

Southend Labour

Manifesto for the Southend Council elections

Thursday 3 May 2018



Foreword



We are passionate about Southend and proud of our Community.

Southend is in many ways a great place to live, with a rich history, great cultural assets and dynamism in our businesses. Yet there is also neglect, decay and severe poverty in many of our neighbourhoods. Our public services are creaking under years of austerity imposed by the Tory government.

We aim to translate values of solidarity, community and cooperation into practical steps to make Southend a more prosperous, more cohesive town with a better quality of life for all. We want a real public service ethos, whether that's in caring for our elderly, keeping the streets clean or running our children's centres.

We can support the local economy and make our community more cohesive if we make sure as much of the money spent by the Council stays in the local area. We can use the Council's buying power to support local enterprise, local charities and local communities. We will promote a real living wage.

We will take tough action against those who damage our town. We will look to strengthen regulation of private sector housing and create a new enforcement team to deal with environmental crime and low-level anti-social behaviour.

Housing and homelessness will be a critical priority for us. We will recommence the building of social housing for rent and look to harness public and voluntary sector resources to deal with the causes as well as the effects of homelessness in the town.

Labour councillors in administration have made a difference before. We commenced building social housing for the first time in decades. We protected the town's network of libraries and children's centres. We developed an innovative digital strategy to boost our businesses. We invested in green energy and green technology.

With your support we can make a greater difference now.

Ian Gilbert - Leader of the Labour Group

Health

We fundamentally disagree with the government's approach to the NHS. The disastrous Health & Social Care Act needs to be repealed, and funding increased. As councillors, we have a duty to scrutinise and challenge proposals which we believe will be detrimental to local health services, and to engage constructively to improve proposals where we can. Current proposals will mean that many services could be relocated out of Southend. We must also remember that, whilst Southend Hospital has rightly been the focus of much attention, improvements in primary care are even more critical to the health and wellbeing of people in the town. We will expand the public sector provision of Adult Social Care and drive up standards.

We will

- Oppose any proposals that are not in the interest of patient care in Southend, and continue to champion a health service for all, free at the point of use;
- Pro-actively support the development of health centres, where appropriate as a partnership between council and NHS;
- Re-focus public health spending on core priorities, with an evidence-led approach to encourage successful programmes and discontinue those which have not proved effective;
- Promote public and/or cooperative models of care provision in Adult Social Care, and increase monitoring of the quality and standard of care across the whole sector;
- Embed the principle of parity of esteem for mental health services in all we do, and in particular improve access to mental health services for children and young people.



Housing

Homelessness is a scandal that requires national action. Yet councils must do their part. Labour in administration started building social housing again and we continue that, as well as using every lever at our disposal to increase the proportion of social housing in all new developments in the town. We will give full consideration to extending the compulsory licensing of landlords, where permitted by law. Whilst there is good practice in the Private Rented Sector, there is also a persistent failure to engage by poor landlords whose properties blight our town.

We will

- Make action against homelessness a key council priority, and seek to establish a genuine partnership with charitable, voluntary sector and the wider community to tackle the causes as well as the symptoms of homelessness;
- Improve joined up support, including mental health support, for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- Re-start the direct building of council housing, looking to acquire land if necessary, including by the compulsory purchase of derelict sites, and ensure the maximum provision of social housing for rent in all new developments;
- Investigate the cost-effectiveness of the Council re-acquiring former council properties as an alternative or a counterpart to new builds;
- Consider a selective licensing scheme to regulate private sector housing.



Community

Southend Council's commissioning process results in contracts going to large national organisations. We will change the process to make sure that small local charities and voluntary sector groups are supported to contribute their own unique social capital to the town. In administration Labour piloted the 'Hub' in the Victoria shopping centre which has provided help and advice for many residents in difficulty. We will promote and extend this collaborative approach to helping people in need. We will encourage community participation in the provision of council services, not as a method of making cuts but of genuinely empowering local communities.

We will

- Change council procurement procedures to favour local charities and voluntary groups;
- Maintain the Essential Living Fund and continue to develop the innovative partnership for its delivery;
- Support and develop our network of community hubs as a source of help, advice and support to people in the community;
- Produce a clear and transparent impact assessment of new development, especially in the town centre, and use it to inform our service delivery and put pressure on partner organisations such as the NHS;
- Promote and value the diversity that makes us stronger and more prosperous as a town, and work to build a community inclusive of all groups and individuals;
- Make pavements more pedestrian-friendly by removing obstructions and increasing investment in repairing uneven surfaces.

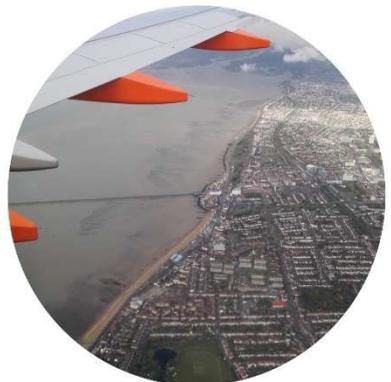


Economy

We will build on the success of the Digital Strategy commenced when Labour were last in administration, building innovative partnerships with business to generate local growth. We need a broad-based local economy, but our focus will be on providing the right environment for cultural, creative and digital business to thrive, as we believe that they are the key to the future prosperity and vibrancy of our town. We will look at using business rate exemptions, the availability of suitable infrastructure and premises, and partnerships in marketing, to support and promote the sector.

We will

- Take forward the Digital Strategy and pro-actively support our digital, creative and cultural industries;
- Review procurement rules to keep the money spent by the Council in the locality wherever possible, so that the Council is investing in jobs and prosperity within Southend;
- Seek to become a living wage council, and promote fair terms and employment conditions across the town by all means possible;
- Continue to work in partnership with local businesses to promote our town to the world, building an identity based on a broad range of cultural and leisure attractions.



Crime and anti-social behaviour

Essex Police have now has 787 fewer Police Officers than in 2010, and PCSOs and support staff have also been slashed. Undoubtedly the disbanding of the Police's Town Beat section has led to people feeling far less safe and secure on the High Street. We will reorganise and increase the Council's resources for enforcement to deliver a uniformed presence for the High Street and other key areas of the Borough, with the powers to deal with low-level anti-social behaviour and provide a visual deterrence and reassurance for our public spaces.

We will

- Create a new highly visible enforcement service to tackle environmental crime, anti-social behaviour, and also to provide visual deterrence and reassurance;
- Work in partnership to integrate various warden schemes with the Council's enforcement and anti-social behaviour teams;
- Ensure that new development is built in a way that is safe and secure by design;
- Review the level of lighting in streets across the Borough and invest where appropriate; we will not switch the street lights off, unlike Tory-controlled Essex Council;
- Ensure there is appropriate provision for those escaping domestic violence – seek a partnership approach with other councils, and work towards white ribbon accreditation for the council.



Education and skills

Southend has some excellent schools, but also some that have struggled for a very long period time. Our focus will be to make sure every child gets a good education regardless of where they are born and in what circumstances. We need to up-skill our workforce, but we also need to value learning for its own sake. Our prosperity lies in our digital, creative and cultural industries, and that should be reflected in our education system.

We will

- Focus attention back on early years provision and the provision of Sure Start/Better Care Fund resources. Look at cooperative and community-led models to manage and run children's centres in the future;
- Work with Southend Adult Community College to promote a culture of lifelong learning;
- Seek to build an ethos where every educational establishment is part of its community and encourage greater use of school facilities out of hours;
- Use the Council's procurement power to increase the number of locally-based apprenticeships available to young people in the town;
- Ensure that children receive sex and relationship education appropriate to their age, for their safety and wellbeing.



Environment

Southend is becoming an increasingly congested town where there are serious concerns about air quality in some parts of the borough. We want to see a cleaner and greener town. In administration Labour increased investment in green technology. We can do more to improve the quality of our environment. Promoting the use of green technology such as electric cars, renewable energy sources, encouraging better home insulation and reducing the use of plastic bottles are all practical steps that we can take that will be good for the environment and the economy.

We will

- Investigate options for a proper park and ride scheme in the borough, and look for ways to improve local public transport;
- Support and encourage investment in green technologies, renewable energy and energy saving measures;
- Promote healthy sustainable living, ensuring that all dietary needs and preferences are catered for in council facilities;
- Increase the provision of allotments, community gardens and support a city farm initiative;
- Ensure our parks are protected and plant more trees for a greener borough.



Labour's candidates for Southend 2018

Belfairs - Taylor Barrell

taylor.barrall@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

Blenheim Park - Laurie Burton

laurie.burton@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

Chalkwell - Sean Jones

sean.jones@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

Eastwood Park- Ros Sanders

ros.sanders@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

Kursaal - Matt Dent

matt.dent@southendlabour.com

07912 521914

Leigh - Michelle Williams

michelle.williams@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

Milton - Cheryl Nevin

cheryl.nevin@southendlabour.com

01702 212879

Prittlewell - Jennifer Beck

jennifer.beck@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

Shoeburyness - Gregory Keane

greg.keane@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

Southchurch - Martin Berry

martin.berry@southendlabour.com

07941 459117

St Laurence - Janet Phillips

janet.phillips@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

St Luke's - Ian Pope

ianforstlukes2018@gmail.com

01702 619868

Thorpe - Jack Reason

jack.reason@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

Victoria - Margaret Borton

margaret.borton@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

Westborough - Kevin Robinson

kevin.robinson@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

West Leigh - Hilary Scarnell

hilary.scarnell@southendlabour.com

01702 619868

West Shoebury - Tom Murray

tom.murray@southendlabour.com

01702 619868



Promoted by Ian Gilbert on behalf all Labour Party candidates in Southend Borough and printed by SLCI, all of 268 Sutton Road, Southend on Sea, SS2 5ET.