



# FOREWORD

This election is not about national politics, rather it's about who are the best people to run Birmingham City Council to ensure the bins are emptied, weekly and on time, the streets are cleaned, the roads are fixed and council tax is kept low. For nearly a decade, residents have had to endure dirty streets, failed projects and an ever increasing council tax bill. Enough is enough.

This manifesto sets out our common sense and deliverable plan to once again make Birmingham the cleanest city in the UK (as it was voted in 2007 under the last Conservative led council), whilst ensuring it is equipped to tackle the climate crisis and ultimately be a council that residents can once more be proud of.

There is one theme throughout this manifesto, unleashing Birmingham's potential. Only Birmingham Conservatives have the vision, backed with plans, to unleash the potential of every Brummie in every community.



*Robert Alden*

LEADER OF BIRMINGHAM  
CONSERVATIVES



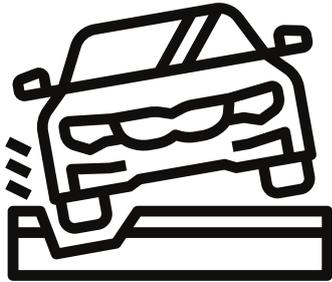
*Ewan Mackey*

DEPUTY LEADER OF BIRMINGHAM  
CONSERVATIVES

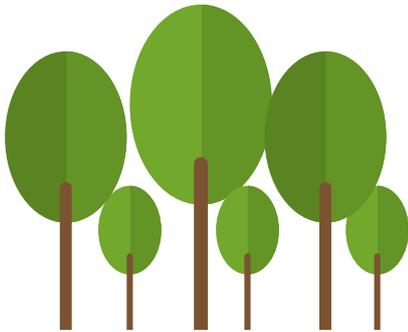
# Our Simple Promises To You:



**Clean Up Our City**



**Fix Our Roads**



**Protect Green Spaces**

**GET THE BASICS**

*Right*

# TRANSPORT

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Our roads are in a mess – there seems to be more potholes than ever, despite Birmingham Labour receiving £1million per week to fix our roads. It's time we got this basic right, so we would make repairing and resurfacing roads a top priority.

Keeping the city moving is more important than ever. There is a need to create a modern transport system with as much choice for users as possible as well as making it more accessible in terms of price and location. Working with the West Midlands Mayor, regional partners, the government and Transport for West Midlands, we will help deliver

- New stations at: Hazelwell (Stirchley), Kings Heath, Moseley, Castle Vale, and The Fort, Walmley, Sutton Park and Streetly.
- Restore platform 4 at Snow Hill and the middle platforms at both Kings Norton and Northfield.

This investment will deliver more trains, more passenger capacity and more stops on the rail network in Birmingham. We will also look to create or expand Park & Ride sites, where appropriate, at these stations.

One of the things we hear most about from you is that some vehicles are getting increasingly loud through adaptations to exhausts and some people are using our roads to race on. That is why we will trial introducing noise receptors in the city linked to ANPR cameras to catch those who are creating excessive noise across the city and fining them. This will directly target those who modify their cars, use loud mopeds, motorcycles and quadbikes. To tackle speeding we will also renegotiate the deal signed with neighbouring Solihull to deliver more average speed check cameras where there is support from the community.

We believe here in Birmingham that the Labour run Council has failed to get the basics right over the last 10 years. Birmingham Labour have been too busy focussing on fancy and often counter-productive schemes such as charging private vehicles to move and park around the city. Under a Conservative run council, we want to deliver action that limits the impact on your daily lives. Therefore, we will scrap:

- Private Vehicle Charges in the Clean Air Zone;
- Damaging Low Traffic Neighbourhoods;
- Labour's plan to close the A38 tunnels.

Of course, the focus needs to not only be on getting from A to B but also ensuring there is somewhere to park at the end of your journey. Labour's current parking policy restricts the number of parking spaces any new development can provide, often to zero. This not only makes it difficult for people to get around but also adds to congestion through an increase in on street parking. We will change the policy to allow for more off-street parking and offer free parking with rapid charging points in our suburban centres such as Erdington and Harborne as well as at key sites such as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

This will not only make your life easier but also support out of centre smaller businesses who have struggled enough over the last 2 years.

In a move to tackle congestion and pollution in the city we will build an urban consolidation centre following the successful scheme in Bristol. These are when hauliers bring the goods to a central point on the outskirts of a city centre, break down the loads and sort them into area-specific deliveries which can then be taken 'the last mile' by vans, preferably electric. This will mean that there will be fewer vans duplicating their journeys around our city centre, limiting congestion, cutting emissions and delivering cleaner air.

We know that bus stops are hubs for poor air quality, yet there is a simple solution to help improve the quality of the air we inhale – air filters on bus stops. Looking to identify which stops suffer from the poorest air quality we will then seek to install the air filters to help clean the air we all breathe in. Through increasing public transport and increasing the reliability of services, more people will use the public transport network meaning we can keep buses moving and not sat polluting our streets running idle.

In an effort to keep our traffic moving we will also look to introduce, like many other councils, a lane rental scheme on our road network, charging those who close roads for work such as utility companies, per day to encourage more efficient use of their time. There are few things more frustrating than being sat in traffic around road works where nothing is happening. Money raised will go back into getting one of our basics right – fixing potholes. With a charge levied, companies will be keen to reduce the amount of time their works take, coordinate better with other utilities and also ensure a quality job is done to prevent the need to come back.

**"Keeping Birmingham moving is key to ensuring we maximise the potential of our city. We will end the pet projects of Birmingham Labour and focus on what matters to the residents of Birmingham, fixing our roads"**

CLLr Timothy Huxtable  
Shadow Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment





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# EDUCATION & SCHOOLS

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We believe that everyone should be able to go as far as their talent and hard work can take them. We want to see more good quality schools across the whole of Birmingham, regardless of whether or not they are local authority maintained. We will encourage applications to set up new free schools, particularly in areas that are poorly served by existing schools. This will include at least two new Special Schools for Children with additional needs within the next decade.

## **Preparing Young People For Life:**

- We want a focus on improving the careers advice in schools with tailored support for each pupil on the path they take post-16.
- Encourage schools to deliver lessons on the textbook produced by Young Enterprise and Martin Lewis which covers
  - Saving
  - Making the most of your money
  - Responsible Borrowing
  - Moving on from school – the world of work
  - Risk & Reward
  - Security & Fraud
- We will look to roll out mental health first aiders in Birmingham's schools to help support our children's mental wellbeing.
- Trial rolling out a programme of training for school staff to spot the signs of eating disorders with an appropriate referral scheme in place to support the child.
- Continue to work with schools in Birmingham to tackle homophobia and bullying, and to ensure that age appropriate relationship and sex education is LGBTQIA+ inclusive.

## **Jobs of the future:**

- One key area of growth will be the Green Economy so we will also focus on the skills that will be needed to deliver the changes we need to make placing Birmingham at the heart of the green industrial revolution.
- In industries that are struggling to recruit, we will encourage and inspire children to see the potential career they can have in these industries.

It is also only right that we encourage our young people to take the path towards growth sectors here in the West Midlands. In Sunderland, we have seen the automotive industry step up and inspire the next generation of talent with a promise to offer every schoolchild in the North East a place at a Nissan Skills Foundation event – the company's programme of activities designed to excite youngsters about careers in manufacturing and engineering. The West Midlands is home to JLR and the associated component industry that supports it so we will look to work with them to set up a similar scheme to ensure the city has the skills and talent to grow in our key areas.

The Green Economy is growing, so we will also focus on the skills that will be needed to deliver the changes we need to make. For example, rolling out zero carbon heating installations highlights a current need for an additional 64,000 qualified heat engineers to ensure we can meet targets set by the government. A Conservative run council would seek to place Birmingham at the heart of the green industrial revolution – for too long Labour have neglected this ambition with neighbouring cities such as Coventry being awarded a battery giga factory. Birmingham Labour voted against our bid to bring this vital investment here to Birmingham. Birmingham's manufacturing and the automotive industry needs support to adjust to the climate challenges we face and needs a Council committed to training a workforce fit for the future.

**"We remain absolutely committed to ensuring that every child reaches their full potential here in Birmingham. It is vital that the failures of Birmingham Labour in regards to the Special Educational Needs provision are fixed and that the Council restores confidence amongst the children and their parents."**

Cllr Maureen Cornish  
Shadow Cabinet Member for Education, Skills  
& Culture

Cllr Alex Yip  
Shadow Cabinet Member for Vulnerable  
Children & Families



**Birmingham Conservatives - Unleashing Birmingham's Potential**



# HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

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Our health and wellbeing has never been so important. We wholeheartedly support the government's plan to get GPs back to face to face visits, and we will work with surgeries to encourage them to start to offer it as an option again. Birmingham should be a place where you can spend all your years and we want to make sure that as we grow older you feel you can stay here in Birmingham. We will introduce an older persons strategy to make sure that the Council's services remain accessible and relevant for people as they grow old, making sure no one is left behind. Part of this strategy will be to expand the amount of extra care villages located on highstreets, giving local business a boost and making it easier for older people to access their local high-street and remain as social and active as possible.

We also know when things go wrong, and you end up in hospital, you want to be surrounded by your loved ones. As it stands, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital desperately needs more parking, so we will build a new multi-storey car park meaning more people can park on site and limit the amount of on road parking in residential areas. This will also help the hard working staff, especially those working shifts and leaving work at times when public transport simply isn't an option.

Early intervention in major health issues can be the difference between life and death. We will ensure all Council staff (12,453 employees) and the staff of our partners are trained in basic First Aid, including CPR. We will also look at rolling out more defibrillators and stab kits across all of the city to help save lives.

The health and social wellbeing of those who have served for the country is so important. We will look at reintroducing our 'homes for heroes' schemes, scrapped by Birmingham Labour and considering how we can align the council's services to make sure veterans receive the best service. This will include: re-skilling veterans, guaranteeing interviews for veterans in council jobs and implementing a veterans' portal, such as in Manchester, which links up services that specialise in veterans' affairs.

**"Sometimes things go wrong that are out of our control and it is only right that, as Brummies, we look after one another when this happens. We want to establish a Lord Mayor's Community Trust to help people get back on their feet. For example, if you had an house fire, your property flooded or to provide Christmas presents for those children who are in care."**

Cllr Matt Bennett  
Shadow Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care





# STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES

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## GREENER COMMUNITIES

We recognise that at the heart of many communities are the open green spaces that people visit. Far too many have been lost under Labour denying future generations access to green spaces; our message is clear we will protect green spaces. We also want to improve our green spaces, so we will work to secure more green flag awards for our parks across the city so that Brummies have access to award winning green spaces to enjoy up and down the city. As well as protecting what we already have, we also want to create a new urban park in the city centre with a memorial for all local regiments in Birmingham to honour those from this city who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Young people also need places they can access and socialise with friends. We want to guarantee at least one skate and BMX park per constituency, creating areas people can meet safely and be active together.

We have, year after year, also seen the Labour run council show their true environmental credentials. In Birmingham's leafiest and busiest bus routes on the Billesley, Moseley and Hall Green border, the city lost 14 trees. Then 61 trees were removed by demolition contractors in order to install a warm-up track next to the Commonwealth Games stadium in Perry Barr. In the city centre, workmen felled a line of trees in Hurst Street because they were 'the wrong kind'. We should be protecting trees and planting more. Where residents want, we will create treelined streets and work in urban areas to plant urban forests.

Fly tipping and litter is a problem in every single one of our communities. Fly tipping has risen 84% since 2015/16 and shows no sign of getting any better. We want to harness the developments made in technology and roll out cameras that will catch cars that dispose of litter from windows or are involved in large scale fly tipping. Since these powers were introduced, Birmingham Labour have issued just one fine for littering from a vehicle showing how they are failing to keep our streets clean.

We also know that for too long residents have suffered with unreliable bin collections. We will ensure that your bins are collected weekly, when they should be, increasing reliability and helping reduce the amount of rubbish on our streets. To tackle the scourge of fly tipping, we will reintroduce Free Bulky Waste Collection and we will scrap Birmingham Labour's bulky waste tax.

Whilst the measures above will help make it easier and deter people from fly tipping and keeping our city clean, we know that there will still be instances where fly tipping and litter will occur. That is why we are dedicating a ward specific clean up crew to help respond quickly when it does happen and feed local intelligence back to the council on where the hot spots are.

**"There have been over half a million missed refuse collections since 2017 under Birmingham Labour. This is simply not acceptable."**



Cllr Deirdre Alden  
Shadow Cabinet Member for Street Scene & Parks.

## **STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

Illegal encampments on our green spaces will face a zero-tolerance policy and the council will use all the new powers being considered by the Conservative Government as well as introducing a city-wide injunction to prevent groups causing damage and disruption.

We will introduce 7 days a week security in our local centres so that even if the police can't respond, there will be local security monitoring issues. We will also look at increasing the number of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). This allows the Council to prohibit specified activities, such as aggressive begging and/or require certain things to be done by people engaged in particular activities, within a defined public area that enables the police to enforce.

We also want to make sure that our community centres and highstreets out of the city centre, such as the Northfield or Erdington High Streets, are places that people can visit easily. That is why we will introduce free parking in district centres and create community hubs where residents can go to access banking and council services. For too long, communities have seen high street banks up and leave with the services that many residents relied on often miles away. We will take lessons learnt from trials in Essex and South Lanarkshire, which allowed a member of staff from a different bank to come into the hub once a week to help with trickier transactions and will work with banks and the Post Office to roll this out in Birmingham. We also want to see more services spread out across the city, for example, we will look to open registry offices in hospitals, so it is easier to register births. We will also plant a tree within the city for every birth registered, creating greenery that the future generations can enjoy.

We will also bring forward our plan for a Festival of Birmingham which would commemorate the date of January 14th, 1889 which saw Birmingham granted City status by Queen Victoria. Our plans would see an event in held in each constituency and for the focus to not just be on the City Centre as we have all too often seen. This would ensure that all communities can join together, celebrate not only how we got to where we are today but also where we are moving together as a city.

**Birmingham Conservatives - Unleashing Birmingham's Potential**

Our high streets and local centres have never needed us more than they do now and for the last decade Labour have let them down time and time again. It is not rocket science, there is more that the council can be doing to give them a boost so we will:

- Support Christmas markets in local centres, showcasing the best of local businesses
- Fund Christmas light displays in local centres
- Work with local Business Improvement Districts to support and promote initiatives in their areas
- Make council owned empty units available at discounted rates for pop up businesses
- Provide Free Parking in all council owned car parks near to high streets
- Provide additional street cleaning crews in all local high streets
- Rebalance spending commitments to ensure that suburban areas do not continue to lose out to the city centre. To address the imbalance caused by Labour's focus on the City Centre, we commit to a budget ring fenced for outside the ring road, aimed at levelling up our suburbs and creating stronger safer communities.
- Relocate the Museum Collection Centre to Erdington High Street and build the new Science and Industry museum in the Northfield constituency to ensure a better spread of cultural activities across the city as well as supporting local centres.

Whilst there are many things we can do across the city to help improve our communities, we recognise that the best people to drive and implement change in their local area are the communities that live there. That is why we want to launch a 'local by design' approach to the council, whereby communities are empowered to tackle the issues they face with the council supporting them.

We want to bring communities into the council rather than imposing the councils wishes on communities. That is why we will look to work with communities to deliver better design guides and licensing policies that reflect both the physical appearance of the buildings in the area and also reflect the aspirations of the local community. We will also look at protecting long standing community assets such as pubs from being forced to close after new developments complain about noise.

**"We know that if even one Brummie feels unsafe walking our streets then it is one too many. We will look at improving street lighting as well as improving the lighting down alleyways and launching an 'eyes on streets' campaign for people to report issues as and when they happen."**

Clr Peter Fowler  
Shadow Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion,  
Community Safety and Equalities.





# HOUSING

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Our message is clear: build beautiful, build better and build for the future. We all know that there needs to be more housing here in Birmingham, and the housing stock needs to work for all of our population, young and old. Birmingham is lucky to have some amazing heritage, from Bournville to the Jewellery Quarter and Moor Pool to Austin Village, Birmingham is home to some beautiful homes – we want more.

## **Our plan for new houses includes:**

- Adopt a brownfield first approach when identifying sites for new housing in Birmingham.
- Where large scale developments do occur, the council will adopt an infrastructure first approach ensuring that the appropriate facilities such as schools, healthcare and community facilities are in place before the houses are built.
- Encourage more townhouse style properties, giving new homeowners the space they need whilst increasing the amount of properties we build per site.
- We also recognise the strain and disruption that new housing developments cause to the local communities during construction, so we will investigate a council tax discount for these properties whilst construction is ongoing.
- Houses need to be fit for the future, so we will look to make them as environmentally friendly as possible, with every new house having an ECV charger. Houses will meet the highest standards for carbon efficiency, exploring the latest technology for heat and energy generation and conservation.
- We will seek to introduce estate management structures to ensure standards are maintained by all living there - similar to Bournville Village Trust

## **Our plan to tackle poor quality HMOs & Exempt Accommodation:**

- Improve design guides to protect the heritage we have here in Birmingham as well as protecting family housing from those who seek to turn them into HMOs, Exempt Accommodation or flats.
- Restore HMOs back into family homes through compulsory purchase or on the open market, thereby easing the pressure to build on green spaces and protecting the character of local neighbourhoods.
- On those properties that the Council does sell, we will place a covenant to ensure that they remain as a family home and do not become a HMO. To ensure this is enforced, we will give the Cabinet Member for Housing direct responsibility for this measure.
- We will ensure that those who meet high standards as providers of Exempt Accommodation who do not use suburban family dwellings, will have better access to the council's ASB team, as well as other services, when they have issues with their residents or other areas.

- A Conservative run council would also refuse to use providers who convert family housing into Exempt Accommodation.
- Make the Exempt Accommodation team pilot a permanent measure.

### Did you know?

Birmingham has seen the number of bed spaces in these hostels and shared houses double from 11,000 in early 2018 to 22,000 in March last year. The Labour Run Council have failed to get a grasp on the rising crisis.

### Our plan for Housing:

- We will introduce a 'rogues' gallery of landlords in the city so that when you are viewing properties, you can avoid irresponsible landlords.
- We will also instruct the council not to work with housing associations that do not meet high enough standards.
- Ensure any repairs and maintenance to council owned properties are done in a timely manner.
- If you are living in a Council owned property that undergoes extensive refurbishment or redevelopment that means you have to move out, we will guarantee you the right to return back to the community you live in. Under Labour, you are only offered an 'Option to return' which is not good enough.
- We will also offer priority for new build council properties to both veterans and those tenants who have looked after and cared for their previous properties and been good tenants and neighbours.
- We will introduce a 5-year residency rule, meaning that you can't receive a council house without having a strong local connection, in line with other local authorities.
- Deliver at least 10 new extra care villages across the city to both ensure sufficient provision for elderly people and help those who wish to downsize freeing up family housing for younger people.

**"Under Labour 50 hectares of green infrastructure has been lost – that is the equivalent of 93 football pitches. Brownfield first will be our policy."**

Cllr Ken Wood  
Shadow Cabinet Member for Homes & Neighbourhoods





# CLIMATE CHANGE

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At every level of government, from the council chamber through to Downing Street, Local Conservatives have been raising the issue of and tackling climate change. Birmingham City Council is the biggest council in Europe – this is a real opportunity to use our size to make a real impact here in Birmingham, harnessing new technologies to deliver impact, rather than introducing restrictions to your everyday life. Between 1994 and 2007, our oceans absorbed 34 gigatons of the world's carbon through algae, vegetation, and coral. That is why we will trial the use of new algae technology being developed in the West Midlands and look to deploy it out across the city once proven to be successful. This technology is affordable and CARBON NEGATIVE.

The Council is also the owner of a large number of buildings across Birmingham and this presents us with an opportunity to shift towards renewables being the energy choice of the Council. Through installing solar panels on buildings, to installing green roofs and walls, it is time the Council used its size and significant asset base to deliver change. The innovative private sector can be used to help deliver this, taking on much of the capital risks whilst our assets work for the people who own them, the residents of Birmingham.

We must ensure that the green spaces we already have are protected from Labour's bulldozers. To do this we will work with Fields in Trust to place all our green spaces in a trust preventing development and protecting the spaces for future generations.

Climate Change and the destruction of green spaces is impacting our bees more than ever. That is why we can again use our scale in Birmingham which is home to more bus stops per mile than any other city in Europe. Bus stops offer us a great opportunity to support the bee population across the city by planting bee-friendly flowers on top, as piloted in other areas of the country.

Increasing bio diversity is so important we will take lessons learnt from the Wildlife Ways scheme in Solihull and look at how we can plant up our verges and our parks to revitalising our wetlands, woodlands and grasslands that have been neglected under Labour and at how we can create wildflower areas and ornamental planting. We will also designate a hedgehog conservation zone in each ward to boost their chances to forage and meet mates. For too long, Labour have ignored and disregarded Conservation areas, the emphasis of the Council must be on protecting, restoring and expanding them.



# FINANCE

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After promising no increases when campaigning for power in 2012, Labour have put up council tax by 39% in Birmingham. Regardless of what they may promise going into this election, to close the financial gap they have left themselves, Birmingham Labour would need to raise council tax another 31% in the next four years without a different approach. We know from their track record that they have limited ability, imagination or ambition to do anything else and their first reaction is always to reach into the pockets of hard working Brummies.

We also believe in bringing the council to you. For too long we have seen an expectation from the Birmingham Labour Administration that you should come to them whilst you are passed from pillar to post trying to navigate the complex bureaucracy they use as shield. Every time any of your money is spent by the council, we will look at whether this makes it easier for you to access the services we deliver and to get the answers to your queries promptly and efficiently. For too long Labour have spent your money on pet projects and gimmicks to mask their failings. We know you want to see change in Birmingham and we will always have the end goal in sight - making sure your council works for you.

If elected in May we pledge to grow the council tax base, not the council tax rate. This means building more Band D and above properties – family homes that people want and need – which would mean more income from council tax without the need to charge individual households more. This also encourages more people to stay in Birmingham as they grow their families rather than move out to surrounding areas and commuting into the city for work.

The Council should be doing all it can to support businesses to grow and hire more local people. We will set up a business support desk to oversee many council services such as planning, licensing and business rates, to help get the answers businesses need to grow. We also recognise that the Council should lead on protecting local jobs, and so we commit to keep all council jobs in the country and not outsource a single council job to another country. Further to this, where possible, we will also commit to prioritising Brummies for council jobs.

The jobs we create in the Midlands need to be jobs that will survive the future,. Therefore we will work with businesses to create eco-apprenticeships for trades such as boiler conversion, battery production and green installations so that Birmingham leads in green skills. We will also play our part in reducing our reliance on overseas workers, especially in the HGV sector, by opening a new HGV Driver Training Centre and offering interest free loans for those who want to train.

We have seen how Labour's policies have driven business out of Birmingham – for example, the Clean Air Zone. The loss of the John Lewis store was very damaging for the city centre, being empty for so long, should be seen as an opportunity to think differently. Empty spaces can offer small flexible premises for business start-ups across Birmingham. Larger empty spaces would allow us to build on the recent success of the filming of the latest Mission Impossible and Amazon series Citadel, which highlight Birmingham's potential to host film studios.

The Council must use its financial might and soft power to make sure we are doing all we can to tackle climate change. Therefore we will introduce a grants scheme for community groups and small businesses to enable them to move towards zero carbon operation. To this end, we will work alongside innovators to bring forward and implement cost efficient and effective schemes.

**"We pledge to freeze council tax – you shouldn't be facing increase after increase when the Labour run council can't get the basics right."**

Cllr Meirion Jenkins, Shadow Cabinet  
Member for Finance & Resources



