

The alternative you can trust



The Labour Manifesto for the South
Gloucestershire Council Elections
2015

Labour – your voice in tough times

Introduction

Labour will not make promises that we cannot keep. Councils have been in the firing line for central government cuts, and we have seen public services go backwards over the past five years. Things will only get worse for local people and local public services if the Conservatives continue in government. To improve life we need a Labour Government, Labour MPs here in South Gloucestershire, and more Labour councillors to influence Council decisions.

1 Improving our health and wellbeing

Under the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition, South Gloucestershire Council has closed care homes and outsourced homecare. The Conservatives have broken their promises about local hospitals, with Frenchay completely vacated, the expected Minor Injuries Unit at Cossham now scrapped, Yate's Minor Injuries Unit not playing its full role and facilities in Thornbury still await upgrading.

Labour councillors have taken a leading role in referring the Frenchay and Cossham decisions to central government for further consideration. They continue to fight for quality to be put above cost in the care sector.

Labour's pledges for the future

- 👉 Fight alongside the community and Labour MPs to restore NHS facilities, including GP surgeries, that are accessible to local people
- 👉 Defend those council services that the most vulnerable rely on and work with the NHS to minimise 'bed blocking'
- 👉 Promote measures to combat loneliness and isolation

2 Giving our young people the best start in life

Under the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition, South Gloucestershire Council has had to slash Sure Start and youth service provision. More strain has been put on our schools, with insufficient places in some areas and Labour's school building programme has been axed.

Despite this, Labour councillors have fought for, and safeguarded, Sure Start and youth service provision in their local communities. We believe that our schools and colleges should work collaboratively for the benefit of students.

Labour's pledges for the future

- 👉 Encourage employers to work with young people, schools and colleges to skill up the next generation and prevent long-term unemployment
- 👉 Actively promote Labour's policy on extending free childcare for 2 year olds and campaign for the expansion of Sure Start and youth services
- 👉 Support young people with special needs and their schools to get speedy support from the council and partner agencies when needed

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3 Strengthening our neighbourhoods and communities

Under the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition, police numbers have gone down. South Gloucestershire Council has had to slash services such as grass cutting and introduce unpopular charges such as those for green waste collection, whilst councils in more prosperous areas get a better deal.

Despite this, Labour councillors have fought to maintain frontline services, ruling out car parking charges, closures to our libraries and public conveniences and have halted a cut to our Police Community Support Officers.

Labour's pledges for the future

- 👉 Campaign for the restoration of adequate funding for community safety measures and take action to support residents affected by anti social behaviour, so that people feel safe
- 👉 Work with key partners, such as housing associations, to enhance community facilities
- 👉 Our councillors will be visible, active and accessible advocates for the local community

4 Getting us moving

Under the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition, South Gloucestershire Council has been forced to accept planning policies that have left us powerless to defend our area against rampant housing development. Filton Airfield has been designated for development, and we all fear a shortfall in infrastructure.

Labour councillors campaigned, spoke and voted against allocating Filton Airfield for development, but were outvoted by Conservative and Lib Dem councillors. Likewise, we stood with Patchway residents against the closure of Highwood Road, but were again outvoted.

Labour's pledges for the future

- 👉 Fight for adequate transport infrastructure at the new developments across the district, including a train service on the Henbury Loop with new stations in South Gloucestershire
- 👉 Work closely with our neighbouring authorities to plan and deliver better rail and bus transport for our region, making all our neighbourhoods accessible
- 👉 Actively campaign to retain the pensioners' bus passes, and promote greater use of young people's passes

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5 Enhancing our local environment

Under the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition, South Gloucestershire Council has had to cut spending on many of the things that improved our environment, such as pothole repairs and traffic schemes. Conservative and Lib Dem councillors also voted down Labour's proposal to safeguard Green Belt land from development.

Labour councillors have spent their small delegated budgets, and worked closely with local community groups and other agencies, to enhance their areas. They also got the streetlight night switch-off put back an hour, responding to residents' concerns.

Labour's pledges for the future

- 👍 Campaign against the Tory planning policies that have given developers too much power and prevent us from protecting our Green Belt
- 👍 Continue to work with community groups to support and improve our town centres and open spaces
- 👍 Support the use of renewable energies and measures to reduce our carbon footprint and pollution

6 Enabling good living and working

Under the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition we have witnessed the scandal of thousands of our fellow citizens, many of them low-paid workers, having to rely on Foodbanks to feed their families. South Gloucestershire has experienced a gap in opportunities, with parts of Kingswood and Staple Hill routinely having above average unemployment.

Labour councillors have pushed the Council into adopting the Living Wage, and believe that all local workers deserve a fair rate of pay. They have also pushed the Council into agreeing that areas other than designated 'Enterprise Areas' should get a share of any new investment. Nationally, Labour has pledged to abolish the bedroom tax.

Labour's pledges for the future

- 👍 Continue to fight for high-value jobs and meaningful apprenticeship opportunities for local residents, and fair employment contracts that do not exploit workers
- 👍 Address the lack of opportunities, which has resulted in Kingswood being ranked the number 1 low-pay hotspot in the country
- 👍 Work closely with our neighbouring authorities to attract inward investment and opportunities into our region

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