

Pride in our City - 50 Pledges for Southampton's 50th Year

Within months of coming to power in 2012, we resolved the strikes that had left a million bin bags rotting on the streets of our City. We have kept job losses low and protected frontline services by making the Council more efficient. All this was achieved despite facing vicious Government cuts to our budget, which meant we had £148 less per person to spend on services. This compares to only £28 less for Winchester - how is that fair?

Ours is a great City, which this year celebrates its 50th year of City Status. Whilst this is a time for us to look back over the last fifty years, it is also an opportunity for us to plan for the future. Our aim is to promote the City and encourage visitors. Work has now started on the final part of our Cultural Quarter, which will bring jobs and opportunities.

Homes

With the cost of housing at an all time high and many Southampton people struggling to pay the rent or get on the housing ladder, it is essential we do all we can to provide affordable homes for Southampton people. We pledge to, on average, deliver a new affordable home every day to buy or rent. We are committed to building the first new Council housing for a generation.

Transport

We have delivered investment into the bus and cycling networks, but our top priority is improving the state of Southampton's roads, particularly small residential roads. We will double the investment in these roads for at least three years. This will resurface an additional 7.5 miles of local roads.

Jobs

The City Deal we negotiated with Government will help equip Southampton people with the skills and training they need to get the jobs available. We are committed to the principle of creating Southampton jobs for Southampton people. City Deal will also deliver the next part of the West Quay development, which as well as creating 900 new jobs will link our City Centre to the waterfront and a new public open space. Because we are insisting that new developments deliver job and apprenticeship opportunities for local people, we have been able to deliver over 500 new jobs for local people, and created a hundred new apprenticeships.

Children

Keeping children safe is a top priority, which is why we have invested more money into children's social care. The aim however is to reduce the number of children needing this sort of intensive help, which is why we have kept open all of our Sure Start centres. School results have continued to improve, helped by the investment we have made into school buildings.

We commend this Manifesto to the people of Southampton.

Cllr Simon Letts, Leader and Cllr Andrew Pope, Manifesto Co-ordinator
8th April 2014

50 Pledges in Southampton's 50th Year as a City

Environment & Transport

1. We will keep weekly bin collections and drive up recycling rates by collecting glass from every house or block of flats.
2. We will freeze or reduce all parking charges including permits for the next three years.
3. We will work with residents to find solutions to the parking problems they face by increasing the number of available spaces.
4. For the next three years we will double spending on roads and pavements to £2.7m per year. This will mean an additional 7.5 miles of roads and pavements to be surface-treated over the next three years.
5. In the last two years, we have invested £2.48m in the bus network, including new bus stops, free Wi-Fi and a newer bus fleet. We will continue to work with bus companies to ensure your bus priorities are delivered.
6. In the last two years, we have bid for and invested £1.5m of government funding into the cycle network. For environmental and health reasons, this level of investment will continue.
7. We value our open spaces and the contributions made by 'friends of groups' to improving them. We pledge to continue to work with these groups and allotment representatives to improve the quality of our green spaces.
8. Last year, we invested heavily in play equipment across the City. We pledge to continue this investment.
9. Residents should have more say on planning applications in their neighbourhoods that matter to them. To achieve this, planning meetings should be held in the areas affected by applications and preferably during evenings when more people can attend.

Children & Young People

10. We will keep Sure Start Children's Centres open.
11. We will work with health professionals to increase the services we deliver in Sure Start Children's Centres.
12. We will increase the number of apprenticeships available in the City, where possible prioritising local people.

13. We will give young people a real say in the City by establishing a Southampton Youth Forum.
14. In the last two years, our Labour Council has invested heavily in schools. We will continue to invest to ensure your child gets into a good local school.
15. Congratulations to all our City's hard-working teachers and school staff who have helped improve our school results. We will continue to promote Southampton schools by encouraging closer working between schools, and unashamedly championing their achievements.
16. Protecting children is at the centre of all we do. Since coming to power, we have invested an additional £7m into this area and will seek to continue this work.
17. We will offer an apprenticeship, or extended work experience opportunity, to all young people leaving Council care.

Housing & Sustainability

18. Southampton needs more homes, especially affordable ones. Labour will keep striving to reach a target of building one affordable home in the City every day, more than doubling the previous Tory target.
19. Rising fuel bills are a real worry. We will improve the insulation and fit better heating systems to thousands of Council homes to knock hundreds of pounds off bills. This will be achieved through such schemes as District Energy in Thornhill, which wasn't backed by Tory councillors.
20. Fuel poverty is also a major issue in the private rented sector. We will encourage landlords to make properties more fuel efficient to save money for tenants and help the environment.
21. Building on Labour's scheme to licence student and other shared houses, the Council should see if it should be extended across the City and if other property types should be included to ensure all Southampton private rented homes are safe and secure.
22. We value Council-owned housing and are proud that we have already committed to build over 500 new Council homes. We will not seek to transfer Council housing to an outside body.
23. We do not approve of the sale of Council housing on the open market.
24. We will help senior citizens stay in their own homes longer by building high quality purpose built housing schemes with on-site support. One is already under way at Erskine Court in Lordshill and others are planned.

25. We believe scarce affordable housing should go to local people and have introduced a rule that only people who have lived in Southampton for three years can join our waiting list.

Economy & Leisure

26. This year the Council will introduce the Living Wage for all Council employees. We will encourage other Southampton employers to sign up, and publicise those that do, as a step to being a Living Wage City.
27. We believe in working with organisations that conduct their business in a fair and moral way. As a result, we introduced an Ethical Procurement Policy for the Council and will seek to promote it amongst Council suppliers to promote improved staff welfare and fairer business practices.
28. We will work with private businesses to bring new jobs for Southampton people to the City, e.g. Watermark West Quay starts on site in September 2014 and will create 900 jobs.
29. We will support the growth of small businesses by providing low cost, flexible start-up units in the City Centre.
30. We are committed to investing in the cultural life of the City. The new arts centre will open in 2016 and will be the centrepiece of our new Cultural Quarter.
31. We will work with partners to safeguard Southampton's heritage by creating a Heritage Trust. This will bring investment into our buildings and collections.

Adult Social Care & Health

32. Residents will decide the public health priorities for their areas as we roll out the 'Your Health, Your Community, Your Vote' scheme currently operating in Thornhill to other parts of the City. Local people will vote on which organisations will get grant funding in their area each year.
33. We will invest Council health money into the NHS health check scheme. All people aged over 40, will be offered a 'health MOT', starting with those at greater risk of heart disease or stroke.
34. We will concentrate our public health money on reducing the City's unacceptably high levels of health inequality. We will work on issues such as accidents, obesity, teenage pregnancy, dental ill health and alcohol misuse.

35. Senior citizens want to stay in their own homes as long as possible. We will work with partners in health and housing associations to join up and improve services to let this happen.
36. We will promote greater independence for disabled people and those in their later years by massively increasing the number of individuals in receipt of direct payments, giving them more freedom and putting them in charge of their care plans.
37. By investing in improving pavements and dangerous junctions then accidents reduce and the NHS saves money. As well as investing Council money in this work, we will press the case for health service money to also be spent in this area, generating a safer environment and saving public money.

Leaders & Finance

38. A new Council website will be designed and delivered. It will make dealing with the Council easier and save you time and us money.
39. When the Council spends money with private businesses, we will ensure that Southampton companies get a chance to bid.
40. As part of a planning application, the Council will insist that major developments in our City lead to jobs and apprenticeships for local people.
41. Despite losing £148 of government grant per person, compared to only £28 for Winchester, we pledge to do all we can to keep service reductions to a minimum.
42. To provide best value for money, we'll review Council land, offices and depots to identify which ones it would be prudent to sell.
43. In our 50th year, we pledge to set up a Peoples Panel which will have representatives from all age groups and areas to help plan the City's future.

Communities

44. We will work with and support local community groups to provide a series of family-friendly events and activities throughout the year to celebrate Southampton's 50th Anniversary.
45. We fully endorse national Labour policy to abolish the 'Bedroom Tax' and will continue to work with individuals struggling to pay.

46. We will continue to support advice services and credit unions throughout Southampton that offer vital support and guidance to our poor and most vulnerable.
47. We value the work of Southampton's voluntary sector and guarantee to secure funding for the next two years to the voluntary groups already receiving funding.
48. Labour locally will continue to support, extend and broaden our current programme which aims to improve school attendance and reduce youth offending by working with our most vulnerable families and helping them back into work. This will reduce the burden on the taxpayer.
49. We will work with the Police and other agencies to tackle community safety problems in Southampton, including anti-social behaviour, dangerous drinking behaviour and domestic violence.
50. To sustain a high level of safety in the night time economy, Labour will work with police to investigate the introduction of a Late Night Levy.