

# Working together - A Basildon District Fair for All

Labour's manifesto for the  
District Council Elections 2010



# Foreword

I have lived in Basildon all of my life and see daily the damage that the policies of the Conservative controlled council have had on the District.



In the new town we are seeing an erosion of our green open spaces and shortly a number of our childrens play areas will be removed. Wickford has seen major development of high density flats both in the town centre and open spaces. Laindon continues to be developed piecemeal, Pitsea will shortly have a waste plant and Billericay has all but been forgotten about.

At the forefront of our policies is the belief that local people come first. Policies must have the flexibility to meet the needs of individuals and local communities. Residents are not 'customers' - they cannot take their custom away from the council when it doesn't perform.

We are committed to ensuring Council Tax is affordable and justified. Essex County Council takes the lions share of our Council Tax and we will seek a fairer deal for Basildon residents. Where necessary we will make efficiency savings by reducing the number of paid consultants so favoured by the Conservatives. Wasteful practices, including councillors' unnecessary trips abroad and away days at Council Tax payers expense will be stopped.

A Labour controlled council will ensure resources are distributed fairly across the District and in a way that favours ordinary people and their families.

**Councillor LYNDA GORDON**  
**Labour Group Leader**

**Vote Labour  Thursday 6 May**

# Housing

- We will look at improving the housing allocations policy specifically around the area of homelessness and succession rights. Legislation stipulates the minimum a council should do not the maximum and in this area we feel the council could do more and we will work to provide a service that people need.
- We will endeavour to provide a choice of tenures to meet the differing needs and aspirations of tenants.
- We will reinforce our planning powers so that developers will be required to include a higher proportion of affordable housing, including homes for rent in any development. This means actual homes not a commuted sum, which has been hived off by the Tories for their other pet projects.
- We support the building of council housing.
- We will make greater use of powers to take over empty homes where the owner refuses to take action.
- We will introduce the toughest and widest licensing scheme for houses of multiple occupancy allowed by law.
- We will introduce a decorating service for our elderly and disabled.



# Regeneration and economic development

- We will review the current programme of regeneration work and where there is clear opposition to the plans we will look at reversing those decisions that have been made.
- We recognise the need for a comprehensive plan in relation to regeneration and in pursuit of this we believe that all of our areas should have integrated development/regeneration plans.
- We will review and consult with residents in respect of the plans for Pitsea, Wickford and the Basildon Town Centre and set up schemes for the planning of Laindon and Billericay.
- The redevelopment of the Laindon Centre will be a priority using all the powers at the council's disposal.
- In recognition of the problems being experienced by Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers, we will allow for an Unmet Needs Survey to be carried out.
- We will act swiftly on the outcome of the survey.
- We will cut parking charges in all council run car parks.



# Environment - cleaner and greener

- We will continue to support measures to protect green open spaces within our housing areas as they have the same, if not more, value to the community as Green Belt. This will include the strengthening of planning policies so that there will be a strong presumption against building on all existing green space and Green Belt.
- We will ensure there is balanced development across the district to meet the needs of the people of the district.
- We are concerned that land at Dunton, originally intended as Green Belt, has been approved by the Conservatives for development. We will, if the activities at Ford Dunton are discontinued, return this land to the Green Belt.
- Labour will pursue a policy of replacing - not necessarily in exactly the same location - trees that have to be removed.
- We will oppose the way in which many of the proposed new developments are taking away small informal areas of open space.
- We will increase the number of general assistants who can undertake general work on our estates and we will re-introduce grass cutting for the elderly and disabled. General work that that can be done today and not in several weeks time.
- We will continue to support and further the recycling programme\* but remain opposed to the Courtauld Road recycling facility.
- We oppose the sell-off of our facilities and will review current programmes and seek to stop any further sales where possible.
- Labour is committed to Basildon's Animal Charter. We will set up a properly serviced working group to work with local organisations to revitalise the Basildon Charter.
- We will increase the council budget for placing secure gates at the entrances to alleys and increase the provision of allotments
- We will revise the policy that currently does not allow small pockets of land transferred to the council to be sold to residents.
- Labour is committed to keeping Local Services such as refuse collection and street cleaning as locally provided services so that the delivery of these are locally accountable.

# Social Fabric

- We are committed to building the Community Warden Scheme and will introduce new initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- We will invest in affordable community facilities as they are key to health and wellbeing for all residents.
- Community Centres managed by volunteers will receive the help and support they need to thrive.
- We will continue to invest in our neighbourhoods and where it is necessary work with other partners to bring environmental improvements as well as improvements in health and safety.
- We will introduce park wardens, who we feel are vital to ensure the safety and well being of park users as well as the upkeep of parks themselves.



# Young People

- Young people need facilities so that they have somewhere to go and enjoy themselves. We firmly believe that a large number of problems with young people stem from the fact that they have little to do.
- We will talk to the various organisations representing youth and individual young people to see what they want.
- We will work to secure funding from the European Union and work with other partners to bring about suitable, appropriate and affordable youth provision.
- We believe that Youth Services, currently a County Council area of responsibility would be better and more effectively performed by the District Council and would seek to have these services transferred. This would then allow the District Council to be far more responsive to the needs and aspiration of its young people.

# Arts

- Basildon is a maturing town and as such should have the social, cultural and commercial facilities one would expect for a community of over 160,000 people.
- We remain totally committed to running the Towngate Theatre properly with a 'something for everyone' programme of arts and entertainment.
- We will ensure that charges are reasonable and that local community groups can easily use the Towngate Theatre.
- We will work to obtain the funding for arts that Basildon deserves and welcome commercial sponsorship of productions and events.
- As well as ensuring the continuance and improvement of facilities such as the Towngate Theatre we will work with others to secure other facilities such as a Working Museum for the District.