

Change for Oxfordshire

Labour & Co-operative Party Manifesto for the
2025 Oxfordshire County Council Elections



Change for Oxfordshire



Cllr Liz Brighthouse
Churchill & Lye Valley, Oxford

OUR PLAN FOR CHANGE

Oxfordshire is crying out for change.

Trust in the County Council is at an all time low. People in Oxfordshire simply do not feel as though it works for them anymore. Too many are being left behind.

Decades of empty promises and mismanagement by Conservative and Liberal Democrat administrations have broken the County Council.

The record of the current Liberal Dem - Green Party minority administration is shocking: from our pothole-covered roads to putting Oxford United FC at risk, from sitting on millions of pounds of developer contributions to a complete breakdown of trust from families of children with SEND, the case for change is clear.

We must turn the page decisively on this failure.

This means restoring faith in the Council and local leadership. It requires a focus

on getting the basics right, listening to and maximising the social impact of every pound spent.

Local Government has the ability to profoundly reshape our communities. We need to rekindle that hope and that ambition. That is Labour's mission.

There is no quick fix to the mess that the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have made - both nationally and locally. Their impact has been deep and profound.

Nevertheless, change has begun. With the election of a new Labour Government: wages are rising, NHS waiting lists are falling and more Police are on the beat.

A Labour-controlled County Council working hand in hand with a Labour Government at Westminster will turbo-charge what we can do for local people.

This manifesto is our roadmap to how we move forward further and faster to repair the damage done to our communities and our public services. It's about how we restore pride to where we live, put people before profit, and build a fairer, greener County.

Change starts with voting Labour on Thursday 1 May.

Cllr Liz Brighthouse
Leader of the Labour & Co-operative Group

“ A Labour County Council working hand in hand with the Labour Government would turbo-charge what we can do for local people. ”



MISSION DRIVEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Whilst rebuilding our public services and communities after decades of damage by the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats from Westminster and County Hall will not be an easy task due to the deep damage done, this is not our final goal.

Labour are committed to tackle the deep challenges facing Oxfordshire and Britain. To transform Oxfordshire for the better, we need to change *how* local government works.

For too long Oxfordshire residents have been let down by Conservative and Lib Dem Councils without any long-term objectives or plans, focusing instead on short-term party politics and power for power's sake -with Councils often squabbling amongst themselves rather than working together in the common interest of residents.

Unlike our political opponents, we believe in the transformative potential of

local government, working hand in hand with residents, businesses and local stakeholders, including trade unions and co-operative societies, to improve our communities and the public services that underpin our daily lives.

So, Labour will approach running the County Council differently - taking a mission-driven approach.

Mission-driven local government means being bold and partnering with national Government to deliver on ambitious, measurable, long-term objectives - based on clear values. It means doing government differently, working in a way that is more joined up, empowering communities rather than ignoring them, and drawing on best practice from around the UK and around the world. This is all done with one objective in mind - making Oxfordshire the best it can be.

Oxfordshire Labour's six missions are:

- 1. Put more money in your pocket**
- 2. Rebuild our NHS and social care**
- 3. Stop the transport nightmare**
- 4. Crack down on crime**
- 5. Grow places to be proud of**
- 6. Break down barriers to opportunity**

Delivering the change Oxfordshire needs will require perseverance. The starting point for delivering these missions is to ensure the foundations of good government are right.

Labour will make sure Oxfordshire County Council has strong finances, trusted leadership and clear priorities.





Cllr Mark Cherry
Banbury Ruscote, Cherwell

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

To deliver real change for Oxfordshire, Labour will establish strong foundations for good local government:



Stable Finances

Labour are committed to careful stewardship of the County Council's finances. Poor management of other Councils have forced them into effective bankruptcy, putting vital services at risk. Labour will always treat taxpayers' money with respect, ensuring that we deliver high-quality services and maximise the social impact of every pound spent.



Trusted Leadership

Public trust in the County Council is at an all time low. Labour will prioritise rebuilding this trust - ensuring that residents' views are listened to. We will work closely with residents using co-production methods to strengthen services, whilst improving how the Council captures and responds to local views.



Clear Priorities

You will always know where we stand. We don't think you should settle for broken and underfunded public services. Our priorities are clear – we will rebuild Council services, tackle disadvantage and strengthen our communities.





Stephen Webb

Abingdon South, Vale of White Horse

PUT MORE MONEY IN YOUR POCKET

Labour has:



Delivered almost £3 million of cost of living relief in Oxfordshire



Expanded energy bill support for low income households via the Warm Homes Discount



Secured £300,000 to help local advice centres provide free support

Labour will:



Unlock our economic potential through the creation of new jobs and opportunities



Accelerate the delivery of new affordable homes and clean energy projects



Continue to support a new stadium for Oxford United FC at 'the Triangle'

Tackling the Cost of Living

Labour's top priority is tackling the cost of living and putting more money in your pocket. Working people have been hit hard by 14 years of sluggish wage growth and runaway prices following the disastrous Liz Truss mini-budget. By partnering with national Government, Labour will seek to accelerate work to reduce the day to day costs of energy, housing and childcare. Helping you to keep more of the money you earn and providing security to family finances.

More Affordable Housing

Oxfordshire is one of the most expensive places to live in the UK, owing to a shortage of affordable and social housing. The dream of home ownership is out of reach for too many.

Whilst other parties celebrate attempts to block new affordable homes, Labour is committed to getting Britain building again. We welcome Government action to restore mandatory house building targets, reform the planning

system and increase support to local planning authorities to speed up the delivery of ambitious local plans.

Under Labour's plans Oxfordshire will need to build over 5,000 new homes a year – making new homes available for local first-time buyers. Labour denounces attempts by District Councils to rush through Local Plans to avoid commitments to deliver additional much needed homes.

It is scandalous that Oxfordshire County Council is hoarding over £280 million in developers' contributions. This funding is supposed to be much needed for schools and local infrastructure.

Oxfordshire Labour will reform how this vital funding is held and ensure that an urgent plan is put in place to deliver these much needed schemes. We will also work more closely with developers to ensure that new developments are built to high specs with amenities, infrastructure and transport options delivered alongside housing, rather than delivered afterwards.

Lower energy bills

Labour's ambition to deliver clean power will drive down bills, strengthen national energy security and tackle climate change. 14 years of ducking strategic decisions has resulted in Oxfordshire households with amongst the highest energy bills in Europe.

By increasing energy generation, reforming the broken energy market and insulating more homes, we can bring down bills for good.

Oxfordshire must play its part in unlocking Britain's clean energy revolution. Labour will support new wind and solar energy generation within our County through an ambitious Local Energy Action Plan. We will also strengthen our work with Government and District Councils to get more energy projects over the line.

Labour's national Warm Homes Plan will help families to reduce the cost and carbon impact of heating



their homes. Labour is expanding grants and low interest loans to support investment in insulation and other improvements such as solar panels, batteries and low carbon heating to cut bills.

The Labour Government has already doubled support for families to insulate their homes and expanded the Warm Homes Discount to a further 2.7 million households. Oxfordshire Labour will work closely with Government and District partners to accelerate the delivery of the Warm Homes Plan and ensure that vulnerable people get all the energy support to which they are entitled.

Reduce the cost of childcare

The impact of years of mismanagement has left our education system struggling to cope. Childcare and early education are increasingly unaffordable and unavailable.

Under the Conservatives, the expansion of the eligibility for free childcare was not matched with support for providers to increase supply.

This resulted in an empty promise to parents. Labour will turn the page on this failed approach by working with providers to deliver the extension of government funded hours families are entitled to.

Oxfordshire Labour will use the Council's co-ordinating role through its collation of the Early Years Needs Assessment and as a Local Education Authority to work with schools and other childcare providers to unlock new nursery places and tackle issues around skills and recruitment.

By working with local-authority schools, Oxfordshire Labour will work to ensure local communities are some of the first to benefit from the Labour Government's support for upgrading underused space in primary schools to provide new nursery places.

Deliver the Oxford – Cambridge Growth Corridor

Oxfordshire has unique potential to power UK economic growth and create well-paid local jobs. Our County is a world-leading centre for manufacturing, health and life sciences, robotics, artificial intelligence, energy and creative industries. We welcome the Government’s clear commitment to Oxfordshire’s economy through the backing of the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor.

In particular, we support the establishment of the new Growth Commission for Oxford, which will accelerate the development of new jobs and much needed homes within the City and surrounding areas.

Oxfordshire Labour will work closely with Government, a new Mayoral Strategic Authority and District Council partners to unlock the full potential of future growth in all parts of Oxfordshire, ensuring that new jobs and private investment is



matched by improved infrastructure and opportunities for existing residents.

East West Rail will be a key pillar in unlocking connectivity across the new growth corridor. Labour will continue to champion the scheme, and the potential links it unlocks in conjunction with other potential rail schemes such as the Cowley Branch Line or Witney–Carterton rail link. Oxfordshire Labour recognises the case for closing the London Road, Bicester and Sandy Lane, Yarnton level-crossings to ensure timely rail services, but supports proposals for replacement walking and cycling links via footbridges or underpasses.

As part of supporting local ambitions for growth, we must also ensure that local growth is inclusive and supports all our communities. There remain significant pockets of deprivation across our County – both in urban and rural areas. Oxfordshire Labour will work to break down barriers to opportunity by taking steps to boost affordable housing, tackle the attainment gap as

“Oxfordshire has unique potential to power UK economic growth and create well-paid local jobs.”

well as improve access to skills and essential public services. We will also work with local employment partners to strengthen links with Oxfordshire’s deprived communities. To underpin Labour’s focus on tackling poverty and inequality in everything we do we will voluntarily adopt the socio-economic duty as they have in Wales.

Furthermore, future jobs and investment in Oxfordshire must not come at the expense of our clear commitments to a zero-carbon County. New business and residential developments must embed sustainability, including good public transport as well as walking and cycling links.

Labour will also ensure that future growth delivers on the needs of future generations.

Community Wealth Building

Labour is committed to reviewing County Council contracts to deliver better value for money but also to ensure that as much money as possible from the Council's procurement is reinvested in our local economy. This will support local jobs. We want Oxfordshire to become a UK leader in delivering social value and community wealth building, drawing on the work of pioneering Labour Councils including Preston and Manchester.

As with other things, the Council is currently not living up to its rhetoric on community wealth building. Labour would strengthen the existing Social Value and Community Wealth Building Strategy to ensure its principles actually change decision making.

In reducing the Council's corporate estate, the County Council has a unique opportunity to positively shape numerous parts of Oxfordshire. Labour would produce clear guidelines for the disposal of Council



property, ensuring that where possible this provides new opportunities for affordable and social housing or new community space.

Labour will ensure through the Council's new economic development function that it works to strengthen community wealth building across other key anchor institutions.

Labour supports the development of a new football stadium for Oxford

United FC at 'the Triangle' in Kidlington, and denounces attempts by Liberal Democrat and Green Councillors to block it.

“Labour supports the development of a new football stadium for Oxford United FC at ‘the triangle’

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James Fry

Summertown & Walton Manor, Oxford

Chipping Norton War Memorial
Community Hospital

Outpatient Unit &
Maternity Unit



Cllr Geoff Saul
Chipping Norton, West Oxfordshire

REBUILD OUR NHS AND SOCIAL CARE

Labour has:



Cut waiting lists and delivered the largest cash injection into our NHS since 2010



Held private providers to account by negotiating better prices for county care



Supported new care co-ops to give carers and patients a greater voice

Labour will:



Deliver a National Care Service to expand access to affordable care



Shift the focus from treatment to prevention to support pressures on the NHS



Tackle the privatisation of care by increasing direct and social provision

CREATE AN NHS FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Labour created the NHS and it remains our proudest achievement. Its principles have stood the test of time.

The new Labour Government is hard at work repairing the damage of 14 years of underfunding and counterproductive reforms under the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. Labour is bringing down waiting lists and has already delivered on its commitment to deliver an additional two million NHS appointments across Britain. We are also rebuilding our NHS with the largest real-term cash-injection outside of covid since 2010.

As part of a strengthened commitment to developing an integrated health and social care system, Oxfordshire Labour will work to support capacity in the health service by reducing delayed

“**Labour is bringing down waiting lists and has already delivered on its commitment to deliver an additional two million NHS appointments across Britain**

”

discharges into care - freeing up NHS beds and helping speed up bringing down waiting lists. We will also seek to expand co-working and joint commissioning across the Integrated Care Board (ICB) area, working with partner Councils. Public accountability and transparency are vital, however. Labour supports strengthening Local Authority representation on the ICB board.

Labour will seek to strengthen and expand the role of public health within the Council. A

focus on prevention, working closely with the NHS, GPs, partners and local communities is key to easing pressure on our precious National Health Service – shifting the focus from treating sickness to supporting long-term health and wellbeing. Oxfordshire Labour will work to support the delivery of a renewed focus on tackling the biggest killers – tackling smoking, physical inactivity and obesity. We will also double-down on tackling the

pronounced health inequalities facing our County.

“ A focus on prevention, working closely with the NHS, GPs, partners and local communities is key to easing pressure on our precious National Health Service

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DELIVER A NATIONAL CARE SERVICE

Labour is committed to ensuring everyone lives an independent, prosperous life. Social care is vital to achieving this, but hundreds of people in Oxfordshire continue to suffer without the care they need for a dignified life. The sector needs deep reform: there are inconsistent standards, chronic staff shortages, and people are not always treated with the care, dignity and respect they deserve.

Oxfordshire Labour is committed to working closely with Government to deliver a National Care Service, which expands access to high-quality, affordable care underpinned by clear common standards. This will be the largest reform to the operation of our health and social care system since the founding of the NHS, and will result in a service that is comprehensive, fair for all, and there for people when they need it.

“**Oxfordshire Labour is committed to working closely with Government to deliver a National Care Service, which expands access to high-quality, affordable care**

”

Alongside these longer-term reforms, Oxfordshire Labour is committed to taking bolder action to improve services for older and disabled adults receiving care. We will strengthen the delivery of ‘home first’ care, based on the principle of allowing people to live independently for as long as possible. We will utilise new technologies to assist in this objective.

For those that need additional support, Labour will seek to

develop additional in-house supported housing - starting with new housing for those with additional complex needs. This will mean more Oxfordshire residents are able to benefit from specialist accommodation close to friends and family rather than having to move outside the County.

Labour will also work to strengthen support in the community, including through community groups and charity partners - helping people stay active,

tackle loneliness and improve access to support. We will also continue to support local advice services to ensure that older and disabled adults are receiving all the support to which they are entitled.

Labour will take bolder action to shape provision of social care in the County. We will stop the County Council being ripped off by private care providers. We will do this by ensuring that as far as possible future cost of care uplifts are in line with



comparator Councils and national trends – delivering better value for local taxpayers. Labour will also deepen the Oxfordshire Way through exploring greater in-house provision of care services, as well as supporting the creation of new care co-operatives to give care staff and recipients of care greater say over their work and the support they receive.

“Labour will deepen the Oxfordshire Way through exploring greater in-house provision of care”





Laura Greatrex

Didcot West, South Oxfordshire

NETHER WORTON 1¼
LEDWELL 2½
SANDFORD ST. MARTIN 3½

BARFORDS
BLOXHAM
BANBURY

Open
Crowell
Road

Cllr Imade Edosomwan
Leys, Oxford

Cllr Trish Elphinstone
Rose Hill & Littlemore, Oxford

STOP THE TRANSPORT NIGHTMARE

Labour has:



Delivered a Citizens Assembly on transport to put residents in the driving seat



Secured £5 million more for fixing our roads and £1 million for repairing pavements



Invested over £9 million in improving bus services and reinstating old routes

Labour will:



Change how the Council operates to ensure the public are listened to



Bring local bus services back under public control



Improve pavements and walking & cycling infrastructure

End the division – bring our communities back together

Transport issues in Oxfordshire have become incredibly divisive, pitting neighbour against neighbour.

There has to be a better way. Labour wants to bring everyone together by trusting local people to chart a path forward. Residents across Oxfordshire are united in recognising the damaging impacts of congestion and the need for action to tackle it.

Last year, Labour forced the Lib Dem–Green County Administration to establish a Citizens’ Assembly on transport in Oxfordshire. The group will be representative of Oxfordshire residents, and will give local people a greater say in transport decisions. It’s recommendations must be given real weight.

Unlike the Lib Dems and Greens currently running the County Council, Labour are committed to listening to local people. Residents are



Inka Oshodi
Cowley, Oxford

very clear that things are not working. That's why we are calling for a rethink, including giving residents more say on the future of their county.

As part of this reset, alongside the Citizens Assembly, Labour are calling for plans for new controversial traffic filters (bus gates) to be halted.

We believe the decision to install traffic filters in 2022 has timed out. Too much has changed as a result of Network Rail and Thames Water's disastrous work on Botley Road. We also share concerns about the traffic filters over-complexity and potentially damaging impact on our schools and hospitals. The Council needs to work with residents to look at alternatives.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) have caused widespread controversy, with some bollards increasing journey times, affecting emergency services and carers, and hurting local businesses and tradespeople who rely on cars and vans. At

the same time, key streets have been made safer for residents when walking, cycling or letting their kids out to play. Residents' experiences across the city are very different.

“**We are calling for a rethink, including giving residents more say on the future of their county**

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A fresh approach requires common sense and continued conversations on the future of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. In the first instance, that means removing the Crowell Road LTN as there is not public support for it, and exempting blue badge holders and carers. We will push for improvements to LTNs where local people support them.

If Labour is elected as the largest party on the County Council in May 2025, we will change the way decisions are made.

Fix our roads and pavements

Our pothole cratered roads are a visible sign of the decline after 14 years of Conservative and Liberal Democrat rule at Westminster.

Labour will work to reverse this by renewing our road network, to ensure it serves drivers, cyclists and other road users, remains safe, and tackles congestion. Oxfordshire is already seeing the dividends of the £5 million additional

investment in tackling potholes this year thanks to Labour. The new Labour Government has also promised £33.4 million in funding to repair our roads.

As part of work to upgrade our road network, we will redesign key pinch points and dangerous junctions with the £6 million Anti-Congestion Fund already secured by Labour.



Rebecca Biegel

Banbury Grimsbury & Castle, Cherwell

Better buses and trains

Improving public transport is at the core of Labour's plans to make it easier for people to get around.

Local communities have lost control over their bus routes. Fares have increased, routes have disappeared, and services are unreliable. Oxfordshire Labour is committed to taking local bus services back under public control by introducing a franchising system as there is in London and Greater Manchester. This will give the Council or a new Mayoral Strategic Authority control over routes, fares and timetables.

Labour will use new technology to extend bus services to communities which might otherwise be unable to sustain a traditional timetabled service. Drawing on the experience of nearby Milton Keynes and Wiltshire, we have secured funding for new trial Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) or 'dial-a-ride' services in both urban

and rural areas this year. Learnings from these trials will inform any future roll out. These new minibus-based services also offer the potential for new innovative ways to support the delivery of home to school transport.

“Oxfordshire Labour is committed to taking local bus services back under public control

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Labour will continue to make a strong case for investment in rail in Oxfordshire. We will work to secure funding for the re-opening of the Cowley Branch Line to passengers, the building of a new station at Grove and Wantage, as well as developing proposals for the restoration of the Witney and Carterton Line.

Invest in walking and cycling

There has been a lot of hollow rhetoric on walking on active travel. Unlike our political opponents, Labour is committed to walking the walk on making it easier and safer to walk and cycle - delivering investment at the size and pace required to allow people to meaningfully change how they get around.

Oxfordshire Labour is proud to have secured over £10 million in investment in active travel

since 2021 and welcomes the additional £2.65 million in funding for Oxfordshire announced by the Government.

Labour is committed to building liveable neighbourhoods based on integrated routes for people walking and cycling. Projects should be joined up and of a consistently high standard.

We are proud to have secured £8 million for walking and cycling improvements in East



Louise Upton
Parks, Oxford

Oxford as part of the 'mini-holland' scheme. This will create new segregated cycle lanes, safer junctions and new crossings. We will push for such ambitious upgrades to be replicated in other parts of the county.

Labour is proud of our record in securing over £1.5 million in funding for school street schemes across the County – providing a safe space for children to walk and wheel to school. We will work to roll out more schemes across the County as part of an

ambitious programme – ensuring every applicable school can benefit.

Effective and proactive maintenance of pavement, footpaths and cycle lanes is essential in supporting a shift to active travel. Labour would invest more in keeping these routes clear and even, building on the additional £1 million for improving pavements secured for 2025/26.



Toby James

North Hinksey, Vale of White Horse



Mocky Khan

Didcot South, South Oxfordshire

CRACKDOWN ON CRIME

Labour has:



Delivered £200 million for Police Forces to hire new Officers



Introduced new Respect Orders to tackle anti-social behaviour



Ended the effective Conservative amnesty on shoplifting

Labour will:



Guarantee a named Police Officer for every community to tackle crime



Oppose dangerous proposals to switch streetlights off at night



Take bolder action to tackle speeding in our communities

Over their 14 years in Government the Conservative and Liberal Democrats presided over a collapse in law and order. Violent crime has surged. Trust in the Police has collapsed. Victims left with little confidence that crimes would be investigated and they would see justice done.

“**The new Government is taking decisive action to restore neighbourhood policing and take back our streets from gangs and violent criminals.**”

Labour is committed to changing this. The new Government is taking decisive action to restore neighbourhood policing and take back our streets from gangs and violent criminals. Labour is restoring law and order to our streets.

Restore Neighbourhood Policing

Visible neighbourhood policing was the cornerstone of the British consent-based model. Under the Conservatives it was eroded, leaving the police a reactive service focused on crisis response, rather than preventing crime.

Labour is now reversing this decline. Labour is introducing

a new Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, restoring patrols to our streets by recruiting 13,000 new police officers, police and community support officers, and special constables. Communities and residents will have a named officer to turn to when things go wrong.

Oxfordshire Labour welcomes the £200 million downpayment announced this year by the Government on its plans for more police in every neighbourhood. This will go a long way to preventing crime and restoring trust in policing.

Tackle antisocial behaviour

Antisocial behaviour is not merely a 'low-level' nuisance. It hits the poorest communities hardest and, if left unchecked, leads to more serious offending.

Labour's new Respect Orders including in the Crime and Policing Bill will empower Police to ban persistent offenders from town centres, which will stamp out issues such as public drinking and drug use. Fly-tippers and

vandals will also be forced to clean up the mess they have created.

Labour's new Crime and Policing Bill will reverse the effective immunity on shoplifting introduced by the Conservatives and introduces a new specific offence for assaulting a shopworker.



Keep the lights on

Labour opposes dogmatic proposals by the Liberal Democrat and Green minority administration to turn off street lights in the evenings in built up areas. It tried to rush these plans through without consultation and despite a damning impact assessment.

Proposals would have a significant detrimental impact on public safety. Women and girls will be

particularly affected, including all those who work unsocial hours including those in the NHS, hospitality and retail, carers, cyclists and pedestrians. Many will feel scared to leave their homes if the lights are switched off. Labour cannot support a curfew on streets and lanes across the County.



Speeding and road safety

Speeding traffic is a key impediment to making our roads safer and achieving our commitment to Vision Zero (no deaths or serious injuries on our roads). It is one of the most visible aspects of crime on streets but it is not a priority for our Conservative Police & Crime Commissioner. Oxfordshire Labour believes this is not good enough.

Labour will work to exert pressure on Thames Valley Police and the Police & Crime Commissioner to prioritise enforcement against speeding, including 20 mph speed limits. The 20 mph roll out has played a critical part in reducing road deaths and serious incidents across Oxfordshire. Labour supports a timely roll out to all remaining applicable parts of the County, including Oxford - working with Parish, Town and District Councils.

While Thames Valley Police continues to deprioritise action against speeding, Labour will ensure that the

“ Labour will ensure that the County Council takes renewed efforts to make it socially unacceptable to speed. ”

County Council takes renewed efforts to make it socially unacceptable to speed. By working with Parish, Town and District Councils we will support the further roll out of traffic calming measures, such as speed bumps and chicanes, as well as speed activated flashing signs.

Labour will explore options to improve enforcement of speed limits through civil enforcement. We will also review speed limits along the length of the Oxford ring-road to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as tackle noise pollution.



Cllr Duncan Enright
Witney North & East, West Oxfordshire

GROW PLACES TO BE PROUD OF

Labour has:



Ensured that the County Council will become net zero before 2040



Established the Nature Restoration Fund to accelerate environmental recovery



Introduced tough new fines on water companies who pollute our rivers

Labour will:



Accelerate Oxfordshire's path to net zero through greater partnership working



Establish Oxfordshire as a local leader for nature recovery



Force the water companies to clean up our waterways

A climate council

Oxfordshire Labour is proud of its record in securing commitments to decarbonise the Council as fast as possible ahead of a 2040 target. Councils must be leaders in tackling climate change.

Labour will expand the use of climate finance, including new green bonds, to accelerate the Council's plans for decarbonisation - including its fleet and estate, whilst supporting private investment routes for commercial projects within the County like the work done by Low Carbon Hub.

Oxfordshire Labour will strengthen the role of the County Council as a coordinating body in accelerating the County's decarbonisation efforts, working closely with major employers and other key public sector bodies, and drawing on important insights from the commissioned Pathways to Net Zero Carbon Oxfordshire report.

“Councils must be leaders in tackling climate change.”

Sow the seeds of nature recovery

The UK has become one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with biodiversity indicators suggesting an over 30% decline in the number of wildlife species in the country since 1970. The biggest impacts have been felt in rural areas due to an intensification of industrial agriculture techniques.

Oxfordshire Labour welcomes the new Government's commitment to restoring nature and improving biodiversity as well as reviewing the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP). Conservative indifference to nature has been devastating, leaving Britain "largely off track to meet its environmental ambitions" according to the regulator.

Labour will work to establish Oxfordshire as a local leader for nature recovery, strengthening the role of the established Local Nature Partnership and finalising an ambitious Local Nature Recovery Strategy this year. We will then work with District, Town and Parish Councils alongside local communities to deliver identified high-value projects.

Labour supports increasing tree cover across Oxfordshire,

including embedding new tree and replacement planting as part of routine Council activity. Labour will strengthen the role of trees and related green infrastructure through a new kerbside strategy.

“**Labour will work to establish Oxfordshire as a local leader for nature recovery**”

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Cllr Andrew Coles

Witney South & Central, West Oxfordshire

Clean up our waterways

The widespread pollution of our rivers and streams is a national scandal. In Government, the Conservatives turned a blind eye and weakened protections. Labour is committed to forcing the water industry to clean up their act.

Labour has already brought in new powers to put failing water companies into special measures and given regulators new powers to block the payment of

bonuses to executives who pollute our waterways. The new Government has committed to bring criminal charges against persistent law breakers. For the first time automatic and severe fines will be imposed for wrongdoing and every outlet will be required to be independently monitored.

This is only the first step. Labour is committed to bringing forward further reforms to tackle water pollution and tighten up regulation of the water industry.



Anneliese Dodds MP

Member of Parliament for Oxford East

BREAK DOWN BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY

Labour has:

- ✔ Strengthened school improvement to boost education outcomes
- ✔ Increased support for SEND parents and staffing for turning around ECHPs
- ✔ Reduced the number of children being taken into care with better family help

Labour will:

- ✔ Deliver free breakfast clubs in every primary school
- ✔ Establish new Young Future Hubs to support young people outside school
- ✔ Work with parents to improve support for children with SEND



Donnington
Doorstep
Family Centre

DONNINGTON
DOORSTEP

107
DONNINGTON
DOORSTEP
FAMILY CENTRE

107
DONNINGTON
DOORSTEP
FAMILY CENTRE

Cllr Brad Baines
Isis, Oxford

Whoever you are, wherever you come from, hard work should mean you can get on in life. However for too many people the odds are stacked against them. Under the Conservatives, rather than being broken down, barriers to opportunity were reinforced.

“**Under the Conservatives, rather than being broken down, barriers to opportunity were reinforced.**”

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Tackling economic insecurity – at home, in our communities and public services – is the golden thread that runs through all of Labour’s missions. On that secure foundation, we can build an education system that prepares our children for life, work, and the future.

The best start in life for every child

Labour believes that every child matters. This means ensuring that children are supported to succeed at every stage of their lives.

A child’s first years are critical to their development. This is why Labour is committed to ensuring all children have access to high-quality, affordable childcare. Alongside this, Oxfordshire

Labour is committed to expanding investment in early help support for 0–5 year olds, building on the pioneering work secured by Labour to support young children with SEND in early years settings.

Labour will end the scandal of children going to school hungry by introducing free breakfast clubs in every primary school in Oxfordshire. This will save the average family £450 each year.

Eight Oxfordshire schools are amongst those taking part in the national pilot starting this April. Oxfordshire Labour will work to accelerate the roll out across the County by identifying and tackling barriers facing schools in advance. We are committed to ensuring no child misses out.

Oxfordshire Labour will work to strengthen countywide support for school improvement, providing additional funding to release our top teachers to share best practice with other schools. We will also implement the findings of Labour's local Education Commission into the attainment gap – taking proactive action to level up education outcomes, especially for children in our most deprived communities.

Labour will also seek to expand support for children

outside school through the establishment of new youth centres in Oxfordshire. This will build on the County Youth Service re-established thanks to Labour. These new Young Future Hubs will have youth workers, mental health support workers, and careers advisers on hand to support young people's health and wellbeing, as well as to avoid them being drawn into crime. Labour are committed to ensuring that the voices of young people are central to the development of these new services.



Susanna Pressel
Jericho & Osney, Oxford

Restore trust in SEND systems

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support is in crisis.

The current system, introduced in 2014 by the then Conservative and Liberal Democrat Government, is failing to deliver the support needed by families across the country.

In Oxfordshire, parental confidence is at an all time low. Children are being left without the support they need to learn, such as wheelchair access or help from teaching assistants.

At the same time, Oxfordshire is facing financial difficulties due to the huge deficits built up by spending on SEND support under the current system. This is expected to reach £110.9 million by the end of 2025/26.

Nationally, Labour is committed to wholesale reform of the system supporting children with SEND so that it regains parent-carers' trust. In the meantime,

Oxfordshire Labour supports further action to support children with SEND and the families who care for them.

The current completion times for Education and Healthcare Plans (EHCPs) remain too long and have not improved since the Ofsted and CQC report. This continues to throw parents and vulnerable children into limbo whilst they await a decision. Labour recognises the scale of this problem and has always prioritised speeding up the completion of EHCPs, including an additional £3 million since 2021. We will continue to push for the Council to streamline processes drawing on national best practice.

Labour will strengthen support and impartial advice for parents through increasing the resourcing for SENDIASS. We will also improve co-working with the Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum to further embed the experiences of children and parents, as well as co-produce improvements to the local SEND system.

Labour believes that more needs to be done to support the needs of children with SEND in mainstream settings. We will work to strengthen proactive support for children with SEND in early years and primary school settings, building on the £600,000 of funding we have already secured. Similarly, we will work to strengthen inclusivity and expertise within mainstream schools by expanding access to specialist support and sharing national best practice. We welcome the Labour Government's announcement of £740 million in funding to support this work.

Where children have complex needs and require specialist provision, Labour will continue work to increase the availability of high-quality, state-run special schools in all parts of Oxfordshire – building on the four new schools in Oxfordshire already secured by Labour. We will also continue to fight to protect funding for post-16 home to school transport for SEND children and young people.

“Labour is committed to wholesale reform of the system supporting children with SEND so that it regains parent-carers’ trust

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Strengthen children's social care

Labour believes that strong, stable families are the best way of keeping children happy and safe. Taking children into care should always be the last resort. This is why on the Council we have secured an additional £2.6 million in additional support for family help, to support families to stay together. We will seek to build on this success to further reduce the number of children being taken into care.

Too many Oxfordshire children within the care system remain in out of County placements far from their families. These children's homes are too often run by private equity firms seeking to extract the highest price from

the public purse. This is a disgrace. Labour will bring children back to Oxfordshire through building our own in-house children's homes. These will save taxpayer money and improve outcomes for local children. Labour has secured funding for six new children's homes and work to see these delivered.

Labour will work to strengthen safeguarding and cross-agency working to prevent child abuse and child sexual exploitation.



Sean Woodcock MP
Member of Parliament for Banbury

