

The alternative you can trust



**The Labour Manifesto for the South
Gloucestershire Council Elections
2011**

Labour - your voice in tough times

South Gloucestershire in 2011

The situation we all face

South Gloucestershire faces a tough time ahead because of the decisions of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat national government. It is clearer than ever that we need a local council that will be our communities' voice in tough times. It is equally clear that Labour is the only Party that will take on this role.

Labour's starting point is that we believe in public services and recognise that many vulnerable people rely on them. We recognise that they have to be efficient, modern and responsive to service users. We also recognise the need to get the best value for money given the tough financial climate.

The difference between us and the Coalition parties is that we believe that we need to get the deficit down through sensible savings, not by cutting too far, too fast and putting the local economy, local jobs and local services at risk. And we do not accept that wholesale outsourcing of council services will result in better provision or value for money.

Funding for public services

The Conservative-Liberal Democrat government has just imposed the harshest year-on-year grant settlement in South Gloucestershire's history. The council is receiving £14 million less government grant than last year and has set a budget containing millions of pounds of unspecified cuts and a £2.3 million raid on reserves. This is a ticking time bomb waiting to go off after the elections. We know this because one of the Conservative councillors showed their true colours when he posted a message on Twitter whilst at the budget meeting saying: *"we're not cutting enough"*. The national approach of the Coalition parties makes it crystal clear that they are looking forward to making cuts.

Electing Labour councillors will be South Gloucestershire's first line of defence against savage cuts.

Labour - your voice in tough times

You can't trust the Tories: a litany of broken promises

The Conservatives made many promises in the run-up to the last council elections four years ago. They have been in control since then and had every chance to implement them, but have not.

At the last elections the Conservatives:

- 👉 Had "priorities" including supporting the police, investing in our schools and taking action to tackle litter. Now in power they are reducing police numbers, cutting money to schools and slashing funding for local council services.
- 👉 Prioritised the reinstatement of travel tokens in their campaign; these tokens have never reappeared.
- 👉 Campaigned on a "time to listen to the people" on the 2+ lane, implying that they would change or abolish it. It is still there.
- 👉 Pledged to step up their campaign for a new secondary school in Emersons Green. This has never materialised.
- 👉 Bitterly attacked the building of the Treatment Centre at Emersons Green. They have gone quiet since it has become a popular facility.
- 👉 Claimed credit for the Labour Government's £25M Building Schools for the Future rebuild of Filton High School. Then abolished the whole programme on taking office.
- 👉 Ran scare stories claiming that Cossham Hospital would be closed. In fact it is benefitting from massive investment.
- 👉 Supposedly opposed top-up fees and had a clear-cut pledge to scrap tuition fees. Now fees have risen to £9,000 a year.
- 👉 Nationally they have broken election promises not to increase VAT and National Insurance.

You just can't trust the Tories when they make promises.

Labour - your voice in tough times

Labour's key pledges

Labour will not make promises that we cannot keep. With the huge grant reduction imposed by central government, we will not be able to do everything we would like to improve South Gloucestershire. We therefore make the following pledges:

Pledge One - Support our communities

- 👍 Safeguard homecare services
- 👍 Fight to keep frontline services in-house
- 👍 Work with GPs to influence their commissioning of services
- 👍 Increase our focus on care in the community
- 👍 Maintain support for community groups such as the Senior Citizen's Forum

Pledge Two - Regenerate our town centres

- 👍 Target resources to achieve cleaner streets
- 👍 Deliver residents' parking where it is wanted
- 👍 Use licensing powers to manage the sale of alcohol
- 👍 Use council powers to crack down on antisocial behaviour
- 👍 Retain and enhance our green spaces

Pledge Three - Develop our Priority Neighbourhoods

- 👍 Help local community groups to survive and thrive
- 👍 Work closely with neighbourhood policing teams to combat crime
- 👍 Continue to press for more affordable housing
- 👍 Oppose excessive flat development in urban areas
- 👍 Prioritise and enhance youth work

Pledge Four - Improve our transport and highways

- 👍 Use existing powers to achieve joined-up integrated transport
- 👍 Work to improve patient transport services
- 👍 Better utilise the council's own transport fleet during the day
- 👍 Make sure council-supported bus services support access to employment
- 👍 Prioritise the resurfacing of roads and pavements

Labour - your voice in tough times

Pledge Five - Secure a sustainable environment

- 👍 Increase the amount and range recycled from the doorstep
- 👍 Explore ways of improving the Tories' unpopular new cardboard recycling arrangements
- 👍 Pursue measures that will help us meet climate change targets
- 👍 Pursue transport options that reduce congestion and pollution
- 👍 Crack down on the problem of fly tipping

A different sort of councillor

Labour councillors are active and identifiable in the communities we serve. We pledge to be available to work with and for local residents. With the Conservative-Liberal Democrat central government cutting public services including the NHS and the police, we need Labour councillors who will stand up for our areas.

Labour councillors are the alternative you can trust.

Labour - your voice in tough times