

Working to change lives for the better.



Labour Manifesto for the 2021 Oxfordshire County
Council Elections

Foreword



No one has come through this year without being touched by the pandemic. We could not have anticipated the scale of the changes to our daily lives that it has caused. The pandemic has emphasised existing inequalities and frailties of our society, and so residents living in care homes and their families, members of the BAME Community, older people living alone, those living in abusive relationships, people with life limiting illnesses, those living in poverty or in poor quality housing and our children and young people have been hit especially hard.

Our response must now be to ensure that Oxfordshire provides services for residents that are fit for purpose.

The response from Local Government employees and the NHS to the pandemic has been nothing short of heroic, but the Conservative government have failed to put the nation's appreciation for these public servants into practice. A pay freeze, or for nurses only a 1% pay rise, is no way to say thank you for their efforts. This is particularly unacceptable when the government wasted over £22 billion of taxpayer's money on a failed Track and Trace Service.

In the recent County Council Budget, the Labour group won extra money for services for children and young people suffering with mental health issues. This money will develop better services for Child and Young People and will help existing services work better. Labour also secured investment to develop apprenticeships for young people wanting to work in the growing care sector. Not only did the Liberal Democrats and Greens vote against these proposals, they offered no amendments to the County Council budget whatsoever. Only Labour is delivering real change at County Hall.

This pandemic has often been referred to as an unprecedented challenge but rebuilding after a period of hardship is something we've achieved as a country many times before. After the Second World War, when Europe was on its knees, we recognised the need to invest in services fit for all, and so the NHS, which has served us so brilliantly well this last year, was founded by the post-war Labour Government. What the last year has shown us is that we must have effectively funded and effectively run public services, so that we can all get the support that we need, when we need.

It is therefore incumbent on us to rebuild our communities and renew Oxfordshire's services to meet this challenge. That starts with voting for Labour on May 6th.

Liz Brighthouse

Leader of Oxfordshire County Labour Group

Listening to our communities

Engaging with the diverse communities across the county to create services which better fit their needs.



The pandemic has damaged the lives of many in Oxfordshire. Labour will work to ensure that we respond by building services which meet the needs of those most hurt by the pandemic. In particular by securing appropriate services for our older residents who rely on care from others and those children, young people and families who desperately need support to recover.

We're committed to engaging with communities about the best ways to improve council services so that they treat everyone with the decency, fairness and compassion that they deserve. Support should be willingly provided to all those who need it without suspicion or judgement.

Tackling wasteful outsourcing

Where appropriate, Labour would look to provide more council services in house rather than outsource to private companies



Central Governments cuts in services since 2010 with many services unnecessarily and expensively outsourced to large companies left services struggling to meet the needs of those suffering from the pandemic – for example, in Oxfordshire contracting with Carillion to run services was a major financial mistake. The aftermath is still being suffered by the County because of it's effect upon successive budgets.

Many large County Council contracts will be up for renewal or review between now and 2025, Labour would approach these contracts differently.

We would work in Partnership with others to deliver inclusive services and we would deliver more services directly. We believe this would keep good quality jobs locally and increase service quality.

Better support for young people

Ensuring opportunity for every child so they can become the best they can be



Children and Young People are experiencing greater levels of anxiety and depression leading to Mental Health Services having difficulty meeting demand. The number of young people without a job or a place in Education and Training has increased. The attainment gap is rising, and our inability to respond to the needs of Children and Young People with Special Education Needs and Disability is leading to many of these children going into expensive Out-County boarding schools rather than being educated close to their home. At present there are too few services available outside school.

Labour would do things better. We would fund a County Youth Service and would provide more apprenticeships both within the Council and through our contractors. We would develop services to keep our children within the county whether they are children in our care or children with special educational needs. We would provide Early Help Services for Young People struggling with poor Mental Health and we would work closely with schools

Spending more on care

Improving services for the most vulnerable people and families so they are fit for purpose



Older people and Adults with Disabilities along with those from BAME Communities have suffered the effects of COVID disproportionately to others. Our Care Services- both Home Care and Residential Care - are outsourced to private companies. Many of these companies are severely overstretched and are not able to make the profits required by their shareholders and struggle to recruit care workers because of the low pay they offer, which doesn't give care workers or their families a decent quality of life.

Labour would do things better. There are other models of Social Care for Adults and Labour would work with others including Co-ops and Social Enterprises to provide a service which is sustainable. We would ensure that those who want to are able to stay in their own homes.

Improving Transport

Making our roads, pavements and cycle lanes fit for purpose and securing a healthy and thriving natural world for future generations



Cuts to staffing, difficulty recruiting engineers and specialist posts mean valuable time is spent filling in forms to central government to get money for schemes which Central Government want delivered. This causes delay to their infrastructure projects while our roads are crumbling because of a lack of investment, Meanwhile, many communities have been left without a bus service because of cuts in subsidy. Many residents feel their views on transport issues are not treated as important.

Labour would do things better. We would listen to and consult with local communities who live with the traffic and transport problems in their neighbourhoods. The ever-increasing use of consultants to reconfigure services lowers the morale of existing staff. We would look at ways of growing our own staff through the use of apprenticeships. We recognise the need to have a system of public transport which meets the needs of communities whether in rural or urban areas.

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