

**Working with – and for – our  
communities**



**Labour's pledges for the  
South Gloucestershire  
Council Elections 2019**

**Labour – your voice in tough times**

## Introduction


The last set of council elections coincided with the 2015 General Election which saw the election of a Conservative Government and Conservative Council here in South Gloucestershire. Local council services, and those who rely on them, have certainly suffered as a result of Tory national and local power. It is telling that the BBC chose to film its recent *School* series here in South Gloucestershire, which is bottom of per pupil funding.

Looking back over the past four years presents a bleak picture. Revenue Support Grant, which has long been the main source of local government funding, has been slashed to nothing. Instead our council has to rely on business rates, sub-regional deals, non-recurrent grants and increased commercialisation for its income – all of which are precarious. Our funding is now more uncertain at a time when the call on services – in particular social care for those with the greatest need – is growing.

What *is* certain is that austerity is most certainly not coming to an end, as claimed by the Prime Minister. In fact the Conservatives running our council approved a new 'savings programme' in 2018 to cut a further £36 million – in addition to the millions already cut to deal with austerity. And even with these savage cuts the council's budget is only set to balance for the next two years; after that, we face another deficit.

Recognising this lack of money, our election pledges highlight our desire to be the voice of residents in these difficult times, to work with community groups and individuals in innovative ways to defend valued services and to speak up for them. We need to send the strongest possible message that the Tories' ongoing attack on our communities is unacceptable for South Gloucestershire.

We continue to face a perilous financial situation. Clearly we need the removal of this Tory central government and its replacement with a Labour government committed to public services.



Councillor Pat Rooney  
Leader of the Labour Group

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## **1. Housing and Development**

- Support housing initiatives that build affordable and social housing
- Promote working with tenant support groups.
- Support and encourage community land trusts
- New homes and new buildings: Encourage the participation of local small, medium sized builders and developers.
- Investigate a key workers housing scheme to include teachers, social workers and NHS workers. More stable staffing in these key services will lead to better performance and results.
- Challenge the low number of affordable homes in private developments especially when the numbers are cut or fall below targets
- Actively use available powers to prevent long-term land banking in town centres and rural areas

## **2. Transport and Traffic**

- Promote integrated transport – buses and trains – franchising where appropriate
- Continue fighting for the Henbury loop train option
- Work with airfield owners YTL to maximise public transport on the airfield development
- Pursue park and ride site development
- Encourage home zones
- Support community transport
- Maintain free parking in Council car parks
- Harness technology to minimise the need for journeys
- Actively enforce the policy to make taxis wheelchair accessible
- Promote better driving, including through education and training
- Work with partners to consider ambitious, innovative and environmentally-friendly transport solutions

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### **3. Neighbourhoods and Communities**

- Labour Councillors have a proud reputation of being accessible and involved within our communities. We will hold regular 'Councillor Surgeries' so that residents in our wards can easily talk to us about any Council related issues.
- Social isolation is bad for mental and physical wellbeing as well as for community cohesion. Labour Councillors will promote opportunities to tackle isolation in our communities.
- Failure to tackle health inequalities, economic disadvantage, poor educational outcomes, high crime and a poor environment causes whole communities to miss out on opportunities to prosper. We will support our neighbourhoods to tackle these indicators of deprivation, wherever they are measurable, as a priority.
- Illegal and antisocial parking can be thoughtless, dangerous and provide a source of community unrest. We will support the police and the Council's enforcement officers to tackle poor parking.
- Residents continue to be concerned about anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods. We will work with partners and agencies to combat antisocial behaviour wherever it is reported as a concern.
- Support local chamber of commerce groups and business associations

### **4. Local Environment**

- Prioritise action to tackle poor air quality in the hotspots of Staple Hill, Kingswood and Cribbs Causeway, holding the metro mayor to account
- Promote community pride by prioritising street cleaning
- Enforce penalties for environmental abuses such as running car engines unnecessarily
- Pursue full internet connectivity with super fast broadband

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## **5. Services for our Children and Young People**

- Pursue fairer funding for all schools
- Promote speedier assessment of special needs and production of statements
- Increase the proportion of children with SEND being educated locally
- Campaign for greater local accountability of schools and academies
- Work with partners to improve youth service provision
- Improve the signposting of services to young adults and young families
- Support Children's Centres wherever possible as investing in the youngest brings greatest benefit
- Investigate best practice to provide a better service to looked after children

## **6. Health and Social Care**

- Continue the campaign for the promised Minor Injuries Unit at Cossham and Minor Injuries Services at all GP surgeries
- Work with CCG partners to extend GP opening hours
- Work with NHS partners to maximise access to health services across the district, including centres at Frenchay, Yate and Thornbury
- Support Community Connectors who support individuals to help live independently, get involved in their community and improve physical and mental wellbeing
- Continue to Scrutinise health services through the Health Scrutiny Committee
- Support individuals to access the assistance they need to navigate the system and play a fuller role in society
- Investigate the creation of a SGC owned company to provide local social care
- Invest in facilities to support carers, including young carers

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