

MAKING COLCHESTER FOR THE MANY NOT THE FEW

Labour's Manifesto for the 2019
Colchester Borough Elections



 **Labour**

MAKING COLCHESTER FOR THE MANY NOT THE FEW

Labour in Colchester has the vision, support and determination to achieve a Labour-led Council at the 2019 Local Elections.

Our manifesto sets out what a Labour-led Colchester Borough Council can achieve:

- A cleaner Borough
- A safer Borough
- A fairer Borough

Our manifesto has been developed by local Labour Party members and Councillors

Over the past decade Labour has been instrumental in delivering the following in Colchester:

- ✓ Built the first council houses in Colchester for over thirty years
- ✓ Significantly increased the Borough's recycling rate
- ✓ The introduction of zone working across the Borough
- ✓ Committed £3.6m funding for new temporary housing solutions and homelessness support
- ✓ Redesigned two outdated sheltered housing schemes to provide fully accessible 21st Century older persons' apartments
- ✓ A real 'Living Wage' for council employees and contractors
- ✓ Helped prevent homelessness
- ✓ Oversaw the redevelopment of the magnificent Castle Museum
- ✓ Made sure parking charges have remained competitive
- ✓ Introduced the town centre A-Board ban
- ✓ Delivered the Big Screen in Castle Park
- ✓ Encouraged businesses to the Borough with significant investment

- ✓ Introduced locality budgets for ward councillors to fund community projects
- ✓ Delivered the Community Stadium
- ✓ Helped transform the fortunes of Firstsite
- ✓ Significantly increased visitor and tourism numbers
- ✓ Protected and promoted Colchester's history and heritage sites
- ✓ Reduced the council's carbon footprint
- ✓ Kept employment levels high and unemployment low
- ✓ Defended and enhanced services for the most vulnerable
- ✓ Welcomed and supported Syrian refugees (the first Essex council to do so)
- ✓ Supported and promoted the Borough's voluntary sector
- ✓ Provided funding for extra police resources including the Team 10 Town Centre initiative

HOUSING, PLANNING AND HOMELESSNESS

A Labour-led council will tackle Colchester's housing, planning and homelessness issues by:

- Building more council houses
- Pressing ahead with shared tenure projects
- Introducing rent controls on Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
- Increasing the number of staff providing housing advice
- Extending the 'Housing First' pilot so that everyone entitled to supported housing receives assistance
- Investigate local rent controls and letting agent duties
- Ensuring a robust enforcement of housing standards to ensure high quality rented accommodation
- Working with community groups to tackle rough sleeping
- Lobbying the government for planning reform to increase efficiency and take note of local opinions
- Backing the emerging Local Plan to support sustainable growth and prevent speculative development
- Supporting the proposed garden settlements built to the east and west of the Borough with:
 - An infrastructure-first approach
 - Affordable housing
 - Employment zones
 - Green buffers
 - Community facilities
 - Sustainable transport including walking routes, cycle paths and rapid-transit solutions

CRIME, SAFETY AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

A Labour-led council will address the problems of crime, safety and anti-social behaviour by:

- Lobbying the government to increase funding for the Police to recruit more Officers in particular for Community and Neighbourhood Policing
- Allocating funding for more Special Constables in partnership with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex and the local Community Safety Partnership¹
- Introducing mandatory 20mph zones on new developments
- Installing more CCTV cameras especially in well-known crime hotspots
- Increasing the resources for the council's highly regarded zone teams to foster community cohesion, promote early intervention and pride in local areas

- Working with Essex County Council to restore street lighting and fix potholes promptly and efficiently
- Tasking the Community Safety Partnership¹ to tackle crime through reducing reoffending
- Supporting and promoting Neighbourhood Watch
- Working with Essex County Council to ensure vulnerable people are safeguarded
- Working with Essex Police to tackle pavement parking issues
- Working with partners to tackle hate crime
- Supporting the victims of crime
- Tackling modern slavery and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults
- Tackling knife crime and gang culture by supporting young people to make better choices

¹ The Community Safety Partnership includes Colchester Borough Council, NHS, Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue Service, Colchester Community Voluntary Service, Colchester Borough Homes, the Garrison, Essex Probation and Essex County Council

ENVIRONMENT

A Labour-led council will improve air quality and take the tough and necessary action on the environment by:

- Enforcing clean air policies
- Promoting all forms of public transport, walking and cycling
- Introducing a local cooperative transport provider, serving the whole borough
- Working with transport providers to offer special deals for passengers
- Allowing free parking for electric vehicles
- Promoting electric and 'clean' buses within the historic town centre core zone
- Consulting on and developing a plan to pedestrianise the High Street including the provision of a shuttle bus service
- Providing safe storage for bicycles throughout the Borough
- Investigating a community bike system similar to London and other cities in the UK
- Taking radical action, with partners, in the worst polluted streets so that residents can live with clean, breathable air
- Continuing the council's successful programme on reducing carbon emissions
- Protecting and enhancing the provision of allotments
- Seeking to take responsibility for highways and transport matters from Essex County Council to Colchester Borough Council and parish and town councils

- Promoting car sharing with high visibility campaign and parking space allocation
- Introducing green walls in high pollution areas
- Trialling car-free days in the centre of Colchester
- Developing a network of connected cycle lanes, following the Mini-Holland example in Waltham Forest
- Protecting and enhancing public open space including green spaces and parks for safe, informal recreation

WASTE AND RECYCLING

A Labour-led council will build on the successes of the new waste and recycling system by:

- Following consultation instigate a roll out of wheelie bins to appropriate parts of the Borough
- Ensuring that we use the most modern and effective recycling methods
- Educating residents and communities to reduce waste to landfill and continue to increase recycling levels
- Making it easy for residents to know what can be recycled and reused
- Lobbying the government, producers and retailers to reduce the levels of packaging including ending the production of single-use plastics
- Working with businesses to reduce the amount of waste they produce and supporting sanctions against those that refuse to co-operate
- Supporting local initiatives that reduce waste and promote reusing repairing and recycling

MODERNISATION AND REGENERATION

A Labour-led council will continue the modernisation and regeneration of the Borough by:

- Delivering the sports and leisure-led development of the Northern Gateway
- Promoting and expanding our Business Improvement Centres
- Supporting Colchester's Business Improvement District (BID)
- Increasing resources for tourism development to place Colchester Borough as a top UK visitor destination
- Showcasing the diversity of the Borough by celebrating, highlighting and investing its wonderful history and heritage, arts and culture and beautiful countryside
- Encouraging a diverse range of businesses to invest and relocate here.
- Undertaking a community wealth audit to ensure money remains in the local economy

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

A Labour-led council will improve the health and wellbeing of the Borough and its residents by:

- Lobbying the government to significantly increase spending on health and social care
- Involving the Borough Council in the integration of health and social care provision and support the local Health and Wellbeing Alliance
- Providing more sheltered, supported and extra care accommodation by working with a range of partners across all sectors recognising that good quality housing is fundamental to good health
- Campaigning on easy accessibility for all public buildings
- Instigating the provision of more Changing Places toilets
- Continuing to offer a high quality Welfare Rights service
- Working with local communities to understand and provide for the health and social needs of young people
- Appointing a Director of Wellbeing in the Council
- Fighting library closures and enhancing their role as community hubs to tackle loneliness and isolation
- Supporting and promoting the Colchester Orbital walking and cycling route

FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY

A Labour-led council will defend and protect the Borough for future generations and give financial and economic stability by:

- Exploring the options to create a new unitary authority releasing us from the shackles of Essex County Council
- Designing a Local Authority scheme that supports cooperatives in the local economy and develops a council cooperative service provider
- Developing an investment and acquisition strategy to generate additional council income so that we can continue to provide vital, front line services while faced with the total withdrawal of central government grant by the Tories
- Only increasing council tax in line with recommended levels
- Supporting the revitalisation of our town centre including working with the Business Improvement District (BID)
- Building upon our heritage and tourism offer to attract more visitors
- Actively supporting and promoting our local Credit Union
- Continuing to support and promote the digital and creative economy
- Protecting and enhancing Colchester's Town Centre Market

OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE

A Labour-led council will provide opportunity for everyone by:

- Ensuring all new projects and developments are accessible for everyone
- Holding listening events for the whole community, paying particular attention to engaging with minority groups and hard to reach communities
- Allowing the public and media to question the Cabinet at bi-monthly open sessions
- Building on the success of previous years continue to support Colchester Pride
- Developing a diversity calendar by identifying the events that our communities wish to celebrate such as Black History Month and the Rice & Spice Festival
- Exploring the viability of using citizens' panels to allow for community input into the decision making process
- Scheduling regular liaison meetings with local trades' unions
- Supporting local homework and breakfast clubs

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