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**PEOPLE'S MANIFESTO  
2022 - 2026**

 **Labour**  
SUNDERLAND

# A message from Labour Leader Graeme Miller



As we move out of this pandemic I have been heartened by the ability of communities to pull together and work for common good and the many volunteers have been an inspiration to us all in our time of need. That resilience, that co-operative spirit, the ability to fight for your community, must be encouraged and cultivated and play a key part in the rebuilding of this city in the years to come.

This pandemic has shown us what can be overcome as well as what can be achieved when we work together as communities, and we should look to build on this and move from simply collaboration to co-production. The many examples of community-led initiatives that have come forward over the last few years has given me renewed confidence that this is achievable, as we once again promote municipal socialism and working for the common good.

We must ensure there will be no return to the status quo – perhaps we can call it a “reframing” or a “new” normal, but it is clear that many residents now want more than just a say. They want to be actively involved in decisions that affect their lives and this must be embraced and become a reality as we move forward. This involvement starts here and now with Labour’s “People’s Manifesto” and I would personally like to thank the thousands of residents that have engaged with us in its production.

Though we have been abandoned by both Conservative and Liberal Democrats in government since 2010, this betrayal of responsibility has resulted in residents looking to the local council to take matters into Labour’s own hands and protect the most vulnerable against the impacts of national government failure. In 2018 the Labour Party in its manifesto set out an initial vision of how we intend to achieve just that and make a REAL difference to the lives of so many people in this city through its community wealth building programme.

I am proud that in so many areas of our manifesto we succeeded in delivering our promises, having a positive impact on the lives of many families; whether it be the steep decline in the number of workers on poverty pay, or perhaps benefiting from our success in becoming a social landlord and once again building council houses, or the new bylaws introduced at the request of residents to help clean up our streets and max out fines on fly-tipping. You may be positively affected by our commitment to becoming a carbon neutral city, or the priority of tackling food hunger – yes real hunger in this city caused by the failure of Universal Credit - or making our streets safer through more CCTV. We have achieved a great deal but think how much more could be done if we had a government that cared.

As leader of this council, I have ensured that the principles of being a co-operative council have been at the heart of decision making, ensuring that communities, whether at the heart of the old borough, or Washington or the Coalfield, sure we continue to embrace these principles. That we continue to celebrate all that is good in a diverse society that cares for the homeless and those suffering poverty, that cares for those in ill health or those fleeing domestic violence. To be a true city of sanctuary.

This manifesto has been developed over many months through consultation with every member of the Labour Party and our sister party – Sunderland Co-operative Party - which shares our values and principles, as well as many thousands of residents across communities - Washington – Sunderland – Coalfield. Municipal Socialism is at its heart as we further develop our community wealth building strategy and continue to tackle poverty in this city all and any means. Though we have achieved much, there is still more we can do on our journey to ensure opportunity and prosperity for all our residents and make sure no one is left behind.



Leader, Sunderland City Council

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# Regenerating our city

## Revitalising our manufacturing base

Labour has ensured our city is on the move with investment flowing into Sunderland at a rate never before seen. More than £1.5 billion of external funding has already been committed to our city within the lifetime of this manifesto. This is all part of our strategy to bring **more and better jobs** to the city.

Whether it be the £100m investment from Legal & General into the city centre's Riverside Sunderland development, Envision AESC's new £450m Gigafactory supporting Nissan's £1bn EV hub, or the near £100m investment planned in 5G - making Sunderland the most **advanced digital city** in the country - it is clear that we are the place that employers now wish to invest.

Labour will build further upon this success to broaden the city's advanced manufacturing capabilities into the **green economy**, including modern methods of construction in housing and maximising the opportunities planned at Riverside Sunderland.



### Revitalising our city centre

Changing shopping habits mean that high streets across the country are in decline. We cannot wait for the government to resolve this national trend and therefore Labour is taking steps to **reignite our City Centre** with new developments.

Labour has realigned the council's capital programme to support our strategy of getting things done – **Bold Vision** - with plans that will completely transform Sunderland city centre, doubling the population (from 2,500 to 5,000) beginning with the new Vaux housing neighbourhood and Expo, showing the world what can be achieved to ensure homes are carbon neutral and eco-friendly as possible. Our plans will also see an additional 8-10,000 new jobs based in and around the city centre.

Labour will **bring our historical buildings to life**, creating exciting new business spaces that will attract more new jobs to Sunderland. The Music, Arts & Culture Quarter (MACQ) is emerging as the city's cultural heart, adjacent to Riverside Sunderland and close to the famous Empire Theatre.

Labour's plans include:

- Neighbouring the restored **Old Fire Station**, our city's new £11 million, 450-seat Auditorium is now open, complementing the Empire Theatre's offer.
- At nearby **Keel Square**, the £18 million, 120-bed Holiday Inn hotel is currently under construction.
- **Mackie's Corner** is a thriving hub, with successful niche businesses such as Sweet Petite and Fat Unicorn.
- The **Athenaeum building** is being turned into a gallery and studio space for artists.
- The former **Hills bookshop** at Waterloo Place is being converted into space for creative and independent businesses.
- A £3 million refurbishment project has seen the former **Wear Commissioners building** reopened as prestigious city centre office space.
- Historic **Elephant Tearooms** has reawakened as a Local History Library.
- The upgrading of **St Mary's Boulevard** into a stylish new main street
- **Culture House** will provide a new community hub, that will attract people to Sunderland
- A new **pedestrian and cyclist crossing** will connect both sides of the river
- Improvements to our **Train Station** will deliver an attractive welcome point to those entering the city by rail or Metro.

Taken together, this represents an **unprecedented level of investment** which will help to attract more shoppers, more employees and more residents all spending more money locally, creating a virtuous cycle as part of our successful Community Wealth Building (CWB) programme.

### Becoming a Smart City

In 2018, Labour made a commitment to begin work ensuring our city is digitally connected and since then we have taken great steps and are already **delivering ultra-fast, free 5G Wi-Fi in key areas of the city** providing an enhanced offer to residents, businesses and visitors.

Fibre works commencing with CityFibre, Virgin Media and Netomnia are all **providing greater choice** and convenience for customers which will result in more cost-effective broadband packages.

Labour has already made a number of commitments relating to the development of 5G, including:

- Ensuring that the Joint Venture accelerates the delivery of digital infrastructure across the city, ensuring over 95% coverage by 2026
- Technology start-ups being well-established within the city, with the goal of 500 new start-ups well on the way to being achieved.

Labour is delivering on a range of other major **transformational projects** such as:

- Assistive technologies - such as smart video sensor devices, smart building solutions, e-mobility - helping people can stay in their homes
- The first private 5G network operational in the city enabling delivery of the automated logistics pilot at Nissan/Vantec
- Working to develop digital technology start-ups within the city as well as developing a city-wide Internet of Things network and a 5G Neutral Host Joint Venture Partner.

We are also working with Sunderland College and the University of Sunderland to **develop digital careers**, focusing on curriculum development, working with industry to fulfil job creation opportunities and the search for a partner to work with children and young people to raise aspirations as to careers in digital and support pathway development.



### Developing better housing

Labour kept its promise to residents back in 2018 and we are proud that the council - after 20 years - is once again a **Social Landlord**, building social housing for rent, 40 years on from the last house it constructed.

Labour has also been committed to **improving housing and management standards** in the private rented sector including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and has, through the council, commissioned Shelter to support residents with their housing advice needs and improving the standard of housing.

We are also committed to **reducing the number of empty properties** and have a current commitment to bring 362 back into use as family homes. In bringing these properties back to life, Labour aims to create superb accommodation, with attractive fixed fittings to ensure the final product is aspirational. From empty shells, to comfortable, modern properties, our work is transforming streets from the outside and changing the lives of the residents who step into their beautiful new home.

We are building 95 new homes – **providing supported accommodation** and, as properties designed for our vulnerable residents, we raise the bar again. Almost every one of our bungalows (for example at Cork Street in Hendon) will be fully equipped with assistive technology and 5G provision, enabling residents to live independently for longer, with support to raise their quality of life.

These are **life-changing additions** to the community and enable us to better support people who need help most.

- Like Cork Street, our bungalows at Albert Place are Category 3 compliant, with 5G provision – again ensuring that those who live there enjoy a home that is custom-built to meet their needs
- Boulton Terrace bungalows for our older residents enjoy 5G access – something that fits with Sunderland's Smart City ambitions, ensuring we connect and enable our people
- 117 new-build bungalows will be delivered across the city through the Housing Delivery and Investment Plan
- Only a year into the programme, the number of homes (of all kinds) acquired, built or under construction was already over 100.

Our city's drive to carbon neutrality will also be supported by **our sustainable dwellings**. We work hard to ensure that the homes we build are designed with the environment in mind. And it's not just about the in-built features of the home, but about enabling residents to reduce their carbon footprint when they move in. That's why our homes feature smart devices that help people who live there to reduce energy consumption – not only keeping bills down but helping the planet in the process.

In all, £59m of investment will deliver **our housing vision** by 2025 through the Housing Delivery and Investment Plan, already supporting 51 local suppliers/businesses, as part of our community wealth programme.

We're working with a range of local artists to ensure the creative sector in the city also benefits from the plan. Labour will be commissioning a range of stunning sculptures and public art, that will stand among some of our new developments, to ensure **we create attractive communities residents can be proud to call home**.

### Expanding our Culture and Tourism Offer

Labour will continue to **expand our cultural offer**, so that Sunderland continues to be the acknowledged destination of choice, whether it be across the Culture Quarter, new city centre, Washington, Houghton and Hetton – ensuring we become an all-age friendly city.

Our **tourism recovery plan** is now in place working toward increasing visitor footfall within Sunderland and restoring visitor and business confidence following the pandemic. The need to deliver and coordinate high-quality events throughout the year with partners will be critical to ensure Sunderland remains an attractive events city.

We will continue to review and re-design Sunderland's event programme in line with residents' expectations and aspirations, as well as **attract new world class events** into the city such as the Tour series professional cycling and revitalise existing ones too.

We worked with partners to launch the new **mysunderland.co.uk** platform. This is a key part of the city's efforts to market the 'attractiveness' of Sunderland and was timed to drive forward the city's economic recovery following Covid. We will also encourage the Heritage Partnership to expand as a formal partnership and open up funding opportunities.

We launched a new tourism campaign, '**City of Surprises**', aiming to raise Sunderland's profile as a destination of choice this summer and to support the economic recovery of the city. The campaign showcases Sunderland's unique mix of city, coast and green spaces and highlights some of our sometimes-hidden gems, challenging perceptions about what Sunderland has to offer both visitors and residents. We are also supporting the city's independent businesses, with an increased focus on promotion, to ensure they are able to bounce back from the challenges of the pandemic and play their part in making Sunderland a more attractive visitor destination.

Labour will build on the above with further **impactful campaigns**, particularly looking at bringing the city plan to life and focussing on key sectors for Sunderland. We will also ensure residents are well informed about economic developments in the city and linked to the opportunities offered by them.

Other key projects Labour will bring to completion during the lifetime of this manifesto include:

**Culture House** - £28m project that, in 2024, will create a library to be proud of - the most advanced in the UK - bringing local studies and archive collections to life for the benefit of all residents and a focus on family learning – spaces for meeting – making – creating – learning – all in one place

**Crowtree Place** – The development of a new commercial leisure development on the site of the former leisure centre

**Community Bridge** - A new high-level 'smart bridge' that will connect both sides of the river, featuring light installations and VR to deliver engaging experiences for pedestrians and cyclists that cross it

**Riverside Park** - Transformation of Galley's Gill into a superb landscape park, and new green spaces in the heart of the city

**Elmore Country Park** – Undertaking a community-led development of the site to deliver a mix of passive/organised leisure activities as well as a co-operative/social enterprise element supporting adults with learning difficulties.



# Section 1: Key objectives 2022 – 2026

## Key objectives 2022 – 2026

In addition to existing commitments, following our consultation with residents Labour will deliver on the following priorities:

1. Manufacturing - A key objective of developing our manufacturing economy will be to ensure it is focused on green technology and we will bring forward an action plan on how this will be achieved
2. The Internet of Things (IoT) and 5G – We will ensure ALL residents benefit, ensuring there is no digital divide within the city by undertaking commitments to combat digital poverty as outlined in section 4 of this manifesto
3. More and better social housing will be achieved through:
  - a. Upscaling our current social housing delivery targets so by 2026 we will be increasing our council housing stock at the rate of 250 units per year. We need this ambitious target for social housing over the next four years to give people hope
  - b. Leading the way as a social landlord and setting the standards required for homes in the city for future generations, looking to other providers to follow our example
  - c. Taking steps to ensure our council stock now and in the future is safe from ever being able to be sold to private individuals or providers again. Ensuring the city always has a baseline of its own social housing stock, meeting the needs of residents across the city for generations to come
  - d. To aggressively purchase private housing stock where there is an absentee landlord and properties are in disrepair
  - e. To have plans in place to upscale further where financial support is obtained from a future Labour government
4. Supporting the private rented sector, which will be achieved through:
  - a. Reviewing Environmental Health services to address issues around run-down properties and absent landlords quicker, more efficiently with tougher enforcement action on landlords whose properties are not up to the required set standard
  - b. Providing financial support and assistance for landlords willing to engage and complete required update work on their properties
  - c. Improving links and a focus to drive publicity for more to sign up to the existing landlord accreditation scheme
  - d. Nurturing the development of a Private Tenant's association across the city
5. Developing a local construction co-operative – expanding our social housing stock will result in increasing employment opportunities and trade for local people and businesses. We intend to harness this and ensure local workers get all the benefits of the regeneration of this city through developing a local construction co-operative, employing local people to work with us side-by-side
6. Ensuring Carbon Neutrality in future building developments - looking at the wider development of erecting new buildings - whether in Washington, Coalfield or Sunderland – as they too cannot escape the need for efficiency as we build for the coming era of carbon neutrality. We will ensure that we develop Passivhaus-equivalent performance (especially the requirement that space heating should need no more than 15 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> pa) a planning approval condition for all new buildings. Developers who claim to achieve this performance without fully adopting Passivhaus should be required to (1) demonstrate that their plans will achieve this, (2) pay for a post-occupancy energy audit

7. **Enhancing of our culture and tourism offer through** further development of public realm to attract visitors / local residents and businesses, having a direct impact on local economy through:
  - a. Effective advertising, communicating more effectively and shouting louder
  - b. Leaflet drops to let residents know what is going on in the city
  - c. Invest in public spaces in communities, from our pocket parks through to larger spaces such as Silksworth Ski Slope and Thompson Park
  - d. Support the strong desire from our public consultation for:
    - i. more live concerts and the number of venues whether you live in Washington, Coalfield or Sunderland
    - ii. better lighting around our monuments such as Penshaw monument
8. Introducing a children's culture offer, similar to Labour's national 'ten by ten', listing ten opportunities the city's children should access by the age of ten.



# An inclusive local economy

## Keeping Sunderland's wealth local

In 2018 Labour began working with the Centre for Local Economic Studies (CLES) to develop our municipal socialist programme through a distinctive **community wealth building** project, receiving national recognition as being unique in developing wealth in terms of social outcomes as well as economic.

The programme is demonstrably improving the lives of residents and communities. Labour has ensured that a key CWB objective has been to prioritise spend with local suppliers. This pledge has led to the council recording its highest local spend ever recorded - at £122m - up a massive £42.9m on 2013 when the council started compiling its records. By spending with local businesses, we are **circulating the "Sunderland Pound"** in Sunderland, creating jobs and opportunities for people and businesses in the city.

The overall third party spend in Sunderland stands at 40% and within the region at 68.5% in the 2020-21 financial year. We do have ambition to continue this **positive progress** even further, so that by 2026 even more of that Sunderland pound is circulating in the local economy. Labour is now working with **anchor institutions** such as our health partners, the University and College, Gentoo and others to consider how procurement activity is best used to support local economic activity and put in place a city-wide CWB strategy.

## Getting more from social value

In addition to the Sunderland pound, Labour has been at the forefront of using **Social Value** legislation to ensure we get the most out of commissioning arrangements and that contractors actively recruit locally, with employees paid a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

So, for example during the **Redevelopment of Parsons Depot**, Esh Construction Ltd committed to £5,560,208 worth of social value, including:

- 55 local people to be employed on the project, with two further FTEs ringfenced to local long-term unemployed
- 52 weeks training to be offered to those working on the scheme (to be recorded on their BTEC, City & Guilds, NVQ, HNC Qualifications)
- 150 weeks of Apprenticeships supported by Esh or their sub-contractors.
- 100 days (10x2 weeks attendance) work experience opportunities to local school/college students.

Procurement activity undertaken over the past two years has secured social value **community benefit targets** totalling a massive £166 million.

We intend to move further with social value as there is a demand – particularly from the social enterprise/co-operative sectors - for greater emphasis being placed on the additional social benefits from contracts. So, for example, we will work with anchor institutions to launch a **Community Wealth Charter**, which focuses on procurement and resident financial resilience, the real living wage, low carbon practices and the environment, as well as the health and wellbeing of workers.

Labour has ensured that a VCS Alliance has also been established, working with the council and wider anchors to ensure they commission the VCS to support **neighbourhood delivery of services**. We will therefore commit to increase social value through procurement and wider activity, ensuring a systematic approach for awarded contracts to link with local VCS to ensure greater impact for residents.

### Building a democratic & community-focused economy

To realise Labour's aspirations to improve our communities, we must not 'manage' but instead 'transform' our local economy. As part of our CWB strategy, we need to support **forms of economic ownership and activity** that are community focused, democratic and that create and retain wealth in the city; this is at the heart of our municipal socialist vision.

As a starting point, Labour - over many years - has ensured that we have a reputation as a leader in **developing social enterprise**, with the number of Community Interest Companies (CICs) in Sunderland standing at/totalling 187 in July 2021 – the highest number and also growing at the fastest rate in the whole of the North East.

Labour has already committed to go further in developing an inclusive economy through partnering with the North East Business Innovation Centre (BIC) in delivering its '**Innovate for Good**' project, with plans underway to enable three new cohorts of businesses to take part. This programme has attracted national and international interest and builds on examples such as Bishopwearmouth Nursery, PopRecs, Elemore and more recently Grace House.

To truly transform our economy, we also need to promote **democratic control** of the local economy as a goal and look to significantly expand this sector, both within the VCS network, but also as part of the wider economy.

### On the side of Sunderland's workers

Labour will continue to support the **rights of working people** in Sunderland by working with the TUC in promoting trade union recognition with employers and as a social value outcome in local purchasing.

Labour will further expand our proposed charter and seek other anchor institutions and employers to adopt it – providing a **gold standard for local employers** to work towards. By doing so we will make increasing job quality a key part of the conversation when pursuing local economic development opportunities.

Labour will ensure the council continues not to request staff work to zero hours contracts and we will apply this principle to our purchasing policies as far as legally possible. Neither will we engage with organisations involved in **illegal blacklisting** activities.

Labour has also ensured that the council will rigorously apply the Co-operative Party **Modern Slavery Charter** in addition to applying the principles of the Fair Tax Charter to ensure companies pay their fair share in tax.

### Fair pay for a day's work

Labour has ensured that our council has paid the REAL living wage (RLW) to its workers since 2014 and, following our commitment in our last manifesto became in 2020 the **first council accredited with the Living Wage Foundation** in the North East of England.

In 2018, 22.8% of the workers in Sunderland earned less than the RLW and to tackle poverty pay we made a commitment to use whatever means available to ensure residents in work would benefit from higher wages. These actions have resulted in a **year-on-year drop in poverty wages** in this city – so that by 2020 it stood at 16.1%, well below the national and regional averages – making Sunderland 1st out of all the North East's 12 local authorities – the impact is very real.

The journey has not finished though, and we will work tirelessly with anchors and businesses across the city to develop a Living Wage City Action Plan, encouraging all employers in Sunderland to ensure their staff benefit from the RLW and become the first **REAL Living Wage City** in the North East.

## Section 2: Key objectives 2022 – 2026

### Key objectives 2022 – 2026

In addition to existing commitments, following our consultation with residents Labour will ensure:

1. We further develop our commitment to becoming a Real Living Wage city through ensuring:
  - a. Options such as a business rate reduction are explored for any accredited Real Living Wage Employer
  - b. Workers employed on service contracts will continue to earn the RLW, phasing in the requirement for companies themselves to also be accredited real living wage employers by no later than 2026, being sector specific in prioritisation of this commitment
  - c. Payment of accreditation fees for the first three years for any Sunderland based employer that has committed to becoming an accredited RLW employer
  - d. A commitment that partnerships and joint ventures the council enters into moving forward will require payment of the RLW to its workers
  - e. Funding to the VCS network will be linked to being an accredited RLW employer and for this to be implemented no later than 2024
  - f. Any support package provided to new or existing Sunderland based employers, in addition should be linked to a commitment to paying their workers the RLW
2. An objective of doubling of the co-operative sector within the lifetime of the manifesto, where necessary supported by a dedicated co-operative development unit. To also link co-operative development to area committees through communities taking control of local assets to become community co-operatives.
3. As part of this wider impact on the local economy we will make a commitment within this manifesto to put in place further advancements in procurement and wider use of social value to help stimulate economic growth through:
  - a. Reviewing procurement systems to ensure an average of 65% of procurement contracts are with local employers and 80% regionally by the end of the manifesto period, as more local spend means more local enterprise and more jobs for local residents. This will also strengthen and expand the SME sector and keep more of the “Sunderland Pound” in Sunderland
  - b. Doubling the number of apprenticeships and, where appropriate, stipulate employment of local residents who are long term unemployed/NEET as part of the contract terms. This commitment should also form the basis of any partnership and joint ventures and supportive package to new and existing employers
  - c. Spot-checking contract compliance in relation to commitments by employers for workers to have regular hours as part of the TUC Great Jobs agenda and ensuring they have robust systems in place in relation to combatting modern day slavery
  - d. Review the council planning framework to ensure minimum levels of social value in any development (in addition to S106 etc) and level of carbon footprint associated with developments.
4. Insourcing will be the model of choice except where social outcomes are more advantageous (for example co-operative/social enterprise development or communities taking over local assets). We will therefore ensure the social outcomes of any proposed service delivery are rigorously tested to ensure the most advantageous social outcomes for local residents



5. In recognition of changing patterns of retail shopping, we will prioritise the council's Business Investment Team (BIT) taking a flexible approach to attracting independent traders/local businesses into the city centre. In addition, also recognising that with more people working from home there is a need for sustaining and further developing local retail shopping within communities
6. "Access for all" must be at the forefront of all regeneration plans and projects within the city. Consulting and working with groups, including the Youth Parliament and Ageing Well Board and Ambassadors. Remaining up-to-date and mindful of groups with specific needs when it comes to access and development of regeneration proposals
7. Exploring the development of a regionally-based mutual bank of Northumbria and/a wealth fund to support local enterprises that have difficulty obtaining support from the traditional banking sector
8. Campaign rigorously for the government to provide decent sick pay and oppose any attempts to water-down existing employment rights
9. Restructuring council directorates so our key strategy for community wealth building sits within distinct social and economic directorates. This will ensure the various pillars of our CWB strategy work under clear officer and political leadership
10. In recognition of the commitment by council workers during the Covid pandemic that we will look to the introduction of a permanent additional day annual leave designated as Sunderland's "Key Worker Day" and ask other employers to consider a similar proposal moving forward.



# A cleaner & greener city

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## Becoming a cleaner city

Labour wants a **clean city** where our streets and public spaces are free from litter, fly-tipping, graffiti, dog fouling, vandalised or damaged street furniture and signs. We have therefore ensured that around £5 million additional resources have been provided as part of our Covid Recovery Action Plan, to ensure our streets and the city centre are clean.

Labour has recently invested additional resources into the Neighbourhood Cleansing and Enforcement Team to tackle issues of anti-social behaviour and environmental crime. Indeed, since 2019 we have employed an **additional 81 environmental staff** supporting our communities through keeping them clean and issuing fines against those caught undertaking such anti-social behaviour.

Labour wants to give the council more powers to combat fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviours and, following your agreement, these are now in place. Our new public space protection order (PSPO) now allows greater actions against dog fouling through to **maxing out on fines** for fly-tipping.

This is all in addition to the work undertaken by our area committees to **keep their communities tidy**.

Labour has also ensured that we have **good quality beaches**, attractive, tidy and green open spaces, well-kept parks and cemeteries, and policies which promote sustainability and ensure the protection and management of the natural environment.

Labour will continue to support residents and communities in caring for their local environment and, from **litter picks** through to taking over the running of community assets where there is a wish to do so. We plan to do more through:

- providing resources to ensure estates receive an annual deep clean to get rid of the grime and dirt that accumulates over time
- utilise year-on-year funding from the capital allocation for asset management on an annual painting and repair programme with an emphasis on street furniture and signs in the city centre.

### Becoming a greener city

Labour is striving for Sunderland to become a **greener city**, putting in place, as part of our municipal socialist programme, steps that will provide a landscape so that our grandchildren will be proud of the decisions we have made. That is why we ensured a key aspect of the Council Core Strategy and Development Plan' (CSDP) was adopted in January 2020 ensuring that the right type of development is focused in the right places to meet the needs of local people and businesses, prioritising first the development of brownfield sites.

We have also taken steps to **eliminate the pesticides killing off our bees** and other pollinators, not an easy step to take, but one we must. We are also now undertaking pilot trials of introducing wildflowers and re-wilding areas and over the lifetime of this manifesto these will become ever more visible across the city.

We will look to identify areas of the city where, with the help of residents, we can look to planting **community orchards** or in more urban areas, pocket streets, back lanes and parks where there is limited space, ensuring they are full of colour and life.

We will look to replicate the great work undertaken at Elemore to put in place a **new series of parks** linking passive and more organised recreation, supporting local plants and wildlife. This will start with a proposed new Great Northern Country Park along the outskirts of our city's northern border.

This will not be ad hoc, but part of a **co-ordinated biodiversity plan** that we will put in place for the lifetime of this manifesto.



### Becoming a carbon neutral city

Following on from declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, we have worked tirelessly to put in place an action plan to become a **carbon neutral council by 2030**. To achieve this, we introduced an annual £1m climate change fund, opposed by both the Tories and Lib Dems, to help support our commitments.

Labour has already proven its ambition to take a lead within the region, being committed to developing **renewable energy generation** and storage, and renewable/district heating schemes such as:

- Exploring solar farm and wind turbine potential by identifying sites within the city
- Continuing to develop and install new/additional PV panels on council buildings and expanding the development of energy storage potential
- Looking to develop a micro grid and renewables at Riverside Sunderland and North East Washington as initial pilots.

Labour will improve energy efficiency of existing homes and buildings and infrastructure and work towards **zero carbon for new homes** and buildings through:

- Delivery of the first major carbon free housing scheme at Willowfield
- Beginning to build new homes which are carbon neutral
- Expanding our successful LED lighting programme into parks and associated buildings and traffic signals etc
- Ensuring that planning applications are meeting low carbon design standards.

Labour will develop **low carbon and active transport** modes such as walking, cycling, rail, Metro, electric and innovative technologies for buses and private vehicles, and help make public transport a more attractive choice through:

- Piloting a programme (where residents wish) to restrict through-traffic access to some streets to encourage people to walk
- Developing our new EV Hub at Parsons
- Preparing a Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys
- Continuing to engage with Nexus and the bus operators to encourage take up of low/zero carbon buses
- As part of our community wealth building programme, encouraging local suppliers to use local suppliers and reduce the need for excessive transport.

Labour will grow the city's green economy, and engage with businesses to **work towards environmental sustainability** through:

- Encouraging investment in and adoption of low carbon technologies such as ground and air source heat pumps
- Targeting green economy businesses as part of our inward investment approach.

We will reduce the volume of all consumption and waste and increase opportunities to **reuse materials and recycle waste** wherever possible through:

- Investigating using food waste for anaerobic digestion to provide energy and developing a plan for weekly kerbside food collection by 2023
- Playing our part in a new national deposit return scheme to be implemented by 2025
- Developing local food growing - increasing the number of allotment plots and community gardens.

We will work closely with residents in the effective roll out of new collection systems and methods that will have a positive impact on recycling across the city.



## Section 3: Key objectives 2022 – 2026

### Key objectives 2022 – 2026

In addition to existing commitments, following our consultation with residents Labour will ensure:

1. We become a cleaner city through:
  - a. Introducing a city-wide strategy of controlling litter and fly-tipping with a major deployment of CCTV cameras and drones, complementing the good work undertaken by Area Committees
  - b. Providing resources to ensure estates receive an annual deep clean to get rid of the grime and dirt that accumulates over time
  - c. Utilising year-on-year funding from the capital allocation for asset management on an annual painting and repair programme with an emphasis on street furniture and signs in the city centre
  - d. Looking to engage with our main partners such as Gentoo to coordinate activities on our estates, working together to keep them clean and tidy and ensuring robust tree management is in place
  - e. Introduce a free bulky waste collection service and a replacement bin if stolen
  - f. Incorporating a GPS tracker into all bins issued by the council, to ensure they can be recovered if stolen
  - g. Supporting struggling families with replacement bins and a free brown bin service if they are in receipt of benefits.
2. We become a greener city through:
  - a. Implementing more tree planting and tree preservation orders, and promoting green roofs on buildings and planting in pedestrianised areas of the city
  - b. Improving the environment following the banning of the use of pesticides through developing a major expansion of wildflower beds and community orchards and pocket streets, back lanes and parks for areas in city with limited space. Making best-use of even the smallest space for people to enjoy
  - c. Increasing tree/wildflower planting on roundabouts and verges
  - d. Providing funding within the 2022/23 financial year to allow trialling of differing methods of street cleaning and weed removal from our streets/paving without use of pesticides, with a view to full roll-out of alternative methods in 23/24 financial year and beyond
  - e. Replicating the great work undertaken at Elemore to put in place a new series of parks linking passive and more organised recreation, supporting local plants and wildlife. This will start with a proposed new Great Northern Country Park along the outskirts of our city's northern border
  - f. Ensuring existing and proposed commitments are incorporated within a city-wide biodiversity plan to be put in place for the lifetime of this manifesto that we can be judged upon.

3. To go beyond our existing targets for becoming carbon neutral via a series of additional measures due to the urgency described in the recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) so that we avoid the worst consequences of global warming. These additional measures will include:
  - a. Putting a plan in place to develop a major expansion of local small-scale community and cooperatively owned renewable energy schemes
  - b. Accelerating and managing the shift to electric vehicles by a step change in their use through;
    - i. Ensuring more free or low cost EV charging points placed on council public buildings
    - ii. Developing a major expansion of high-speed EV charging points across the city so by 2026 we have the most comprehensive charging network of any major UK city of a similar size
    - iii. Providing free parking for EV vehicles 24/7 in all council car parks
  - iv. 12-month interest free loan for home installation of dropped kerbs and put in place an action plan to ensure accessibility for homeowners with no designated parking at their property
  - v. Putting arrangements in place so that all new-builds (residential and industrial) have electric charging points installed as standard as part of any planning approval
- c. Working with Nexus to develop a fully integrated transport system that will help meet our carbon reduction targets through:
  - i. Ensuring that all subsidised public transport is carbon neutral by 2026
  - ii. Bus franchising arrangements being put in place to take control routes and timetables, ensuring better links with Washington and Coalfield
  - iii. Consulting on increasing the number of bus shelters
  - iv. Developing a free circular bus service to allow the greater pedestrianisation of the city centre and introduction of dedicated cycle lanes
- v. Continuing to press the government for support to the extension of the Metro to Washington
- vi. In relation to planning, adopting much higher standards for efficiency through our planning strategies and insisting that new buildings comply with them through adopting the Passivhaus standards as a necessary requirement for planning approval. Amending the Local Plan where necessary to require all new residential and commercial properties to be 'net zero'
- vii. Putting in place a plan of major investment into active transport with the goal of creating a fully interconnected, properly segregated cycle network. Including a network of safe places to leave your bike!
- viii. Seeking urgent government funding to support residents in retrofitting their homes to conserve energy due to the significant costs involved in such conversions.

# Working with our communities

Labour continues to do what it can to **support struggling families** in this city ranging from more than 30,000 residents supported through our council tax support scheme or those accessing reduced, or no cost council services, such as the recent reintroduction of free pest control.

## Have your say – Let's Talk

In 2018 Labour made a commitment to ensure that we would continue to **work with our communities** and progress with our plans to devolve decision-making to residents, as they are best-placed to know the priorities for their communities; residents working together on projects and ideas that make their neighbourhoods more exciting and enjoyable places.

This was partly achieved through our newly appointed community development workers, but also through the largest consultation exercise this city has ever seen – our Let's Talk initiative – that saw around 155,000 residents consulted (around 60% of the population engaged) on priorities for their communities and then developed into **five neighbourhood plans** – carrying out YOUR priorities. Most recently these have led to:

What YOU asked for through Let's Talk	YOUR neighbourhood plan 2020/21
Coalfield area - you asked for more support for young people and supporting local heritage	We have allocated £97,000 on a two-year youth support project and £100,000 for local heritage sites including the Stephenson trail and an iconic mining statue
Sunderland East - you asked for safer roads and enhancements to local parks	We have allocated near £215,000 to reduce speeding in speeding hot spots and £205,000 for new bins, benches, paths signage to your parks
Sunderland North - you asked for more CCTV coverage to combat anti-social behaviour and more environmental enforcement officers	We have allocated £200,000 for advanced CCTV cameras across multiple locations in the area and £110,000 for an additional environmental officer and resources to reduce littering and fly-tipping
Sunderland West - you asked for more activities for young people and support basic skills and digital learning for residents	We have allocated £210,000 for new play equipment and youth sessions in addition to a three-year £100,000 project to improve digital skills and reduce social isolation
Washington - you asked for more neighbourhood enforcement and support for young people	We have allocated £193,000 to tackle fly-tipping, litter and anti-social behaviour. In addition, allocated £172,000 to support children and young people across Washington





Our **Let's Talk framework** is now used for all resident consultation undertaken by your council:

- Let's Talk Sunderland
- Let's Talk Housing
- Let's Talk Physical Activity
- Let's Talk Digital
- Let's Talk Culture House etc.

**Your community – your decision**

We have embraced social media through setting up Area Committee Facebook pages and they are all now actively followed by thousands of residents so that you are aware of local events, activities and support available. We also **launched a resident's survey** in the autumn to better understand what our residents and communities see as key issues and how we can work to address them.

Now that our consultation systems are embedded, we need to look to next steps and that means how we, in real-time, allow residents to take actual decisions that affect their community. This already takes place in some limited areas such as planning, but we make the commitment that over the next four years this will be greatly expanded – **your community, your decision!**

New technology gives us the opportunity to have real-time communication and the ability to make decisions right down to local neighbourhoods. Labour intends to embrace this and therefore **develop a Sunderland App** that is more than just a tool to report problems but will allow residents to be consulted on decisions that affect their communities.

We also intend to ensure that residents are more informed about the work of the council and be proactive in providing support through a **proactive community information service** that can ensure communities are always just a click away from the most up-to-date information on what is happening in their community or if they need additional information and support.

**More power to area committees**

We will continue to look at delegating more powers and responsibilities to Area Committees to run more services as part of a programme of **devolving responsibilities away from the centre**. Though Area Committees continue to access Neighbourhood Funds and Neighbourhood Capital Programme, to enable delivery of your priorities - we have also ensured that they have influenced the allocation of the council's Parks and Green Open Spaces Capital Programme. We need to do more though, and step-change the level of decision-making at an area level.



### Supporting Volunteering in Our Community

During the pandemic this **city pulled together**, and many residents supported their neighbours. Council staff took time from normal duties and volunteered to support vulnerable residents.

Labour believes that this **community spirit** should not be lost, and the council has worked with these community volunteers to ensure they have further opportunities to continue volunteering and make things better for their communities.

We have therefore appointed **community development workers** in each of our five area committees to work with communities ranging from litter picks through to supporting the development of new organised groups such as the “friends” of Bunny Hill, Silksworth Park and Downhill Pond. As these groups develop, we will work with them and, if they so desire, Labour will look to support them taking over community assets to the benefit of their communities.

Labour also wishes to ensure that staff working for the council have an opportunity to support these local initiatives and we have therefore implemented another pledge to allow staff paid time off to work to volunteer and support the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in their communities. Examples of this range from volunteer walk leaders through to supporting children’s arts and craft sessions. We will continue to promote this as a way for **staff to get closer to our communities** and support their resilience to work together for the benefit of their neighbourhoods.

### A basic right to food

Labour has put in place a **food champion** to tackle food poverty, looking at ways we can support struggling families so that they have access to free or low-cost food, whether through our food banks or through our community shop initiative.

Labour has ensured that we have a well-established **hub of foodbanks** across the city to support residents who, due to deliberate government action, do not have the finances to feed their families. We have also supported those families unable to access foodbanks, so they do not go hungry. So, for example almost 12,000 **food parcels** were delivered, supporting over 22,000 people, during the Covid pandemic.

However, with little support expected from government, we need to do more and give a pledge as socialists that **everyone has the right to food**. We will therefore:

- Look to establish a new consumer-owned food cooperative using collective purchasing to reduce costs
- Fill the gap made by national government to ensure that holiday hunger is a thing of the past in this city
- Work with local schools and their volunteers so that children can access extra low-cost and free school breakfasts.

### Affordable credit and help with finances

Labour will continue our **financial inclusion** strategy of providing early and proactive support to individuals and households to reduce the harmful effects of government welfare reforms.

Labour has already taken steps to put in place a **city-wide credit union** – working in partnership with Moneywise - to bring an alternative to high-cost credit and loan sharks. To date around 1,000 members have signed up benefiting from its services that will be needed due to the cuts in benefits by this uncaring government.

We will continue to look at how we can do more to support families, such as the feasibility of developing a co-operative not-for-profit alternative to access affordable **ethical loans at fair market rates** to individuals and local businesses who may struggle to get finance from mainstream providers such as banks and building societies.

Labour has ensured that residents can access free **Financial Resilience Checks (FRC)** so they can identify and deal with underlying issues, maximise income/reduce outgoings, so as to increase resilience. We have been able to support 5,183 cases in the last financial year.

Labour continues to support benefit and debt advice through our **welfare rights programme** – supporting over 10,000 cases in the last financial year – with more expected this year following the cut in Universal Credit payments by this government.

Labour has also put in place support for residents at benefit and employment tribunals, where our welfare rights service has a 70%-80% success rate in overturning initial decisions by government agencies. Indeed, due to our success, Labour has increased staffing to **accommodate increased demand** by residents.

The 2020/21 financial year the services put in place by Labour through our council has been successful in bringing **£1,827,206.00 back to residents and the local economy**.

Labour has also supported families in need with **furniture and other white goods** and support to meet housing benefit shortfalls by around £700,000, due a failure by government to help those in need.

### Help with reduced energy bills

**Fuel poverty** is another scourge on society that has become increasingly important as residents struggle with their finances. It is vitally important too, due to the need to reduce carbon emissions.

Through our actions, we are having some success with fuel poverty levels having gone down in the city to around 9.2% of households overall. In part, this is due to the success of our **energy efficiency schemes** such as ECO and ECO flex.

Our ECO flex scheme went live from October 2020 and by May 2021 the value of both ECO and ECO flex applications were:

- **£862,451** Total Lifetime Savings (£314,685 for ECO flex only) from measures installed
- **£145,174.25** Total Utility funding from energy companies for ECO / ECO flex measure.

Fuel poverty, though falling, is still far too high and Labour will do more, accessing grants when available and where necessary providing **fuel vouchers** to those in need.

### Eliminating the digital divide

Labour has an ambitious plan to ensure everyone in the city – from Springwell Village and Washington through to Hetton and the Coalfield - has access to the **latest 5G technology** so that we will be at the forefront of new digital services and take a national lead. However, this will only be a success if we engage with residents and adopt solutions to eliminate digital poverty.

Labour will ensure that this takes place through:

- Developing an ageing well ambassador programme
- Providing free 5G Wi-Fi to all public buildings and spaces within the city
- Supporting a community/co-operative – partnership-based ISP to provide 5G services to those in need at an affordable rate.

This will enable our proposed new **Sunderland digital app** to take advantage of the capabilities of 5G and ensure real-time decision making is a possibility for ALL local residents.



## Section 4: Key objectives 2022 – 2026

### Key objectives 2022 – 2026

In addition to existing commitments, following consultation with residents Labour will ensure:

1. We make a step change in engagement with our communities through:
  - a. Development of a Sunderland digital app to allow real-time consultation and decision-making by residents on what really impacts on their communities
  - b. Proactive support and advice to communities through a digital community information service, ensuring communities are always just a click away from the most up-to-date information on what is happening in their community
  - c. Support to community hubs and other organisations that have developed during the Covid pandemic, so they can become key connection points between residents of all backgrounds, and support those who face all forms of disadvantage
  - d. Empowering and developing our “friends” and other community focused groups across the city so that communities are increasingly engaged, ensuring they receive the services and opportunities they need. Through this, communities will become more resilient over time and have the confidence to take over assets for the benefit of their residents
  - e. An ongoing review of Area Committees as part of a continuous programme of devolving responsibilities away from the centre
  - f. Exploring how we can further promote staff volunteering through a community linkage programme, so that staff can get closer to our communities, and it becomes embedded
  - g. Empowering residents taking over local assets and turning them into community parks run and maintained by the community.
2. We will support struggling families in the city through:
  - a. Working to ensure a right to food by:
    - i. Establishing a new consumer-owned food cooperative using collective purchasing to reduce costs
    - ii. Making a commitment to fill the gap made by national government to ensure that holiday hunger is a thing of the past in this city
    - iii. Working with local schools and volunteers to access extra low cost and free school breakfasts
    - iv. Putting in place a city action plan to support families moving away from food insecurity due to their dependency on food banks.

- b. Working to ensure affordable credit is available to struggling families through ongoing promotion of our credit union, but in addition looking to the provision of a not-for-profit vehicle for accessing affordable ethical loans at fair market rates to individuals and local businesses who may struggle to access finance from mainstream providers
- c. Working to reduce energy bills through more efficient homes, increased choice of energy, but in addition, looking to develop municipal and community production of energy to further reduce fuel poverty
- d. Working to eliminate digital poverty by:
  - i. Providing free 5G Wi-Fi to all public buildings and spaces within the city
  - ii. Looking to support a community/co-operative-based ISP to provide 5G services to those in need at an affordable rate.



# Improving residents' health & wellbeing

The **Impact of Poverty** in our communities, is greatly affecting our residents' health outcomes. Labour has chosen to support everyone in the city to have a safer, happier, and healthier lifestyle, where no one gets left behind. Everyone should have the choice and support to be the best they can be.

However, there are residents who do not engage due to circumstances outside of their control - a lack of education, skills or ill-health. Some are excluded due to lifestyle choices that have taken away their self-worth and dignity, which now precludes them from engaging with Public Health or the NHS at any level. We therefore aim to **change the way we engage with our residents**, to include them in the health decisions we make, even down to the effects of fly-tipping on their local community.

This is because **green spaces and mental health** are very closely linked, and we aim to make sure that our city is cleaner, greener and healthier for all.

We will work closely with our partners in the city, along with our VCS groups to deliver a healthy plan. When people have good jobs, with decent wages, better housing, green spaces to walk and meet in, and feel supported in their community, then much can be achieved. The circle of poverty is a difficult circle to break, but we are going to **aim high** and try to make all aspects of our society fairer.

## Reducing health inequalities

Approximately 10.5% of those who are classed as economically inactive are workless due to **long-term sickness** in Sunderland, much of which is linked to our historical reliance on heavy engineering, mining and ship-building.

Labour is aware that work to address health inequalities has a key role to play and therefore we are working with partners to **reduce health inequalities** and improve the health of the poorest the fastest, through a refreshed healthy city plan.

We have developed an integrated impact assessment combining equality, health, community wealth building and potential for sustainability into one impact analysis. This will give us a deeper understanding of our communities and how we can **support those most in need** moving forward.

Labour has also created a **new Financial Resilience Team**, set up with funding from public health to increase residents' financial resilience and wellbeing, as part of our programme to support mental health.

We will continue to support healthy, physically active lifestyles for all ages, with targeted intervention programmes in communities with the greatest need.

We will ensure the effective promotion of the **universal offer**, working with key delivery partners to ensure coverage of opportunities across the city.

Labour will support those most vulnerable in society including those impacted on by debt, by poor health, by the impacts of unemployment and disadvantage, by ensuring our approach to services is built upon a deeper understanding of our communities and how we can help those most in need both in terms of **socio-economic and health inequalities**. Social isolation from Covid also remains a key focus to ensure the wellbeing of all residents.



### Supporting self-care

Labour will continue to support self-care, taking steps to ensure more people are successfully managing their own health conditions by implementing a **Health in All Policies Approach** to develop a policy (and physical) environment that is supportive of prevention and self-care approaches, with a strong focus on health inequalities.

We are **enabling people** with care and support needs to have choice and control through ensuring rapid discharge from hospital, an extended range of short-term support services, as well as a mental health accommodation service to prevent future hospital admissions.

Self-care will also be supported by our co-ordinated approach to providing **Advice and Guidance** through a strong customer service network and approach. Health improvement advice is also offered via Sunderland Live Life Well function.

Labour continues to support adult social care services in **supporting people to remain independent** including new outreach services to complement existing day services in addition to introducing dedicated physio and OT teams to support care homes.

We have created an Assistive Technology Team to roll out **Technology Enabled Care** to complement care packages.

Labour has already agreed to take further action in **supporting self-care** through:

- Integration and co-ordination of approaches to social prescribing with partners
- Cross-system working to implement place-based arrangements for commissioning and providing health and social care, in addition to support for VSC organisations
- Implementation of Champion and Ambassador programmes to advocate on behalf of communities or groups
- Developing better understanding of community needs and aspirations by taking advantage of the Let's Talk consultation initiative
- Continuing to prioritise a person-centred and personalised approach to health and care. Alongside NHS partners, embedding a support pathway for people experiencing long-Covid.

### Supporting wellness

Labour is continuing to support **employee wellness programmes** to promote good health and wellbeing, with a Healthy Economy Working Group developing a programme of activity that will tackle:

- Workplace health - employers' role in improving employee health
- Healthy labour-force - the health of those in work and seeking work
- Employment in the health and social care sector - understanding and tackling recruitment issues and wider workforce opportunities.

Labour will continue to promote the **Better Health at Work Award** (BHAWA) that currently 37 businesses have achieved, which recognises the efforts of local employers in addressing health issues within the workplace. It is endorsed by Public Health England as an exemplar of good practice.

Regionally there are only three Local Authorities who have reached the highest level of this award and given **"Ambassador" status**, our council being one of them.

Over 90 businesses are now also actively involved within the wider Sunderland Workplace Health Alliance which aims to work collaboratively to **improve health and wellbeing** within the workplace.

### Ensuring Healthy Food & Nutrition

We will continue to encourage **local production of healthy food**, through our existing commitment to develop more community allotments and orchards, to promote good nutrition.

We will continue to **promote healthy eating** in schools and look to ways of continuing this during school closure periods through the active work of our food justice champion.

We also need to review the reliance of families on food bank usage in the city. This needs to be reduced and good eating taught with access to good fresh food as part of our belief in right of access to good food.

### Encouraging healthy exercise

Physical exercise can take a range of forms – it does not need to be the local gym – and we will ensure that a co-ordinated approach is taken ranging from our commitment to increase allotments, expansion of our guided (and non-guided) walks, and the use of ever-expanding green spaces.

Labour has therefore made a commitment to:

- Expand and enhance the opportunities for allotments
- Updating and extending playgrounds, play equipment and recreational facilities for younger citizens, to encourage a healthier active lifestyle
- Encouraging active sports through a plan of major investment into active transport with the goal of creating a fully interconnected, properly segregated cycle network as referenced in section 3 of this manifesto.

### Our recent health commitments

Some of our **recent commitments** include:

- The opening of a new nursing home in Ryhope
- A commitment to recruit additional social workers to improve transitions from children to adult services
- Further expanding the use of Personal Health Budgets
- Opening of the new day centre and bungalows in Cork Street, Hendon
- Completion of new day opportunities centre for people with learning disabilities
- The introduction of live-in care as a future option to meet need.



## Section 5: Key objectives 2022 – 2026

### Key objectives 2022 – 2026

In addition to existing commitments, following our consultation with residents, Labour will ensure:

1. We implement our five pledges to residents in relation to their health:
  - a. We will pledge to support all residents, to make our city flourish
  - b. We will ensure that we communicate, listen and act on information from our residents on health matters and council services
  - c. We will put our residents' mental and physical needs first, when designing, planning, and delivering council services
  - d. We will work hand-in-hand with Public Health and the National Health Service, to deliver tailor-made services with the expectation that our partners will adopt our policies and support the outcomes for our residents
  - e. We will leave no one behind, to improve learning, skills, mental and physical support. Everyone will be treated with respect and given the opportunity to succeed.
2. We will ensure greater opportunities for residents – from birth through to old age - to improve their health through:
  - a. Our Healthy Economy group to further develop opportunities for vulnerable people to access work experience and paid employment by ensuring businesses are encouraged to become Disability Confident employers and leaders and sign up to the Mental Health at Work Commitments
  - b. Social value opportunities, that expand job opportunities for vulnerable people, are maximised as outlined in section 1 of this manifesto
  - c. Expansion of options available for social prescribing, such as exploring provision of 12 months membership of leisure facilities and considering expansion to cover care workers and carers
  - d. Ensuring families have access to affordable nutritious food particularly during school holidays as referenced in section 3 of this manifesto.
- e. Ensuring accessibility - in all parts of the city –taking a more joined-up, proactive approach to ensure our city is disability friendly, for example through taking enforcement action where access to footpaths and dropped curbs are blocked or where employers are not complying with the equality act.



# Becoming a safer city

## Supporting the battle against violent crime

Through continued **partnerships and collaboration**, Labour will tackle violent crime through involvement with the Safer Sunderland Partnership Board and Community Safety Operational Group, the delivery plan of the latter encompassing priorities around crime, disorder, feelings of safety, domestic abuse, violent crime and community cohesion.

Labour will maintain its focus on tackling **Domestic abuse and violence** against women and girls (VAWG) and this will remain a key priority for the city. To date:

- We have established a Sunderland Domestic Abuse & Violence against Women and Girls Executive Board
- We are assessing how we can further support the needs of domestic abuse victims, and their children, who reside in safe accommodation
- We have approved a three-year strategy, informed by the needs assessment, for the provision of support in safe accommodation.

## Community safety

We will use both city-wide and local area problem-solving approaches in response to crime, **community safety** and cohesion issues through our four Local Multi Agency Groups (LMAPS) focusing on city-wide and local issues, involving problem-solving approaches including VLO (Victim, Location, Offender) and SARA (Scan, Analyse, Response, Assess).

Labour is also tackling **threats and harmful behaviour** that impact particularly on our most vulnerable people – such as modern-day slavery, sexual exploitation, fraud and financial crime, serious organised crime, cyber-enabled crimes and preventing violent extremism and radicalisation.

We also continue to work in partnership with the **Illegal Money Lending Team** to provide intelligence that will lead to the arrest and prosecution of loan sharks. For example, a proceeds of Crime Act Funding application has been made to work in raising awareness in a specific area of Southwick with our SARA partners.

Labour will also ensure the council continues to work closely and support the work of the IMLT to counter **illegal high-cost lending** as part of financial resilience and anti-crime activity.

## Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is an issue that impacts on many lives and exists in many forms including inappropriate behaviour of neighbours, public drinking and drug use, dog fouling, littering, fly-tipping, motorbikes as well as excessive speeding in our 20mph traffic zones.

Labour has prioritised action in these areas, taking a zero-tolerance approach to such behaviour including maxing out on the level of fines allowable under government legislation. Quarterly figures show a total of 244 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) with the total monetary value of £38,400.

To do more requires working with our partners, not just Northumbria Police, but schools and further education providers, businesses and the voluntary sector to both understand the causes of such behaviour and intervene to change it. A recent pilot in working in partnership – the Southwick Altogether Raising Aspirations (SARA) Project has shown the impact such partnership can bring and will be extended to other communities.

### Traffic Safety

Labour has developed a series of area-based **20mph zones** across the city and will continue to further develop this strategy moving forward, including the use of traffic calming measures and vehicle activated signs (VAS) to make our roads safer for residents.

We are also looking at a partnership with Northumbria Police to target the ASB of some drivers that refuse to keep within traffic speeds, putting our children and residents at risk.



## Section 6: Key objectives 2022 – 2026

### Key objectives 2022 – 2026

In addition to existing commitments, following consultation with residents, Labour will:

1. Produce an annual 'Respect Plan' for the city, detailing how the council and its partners will collaborate to tackle crime
2. Expand the successful SARA partnership project based in Southwick to many other parts of the city
3. Ensure additional safety of children and young adults through developing safe places for young people to meet up
4. Review how we can support the police through surveillance of ASB hot spots via more CCTV and use of drone technology
5. Look to create safer roads and streets through:
  - a. Adapting them to provide more pleasant conditions for walking and cycling, making streets safer to use for all. Where there is support from local residents this could include:
    - i. Introducing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and also looking to expand/enhance them as 'Healthy Streets'
    - ii. Supporting a ban on pavement parking with exceptions for marked parking bays
    - iii. The introduction of school streets to create car-free zones outside of our schools to ensure children's safety
  - b. Working with the police to establish additional Traffic Speed Protection Officers who will carry out speed checks on our 20mph and 30mph roads through a dedicated mobile traffic unit for our 20/30mph zones
  - c. Introduction of CCTV monitoring (voice enabled) in all underpasses so that pedestrians can feel safe, and anyone involved in ASB can be recorded
  - d. Improving road safety with the use of cameras and automatic fining techniques for those who speed and travel through bus only links
  - e. Where there is limited space for vehicles, looking at the feasibility of converting grass verges into car ports
  - f. Working with homeowners to bring unadopted roads up to a standard that will allow them to be adopted by the council and ensuring that the adoption of any proposed road network in future developments is a planning requirement and that the council is compensated.
6. Working with Nexus on ensuring safer lighting around Metro stations such as the Stadium of Light and ensuring availability of Metro/buses later into the evening when the public feel most at risk
7. Working with Northumbria Police on establishing a permanent police presence in Washington, Coalfield and Sunderland city centre that can be accessed by local residents.





Train destination

Airport

M

1

St. Peter's

Information board with text and graphics

# Promoting education & skills

Labour has ensured that our education and children's services have been provided with resources, vision and leadership, such that the service has been **recognised by Ofsted as Outstanding** – One of only four Local Authorities in the north and the only one in the whole country to make the leap from Inadequate to Outstanding. Ofsted concluded that we are “making a real difference to children's lives”.

## Opportunity for all

The commitment of Labour to ensure **opportunity for all** is unrelenting as we strive for continuous improvement in services to our children, inclusive of educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for the most vulnerable. Examples of this work include:

- Ensuring a personal education plan (PEP) is in place for all pupil premium children
- Supporting those not in education employment or training (NEET) with increased use of personal advisors
- A Link school that incorporates an all through approach in newly refurbished buildings
- Development of an assessment hub aimed at reducing the number of permanent exclusions by schools within the city
- Access to early years high quality education and childcare from a mixed economy of providers.

Labour has continued to encourage greater **collaboration between schools** and other education providers and businesses through:

- Our education, training and employability online directory launched back in May 2020
- Developing links with employers including Esh Group, Everyone Active and Gentoo, with plans to expand this further by taking forward the Care Leaver Covenant and Disability Confident Agenda to develop realistic EET opportunities.

## Enhancing achievement and skills

It is crucial that our residents (especially young people) obtain the necessary educational **achievement and skills** required to ensure they have the competitive edge to succeed in the modern world and not be left behind and to ensure they can benefit from jobs created in Sunderland.

Labour has therefore continued to support businesses and individuals in improving skills to boost competitiveness and aid career progression and has set up an **Education and Skills Smart City Working Group** to help support more residents into higher education to gain digital skills, as we gear up leading the rest of the UK in digital technology and digital start-ups.

## Family Learning

Our Family and Community Learning (FACL) Team continues to focus on **supporting parents and carers** to be able to assist their children with schoolwork. It also supports people with confidence, skills and knowledge to get back into volunteering or work.

However, we will take further steps to ensure that **family learning** is offered in a non-judgemental way in community settings as some parents and carers may have a negative view of school.

**Services** need to take learning disabilities into account, particularly for those who have weak family support networks, home economics or basic life skills.

Parenting skills should be extended, basic numeracy and literacy learning needs to be available in community settings. **Parental support** needs to be aspirational. There needs to be a focus on confidence-building to ensure barriers to learning can be overcome by using incentives, for example providing fish and chip suppers to encourage participation that takes place in Redhouse.

There is a digital divide as parents may not have the IT skills to support their children, even if the latter are provided with laptops. Skills such as **safe internet** searches need to be taught. In addition, everyone needs to know that social media comments can hamper employment prospects.

Schools have an opportunity to spread links to **community learning** as most have social media sites which could signpost people in the city to this support.

### Lifelong Learning

Our mission is to provide the residents of Sunderland - especially those living in the city's most deprived communities - with the skills, qualities, attributes, qualifications, experiences, confidence, health and wellbeing that enable them to **realise their full potential** and to contribute to the city's economy and resilience.

Our vision and ambition is to deliver education, skills, qualifications and personal development programmes so residents benefit from the best possible learning and training opportunities in a **safe and supportive environment**, helping them to thrive and enhance their job and career prospects. Through our learning programmes, we aim to:

- Contribute to Sunderland's economic growth
- Support workforce development and career progression in the health and social care sector regionally
- Promote better living and working
- Improve confidence, self-esteem, health and wellbeing
- Improve the skills needed for employment, volunteering and self-employment
- Provide routeways into employment or further education
- Improve parenting skills and promote family togetherness
- Promote participation in environmental improvement
- Help to build resilient and vibrant communities.

Sunderland City Council, Sunderland College and the Ministry of Building Innovation and Education (MOBIE) have worked together to develop plans for a Housing Innovation and Construction Skills Academy (HICSA) – a ground-breaking facility that will educate, train and upskill local people to create innovative factory-built new homes, the first of which will be assembled at Riverside Sunderland. And now a planning application for the £15m building has been submitted to the local authority, which – if given the green light – will pave the way for work to start later this year.

When completed, HICSA will support the development of scores of eco-friendly homes planned for Riverside Sunderland and the city centre. The planning application follows the Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) announcement as part of the last Autumn Budget, which committed £20m to support the city's housing ecosystem, including £9m of support for HICSA.

The facility – the brainchild of the three organisations working in partnership – will enable Sunderland to build the skills-base to upgrade the city's homes locally, using MMC, low carbon, renewable energy and smart technology. It will position Sunderland at the heart of the UK's net zero ambitions, enabling the city to capitalise on the move towards modern methods of construction and sustainable house-building while helping Sunderland realise its Smart City and Net-Zero Carbon ambitions.

One of the key partners shaping plans for HICSA is MOBIE, which was founded by Sunderland born TV architect, George Clarke. The organisation was set up to inspire young people and to revolutionise the way we think about our homes and produce the talent capable of creating future-housing.



# Section 7: Key objectives 2022 – 2026

## Key objectives 2022 – 2026

In addition to existing commitments, following consultation with residents, Labour will ensure:

1. We continue to work with headteachers to review alternative provision to secure better outcomes for pupils
2. We work with the other partners, to develop a suite of programmes to develop and enhance school leadership
3. The provision of bespoke training events to improve standards in core subjects at Key Stage 4 utilising Specialist Leaders in Education and examination boards
4. We develop further our primary/ secondary transition partnerships focussing on presentation, marking, assessment, pedagogy and tracking for years 7 to 8
5. The continued improvement of educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for the most vulnerable children and young people by challenging all providers of education to improve pupils' and learners' rates of progress at every stage, particularly disadvantaged pupils. In addition, looking to improve reading by the development of a Sunderland Reading Strategy
6. Supporting businesses and individuals in improving skills to boost competitiveness and aid career progression and help support more residents into higher education through the creation of a Science/Technology Hub to expand teacher capacity, develop stronger links with local STEM employers and promote career opportunities
7. Encouraging greater collaboration between schools and other education providers and businesses through:
  - a. Our teaching school hub broker improvement frameworks, coaching and mentoring from across the North East region with an identified package of support from across the system for identified schools
  - b. The use of local authority powers to elect or appoint other governors to strengthen governing bodies
8. We will work with schools to look at how we:
  - a. Further reduce the number of exclusions of pupils, especially in the secondary sector
  - b. Further develop citizenship to ensure a sense of belonging of pupils to their community
  - c. Address a diagnosis of learning issues earlier; this would aid learning later on in schools.



