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AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON



**CROYDON LABOUR
2014 MANIFESTO**



Croydon Labour Party

2014 Manifesto

AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON

We are proud of our borough and we believe it is time to be ambitious for Croydon.

Our town has been hit hard in recent years by the economic downturn and by the failure of a Conservative Government and a Conservative Council. So it falls to us to offer an alternative, an alternative that brings hope and helps unlock the ambitions and aspirations of all who live and work in Croydon.

If we win the local council elections in May 2014, Labour's priorities will be to work for a strong local economy, provide support for local jobs, fair and affordable housing for all, and clean, safe streets across all of our borough.

It is already clear we will inherit a council in financial crisis, a council that has wasted what little money it had on building luxury council offices, while cutting local services. As a result we will have to take tough decisions to protect frontline services, while ensuring that value for money is achieved in everything we do. Our plan is to take immediate action in some of the important areas laid out in this document. While other changes will be achieved within our first term, further changes can only be achieved when we can once again work with a Labour Government and a Labour London Mayor.

We believe things can be different and we believe that our town needs and deserves a new beginning.... **It's time to be ambitious for Croydon.**

Tony Newman
Labour Group Leader

*This document has been produced with contributions and input from Croydon Constituency Labour Parties and wards, Croydon Labour Women's Forum, Croydon Labour Group, Labour Party members and local residents, trades unions, Croydon businesses, Croydon DPAC, the voluntary sector and the GMB. THANK YOU.
Special thanks to Lis Watkins www.lineandwash.blogspot.co.uk for her artwork*

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FAIRNESS

The Coalition government has put in place a programme of tax increases and public spending cuts. As public services are cut, fairness matters more than ever. The bigger the gap between rich and poor, the more anti-social behaviour, ill-health, drug abuse and signs of social breakdown we have to deal with. This means that the need for public services – such as police, health care, drug rehabilitation, prisons and social services – is powerfully affected by how fair or unfair our society is. People in our borough are suffering because of this gap. Community life can also be weakened in societies with bigger income differences. Inequality is divisive and an enemy of social cohesion. The potential for voluntary services and local communities to flourish is dramatically reduced when the gap between rich and poor grows wider.

We are aware that Croydon is marked by some stark contrasts in wealth and poverty. It is our strongly held ambition to establish the **Croydon Fairness Commission**, to recommend steps on how to improve the quality of life across the borough by making it a fairer place for all who live and work here. The Croydon Fairness Commission will influence and inform the council on how it makes decisions on allocating resources.

CROYDON – A PLACE TO LIVE & WORK

Croydon has a vibrant and diverse community. We are a borough of many places full of brilliant people. We are ambitious for a Croydon where everyone is proud to live and work. We will work for an inclusive and equal Croydon that enables every person to reach her or his full potential and enjoy the benefits of a vibrant economy.

JOBS & THE ECONOMY

- **Croydon will be a London living wage council and we will campaign to make Croydon a living wage borough**
- **We will work towards increasing employment and reducing poverty across all communities**
- **We will work to improve development opportunities and investment in Croydon**
- **We will continue the work of Labour's Croydon Business Forum**
- **We will work in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, Croydon College and other organisations to ensure that all our people have the right skills for the right job**

- **We will encourage businesses to invest in our district centres and to employ local people and we will use business rates to help achieve this**
- **Working in close partnership with the private sector, we will help train up a new generation of skilled workers to take advantage of future projects**
- **We will make Croydon a connected ‘smart city’**
- **We will take steps to encourage owners of empty offices to bring the buildings back into productive use**
- **We will support and encourage co-operative solutions to the Croydon economy**

Youth unemployment is one of the biggest issues in Croydon. We are ambitious for our young people to have the best possible start in life, whether going to university, going into apprenticeships or training, or joining the workforce. Compared with other parts of the country, London’s job market has a much higher proportion of jobs requiring high-level qualifications. It is vital that all our children do well in school in order to ensure the best possible opportunity of employment.

Over the eight years of the Conservative administration in charge of the Town Hall, **Croydon’s economy has been in decline**. Businesses – Nestlé, Alders, Bank of America - have closed or left the borough, jobs in the borough have reduced by more than a quarter and opportunities are scarce, for young and old alike.

With Croydon’s infrastructure and population, companies should be queuing up to move to this borough. **Labour’s strategy is to create an ambitious and vibrant ‘place to be’**.

We will build upon our good working relationships with local businesses, large and small. We will continue to work in partnership with major developers such as Hammerson and Westfield, as well as Croydon’s thousands of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). We will aim to improve development opportunities and to attract investment by vigorously promoting the borough at every opportunity, both at home and abroad.

Through a community budget approach we want to work with all agencies and organisations across Croydon, to assist our residents with access into employment. We want to ensure that every pound of public money spent in Croydon achieves the intended outcome by delivering value for money and not simply duplicating the efforts of others.

Labour has already launched the Croydon Business Forum to identify means by which a Labour council can help our businesses in the borough. Croydon needs a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, and a workforce that is paid fairly. We will work with Jobcentre plus, employers and our educational partners to ensure that our people have the right skills for the right job while ensuring they are paid justly for their work.

We shall ensure that **all new council contracts will pay the London living wage** and we will work to make Croydon a living wage borough.

A Labour council will work with local employers to build confidence about employing disabled people. We will increase awareness of the Access to Work scheme and support local disability organisations to de-stigmatise mental health. **We are committed to lobbying national government to scrap the contract with Atos for the Work Capability Assessment.**

It is vital that Croydon becomes a 'smart city' that develops and welcomes those at the cutting edge of the technology sector. Labour will promote Croydon as one of the South East's IT destinations of choice, building upon the work of our tech city entrepreneurs and established Croydon companies such as dotMailer, who already employ hundreds of people.

Labour will work with providers to make Croydon a fully Wi-Fi-enabled borough. We want everyone to be able to connect to the web for free in main shopping and business areas. We want to **ensure the borough has the best connectivity capability** for companies who are already based here, as well as for those we want to encourage to move here.

When a Labour council funds or procures a new service, building or development, we will ensure training and apprenticeship opportunities are given to local people. We will encourage this through the planning process and by working with local businesses and other public sector bodies. We will actively encourage employers to pay apprentices a decent wage.

Using business rates as leverage, we will encourage businesses to invest both in our town and district centres and to employ local people. We will encourage owners of empty office space to bring it back into use, particularly for new enterprise and business start-up units.

We will make sure that Croydon takes advantage of Gatwick Airport's close proximity and ensure Croydon profits from any future airport expansion.

Croydon Labour is ambitious to encourage the growth of the co-operative economy.

Mutuals, co-operatives and social enterprises are ideal vehicles for local economic development. They generate wealth and employment, while income is retained locally to the benefit of local communities.

EDUCATION & LEARNING

- We will improve the availability of education in Croydon, from pre-school to college, for our young and adult learners
- We will seek to work with every Croydon school to make sure that all are schools of choice for local families
- We will establish a ‘free breakfast’ scheme to meet the needs of all Croydon parents and children, and we will lobby central government to provide the funds
- Labour will work hard to deliver the necessary additional school places to fully meet the borough’s needs
- To improve options and outcomes for young people, we will work closely with all Croydon colleges and sixth-form establishments
- We will promote lifelong learning
- We will explore, among other options, the co-operative school model for new schools

Labour will work in partnership with all Croydon schools to deliver the very best for all our young people. From pre-school to our older residents, we believe that **by supporting the whole family we can improve the lives of Croydon residents**. At a time when council money for the voluntary sector has been cut and the council’s role in education is downgraded, our challenge is to work with businesses and others to meet the educational needs of all.

We are ambitious to improve the availability of education in Croydon for our young and adult learners, from pre-school to college. Croydon has many different types of school, many of which are very good and popular with parents. **A Labour council will work with every Croydon school to make sure all are schools of choice** for local families.

We will seek to re-establish good working relationships with all publicly funded schools in Croydon. We will seek to create a new working partnership with all academies, council-run and free schools to ensure that school standards improve and that the running of all schools is transparent and accountable.

In addition, **we will work with schools to ensure that resources are targeted at those social groups that currently under-perform in school exam attainment**.

Labour understands the need for schools to play a wider role in our lives, so **we plan to establish a ‘free breakfast’ scheme**. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day but it is a meal which many children miss. Children who don’t have a breakfast don’t learn as well.

A Labour council will support changes that will strengthen the quality and status of the childcare workforce. We recognise that the early years so often determines life chances and that is why we fully support Sure Start (Children's Centres) and early year's provision. There is strong evidence that this leads to better social mobility and costs savings down the line. We are deeply concerned by cuts in funding to Sure Start from central government and will actively campaign for this funding to be restored.

We will work with the parents of children with special educational needs to identify what extra help will best meet their children's needs and we will give adequate support to enable children and their families the choice of inclusive education.

Croydon Labour understands that classroom support staff and teaching assistants are vital professionals in the modern school environment and should be recognised as such. We are aware of the difference teaching assistants make every single day, whether it's supporting a teacher, helping a child, or working with students with greater needs. **We will campaign to defend teaching assistants from cuts by central government.**

Croydon is in desperate need of new schools and **Labour will put in place plans to deliver the additional school places required.** We will do this by expanding existing schools where appropriate, by the building of new ones, and by working with private and voluntary organisations. We look forward to working with a Labour Government which will once again allow councils to build and run schools. We will ensure that all new and refurbished school buildings are designed to be accessible to disabled pupils.

We will work with all Croydon's colleges and sixth form establishments to improve options and outcomes for young people. We are ambitious to help Croydon College offer a first-class education and make university or other choices more accessible, not only for our young, but also for the more mature student. As a longer term aspiration, **we are ambitious for a university in Croydon.**

We will work with schools, businesses and the voluntary sector to ensure young people and those learning new skills can access high quality education and learn a range of skills which will equip them for employment, whatever the sector.

We will work with Croydon Tech City to support the creation of Code Clubs in all our primary schools to give Croydon children a head start in learning about computing.

Labour believes strongly in lifelong learning for all of our citizens and we will work with Croydon College, Croydon Adult Learning & Training (CALAT) and other providers to see that this is achieved.

HOUSING

- **In partnership with key stakeholders, we will launch a housing commission to report back within six months on the scale of the homelessness crisis we will inherit and to provide possible solutions**
- **We will establish a Croydon housing partnership to promote housing-led regeneration**
- **In partnership We will build affordable housing to buy and rent**
- **We will crack down on rogue and criminal landlords and letting agents**
- **We will ensure Croydon invests in mixed communities and the infrastructure to support them**
- **We will ensure the right to a decent home in both the social and private rented sectors**
- **We will target empty properties using the full range of powers, including compulsory purchase**
- **We will look to establish a not-for-profit lettings agency that works for all Croydon residents**
- **When developing new homes to buy or rent, we will work with local residents to develop local lettings plans so their community needs are taken into account**

Labour will have a fair housing policy for all of Croydon. Homes are the foundation of our neighbourhoods and communities, whether we are owner-occupiers, council or social housing tenants, or living in shared ownership or private rented accommodation. We need well-designed areas where people want to live. We need mixed and diverse communities free from crime and we also need to protect our environment.

Croydon has a housing crisis and Labour will make tackling this a priority. Housing policy is not just about putting a roof over people's heads. It is about giving our children the best start in life, by tackling inequality and poverty, and by increasing life chances and improving health. If we want a town where big business invests and smaller businesses are given the opportunity to start up and grow, then we must provide decent homes, whether to rent or to buy, that are affordable for all.

We are ambitious to build new homes to rent and buy to help tackle Croydon's housing crisis. There are already 10,000 people on our housing waiting list and the Government's changes to local housing allowances and housing benefits has placed further pressure and restricted access to housing in the private sector for many of our lowest income residents.

Labour is committed to building mixed sustainable communities. By working alongside social housing providers and housing developers, we will ensure not only a decent mix of

housing but also the infrastructure that goes with it. **We will ensure that every major new development has a fair share of homes that local people can afford to rent or buy.**

Labour is committed to the principle of council housing for local people. We will provide new council homes and seek to replace the worst of the borough's housing stock, making vibrant places in which to live, with tenancies guaranteed for existing residents.

When developing new homes to buy or rent, we will work with local residents to develop local lettings plans so that their community's needs are taken into account. We will ensure that when we work in partnership with developers, they will provide apprenticeships that deliver real training for real jobs and a decent wage. We are committed to seeing that new homes built in both the social and private sectors meet lifetime homes standards.

Labour recognises that private rented accommodation will have a vital part to play in providing housing in the borough. While we have many excellent landlords, there are some who rent out accommodation that is not fit to live in and who fail to manage their properties, leaving the council to pick up the tab. This causes distress to the tenants and affects the lives of others. We will make landlords responsible when old furniture and mattresses are simply discarded in front gardens or dumped in the street. **Landlords and letting agents need a proper registration scheme and to be accountable for their properties.** The best landlords can only benefit from this.

The last Labour Government's policy on decent homes brought huge benefits for our council and social housing tenants but this work needs to be maintained, both in the social housing and the private sector. **We will ensure our council homes have modern kitchens, bathrooms and central heating systems that meet the best possible standards of energy efficiency.** We will promote independent living and high-quality affordable homes for our older residents. A priority will be to encourage extra care villages within our communities. We will make sure our housing policies help young people move on to independent living and adulthood.

We will have allocations and homelessness procedures that treat people with respect.

We will ensure contracts for maintaining council houses deliver better value for money, as well as fair pay and apprenticeships for local people. **Under Labour, contractors will not get paid twice for doing a job not completed properly in the first instance** and they will be responsible for ensuring that any repairs are cost-effective in the long run.

We will review our residents' involvement structure to ensure that it is truly inclusive and that we have a genuine partnership with all residents on our estates, no matter what their tenure. We will ensure that all our tenants abide by their agreements and will take action

against those who make their neighbours' lives a misery. We will work with residents who are under-occupying to help them move to smaller homes if available.

A Labour council would campaign for much tighter restrictions on the sale and future letting of right-to-buy properties, recognising that many sold council properties become privately rented at much higher rents.

Croydon Labour will further explore co-operative housing solutions and tenant self-management, where appropriate.

We will undertake a fundamental asset review of Croydon's housing stock to ensure all housing opportunities are identified.

CLEANER & GREENER

- **Our goal is to make Croydon the cleanest and greenest borough in London**
- **We will launch our 'Don't Mess with Croydon' campaign tackling those who think they can blight our borough without consequence**
- **We will crack down hard on fly-tipping**
- **We will increase the frequency of street cleaning, waste collection and improve recycling in areas where the need is greatest**
- **We will make it easier to report environmental crime**
- **We will empower officers to issue fixed penalty notices for a wider range of environmental offences and make enforcement activity more effective**
- **We will make the recycling process easier for households and increase rates of recycling**
- **We will do more to reuse or recycle items such as white goods, furniture, clothes and bedding**
- **We will make spitting and urinating in public places punishable with on-the-spot fixed penalty notices**
- **We will improve the provision of public bins for on-street recycling**

A Labour council will be committed to restoring pride in Croydon. **Croydon Labour is ambitious to make Croydon the cleanest and greenest borough in London.**

Many householders have told us that they are unhappy with the state of their street, with problems such as fly-tipping and dog-fouling. These problems have a negative effect on people's quality of life and a Labour council would be determined to tackle them.

A Labour council will improve our local environment and make Croydon a more pleasant place in which to live, work, shop and visit.

Croydon's Conservative council has ignored the views of local people by cutting weekly bin collections and by supporting an incinerator at Beddington Lane. Labour has always opposed this; **a truly green council would never support the building of an incinerator that will be a potential health risk on its border**, particularly one so close to residential areas.

A Labour council will continue to reduce the amount that is sent to landfill sites by doing more to reduce waste, encourage re-use and increase recycling.

A Labour council will empower enforcement officers to issue a fixed penalty notice for a wide range of environmental offences and make enforcement activity more effective. We will also make it easier for environmental crime to be reported so that incidents can be resolved more quickly.

Spitting is a health hazard. A Labour council will make it an offence punishable by an on-the-spot fixed penalty notice. We will also adopt the same approach to urinating in public places.

Labour's new approach will ensure that many more offenders are caught and punished.

This will send a clear message that fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviour in Croydon will no longer be tolerated.

Fly-tipping has been a particular problem in some parts of Croydon. Where possible, we will use fixed or mobile CCTV to identify offenders. We will work with the police to pursue large-scale fly-tipping through the courts and press for the maximum penalties in addition to seeking compensation. We will require council employees to report incidents and also establish a dedicated fly-tipping and litter hotline to make it easier for people to report offences. We will name and shame offenders.

Labour is aware of the concerns raised by residents about littered, overgrown and untidy gardens and so will launch an 'Eyesore Garden Project' involving local people in days of action, resulting in enforcement notices wherever necessary.

A Labour council would be committed to making it easier for people to recycle, by simplifying the recycling process for households. Labour introduced doorstep recycling in Croydon and a Labour council will work with households and businesses to reduce waste further.

We will ensure that households have containers and recycling bins that adequately meet their needs. We will tackle the problem of recycling in flats, particularly those over shops. We will work with residents, not against them.

We will also increase the number of recycling bins on streets outside Croydon town centre, particularly in areas where population density is highest. This will make it easier for people to recycle rather than see them put recyclable material into non-recyclable bins.

We will work in partnership with our contractors to ensure our recycling and waste is collected efficiently. **We will take firm action against contractors who do not keep our streets clean.**

We will look at alternative ways of collecting our recycling and waste to best suit the needs of residents. **We will increase the frequency of street cleaning and waste collection in areas where need is greatest.**

A Labour council will also work with charities and recycling companies to do more to re-use or recycle old clothes, shoes, bedding, white goods and any other recyclable items.

We will also encourage the government and businesses to do more to reduce the amount of packaging on products and to make it clearer to people what can and cannot be recycled. We will encourage the highest standards of energy and water efficiency in new-build homes in the borough.

ROADS & TRANSPORT

- **Labour will work for a sustainable transport system**
- **We will fight for an extended tram system**
- **We will repair our roads to a good standard**
- **We will improve access and safety for cyclists, disabled people and pedestrians**
- **We will support 20mph zones in residential areas where communities want them**
- **We will protect the freedom pass**
- **We will create 'play spaces' where communities want them**
- **We will introduce a fair parking policy across all of Croydon**

For Croydon to be the best that it can be, we need a sustainable transport system. Labour will fight for tram extensions, improved stations, protect our bus routes and improve the condition of our roads that have been so badly neglected by the Tories.

Labour will look to establish plans to improve roads across Croydon and give disabled people, pedestrians and cyclists greater protection and make their journeys safer. We will focus on improving the local environment and improving the transport infrastructure to make it easier for all residents to move around the borough and be better connected.

Where residents want it, Labour will support 20mph zones in residential areas. We will also work with residents to establish 'play streets', where children are able to play safely in front of their homes with their friends and where communities can meet.

Labour will also focus on repairing the roads more quickly, to a higher standard and within budget. **We will set targets that reward only those contractors who complete the work on time and to a high standard** – not to a standard that needs repair within a year.

We need to improve our public transport system. Labour is ambitious to extend the tram system and sees this as vital if we are to be a truly competitive town where businesses flourish and people enjoy living. We are deeply disappointed by the London Mayor's failure to extend the tram to Crystal Palace. It is a lost opportunity for Croydon and we will fight for this extension. We will also encourage the extension of local bus routes to enable residents to more easily access employment and leisure opportunities.

We will seek to significantly increase the number of journeys in Croydon by bicycle by undertaking a fundamental review of how the council supports cycling.

We are committed to protecting the freedom pass.

We will work with Transport for London (TfL) to put more real-time information for bus passengers at bus stops, particularly on routes where this would add the greatest value.

We will look at how we can make the proximity to Gatwick Airport benefit Croydon.

NEIGHBOURHOODS – DISTRICT CENTRES – PLANNING

- **We will change planning policy to support high-quality homes across the borough**
- **We will work in partnership with local people to develop and regenerate our district centres**
- **We will increase the proportion of affordable housing as a planning requirement of developers to a minimum of 30%**
- **We will encourage strong neighbourhoods by devolving funds to local areas and restoring a sense of pride in where we live**
- **A Labour council will review the Croydon Council Urban Regeneration Vehicle (CCURV) to provide social benefit across the borough**

A Labour council will change planning policy to support development of high-quality affordable homes distributed fairly across the borough and will bring forward development and regeneration plans for our district centres.

We will increase the planning requirement proportion of affordable housing for local people to a minimum of 30% and look for suitable development sites right across the borough, while protecting the character of local areas. We will review the provision of Community

Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in the town centre and review the current mega tower policy in order to avoid blight and unneighbourly development.

We will focus on regeneration and development plans for our local neighbourhood centres and smaller village areas, moving away from excessive emphasis on the town centre. We are a borough made up of many places and communities - Addiscombe, Fieldway and New Addington, South Norwood and Coulsdon, to name but a few. **A Labour council will empower residents in our areas and neighbourhoods to improve their local area by providing new powers and responsibilities around the delivery and monitoring of local services.** We will also promote and protect community 'hubs' in our neighbourhoods. These are the places where people traditionally meet - whether in their church or community hall, a pub or a club, the post office or local shop – all places that are vital if you are to develop and support communities.

Labour is ambitious to ensure that our streets are safe and friendly, by driving out crime. By devolving funding to local areas where possible, we will encourage strong neighbourhoods, restoring a sense of pride in where we live.

A Labour council will support our local street markets. **To support our local economies, our district centres will offer free parking for the first hour.** This will not only make shopping easier for residents but will also support our local traders in difficult times.

A Labour council will have a safe and vibrant Croydon town centre with a mix of shopping, entertainment and culture, all helping to generate employment. We will promote larger shopping developments but also smaller independent traders, markets, start-ups and shops that truly recognise our cultural diversity.

A Labour council will promote Changing Places standard toilets in all new large scale community facilities and seek to introduce a Community Toilet scheme

A Labour council wants to see a green borough, protecting and planting trees. We will allow only sustainable development that is easily accessible with environmentally friendly buildings that are energy efficient and provide adequate recycling and re-use services.

A Labour council will review CCURV, the Croydon Council Urban Regeneration Vehicle, to ensure we deliver social benefits across the borough, including imaginative use of existing council assets. We will create an investment board and fund to provide new build, investment and infrastructure right across the borough.

CULTURE

- **Labour will seek to reverse the Conservative council's sell-off of our libraries**
- **We will establish a framework for more community-run art and cultural events**
- **We will work with local residents to support greater participation in and a wider variety of the arts in our borough**
- **We will work with community groups to run the David Lean cinema**

Croydon has a long and rich sporting, cultural and artistic history. From Camille Pissarro painting in the north of the borough at the end of the 19th Century, to Crystal Palace Football Club winning promotion to the Premier League. Labour aims to build on this. Even in times of financial constraint, we believe it is important that the council does what it can do to promote art and cultural events.

Labour will seek to reverse the Conservative council's sell-off of our libraries and ensure that they are run in the interest of local communities. **We will not close libraries**, but we will look at using models such as the Upper Norwood Library to continue providing library services throughout the borough on a sustainable, long-term footing.

We will establish a framework for more community-run arts and cultural events. We are committed to the theatres and stages we already have and will strive to improve the numbers right across the borough.

We support Fairfield Halls – a venue that has hosted groups from the Beatles to JLS – and we aim to improve its connection with the Croydon town centre over the longer term.

We are dedicated to providing more local artistic venues. From Stanley Halls through to new cinemas and theatre spaces, **we will work with local residents in support of a wider variety of venues, together with greater participation in the arts in our borough.**

We will work with voluntary organisations to make it easier for community-led, community-run events to take place in the borough.

We are ambitious to work with community groups to re-establish a vibrant fringe theatre for Croydon, in partnership with the Arts Council and private sector funders. We will work with a film society to run the David Lean Cinema. We will ensure that the Braithwaite Hall, which is an integral part of the Town Hall, is made available and accessible to all communities.

We are proud that Croydon is the home of the BRIT School, a one-of-its-kind state-funded Performing Arts and Technology School. A Labour council would celebrate both the school

and its pupils, past and present, and actively work with it to improve cultural opportunities for young people in Croydon.

We will work with community groups, the voluntary sector and investors to bring back a summer festival to Croydon.

A Labour council will value our cultural heritage and our museum service. Our cultural heritage informs us of who we are and what we can become. It is our duty to safeguard it for the future.

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

- **A Labour council will work to make our parks and open spaces safe for all**
- **We will have a named park keeper and a team of staff to work with local communities**
- **A Labour council will work with local communities to enable them to take the decisions that affect their parks**
- **We will create a Parks Task Force, giving young people and the unemployed opportunities to learn new skills while restoring our parks and will enable disabled young and unemployed people to take part**

Croydon's public parks are invaluable green spaces where people and children can relax, play and escape the pressures of daily life. They can also support the local economy, provide opportunities for exercise and sport and help to mitigate climate change. As London's largest borough, we are fortunate to have many public parks in Croydon. However, our parks and open spaces have been under constant and consistent attack from the Conservative council. Rather than working with local communities to keep these facilities open, vital amenities have been lost.

In partnership with local people, a Labour council will seek to ensure that our parks are of the highest quality, and in which all our communities can take pride. **A Labour council will set higher expectations of our parks and open spaces and view them as key assets for the local community.**

A Labour council has a vision for our parks where each one has a named park keeper and a team of staff. These teams will work with local communities to identify priorities and develop our open spaces to reflect the needs of residents and support nature conservation.

A Labour council will not sell off parks and open spaces' buildings, but will work with residents to find new uses for them where their original use is no longer appropriate. Labour has vehemently opposed the Conservative council's plans to sell-off the old

Ashburton Library, together with the White House in Norwood Grove, and we will work to secure the future of these buildings.

SPORT

- **A Labour council will build closer partnerships with the borough's community amateur sports clubs**
- **We will promote sport to improve health and well-being across our communities**
- **We will encourage the take-up of sports through 'open house' weekends**
- **A Labour council will promote our leisure centres and make them accessible to more people, keeping prices affordable**
- **A Labour council will work with Crystal Palace Football Club to re-develop their ground at Selhurst Park**
- **Labour will work together with local sports clubs to host more county and regional sports events at venues around the borough**
- **A Labour council will hire sports development staff to encourage volunteers and help unlock funding for the benefit of our local clubs and schools**

A Labour council will use sport to improve health and well-being across our communities. **We will partner with volunteer sports clubs and organisations to increase participation and strengthen communities.**

A Labour council will showcase the wealth of volunteer-led sports clubs, commercial sports providers and council-provided facilities through co-ordinated "open house" style weekends that encourage people to try out different sports or activities, or to volunteer in the running of them.

A Labour council will actively manage our leisure centres and promote their use. We are ambitious to develop the use of leisure centres and make them accessible to more people and affordably priced. **One of Labour's priorities will be to ensure the provision of a decent swimming pool in New Addington.**

The Conservative council failed to take advantage of the tremendous opportunities offered to our borough by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and they also failed to plan for a legacy. A Labour council will seek to build a sporting legacy for our borough and its people.

Croydon, under a Labour council from 2014, will set out to help its sportspeople, the coaches, officials and other volunteers, to recruit, train and retain new members; to foster stronger links between schools and sports clubs and to offer more sporting opportunities and better sporting events in the borough.

We will carry out a detailed survey of all the sporting facilities in the borough and their relative states of repair. This will determine the facilities' availability for public use. With the athletics World Championships being staged in London in 2017 and other elite global sports events being staged at the Olympic Park, there will be opportunities to offer training bases in Croydon for international teams. To do this, we need to be able to offer access to a swathe of first-class facilities.

Crystal Palace FC is important economically to Croydon as a whole and to the areas of South Norwood and Thornton Heath. **A Labour council will work with the football club on their plans to re-develop their ground at Selhurst Park.** The right development has the potential to improve the financial viability of the club as well as providing Croydon with a range of first-rate facilities. Any development must be undertaken in partnership with local residents and businesses.

The council will work together with Croydon Harriers and Surrey County AA to bring the annual county athletics championships back to the borough for the first time in more than a decade. This will involve a full assessment of the Croydon Arena and the identification of appropriate investment in the facilities.

Well-staged sporting events provide visibility to any area, as well as bringing many visitors to the borough to participate or spectate. They in turn visit our shops, café, bars, pubs and restaurants. We will work with a host of sporting organisations, key stakeholders and the voluntary sector to ensure Croydon is a place of choice for the staging of a range of sporting events.

A Labour council will have dedicated sports development staff to help unlock available funding for the benefit of our local sports clubs and schools.

CROYDON – SAFE & SECURE

We know that your neighbourhood is important. Croydon residents want to feel at home when they reach their street, not just when they close their front door. We are ambitious to restore pride in our homes, our streets and our borough.

Labour will put your safety, whether you live, work or socialise in the borough, as one of our main priorities. People need to feel safe in the street where they live and in their homes.

STREETS

- **We will ensure all our streets are safely lit**
- **We will launch our ‘Don’t Mess with Croydon’ campaign tackling those who think they can blight our borough without consequence**
- **We will support 20mph zones in residential areas where communities want them**
- **We will improve access and safety for cyclists, disabled people and pedestrians**
- **We will set up a scheme to support local residents who want to create play streets**

We will give priority to completing the street lighting project started by the previous Labour council and neglected by the Tories.

We will establish a fly-tipping emergency hotline.

A Labour council will work to design crime out of our estates and streets, and encourage businesses and residents to work together to highlight issues and deter anti-social behaviour and crime.

We will set up a scheme to support local residents who want to create play streets in their neighbourhood.

We will make spitting and urinating in our streets punishable with fixed penalty fines.

POLICING/TACKLING CRIME

- **We will work in partnership with local police to reduce crime**
- **We will continue to fight against the cuts to your police service in Croydon**
- **We will introduce a tough approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, involving local communities at every opportunity**

- **We will campaign hard to ensure that Safer Neighbourhood Teams once again operate from local bases in the borough**
- **We will work with local police to increase awareness of and to tackle disability hate crime**

The Conservatives failed Croydon's community in 2011. Not only did the riots occur, but the promises made afterwards by the Conservative-led Government, the Conservative Mayor and Conservative Council to help and regenerate our communities and make them safer were found to be hollow.

Labour will work with local police to reduce crime and the perception of crime. We will continue to fight against the cuts to your police service in Croydon made by the Conservative Mayor of London. We will campaign hard to ensure that Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs), once again operate from local bases in the borough, making them community-based and easily accessible. SNTs should not waste precious time travelling from far off offices; they should be based in our communities.

We will work with the police to look at innovative ways to reduce crime and the perception of crime in the borough. We want every street to be both clean and safe.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- **We will make tackling domestic violence a priority and work to ensure a co-ordinated response across the borough**
- **We will work vigorously with agencies to secure prosecutions against those who carry out female circumcision (mutilation)**
- **We will seek to highlight and stamp out the growing problem of domestic violence being perpetrated against parents by their children**

A Labour council will be ambitious aim to make Croydon a beacon local authority for tackling domestic violence and sexual exploitation. We will ensure that Croydon's response to domestic violence and sexual exploitation is effective and regarded as best practice. As a council we will have a key role in leading and co-ordinating the community and agency response and we will use that role to have a real impact to bring about positive change.

We will set up a task force to look at how the borough responds to survivors of domestic violence and how we can ensure a joined-up response across agencies. We recognise the long-term damage domestic violence inflicts upon survivors and their children. To keep survivors safe and hold perpetrators to account, we will work with survivors, voluntary organisations, the police, health and other agencies to ensure a community co-ordinated

response. We will ensure that Croydon's structures for identifying and intervening earlier in domestic violence, sexual exploitation or violence against women are well-established and working effectively. We will raise awareness of these issues across the borough, particularly where people don't see domestic violence and sexual exploitation in the same way as other crimes. We will have a zero tolerance approach. We will educate and empower young people, particularly in schools, because we recognise there is a real need to undertake primary prevention work on domestic violence.

Recent estimates suggest that there may have been as many as 100,000 cases of female genital mutilation to have taken place in this country; yet not one case has been prosecuted. A Labour council will make every effort to prevent and put an end to this despicable crime by working closely with police, hospitals, charities and GP practices. We will send out a strong message that this practice will not be tolerated in our borough.

Child violence against parents is a growing and disturbing area of domestic violence. Parentline Plus reported receiving 22,537 calls in two years from mothers and fathers struggling to cope with their aggressive offspring. Almost 7,000 spoke of incidents of physical abuse. A Labour council will work against this increasing violent trend by highlighting the problem, by encouraging abused parents to come forward, and working closely with schools, GPs, hospitals, and the police.

FAIRNESS – EQUALITIES

OPEN & ACCOUNTABLE

- **We will be an accountable, open and transparent council**
- **We will establish a Fairness Commission to make Croydon a fairer place for all who live and work here**
- **We will implement the London Living Wage in all new council contracts**
- **We will work in partnership with all our trades unions and business partners**
- **We will ensure local people are given jobs and apprenticeships through our social value procurement strategy**
- **A Labour council will refocus the fundamental principles on how council services will be delivered**

Irrespective of age, disability, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, cultural, social or economic background, a Labour council will act positively to create and promote access to services for all citizens.

We are committed to providing services that are customer-driven. We will be ambitious but realistic in our approach and will treat the public and our colleagues with respect, honesty and, above all, fairness. We will aim to be a council at all levels that recognises and reflects the diversity of the borough.

Diversity and cultural mix are two of Croydon's greatest strengths. A Labour council will commit to unlocking our community's full potential, thus enabling everyone to realise their ambitions and aspirations.

We are concerned by the high level of poverty among one parent families – significantly higher than other London authorities, and the second highest amongst London suburbs. We will look at ways to address this, particularly by allowing more flexible working for council staff and by encouraging our contractors and other bodies to do likewise.

A Labour council will sign up to the social model of disability and ensure council staff have training in disability equality. We will work with disability organisations to achieve this.

Labour believes in transparency and as a matter of principle we will publish our proposals *before* decisions are taken. We can then work with residents and other organisations to improve the services we deliver.

With Labour, the council will release both target and performance information for all to see. We will end the culture of sacking experienced staff and replacing them with expensive consultants. We will introduce an in-house training academy so that our staff can improve their skills and employment opportunities.

We will work in partnership with all our trades unions to improve the services we deliver and ensure our staff are treated fairly. We will devolve more power to front-line staff.

A Labour council will be ambitious to restore the fundamental principles on how a council should deliver public services. Our core service principle will be to look first at providing services in-house, unless it can be shown that a service can be delivered more efficiently elsewhere. We will then explore the options of not-for-profit trading companies, co-operatives and mutual, and of commissioning through the voluntary sector. If it is necessary to out-source a service, this will be done through our social value procurement strategy.

We will actively use any Local Authority trading companies to raise an income to help deliver essential council services.

We will review the council constitution to make cross-party scrutiny of the executive effective again. We will review council meeting procedures to ensure meetings are more accessible and meaningful to local people. We will support those communities who want to take a lead on delivery of local services by supporting devolved budgets.

We will once again open up the Town Hall as a community space for local organisations, making it the 'People's Town Hall'.

A Labour council will implement the London living wage in all new council contracts

Croydon Labour deplores the illegal practice of 'blacklisting' within the construction or any other industry. Any company known to have been involved in blacklisting which has not apologised to and compensated their victims and corrected such practices will not be awarded contracts by a Labour council. We will use our influence to work with any existing council contractors involved in these practices to ensure they own up, clean up and pay up.

We will review our adoption, fostering and looked-after children services to ensure that they are fair, inclusive and have the very best interest of the borough's children at heart.

A Labour council will work with the voluntary sector, reviewing the commissioning process and, where appropriate, use grant funding. We will ensure our processes are open and transparent and we will ensure that our work with the voluntary sector is inclusive and that small groups and our communities are aware of what is on offer. We will encourage organisations to work together to avoid duplication of services.

TACKLING THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

- **We will work to rid our borough of payday loan companies**
- **We will support Croydon's Credit Union as a people's bank and a financial co-operative**
- **We will review our planning and licensing guidelines to stop the spread of fast-food outlets**
- **We will limit the spread of betting shops**
- **We will provide a welfare benefits hotline**
- **We will take action to assist those affected by the Bedroom Tax**

Labour will work to rid our borough of payday loan companies, which are causing great harm in our communities.

We will stop access to payday loan web sites from council-owned computers (for instance, in libraries).

We will actively work with and support Croydon's Credit Union as a people's bank and an independent financial co-operative open to all. We will work to expand the Credit Union's services, providing sustainable loans linked to membership of the Union and a commitment to save in the longer term.

We will work to limit the spread of betting shops in our local neighbourhoods and actively campaign for changes in the law to enable the council to make decisions about improving local areas and allowing a diversity of shops to flourish.

We will review our planning and licensing guidelines to stop the spread of fast food outlets on our streets, particularly close to our schools, and we will work with existing shops to promote healthy eating.

We will provide a welfare benefits hotline, and work to prevent food poverty and fuel poverty. We are determined to break the cycle of unemployment and dependency that blights too many of our households.

We will take action to assist those affected by the Bedroom Tax until such times as it is repealed by a Labour government. Labour will stand up for the residents of Croydon who have been hard hit by housing benefit changes and seek to protect their interests.

FINANCE & CHANGE

- We will use the buying power of the council to get improved value and further our wider ambitions for Croydon
- We will use the council's borrowing powers and creative structures to help deliver our priorities
- We will apply zero-based budget principles to ensure that money is spent on our priorities
- Our staff are our most valuable asset - we will review council structures to allow greater efficiency, rapid decision-making and focus on front-line services.
- We will make the maximum use of the council's assets to help deliver our priorities.
- We will take a tough and prudent approach to managing the council's finances, while ensuring our priorities are met
- We will ensure that the pension fund is not invested in the tobacco industry

A Labour administration will inherit a legacy of flawed political decisions and an unprecedented attack on the level of local government finance. In order to deliver for the people of Croydon, a Labour council will take a radical approach to overhauling and managing the council's finances.

As the largest borough in London and one of the largest local authorities in the country, we need to ensure that the council's budget is well-managed and prudently spent. Suppliers must be held to account and properly managed and not allowed to get away with poor service or be paid to fix their own mistakes. Our suppliers must be made to work together, rather than residents having to contact the council multiple times just because of the way in which the council gives out its contracts. We will use our suppliers to further our wider objectives, such as local apprenticeships and jobs with decent wages. In addition to providing good value for money and services closer to communities, we will look at supporting local businesses or helping to create networks of local businesses to bid for council contracts.

Too many contracts are issued to large organisations, rather than commissioning services from the voluntary sector and community groups. We need to support these groups, so they are able to make the most of the opportunities. By allowing the community groups to flourish, we create a stronger voluntary sector. This provides good value for money and retains the council's spend within the borough.

A Labour council is ambitious to work closely with other public sector organisations to achieve better outcomes and value for money. This joined-up thinking will not only provide better outcomes for residents but also efficiencies.

In these tough times when the council's budget is being reduced, we are committed to taking a fresh look at everything the council spends and where staff are allocated. This means that we can ensure that resources are deployed where they are most needed. This is not only good for residents but saves money in the long-run.

There is a need to empower front-line staff and team managers and devolve decision-making to the most appropriate level.

The council has an unprecedented level of debt, which includes £140 million squandered on building luxury council offices in the midst of austerity. We will look at the use of borrowing to allow capital investment in our borough, which will include our district centres and neighbourhoods. **This will provide efficiencies and savings by having the right infrastructure for the borough while delivering improved facilities for our communities.** There are ways that we can use creative structures to unlock potential and speed up delivery of important projects and objectives.

The council has a huge asset base, of land, buildings and other assets. Many are under-used. **We will look at all the assets to see how they can be used for the benefit of the borough.** For example, it is likely that there will be considerable under-occupancy in the luxury council HQ offices - we cannot allow council premises to be wastefully under-utilised or left empty.

The pension fund has some £700 million of assets. It needs to be run properly to deliver the returns needed to meet the council's pension obligations. We will establish some new guiding principles. **We will invest ethically: the council will not invest in tobacco stocks or payday loan companies.** We will look at investment opportunities that relate to our borough in order to keep our much needed funds within the borough, such as property investment, which could provide a return to the pension fund from a proportion of the sale of private housing while also delivering additional affordable housing.

HEALTH

- **A Labour council will fight for the very best hospital and health care services for Croydon**
- **We will protect our A&E and maternity services**
- **Through the health and well-being board we will seek to address the inequalities that blight our borough**
- **We will promote dignity and respect for our older people, disabled people and those with learning difficulties**
- **We will strive to prevent people from becoming isolated**
- **We will support our new-build houses to be 'life-time' homes, adaptable to support changing needs**
- **A Labour council will end council investment in the tobacco industry**
- **We will seek to improve services to reduce the effects of alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse**
- **Under Labour, all council departments will be expected to consider how they can deliver services to improve the health of Croydon residents**
- **We will seek to improve access to better mental health services and effective treatments**

Labour is committed to a National Health Service for all, free at the point of use. We will ensure that Croydon's health and well-being board sits at the heart of everything we do. A Labour council will work on preventing ill-health by enabling people to take more control of their lives.

We will work with the NHS to secure the very best services for the people of Croydon, but we will ensure that it is held to account. We want Croydon University Hospital (Mayday) to offer the very best and we will work with the health and well-being board to achieve this.

We will work not only to save our local A&E (accident and emergency) and maternity services, but to improve them.

Isolation and loneliness create negative health outcomes, particularly for our older residents, leading to expensive dependency. Connecting older people to the outside world can reduce these problems. Labour will look at ways of improving all forms of social interactions for our older residents, disabled people and those with learning difficulties.

We will work with a Labour government to develop a fully integrated adult social care and NHS and in addition we will provide access to improved mental well-being and mental health services. We will ring-fence any Independent Living Fund devolved to the council.

We will continue the important work of the late Malcolm Wicks MP, ensuring that the thousands of dedicated carers in Croydon are given the support they need and that they receive due recognition for their major contribution to society.

We will work with local GPs and the health and well-being board to maximise the advice given to avoid and prevent conditions such as obesity, diabetes, teenaged pregnancy and substance abuse and to encourage smoking cessation.

We will review Croydon's licensing strategy to reduce the harm done by excessive consumption of alcohol.

Labour is ambitious to help Croydon citizens to live long, independent lives in their own homes, and we will seek to provide care and support where needed. We will invest with the third sector, co-operatives, mutual and social enterprises to provide high-quality care.

We want care professionals to be valued with decent pay and terms and conditions, and these objectives will be clearly set out in new principles that will underpin the commissioning of adult care.

SAFEGUARDING

- **Safeguarding will be at the heart of everything we do – protecting our children from abuse and violence is imperative**
- **Safeguarding our older people from abuse, violence and neglect is, as with children, imperative**

Labour will work to strengthen the council's safeguarding processes and collaborate with the police, voluntary organisations, hospitals and GPs, to make every effort to prevent incidents of child abuse taking place in our community.

Council budgets have been slashed by the Conservative-led government, putting unacceptable pressure on child protection agencies. Social workers and social work departments are straining to maintain services. In 2015, we will work with a Labour government to ensure resources are allocated to this crucial area to strengthen child protection further.

In the wake of the many reported cases around the country of neglect and abuse of older people and people with learning disabilities, a Labour council will ensure that adult safeguarding, despite government cuts, is strengthened. As with children's safeguarding, we will work closely with external agencies to ensure this area is a priority.

We will make every effort to safeguard against violence and abuse (physical, mental or financial) being inflicted upon our older and most vulnerable people, but equally as important, we must guard against simple indifference, which so often leads to neglect. Labour will strengthen the council's safeguarding processes, and through our scrutiny role, we will make other involved agencies, responsible and accountable.

EARLY INTERVENTION

- **Labour will invest in services to help local families at an early stage**

We know that if they don't get the right help as early as possible, some families' difficulties can grow resulting in costly consequences for both the family and their community. Labour will invest in services to help local families at an early stage; this is the right thing to do for the families and avoids much more expensive work later.

This means working with a family in difficulties and not waiting until the only option is to take children into care. We will work with young people who are starting to get into trouble to try to help them. We must not wait until they end up in the youth offending system.

AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON 2014



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Printed by xxxxxx