

Labour: Standing up for Ipswich

Labour's Manifesto for
Ipswich Borough Council

Election 5th May 2011

Standing Up For Ipswich

Public services in Ipswich are under unprecedented threat.

The Tory-led government is cutting too far and too fast. The money given to our councils has been slashed this year with further cuts to come in future years.

Unemployment is increasing as the economy stagnates. People who lose their jobs will see their benefits cut. Crime is set to rise as police numbers are cut. Suffolk County Council is embarking on a programme of cuts that will have a severe and detrimental effect on Ipswich. School crossing patrols and branch libraries face the axe. Bury Road Park and Ride has been closed. Our roads are cratered with potholes.

The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats running Ipswich Borough Council stood back and did nothing during the recession. They are repeating the same mistake with the Government's unprecedented cuts in public expenditure. They are retreating to the council's headquarters, concentrating purely on the council's own services and leaving other organisations to make the cuts and pick up the pieces. They show more inclination to defend Government cuts than to fight for a better deal for Ipswich.

Ipswich needs a strong Borough Council, determined to stand up for Ipswich and defend Ipswich people against the worst effects of the Tory-led Government cuts. Labour has shown it cares and is prepared to act by standing up for our libraries and lollipop patrols.

Only a vote for Labour in May 2011 can give Ipswich the strong voice it needs.

Labour's priorities for Ipswich:

- **Protecting frontline services**
- **Bringing jobs and investment to Ipswich**
- **More affordable houses and fewer flats**
- **Helping victims of crime and anti-social behaviour**
- **Cutting council waste**

A Stronger Ipswich Economy

A Labour council will be active in supporting the local economy.

Government spending cuts have led the national economy to contract. Other councils have taken active steps to boost their local economies but the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats running our council have done next to nothing to help local businesses. They stood idly by, leaving vacancies in the council's Economic Development Unit, throughout the recession.

Unemployment in Ipswich is now higher than when the Tory-led Government took office. We need a council that will do whatever it takes to grow the local economy so that there are jobs for people.

What Labour Will Do

- *We will redouble efforts to bring new investment and jobs to Ipswich.*
- *We will provide incentives to bring empty shops and run-down areas back into use.*
- *We will do more to ensure local businesses are claiming the reliefs and grants they are entitled to.*
- *We will improve the skills and employment prospects of people who are out of work by increasing the number of apprentices and volunteering and work experience opportunities.*
- *We will seek to use local suppliers and workers wherever possible.*
- *We will ensure that the council has a properly staffed Economic Development Unit working to attract businesses to Ipswich.*

Value for Money

A Labour council will be run in an efficient way, with savings used to improve services and keep down council tax.

Council budgets are under increasing pressure. It is vital that every penny is spent wisely to maintain services and keep council tax levels down. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have wasted huge amounts of money. Unwise investments in Iceland have lost £1.5 million. Moving the Giles statue a few metres has cost £650,000. The council has spent over £4 million hiring consultants. Enormous amounts of time and money have been wasted on schemes that were never likely to happen.

What Labour Will Do

- *We will cut back the use of expensive consultants.*
- *We will work with council staff and residents to identify ways to save money and improve services.*
- *We will reduce council waste in energy and paper.*
- *We will work with other organisations, where this will improve the service or reduce the cost to Ipswich residents.*
- *We will increase the amount of information the council makes available to let public scrutiny drive up service standards.*
- *We will cut waste from duplicated effort by “Getting It Right First Time”.*
- *We will stop wasting time and money pursuing unrealistic schemes that will never happen.*

A Safer Ipswich

A Labour council's top priority for anti-social behaviour will be to provide fast and effective relief for victims.

Property related crime in Ipswich is on the increase. Crime levels in Ipswich are still much higher than in surrounding areas. Drinking on the streets has not been tackled effectively. 300 police job cuts make it likely that the situation will get worse.

The way the council deals with anti-social behaviour is simply not acceptable. Many victims of anti-social behaviour are left to suffer for months or even years, filling out elaborate logging sheets while no action is taken to stop the problem.

What Labour Will Do

- *We will improve the way anti-social behaviour is tackled to speed up the resolution of problems.*
- *We will improve the enforcement of littering, dog-fouling and fly tipping.*
- *We will adopt firmer policies to control premises selling alcohol.*
- *We will introduce more rigorous inspections for off-licenses.*
- *We will give greater priority to tackling street drinking.*
- *We will give residents more say in the placing of mobile CCTV cameras.*
- *We will tackle untidy and eyesore land and gardens.*
- *We will make the town centre more welcoming for people of all ages.*

Keeping Ipswich Moving

A Labour Council will make it easier for people to get around town.

The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have woefully neglected Ipswich's transport system. There have been no measures to ease traffic flows; our roads are in a worse state than ever and a lack of maintenance caused the early closure and demolition of Crown Car Park. The County Council has made matters worse with its schemes at Duke Street and Rope Walk and by closing Bury Road Park and Ride. The Tories and Liberal Democrats are only interested in trying to take money out of Ipswich Buses leading to 60% higher fares, cuts in services and a lack of investment in new buses.

What Labour Will Do

- *We will keep Ipswich Buses in the ownership of the people of Ipswich, run as a public service providing frequent, reliable and affordable services – not maximising the payment of dividends.*
- *We will fight to get a fairer road maintenance budget from Suffolk County Council.*
- *We will ensure that there is sufficient car parking in Ipswich to support a thriving town centre.*
- *We will ensure that Ipswich gets worthwhile improvements from the Ipswich Fit for the 21st Century scheme*
- *We will introduce 20 mph speed limits on all estates where residents want it.*
- *We will speed up the introduction of residents parking areas where residents want it.*
- *We will work with local cycling groups to extend the current piecemeal cycle network.*

Quality Housing For All

A Labour council will work to ensure decent, suitable and affordable housing is available to everyone in Ipswich.

The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have allowed too much of the wrong kind of housing to be built in Ipswich. Instead of much needed affordable family houses, we have seen a glut of apartments that people don't want to live in. The recession has slowed house building to a trickle, but the council has missed numerous opportunities to apply for the limited Government funding available to build new affordable housing. The council's own tenants are treated like second-class citizens, their services cut and their voice ignored.

What Labour Will Do

- *We will speed up plans to build new housing to boost the local economy.*
- *We will prioritise the building of affordable family homes over luxury flats.*
- *We will give all tenants – council, housing association or private rented - a voice.*
- *We will make it a priority to get empty properties back into use.*
- *We will develop an Ipswich Standard for private rented property to tackle safety, heating efficiency, insulation and damp problems.*
- *We will help to kick-start stalled housing developments.*

A Fairer Ipswich

A Labour council will be run for the benefit of all the people of Ipswich and will give them a greater say in how it is run.

The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have become arrogant and out of touch. Ipswich people are not being consulted on major decisions. Where consultation is carried out, it is often a sham. The council does not genuinely work with voluntary and community groups but seeks to offload services on to them, while cutting their funding.

Where you live in Ipswich still makes a huge difference to your life expectancy and the council is not seriously trying to address this.

What Labour Will Do

- *We will identify and strengthen council services that will see greater demand as a result of Government cuts*
- *We will ensure that there is proper consultation with residents and affected groups on all major council decisions.*
- *We will increase the openness of the council and keep residents better informed about what the council is doing.*
- *We will introduce longer term funding deals to give more certainty to community and voluntary groups.*
- *We will reform the way the council works to take decision-making closer to the people.*
- *We will support existing residents' and community groups and encourage the creation of new groups.*
- *We will use the buying power of the council to ensure that suppliers and contractors follow good employment and environmental practices.*
- *We will focus on improving services to areas where there is the greatest need.*

A Greener Ipswich

A Labour council will make Ipswich a more pleasant place to live, help tackle climate change and help save council taxpayers money.

The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats proclaim their green credentials but, in reality, they have achieved very little. They have spent too much time on eye-catching, but ultimately worthless initiatives such as the windmill in Christchurch Park, while neglecting bread-and-butter issues where the council really can make a difference. Recycling rates could, and should, be much higher. Labour councillors have had to fight to stop plans to build on allotments. Not enough is being done to stop littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling.

What Labour Will Do

- *We will reduce the council's carbon emissions every year.*
- *We will improve the take-up of energy efficiency measures in privately rented houses.*
- *We will introduce separate food waste collections.*
- *We will expand the number and range of neighbourhood recycling centres for materials that cannot be collected at the doorstep.*
- *We will improve public information to increase the take-up of the council's existing recycling facilities.*
- *We will improve recycling from commercial premises.*
- *We will encourage the take-up of allotments to provide cheap and healthy food.*
- *We will improve the council's response to fly-tipping on private land.*
- *We will change the council's planning policies to protect green areas in Ipswich.*

A More Enjoyable Ipswich

A Labour council would maintain and improve sport and leisure services and make sure they are available to all Ipswich residents.

The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have presided over the steady decline of cultural and leisure services in Ipswich. A volunteer group had to step in to run the Film Theatre after the council closed it. The Corn Exchange is closed for part of the year. Landseer Play Centre is in a state of limbo. Broomhill Pool is still closed. The council is now looking to offload many of its sports and leisure facilities with seemingly little regard for how this will affect Ipswich residents.

What Labour Will Do

- *We will work with the Broomhill Trust and interested parties to re-open Broomhill Pool.*
- *We will provide more activities for young people.*
- *We will introduce a fair charging policy to encourage greater use of our sport and leisure facilities.*
- *We will actively support groups who wish to run events and services from council facilities.*
- *We will ensure that Ipswich continues to benefit from the Olympics after 2012.*
- *We will ensure that our sports and leisure facilities are properly maintained and improved.*
- *We will increase the number of events in Ipswich both for the benefit of residents and to increase the number of visitors to our town.*