

“For the many, not  
the few”

# WYRE FOREST LABOUR DISTRICT COUNCIL 2019 MANIFESTO

## **Vote Labour:**

To enable positive change so that the District thrives and evolves

So everyone is given an equal opportunity to succeed

To contribute to improving the community in which you live and work

To ensure a safe and prosperous District you're proud to call home

**Our 4 Key Manifesto 'Targets' have these aspirations:**

- More affordable housing
- Better public transport in a cleaner greener local environment
- A local economy that works for all
- Improving the cultural economy

**A Labour Wyre Forest will seek to improve:**

**HOUSING** – by working towards ensuring decent social housing is both accessible and affordable.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT** – by working towards ensuring public transport is based on a publicly owned, environmentally friendly electric bus network. We also want people to have access to a network of affordable and accessible trains, trams, bikes, scooters, and hourly hired electric cars. We would seek to make walking and cycling a pleasure, with tree-lined spaces, so that residents can enjoy our rivers, parks, canals, and town paths. A recharging infrastructure for electric vehicles will be properly explored.

**THE LOCAL ECONOMY** – by working towards a local economy based on decent wages, good training, and decent conditions of employment.

**THE CULTURAL ECONOMY** – by working towards a system of local government that re-energises communities. Historical buildings will be re-used sensitively for the benefit of the community, not left to rot. Our town centres should become people-based communities for living and working. Unused shops will be re-purposed to create affordable rented housing and work spaces. We will not contribute to urban sprawl nor build on the green belt. We will not invest local tax-payers' money for the benefit of other Districts.

## **PLEDGE LIST:**

- **Restructure of Local Government**  
Devolution of more powers to Town and Parish Councils. We will work across the County to end the confusion and waste of three tier local government. Through town and parish councils we will deliver more local control and better and more efficient strategic services in all areas, including Highways, Education, Social Care and Youth Services.
- **Wyre Forest District Council investments to be made in Wyre Forest**  
A Labour Council won't invest outside of Wyre Forest. We will invest using our powers of compulsory purchase to redevelop and regenerate our town centres.
- **A publicly owned and run local bus service to better serve the community**  
According to a not-for-profit model and seeking to expand the service. Any surpluses will be reinvested in lower fares or higher wages and community engagement projects. We will co-operate with other local Councils to serve as many communities as possible. Committed to providing reliable, clean electric buses.
- **Lobby for free bus and rail passes for children, students and single parents**  
Support for those who need it and help to reinvigorate our towns through increased footfall.
- **Council-run free collection of large items of rubbish**  
Up to twice yearly
- **Campaign to address the collapse of special needs provision in education**  
Possibly linked to campaigns to retain facilities such as Ludlow Road
- **A goodwill supplement on pubs and clubs**  
With money raised used to assist the homeless; and a goodwill supplement on the most expensive properties in the highest council tax band. Those with the broadest shoulders should be asked to contribute a bit more towards our homeless people.
- **Relocate council headquarters from Wyre Forest House back to a town centre location**  
Use Wyre Forest House for local enterprise, as a centre for entrepreneurs and new businesses. Subsidised rents for local businesses to support and grow our economy.
- **Campaign for regeneration of Kidderminster town centre**  
Using existing legislation for compulsory purchase of underused or derelict properties and land, to create a town centre for the communities of the future. Use prudential borrowing to invest in Wyre Forest.
- **More funding and support for local parks**  
Including Officer's time.
- **Services brought back into the control of local authorities, not contracted out**  
Where this is not possible, training and support for co-operatives, community groups and local businesses, to help them to bid successfully for future contracts.

- **Develop a not-for-profit energy company**  
Working in partnership with not-for-profit Nottingham City Council owned Robin Hood Energy and LECCY (Liverpool Energy Community Company) to create Forest Energy, delivering clean, green energy for local business and residents.
- **Policy on a real living wage**  
Everyone to be employed directly by the council and end outsourcing. Any organisations working with the council must pay at least the *real* living wage – recognising that small businesses may need support.
- **A strong underpinning statement that housing provision is in crisis**  
Over 4000 families are currently on the waiting list in Wyre Forest.
- **End actual and hidden homelessness in Wyre Forest**  
Using all available tools and means.
- **Campaign for Social Housing to be returned to the local authority**  
Adequate funding to be available to achieve this.
- **Substantially increase the number of homes for social rent**  
By working with housing associations and community land trusts.
- **Compulsory purchase of land in readiness for building housing**  
Brownfield sites should be built on before green belt land is considered.
- **Campaign to redefine ‘affordable’ housing**  
Cost of housing, both rented and for home ownership, should reflect what is genuinely affordable in Wyre Forest, where wages are below the national average.
- **20% cut to all Councillor allowances and expenses**  
Savings to be reinvested into frontline services.
- **Abolish individual councillors’ “Community Leadership Fund”**  
The £33,000 will be reinvested into frontline services, and alternative models for charitable donations will be explored, according to collective decision-making processes.
- **Ensure that both Town and Parish Council’s voices are heard at District**
- **Work with other local Councils to replicate the success of the “Preston Model”**  
Using “Anchor Institutions” and co-operatives across Wyre Forest and the surrounding areas implement the Community Wealth Building programme championed by Preston Council.
- **Enable and support the creation and growth of Community Land Trusts**
- **Support Towns and Parish Councils with allotment provision**
- **Campaign for better Mental Health Services**

- **Campaign for better funding for Local Authorities**
- **Ensure that all council-supported projects and services delivered are not detrimental to the global Climate.**  
Support businesses and residents to reduce their impact upon the environment and save energy.
- **Improve the quality of health and education services for our growing population**