



standing up for Reading

Labour's manifesto
Reading Borough Council 2011

Reading  Labour



A COUNCIL THAT STANDS UP FOR READING AND FOR YOU

Labour Leader, Jo Lovelock, writes:

“ Labour wants Reading to be a place where people have jobs and opportunities.

We know that to provide those jobs and opportunities we need to be a town with efficient, well-run services, clean streets and a shared ambition between private, voluntary and the rest of the public services. We know what we can't promise; to put things back the way they were, because the Conservative Government's enforced cuts are too severe.

“But there ARE choices. We have to make the RIGHT choices.

“Most of all we need a Council that stands up for its people, rather than just doing as they are told by their Party bosses.”

Labour will:

- Stand up for a cleaner Reading by making clean streets the Council's priority.
- Radically re-organise the Council and its services to deliver savings and protect people in need.
- Use the Council's watchdog powers to stand up for your NHS.
- Stand up for those least able to care for themselves
- Involve the public more effectively.
- Ensure that all voices in Reading are heard equally – not just those of the politicians and those who shout loudest.
- Create a New Local Partnership to stand up for Reading.
- Work with our partners to continue the regeneration of our town.
- Review the Green Bin fiasco.
- Maintain the Council's commitment to paying a living wage.





Working Together for Reading

When in office Labour created partnerships with organisations all over Reading. Those partnerships delivered real results:

- Working with schools delivered higher standards, better results and new school buildings funded in the same way as every other council. We provided a long stop when head teachers failed their schools and pupils. We were there with support to ensure improvements when a school was struggling.
- Labour kept Reading clean over 23 years in office. When things went wrong with the services we put them right. We did it by making it a priority service with the help of partners and brought investment, business and jobs to the town.
- Working tirelessly with the Police to bring about neighbourhood policing, pioneering the community warden that became the Police Community Support Officer service and setting up Neighbourhood Action Groups.
- Working with voluntary groups and funding them properly helped bring about good race relations and built one of the best community transport services in the country – Readibus.
- Working with business for 22 years Labour delivered jobs, investment, and new infrastructure.

In Reading we were doing 'big society' before Mr Cameron had even thought about it. How dare he lecture Councils like

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Reading on working with the voluntary sector. Now Labour will do what it has always done in Reading – find new ways to tackle the problems facing local people and take the public with us.

Labour will ensure that voluntary groups are recognised for the good work they are undertaking in the town, and that they are treated fairly and transparently when looking for funding from the Council. We will ensure they can plan effectively for the future.

Standing Up for Your Services

Our NHS is being taken away from us by Tory reforms, backed by the Lib Dems – neither said a word about this before the election. They simply don't have a mandate for these reforms that few people seem to want. Treatment standards introduced by Labour have been scrapped along with the rights of patients, such as the right to treatment within 18 weeks of referral.

The Council has the legal power to act as a watchdog over the local NHS. Labour will use these powers to hold the NHS to account in the interests of patients and will involve the public in doing so.

Labour will resist the breaking up and privatisation of our NHS services by the Conservative-led government. We will use influence of the Council to protect local, publicly provided and accountable health services.





Giving You a Greater Say

The Conservatives claim they consulted the public over their cuts – but only 900 people responded and their ‘consultation’ was only held through the Council’s website. The fact is that many of the elderly and people who don’t or can’t use the web were excluded. At the same time the Conservatives, propped up by the Lib Dems, tried to abolish the council’s consultative forums with no ideas for any alternatives.

People are no longer happy to leave the big decisions over their services to the politicians. Labour recognises that things have to change. We will build new structures for involving the public: properly representative service user panels, social networking groups, traditional survey methods and in some cases local referenda will be used to make sure everyone’s voice counts equally in Reading.

Labour will protect and improve services by giving local communities and service-users more influence over them. Instead of top-down control from the town hall, Labour will promote initiatives that hand more power to local people guided by the cooperative values of fairness, accountability and responsibility.



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Clean Streets – the Council’s Priority

You don’t have to look far to see the effects of the cuts in Reading. The town has been looking steadily more down at heel as the Conservatives go round cutting everything except the grass.

Clean streets will be the priority of a Labour Council. If our town is to compete and attract jobs, if our town is to be worth living in, we have to be serious about keeping the streets clean, dealing with graffiti and looking after our parks and public spaces.



Jobs – Always a Priority for Labour

The Conservatives have no plan for growth. Their cuts are increasing unemployment and forcing up the benefits bill. Now one in four young people are without a job.

Labour has always stood up for jobs in Reading. We’ll work closely with growth sectors in local business and partner with anyone who is seriously interested in promoting growth across the area. We will use the Council’s influence to attract investment and bring new jobs, apprenticeships and training that serve ALL the people of our community.

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Standing Up for the Least Able

Conservative Councillors, propped up by the LibDems, are failing to tackle the real problems of the Community Care service – a demographic time bomb of ever more elderly people needing care from the same pot of money – and their service cuts are callous.

Labour will work to re-invent the system of community care with the involvement of the retired, those approaching retirement and the families whose loved ones receive care. Labour is campaigning against unjust increases in charges and will reverse the daily charge of up to £43 at Day Centres. These charges are not only wrong but could lead to a drop off in use which will threaten the viability of the services.

Labour will suspend the cuts to community care and undertake a full review of the service to ensure no elderly person is left without support they need.



Serving Young People in Reading

Labour will reassess as a priority the devastating cuts which have been made to youth services. We recognise that the cuts being made to the Connexions service will undermine a widely used service which is supported by young people. They will result in long term damage for a generation of young people as expertise and highly trained staff are lost.

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Standing Up for Tenants

The Conservative-led government is introducing new measures to limit the tenure rights of council and housing association tenants. Many tenants who have paid their rent, looked after their homes and been good neighbours for many years but find that they need to move house could find themselves with no security in their new home.

Labour will stand up for tenants. We will use the council's local powers and its influence with its housing association partners to develop fair tenure arrangements for Reading people who choose to rent their homes, but find they need to move and for those who take care of their properties and neighbourhoods.

“ We will use the council's local powers and its influence with its housing association partners to develop fair tenure arrangements. ”





Helping Local Schools Do Even Better

Labour's work with local schools helped raise standards here in Reading. We have always been committed to creating a better start for all the town's children. While it is already clear that, under the Conservatives, councils will not be able to take some of the initiatives on education that they have in the past, we believe that it is vital that local schools serve local children and parents and that your Council has a duty to help them.

Labour will continue to take action that makes it easier for schools to work together on an area-by-area basis, pool resources, get better value for money and to produce better results.

Labour will also use the powers the Council has at its disposal creatively to assist Governors and teachers in Reading in providing the best quality education at ALL our schools and to ensure that they remain accountable to the Reading public.

A Labour led-Council will take legal advice on how to challenge Wokingham Council's intention to exclude Reading children from Maiden Erlegh.

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Re-inventing the Council

Labour in Reading has never promised what we could not deliver. And we won’t promise now to restore everything the Conservatives have cut – the reductions in funding are too severe. What we **will** do is examine services in a different way. We have already shown by proposing alternatives to put half a million pounds into Children’s Services from reduced bureaucracy that there is a better way. Over the years Labour delivered millions of pounds worth of efficiency savings and we’ll make sure we do it again.

Labour will:

- Radically review the Council’s senior management.
- Achieve savings by freeing officers from bureaucracy.
- Work tirelessly, as we always have, to bring investment and jobs to Reading
- Explore and implement new ways of delivering services
- Learn from the work of other councils
- Work sensibly with the workforce
- Explore co-operative service delivery
- Restructure the Council’s publicity function and overhaul electronic communications to make radical savings
- Put a stop to the Conservatives abusing Council processes to deliver propaganda funded by the Council Taxpayer.

In these areas and many others the Conservatives have failed to maximise the savings they could have achieved.



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Labour will make a start by reducing the Council's senior management by at least half a million pounds to support local schools to work effectively with each other and family support services in our local communities. Under the Conservatives, school budgets are under real pressure. In order to continue to build on recent successes, schools will be encouraged to share best practice and work jointly to support local children's learning.

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Labour Investment in Reading

When in office locally Labour attracted government and private investment to Reading. Our town has got a lot to show for it – new schools at JMA, Avenue, and significant facilities investment at Kendrick, Prospect, Highdown and Reading Girls School, a modernised bus company, the M4 Junction 11 improvements, better council homes all over Reading particularly on the estates that badly needed it, such as Dee Park and North Whitley.

These investments were paid for in the same way as around the rest of the country through the system of Council funding and working in partnership to find additional funding. Now the Conservatives are distorting the facts about the funding of these projects. But they still try to take the credit when the projects are finished!



vote Labour

 **Labour**
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