

REBUILDING STOKE-ON-TRENT

LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO
FOR CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2019

OUR PLEDGES TO THE PEOPLE OF STOKE-ON-TRENT



“Each pledge in this manifesto is designed to improve the lives of every person in the City. Our focus is, and always will be, the people we represent in Stoke-on-Trent.”

INTRODUCTION

Stoke-on-Trent is a city with a proud heritage and a bright future. Ours is the city that created beauty around the world and powered the industrial revolution. Our City's people work hard, play fair and have an immense pride in the place we all call home.

We are rich in talent; our communities are a source of continuing strength and we know that Stoke-on-Trent is a city that has so much to offer but has been let down by nine years of Conservative Government in Whitehall and four years of a squalid Conservative and Independent coalition in our Town Hall.

Each pledge in this manifesto is designed to improve the lives of every person in the City. Our focus is, and always will be, the people we represent in Stoke-on-Trent.

In these elections, the Labour Party and our 44 candidates will focus on what we can do to improve your street rather than blandly repeating the politics of Downing Street. The last 4-years have been tough on Stoke-on-Trent. Labour Councillors and our Labour MPs have heard in



our surgeries and on your doorsteps how angry you are at the way the Conservative and City independent coalition has got even the basics wrong.

Litter and fly-tipping has increased. Potholes are being left unattended for months. Drains are overflowing. Pavements are crumbling, and parks and green spaces have been abandoned.

Our children and our older people have been let down as social care cuts bite and children's centre services get slashed. Primary School buildings are not fit for purpose and are overcrowded. The Care Quality Commission found examples of citizens of our city left in pools of their own urine.

On 2 May 2019, each person in this city will have the chance to elect a new council, one that listens to the people and not their political masters in Westminster. A new council that will put Stoke-on-Trent first. A new Council run by Labour, and not the dodgy back room deals of the Conservatives and City Independents.

By voting Labour locally, we will get a council that will manage our money responsibly and provide the services that we value. We will get the basics right. Litter and fly-tipping will be dealt with and potholes that you report repaired in a timely manner. We will speed up house building to give our people the new homes they desperately need for rent and to buy including new council homes and bungalows. We will fight for the best futures for all our children. Despite Westminster Government cuts, we will protect our most vulnerable residents whether they are looked after children, older people who need social care, disabled people or the homeless. With a Labour Council, no one will be forgotten.

Put simply – our pledge to you is a Council that works for everyone in Stoke-on-Trent.

Cllr Mohammed Pervez
Labour Group Leader,
Stoke-on-Trent City Council

FOR OUR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE – THE FUTURE OF OUR CITY

001. We will make sure that every child has the best start in life, this will be at the heart of everything we do. We will promote inclusivity in our education system providing equal opportunity for all children including those with special educational needs and living with a disability.

002. We will transform children's social care provision in the city to ensure that vulnerable children are kept safe, protected from harm and achieve the best outcomes. The Conservatives and City Independents have driven down these services and Ofsted have raised concerns about our children being at risk of significant harm.

003. It was Labour that campaigned and pushed for better support for care leavers. We will continue to support those children leaving care to help them start their independent lives well.

004. We believe that every young person in Stoke-on-Trent should be able to go to a local school rated Good or Outstanding. Labour will demand the highest standards possible from all local authority run schools focusing on attainment, strengthening leadership, sharing best practice and creating an enjoyable and inclusive learning

environment. Even with the creation of academies, Labour will always seek ways of working in partnership to raise standards across the city and improve pupil attainment.

005. We will work to improve the attainment of pupils in schools through effective early years provision, recruitment and retention of specialist teachers in subjects such as Maths and Sciences, effective training of teachers of STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), reducing exclusion of pupils and tackling unauthorised absences.

006. We will work with schools and parents to develop effective partnerships to improve the outcomes for children.

007. We will focus our children's centre services to meet the needs of our communities and promote equal opportunity. We will support community groups using children centres for the betterment of the community.

008. We will forge strong links with businesses in the city to allow school children to have an insight into how factories, manufacturing, research, digital and creative industries work and have greater awareness of the range of career opportunities available to them. This will be done through site visits and providing work experience opportunities.

009. We will deliver at least 200 apprenticeships including Level 3 apprentices within the city council at any given point and hundreds more through our contractual suppliers to the City Council.

010. We will provide opportunities for young people to gain work experience in the council to become more work ready.

011. We will enhance the advice service available for young people to support them to make the big decisions about their futures e.g. going into higher education or taking up apprenticeships.

012. Labour will join forces with our MPs to campaign for fair funding from government to ensure that our schools in need of renovation are refurbished and that there is enough capacity for parents to send their children to their preferred schools.

013. Labour recognises the importance of mental health care for young people and we will work in partnership with the NHS, service users and other partners to enhance the provision of effective and accessible services.



014. We will immediately scrap the Conservative and City Independent plans to undermine local youth services. Labour will invest in neighbourhood youth programmes including activities in our parks and open spaces. We will do this by working closely with our communities.



FOR JOBS, BUSINESS AND PROSPERITY

015. We will work in partnership with businesses, communities and other stakeholders in the city to develop a vision for each town including a joint vision for our key development sites in our towns.

016. Labour will revive our six-towns by bringing empty council owned shops back into use either as retail units or for new homes and by working in partnership with our businesses and communities.

017. We will put our historic buildings into better use creating new social spaces, community focused hubs or new business units.

018. A Labour Council will build new industrial units to help business start-ups and growth.

019. A Labour Council will support businesses and investment in small and medium enterprises through business rate relief or rent-free periods for new start-ups.

020. We will introduce free wi-fi in each of our town centres. Stoke-on-Trent is a modern city and we believe our services should reflect this. We will also ensure faster broadband connectivity across the city.

021. We will invest in our markets to secure them for the future. A Labour Council will provide good quality indoor or outdoor markets in each of our six towns.

022. Labour will freeze car-parking charges on existing council car parks for the next four years. To support markets, we will also provide 1-hour free parking on existing council car parks in each of the five towns outside Hanley, during market trading hours. We will also create more parking spaces to support residents and stimulate the local economy.

023. We believe that the Stoke-on-Trent Tax-Payer's pound should stay in our city. The Council spends millions of pounds buying services and with Labour, we will open all opportunities to local businesses and aim to give them a competitive edge through the powers the council has.

024. We will create jobs in the construction industry through a major house-building programme.

025. We will sign up to the 'Unite the Union Construction Charter' to achieve the highest standards in respect of direct employment status, health and safety, standards of work, apprenticeship training and implementation of appropriate nationally agreed terms and conditions.

026. We will work even harder to enhance our understanding of the local jobs market and in partnership with key stakeholders, we will support residents to access training that will improve their job prospects. We want to bring good quality and better paid jobs in the city for our residents and this can be achieved by addressing the skills gap of our work force.

027. Working with our City MPs, we will campaign for a fair share of investment in Stoke-on-Trent. Nine years of national neglect and conservative cuts have left our City poorer.

028. We will root out zero hours contracts in the council's supply chain that are used to undermine workers' rights and we will not award contracts to companies who blacklist workers.

029. It was Labour that proudly introduced the Real Living Wage for City Council staff. We will now seek opportunities to get council contractors to pay the Real Living Wage to their employees. We will work with other partners including trade unions to promote the living wage to tackle the low wage economy in the city. This will take some time to achieve but our ambition will drive us to maintain focus on this important issue.

030. We will ensure that companies securing contracts with the council will always pay sub-contractors within 30-days and we will monitor this.

031. We will promote Fairtrade through the council procurement processes.

032. Labour recognises that being able to generate some of our own energy, from cleaner, greener and sustainable sources will be a corner stone in keeping and bringing jobs to the city and in protecting our environment. The District Heating Network was Labour's finest example of how we can achieve this and fuel the city's economy. We believe that there are jobs in creating the green economy, there are jobs in running the green economy and there are jobs in greening the rest of the economy. We must see those jobs become a reality. We will be at the forefront of any national investment in green initiatives in housing, transport and business support.

“Labour will freeze car-parking charges on existing council car parks for the next four years.”

FOR ROADS, TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

033. We will invest £25m to tackle the neglected roads and potholes and millions more in partnership to improve our road networks.

034. Labour will fix the potholes reported by residents within seven days of being reported.

035. We will deal with blocked gullies and drains reported by residents within ten days. We will also begin to clear the backlog of long-term blocked gullies causing issues for residents.

036. We will work with our City MPs to fight for our fair share of funding to ensure that we are able to maintain our roads, tackle congestion and improve air quality.

037. We will halt the chaotic Conservative-City Independent red route plans and work with our communities to devise a strategy to tackle reckless parking and keep traffic moving on our roads.

038. We will campaign for better rail services to our city including improved rail links on the east-west line from Crewe to Derby both in terms of increasing capacity and improving quality of trains.

039. We will campaign for better direct rail links to Manchester Airport.

040. We want the best bus service for Stoke-on-Trent. We will explore better partnership working between the bus operators, public sector and businesses to improve bus services and keep fares low. We will also work towards applying for re-regulation and franchising of bus services to allow the city council to have a bigger say on the actual routes for bus travel.

041. We will provide more bus shelters in the city and ensure that bus stops have easy to understand live bus timetables with electronic displays.

042. We will promote existing cycling routes and further invest to make Stoke-on-Trent a great cycling city.

043. We will introduce 20mph zones near schools where needed and in neighbourhoods where appropriate.

044. We will work with schools, parents and residents to tackle car-parking issues near schools including provision of additional parking spaces where possible.

045. Keeping our City moving during severe weather is vital for our economy and our communities. Labour will introduce a minimum of 200 more grit bins across the city and keep them topped up.

FOR BUILDING HOUSES FOR THE MANY

046. We will build a minimum 2,000 homes over the next 4-years. These will be council houses, council bungalows, social housing, affordable housing and private sector housing to rent or buy. We will make our council the largest house builder in the city.

047. Working with partners, we will provide more sheltered, supported and extra care housing in the city to support our older and vulnerable citizens.

048. We will invest around £80m in our Council housing stock to carry out essential maintenance and refurbishment works including new kitchens, bathrooms and roofs.

049. We will ensure that all new build houses in the city are energy efficient and we will work with partners to continue to improve existing homes.

050. We will prioritise viable brownfield sites for house building to regenerate our towns and protect our green spaces from the Tory plans. We will review the Conservative-City Independent draft local plan that proposes to build massively on the Berryhill Fields to find alternative viable sites.

051. We will bring back into use 400 empty homes per year.

052. We will scrap the Conservative and City Independent privatisation plans for housing and homelessness services and keep these vital services in local authority control.

053. With Labour, our City Council will introduce fair licensing policies for private landlords to improve our neighbourhoods and housing conditions as well as protect tenants. We will support good landlords and pursue rogue landlords.

054. To tackle homelessness in the city we will deliver integrated homeless services. We will review the Conservative-City Independent multi-million pounds homelessness hub model to ensure that those organisations working with our homeless people have a proper say in how services are delivered. We will draw up a Homelessness Charter to ensure we have a clear vision for how we will prevent homelessness and support homeless people.



FOR OUR COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

055. We will clean up our neighbourhoods and tackle littering and fly-tipping through better enforcement and council supported Community Action Days.

056. We will scrap the Conservative & City Independent charges for the disposal of soil, plasterboards and rubble at the tips. We believe such charges will only lead to increased incidents of fly-tipping.

057. We will scrap the 'Conservative-City Independent Rat Tax' and provide rat control services in the city free of charge.

058. We will cut the cost of bulky waste collection from £16 for five items to £10 per five items to encourage people to use this service rather than dump rubbish in the alleyways.

059. Fly-tipping in our city is a disgrace and those who do it should be punished. We will double the number of mobile cameras available to catch the perpetrators and to tackle anti-social behaviour.

060. We will invest in our city parks and ensure that they are kept clean and safe.

061. We will invest in better tree maintenance and ensure that overgrown trees reported by residents in populated areas are dealt with in a timely manner.

062. We will tackle climate change and protect the environment by supporting carbon reduction initiatives such as Geothermal heating, solar panels and heat capture technologies.

063. Too many of our community groups have been left behind by the Conservatives & City Independents. With Labour, we will support community initiatives and events that bring people together. We will offer practical help for groups to make effective funding applications.

064. We will create a £3m Community Wealth Fund to support organisations that are making a sustainable difference in our towns.

065. We will take community safety seriously and act to protect people from anti-social behaviour and other forms of crime by working in partnership with the Police and other agencies such as the voluntary sector.

066. We will protect our residents from rogue traders and service providers.

067. We will work to alleviate all forms of hate crime within the city, celebrate diversity and promote community cohesion in our neighbourhoods.

068. We will forge strong links with our faith communities in the city by promoting inter-faith dialogue and developing mutual understanding to achieve greater cohesion.

069. The Armed Forces Covenant was previously signed by many partners across the city under the previous Labour administration. We will continue to support ex-service personnel through finding them appropriate accommodation and providing support to integrate into the community.

“We will take community safety seriously and act to protect people from anti-social behaviour and other forms of crime.”



FOR BETTER HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

070. We will support and educate residents, especially young people, to prevent and overcome nicotine addiction and alcohol dependency.

071. We will work with partners to deal with drug related issues facing our city. This will be through a mixture of treatment, education and disruption of the supply chain.

072. We will work with partners to encourage better uptake of health checks within our communities to prevent diabetes, heart diseases and strokes and promote healthy eating and active lifestyles for all ages.

073. We will expand the Social Prescribing Programme to support people with a wide range of social, emotional and practical needs focussed on improving mental health and physical well-being. This can lead to a wide range of positive health and well-being outcomes. We will also support the Integrated Care Teams to provide support to residents in our neighbourhoods through GP practices.

074. Poor air quality is a major issue within our city that has a negative impact on people's health. We will work with partners to set a clear strategy on how we tackle this important issue and call upon central government for additional funding to achieve this.

075. We want our citizens to age well in the city and remain healthy, independent and happy throughout their lives. We will seek to maintain our 'Age Friendly City Status' to ensure that our elderly residents continue to live well and make a positive contribution.

076. We will carry out responsive assessments and fitting of adaptations for people living with disabilities or who need support with mobility.

077. Our Labour councillors and MPs campaigned hard against the closure of community hospitals. Both the Health and Social Care budgets are stretched due to continued Conservative Government cuts and there is now a significant gap between need and the available resources. We will work with other local providers in the public sector, voluntary sector and the third sector to protect the most vulnerable in our society including children, elderly people and those living with a disability. We believe that care is best provided in people's own homes in the community.

078. We will work in partnership with the NHS and Clinical Commissioning Groups and others to ensure people receive the best care in the community and have readily accessible and fit for purpose GP services. GP services are in crisis, with

many GPs retiring, patient lists and waiting times for appointments growing, and problems recruiting new GPs. We will work with our partners and Keele University to promote Stoke-on-Trent as a vibrant City with an exciting future, where newly qualified GPs would want to live and practice.

079. We will continue to scrutinise the proposals being put forward for realising efficiencies in the health and social services sector to ensure they do not have a detrimental effect on our residents. We remain opposed to the privatisation of health services and the loss of community beds and we will oppose the proposal to replace Community beds with commissioned beds in private Care Homes.

080. We will adopt and work towards the principles within the Unison Ethical Care Charter designed to promote safety, quality and dignity of care through better employment conditions, training and fair pay.

“Labour will ensure our leisure centres are affordable and offer activities that appeal to all ages.”

FOR SPORTS, ARTS & CULTURE IN THE CITY

081. Our main leisure facility at Fenton Manor is now dated and requires investment. We will join forces with partners to develop a state-of-the-art modern leisure facility with possible conference facilities.

082. We will support and make it easier for communities to come together through family fun days, music, arts and sport events.

083. We will support our community groups, arts and sports clubs with advice and help to bring in additional investment from external funders.

084. We will replace worn-out and unsafe outdoor gym and play equipment in our parks. We will also work to enhance and maintain sports pitches in the city.

085. Labour will ensure our leisure centres are affordable and offer activities that appeal to all ages from toddlers to over 50s walking football. We will also commit to making sport and leisure facilities available and accessible to people living with a disability.

086. We will invest in neighbourhood sport and play for youngsters and in activities for retired people.

087. We will work with our hugely popular theatres, our museums, our diverse communities and our artists to show case the rich culture of our city to attract visitors and boost the local economy.



“Labour will invest in advice services to make sure all Stoke residents get their full entitlement to council tax and other benefits.”

FOR TACKLING POVERTY IN THE CITY

088. We will work to alleviate poverty in the city including child poverty by working with families to address a range of issues such worklessness, increasing household incomes, improving housing conditions, improving educational standards and ensuring that everybody has the same chance to succeed in life.

089. Labour will invest in advice services to make sure all Stoke residents get their full entitlement to council tax and other benefits and the necessary support to be able to navigate through the various application processes.

090. We will work in partnership with the voluntary sector to provide effective support for our residents facing difficulties and requiring support.

091. We will create a new hardship Fund with an initial value of £500,000 to support people facing genuine hardship and crisis situations.

092. We will tackle fuel poverty by expanding the community energy switching program and making homes more energy efficient and increasing the number of people that benefit from our District Heating Network.

FOR OUR DEMOCRACY AND RE-BUILDING TRUST

093. We will carry out a complete review of the council's constitution to enhance democratic decision making and improve accountability.

094. We will facilitate an independent review of the council's finances to gain an in-depth understanding of the state of council budgets to ensure that we focus resources to meet the needs of our communities and drive efficiencies.

095. We will listen to you and continue to improve the way you access services and make the council more responsive.

096. We will make decisions in the council openly and transparently. Too many decisions by the Conservative and City Independent coalition have been behind closed doors.

097. We will strengthen scrutiny in the council to ensure decisions made by the council stack up and are delivering essential services to our residents.

098. Labour councillors will be accessible to their constituents to listen to their views and to resolve issues.

099. We will create a new Youth Council to give young people a real voice to help shape services that the council provides.

100. We will strengthen the democratic accountability of the council owned companies such UNITAS and FORTIOR Homes and ensure proper scrutiny of plans and outcomes take place.



“We will create a new Youth Council to give young people a real voice.”

