

Lewisham Together Towards a Better Future

Labour's Manifesto for the 2014 Mayoral and Local Elections on 22 May

What we have done since 2010:

- Overseen 2,090 new affordable homes built, brought back 1,000 homes into use and upgraded 3,000 existing homes;
- Become the first council in the country to adopt the Living Wage officially benefitting hundreds of local workers;
- Helped save Lewisham Hospital's A&E and maternity services;
- Improved our Primary Schools to achieve the fourth best results in the country;
- Opened two new Leisure Centres with swimming pools, a new library in Deptford and created five community libraries by working with local residents;

In the next four years we will:

- Tackle the cost of living crisis, freeze council tax for at least two years and lead the way on fair pay and fight fuel poverty;
- Deliver a minimum of 2,000 new affordable homes, building 500 council homes directly, tackle rogue landlords and rip-off letting agents;
- Support the creation of 3,000 new jobs over the next seven years to ensure that the benefits of regeneration in Lewisham reach local people;
- Help young people by increasing the number of apprenticeships to 1,000 by 2018 and ensure provision of quality vocational training;
- Guarantee a primary school place at a good quality local school for every child and improve secondary school results by 10%.

Foreword

by Steve Bullock, Labour Candidate for Mayor of Lewisham

On 22 May you will help decide who will be responsible for local services in Lewisham over the next four years. The challenges we face are not easy, and I want to be as honest with you about that as I have been throughout the 12 years I have served as your mayor.



We all share three basic needs - a place to live, food in our stomachs and enough money to pay for the essentials of life. Without these needs, it is not possible to take advantage of many the other things most of us take for granted. Schools, libraries and parks and much more cannot be put to good use if you are homeless, hungry or destitute.

While most of us have affordable homes, good diets and secure incomes, a growing number of our fellow citizens are increasingly finding they don't have one or more of these essentials, and the root causes of this affects us all:

- The London housing crisis is seen most clearly in the rising tide of homelessness. But it is also affecting thousands of others both young and old. We have reached a situation where even those on middle incomes struggle to find places they can afford to buy or rent.
- Poor diet and nutrition affect people's ability to learn while increasing obesity adds to the strains on our already overstretched health services.
- Falling incomes reduce economic activity, undermine local businesses and create a vicious circle of debt that is then exploited by payday loan sharks and other businesses for which profit is the only motive.

Under Labour, Lewisham Council has addressed each of these issues:

- We have facilitated the development of 1,500 new affordable homes, brought more than 1,000 empty homes back into use and brought 3,000 properties up to the decent homes standard since 2010.
- We were the first local council to achieve Living Wage accreditation and we implemented the London Living Wage across all new council contracts. We have

supported our local credit unions which offer fully-protected low-cost loans and ethical savings plans. We have tackled youth unemployment and created more than 350 apprenticeships.

Over the next four years, we face more savage cuts in the funding imposed by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat government, vital in supporting our services. We will inevitably face some very tough choices and we will need to take a radical approach to how services are delivered. But we also need to do even more to address these three basic issues. If Labour is re-elected, we will:

- Make housing our top priority, building still more affordable homes and rooting out rogue landlords and letting agents in the private rented sector.
- Develop a more comprehensive approach to food and nutrition.
- Continue to work with credit unions, advice agencies and local employers to make fairness in personal incomes a reality for more people.

Lewisham is a place many of us are proud to call our home - it has a strong community that comes together when threatened, never more so than when we worked together to save Lewisham Hospital last year. It is also an active community with hundreds of groups, large and small, working hard to make their areas and neighbourhoods a better place.

There are good schools and leisure facilities, lots of green spaces and excellent links to the wider city. It was the Council that campaigned for the better travel links that many of you use to get to work in central London and Docklands.

That has in part resulted in our growing population with increasing pressures on housing and school places. Many of the changes that have happened since the crash of 2008 have widened the gap between the poorest in our community and the rest, none more so than the impact of cuts to all of our public services.

At the 2010 election Labour knew that cuts were inevitable, but the scale of those cuts was unprecedented and unjustified. Nevertheless, we were prepared and, working with other organisations in local government and the wider public services, we were able to cut the Council's spending while still maintaining vital services. We chose to keep council tax rises as low as possible. This is the right thing to do - helping residents with the cost of living in these tough times - but it has meant some tough choices on how we have spent.

In some cases, we have been able to make savings by changing the way things are done and creating new cost-effective partnerships. In other cases, services have been taken on

by local people or community groups. But there have also inevitably been job losses and service cuts in some areas.

At the same time, we have delivered on our promises to continue investing in our schools, homes and leisure facilities - and developed programmes to make sure that the economic impact of that work benefits local businesses and residents, particularly young people in the borough.

During the last four years London as a city has coped better than the rest of the UK, not least because of the boost that the 2012 Olympic Games gave the whole city. There are opportunities in London and we must make sure that Lewisham's young people can make the most of them in the years ahead.

The politically-motivated Conservative government cuts - supported by the Liberal Democrats - have hit areas of higher need like Lewisham hardest. Unless there is a change of direction, Lewisham, along with most urban councils, faces an even more difficult financial situation over the next four years. Since 2010 the government has cut its funding to Lewisham by 30%, leading to cuts of £93m. As things stand, the Council will have to make a further £84m of cuts in the next four years. This means cutting £1 in every £3 that is currently spent on services. We all know that taking that much out means very tough choices ahead.

We will not be able to protect every part of every service - we will need to innovate and look at new ways of delivering our public services whilst ensuring the vulnerable are protected. It would be wrong to rule out anything which can reduce costs but sustain services. However, we also need to be clear about our priorities and our principles.

For us, those priorities are housing, education, the cost of living, jobs and growth, and supporting the most vulnerable members of our community.

The two most important principles are togetherness and fairness. We need to work together with our community to understand your needs and to enable you collectively to do those things which make a difference in your area. We also need to be fair in everything we do - fair as an employer, fair to different parts of the borough and fair to all sections of the community.

Not all the services and facilities we need and use are the direct responsibility of the Council - Policing, NHS, Further and Higher Education, Public Transport and many others are controlled by other agencies. But the councillors and mayor you elect on 22 May will be your democratic voice for how all of those services are run - no matter where formal responsibility lies.

All those public services face huge financial pressures and it is only by working together that we can hope to balance our budgets and still maintain acceptable levels of service. Nowhere is this more urgent than in health where Lewisham Council and the local NHS are already working together closely. Over the next four years, we will have to integrate many of our services so we can offer you the quality of service you expect.

In the following pages, Labour sets out the ways we will address the future in more detail as we deal with both the loss of government funding and growing demand. We know that in some areas we can build on past success to have an even greater impact. In others, we will need to work with you and with our partners to decide which are the essential things we must maintain and how we do it.

Lewisham is a great place and I have been proud to serve as its Mayor. We have been able to sustain the quality of life in our borough over the last four years because of the way you, the people of Lewisham, have responded – because of the hard work of thousands of public servants and because we share a belief in building a community where tolerance, respect and fairness are the values to which we aspire.

As we have faced up to the effects of a government that chose austerity over growth, and penalised ordinary people and the least wealthy, we have been helped in countering the worst effects by the way you, the residents of Lewisham, responded. This was never more important than in the united opposition to the cuts affecting the emergency services – fire and ambulance services, the police, and most of all Lewisham Hospital's A&E and maternity services – perhaps the most wanton and unjust proposals we in Lewisham have ever had to face. That response, which the council played a full part in, has been truly inspiring and we want to build on the sense of a united community that engendered in planning for the future.

If you share our vision and values, if you value our track record of delivering for you and working with you for Lewisham I ask for your support at this election – for myself as your mayor and for the three local Labour candidates in your ward – so we can work together to make Lewisham an even better place for everyone.



Contents

Foreword	2
Building the Homes Lewisham Needs.....	7
Growth and Jobs	10
The Cost of Living and Fair Pay	12
Education and Young People.....	15
Cleaner, Greener and Safer	18
Lewisham Together - A Stronger Community.....	21

Building the Homes Lewisham Needs



Having a roof over our heads is one of the most basic needs we all share. For too many families today, it has become almost impossible to find somewhere affordable to live in London. Lewisham needs thousands of new homes over the next four years to meet the needs of a growing population - homes to buy, homes at market rents and homes at genuinely affordable rents. Labour in Lewisham has responded not only by encouraging the development of thousands of new affordable homes, but also by beginning to build new homes ourselves.

Since 2010 we have...	In the next four years we will...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseen the development of 2,090 new affordable homes - in 2011-12 the Council delivered the third highest number of new affordable homes in the country, and in 2012-13 the highest of any London borough; • Regenerated 3,000 homes to the Decent Homes Standard; • Brought 84 under-occupied large family homes and more than 1,000 empty homes back into use; • Set up a Private Sector Housing Agency to improve standards in the private rented sector; • Accredited 320 landlords across the borough and taken successful action against rogue landlords who don't meet our standards; • Developed a range of tailor-made housing for older people, including extra care facilities and sheltered housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to deliver a minimum of 2,000 new affordable homes and expand the council's new home building programme to deliver at least 500 of them directly; • Tackle rogue landlords and rip-off letting agents when we set up our own Lewisham Lettings Agency; • Negotiate for more genuinely affordable homes in new developments; • Bring more empty homes back into use; • Create new jobs and apprenticeships in the building industry; • Complete the regeneration of all our housing stock to the national Decent Homes standard by 2018; • Help prevent households affected by the Bedroom Tax falling into rent arrears; • Work with housing providers in the borough to raise standards across the board in housing management and repairs services.

What that means...

Addressing London's housing crisis

London is in the midst of its worst housing crisis since the 1960s. Across the capital, there has been a failure to build enough new homes year-on-year to meet current need, let alone the needs of our growing population. It is estimated that there will be an additional 23,500 people living in Lewisham by 2030.

Housing affordability has declined rapidly. Substantial price inflation from the mid-1990s until the recession in 2007 resulted in a 250% increase in the average house price in Lewisham. The private rented sector in Lewisham doubled in size between 2001 and 2011. It now accounts for 25% of the housing stock. Rents are high, letting agents' fees expensive, and too many people who rent are forced to live in sub-standard conditions.

We urgently need to expand our work on these issues in Lewisham before they get worse. Labour's commitment is to build new council homes, work with partners to deliver additional housing of all types and tenures, and tackle the worst excesses of the private rented sector.

Building new homes

We will build a minimum of 500 new council homes by 2018. But Labour wants that to be just the start, so we are lobbying Government to get additional funding to build more and have already identified sites owned by the Council that we can build on.

Labour will only work with fair employers, so we will ensure that our new homes are built by contractors who pay the London Living Wage and that each development has its own apprentice and trainee scheme.

The Council has also been looking at innovative ways of delivering the housing Lewisham needs through self-build and low-cost home-ownership schemes for first time buyers struggling to get on the housing ladder. We are working to unlock "stalled" large-scale schemes that could deliver thousands of homes quickly and identify brown-field and publicly-owned sites that could be developed.

Labour will press developers to increase the proportion of genuinely affordable homes in new housing schemes and be prepared to look at all options to achieve this.

We will also continue to lobby Government to reinstate the levels of subsidy the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition took away which allowed for higher levels of affordable housing before 2010.

Tackling rogue landlords and rip-off letting agents

The Council has developed a variety of approaches to support those who are most in housing need and who live in private rented accommodation. This has included procuring properties through private sector leasing, working with existing landlords to secure precarious tenancies and generally improve rents for Lewisham residents.

Labour wants to build on this work with our new Lewisham Lettings Agency. It will be free to landlords and customers, and will focus on improving the supply and quality of private sector homes. It will guarantee that the properties it offers are of a good standard, well-located, well managed and maintained, with an appropriate degree of tenure and offered at the best price.

The agency will start by focusing primarily on finding properties for:

- homeless households where the agency will take on the management and maintenance of the properties;
- preventing homelessness to avoid the need to use Bed and Breakfast facilities;
- people who are affected by the benefit cap;
- those who face homelessness but who, with the right advice and a small incentive, could gain access to a privately-rented home.

We also want the agency to improve property standards across the private sector. Working with existing good landlords, we hope to extend and support their businesses in Lewisham, and we want to help new and emerging landlords to increase the volume and quality of their services.

Labour will promote the London Rental Standard to encourage all landlords operating in Lewisham to apply for and achieve accreditation. This will start as a voluntary scheme but, if that is not seen to be sufficiently effective, we will look at introducing compulsory registration by 2016.

The agency will also tackle head-on the small group of criminal or rogue landlords who blight the lives of their tenants and the neighbourhoods in which they operate. Our intention is to make Lewisham a very uncomfortable place for irresponsible landlords to function. To support this intention, we will strengthen our housing rights advice service to tenants who face illegal eviction.

Bring more empty homes back into use

The majority of empty homes in Lewisham are in private hands. Labour wants to help bring them back into use by offering a combination of loans and grants for building works. We will continue to press Government for stronger powers to tackle the problem of overseas buyers who leave properties empty but, if a property does remain unlive in for more than six months, we will charge owners a higher rate of Council Tax for it.

Create jobs and apprenticeships in the building industry

Labour will make sure new housing developments produce jobs and apprenticeships for people living in Lewisham. We will encourage the use of local supply chains and demand that all jobs created are paid at least the London Living Wage. On our own developments, we will ensure all our contractors meet these standards. We will encourage smaller contractors to bid for work to help strengthen this sector and increase capacity in the industry.

Growth and Jobs



Lewisham’s proximity to Central London and Docklands means that residents will always look beyond our boundaries for work. Labour in Lewisham brought the DLR to Lewisham, providing many with access to those opportunities, nonetheless, we need to develop more local jobs and help the borough’s businesses to grow. We have worked

hard to avoid today’s young people becoming a “lost generation” and that effort must continue.

Since 2010 we have...	In the next four years we will...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created over 350 apprenticeship opportunities and 79% of apprentices have gone on to secure permanent employment; • Enabled 2,500 job seekers to connect with potential employers at our job fairs; • Increased the number of shops open in Lewisham and Catford town centres and decreased the number of vacant shops across the borough. We have piloted additional street markets and offered opportunities to young people and small businesses to trade; • Supported and promoted successful local businesses through the annual Mayor’s Business Awards; • Worked in partnership with the Voluntary Sector in Lewisham to support the growth of social enterprises in the borough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support businesses in our town centres by reviewing and, where appropriate, reducing car parking charges; • Continue to attract businesses into Lewisham by withholding the new Community Infrastructure Levy on new business developments; • Support responsible businesses and retailers – while cracking down on businesses that exploit workers and shoppers – through our responsible retailers’ initiative and trading standards work; • Support the creation of over 3,000 new jobs over the next seven years for local people through regeneration schemes in Lewisham; • Maximise the benefits for local people in Lewisham’s major regeneration schemes through “community gain” agreements that meet local job and other needs; • Work to make more council-owned vacant commercial properties available for community use; • Fight for the extension of the Bakerloo Line and for the extension of the London Overground to Hither Green and Bromley North; • Continue to argue for a more comprehensive bus service in the south of the borough.

What that means...

A business-friendly borough

Labour will continue to promote Lewisham as a business-friendly borough. Through our support of small and micro businesses, the Council will attempt to create an environment in which the arts and digital media sectors can thrive. We want to create the right conditions for business through our planning policies and by ensuring our local environment promotes trade with clean and safe streets. We will support businesses in our town centres by reviewing and, where appropriate, reducing car parking charges.

Regenerating Lewisham's economy

The growing needs of Lewisham's expanding population mean that the regeneration of those parts of the borough that can support new housing, jobs and other facilities is more important than ever. The scheme to transform and modernise Lewisham town centre was delayed by the recession but intervention by the Council and its partners means that work on this scheme is now underway.

The Surrey Canal project, which will bring new homes and improved transport links as well as a new community sports facility, should begin next year. Good progress has been made with the Catford town centre regeneration programme and this will be a priority for the next four years.

Labour will ensure that the physical regeneration of the borough promotes economic growth and benefits are shared with local people. We will make sure that Lewisham residents are able to access jobs in the building industry and new businesses that are created. There will be new retail and commercial space in our regeneration projects and we will continue working to

improve existing business units in ways that enhance the rest of the high street infrastructure.

Supporting residents into work

The Council have developed an innovative partnership with neighbouring boroughs and Job Centre Plus to identify the most effective ways to help our residents into work, offering them the support they need to equip themselves with the education and skills they need to get work.

High-quality skills training is vital and it needs to be targeted to areas of economic growth. Labour will therefore continue to work with colleges, schools and others to deliver this training and, if necessary, intervene directly to ensure good provision exists. We will develop skills centres focused on giving 16-19 year olds the right high-quality vocational training for the trades and skills where jobs are available.

Improving transport links

Labour will fight for improved public transport links between Lewisham and Central London. Working with the Greater London Authority, we will make sure that a strong business case is made to get further investment for transport links to Lewisham. We will continue to work with neighbouring boroughs to argue for the extension of the DLR and Bakerloo Lines, and will keep up pressure for the extension of the London Overground to Hither Green and Bromley North. Work is underway to deliver a new London Overground Station at Surrey Canal Road, creating access to the tube network for hundreds of residents. We will continue to argue forcefully for a more comprehensive bus service in the south of the borough.

The Cost of Living and Fair Pay

For many people the last six years have seen incomes fall, jobs disappear and pensions undermined. The price of everyday essentials like food and energy has risen faster than any ordinary person's income. To help people in Lewisham, we have kept council tax rises far below the rate of inflation, adopted the London Living Wage and supported the growth of our local credit unions.

Since 2010 we have...	In the next four years we will...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become the first local authority in the country to adopt the Living Wage officially; • Targeted advice to more than 10,000 residents, helping reduce the cost of energy bills; • Delivered a borough-wide programme insulating 4,000 lofts and cavity walls; • Supported a Time Credits scheme, building on the success of Lewisham Time Banks; • Stopped a new betting shop from opening on Deptford High Street, while lobbying government for stronger powers to tackle legal loan sharks and betting shops; • Worked with Lewisham Plus Credit Union to offer alternatives to payday loan rip-offs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freeze council tax for at least two years and keep it at inflation or below thereafter; • Lead the way on fair pay with the London Living Wage for Lewisham employees and council contractors, and pressing all local employers to do so as well; • Help people with debt problems and tackle 'legal loan sharks'; • Fight fuel poverty and help residents keep energy bills down; • Help working families with childcare access and costs; • Develop comprehensive local food and nutrition policies to tackle food poverty; • Provide older people with information and advice to maximise their income and entitlement; • Target employment advice and job opportunity to those over 50 who lose their jobs.

What that means...

Tackling the rising cost of living

The cost of living has risen dramatically since 2010, with many people in Lewisham struggling to pay their bills; more local households living in poverty are in work than out of work. Average hourly wages have fallen by 5.5% after adjusting for inflation since the Tories came into power in 2010 and year after year people are working harder, for longer, for less.



Ed Miliband has pledged to tackle the cost of living crisis if he is elected Prime Minister in 2015. A Labour Government will cap energy prices, reduce the cost of childcare and introduce Make Work Pay contracts that will help businesses raise wages for millions of low-paid workers. Labour in Lewisham would start this work before the general election to help people struggling to pay their bills now.

Fair Pay

Lewisham is proud to have been the first borough to become an accredited Living Wage employer. We will continue to pay the London Living Wage to all council employees and through our contracts we will work to ensure that all workers are paid the London Living Wage. Labour will encourage and

press local employers to pay the living wage and promote benefits of the living wage to all businesses in Lewisham. We will also take enforcement action against any business that doesn't pay the legal minimum wage.

Supporting people with debts

Lewisham Council already provides support for people with debt problems but we will increase our financial debt management advice, working with voluntary and advice organisations. In particular, we will promote the benefits of Lewisham Plus Credit Union and discourage the use of payday loan companies.

We will continue to work with those most affected by the benefit cap and maintain a hardship fund to help those residents most in need. Planning and licensing policies will be used to stop new money shops opening on Lewisham high streets wherever possible and preventing them from advertising in council publications and on council buildings.

Tackling the cost of energy bills

Advice to residents on how to reduce their energy bills will continue to be a priority and we will work with housing providers and the private rented sector/owner-occupiers through the Lewisham Insulation Partnership to fund solid wall insulation and other more expensive measures.

Help working families with the cost of childcare

A future Labour Government will introduce a 'primary childcare guarantee', giving all parents of primary schoolchildren a guarantee of childcare through their school

from 8am-6pm. It will also expand free childcare for three- and four-year olds from 15 to 25 hours a week for working parents - an increase in childcare support worth over £1,500 per child.

In advance of that gain, Lewisham will develop a new childcare strategy to support working parents with the cost of childcare, with schools to support and develop breakfast clubs and after-school activities to allow parents time to commute. We will support the private and voluntary sectors to contribute to meeting childcare needs more effectively.

Council tax and council funding

While councils cannot meet every extra cost faced by residents, Lewisham Council will play its part in keeping household bills down by freezing Council Tax for two years and limit any increase to inflation or below.

Labour will protect the services residents value as best we can, however, we are facing massive cuts of 30% to our budget imposed by the Coalition Government, with more in the pipeline.

We will also continue to seek ways to secure income from other sources to compensate for part of this freeze and the overall cuts to the Council's budgets, building on existing work with other councils to cut administrative costs.

Education and Young People



Giving our young people the best start in life is something we all care deeply about. Labour is very proud of the absolutely outstanding performance of Lewisham's primary schools, rated fourth in the country and significantly out-performing schools from wealthier areas. More of our secondary students are now getting five good GCSEs but we need further improvement from them

and now need to encourage more of them into Higher Education. Equally importantly, we need to ensure a better vocational education offer.

Since 2010 we have...	In the next four years we will...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved our primary schools to achieve the fourth best results in the country in 2013; • Ensured a 26% rise since 2002 in the number of 16-year-olds gaining five good GCSEs; • Ensured 92.6% of our primary schools are graded "good" or "better" by OfSTED; • Created 2,643 additional primary places since 2008; • Rebuilt or refurbished more than 20 of the borough's schools in a £300m programme; • Improved our provision for children with special educational needs, particularly with a new school supporting children on the autistic spectrum; • Maintained 17 Children's Centres despite massive cuts in Government funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure improved results for secondary school pupils with a further 10% rise in the number of children getting five good GCSEs, including English and maths, by 2018; • Ensure that young people continue to study English and maths up to the age of 18 as preparation for apprenticeships, further study or skilled work; • Increase the number of apprenticeships to 1,000 by 2018 and help young people through to the provision of high quality vocational training; • Make schools account for their use of the Pupil Premium funding to support children on free school meals; • Continue to provide a primary school place for every child in Lewisham; • Ensure Lewisham's youth service and voluntary sector providers are delivering services that meet the needs of young people across the borough; • Continue to achieve a good number of high-quality, secure adoptions for looked-after children in Lewisham.

What that means...

Improving Lewisham's schools

Lewisham schools have improved their performance across the board since 2002. Our primary schools are amongst the best in the country; only the City of London, Kensington and Chelsea and Richmond are ahead of us in the percentage of children achieving grade 4 in reading, writing and maths. This is an outstanding achievement.

More Lewisham 16-year olds than ever before are getting five good GCSEs (A* to C grades), but we need to work with and support all our secondary schools to build on this success. In the next four years, Labour is committed to increasing the number of children getting five good GCSEs, including English and maths, in Lewisham secondary schools by a further 10% by 2018.

Lewisham has actively encouraged groups of schools to work together in partnership, or form more formal federations. This move has seen hugely significant improvements in the performance of our primary schools and is in contrast to the Coalition Government's approach that encourages schools to operate in isolation, independently of other schools and the local authority. We will continue to help our secondary schools to develop their premises for increased use by their local communities.

Labour will make schools account for their use of the Pupil Premium funding to support children on free school meals.

The Council has continued to improve the provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) by increasing their opportunities to be educated locally and, where possible, in mainstream schools. To

help facilitate this improvement, we have introduced specially-funded "resource bases" in mainstream schools for children with specific needs. We have built a new school, Drumbeat, for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), which also acts as a support "hub" across the borough.

Vocational Education

Labour is committed to transforming Vocational Education in Lewisham over the next four years. Alongside an offer of high-quality academic choices for young people, we will promote social mobility and deliver the skilled workforce needed for a better, stronger economy. All young people are obliged to stay in education or training until they are 18, so we must ensure there is challenging and engaging vocational education for them, including the study of English and maths, as preparation for an apprenticeship, further study or skilled work.

We have developed strong partnerships with neighbouring boroughs and local Further Education providers, and Labour will fight to ensure that Lewisham residents receive a fair allocation of funding for further and adult education from the London Enterprise Partnership. We will work with employers and FE providers to ensure that Lewisham residents get the right qualifications to help them into jobs. The offer will include skills centres focused on giving 16-19 year olds high quality vocational training in the trades required by local employers.

Securing school places

Lewisham has experienced some of the biggest increases in primary school aged children in London. The Council has met this

challenge by creating 2,643 primary places since 2008, in the process managing to find a place for every primary age child in Lewisham. However, we need to make sure that they are able to attend a school as near as possible to their homes and will continue working towards this goal. Furthermore, increased numbers will start to feed into our secondary schools, so we have already begun looking at how we increase capacity in future years.

Stability rather than a quick solution is the key in committing to providing for every primary and secondary schoolchild in Lewisham. That may mean larger and, where possible, new schools. Ideally, for Labour, these would be community schools within local authority control. Meanwhile, as the growing numbers of schoolchildren is a London-wide issue, the Council will continue to work with other boroughs to lobby Government to provide additional funding.

Youth service and adult education

Labour will continue to ensure our youth service is meeting the needs of young people in every part of Lewisham, working alongside organisations that can provide services to young people that help them to develop the confidence and skills to meet the challenges of an increasingly difficult world. We will offer support to schools with Duke of Edinburgh awards and Scouts and Girl Guide groups. We are establishing a youth service volunteering scheme and will sustain the Lewisham Enterprise programme.

We will work hard to maintain funding for Community Education Lewisham with the three existing centres on top of the additional investment in classrooms at Deptford Lounge and Brockley Rise.

Early Years' services

The Council continues to provide services for our youngest children in spite of severe Government-imposed cuts. Labour is committed to maintain a network of Children's Centres, particularly for those from vulnerable families. We will work with community-based childcare providers like Cooperative Childcare, to supplement our current provision.

We have introduced the free provision of 15 hours of nursery care a week for three- and four-year-olds, and have extended this offer to two-year-olds who are most in need. This provision is offered for a nursery setting, whether that is provided by school, childminder, social enterprise or private company. We have transferred the Early Years Centres at Rushey Green and Honor Oak to community-run nurseries but will maintain our nursery provision at Ladywell for children with complex needs.

Cleaner, Greener and Safer



Concern about the environment - whether it is our neighbourhood looking clean and well cared for, our roads safer, or how we will leave it to future generations - means people look to the Council to make things better. Equally, people are anxious about the safety of our young and older people. In Lewisham, we have worked with the Police, community organisations and

others to make an impact on these issues.

Since 2010 we have...	In the next four years we will...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invested in Lewisham's parks and green spaces, sustaining our numbers of Green Flags and creating more than 80 community gardens; • Improved our recycling service and promoted home composting; • Improved our response times for tackling fly-tipping and graffiti through innovation and technology, such as the LoveLewisham app; • Worked with the Police and other partners to reduce serious youth violence by 39% and knife crime by 29% over the last two years; • Encouraged businesses to sign responsible retailer agreements to restrict the sale of knives and high-strength alcohol. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review how waste collection, recycling and street cleaning services work to achieve the right balance of cost, cleanliness and environmental impacts; • Build on the success of the 20mph zones which targeted local problems by adopting a 20mph speed limit across the borough. • Develop our programme of cycling safety measures, increase the number of cycle racks across the borough and work with schools and local businesses to develop green commuter strategies; • Launch a Low Emission strategy for vehicles in Lewisham by improving the Council's fleet through greater use of electric vehicles and encouraging drivers to reduce their emissions; • Work with the Police and other partners to reduce crime further, especially serious youth violence, violence against women and girls and hate crime of all types; • Work with businesses and community groups like the 10,000 Hands campaign to make our streets safer; • Support older residents by campaigning to protect free transport and ensuring that traffic lights allow adequate crossing time.

What that means...

Environment

Lewisham pioneered the local incineration of waste, recycling energy and avoiding burying waste in landfill sites. Official figures on domestic recycling still ignore this but we will continue with our long-term strategy of how best to protect our environment for future generations. That means capitalising on the improvements in our recycling service and continuing to increase the proportion of sustainably disposable waste.

There are several strands to Labour's strategy: we will review Lewisham's waste collection, recycling and street cleaning services, taking account of changing expectations and resources, and seek the right balance between cost, cleanliness and environmental impact.

We will encourage more people to compost more of their waste and continue to use the LoveLewisham app to allow people to report fly-tipping and graffiti quickly while maintaining our fast response times. We will aim to design out fly-tip hotspots where possible and work with local residents to speed up the legal process of fly-tip removal from private land.

We will use the Council's supply chain, companies that supply us services and goods, to promote sustainability and improve energy efficiency in its own buildings.

Cycling

Increased use of bicycles brings benefits to health and the environment but is only possible where greater safety can be achieved. Working with local groups, Labour will encourage the use of existing cycle

routes and continue to roll out the new Quietway routes that create links across Lewisham and neighbouring boroughs.

We will introduce a package of supporting measures, including a potential bid for a Cycle Super-Hub at a key railway station (e.g. Catford); increase the number of cycle racks and continue to promote our local cycle-hire scheme and cycling training to allow new cyclists to gain more confidence on the roads. Labour will make the Council's own vehicles safer for cyclists by installing cameras, sensors and mirrors.

The Council will lobby the Mayor of London to fund cycling infrastructure improvements in Lewisham to make the borough a safer place to cycle, in particular in Deptford and New Cross, where new town centre developments and the Cycle Superhighway create an ideal opportunity for a cycle-friendly public realm.

Parks

Major investment in Lewisham's parks has transformed some previously undesirable areas into green spaces that everyone can enjoy. Margaret Macmillan Park has been refurbished and Ladywell Fields transformed; the latter with £2m of funding that has allowed new areas of the River Ravensbourne to be opened up, new wildflower meadows created and sports facilities such as outdoor gyms introduced.

Working with local groups, the Council has supported the creation of more than 80 community gardens. We welcome suggestions for new community projects and will do our best to support them wherever possible.

Crime

Under Labour, the Council will continue to work with the police through the Safer Lewisham Partnership to reduce crime. Whilst it isn't directly responsible for policing, the Council has already supported a reduction in crime across the borough through campaigns such as property-marking to reduce mobile phone theft, the 'Street a Week' scheme to reduce burglary and joint enforcement operations targeted at prolific offenders and street drinkers.

We will also sustain our focus on fighting serious youth violence and gang crime, working with the Police on key programmes like Trilogy. Crucial to this is our Youth Offending Service, which aims to divert the most high-risk offenders from lives of crime, and the Youth multi-agency service which works with victims of serious youth violence.

The Council will expand its programme of responsible retailer agreements, promote the safe sale and storage of knives and request shops to stop stocking and selling high-strength lager and cider to help reduce street drinking.

Lewisham recently launched a "hate manual" to combat hate crime of all kinds. Working through the Safer Lewisham Partnership, we will draw up a "Violence against Women and Girls Plan" to tackle domestic violence and abuse in Lewisham. As part of that work, we will develop a strategy to tackle the illegal practice of female genital mutilation.

Labour will continue to work with community and voluntary organisations, schools, churches and campaigns like the 10,000 Hands campaign to promote peace and understanding across the borough.

Lewisham Together - A Stronger Community



A stronger community is one that works together. The campaign to save Lewisham Hospital showed the truth in that, when residents across Lewisham came together, supported by their Labour Council, and fought successfully to defend a much-loved service.

The value of that service reflects what we all know - that, when things go wrong, we all want to know that the services we need to help us through will be there. Not only the emergency services, vital as they are, but we are also talking about everyday services that help us get back home and resume a normal life. And then there are the services that help us to maintain healthy lives - mentally and physically - like swimming pools and libraries...

Since 2010 we have...	In the next four years we will...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported the victorious campaign to Save Lewisham Hospital, twice defeating the Coalition in the courts to save our A&E and maternity services; • Reduced delays in transfers of patients, reduced hospital readmission rates, and helped more than 200 vulnerable adults to remain independent; • Opened a brand new library at the Deptford Lounge and created five community libraries by working with local residents; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the new Lewisham and Greenwich Hospital Trust, the Clinical Commissioning Group and other health partners to safeguard our local NHS and reduce health inequalities in the borough; • Integrate health and social care to provide better services and value for money; • Transform our support for vulnerable adults by matching services to individual needs;

<p>Since 2010 we have...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened two new Leisure Centres and refurbished a third, all with new swimming pools; • Commissioned over £30m of services from the voluntary sector every year; • Established a Positive Aging Council so the voice of elders can be heard and acted on, and begun developing a programme for lonely and isolated people; • Taken on responsibility for Public Health in Lewisham and, with our partners, developed a Health and Wellbeing strategy; • Sustained and developed Local Assemblies in all 18 Lewisham wards, ensuring local residents have a say about council policies and can support activities in their area. 	<p>In the next four years we will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the voluntary sector and work with them to provide services that support council and other public services; • Sustain Lewisham's libraries and promote healthy lifestyles by continuing to provide free swimming and gym access for under-16s and over-60s; • Support local people in having a say in developing policies and schemes that directly impact on neighbourhoods through the borough's Local Assembly and Young Mayor programmes; • Continue to work with people of every background - race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability or faith - to ensure they can meet the challenges of discrimination.
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What that means...

Working with you

Councils continue to face massive levels of Government-imposed cuts to local services, resulting in successive rounds of difficult decisions. At all times, we have tried to keep Lewisham's residents informed and tried to take their view into account. In 2010 we undertook an extensive consultation programme to make sure we understood what you felt were the most important services as we made savings.

We will do this again, making use of more traditional ways as well as new social media, doing our best to do so in ways that work for everyone - the LoveLewisham App is a great example of how new technology can be used conveniently and cheaply to improve services. The aim will be to stay in touch with you, explaining what choices we have

and how we have come to our decisions, as well as what progress we make on delivering the pledges in this manifesto.

Health

The strength of our community is one of Lewisham's greatest assets, and this was never better reflected than when everyone came together to campaign against the government's unjust and illegal decision to close Lewisham's A&E and maternity units. Labour was proud to support this campaign and we will continue to fight for the best possible health services for our borough. We will campaign strongly against any further Government attempts to undermine them.

The Council will work closely with the newly-merged Lewisham and Greenwich Hospital Trust and Clinical Commissioning Group,

using the borough's Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure they deliver excellent health services for all residents. Labour will use the Council's new powers in Public Health to adopt fresh approaches of targeted support to residents who face problems related to obesity, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

Labour is already addressing food and nutrition issues by promoting healthy eating through advice and cookery classes for vulnerable adults or others who are on a limited budget, encouraging takeaway shops to provide healthier, attractive food choices.

Social Care

The Council will work with the hospital and other healthcare agencies to integrate our health and social care services more effectively, so reducing the number of hospital admissions of vulnerable adults and older people while helping to shorten their stay in hospital when they are admitted.

Labour will continue to transform the Council's support for vulnerable adults and older people by personalising services to their particular needs, working with other healthcare providers and voluntary groups.

Vulnerable adults and older people want to live at home where possible. We will do more to ensure there is a range of housing choices for them in Lewisham, helping them keep their independence for as long as possible and adapting their homes to meet their changing needs.

Labour will build on the Council's existing work with voluntary organisations to support carers - the friends and relations who give so much - including information and advice, short breaks, employment support and respite care.

Supporting the work of older people

The Council's setting up of a Positive Ageing Council - following Labour's pledge in our 2010 manifesto - has proved successful in making sure policies and services reflect the needs of older people. In the next few years, we will work with the PAC to develop additional social activity programmes to help people overcome loneliness and isolation, to ensure those reaching retirement can remain active and involved in their local community.

Community and voluntary sector

Lewisham's community and voluntary organisations are among its greatest assets. The Council spends some £32m a year on the voluntary sector, commissioning services and supporting local groups. Labour recognises that we cannot afford in future to take a short-sighted and damaging approach of cutting funding needlessly. So, where tough decisions are unavoidable, we will work closely with community groups to make sure they are protected as far as possible and continue to look for ways of supporting those that give so much to the borough.

Libraries and leisure

Since 2010 the Council has built two new swimming pools - Forest Hill Pools and the Glassmill Leisure Centre in Lewisham - and refurbished a third, Wavelengths, in Deptford. We will continue to provide free swimming for under-16s and over-60s in Lewisham swimming pools.

Labour listened to residents when they campaigned to keep all the borough's libraries open, and then worked closely with residents to make it happen. The Council transferred four buildings for

wider community use while maintaining their library services, and in Blackheath transferred the service to Age Exchange. Since those moves, the libraries have thrived and many are busier than before. Meanwhile, we also opened the Deptford Lounge, a new hub library for the north of the borough. Labour is committed to protecting these valuable community-based services.

Working with you to protect vital local facilities

Labour made sure the Council, alongside the community campaign, actively supported the defence of Lewisham Hospital, providing legal backing for the successful challenge to the government. We also fought against the closure of local fire stations and, although we failed to stop London Mayor Boris Johnson's closure of Downham, we helped to win a reprieve for New Cross.

The Council also intervened in more local campaigns, helping to save a number of much-loved local pubs from being demolished. We challenged the proliferation of betting shops on our high streets and worked with other councils to lobby for new laws to give local government extra powers to stop betting shops exploiting people while maximising their profits.

Meeting the needs of our whole community

The work people do in their Local Assemblies is helping to build a sense of community in Lewisham. Labour believes that, by enabling residents to get involved, they help shape the way their area develops. That's why we have sustained the Assemblies programme which, together with others like the Young Mayor Scheme, now in its tenth year, has broadened local people's influence over

council policies.

As we face the difficult challenges ahead, we must make sure no group bears an unfair burden. To do that effectively, we need community-based groups to reflect and articulate the needs and aspirations of the many different peoples of Lewisham. Without their advocacy, the Council would struggle to meet - let alone identify - the needs of those who face particular challenges because of their race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability or faith. With these groups working together, more can and will be done to meet current and future needs.

However, we have to be on constant guard against those who seek to cause division for their own ends. When one section of our community is threatened, we are all threatened; when that happens, we must stand together.

One of the strengths of our borough is its great diversity. We have increasingly seen people of different ages, backgrounds or cultures working and coming together to campaign around issues or develop projects that meet the needs of their local community - in the process demonstrating the great vitality we have in Lewisham.