

WHAT A LOCAL LABOUR COUNCIL WILL DO FOR YOU - 2019 MANIFESTO



 Labour

NATIONAL POLICIES
LOCAL SOLUTIONS

www.totnes.laboursites.org

YOUR LABOUR TEAM

FOR SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL 2019

South Hams Ward

ALINGTON / STRETE

BLACKAWTON / STOKE FLEMING

BICKLEIGH / CORNWORTHY

CHARTERLANDS

DARTMOUTH

ERMINGTON / UGBOROUGH

IVYBRIDGE EAST

IVYBRIDGE WEST

KINGSBRIDGE

LODDISWELL / Av. GIFFORD

MARLDON / LITTLEHEMPSTON

NEWTON / YEALMPTON

SALCOMBE / THURLSTON

SOUTH BRENT

STOKENHAM

TOTNES

WEMBURY / BRIXTON

WEST DART

WOOLWELL

Candidate

PETER MCILVEN

DAVID MATTHEWS

MIKE CADE

DAVE TRIGGER

NATHAN BODINNAR
GRAHAM CAMPBELL
SUE BUDGE

LOUISE REA

TESSA LANNIN

TONY REA

GERRIE MESSER

JOHN HARVEY

EVELYN BURGESS

ED PARSONS

HELEN BEETHAM

PAUL BISHOP
LYNN ALDERSON

RICK GAEHL

LOUISE WEBBERLEY
COLIN LUKER
LAUREL ELLIS

ALISTER HENDERSON

MICHAEL ELSMERE

PAUL FURLONG

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
HOUSING	6
ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE and FISHING	7
TRANSPORT and INFRASTRUCTURE	8
POLICE, CRIME and SAFEGUARDING	9
LOCAL ECONOMY and TOURISM	10
TACKLING POVERTY	12
EDUCATION and LIFE LONG LEARNING	13
CREATIVITY, THE ARTS, CULTURE and COMMUNITY WELL BEING	14
COMMUNITY WELL BEING	14

INTRODUCTION

Labour nationally promises to govern '**for the many, not the few**'. Labour in the South Hams will follow the same principles.

From 2020 South Hams District Council (SHDC) will no longer receive any government funding **so how will SHDC carry out their statutory and social responsibilities?**

• Council tax collection	• Recycling and waste
• Community transport	• Street lighting
• Economic development	• Tourism
• Emergency planning	• Car parks
• Environmental protection	• Public toilets
• Museums and arts	

SHDC Councillors also have an important say on issues such as health, social care, and education.

SHDC Councillors, the majority of whom currently are from the Conservative Party, have shown a reluctance to condemn central government austerity cuts and have therefore failed to protect vital local services.

- The "One Council" consultation was ignored by SHDC Conservative Councillors despite 85.9% of respondents voting against the merger
- There was no consultation over the recent decision to privatise our street cleaning and waste collection service
- Conservative Councillors lost tax payers money after their decision to invest in Icelandic banks (£1.25m in 2008)
- This is reflected in the Local Government Association Resident Satisfaction Survey October 2018 showed that 4 out of 10 SHDC residents were dissatisfied with their local council. Nationally the figure was 2 out of 10 being dissatisfied

Despite the pleas against severe cuts caused by Conservative / SHDC austerity policies the council were reportedly willing to spend around £150,000 on the failed SHDC / West Devon merger.

In a recent review of SHDC, one Officer said: 'we're miles away from understanding what the public want'.

After many years of a Conservative dominated Council the local Labour Party is offering to improve the lives of residents and bring a refreshing approach to the delivery of essential services that impact the lives of all in South Hams.

Currently SHDC only retains 9p in every £1 it collects from Council Tax.

How will Labour be different?

Labour Councillors promise to fight cutting of services and the privatisation of contracts. Instead we will support investing in local services, that will deliver for everyone and ensure that the most vulnerable do not fall through the net.

Residents of the South Hams have suffered long enough from high housing costs, poor infrastructure and cuts to services.

Labour Councillors in Plymouth and Exeter are already making a positive difference

Locally. Labour Councillors will seek to make SHDC more democratic and transparent by ending the current system of rule by Executive (a gang of only 6 Councillors) which allows the making decisions behind closed doors.

A recent review criticised SHDC decision making process, saying that more work is needed from Councillors and senior managers to ensure fuller member engagement.

We fully support the national Labour policy of reducing the voting age to 16 and will encourage the involvement of Councillors in citizenship education in schools and colleges.

Local councils have four main sources of funding:

- Central government grants (Rate Support Grant)
- Business rates
- Council tax
- Fees and charges

The elections in May provide the residents with a chance to elect a real alternative.

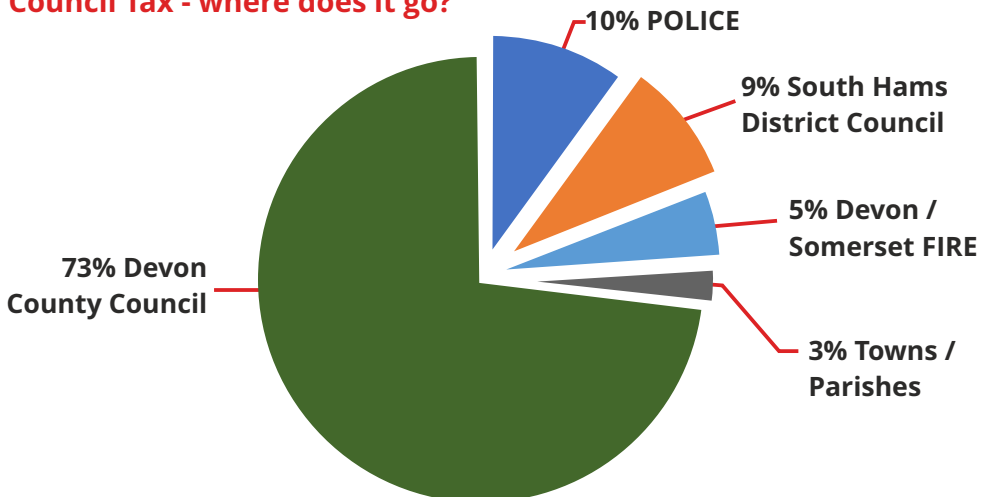
- **Core central government funding for SHDC will fall by £4m between 2009/10 and 2019/20**
- **Over the next two years the shortfall at SHDC will be £1.18m**

By 2020, central government is testing a pilot scheme for local councils to retain a % of business rates (Business Rates Retention) but this will only increase funds available to councils if central government grants are not cut.

Labour Councillors will critically scrutinise SHDC's current plan to borrow £75m to invest in commercial property speculation and any other investment gambles

In 2019 on the average band D property, your council tax will be £1,821.93 and is divided up like this:

Council Tax - where does it go?



HOUSING



The Labour Party annual conference in 2018 agreed that housing was a **top priority** and promised that a Labour government would invest in council housing and affordable homes to buy.

A Labour government will:

- encourage local authorities to build new council housing
- tackle insecurity for private renters and ensure that all social/private rented homes are maintained to a decent standard

Today, many residents can only dream of housing security. In addition, high levels of private rents make it impossible for people to save for a deposit if they wish to buy a property. Affordable homes in South Hams are **only 11 %** of new developments and generally these are way outside the price range of many residents.

In South Hams the average wage is £23k and the average house price is £210K.

This makes it virtually impossible for anyone to borrow or afford a mortgage based on this earnings / price relationship.

Your local Labour Councillors will:

- Borrow to invest in truly affordable and council housing
- Demand that new development meets actual local need, both in terms of type of housing, and that at least 30% of new housing is genuinely affordable
- Demand that the money developers pay SHDC Section 106 (development), is used to improve infrastructure in communities affected by development
- Campaign for planning applications to have the highest environmental and energy standards and the protection of green field areas
- Support increases in council tax on second homes, and empty homes. Lobbying government to close the loop hole where second home owners avoid paying council tax.
- Reject the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reductions policy to ensure that residents of SHDC will not be worse off

ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE and FISHING

The Labour Party, nationally will:

- Ensure that today's farming, fishing, transport and tourism industries become truly sustainable, so future generations can continue to enjoy the beautiful landscapes of the UK
- Establish regional Investment Banks that will support green jobs in renewable energy and will invest in rural and coastal economies
- Ban fracking, and current environmental standards will be reviewed against the best in the world
- Bring in a new clean air act, end the badger cull, and totally ban all hunting of wild animals

Your South Hams Labour Councillors will:

- Encourage the use of the local supply chain, particularly in the prioritisation of the farming industry
- Work with the farming community on the reduction / eradication of bovine TB
- Fight to reverse the policy of out-sourcing waste collection and return to in-house service
- introduce a transparent, fully audited system of waste collection and disposal
- Revise the planning process to make sustainability and energy reduction a requirement in all new developments and improve energy-efficiency of existing homes
- Review all Council policies and proposals for their environmental impact
- Promote cycling, and campaign for completion of the Littlehempston-Totnes cycle path.
- Act to improve air quality, especially in existing Air Quality Management areas
- Develop a plan for the South Hams to be carbon neutral by 2030
- Encourage the take-up of electric transport and car sharing e.g. with dedicated parking spaces and recharging points
- Support the adoption of 'reduce, re-use and recycle' practices by residents and local businesses
- Protect open spaces, giving all residents access to leisure and enjoyment
- Enforce food, environment and welfare standards to protect animals and consumers
- Support action to reduce plastic waste
- Investigate 'park and walk' schemes for schools
- Promote better maintenance and greening of streets by encouraging community stewardship projects to improve local environments



TRANSPORT and INFRASTRUCTURE

Labour nationally will invest in a modern, integrated, accessible and sustainable transport system that is reliable and affordable.

Our vital rail link with the rest of the UK is constantly threatened by high tides and bad weather and a Labour government has promised to fund the improvements so desperately needed

The South Hams is a large geographical area with many isolated communities and poor transport. Labour Councillors will take account of the impact on rural communities of all policies being considered at Town, District and regional level.

South Hams Labour Councillors will:

- Support local communities to retain shops, banks, post offices, pubs and GP surgeries
- Promote car sharing and support community transport schemes such as Bob the Bus, Ivybridge Ring and Ride, Totnes Caring and Dartmouth Caring
- Lobby Devon County Council for subsidised bus routes so residents in all communities can access work, education, training and essential services
- Demand Devon County Council improves the state of the roads
- Work with the Rail Users Groups to campaign for increased capacity and reliability on trains serving Ivybridge and Totnes
- Campaign to retain high speed train services to the west country, currently under threat
- Campaign for lower cost car park charges that will assist High Street retailers
- Oppose building over car parks and the sell-off of SHDC related assets
- Investigate the introduction of free parking at Totnes train station
- Provide better information on transport availability in rural locations and smaller towns



POLICE, CRIME and SAFEGUARDING

The Conservative Government has cut police numbers by 20,000*. **Cuts to the police force endanger communities and police officers too.**

A Labour Government will:

Labour's national approach to policing will be different, we will work with the Police to ensure that our communities are safer for all of us. Support the police in the performance of their duties.

- Provide officers, police community support officers and support staff with the equipment and people they need to provide effective policing services. This includes the growing threat of cybercrime and domestic violence
- Champion community policing policies by working with Police authorities throughout the country on strategies to prevent crime
- Recruit 10,000 more Provide police officers to work on community beats

Your South Hams Labour Councillors will:

- Support an initiative to ensure that the police force is adequately resourced so that they may tackle the changing face of crime in the South Hams
- Support the national target of the Labour Party to ensure that at least one police officer is in every neighbourhood, both town and rural
- Fight to insure that rape crisis centres and refuges for victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment are available, as essential services
- Highlight that the 20% shift from central government funding to local funding through the Policing Precept over the past 2 years, is hitting the poorest as they are most likely to be victims of crime.
- Lobby hard to ensure that responsibility for Police funding is not shifted further to local authorities.

LOCAL ECONOMY and TOURISM

Our District and Town Councils need to support a vibrant local economy, with good employment opportunities for young people.

For examples see what a Labour council is doing in Preston. Labour nationally will invest in the regions, establishing Regional Investment Banks and targeting support at rural communities and coastal towns that have been left behind.

Your local Councils can have a significant impact on creating and sustaining local employment by enabling money collected to be spent, as much as possible, within the local community.

For examples see what a Labour council is doing in Preston

Your South Hams Labour Councillors will:

- Ensure that all outsourced contracts include the payment of the real living wage and exclude zero hours contracts
- Encourage the creation of sustainable directly employed jobs
- Support small business groups and incubate new business models such as credit unions, community enterprises and co-operative initiatives
- Support the reduction in business rates for local start-ups
- Review Local and Town Plans and identify opportunities to support local businesses
- Prioritise the use of local residents and businesses rather than organisations from outside the area
- Bring back contracts in-house so that surplus can be reinvested in council services
- Encourage local community initiatives for services that are disappearing in our towns and villages

Tourism has a major influence on the local economy and is a benefit to employment opportunities.

How can tourism be supported and further encouraged?

It is essential that existing car parks are not sold for housing development – we need all the car parks that currently exist.

Car Parking – a reduction in the charges would:

- assist in attracting visitors.
- For residents, reduced charges, would also be a major benefit and promote local shopping.

For example: there could be free parking on certain days / times of the week (e.g. market day in Totnes). Park and Ride schemes in conjunction with community transport.

Pedestrianisation of High Streets – In association with Devon County Council, Town Councils and local businesses we would actively encourage surveys to investigate the pedestrianisation of appropriate High Streets (e.g. Totnes).

Toilets – we reject the proposal to place entry charges and closures of public toilets. Tourist Information – to improve the staffing, siting and availability of tourist information.

Environment – we support greening of the built environment by encouraging involvement through community voluntary actions.

TACKLING POVERTY



A Labour government will scrap Universal Credit (UC) and establish a benefits system that supports rather than punishes claimants.

Since September 2018 new claimants of means-tested benefits or those with a change of circumstances in the South Hams, have been forced to claim UC. UC affects both working and non-working people, and recent Conservative changes have led to UC negatively affecting pensioners in mixed age couples. UC does not support the self-employed on varying incomes, leaving them significantly worse off.

- Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) has reported nationally that there is a 50% increase in enquiries where UC has been rolled out.
- UC has resulted in increased hardship, documented by the increase in food bank use
- Public transport links to Follaton House, to access the Job Centre and the CAB are inadequate. Many claimants in South Hams do not have access to public transport. Claimants with disabilities from surrounding towns and villages would need to pay for a taxi to get from the bus stop to Follaton House.
- Too many of our residents are being pushed further into debt and poverty.

Your South Hams Labour Councillors will:

- Work with Citizens Advice, other councils and local agencies to reduce the damage done by benefit cuts and UC
- Campaign against loan sharks and high-interest loans
- Assist in the establishment of local credit unions.
- Campaign for a mobile Job Centre / Department Work and Pensions / SHDC services to reach the outlying villages and smaller towns.
- Support the scrapping of UC

EDUCATION and LIFE LONG LEARNING

- Nationally, a Labour government would introduce a National Education Service for all ages
- Restore and fully fund Sure Start Centres
- End the Academy and Free School Systems bringing back schools under Local Government control
- Bring back a variety of grants to assist students in Higher and Further Education

Whilst SHDC does not have a direct remit for education it can, if it wished, have a considerable influence on education policies provided by Devon County Council.

Your South Hams Labour Councillors will lobby:

- for increased per pupil funding in all Devon Schools to the national average and support the campaign by headteachers to see that this is implemented immediately
- to restore a wide range of support financial, social and psychological for children with special educational needs
- for an increase in provision for children and young people excluded from school.
- to reinstate Sure Start Children Centres and ensure they are properly funded
- for funding and reorganisation of the school transport system to ensure poorer families are not disadvantaged
- to prevent the formation of further Academies and Free Schools in South Hams and ensure those schools already in this system are brought back under local government control
- to reopen or take back under local government control all libraries and their related facilities
- to support voluntary organisations working with young people to press local government to reopen and adequately fund youth centres and their services in towns and villages across the constituency

Devon's schools receive £268 less per pupil than national average

CREATIVITY, THE ARTS, CULTURE and COMMUNITY WELL BEING

- The Labour Party believes that local community involvement in a wide range of artistic, cultural and sporting activities is crucial to well-being, both physical and mental. We will ensure that adequate funding is made available for this
- The austerity policies of National and Local Government (SHDC) have led to a complete lack of initiatives to sustain and increase the well-being, mental health and sense of community of people across South Hams
- Until now involvement in such activities has not fallen under the remit of councils but Labour Councillors will press SHDC to use funds that are available but hidden in council budgets to encourage more people to take part in cultural events, to support artists, local organisations and the public in order to increase choice and opportunities for people to experience and be inspired by the arts
- Labour Councillors will also press urgently for more support for local museums such as the Cookworthy in Kingsbridge and the Totnes Museum
- Labour councillors will also strongly oppose selling off open spaces or the closure of public paths and bridleways in the face of development by either public or private organisations
- Support Social Prescribing initiatives where patients can be referred to a range of non-clinical facilities

YOUR LABOUR TEAM FOR SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL in 2019



www.facebook.com/totneslabourparty
www.facebook.com/SouthHamsLabour

www.totnes.laboursites.org

Promoted by Peter McIlven on behalf of South Hams DC Labour candidates,
at Orchard Barn, Plymouth, Totnes. TQ95NA

Printed by: TQ Print & Design - 7 The Plains Totnes TQ9 5DR