

LLAFUR CYMRU  **WELSH LABOUR**

WREXHAM LABOUR MANIFESTO



Putting democracy back into Wrexham

PUTTING DEMOCRACY BACK INTO WREXHAM

Introduction

Contrary to the opinion of many residents, Wrexham County Borough Council is not led by Welsh Labour councillors. Indeed, the current Executive Board consists entirely of Independent and Conservative councillors who have not heeded the advice of other councillors or listened to the voice of many residents, the business community and campaigning groups on a range of issues. We strongly assert that the current administration is not fit for purpose and has failed the people of Wrexham.

With the Tory cuts in the money coming to Wales all Councils are experiencing the need for budget cuts so Wrexham is not in a unique position. However Welsh Labour Councils have prioritised many front line services and we believe Wrexham should do the same. While Welsh Labour has a sound understanding of the economic situation, it does not believe that vital public services should be compromised and the local economy stagnates further.

We know how deeply the people of Wrexham care about the town and their local communities and so we promise not only a listening approach but to hear what you say and make informed decisions.

Our manifesto outlines an ambitious but realistic plan for Wrexham County Borough. We are fully aware of the challenges we face in each of the sectors we have outlined as our priorities but are inspired by the past success of Labour in moving this Borough forward. We will do so again. We need to develop a strong and vibrant economy which will enable us to bring jobs and prosperity to our communities and so give us the wherewithal to regenerate our town centre and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

Education, social care and housing are all services within the control of the local authority, therefore we must ensure that our commitment to these sectors is high on our agenda as they can make a significant difference to the lives of our residents of all ages and backgrounds.

We know that you care about all of these issues, so support us and together we can make this happen. Only Welsh Labour will move Wrexham Council forward.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – THE FUTURE

Quality education is a human right and not just a public good. In Wrexham we will lead a very different approach to education and children's services which is co-operative, dynamic and ambitious for our children and young people. A Labour led council will:

- ✓ set coherent and balanced expectations for education and children's services;
- ✓ work with all relevant agencies to minimise the impact of poverty and disadvantage on educational standards and children's well-being;
- ✓ encourage the aspirations of our children and young people and work with local business leaders to develop high quality work experience and mentoring schemes;
- ✓ develop a stronger partnership with Glyndwr University and Coleg Cambria to enhance learning opportunities;
- ✓ promote an equality of approach to academic and vocational learning to ensure ALL of our children and young people are prepared for the needs of a modern workforce;
- ✓ develop the Groves School site as a centre for skills and lifelong learning;
- ✓ commit to increasing school places in our primary and Welsh-medium schools;
- ✓ support Welsh Labour Government policy to increase the opportunities for people to learn and use the Welsh Language; with the aim of increasing the number of people with bilingual skills;
- ✓ encourage genuine participation and engagement with parents and carers.
- ✓ support the Welsh Labour Government's policy to deliver 30 hours of free child care for working parents of three and four year olds;

We deplore the fact that the youth services have been cut and play services are now endangered. A Labour led council will:

- ✓ ensure that the youth service provision is further supported and find innovative ways to secure the service;
- ✓ promote and support the third sector to enable high quality play provision;
- ✓ provide a framework for all our community partners to ensure well-planned children's services.
- ✓ ensure that a robust and high standard of accountability is in place and that those holding our services to account have the necessary knowledge and skills to do so.

SOCIAL CARE

Access to high quality social care is a right and not a privilege. We must protect our young, honour our elderly and care for our sick, isolated and vulnerable residents. A Labour led council will:

- ✓ provide choice and accessibility to all relevant services to meet individual needs;
- ✓ work in partnership with all agencies to develop an Ethical Care Charter which complies with the Health and Wellbeing Act (Wales);
- ✓ create Dementia Friendly communities and commit to Borough councillors participating in Dementia Friendly training in support of the Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friends Campaign;
- ✓ commit to a multi-agency approach towards the development of a mental health strategy to support the needs of all age groups;
- ✓ ensure that support services of the highest standard are provided to children and young people who are vulnerable or have additional needs;
- ✓ commit to a preventative approach with emphasis on early intervention when we are designing and delivering services;

- ✓ invest in conditions which emphasises support and independence for those in crisis;
- ✓ develop an approach which focuses on delivering services which are tailored to meet the needs of individuals rather than our residents having to adapt to the needs of the service;
- ✓ support the Welsh Labour Government's policy to more than double the capital people can keep before paying for residential care;
- ✓ support a *not for profit* Third Sector to include voluntary organisations and social enterprises;
- ✓ ensure that standards are not compromised when the private sector is involved in the provision of services;
- ✓ work with partner agencies who will pay their employees appropriately for work undertaken for Wrexham County Borough Council.

HOUSING

The right to a home is a basic human right. To date, a Local Development Plan is not in place and, therefore, developers are able to build for profit without concern for community needs. We will take a comprehensive approach to dealing with our housing crisis and will tackle issues in all sectors of the housing market. A Labour led council will:

- ✓ ensure that a development plan is in place to cover two council terms of office;
- ✓ commit to robust quotas for affordable housing;
- ✓ ensure that new council houses are built as part of our scheme to provide choice in the affordable housing market and suspend the 'Right to Buy';
- ✓ work with ethical developers and housing associations to increase the stock of social housing at affordable rents;
- ✓ devise a Landlord's Charter and develop the Local Lettings Agency to support good landlords registered with and licensed by Rent Smart Wales ensuring that privately rented accommodation is of an acceptable standard;
- ✓ work with relevant agencies to tackle the problems of homelessness in the Borough;
- ✓ complete the work which has started with Welsh Government finance to ensure that our council rented properties provide good quality housing for residents meeting Welsh Housing Quality Standards.

ECONOMY, JOBS AND BUSINESS

Due to a lack of vision and ambition many opportunities for inward investment have been missed. We need a continued focus to create a highly skilled, highly motivated workforce to attract the well paid jobs that Wrexham needs.

Over the next five years, a Labour led council will:

- ✓ work in partnership with all Wrexham institutions and agencies, including Glyndwr University, Coleg Cambria and the Health Board, to formulate a skills and economic plan to shape the future of Wrexham.
- ✓ develop the Groves site as a hub for skills and life-long learning.
- ✓ Work with the business community to create a Business Improvement District (BID) and develop a small business incubator hub to help nurture and encourage local enterprise.

- ✓ support the continued access to Careers Wales advisers in order that all our children and young people are appropriately equipped to reach their full potential, enabling them to be work place ready;
- ✓ support apprenticeship training with the county's major employers, with a growing emphasis on higher level apprenticeships;
- ✓ work to secure major investment in the local transport infrastructure, to link new homes and jobs with a sustainable transport network and improve the safety and experience of pedestrians;
- ✓ work in partnership to establish a transport plan for the county and link with Welsh Labour Government plans to deliver the North Wales metro;
- ✓ promote the real Living Wage and work towards becoming a living wage council;
- ✓ work to secure an Advanced Manufacturing Resource Centre to support research and development investment in the local economy;
- ✓ generate new local jobs and apprenticeships in the construction industry by building more homes.

REVITALISE WREXHAM TOWN CENTRE

We want Wrexham to be a place where we are proud to live, work and enjoy. A Labour led council will:

- ✓ consult the public on a comprehensive strategy for Wrexham town centre to increase footfall, improve public safety and regenerate the town;
- ✓ work in partnership with the Town Centre Forum and the business community to create a more vibrant town and evening economy;
- ✓ campaign to make Wrexham the Welsh Governmental Centre for North East Wales;
- ✓ devise a parking policy which works for residents, the disabled, businesses and visitors;
- ✓ ensure our town centre is well-kept, attractive and a desirable place to visit;
- ✓ work closely with the police and other agencies to seek resolutions to the problems of anti-social behaviour which blight our town centre;
- ✓ support information campaigns to reduce littering, fly tipping and dog fouling across the county borough.

CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We want our communities to be a safe and secure environment for residents and visitors. Moreover, we want to feel proud of our Borough and know that it is a desirable place to live, work and visit.

A Labour led council will:

- ✓ work with the police and other agencies to develop a comprehensive plan to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the town centre and across our communities;
- ✓ review the current policy on anti-social behaviour to ensure that it is fit for purpose;
- ✓ ensure that all our council front-line staff are supported to deal with matters relating to anti-social behaviour;
- ✓ ensure that any private sector agencies working on behalf of the Borough, do so within acceptable and fair-minded parameters with an ethical clause written into every contract;
- ✓ meet the public expectation of security provision regarding council owned premises.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND THE THIRD SECTOR

Voluntary organisations and the third sector make invaluable contributions to our communities. The Welsh Labour Government's Financial Inclusion Strategy has helped to sustain the vital support provided by the sector and helps those families hardest hit by welfare reforms. We will make sure the Council continues as a key partner in this work. We will also work with the sector to reduce, and tackle violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

A Labour led council will:

- ✓ work with other local authorities, the third sector and voluntary organisations to ensure that these vital services are retained and delivered to the highest possible standard;
- ✓ we will recognise the need for efficiencies but will aim to minimise the impact of any savings on front line services and the employment of those who deliver them;
- ✓ work creatively to support social enterprise, mutuals and co-operatives, so preserving important facilities for our communities, such as leisure facilities and libraries;
- ✓ establish a co-operative way of working based on the principles of fairness, equality and social justice;
- ✓ act against scams and tackle loan sharks by supporting credit unions and promoting the work of the Money Advice Service which advises on alternatives to pay day loans;
- ✓ ensure the council has a resource focussed on the need to reduce violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Recognising and facing the challenges for Wrexham will be Labour's way forward. We will listen to our local communities and be creative and ambitious in our approach to deliver a brighter future for our Borough and its people.