



Horsham Labour

A manifesto for the many not the few in 2019



Vote Labour
X Thursday 2 May



On 2 May you have an opportunity to elect Labour councillors to Horsham District Council. Our manifesto sets out our ambition to achieve a greener, kinder, more equal and yes - more prosperous Horsham.



Every Labour councillor you elect will send a message of hope to all those in need of a decent and affordable home. It will be the first step in ensuring our schools receive the level of funding they so desperately need and signal a change in the way we nurture and protect our environment.

At the last district-wide election in 2017, Labour secured more than twice the level of support of the next party, coming a strong second to the Conservative Party. Only Labour can beat the Conservatives in Horsham, the Lib Dems cannot win here.

We're proud of our manifesto - why not email us and tell us what you think about it?

Together we can change Horsham for the better.

David Hide

Chair Horsham Labour Party

chair@horsham-labour.org.uk



Somewhere to call home

In Horsham, it costs 11 times the average local wage to buy an average sized house...

We believe everyone is entitled to a decent, secure and affordable home. Despite rising numbers on the housing register and housing costs increasing year on year, thousands of new homes that are unaffordable for many local people are being built. We will always put the community first.

The Council has failed to ensure the number of affordable homes that our community needs are delivered, resulting in a housing crisis in our District. A Labour run council will take immediate steps to resolve our housing crisis.

- We will make sure the planning process puts the interests of our community first. We will demand that any developer seeking planning permission must deliver at least 50% genuinely affordable homes. This must also include a mixture of homes with social rents, shared ownership and supported living schemes.
- The development of thousands of new houses around Horsham has put pressure on local services and infrastructure. We will challenge every planning application that fails to meet the guidelines set down by the council's own local plan. This means that before we approve any applications, we will require developers to build adequate provisions – for example, schools, GP surgeries and other infrastructure required to meet the needs of the growing population. We will also make sure only sustainable communities are built, both in terms of affordability and the environment.
- Our robust approach towards the delivery of affordable housing will reduce the length of time that applicants on the housing register have to wait for a decent home. We will review the eligibility criteria for applications to the housing register to help all those in need of support find a safe, secure home.
- We believe it's unacceptable that in an area as affluent as Horsham, people are forced to sleep on the streets because they have nowhere else to go. It will be our priority to invest in support services that help the homeless to find secure accommodation and help them in addressing the challenges in their lives.

Creating safety in our local community

Residents and visitors should have the right to feel safe and secure, both at home and on the streets.

Horsham Labour are deeply concerned by rising levels of crime in the area. We firmly believe that a low crime rate can contribute to making our district a better place to live and will prioritise the reduction of crime in the area. We will:

- continue to campaign for more police officers on the beat and increase the number of Community Support Officers and Local Authority Wardens.
- work closely with other professionals to ensure safety for children and vulnerable adults by re-investing in youth work, including youth centres. We will use these facilities to help young people build new skills and friendships, and to identify and support them with drug and substance abuse. We will put in place support through the provision of hostels and support for victims of domestic abuse, exploitation and crime.
- encourage Neighbourhood Watch schemes and appoint a named contact to champion their work and relay local issues back to the Council.
- make sure that when planning and landscaping our neighbourhoods that there are clear sight lines through wide, well-lit subways, footpaths and car parks. We will keep trees and bushes on public paths trimmed to help our community feel safer and reduce street crime.



- turn areas of unused waste land in to well-designed public areas to deter their use for anti-social and criminal activities.

Protecting the environment, protecting our future

Too often, decisions are taken that ignore the long-term consequences for our health and on the environment.

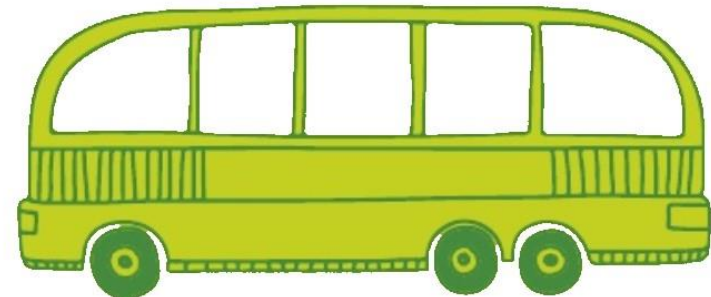
A Labour-led council will use the levers of local government to reduce our impact on the environment and commit to a programme of divestment. We will ensure that none of Horsham Districts reserves or pension funds are invested in companies whose operations have a negative impact on our environment.

- A Labour run council will set up an environmental committee to assess the environmental impact of its decisions. We will create a new senior role in the council with a focus on engaging with the public, making sure new innovative initiatives are developed and delivered across the district.
- We support zero-carbon housing and would make sure all new builds include solar panels and are energy efficient.
- We will invest in reliable and affordable public transport to reduce traffic in Horsham. We will provide adequate charging points to encourage electric cars.
- Horsham Labour party is against the proposed waste incinerator plant to the north of Horsham. We believe this would discourage recycling and would have a detrimental impact on the environment and on our health.



Creating an integrated, green transport system for all

- Labour councillors will prioritise the maintenance and improvement of the cycle networks in Horsham so they are safe for all that use them. We will work with all local cycling organisations to achieve this, with the goal of providing more opportunity for residents to leave their cars at home.
- We recognise bus travel is vital for many of our senior citizens to get out and about in Horsham. We will scrap the time restriction on senior bus passes so there is free travel all day. We will also introduce free travel passes for young people in education, as for many students, bus transport is their only option.
- With a focus on keeping the air in Horsham clean, we will work with bus companies to make sure all new buses meet the highest environmental standards.
- A Labour run council will use all our powers to continue championing the rail user, working with all those involved to ensure they deliver a high quality and reliable service for all. We will continue to campaign to bring our railways back into public ownership, the fragmented and privatised model consistently fails Horsham's rail users.
- A Labour council will remove parking charges at the Horsham Hospital - no one should be charged when seeking medical assistance or visiting loved ones.



Power to the people - bringing local democracy back to the people

We will open up our local democracy and end the 'behind closed doors' culture that exists

We believe the cabinet style government has delivered too many poor decisions and is not working well for our town. We will end cabinet-style government and reintroduce decision making by the full council to ensure complete transparency and improved levels of scrutiny. Through prudent financial management and by avoiding costly mistakes, we will be able to deliver on our manifesto promises.

- Every member of the public should have the right to petition the council. We will set a threshold of 500 signatures, and once this figure is met, the lead petitioner will be invited to present their case to a meeting of the full council. The council leader will be required to provide a full and considered response.
- We will provide all members of the public with an opportunity to ask a question on a topic of their choosing at the start of every full council meeting. A lead member from the council will be required to reply.
- Horsham Labour councillors will encourage greater levels of local engagement, particularly in respect of large- scale planning applications. We will hold public meetings to ensure that the views of residents are taken into account and inform any approved application.
- We will increase the number of residents allowed to speak for or against a planning application and will not set a limit of just three people as happens now. We will increase the time for each speaker from two to four minutes and also prevent the developer from speaking in favour of their own application.
- As a result of appalling decision making and even worse oversight and scrutiny, the Acorn Plus Recycling and kerbside collection scheme was introduced and then a few years later replaced, as it was found not fit for purpose. This expensive mistake cost Horsham's residents millions and brought about the end of weekly bin collections. During the financial year 2017/18 Horsham District Council spent £28 million across 70 capital projects, including £11 million on the Forum retail outlets and £3 million on replacement waste collection vehicles. We will ensure the highest levels of scrutiny, so that there can never again be a repeat of the Acorn Recycling Scheme financial fiasco.

Supporting local businesses for a vibrant town centre

Making sure Horsham is a great place to work and live

Like many parts of the UK, our high streets are attracting fewer visitors than we would like. Working with local businesses, we will boost our local economy and make sure our high streets are a centre full of community spirit.



- We will stimulate the local economy by encouraging genuine local independent businesses to fill the town's empty retail units and make Horsham an exciting and vibrant shopping destination. To overcome the obstacle of high rents and business rates, a Labour run council will introduce local business grants. This would help launch and sustain local enterprises and allow them to compete with their national giant neighbours.
- Horsham town centre already has a substantial programme of music, markets and street entertainment. We will enhance this by reinstating budgets to deliver award-winning summer floral displays and a Christmas extravaganza to delight the crowds. We will reinstate the much-loved fireworks and laser show in the Carfax to launch the seasonal shopping experience with a celebrity lights switching on event. Then properly promote extra hours late night shopping and decorate the town centre with lights and seasonal displays that really pull the crowds in.
- A Labour-run council will build a new campaign strategy, encouraging shoppers to 'buy local' wherever possible, bringing people back into our high street.
- We will make a commitment that every council employee is paid the Living Wage, and that as contracts come up for renewal, all suppliers commissioned by the council are also Living Wage employers too. We will work collaboratively with all council employees and their trade unions to deliver the very best outcomes for our district. We will also work with local businesses to help them adopt the Living Wage. Not only will this help businesses with recruitment and staff retention, but it will also help improve the lives of the lowest paid workers.

Bringing civic pride back to our beautiful historic town

Looking after our parks and outside spaces

Horsham is blessed with some beautiful parks and countryside, but we feel they have become neglected. A Labour run council will introduce new measures to enrich our natural environment.

- We believe in encouraging the residents of Horsham to recycle, not to charge them for doing so. We will repeal the charge on Garden Waste bins which will address the increase in fly-tipping and dumping of garden waste at the tidy tips in Horsham and Billingshurst that has occurred since a charge was introduced.
- As part of our drive to make Horsham a Smart Town in Waste management and a shining example of environmentally friendly green policies, we will invest in new IT Waste technologies. These have been successfully introduced in many parts of the world, and we would use them to increase the efficiency of our waste collection. This Smart Waste management will also address the need to better handle food waste, allowing regular pick up rather than just including it with general waste. The separation of food waste will increase recycling rates, reduce CO2 emissions and help us move towards zero waste to landfill.
- Time and time again, we hear residents tell us they are tired of dog waste bins overflowing, making our environment unattractive and unsafe. We will increase the number of dog waste bins and convert them to smart bins so they can be emptied before they become too full. This policy of Smart waste management has been shown around the world to create massive efficiency savings. This will save Horsham council money and allow us to increase the number of operatives keeping our green spaces clean and tidy.
- We intend to make Horsham a “zero” plastic bottle town by introducing more water fountains around Horsham District, in recreational areas such as parks, nature reserves and other locations, as well as in local businesses, to encourage the use of reusable water bottles. We will also encourage local businesses to drop the use of plastic straws and cutlery and move to more sustainable alternatives.
- We will manage our green spaces and parks to the highest environmental standards. We will ensure that we protect all our flora and fauna and make our environment a beautiful place to enjoy together as a community.

Creating opportunity for all Horsham's residents

We believe in genuine equality of opportunity for all

Every child in Horsham district should be able to fulfil their potential by hard work and talent, regardless of where they live, how much money they have, their gender, ethnic background or disability. Creating equality of opportunity will not only create a fairer society, but it also makes business sense. Our future is in the young. Yet many young people are pessimistic about their life chances and this is the case even in a seemingly affluent town such as Horsham.

A Labour -run council will be committed to improving social mobility by:

- lobbying and liaising with local education providers, so that young people in Horsham benefit and have access to careers advice.
- working with local employers to offer training and development opportunities such as apprenticeships and advertised paid work experience and internships.
- improving access to IT services and access to faster broadband across town.
- working in partnership with local sports and arts facilities, we will provide reduced rates for the under 25s and the unwaged. We will promote their use to encourage more young people to become involved in the arts and develop their talents.

The new funding formula for education will leave Horsham Schools at least a further £2 million underfunded compared to other similar sized schools in inner cities. Yet education is the most valuable investment we can make. It unleashes potential, setting people free to realise their ambitions and chase their dreams. We support and applaud the work done by the WorthLess campaign to deliver better funding for all of our schools.

- Academies and free schools are delivering big business opportunities with shareholder dividends, offshore hedge funds and excessive CEO salaries. We do not support this model as it is taking much needed funding out of our education system. We will continue to support the campaign to deliver improved levels of funding for our excellent local schools and Labour councillors will oppose any academisation of our schools, and the building of any new free schools within Horsham district. All new schools must be funded by the tax payer and under local authority control. We support our excellent comprehensive local education run primary and secondary schools.



Helping everyone lead a healthier life

Keeping active and leading a healthy lifestyle should be accessible for everyone

- A Horsham-led council will work in partnership with local sports centres to provide free gym passes for residents under 21, those currently in full time education, and anyone in receipt of benefits.
- To encourage greater use of the park and its facilities, we will introduce a free parking scheme for people using the Pavilions in the Park parking, and up to 2 hours free parking for the other park car parks. We will also return to free use of the tennis courts in Horsham Park.
- We will install a re-cycled membrane, integral with the turf, to provide an all-year round running surface in Horsham Park, to encourage greater use during the winter months.





We need you on our side, so together, we can start to build a community that stands up for the many.

Contact Horsham Labour Party

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