

*Residents often say that
The Council does things to them
rather than with them....
We are going to change that.*



BETTER HOUSING
A GREAT ENVIRONMENT
COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS
AN ECONOMY FOR EVERYONE
TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

LABOUR
DISTRICT COUNCIL
MANIFESTO
MAY 2023

For a friend and inspiration, Christopher Deane

LABOUR COUNCIL
MANIFESTO
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A Plan for People

Labour's vision for local government across Folkestone, Hythe, and surrounding areas.

Residents across our district, from Hawkinge to Lydd and everywhere in between, often say the Council does things to them not with them. This document aims to change that.

**This is a commitment
to change the very ethos of local government.**

No longer will residents be considered 'customers' who have a transactional account with their council.

**Local residents will instead be invited
to work alongside our elected members and officers**
to inform, challenge and test our assumptions and decisions.

Our elected members will be accessible to you:
they will appear regularly in your town and village halls,
not to tell residents what they are doing, but instead
**to have a discussion with you about your priorities
and what we need to be doing.**

This approach will also extend to all groups that make up our vibrant district: business owners, charity organisations, local groups, residents' associations to name but a few. Only by working together, with all the valuable input, diverse voices & ideas our local district has to offer will Labour deliver the District Council you deserve.

"We look forward to bringing this plan to life over the next four years and beyond, for everyone in our incredible district."

Connor McConville
Labour Group Leader
(Folkestone and Hythe District Council)



Housing and Homelessness

There is a housing crisis in Folkestone and Hythe which affects the private rented sector and the council's in-house provision (council housing).

A Labour administration will address and improve both.



We would hold landlords accountable for poor housing standards and give tenants the knowledge and skills to challenge them.

We will build and acquire more council houses.

We will improve the housing we have, ensuring this is properly maintained and sustainable for the future.

Labour will improve communication, collaborating with residents when we make decisions about your housing.

Key Pledges: Labour will...

- Build more council housing to cut the waiting list
- Hold private landlords accountable through a new licencing system and Private Sector Housing Charter
- Promote and facilitate resident forums and associations to collaborate and resolve problems
- Work all year-round to address homelessness in collaboration with partners
- Commit in the next local plan to prioritise "affordable" housing that is sustainable, accessible and fit for the future
- Facilitate community led, co-operative and self-build models of housing provision.
- Review housing maintenance contracts with a view to bringing these services in-house, where possible

Community and Collaboration

A Labour run council will not have customers,
we will have partnerships.

We will deliver improved face to face contact with council staff
across the district.

Our community has a wealth of community champions,
from Hawkinge to Dungeness, who work tirelessly to improve
residents' lives, for example through the District Food Network.
Labour believes that a key role for the Council is both to facilitate
their work and to provide a hub for these groups
to convene and share ideas, ensuring best practice.

A Labour run council will work with residents, open its doors
and facilitate networking and best practice.

Whenever possible, funding will be offered to provide practical
support for the invaluable work
that is undertaken on behalf of our communities.

Key Pledges: Labour will...

- Deliver in-person access to council services across the district
- Open up council assets for community use
- Deliver a Folkestone Town Centre Regeneration Project that has local residents at its heart
- Establish a £100,000 yearly grant scheme to support local organisations providing community services & activities
- Establish Town/Parish council grant funds, where these are not already in place
- Create neighbourhood plans for Town/parish councils to support community funding
- Provide support to local cultural venues, artists and projects enabling them to develop and be part of our success story



Environment and Public Space

Our public spaces are the beating heart of our community.

However, our parks, playgrounds and open spaces are sometimes neglected and often taken for granted.

By forging partnerships with parish councils and residents' associations we'll ensure every public space is a source of pride in the community.



A Labour run council will take every opportunity to further develop the council's climate pledges and actions.

We will take action to improve street cleaning, reduce fly tipping and demand higher standards from our current waste services provider. Longer term, we will work to develop a new in-house service.

Key Pledges: Labour will...

- Move to net zero overall for council operations by 2030
- Ensure leisure facilities, open spaces and playgrounds are accessible to everyone across the district.
- Safeguard heritage assets, such as Folkestone Library, for future generations to enjoy
- Develop a net zero, energy producing waste management system delivered in-house.
- Implement a District-wide ban on glyphosate use by the council
- Initiate flower and shrub planting schemes district-wide
- Offer free bulky waste and bin replacement support for residents on low incomes.
- Collaborate with town and parish councils to ensure local people can create the local spaces that they deserve
- Hold water companies accountable for tackling the poor quality of our waterways and sea through the council's scrutiny functions.



A local economy working for everyone

Folkestone and Hythe has a vibrant, local economy. However, there are still too many barriers to growth and success.

A Labour-run Council will provide commercial spaces for our next generation to gain skills, for new and emerging entrepreneurs to test ideas and reduce their initial risk when entering the business world.

Offering the expertise of council officers, forging links and networks will widen opportunity for all and provide a platform for business to expand throughout the district.



Key Pledges: Labour will...

- Establish an economic partnership bringing Council, business and residents together to grow our economy
- Develop a local business incubator hub to help the local economy of the future to develop and thrive
- Review district-wide parking strategies to ensure access to services for local traders, alongside residents' provision.
- Offer Green skills investment and training to enable local people to be part of a zero-carbon future.
- Lead by example with an ethical procurement policy
- Ensure a level playing field for local businesses to bid for Council contracts
- Champion affordable personal finance, such as Credit Unions

Trust and Transparency

For many years the Council has not listened, engaged effectively, or taken the time to work with the residents of the district.

Old fashioned working patterns and systems have restricted their ability to communicate, collaborate and build constructive partnerships.

A Labour council will put residents at the heart of what we do.

A simple survey will no longer be the limit of the Council's efforts to show community engagement.

Residents will be invited to take part in panels that sit alongside our existing committees to engage and inform how the council operates and makes decisions.

Labour believes that local people are our district's greatest strength.

Key Pledges: Labour will...

- Move to a committee system of governance in May 2024.
- Create greater local democracy with open decision making.
- Review internal rules of governance for district, town and parish councils to ensure open and accountable democracy.
- Utilise local expertise through the introduction of Citizens' Juries and Youth Councils, alongside existing scrutiny panels
- Convene regular public assemblies to engage and inform local projects and scrutinise council policies.
- Implement Root and Branch reviews of council activity involving arms-length bodies, such as the parks and pleasure grounds charity, Oportunitas and Otterpool Park LLP.

Otterpool Park

The next four years of council governance is crucial to the delivery of the long planned new town of Otterpool Park. Currently, councillors have limited input into what shape Otterpool will take as well as having the opportunity to scrutinise decisions.

Otterpool Park not only needs to be self sufficient for the people who will live there but also add value to the wider district. Good quality health, leisure and education provision will be vital to ensure that Otterpool Park does not become a strain on services which are already over-stretched elsewhere. While this project is expected to span thirty years, the next four will lay the foundations for this new community.

Key Pledges: Labour will...

- Deliver council housing within the Otterpool Park development
- Review the governance and decision-making framework
- Commit to Net zero housing design
- Provide Community and leisure facilities
- Deliver Council-owned commercial spaces

"Princes Parade has highlighted the need for the District Council to balance inward investment with sound risk management and meaningful consultation."

Produced and Promoted by Connor McConville
on behalf of the Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party.
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