use available powers to increase income to the council to help deliver and protect frontline council services.



Safer streets, healthier lives

Road Safety

- » We will introduce safer crossings and 20 mph limits where residents support them
- » We will improve the state of our roads and pavements to protect motorists, cyclists and pedestrians alike
- » We will use available funding to make cycling safe and attractive

The poor state of roads and pavements in Barnet is the number 1 concern for local people according to the council's latest Residents' Perception Survey. Poorly maintained roads and pavements affect motorists, cyclists and pedestrians alike, and the latest council data shows only 59% of unsafe or 'intervention level' potholes are made safe within 48 hours of being reported by members of the public - that's against a target of 100%. Labour will use the £7m sitting in council coffers specifically for road and pavement improvement to better effect, and would hold contractors to account for poor performance.

There were 1,262 casualties from road traffic accidents in Barnet in 2012. That's the 2nd highest number of casualties in London, and the highest number of all outer-London Boroughs. A Labour council will introduce safer crossings and 20mph limits where residents support them - not just around schools - in order to protect children, older people and those with disabilities. There is a direct link between reducing speed and reducing injury and fatalities on our roads.

Labour councillors have been campaigning for and supporting residents in various road safety campaigns for many years, including the Walksafe N2, N10 and N14 and Victoria Road, New Barnet campaigns and other petitions for safer crossings and road safety measures.

We will work to make cycling safer. Although there was a 9% reduction in the number of casualties in Barnet in 2012 compared to 2011, there has been a 15% increase in the number of casualties amongst cyclists with 82 in total in the last reported year. Barnet Cyclists have identified a number of roads in the Borough where they feel there is a safety problem, or where improvements could be made to help cyclists. A Labour council would ask officers to look at these suggested improvements to identify which could be implemented.

Of course, all of this costs money, and the Barnet Tories have missed out on millions of pounds from the Mayor of London over successive years by not pressing Barnet's case strongly enough. A Labour council would maximise the uptake of any available investment to implement schemes, provide cycling training in schools and ensure cycling is encouraged, supported and safe in Barnet.

Police and Crime

- » We will work in partnership with the local police, our communities and Neighbourhood Watch to reduce crime
- » We will continue to fight cuts to Barnet's police service and lobby for Barnet's fair share of resources
- » We will take a tough approach to tackling anti-social behaviour
- » We will ensure our streets and footpaths are safely lit
- » We will work with local police to increase awareness of and to tackle hate crime

Crime and the fear of crime is always a top concern for residents, and it is a top priority for local councils. Barnet has a relatively low crime rate compared with other London boroughs, but certain types of crime are still on the increase, including residential burglary, and more must be done to tackle it.

We will always work in partnership with the local police and all our diverse communities to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

Under the Conservative Mayor of London the number of police officers and PCSOs has fallen in Barnet, while our local police must manage within the budgets they are given, we will continue to fight for Barnet's fair share of police resources and to oppose any further cuts to police.

Things the council can do directly to make our streets safer, including ensuring streets and footpaths are safely lit, we will do.

And we will work with the police to tackle any form of hate crime that seeks to undermine our harmonious community relations in Barnet.



Public Health, Social Care and the NHS

- » We will continue to fight against cuts to our local health services and hospitals
- » We will stop any investments from our pension fund in tobacco and alcohol companies
- » We will promote sport and physical activity to improve health and well being across the Borough
- » We will sign-up to the Alzheimer's Society's 'Dementia Manifesto for London'
- » We will seek to address the health inequalities that blight our Borough
- » We will promote dignity and respect for our older people, disabled people and those with learning difficulties
- » We will strive to prevent older people from becoming isolated
- » We will seek to improve access to better mental health services and effective treatments, and establish a Charter for Mental Health
- » Safeguarding will be at the heart of everything we do
- » We will invest in early intervention and prevention services to help local families
- » We will sign-up to the principles of Unison's ethical care charter
- » We will sign-up to the Sustainable Communities act, and submit proposals to improve the well-being of our local area
- » We will bolster the Community Right to Bid and Challenge powers and actively promote social value as a criteria in the procurement of local services

Our National Health Service is being dismantled and is under constant threat of cuts and privatisation from the Conservative-led coalition government.

Before the 2010 General Election David Cameron promised to protect NHS funding and also promised that there would be no top-down re-organisation of the NHS. Both promises have been broken, and our NHS is now undergoing a massive re-organisation costing £3 billion whilst having to find £20 billion in efficiency "savings".

All this is putting pressure on our local health services - particularly hospital services - where local A&E departments are increasingly struggling to meet targets and demand.

We have been campaigning against the cuts to local health services, and will continue to support and fight for the principle that the NHS is free for everyone at the point of need and use.

The council is now responsible for public health and has a substantial budget for tackling public health issues. A Labour council will ensure this budget is used to reduce health inequalities across the borough, and to improve the health of all residents particularly to prevent and tackle obesity, diabetes, teenage pregnancy and substance abuse, and encourage the cessation of smoking.

We will stop any investments from our pension fund in tobacco and alcohol companies.

We will work to integrate health and social care for better health outcomes and to save precious resources.

Barnet is 'Dementia Capital of London' with the highest prevalence amongst all the boroughs and almost twice the average - 0.61% of the population compared with 0.35%. We will sign-up to the Alheimers Society Dementia Manifesto for London to help tackle the issue.

For older people, we will strive to make the borough age friendly, make travel more accessible, including fight to protect the Freedom Pass, ensure high quality health and social care services - including signing up to Unison's Ethical Care Charter, help older people stay fit, active and involved, tackle isolation, provide accessible, affordable housing, ensure equal opportunities in employment and volunteering, work to make Barnet's streets safe and attractive and make information more accessible.

And we will do all we can to support carers, and we will introduce a Mental Health Charter.



Vote  **Labour** on 22 May

labour.org.uk