



Hastings Labour Manifesto for the 2022 Borough Council Elections

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Introduction

Unusually these elections are only a year after the last ones!

So the Council is still very busy delivering on last year's manifesto, and in this Manifesto for 2022 the local Labour party has included last year's pledges (in black), an update on progress (in red) and also added some new ideas.

I have just been elected Labour Group leader and it will be an honour, and a pleasure, to deliver on this manifesto, ensuring that the passionate socialist views of our many local members is translated into dynamic action that transforms Hastings over the next two years.

So come and vote for us on May 5!

And join us if you want to help shape a fairer society in our great town.

Paul Barnett, March 2022

Our Values

The policies and initiatives outlined in this manifesto can only cover a small part of what a council does in its day-to-day activities. Everything we do will be governed by a clear set of guiding socialist principles which will remain at the heart of everything the council does. We believe:

- equality of opportunity is paramount, and services to local people should be provided in a way that addresses their needs and reasonable expectations, regardless of gender, social class, race, disability, age, culture, sexuality, or philosophical beliefs, in as far as such beliefs do not oppress others;
- in a culture of co-operation, openness, fairness, and transparency in all it does, enabling local people to hold us to account and other agencies to work with us;
- all local people (including employees of the council) should be entitled to a high standard of education and decent jobs that pay a living wage, where they are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness;
- all local people have a right to a safe, secure, affordable home in an environment that enhances their health, quality of life and access to lifelong learning;
- the economic regeneration of Hastings should narrow the gap between the most deprived communities and those of the rest of the town, as well as between Hastings and the rest of the South East and that poorer people should not be excluded from the new opportunities that arise.

Within these values, we are proposing a set of priorities to be addressed through the commitments in this manifesto:

- Tackle climate change and increase biodiversity, aiming to make Hastings carbon neutral by 2030 and ensuring that the council shapes its actions and policies to achieve this;
- To develop and implement the best possible approach to the recovery from the pandemic, underpinned by our commitment to equalities;

- Ensure policies and funding applications are targeted to benefit the most deprived households and communities;
- Bring services back in house, to ensure they're run for public benefit rather than private profit;
- Maximise the supply of genuinely affordable rented housing available in Hastings;
- Support and promote projects that create well-paid, secure jobs as well as training opportunities to give local people the skills to benefit from them;
- Generate income, through ethical means, to ensure that a good level of services can still be provided, despite government funding cuts.

Our Achievements

Just to set our achievements into context, since 2010 council budgets have been cut dramatically because of reductions in government grants. Hastings has suffered particularly badly, with our main government grant cut from over £9m in 2010 to just £1m in 2020. The council workforce has been cut by half. Overall, we've lost over £60m in government funding. Many services have been discontinued. If funding were to be restored to the levels under the last Labour government, before Conservative and Liberal Democrat cuts, we would be able to reinstate many of these services and develop new ones with additional income we've raised and efficiencies we've made since 2010. As we have elections every two years (although it has only been a year since the last one) not everything in the manifesto is achieved within that timescale – some of our commitments are longer term or are continuous commitments stating our broad approach to particular issues. In most cases, these have been 'carried over' to the updated 2022 manifesto but many of the specific commitments we made both in 2018 and 2021 have been achieved.

Some of our 2021 **pledges** and **achievements**:

1. Tackling Poverty and Inequality

- Consult with residents in appropriate communities as well as those from other under-represented or disadvantaged groups including ethnic minority groups, disabled groups, LGBTQ+ groups, refugee groups, and women's groups.

The draft Equality Charter has been written and launched in conjunction with the LSP for consultation in September 2021. Meetings with groups and people from right across the community are underway and will continue through till the end of the year, leading to new actions to be agreed by the LSP, including a renewed commitment to improve full access for all. HBC has now committed to being Age Friendly and supporting the Older People's Forum.

- Work with organisations such as Little Gate Farm to take on young people with learning difficulties or with physical disabilities as apprentices in the council.

We have continued to work with Little Gate Farm and have 3 apprentices working with the council, and will encourage council services to employ apprentices from groups impacted by the Equality Charter.

- Continue to provide services to identify and assist rough sleepers, in partnership with voluntary agencies, offering help with associated problems such as addictions and mental health problems.

We continue to demonstrate good practice across the piece when it comes to rough sleeping (with reducing numbers), and this includes the way we work collaboratively with our voluntary sector partners. We have an excellent network of statutory and voluntary services. HBC lead cross- county work to support rough sleepers and pass on good practice, including regular meetings with all our rough sleeping charities, voluntary groups, and statutory partners.

- Continue to fund the Council's Active Hastings team to take sports into disadvantaged parts of the town, and give the chance for young people, especially girls, ethnic minority, LGBTQ+ and disabled young people to become sports leaders.
This work continues and is being extended through a new funded programme focusing on health inequality in the most disadvantaged communities.
- Continue to promote 'housing first' model to make sure rough sleepers are given the support they need to get a home and sustain a tenancy.
Work continues and we have received extra funding to expand the scheme, but the challenge of finding suitable accommodation is key to this project expanding. We will seek innovative accommodation options locally.
- Support and welcome refugees, and local groups working with refugees, and continue to play our part in the Syrian refugee resettlement programme.
HBC continues to welcome and support all people seeking refuge, Council motions of support have re-affirmed HBC commitment to being a City of Sanctuary, and regular meetings continue with all local organisations supporting refugees to provide a coordinated response.

2. Tackling Climate Change

- Work with public sector partners and local businesses to make Hastings carbon neutral by 2030.
Continue, including the aim of HBC becoming carbon neutral by 2023, and other partners helping to secure a zero carbon town by 2030. (Ongoing work (see Climate Emergency progress report Feb 2022)).
- Review our local plan to ensure our planning policies maximise energy efficiency in new developments, as well as maximizing the opportunities for sustainable energy generation (wind, solar, wave etc), biodiversity and sustainable transport solutions.
Include in the new Local Plan by 2023 and encourage landlords and homeowners to add solar to properties, changing planning procedures where necessary.

- Install rooftop solar energy on all possible council-owned buildings.
'Solar for Business' project now underway, to be completed by 2023. Suitable ground-mounted solar arrays including car parks to be included once identified.
- Eliminate single-use plastics from all council activities.
Achieved, all festivals on HBC land and council activities are technically SUP free.
- Ban single-use plastics from all events held on council land.
Achieved
- Maintain all our parks and open spaces in a way that promotes environmental sustainability, using natural methods to control invasive species while maximising biodiversity and protecting rare habitats.
Successfully doing, especially in the country park with the use of ponies and cattle, and also the development of wild meadows, orchards, verge trials, tree planting and other innovative approaches which can be extended, as well as further development of biodiversity, in 2023 when grounds maintenance comes back in house.
- Establish a greenway cycling and walking link between Ore Station and Frederick Road and seek ways to fund greenways linked into the Town Centre.
Continue to press ESCC to deliver the three planned Greenways with updated links to the Town Centre, and for the Hollington-Silverhill-Alexandra Park path to be completed by 2023.
- Promote guidance on how local people can reduce their carbon footprint by home composting, reducing flying and car use, reducing single-use plastics, reducing energy consumption, and more.
Guidance online, and ongoing work, including a social media campaign for 2022.
- Install more electric vehicle charging points and pressure local supermarkets and leisure providers to provide charging points.

Achieved (21 installed in many town centre car parks), emails sent to supermarkets. Press ESCC to roll out on-street EV charging by 2023.

- Replace council-owned vehicles with electric vehicles as they're renewed. Council and contractor fleets (ie Biffa dustcarts) to be all electric asap (and at any event within five years). Lobby other publicly funded organisations ie Stagecoach buses, Police, NHS) to convert to electric by 2030.
- Use the new Country Park Visitor centre to demonstrate and promote sustainable straw bale building techniques. Successfully doing and now award winning, with greatly increased visitor numbers. Continue to promote The Bale House including more sustainable transport links such as better cycle and bus access.

3. Tackling Health Inequality

- Work with the Clinical Commissioning Group through its funding programme to develop initiatives that promote smoking cessation, healthy eating, and responsible drinking. £3.4M well-being programme planned in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- Focus on improving play areas in the most deprived communities, as well as in our major parks and seafront. Transfer and refurbish The Bowl (Hollington) by 2023 and agree wider play improvement budget with Optivo and Orbit, with Levelling Up or other grant support, and where appropriate transfer of play facilities to council control.
- Continue our 'Sport for All' programme to get adults and children involved in sports. New football pitch in Hollington included in Summer Kids' course. Better grass roots provision, including holiday programmes, to be provided including investment in partnership with the Football Foundation.
- Develop opportunities for sport for disabled people through our funded sports programmes.

Active Hastings courses delivered, and sport for all promoted.

- Continue our holiday play schemes for children in the most deprived parts of town, linked to a programme of exercise leading to healthier lifestyles.
Delivered by Active Hastings and other partners.
- Aim to develop new fully accessible sports and leisure facilities through the development of the Bohemia area.
Begin planning in 2022 a new Bohemia Sports and Health Centre (replacing Summerfields), protecting and enhancing sports facilities at Horntye and elsewhere, with a Levelling Up bid for sports and health submitted in 2022.
- Promote cycling in Hastings, including the use of electric bikes.
Encourage cycle hire and repair projects, including electric bikes

4. Regeneration and Boosting the Local Economy

- Work with local community-based organisations to support them in developing regeneration projects (such as the Observer Building).
Complete locally led Town Deal projects and encourage new community based projects, with new online consultation on regeneration and climate emergency plans.
- Work to support the Town Deal Board if it is successful in its bid to gain £25m in funding for regeneration projects that help the poorest people in our communities, while recognising the need to tackle climate change and improve sustainable transport.
Agreed final allocation of £24.3m in 2022, and Fast Track projects underway. Revisit Bohemia plans, then focus further regeneration investment on where the poorest communities live, and on services they prioritise.
- Work with partners to produce a strategic approach to marketing the town in a way that links the cultural, heritage and tourism sectors more closely.
Tourism investment review in 2022, as well as new Cultural Regeneration Strategy.

- Increase the availability of good quality overnight accommodation, both through council developments to create new hotels and by encouraging other accommodation providers.
New hotel deal with Premier Inn secured (at Cornwallis Street) and planning approval achieved.
- Use the council's newly built business start-up centre at Churchfields to help those from our most deprived communities develop business skills and establish new businesses, especially co-operatives.
Project on site, fully funded with very high environmental standards, and will open by 2023, promoting local and green new businesses.
- Redevelop West Marina as a destination that includes enhanced use of the sea and beach, with artists' studios, children's play, cafes and other leisure attractions and housing.
HBC to retain freehold, with development agreement now signed with Countygate. Residents consultation and detailed surveys throughout 2022, with the aim of a final plan for approval by HBC in 2023.
- Develop a Community Wealth Building approach, to ensure more contracts and services are procured locally, keeping the money in the local economy.
New procurement arrangements with LSP support to focus on Community Wealth Building (the 'Preston' model adapted for Hastings) by 2024.
- Support the Hastings 'Music City' initiative, working with venues and event organisers to encourage and develop local musicians of all musical genres to develop a reputation for Hastings as a centre for excellence for contemporary and classical music.
Continue including securing a sustainable future for our main music venues, White Rock Theatre and St. Mary in the Castle.
- Take every opportunity to provide economic advantage for young people, working with others to help provide high skill training, jobs and homes, alongside a safe and exciting cultural and social experience.
Include opportunities for young people in the 2022 Levelling Up bid, and ensure young people are at the heart of the new Cultural Regeneration Strategy.

- With other local authorities, investigate the possibility of establishing a community bank to provide loans to small and medium sized businesses.
Include as part of the new procurement strategy, and support further development of the local Credit Union.

5. Promoting Local Events and Attractions

- Work with the Environment Agency and Southern Water to make sure water quality is further improved and Blue Flag status is maintained for St Leonards beach.
Improve seawater quality (see Climate Emergency section) and seek improved status from Defra for Pelham Beach, whilst maintaining our excellent status at St. Leonards, with clearer public information from SW about water conditions.
- Continue to support the Hastings cultural sector in general and, specifically, with leverage funding that can be applied to Arts Council applications.
Regular surgeries and advice to arts organisations continue, as well as building new relationships with funders (such as recent two day visit by Arts Council England's new regional director).
- Support and promote St Mary in the Castle as a successful performance venue, working with the charitable trust that now runs it.
New grants provided recently to support reopening and match Arts' Council England funding (see Regen section).
- Support the Hastings Contemporary gallery to establish a secure future and use its Arts' Council National Portfolio Funding to enhance its outreach work with schools and local communities.
Finalise the agreed transfer of building to HBC, as part of a sustainable future for the gallery to include free entry for Hastings residents and enhanced education provision for local young people.
- Work to maintain and improve our programme of events (such as the Seafood and Wine Festival, St Leonards Festival) engaging with

underrepresented, minority and disadvantaged local people to maximise the variety and impact of the overall festival programme.

Further active promotion, including attendance and engagement by council leadership, of inclusive and diverse arts projects, especially those led by under-represented, minority and disadvantaged people living locally.

- Keep White Rock Theatre open until the new performance venue can be developed.
Invest in the White Rock Theatre to improve its facilities and sustainability (ie increasing capacity and providing better front of house provision) rather than develop a new venue.
- Maintain 'Green Flag' award status for Alexandra Park, St Leonards Gardens and Hastings Country Park.
Achieved
- Work with Natural England to protect habitats, encourage biodiversity and limit invasive species in the country park.
Achieved, plus working with Sussex Nature Partnership and Sussex Wildlife Trust and considering enhanced partnership arrangements.
- Use the new Country Park Visitor Centre to promote the country park to local people and visitors.
The Bale House successfully opened and operating (see Climate Emergency).
- Maintain and develop wheelchair access to our parks and open spaces.
Prioritise wheelchair access routes in parks and open spaces in the most disadvantaged areas.
- Work to establish an electric 'mini tram' or other sustainable bus service along the seafront, linking the Old Town, Hastings Pier and St.Leonards.
Continue to press ESCC to invest in local bus priorities including seafront services.

- Establish a local trust to maintain and enhance the Ore valley protected open spaces for local wildlife and for local people to enjoy.

Land transfer to protect these open spaces by 2023

6. Generating Income to Fund Day-to-Day Services

- Continue our path to 'entrepreneurial socialism', using commercial methods to raise money for public benefit rather than private profit, investigating every possibility for the Council to trade its services to generate income and by bringing services back in house.

Looking at trading elements of the street cleaning and building cleaning DSO. Bringing the grounds maintenance service in house in 2023 will also generate new possibilities.

- Continue to acquire local commercial properties to generate income for the Council and provide security for local jobs.

Much harder to do this now, following changes to CIPFA and government borrowing rules – no longer possible to borrow money to purchase properties for income generation, so we can't acquire any further commercial properties. However, the ones we have already acquired are bringing in around £1m a year net, despite the pandemic.

- Continue our 'transformational change' programme, ensuring that all Council tasks and processes are carried out as efficiently as possible, and that all projects are properly planned and costed.

The transformational programme linked in with the corporate standard is moving forward so that targets and projects for all service areas are using the dashboard and smartsheets to make us more efficient and to slimdown on the amount of paperwork required. There will also be a 'business as usual' smartsheet and dashboard which councillors and public can access.

- Provide Council services online wherever possible, making it easier for people to apply and cheaper for the Council to provide them, while maintaining our telephone contact centre for people who are not able to use online services.

Prior to lockdown 68% of all tasks were being carried out through our online services but this has increased during 2021 so that currently 83% of tasks and reporting are being done online.

- Take every possible opportunity to submit funding applications to the Local Enterprise Partnership, central government, Heritage Lottery, and any other funding streams available, where these support the Council's priorities.
£24.3m secured in 2021/22 from the Town Deal fund and further applications planned in 2022 to Levelling Up and other funds.

7. Keeping Hastings Safe

- Continue to co-ordinate and participate in inter-agency community safety initiatives, including the Safer Hastings Partnership, Hate Crime Partnership, and Multi-Agency Task Teams.
Hastings is co-chair of the Safer Hastings and Rother Partnership. The group brings together police, county officers, borough officers, probation service to look at local issues and receive reports from the agencies. The memorandum of understanding for this group is being reviewed and updated and we expect a re-established Safer Hastings partnership to be an outcome.
- Expand our participation in White Ribbon Day and work with other agencies to highlight and prevent domestic violence and coercive control, and lobby to provide more resources for women experiencing domestic violence.
Currently a lot of work on violent crime against women at home and on the street following an increase in street crime against women involving sexual assault – 112 women in England killed on the street in 2021 and in Hastings several assaults or attempted assaults in Alexandra Park. Now a standing item on the Safer Hastings and Rother Partnership. Safer Streets funding allocated to Alexandra Park with public consultation on aspects such as CCTV. Priorities include better urban design/lighting, campaigning and partnership working.
- Work with the police to enforce Public Space Protection Orders to prevent littering, street drinking and anti-social behaviour, while linking this to mental

health and other support services that offer help to those with alcohol or drug addiction problems.

The PSPO orders are due for renewal in 2022, and work will be strengthened between Police, HBC, ESCC and Project Adder to reduce anti-social behaviour in Hastings Town Centre.

- Ensure cycling and pedestrian provision, on road and in shared spaces, are safe and comply with good practice, to improve the experience for cyclists and pedestrians, especially in the Town Centre.

Campaign to bring road maintenance service back under local (HBC) control in order to repair potholes better and make our roads safer, and continue to redesign Hastings Town Centre to encourage safe walking and cycling and better access to public transport.

8. Keeping Hastings Clean

- Use our new in-house street cleansing service to continue to improve street cleaning standards.

Continue to improve street cleaning standards right across the town including partnerships with community organisations such as Tidy Up St Leonards.

- Promote our online reporting system for rubbish, dog fouling and fly tipping to provide clear target times for when problems will be dealt with and use our street wardens to monitor 'hotspot' areas regularly.

Successful with increased number of users, and next steps to include developing shared reporting systems with other agencies ie Optivo.

- Use our new in-house fly tip removal service to develop new polices to deal with fly tipping, using CCTV and other methods to identify perpetrators.

Work in partnership with external organisations ie Optivo to agree new approaches to reduce fly tipping, including a review of charging policy in 2022.

- Use our compulsory purchase powers to bring more empty homes back into use.

We submitted to the national Labour party conference a housing motion of a call for cost-neutral CPO powers which would enable local councils to act against land banking landowners. We will invest in more capacity in 2022 to enforce use of empty homes.

- Work with housing associations to make sure their housing estates are kept clean and tidy, investigating joint planning of services and potential use of enforcement powers where this is necessary.

Councillor meetings have formulated our ask of the housing associations and our very clear and public demands of OPTIVO. The letter written to the chief executive led to a visit from him and a commitment to address the issue of estate management, including joint HBC/Optivo walkabouts, and a resident first approach to reporting, with transfer of grounds maintenance, cleaning and play responsibilities to HBC.

9. Providing Decent Homes

- Continue our programme of property purchases to house homeless families as an alternative to using bed & breakfast accommodation.

Second phase of property purchases completed so total number of homes is 28. Big spike in house prices and availability of the type of accommodation make this difficult, so a new task force to look at fresh approaches to reduce homelessness has been set up.

- Start building or acquiring council housing again by re-establishing a Housing Revenue Account if this is financially viable within the government social housing grant regime.

We are now a registered provider and a partner with Homes England. The need for us to have a housing revenue account would only arise if we had 200+ properties. We have committed to 500 new homes at affordable LHA rents, and will start building on our sites at Bexhill Road and Mayfield in Hollington by 2023.

- Ensure new housing built or acquired by the council meets the fully accessible 'Lifetime Homes' standard where possible, as well as good design and energy efficiency standards.

We are committed to all the homes HBC fund or work in partnership on being Lifetime homes and we have publicly committed to all new homes being zero carbon as well.

- Work in partnership with housing providers whose policies reflect the needs of those in greatest need in Hastings.

Partnership working with OPTIVO continues, and the sale to Ilke Homes of Harrow Lane, ensuring 100% affordable, including 50% affordable rent. And since our very public 500 homes policy was published, Optivo have said they will deliver 100% affordable at Holmhurst St. Marys.

- Push for the renewal of the selective licensing scheme with the Secretary of State for Housing, alongside a campaign for rent caps and the return of fair rent reviews.

We pushed for this renewal but were blocked by our MP and the secretary of state. HBC has commissioned a new town wide stock condition housing report in 2022, in order to apply for the renewal of the licensing scheme in 2023. We will also secure new resources to increase action against poor landlords.

- Promote and enhance our homelessness prevention programme, to help people get rehoused before they become homeless.

We have been very successful in maximising the “everyone in” instruction during COVID (and led on this across the county) reducing the rough sleeping numbers to single figures. We have had successful funding bids to provide security for those rough sleepers who came off the streets and to prevent homelessness. (The biggest challenge is how residents move on once they have been supported and temporarily housed by HBC. Difficult to find sustainable, affordable move on homes with now over 400 people and families effectively trapped in temporary accommodation and in turn producing massive increases in HBC budgets). See task force above.

- Ensure all possible pressure on developers to comply with the 25% social housing requirement in the Local Plan for all qualifying developments.

500 rented LHA rates affordable homes programme agreed, constructive discussions underway to deliver more than 25% affordable on new sites at

Harrow Lane and Holmhurst St Marys and new Local Plan will aim to maximise affordable housing on new developments.

- Investigate and encourage alternative models of housing provision, including community land trusts and housing co-operatives, especially for older people.

We continue to have good relationships with alternative providers in the town and have actively promoted the need to work in partnership with external organisations with specialist knowledge and commitment to continue to promote new ways of delivering housing. This includes updating our housing allocation scheme, and reviewing disabled facilities funding during 2022.

Where the Money Comes from

During these times of austerity, there is far less money to provide new services and functions than there used to be. So, the council's efforts need to be focussed on providing existing services better, as well as raising as much money as we can from other sources.

Council spending is divided into two kinds: revenue spending and capital spending.

Revenue spending is what the council spends to cover its day-to-day expenses, providing services it must provide by law (statutory services), as well as additional services it chooses to provide (discretionary services). Money for this comes from Council Tax, Business Rates, government grants, fees and charges, car parking, competitive grant programmes, rents on commercial properties, and other income generation. The Hastings Council part of the Council Tax (about 12% of the total) only pays for about a sixth of council spending. Government grants used to be the largest contributor to council income but have been cut to almost nothing. Council Tax increases have been limited too,

so much more has to be raised from local fees and charges, and other income generation.

The council cannot borrow money to pay for revenue spending and cannot end the financial year in deficit. If it can't balance the books, it must use money from reserves to cover the gap, cut its services, or raise more income.

The council bids to external competitive grant programmes wherever the grant can help the council to fund its priorities. These grants can only be used for a specific purpose, are time-limited, and are generally used to fund additional rather than mainstream services. Grant sources include the Government, National Lottery Fund, Arts Council, and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

Capital spending is the money the council spends on longer term projects – buildings or equipment that last beyond the current year. To fund this, the council is allowed to borrow money, usually from the Public Works Loan Board (which offers low interest rates).

The council has to set its own limit for the amount it's going to borrow during the year, but there are no restrictions on this limit. As long as the council sticks to 'Prudential rules' (i.e. it can demonstrate that it can afford the loan repayments) it can borrow as much as it likes. However, as the repayments on loans come within the revenue budget, and because the revenue budget is so restricted now, borrowing can really only be done to pay for capital projects that will generate enough income to cover the loan repayments. For some capital projects, the costs can be covered by external grants. So, undertaking capital-funded projects makes no difference to the amount of money the council has for day-to-day revenue-funded services.

2022 PLEDGES

Tackling Poverty and Inequality

Hastings is the most deprived council area in South East England and has some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the country. We want to make sure all people, regardless of their ethnic origin, sexuality, gender, or disability, feel included in the local community. We will:

- Continue to consult all groups impacted by the Equality Charter and urgently develop plans with the Local Strategic Partnership to improve services for each, and to ensure that all organisations funded by the Council actively promote the same equalities values;
- Campaign through the LSP for other key local organisations to do the same;
- Work with the local Disability Forum to make sure disability access to Council services and structures is maintained and enhanced and that local retail and leisure services are encouraged to improve disability access;
- Ask the LSP to ensure all partners are also committed to full access;
- Continue to encourage council services to employ apprentices from groups impacted by the Equality Charter;
- Continue to use the funding until 2023 achieved from the EU Community-Led Local Development programme to fund projects to address long-standing unemployment and income deprivation, as well as skills shortages, principally in the Hollington, Broomgrove, Farley Bank, Halton, and Downs Farm estates;
- Continue to fund the Council's Active Hastings team to take sports opportunities and street games into disadvantaged parts of the town and
- give the chance for young people, especially girls, ethnic minority, LGBTQ+ and disabled young people, to become accredited sports leaders;

- Continue and extend the work of Active Hastings to focus on health inequality in the most disadvantaged areas;
- Continue to lead good practice across East Sussex and reduce the number of rough sleepers;
- Continue the housing first model and seek innovative accommodation options locally;
- Ensure Hastings Borough Council continue to support and welcome all people seeking refuge through its commitment to the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme as well as playing a full role, along with other East Sussex councils, in the new Afghanistan resettlement scheme;
- Ensure the Council continue to meet regularly with all local organisations supporting refugees such as Hastings Supports Refugees and the Refugee Buddy Project, to provide a coordinated response to issues faced by people seeking refuge.

Providing Decent Homes

Hastings has a large private rented sector which still has a significant number of poor-quality homes with bad landlords. We are also desperately short of genuinely affordable, social rented housing. To tackle this, a Labour Council will:

- Continue our programme of property purchases to house homeless families as an alternative to using bed & breakfast accommodation;
- Respond to the local housing emergency by establishing a new Task Force in 2022 to address the spiralling cost of temporary housing, to increase the supply of temporary and permanent accommodation alongside our voluntary and statutory partners;
- Start building or acquiring council housing again by re-establishing a Housing Revenue Account, if this is financially viable within the government social housing grant regime;

- Build new homes for LHA affordable rent on Bexhill Road and at Mayfield (in Hollington) by 2024;
- Ensure new housing built or acquired by the council meets the fully accessible 'Lifetime Homes' standard where possible, as well as good design and energy efficiency standards;
- Work to secure zero carbon, including gas free, homes at Harrow Lane, Bexhill Road and Mayfield by 2024;
- Deliver the 500 LHA rented affordable homes commitment to ensure genuinely affordable homes for local communities by 2024;
- Work in partnership with housing providers whose policies reflect the needs of those in greatest need in Hastings;
- Complete stock condition report in 2022 and apply for selective licensing by 2023 as well as campaign for rent caps;
- Use other statutory powers to crack down on rogue landlords who abuse tenants' rights and work to ensure that private rented housing and HMOs are maintained to a decent standard;
- Secure new funding in 2022 to increase inspection of homes and action against poor landlords;
- Promote and enhance our homelessness prevention programme, to help people get rehoused before they become homeless;
- Establish multi-agency task force in 2022 to tackle homelessness including increasing supply of temporary and permanent accommodation, to reduce numbers and time spent in temporary homes;
- Bring all possible pressure on developers to comply with the 25% social housing requirement in the Local Plan for all qualifying developments;

- Investigate and encourage alternative models of housing provision, including community land trusts and housing co-operatives, especially for older people.
- Revamp our relationship with social landlords (ie Optivo and Orbit) and update our housing allocation scheme and disabled facilities fund, including a new partnership to manage grounds maintenance, litter and playgrounds more effectively;
- Strengthen the new Local Plan to maximise the amount of affordable housing on all new developments;
- Work with developers and investors at an early stage to stress the need for rented affordable homes and deliver more than the 25% on Harrow Lane and at Holmhurst St. Marys for example.

Tackling Climate Change

The climate emergency is the biggest threat to humanity. We will:

- Work with public sector partners and local businesses to make Hastings carbon neutral by 2030;
- Build on recent achievements with aim of HBC becoming zero carbon by 2023 and then with other partners helping to secure the town becoming zero carbon by 2030;
- Further develop the council's strategy and action plan to make Hastings carbon neutral;
- Continue with updates published twice a year and involve local climate emergency organisations;
- Review our local plan to ensure our planning policies maximise energy efficiency in new developments, as well as maximising the opportunities for sustainable energy generation, biodiversity and sustainable transport solutions;

- Include new guidance in the next Local Plan i.e. promoting wind and solar panels over listed/conservation considerations, prioritising walking and cycling and public transport over roads;
- Pursue the Council's energy generation strategy to install solar arrays and wind turbines, for example seafront vertical-axis wind turbines, as well as examining potential other sustainable sources such as wave and tidal power;
- Complete Business Solar Programme and encourage landlords and homeowners to add solar to domestic properties, changing planning procedures where necessary and extending group purchase scheme;
- Identify sites suitable for onshore wind energy generation and include in the Local Plan;
- Encourage and promote community energy generation schemes including working with local community organisations;
- Install rooftop solar energy on all possible council-owned buildings by 2023;
- Develop solar arrays mounted above suitable council car parks including locations in the new Local Plan;
- Investigate sites for ground-mounted solar arrays, installing arrays at these only where there are no adverse ecological consequences, budget already identified in HBC capital plans;
- Work with Energise Sussex Coast to install solar arrays on commercial, domestic and community buildings throughout the borough, subject to the development of a workable feed-in tariff to make such projects viable;
- Refocus with a retrofit/solar plan for the most disadvantaged communities working with housing providers, and research linked to the new Green Energy training centre at the College;

- When the technology is available, link local energy generation projects to a local electricity network to provide cheap, sustainable electricity for local homes and businesses;
- Continue to press government for changes to make this possible including campaigning with other councils;
- Eliminate single-use plastics from all council activities and campaign for others to eliminate too;
- Ban single-use plastics from all events held on council land and encourage others to do the same;
- Aim to protect existing wildlife habitats, and create new ones, to maximise biodiversity in our parks and open spaces;
- Where possible protect existing green spaces from development and improve biodiversity;
- Maintain all our parks and open spaces in a way that promotes environmental sustainability, using natural methods to control invasive species while maximising biodiversity and protecting rare habitats;
- Bring grounds' maintenance service back in house by 2023, and review and improve their management of biodiversity;
- Develop a tree-planting programme for Hastings, and identify and support tree planting opportunities where funding is available i.e., Tressell, Hollington and Castle Wards in 2022 and then the Garden Town;
- Support new creative approaches i.e. Hollington Orchard, Woody Wood and garden and wildflower verges;
- Promote guidance on how local people can reduce their carbon footprint by home composting, reducing flying and car use, reducing single-use plastics, reducing energy consumption, and more;

- Launch new web content and social media campaign in 2022 involving a variety of local creative approaches;
- Establish a greenway cycling and walking link between Ore Station and Frederick Road, from the development of housing sites along the route, and seek ways to fund a greenway linked through to Hastings Town Centre;
- Continue to press East Sussex County Council to speed up the delivery of the three planned Greenways (safety designed in) new links to the Town Centre and for the Hollington, Silverhill, Alexandra Park path to be completed by 2023;
- Ask the county council to allow closure of the A259 along Hastings seafront on two summer Sundays to promote the attractiveness of a car-free seafront;
- Press the county council for car free developments including better walking and cycling links between the town centre and the seafront, including regular car free days in different parts of the town;
- Develop policies and practices, with local businesses and other organisations, to reduce the harmful effects of plastics in our seas;
- Protect our seas by campaigning with local groups to ensure major improvements by Southern Water in seawater quality supported by the Environment Agency and Natural England and working with other councils along the coast;
- Use this innovative and ground-breaking work to encourage green energy generation companies to relocate to Hastings;
- Launch green energy hub including a new Green Business Training Centre at Ore College Campus by 2023;
- Install more electric vehicle charging points and pressure local supermarkets and leisure providers to provide charging points;

- Press East Sussex County Council to roll out on-street EV charging by 2023, and promote electric car sharing;
- Replace council-owned vehicles with electric vehicles as they're renewed;
- Lobby other publicly funded organisations (i.e. Stagecoach buses, Police, NHS) to convert to electric by 2030.
- Use the new Country Park Visitor centre The Bale House to demonstrate and promote sustainable straw bale building techniques;
- Work to achieve sustainable transport links to The Bale House such as better and safer cycle and bus access.

Tackling Health Inequality

Obesity, smoking and common life-limiting health problems such as stroke, high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes are all significantly higher in Hastings than the national average. These poor health outcomes lead to short life expectancies in some parts of town. To help tackle this, the Labour council will:

- Work with the Clinical Commissioning Group through its funding programme to develop initiatives that promote smoking cessation, healthy eating, and responsible drinking;
- Launch new Hastings Health Equality Partnership with the NHS and Public Health, targeting the most disadvantaged communities, both geographic i.e. Broomgrove, Hollington, Downs Farm local health facilities, and of interest i.e. LGTBQ+ health provision;
- Focus on improving play areas in the most deprived communities, as well as in our major parks and seafront;
- Transfer and refurbish The Bowl during 2022 and agree wider programme of play development with Optivo and Orbit including a Levelling Up investment fund for young people in the most disadvantaged communities, and where appropriate taking playgrounds into council control;

- Continue our 'Sport for All' programme to get adults and children involved in sports;
- Focus our Sport for All programme on new and improved grassroots sports, play and health facilities and holiday provision, including investment in grass pitches in partnership with the Football Foundation by 2023;
- Develop opportunities for sport for disabled people through our funded sports programmes;
- Ensure that Active Hastings promotes sport for all as part of the Equality Charter rollout;
- Begin planning a new fully accessible Bohemia Sports and Leisure Centre (replacing Summerfields) and protecting and enhancing sports facilities at Horntye;
- Continue our holiday play schemes for children in partnership with the Hastings Opportunity Area and voluntary sector arts and sports organisations in the most deprived parts of town, linked to a programme of exercise leading to healthier lifestyles;
- Promote cycling in Hastings, including the use of electric bicycles;
- Encourage cycle hire and repair projects including electric bicycles.

Regeneration and Boosting the Local Economy

Through its planning policies, external grant applications, and other interventions, the council can influence the local economy, promoting 'traditional' sectors such as tourism, as well as newer sectors such as the creative and cultural sector. To achieve this, a labour council will:

- Work with local community-based organisations to support them in developing regeneration projects (such as the Observer Building);

- Complete locally led Town Deal projects by 2023 and encourage more community-based projects to come forward, with new online consultation on regeneration and climate emergency plans;
- Take every opportunity to provide economic advantage for young people, working with others to help provide high skill training, jobs and homes, alongside a safe and exciting cultural and social experience;
- Put young people at the heart of the new Cultural Regeneration Strategy;
- Deliver the Town Deal and other Town centre projects underway (Pelham Place restoration,) as well as revisit plans for the Bohemia Quarter to ensure they are complementary with the Town Centre redevelopment (including enhanced gardens and open spaces, new homes and improved sports and arts facilities);
- Focus further regeneration funding on where the poorest communities live and on services they see as priorities;
- Support the Hastings 'Music City' initiative, working with local music venues and event organisers to encourage and develop local musicians of all musical genres to develop a reputation for Hastings as a centre of excellence for contemporary and classical music;
- Work to secure a sustainable future for the White Rock Theatre and St Mary in the Castle;
- Work with partners to produce a strategic approach to marketing the town in a way that links the cultural, heritage and tourism sectors more closely;
- Complete a tourism investment review, as well as the new Cultural Regeneration Strategy in 2022;
- Increase the availability of good quality overnight accommodation, both through council developments to create new hotels and by encouraging other accommodation providers;

- Complete the new hotel by 2024;
- Use the council's newly built business start-up centre at Churchfields to help those from our most deprived communities develop business skills and establish new businesses, especially co-operatives;
- Open Churchfields start up centre, in Hollington, by 2023 and promote local and green new businesses;
- Redevelop West Marina as a destination that includes enhanced use of the sea and beach, with artists' studios, children's play, cafes and other leisure attractions and housing;
- Consultation with residents and businesses throughout 2022 as well as detailed ground condition surveys, with the aim of a new plan for approval by HBC in 2023;
- Develop a 'Community Wealth Building' approach to local procurement, using our new procurement strategy and a simplified application processes to ensure more contracts and services are procured locally, keeping the money in the local economy;
- Ensure that new procurement arrangements focus on community wealth building (the 'Preston' model adapted for Hastings) by 2024;
- Encourage other public sector services providers to sign up to a community wealth building local procurement approach;
- Invite the Local Strategic Partnership to support and help develop the new procurement strategy;
- With other local authorities, investigate the possibility of establishing a community bank to provide loans to small and medium sized businesses;
- Include the above as part of the new procurement strategy and support development of the local Credit Union;

- Promote good quality apprenticeships for local young people, with the council 'setting a good example' by taking on apprentices in council services.

Promoting Local Events and Attractions

Hastings has many attractions that benefit local people, tourism, and local businesses. Some of these are owned and maintained by the council, but others can be helped by the council too. Hastings-based groups have received over half a million pounds in the current financial year to date from the Arts Council alone. We will:

- Continue to support the Hastings cultural sector in general and, specifically, with leverage funding that can be applied to Arts Council applications;
- Continue to support the cultural sector, building relationships with funders and consult on then publish new Cultural Regeneration Strategy;
- Work with the Environment Agency and Southern Water to make sure water quality is further improved and Blue Flag status is maintained for St Leonards beach;
- Improve sea water quality (see Climate Change) and seek improved status from Defra for Pelham and maintain excellent status at St. Leonards;
- Maintain and develop wheelchair access routes on our beaches;
- Support and promote St Mary-in-the-Castle as a successful performance venue, working with the charitable trust that now runs it;
- Support the Hastings Contemporary gallery to establish a secure future and use its Arts Council National Portfolio Funding to enhance its outreach work with schools and local communities;
- Secure a sustainable future for Hastings Contemporary including enhanced outreach and education programme and free entrance for local residents;

- Work to maintain and improve our programme of events (such as the Seafood and Wine Festival, St Leonards Festival) engaging with underrepresented, minority and disadvantaged local people to maximise the variety and impact of the overall festival programme;
- Continue to focus our investment on under-represented communities, and encouraging festivals and events to support the local arts sector;
- Continue to recognise the impact of local events on the community and the difference they make to people's lives, e.g. Pride for the LGBT community and International Women's Day for women and increase work with other groups including disabled groups and BAME groups;
- Actively encourage and support work from minority and disadvantaged local people and where funding is available ring-fence some for work led by and including women, BAME, Disabled, LGBTQ+ and other underrepresented people;
- Actively promote and encourage inclusive and diverse arts projects, especially those led by underrepresented, minority and disadvantaged people living locally;
- Invest in the White Rock Theatre to improve its facilities and sustainability rather than develop a new venue;
- Continue to support local groups to put on established cultural and heritage events and festivals, and encourage new ones;
- Work with Ore Community Land Trust and others to secure community ownership of Speckled Wood and establish the area as a Local Nature Reserve;
- Maintain 'Green Flag' award status for Alexandra Park, St Leonards Gardens and Hastings Country Park;

- Work with Natural England, Sussex Nature Partnership and Sussex Wildlife Trust to protect habitats, encourage biodiversity and limit invasive species in the country park;
- Consider enhanced partnership arrangements with the above;
- Work to establish an electric 'mini-tram' or other sustainable bus service along the seafront, linking the Old Town, Hastings Pier, and St Leonards;
- Press ESCC to invest in local bus priorities including seafront services;
- Install a cycle route in Alexandra Park;
- Maintain and develop wheelchair access routes in our parks and open spaces;
- Prioritise wheelchair access routes in parks and open spaces in the most disadvantaged areas;
- Use the new Country Park Visitor Centre to promote the country park to local people and visitors;
- Establish a local trust to maintain and enhance the Ore Valley protected open spaces for local wildlife and for local people to enjoy and aim to achieve land transfer by 2023;
- Work with the county council to eventually develop a car-free seafront.

Generating Income to Fund Local Services

These are a mixture of day-to-day activities and investment projects funded from borrowing that generate a net income for the council as well as improving services, helping to offset the huge cuts in government funding over the last twelve years. A Labour council will:

- Continue our 'transformational change' programme, ensuring that all Council tasks and processes are carried out as efficiently as possible, and that all projects are properly planned and costed;

- Give the public increased access to service targets and performance details online;
- Use sustainable electricity generation to raise income and reduce costs for the Council;
- Roll out 'Solar for Business' on as many buildings as possible, reducing use of fossil fuels and raising income too;
- Continue to increase the use of online council services wherever possible, making it easier for people to apply and cheaper for the Council to provide them, while maintaining our telephone contact centre for people who are not able to use online services;
- Continue our path to 'entrepreneurial socialism', using commercial methods to raise money for public benefit rather than private profit, investigating every possibility for the Council to trade its services to generate income;
- Bring more council services back in-house and run them directly rather than through a contractor, for public benefit rather than private profit, focusing initially on grounds maintenance and building cleaning;
- Look at trading elements of cleaning DSO, and potentially the building cleaning DSO when we bring that in house;
- Bring the grounds maintenance service in house in 23/24 which will generate new possibilities too;
- Take every possible opportunity to submit funding applications to the Local Enterprise Partnership, central government, Heritage Lottery, and any other funding streams available, where these support the Council's priorities;
- Apply to various Levelling Up funds in 2022/23 to improve public services.

Keeping Hastings Safe

While tackling crime is primarily a police responsibility, there are powers the council has to tackle anti-social behaviour, street drinking, littering and other

minor crimes, in collaboration with the police, helping people feel safer and more willing to visit our town centres. To make the most of these powers, a Labour council will:

- Work with other agencies to help reduce violent crime, especially knife crime;
- Support the Violent Crime Reduction Unit and Youth Service, especially in Hastings Town Centre;
- Continue to co-ordinate and participate in inter-agency community safety initiatives, including the Safer Hastings Partnership, Hate Crime Partnership, and Multi-Agency Task Teams;
- Seek the re-establishment of a local Safer Hastings Partnership to give greater focus and impetus to this work;
- Use our Licensing Policy to restrict the proliferation of off-licences in town centres, while encouraging responsible licensees to develop the town's evening economy with good restaurants and other licensed premises;
- Promote aims of the Saturation Policy (to encourage new and diverse attractions) and extend it to include Queens Road;
- Continue the 'Reduce the Strength' campaign to encourage off-licences not to stock high-strength beers and cider;
- Expand our participation in White Ribbon Day and work with other agencies to highlight and prevent domestic violence and coercive control and lobby to provide more resources for women experiencing domestic violence;
- Continue to prioritise prevention of violence against women at home and on the street through better urban design, campaigning and partnership working, including consultation on CCTV in Alexandra Park;
- Renew the Public Space Protection Orders in 2022 and continue to work with the Police, ESCC and Project Adder to reduce anti-social behaviour in Hastings Town Centre;

- Ensure cycling and pedestrian provisions, especially in shared spaces, are safe and comply with recognised good practice to improve the experience for cyclists and pedestrians, especially in the Town Centre
- Continue to press ESCC and the Police to enforce restricted vehicle access to town centre and begin to redesign our town centres to encourage greener and safer walking and cycling.

Keeping Hastings Clean

We will:

- Continue to use our in-house street cleansing service to improve street cleaning standards;
- Continue partnership working with community organisations i.e. Tidy Up St Leonards;
- Promote our online reporting system for rubbish, dog fouling and fly tipping to provide clear target times for when problems will be dealt with and use our street wardens to monitor 'hotspot' areas regularly;
- Developing shared reporting systems with other agencies i.e. Optivo
- Use our new in-house fly tip removal service to develop new policies to deal with fly tipping, using CCTV and other methods to identify perpetrators and secure prosecutions;
- Seek new approaches to reduce fly tipping, i.e. partnerships with external organisations such as Optivo (see below), and review the charging policy in 2022;
- Invest in more capacity during 2022 to enforce use of empty homes including using our Compulsory Purchase Order powers;
- Work with housing associations to make sure their housing estates are kept clean and tidy, investigating joint planning of services and potential use of enforcement powers where this is necessary;

- Ensure estate walkabouts with HBC/Optivo continue and aim for a resident first approach (argue whose bit of land the rubbish is on later!) and transfer of responsibility for grounds maintenance and play to HBC.

What does the Borough Council do?

In Hastings, there are two councils providing different local services. They are independent of each other, and make their decisions separately, with different councillors elected at different elections (the next county council elections will be in 2025.) Hastings Borough Council is a district council, and is based in Muriel Matters House, on the seafront. East Sussex County Council is based in Lewes. Generally, county councils provide fewer, more expensive services, while district councils provide more, less expensive services.

Hastings Borough Council is responsible for:

- Domestic waste collection and street cleaning
- Licensing (pubs, off-licences, events, taxis etc)
- Planning policy and planning applications
- Economic development and regeneration
- Homelessness, private sector housing regulation and housing advice
- Social housing allocations policy and local housing strategy
- Community grants
- Arts and culture
- Parks and gardens
- Sport and recreation
- Seafront services
- Marketing, publicity, and tourism
- Environmental health (including air quality and noise) and food safety
- Dangerous structures
- Off-street parking
- Cemetery and crematorium
- Housing benefits
- Council tax and business rate collection

- Health and safety at work in shops and some other businesses

East Sussex County Council is responsible for:

- Highway maintenance, fixing potholes and on-street parking
- Streetlighting
- Economic Development
- Public Health
- Skills training (via colleges)
- Strategic transport
- Children's and youth services
- Adult social care
- Minerals planning (including fracking)
- Waste disposal
- Libraries
- Education services and maintained schools

Councils are not responsible for:

- Academy schools (all non-religious schools in Hastings are academies apart from Sandown Primary)
- Social housing run by housing associations (all social housing in Hastings is run by housing associations)
- Trade waste collections
- Benefits (apart from housing benefit), tax credits, universal credit
- Police and fire services
- Further Education colleges
- Drains, sewers and most waterways
- Health and safety in factories, offices and building sites

New Powers for Local Government

Over the years, the powers available to councils to achieve real change have been taken away and centralised, reducing the council's ability to make comprehensive improvements to local facilities and services. Councils need real

powers returned to them so they can make more of a difference locally. Powers we would like to see passed to Hastings Council include allowing the council to:

- Set up and run local bus services;
- Seize abandoned property and development land with reduced compensation to allow redevelopment and reuse;
- Ensure all developments include social rented housing, regardless of spurious 'affordability' arguments;
- Increase Council Tax on second homes and other underused properties;
- Decide the level of local business rates;
- Control the types of shops and businesses operating in an area;
- Regulate and licence homes used as holiday lets.

We would also like to see the creation of a Hastings (or Hastings and Bexhill) unitary council, so we could take on county council powers to maintain highways, fix potholes, provide education and social care services, and all the other county level services (see earlier list). We believe this would be less confusing for local people and allow efficiency savings by running better integrated services, as well as maintaining a council that was close to local people and responsive to their needs.

Thank you for taking the time to read our manifesto and it would be great to have your support on May 5th

Your Labour candidates for Hastings Borough Council are:

Margi O'Callaghan, Braybrooke; Judy Rogers, Castle; Andy Batsford, St Helens; Nigel Sinden, Silverhill; Liam Crowter, Tressell; John Cannan, Wishing Tree; Paul Barnett, Hollington; Chris Munn, West St Leonards; Steve Willis, Ore; Justin Greenland, Maze Hill; Ruby Cox, Central St Leonards; Kim Forward, Gensing; James Bacon, Old Hastings; Mike Turner, Baird; Kenan Hakko, Conquest; Jane Hartley, Ashdown

Promoted and published by Judy Rogers on behalf of Hastings and rye Constituency Labour Party, all at 84 Bohemia Road, St Leonards on Sea, TN37 6RN.