

**For the Many, Not the Few**

# Swindon Labour

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2018 MANIFESTO



# Foreword

Swindon is a wonderful and vibrant town. I am proud to call Swindon my home and to have raised my family here.

But under successive Conservative administrations, we have seen services cut, taxes increased and promise after promise broken.

Listening to the people of Swindon is a vital part of my job. Over and over again I hear that you want Swindon to thrive again – and so do we.

We will carry out the regeneration of our Town Centre that has been promised for so long. We will take action to tackle poverty and inequality. We will introduce real solutions to address the housing crisis, building more council houses and affordable homes. We will protect and invest in the heritage buildings which could be such an asset to the town. The Conservative council has changed track time and again about the future of Lydiard House and Park while allowing the backlog maintenance bill to mount up. A Labour administration will guarantee to keep Lydiard House and Park under council control, and make sure that they are efficiently run for your benefit.

Swindon needs change and only a Swindon Labour Council will have the vision and ability to achieve this. Join us and make that change on 3<sup>rd</sup> May.



Cllr Jim Grant  
Leader of the Labour Group

# Flagship Policies

We will reinstate Sure Start Children's Centres - giving all Swindon children the best start in life.



We will sign the Council up to the Unison Ethical Charter- ensuring dignity for home carers and those who receive care.

We will guarantee that all workers of Swindon Council are paid the Real Living Wage (as set by the Living Wage Foundation) and we will end the use of exploitative zero hour contracts.

We will introduce the Swindon Neighbourhood Cares Scheme. Tackling isolation and loneliness in Swindon, through mobilising a new volunteerism in the Town.

We will support the redevelopment of the Corn Exchange, the redevelopment of the Mechanics Institute and the restoration of the Milton Road Baths - showcasing Swindon's heritage.



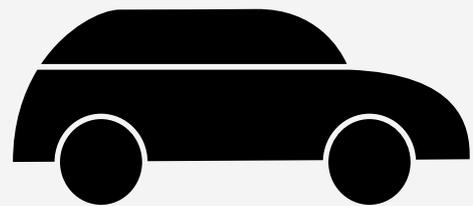


We will target public sector spending in the local economy, boosting local jobs.

We will build more private housing for rent, offering quality private rented accommodation to Swindon residents and setting the standard for other private landlords.

We will deliver more university education for Swindon - increasing skills and attracting new businesses to the town.

We will consult schools and parents about creating a new, cooperative-run Multi-Academy Trust.



We will build double the numbers of Council Houses currently being built.

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## Tackling Poverty and Inequality

Poverty and inequality are rampant across Swindon. Reducing poverty should be the main priority for any Labour administration; nationally or locally. Swindon Labour will give due consideration to reducing poverty and inequality with every decision it takes.



We will reinstate Sure Start Centres – giving all Swindons children the best start in life.

We will guarantee that all workers of Swindon Council are paid the Real Living Wage (as set by the Living Wage Foundation) and we will end the use of exploitative zero hour contracts.



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## Working with the Community

We will work with local food banks and charities to ensure children are fed over the summer holidays when they don't receive free school meals.

We will assist benefit claimants to receive the benefits they are entitled to and will ensure the public sector's drive towards digitalisation meets this objective.

We will make Swindon a "City of Sanctuary" and increase funding for The Harbour Project, ensuring all refugees who come to this town feel welcome and supported.

Swindon  
City of Sanctuary



## Learning from others' best practise

We will set up a redistributive scheme to tackle poverty and inequality in Swindon, like "Islington Giving". This comprises independent groups of funders, businesses, residents and charities working together to fund grants to voluntary organisations, as well as building and developing partnerships to deliver projects and create networks to achieve the goal of tackling poverty and inequality.



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## Creating a fairer Swindon

We will tackle fuel poverty by making sure occupiers are aware of their rights in terms of energy efficiency standards, and where necessary we will enforce legal energy efficiency standards on local landlords.



We will use the "Social Value" element of procurement rules when tendering for Council services to create more work opportunities for people facing barriers to employment.

We will publish a plan to reduce the pay ratio between the CEO and the lowest-paid directly employed council worker.

We will evaluate the likely impact on socio-economic inequality of all new council decisions and of the council budget.

We will ensure 100% of the Local Welfare Assistance Fund is spent.

We will appoint a Cabinet Member to take responsibility for Inequality Reduction.

We will ban pay day loan companies from appearing on council advertising space.

We will enable council staff to use credit unions via the payroll function.

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## Healthy Swindon

Health in its entirety needs to improve in Swindon. While Social Care is a main area of focus for the local authority, physical health, mental health and environmental health are also key factors to improve the quality of life for Swindon's residents. We will seek to improve air quality in Swindon and ensure levels are monitored & measured correctly.

We will introduce the Swindon Neighbourhood Cares Scheme. Tackling isolation and loneliness in Swindon, through mobilising a new volunteerism in the town.

We will sign the Council up to the Unison Ethical Charter- ensuring dignity for home carers and those who receive care.

## Caring Swindon

We will better promote the family care allowance and see whether employers could do more to enable carers to support their relatives whilst still in employment. We will provide training and support for Swindon's care workers, making care work a more attractive career path. We will introduce an alert system that can collect people who are out in the community and in crisis. This will enable vulnerable people to live more independently.



We will continue to back the town centre based Swindon Half Marathon.

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We will end the use of throw-away plastic in Council-owned buildings.

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## Support in the Community

We will deliver Dementia Friendly accommodation in the borough.

We will improve wait times for mental health assessments and treatments.

We will lobby for the reintroduction of the "place of safety" at Sandalwood Court

We will develop stronger relationships with mental health professionals to improve mental health provision in the town.

We will further develop programmes to reduce smoking and obesity in the borough.

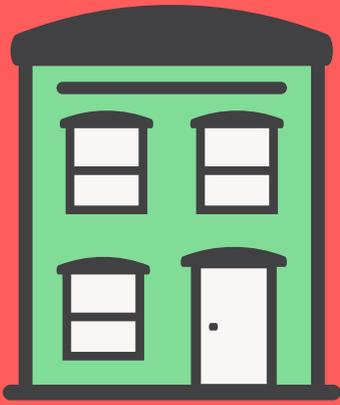


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## Swindon's Housing Crisis

A Labour-led authority would seek to tackle Swindon's Housing Crisis by all measures available to it. Over recent years we have found home ownership in Swindon is declining, with insufficient and increasingly expensive private rented housing and a lack of housing for senior managers working in the town.



**We will double the number of Council Houses built in Swindon.**

**We will build more private housing for rent, offering quality private rented accommodation to Swindon residents and setting the standard for private landlords.**

The Labour Group supports the national Labour Party's policy of tackling "land banking" by empowering local authorities to force large housebuilders to build on the land they own, or face the prospect of losing the land.

## Solutions to our Housing Challenges

We will enforce the Council's 30% affordable housing target.

We will use Council Housing and financial facilities to attract key workers to the town.

We will set up a Council mortgage deposit scheme to help local people get on the property ladder.

We will provide a Letting Agents service for private rented properties, becoming a trusted letting agent for renters and ensuring landlords abide by regulations set out in law.

We will bring down the number of empty homes in Swindon.

We will build Urban Villages on the outskirts of the Swindon Borough, revitalising Swindon's satellite towns.

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## Helping the Vulnerable

We will build and encourage other providers to build specialised housing for adults with learning disabilities to ensure they are housed adequately and do not have to live outside the Borough, away from their families.

We will immediately build a small number of units to house Swindon's rough sleepers, using the "Housing First" model.

We will do more to take enforcement action against irresponsible private landlords who are not complying with the law.

We will introduce a "buy-back" scheme on sub-standard homes in the Borough, making the homes fit for purpose and where appropriate increase the volume of housing units on the land to make the scheme cost-neutral.



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## Improving Education & Employment

An incoming Labour administration wishes to improve the quality of life of Swindon's residents through better paid jobs and greater life opportunities for all its residents, no matter where you are from.

We will target public sector spending in the local economy, boosting local jobs.

We will consult schools and parents about creating a new, Cooperative-run Multi Academy Trust.

We will carry out an in-depth review of education provision in the first 6 months of a Labour administration and take action with a consultation and a detailed three year delivery plan.

We will use the Local Plan to prioritise green energy and advanced technology sectors for new employment land.

We will make available grants to Swindon residents for advanced qualifications where Swindon currently has a skills shortage – for example, engineering.



We shall sign up to the Unite Construction Charter

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## Improving Transport for Swindon

We will hold a review of the road network to improve traffic flows around Swindon.

We will install LED lightbulbs in all Swindon's streetlights. We will consider setting up a centrally-controlled street lighting system, which would reduce energy usage and costs to taxpayers.



We will make Swindon a Cycling Hub and create a new Swindon Cycle Masterplan, to plan for linking up all the cyclepaths in Swindon.

We will increase parking enforcement across the town, ensuring motorists are complying with the law.



We will introduce multi-purpose Enforcement Officers.

We will ensure all Bus Lanes are fully enforced.

We will open up Town Centre & Old Town Car Parks for Residents' Parking. This will become ever more necessary with the expansion of residential accommodation in the Town Centre.

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## Aspirational Swindon

Labour is ambitious for Swindon. We believe it has huge potential to build on its culture and heritage. We are determined to achieve a new and purposeful Town Centre that the people of Swindon aren't only happy with but embrace and love. We know this will take time and this policy area is devoted to fulfilling Swindon's full potential over the long term.

We will support the redevelopment of the Corn Exchange, the redevelopment of the Mechanics Institute and the restoration of the Milton Road Baths – showcasing Swindon's heritage.

We will deliver more university education for Swindon – increasing skills and attracting new businesses to the town.

## A Town to be proud of

We will build more residential properties in the Town Centre area, including through the building of "layered" housing units.

We will pursue a new Museum and Art Gallery for Swindon.

We will deliver the North Star development based on current outline planning permission.

We will seek to create wider leisure offers across the whole of Swindon.



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## **An Open & Transparent Council**

We need to turn our local authority into a "21st Century Council", not only more open and transparent to the people it represents but also widening the decision-making process beyond the Council's Cabinet

## **Your Opinion Matters**

We will instigate a Community Governance Review to reassess past Council decisions regarding Parishes and Parish Boundaries.

We will deliver a decision making structure within the council giving all members the opportunity to influence council policies .

We will create a People's Jury to find out what residents want from their Council services and we will create a Value for Money Committee to give the public the opportunity to review our accounts.

We support giving all voters a postal vote to make democracy more accessible to local people.

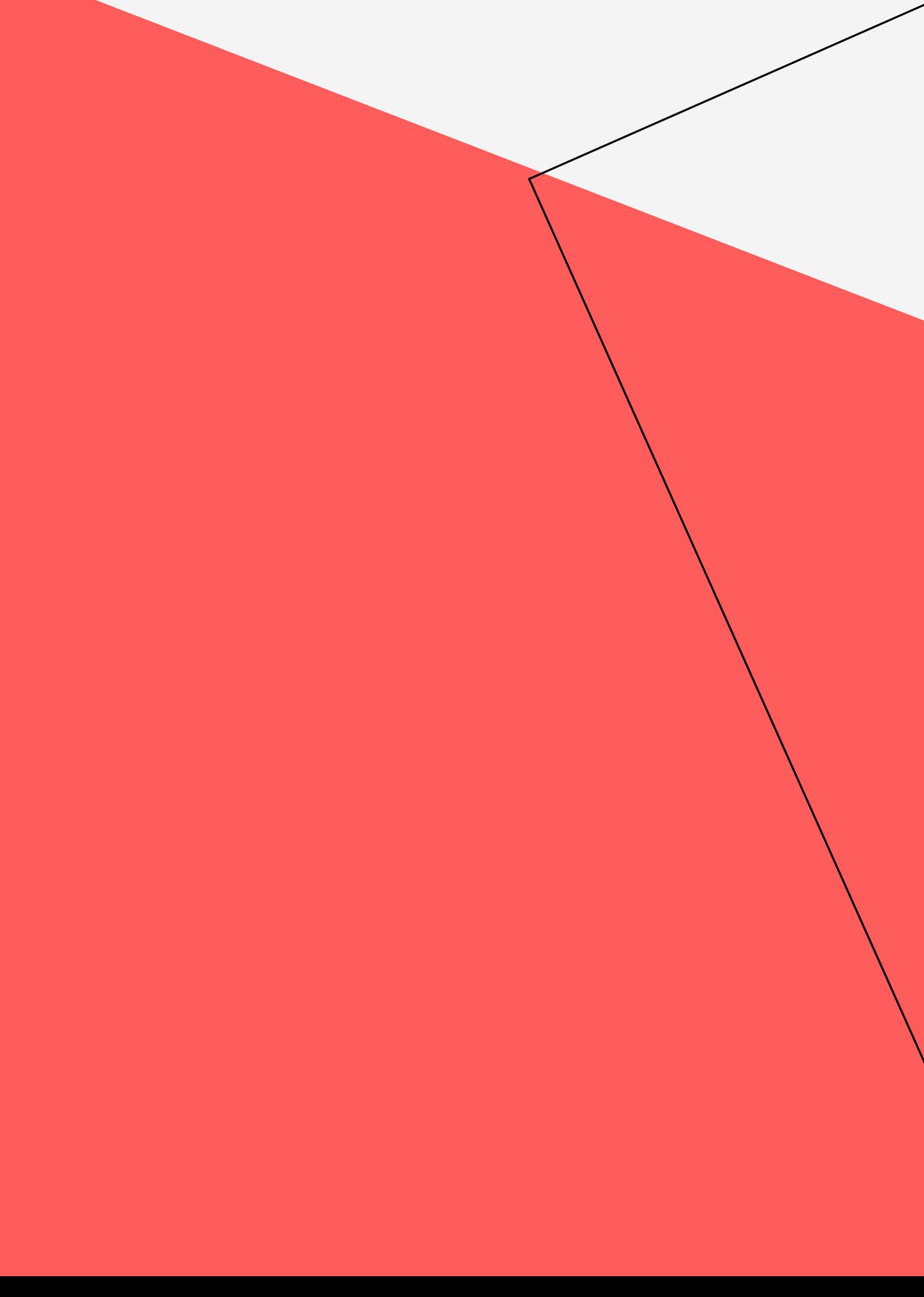
We do not support forcing voters to provide ID at polling stations.



We will increase the Council Tax by the maximum Government threshold.

We will bring Forward Swindon back in-house.

We will reduce Senior Management and will ensure the Council has sufficient middle management capacity to implement the change that is require to make this a "21st Century Council".





Promoted by Jim Grant on behalf of Swindon Labour, both at 36 Celsius Grove, Swindon, SN1 4GT.

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