







**Our 2023 Local Election Manifesto for  
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole**  
Putting Integrity Back into Public Life

## **Cleaning up the council - Putting integrity back into public life**

BCP has been dogged by reports of financial mismanagement, cronyism and a lack of transparency. The Council is on the edge of bankruptcy because of a risky financial strategy pushed through by the Conservatives. This mirrors the financial recklessness of the Conservative Government. Nearly five years after the creation of BCP, the council still lacks a strategic plan for the number of staff or buildings it needs to deliver services. In truth, it is a council of chaos. Local residents want their hard-earned council tax to go on services, not big salaries for the friends of councillors.

### **Labour will:**

-  Introduce proper financial controls on the council's expenditure – and put an end to contracts for friends or associates of council members
-  Cease all local authority involvement with, and funding for, the Future Places organisation
-  'Open the books' and have a public audit of how the Conservative administration has wasted our money on vanity projects with questionable financial arrangements
-  Support greater scrutiny of the council's decision-making processes
-  Create a strategic plan that prioritises service delivery, treats council staff fairly and tackles the concerns of local residents
-  Ensure all Labour councillors speak up when they think the council is acting inappropriately

## **Tackling the cost-of-living crisis - Making the local economy work for all**

The Conservative government has made most of us financially poorer over the last few years with a series of tax increases and spiralling inflation. Everyone has also suffered from the cuts to support and services that started in 2010 with the Conservative/Lib Dem Coalition which have been continued by the Conservative government's failed economic policies.

Many people in precarious employment have lost work this year. We will work with other agencies to support learning and skills training for those who are furthest from work, whether for health, education, language or other reasons. Labour will make sure that inclusive growth is now on the agenda of local business. No-one should be left behind.

Locally, a Labour BCP Council will have a crucial role to play in supporting residents during these challenging times.

## Labour will:

-  Create and promote a Local Living Wage for BCP and insist the council's suppliers pay it and other local employers adopt it
-  Change the council's procurement processes so that more goods and services are sourced locally, ethically and with priority given to local suppliers
-  Introduce a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for our poorest citizens that takes those least able to afford it completely out of paying Council Tax
-  Work with local bus companies to extend subsidised bus fares for specific vulnerable groups such as the unemployed and students
-  Provide grant aid to local advice agencies including the Citizens' Advice Bureau to provide free financial, housing and immigration advice and establish a welfare rights service providing a one-stop shop for local residents
-  Investigate setting up a conurbation-wide Credit Union to provide affordable borrowing and saving to those who are financially excluded
-  Reinvigorate the high streets to regenerate the local economy and improve retail opportunities, and work with commercial landlords to use empty retail or business premises as space for small business or social enterprises and those starting up
-  Actively encourage more local employers to take on apprentices
-  Develop skills and jobs in the 'green economy' including in the council

## Protecting where we live - For a greener, healthier conurbation



The Labour Council will make the BCP conurbation a great place to live. Our vision is of an area where local people are able to enjoy their streets, neighbourhoods and green spaces, where their work, home and leisure and cultural activities can take place locally, and where the air is clean, and people are healthy and happy. This is the vision that Labour seeks to deliver for people.

We recognise that climate change is affecting our local environment and the council must take a lead on issues such as recycling, the use of renewable energy and reducing plastic. Yet the Conservatives have allowed our beautiful beaches to be polluted by big business with illegal sewage.

Poor air quality has a disproportionate health effect on poorer and minority communities and fuel bills are a major contribution to poverty. We will ensure that there is widespread consultation as we develop proposals to deliver Zero Carbon and that our poorest and most disadvantaged citizens are actively engaged in these discussions so their concerns can be addressed. We want to see a full network of safe, secure and segregated cycle lanes across the whole conurbation.









**Labour will:**



-  Make BCP Council a Zero Carbon Council by 2027 and work with the town's biggest employers and institutions through a new Zero Carbon BCP Partnership to achieve our science-led goal of getting the conurbation to Zero Carbon by 2035
-  Make BCP a first-choice area to attract new funding for innovators to tackle climate change, helping develop skills and jobs while meeting our Zero Carbon targets
-  Recognise that climate change could lead to greater flood risks within the BCP conurbation and take proactive steps to minimise the impact
-  Invest in our award-winning beaches to encourage responsible tourism and take legal action to fine polluters and stop the sewage dumping scandal
-  Use the council's management of parks, playgrounds and community and leisure centres to support healthy activities and provide green spaces and meeting spaces that are accessible to everyone
-  Establish a local energy co-op 'Zero Carbon BCP' to obtain, generate and store cheaper and sustainable energy for local residents
-  Oppose any plans for fracking
-  Reintroduce free garden waste collections
-  Install at least 100 electric vehicle charging stations in our towns' residential streets to help people go electric and work with partners to deliver a Zero Carbon bus fleet
-  Support local projects to encourage renewable energy, particularly in council buildings
-  Campaign to ensure all publicly invested money from local government pension schemes disinvests from fossil fuels

-  Reduce the amount of plastic waste, improve the recycling rate, create free water fountains for public use and encourage recycling
-  Increase bee corridors, wildflower meadows, more tree planting and work alongside children and young people to create enthusiasm for nature

We are committed to working with communities to continue to support alternative community transport schemes, such as bikes and scooters, and a comprehensive network of dedicated cycle tracks to encourage active travel. We will also build more secure cycle parking. Together we will ensure that our roads are made safer for pedestrians and cyclists and introduce an improved pavement and pothole repair service with a maximum time within which the work should take place.

### **Labour will:**






-  Continue to work with people with disabilities and older people to ensure that their needs are considered in transport planning
-  Recognise that the vast majority of roadworks are caused by utility companies and cause major disruption. Labour will therefore look at ways in which more stringent controls and fines can be placed on these private companies to keep transport disruption to a minimum. We will also encourage more work to be carried out at night
-  Clamp down on suspect car parking operators with a view to re-tendering the car park management services
-  Investigate the feasibility of constructing a cross conurbation tram system using government funding, as a way of tackling the growing problem of congestion
-  Work with railway companies to evolve stations into community hubs and embrace Community Rail Partnerships
-  Support a fully integrated public transport system and push for the retention of reasonably timed connecting rail/bus services, particularly in areas not served by the national rail network. This will include having direct routes from one end of the council area to another
-  Continue to campaign to support staffed stations and the retention of guards on our trains
-  Oppose any attempt to curtail existing Cross-Country services at Southampton Central

-  Work towards ensuring that no major changes to rail or bus services are implemented without first seeking the opinion and consent of passengers
-  Investigate the merit of bringing local bus services into local authority control as a way of retaining all community bus services, regardless of profitability and ensuring bus drivers are paid a wage which reflects their professional skills and encourages them to remain within the industry

## Homes for all - Delivering decent, affordable housing across BCP










Conservative housing policy has consistently failed residents. Home ownership is out of reach for many because of London-style house prices. Renting does not offer an affordable, stable option and homelessness and overcrowding are high. We need more secure and better-quality homes and, above all, we need more social and council housing. To tackle the Conservatives' cost-of-living crisis and meet our climate and ecological emergency, we also need to end expensive energy loss from poorly insulated homes.

### Labour will:

-  Use existing regulations to ensure that all new developments guarantee an agreed number of truly affordable homes that are integrated into the local community, provide important local facilities and amenities, and encourage walking and cycling for health and for the environment
-  Campaign for new social and council homes for local residents at affordable rents to eliminate waiting lists
-  Deliver a licensing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), followed by a full private rented sector licensing scheme to protect tenants and ensure higher standards for those who live in private rented housing
-  Work with partners to make our towns' housing carbon neutral, to save residents money on heating and to meet our climate and ecological emergency
-  Develop a 'Housing First' approach to tackling homelessness so no-one has to sleep rough or be inadequately housed. We will ensure everyone has the support they need and use legislation to make empty properties available

More stringent controls of private developers are needed to ensure future developments prioritise the needs of local communities. We will ensure that such developments are subject to meaningful and accessible consultation with local residents.

## Labour will:

-  Continue to campaign for a ban on 'no fault' evictions to protect tenants in the private rented sector
-  Call for greater regulation of Airbnbs, clamp down on properties being registered as holiday lets and support the local hotel industry
-  Review brownfield sites to increase housing development options and oppose building on green belt land or on flood plains
-  Raise council tax on empty second properties
-  Introduce a Tenants' Charter in conjunction with local associations
-  Ensure all high-rise blocks are fitted with an effective sprinkler system and investigate where flammable cladding has been used locally
-  Explore the use of housing co-operatives to create more affordable homes
-  Introduce measures to ensure building extensions are appropriate to the surrounding areas
-  Ensure the planning department has enough staff to do the job effectively and efficiently

## Caring for our communities - Improving everyone's health













Whilst the NHS is governed by Westminster, your local council has a number of powers that affect health at a local level. BCP's children's social care has recently failed two major inspections. At the heart of the problem has been poor leadership and cuts to budgets that have ultimately damaged some of our most vulnerable children and their families. We know that after more than a decade of Conservative austerity, thousands of families are now struggling and need our help.

The Conservatives in government have failed to fix our social care system, and we know that too often local residents are faced with the prospect of having to sell their homes to pay for the care they need. The private sector has also shown itself to be incapable of providing the quality of care that our loved ones deserve.

Local councils also have responsibilities for public health, including the need to tackle the causes of health inequalities. We know that income and lifestyle have a direct effect on health.



## Labour will:

-  Invest in early years programmes to provide targeted support to children at a time when it can make a real difference
-  Investigate providing new residential accommodation for young people getting ready to leave the care system
-  Improve the provision of care packages to enable those in hospital to be properly cared for in the community and so ease the pressure on the NHS and the availability of beds
-  Seek to bring domiciliary care back in-house. This would benefit local residents by improving standards of care and ensuring that any profits are reinvested into services
-  Better resource BCP Council social care information and advice services to support families trying to understand and navigate the health and social care systems
-  Strengthen contracts with private care home providers around issues of quality of services, staff training and pay
-  Introduce a healthy eating programme and cookery advice to local residents
-  Expand the availability of allotments to local residents of all ages to enable them to grow their own food
-  Review the provision of meals provided in our local schools, including breakfast and after school clubs
-  Ensure improved access to local mental health services, including for those who are neurodiverse
-  Launch a new initiative working jointly with communities and the Police to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour and provide support to those in need
-  Work with Police to tackle drug dealing, domestic abuse, “county lines”, child sexual exploitation, modern slavery and crime and disorder in the area
-  Accelerate accessibility improvements at Pokesdown and other stations