

LABOUR'S 'CONTRACT WITH CAMBRIDGE'

**Labour's Annual Statement 2012
Cambridge City Council**

**For a Safer, Fairer, Cleaner, Greener
and More Prosperous Cambridge**

Cambridge City Council - Labour Annual Statement 2012

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1 Overview

Labour's vision for Cambridge is of a **socially just city** in which frontline Council services are protected, and the contributions and rights of Cambridge residents as well as voluntary and co-operative organisations are harnessed and expanded. We would combine the **strong leadership** required to make this vision a reality with sensitivity to the needs and views of residents – unlike the complacent Lib Dem administration, which has stopped listening to local people.

Cambridge is a city of contrasts. Some areas are wealthy, enjoying the fruits of the city's high tech industry and the research, studying and teaching opportunities offered by the universities. However, other areas particularly in the north and east, have not shared as fully in the benefits of growth, and suffer from relatively high levels of unemployment and deprivation. These areas also suffer more anti-social and criminal behaviour, which adds to a feeling of neglect, and to the feeling that Cambridge is a **'two-tier' city**.

The wider contrast is also between **security and insecurity**. Too many Cambridge residents live in poor quality, crowded or insecure housing, often with high rents. Others are being priced out of their own city by rising housing costs, caused ultimately by the lack of supply of social and low-cost housing and by Lib Dem-Tory coalition government cuts. This particularly applies to the crucial low-paid workers upon whom Cambridge depends, such as hospital workers, carers, workers at the colleges and universities, cleaners and construction workers. It is hardly surprising that these groups, who do not share in Cambridge's prosperity, feel that their city is not looking after them.

We will work with partner organisations to end 'two-tier Cambridge'. Our vision is of **one, united Cambridge**, where the areas and sectors enjoying growth, prosperity and a high quality of life can prosper, but where solidarity between them and the less prosperous areas is fostered and relative inequalities evened out by raising everyone up and spreading Cambridge's wealth and opportunities. This will require purposeful council planning and economic policies; concentrating on improving the quality of Cambridge's environment and surroundings; robust action to make Cambridge safer; the use of co-operative values in the provision of services; higher standards and robust enforcement to tackle unacceptable and anti-social behaviour; real political will to build additional housing for rent; and standing up against the regressive policies of the Lib Dem-Tory

government. A Labour City Council would make a **real difference**. This will provide a marked contrast to the tired Lib Dem administration and its misjudged priorities.

The Lib Dems have had 12 years to tackle the city's social housing problems, and the housing needs register is now at crisis levels at 8,500. Labour's number one priority will be additional affordable housing. We will identify housing sites and opportunities, and work to build **new, sustainable neighbourhoods for people of all incomes**.

The biggest Cambridge Lib Dem failure has been in not standing up for residents against their own government as it slashes funding and services, and attacks the poor and vulnerable by introducing regressive policies on housing, benefits, and employment. A Labour City Council's first duty will be to all **stand up for all Cambridge residents**.

As confirmed by their own Council 2012 Citizens Survey, the Lib Dem council has been neglecting **basic frontline services** like street-cleaning, bin-collection, maintaining our green spaces and parks, tackling anti-social behaviour, and providing community services to older and young people. Their policy-making is short-sighted and reliant on gimmicks rather than any determined attempt to tackle the city's fundamental problems based on a mature strategy that is supported by partnerships with key organisations.

Cambridge Labour Councillors also recognise that the Cambridge area **needs proper control over its own destiny**. Having a separate city and county council is pointless and creates expensive extra bureaucracy, which leads to buck-passing between the two councils, which makes getting things slow and inefficient. It also means that crucial local policies on issues such as transport, social care, education, and libraries are not made by Cambridge, but by rural councillors. We need to give the Cambridge area real power over its own fate by developing a single unitary council covering the 'Cambridge City Region', preferably a single council with South Cambridgeshire. We can't do this without resident support, and government policy changes, but we will explain why and seek resident and South Cambridgeshire backing to lobby Government for this change.

A Labour council will make your city **safer, fairer, cleaner and greener, and more prosperous**.

2 Labour Principles

- Collective action to protect the interests of all residents, particularly those who struggle: 'by the strength of our common endeavour we achieve more than we achieve alone'.
- Universal and fair provision of public services, including to promote social justice and equality.
- Economic and social intervention to correct the failures of private competition, regulate markets in the common interest, and promote objectives wider than private profit and individual materialism.
- Social, political and economic organisations that are co-operatively and democratically organised and managed, local and decentralised, and which prioritise the common good.

- The responsibility of all groups and individuals to act considerately and socially, including the wealthy and powerful.

3 ... Safer

The Lib Dems have failed to take the **robust action** we need to make Cambridge safer for all. Tackling anti-social behaviour, addressing the problem of street-drinking, and boosting enforcement will be among Labour's top priorities.

A Labour council will:

- Look into opening a 'wet centre', which will give street drinkers an off street environment where they can get help and treatment.
- Work with police to introduce targeted alcohol-free zones via Designated Public Places Orders where there is evidence of a problem and where local communities want it.
- Commission a report that outlines effective new policies to ensure that street-drinkers and drug-takers get the rehabilitation and wider support they need.
- Work with local hostels to improve management.
- Work with the police to implement Section 30 dispersal orders in areas where persistent anti-social behaviour is a real problem.
- Re-examine recent Lib Dem cuts to city centre CCTV.
- Ensure that the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership engages with community organisations and residents more openly and effectively.
- Create a single Antisocial Behaviour Hotline.
- Expand and retarget the Council's Enforcement Team, including employing a new City Centre enforcement officer to take tough action against anti-social behaviour.
- Work with local off-licences and supermarkets to crack down on the sale of alcohol to those already drunk or under-aged.
- Look with the police to extend Cumulative Impact Zones where evidence supports this.
- Investigate, with a view to implementation, a 'nil policy' on sexual entertainment venues, making the appropriate number lap-dancing and strip clubs in every part of the city.
- Work constructively with the local taxi trade to tackle the problems surrounding taxi licensing. There are now too many taxis and too few rank spaces, so we'll look at a moratorium on new plates.
- Improve accessibility for disabled people. Poor quality pavements, impassable puddles, advertising boards on footpaths and pavements, lack of seating and local toilet facilities, and badly placed street furniture make getting around difficult and hazardous for disabled people. We will look to work closely with the County Council to review the nature of these accessibility issues and formulate solutions.
- Improve parking and road safety. A lack of on-street parking is a significant problem across the city. A Labour council would work closely with the County Council, local schools and local parking review groups to work towards solutions in these areas.
- Use the new City Centre Enforcement Officer to encourage positive cycling behaviour and crack down on dangerous and illegal cycling in the city centre.

- Work with police around the whole city to tackle dangerous cycling, such as cycling on the pavement and not wearing lights, and also bike theft.

4 ... Fairer

The Local Plan review is a major opportunity for the whole community to decide future plans for the Cambridge area. Labour's vision is of a **fairer city** where the wealth and opportunities of Cambridge's vibrant economy are shared more widely, where everyone can rely on help when they're struggling, where basic services are prioritised and where we care for everyone, including the young, the old and the vulnerable. Building affordable housing will be one of our top priorities, to ensure that people aren't priced out of their own city.

A Labour council will:

- Identify new and replacement sites that can be used for significant house-building. This will involve reopening assessment of the Northern Fringe East site and working to develop a fully integrated Joint Plan with South Cambridgeshire.
- Rule out house building on the main 'Cambridge East' Marshall Airport site, while supporting suitable, sustainable development north of Newmarket Road.
- Commit to clear joint housing targets for the Cambridge area with South Cambridgeshire – targeting 34,000 new homes overall, with targets of 14,000 in Cambridge City and 20,000 in the wider South Cambridgeshire area by 2031.
- Not accept commuted sums in lieu of affordable house-building in major new developments.
- Set the Council an overall target of at least 40% affordable housing in new development in the city.
- Use the opportunities provided by housing self-financing to build as many new council homes as possible.
- Change planning rules to ensure that small developments contribute to tackling the affordable housing shortage.
- Take action to bring empty homes back into use.
- Work with universities to boost dedicated student accommodation, reducing the overspill of students into the private rented sector.
- Investigate the possibility of launching a Cambridge Community Land Trust together with small, community based housing co-operatives, with the objective of building co-operatively owned, low cost housing to allow people to get onto the housing ladder.
- Give council tenants opportunities to move to a housing co-operative structure if they wish.
- Conduct a review of housing department staffing levels, and improve them if necessary in order to make sure that City Homes is responsive to its tenants.
- Aggressively lobby the government to step in to cap rent rises.
- Oppose the privatisation and contracting out of housing services, and examine the possibility of bringing services already privatised back in-house (especially the City Homes maintenance contract).

- Strengthen the Landlord accreditation scheme in order to provide tougher standards, and enforce them better.
- Ensure that Tenancy Relations Officers have the resources to advise private tenants properly.
- Help to bring down rents by expanding the supply of all types of low-cost private and non-council sector housing.
- Use the powers provided by the last Labour government to improve Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), particularly where landlords of very large multi-occupied properties are evading control and detailed inspection, and improve standards for tenants.
- Consult on options to use planning powers to limit additional increases in the percentage of houses where HMOs have become the predominant tenure, provided this does not reduce net shared housing supply across the city.
- Tackle low pay in the city, starting with a staged implementation of a 'Living Wage' minimum of £7.20 per hour by the City Council for its employees, with the aim of also applying this to our main contractors.
- Consult with other Cambridge public sector or public-funded organisations paying under £7.20 per hour to persuade them where possible to offer a 'Living Wage'.
- Help to tackle youth unemployment by increasing trainee places in all parts of the Council for young people, and encourage all our contractors to do likewise.
- Conduct a review of fuel poverty, to improve insulation and energy efficiency in council properties, particularly for over 60s and those on low incomes.
- Look to use the council's procurement policies to promote local, sustainable and/or co-operative enterprises that are more socially responsible.
- Look to use our influence in council contracts to minimise the use of workers in contracts who are underpaid, casual, or have poor working conditions.
- Examine the viability of instituting a bylaw prohibiting loan shark companies.
- Promote and support the development of Cambridge Credit Union through the establishment of a central credit union support unit.
- Conduct a review of community services to look at how coherently provision works, what is required and what we could do better.
- Protect the overall budget of Community Development Grants.
- Merge the many city small Community Development and similar grant funds into a single integrated council-wide grants budget.
- Examine how to increase the low take-up rate for Social Entrepreneurship grants, which promotes self-sustaining enterprises.
- Support the Cambridge Children and Young People's Participation Service (ChYpPS) to become more self-financing and defend its principle of universality and role as a gateway for passing children on to targeted services.
- Review provision of community centres, ensuring that historic under-provision in areas such as Abbey, Coleridge, Cherry Hinton and Petersfield is addressed.
- Work with Age UK to investigate the viability of allowing them to develop an Older People's Centre within the city centre, if residents desire it.
- Fund extra training for frontline council staff advising on welfare changes.

- Work closely with local advice and support organisations, such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau to ensure that they have the resources they need.

5 ... Cleaner

Keeping the city clean is among the most basic of the council's functions, and the one that residents value the most. Many residents feel that the area where they live is dirty and has not been given sufficient attention by the Lib Dem-run council.

Labour will prioritise outlying residential street-cleaning and tidy up Cambridge.

A Labour council will:

- Implement 'Cleaner Cambridge Blitzes' on the dirtiest residential streets, tackling one ward every month combined with co-ordinated and high-visibility enforcement sweeps on littering, dog fouling, gum, leaf collection and graffiti.
- Use a new City Centre Enforcement Officer and wider enforcement team to tackle littering, damage to parks, blocked drains and other cleanliness issues, and related offences.
- Implement a crackdown on dog-fouling, including more enforcement and funding 50 new dog bins, to be placed around the city in dog-fouling hotspots.
- Conduct a review of staffing and priorities in the Environment and Waste department including a review of the City Rangers in order to ensure that they work effectively and in the right places.
- Improve maintenance and cleanliness standards in public places/parks.
- Tackle icy and snowy conditions better. A Labour Council will create an initial city wide network of 150 winter-only salt bins plus free large salt bags for more resident groups.
- Work with the County Council, tackle poor drainage and puddles, and make sure neglected pavements and potholes are tackled in a co-ordinated way, and improve main cycle routes.

6 ... Greener

Improving the state of Cambridge's environment is central to Labour's vision of a Cambridge that can be enjoyed safely by everyone. We will steward our green spaces, parks and trees responsibly. We also have a duty to make sure the city plays its part in becoming a **sustainable, low carbon city** that can be enjoyed by generations to come.

A Labour council will:

- Introduce free bulky waste collections for those on lowest incomes.
- Improve recycling communication, especially for transient residents, students and those living in HMOs, by looking at new methods of communication, like text messaging services.
- Help people improve their internal recycling routine.
- Review recycling schemes in flats which rely on residents taking recycling to communal recycling sites, which can be difficult for some residents.
- Redirect funding from the Lib Dem ineffective 'Recycling Champions' scheme to invest in improved recycling communication, with a specific focus on new residents.

- Set up a city-wide Cambridge Energy Co-operative, which will make it cheap and easy for Cambridge households, streets and neighbourhoods to come together to purchase their energy needs at lower prices, and to purchase more energy from affordable sources.
- Reform the council's Climate Change Fund by making it open to bids from external bodies wishing to limit their carbon footprint and merging it with the Sustainable Cities Grant.
- Improve energy efficiency and insulation in council-owned homes, and encourage up-take in the private sector.
- Work with local groups such as Transition Cambridge to help Cambridge make the transition towards a carbon neutral city.
- Strengthen planning standards on water consumption and supplies, to address Cambridgeshire's water shortage and its impact on Cambridge.
- Explore the city's options for cutting water consumption in Cambridge.
- Reverse the current policy of allowing developers to pay commuted sums in order to get out of their obligation to provide adequate green space or in new developments.
- Invest in tree-planting on our parks and green spaces, ensure that the trees we already have are protected properly, and ensure that we maintain a diverse range of interesting trees.
- Take firm action to protect grass verges. We will conduct a survey of the most damaged green verges in Cambridge, and review ways of protecting them.
- Expand allotment provision with the aim of bringing down allotment waiting times.
- Reinstate a full-time Cycling Officer with a remit of promoting safer cycling through planning and other projects.
- Work with the County Council to implement a city-wide 20 mph residential, school area and shopping centre speed limit. We will press the County Council to pay its fair share.
- Tackle the shortage of secure cycle parking, particularly in the city centre, and oppose charging for cycle parking.
- Restore the City Centre Shuttle Bus, including using money from the Climate Change fund.
- Work with the County Council to change pedestrian crossing timing systems to maximise convenience and safety for pedestrians.
- Lobby the County Council to use the powers given to it by the last Labour government to properly regulate bus fares and routes.
- Lobby to end Stagecoach's monopoly on bus services.

7 ... And More Prosperous

A Labour council will be an **enthusiastic champion of sustainable growth and the needs of innovative and socially responsible business**. We are acutely aware of the concerns of local residents over unemployment, and we will seek to counterbalance the regressive economic policies of the Lib Dem-Tory government. We will also look to improve our tourism industry and make our city centre more accessible, especially to the old and vulnerable.

A Labour council will:

- Work with South Cambs and the County Council to create a 'Welcome to Cambridge' Office, focusing on supporting potential and current employers.
- Seek to split the new Peterborough and Cambridge Local Economic Partnership in half, as the 'Cambridge City Region' needs its own strategy and delivery structures.
- Establish a Cambridge Jobs and Skills Partnership to support local firms and social enterprises and assist education/skills development and expansion.
- Meet major local employers and identify their top 10 priorities for support and input.
- Develop this new partnership with the Universities, Cambridge Regional College and organisations like Cleantech.
- Look at the funding of a regular 'Cambridge City Region' strategy and skills analysis.
- Set up a City Centre Residents Panel to advise a Lead Councillor for the City Centre. This will support and democratise 'Love Cambridge'.
- Review and improve the Market Square with a view towards ensuring that it can also be properly used in the evenings.
- Increase access to the town centre for all, especially older and disabled people, by ensuring access at all sides of Lion Yard, investing in Lion Yard toilets, providing more seating, and fixing pavements and ramps.
- Address city centre planning issues via the revised Local Plan, including requiring retail diversity in designated streets, and encourage a full range of retail outlets, including affordable shops.
- Work to protect pubs that are important to the community, and wider community assets.
- Implement a community toilet scheme which works with local businesses, cafes and pubs to open up their toilets to public usage.
- Develop the core zone further with the County council in order to prioritise non-car journeys and make them easier.
- Investigate with Cambridge University the creation of a new tourist venue and learning zone in the Silver Street area, providing residents with an engaging way to enjoy the city's fascinating history.
- Crackdown on anti-social punt touts by investigating punt touting licensing and allowing sales only from approved booths.
- Open up the Guildhall to public usage and access, and make the city's building an accessible showcase for the city.

8 Addressing Other Challenges and Resident Priorities

Running the Council

A Labour Cambridge City Council will be an outward-looking council that properly consults and genuinely listens to people, and changes policy if things go wrong. We will run a council which absorbs the best ideas and energies of everyone.

A Labour council will:

- Reform area committees. Labour would remove planning from area committees and refocus them towards genuine engagement of communities including ward based plans and neighbourhood planning.
- We will make the public forum central to area committees, where residents can air their views and problems, and councillors can report back. We would invite executive councillors to attend each area committee at least once a year. We would devolve more ward budgets to area committees, and make them genuinely responsive to the priorities of residents.
- Create a central Planning Sub-Committee for smaller applications. These meetings could be in different locations in rotation, in accessible venues and during early evenings.
- Reform scrutiny arrangements and committees to improve councillors' ability to scrutinise and challenge the decisions and policies of executive councillors and to maintain the independence of council scrutiny functions.
- Implement wider measure to increase accessibility and transparency, including filming and webcasting of Committees, subject to appropriate rules protecting resident rights.
- Seek genuine, constructive engagement with all opposition councillors.
- End the 'Cambridge Matters' magazine and replace it with locally targeted communications.
- Make savings by reviewing repair and renewal funds, and review the Council's use of reserves to make sure we maximise secure income from financial investments.
- Look to increase rental income from the council's commercial properties.
- Consult the public better, through regular consultation forums with residents associations, business, and unions, made accessible for those, particularly older people and those on low incomes, who may not own a computer or have access to the internet.
- Give every ward a small budget to fund local projects in consultation with councillors and local residents.
- Improve staff morale, work constructively with employees and trade unions, and reinstate full-time union staff, since low morale ultimately has a detrimental impact on the services provided to the public.

Leisure Projects Involving the Whole Community

A Labour council will ensure that the council provides a varied and interesting programme of leisure events that reflect what the public wants, while also catering for a wide range of tastes.

A Labour council will:

- Create a 'Celebrate 2012' fund. This will provide dedicated extra grant funding for community-led Olympics sporting events and Jubilee street events.
- Examine funding levels of leisure grants.
- Reform the Corn Exchange. We will never privatise the Corn Exchange leisure operations, but we will aim to ensure that it becomes self-financing. We will conduct a review examining the option of co-operative customer ownership.
- Review the provision of a city centre youth centre, and examine funding options.

- Investigate the possibility of developing a new model of democratically-managed sports facilities managed on a co-operative basis, in the style of Greenwich Leisure.