



Labour's pledges to you in Stevenage

- ✓ Regenerate our Town Centre and Neighbourhood Centres
- ✓ Improve the availability of Housing, especially council housing
- ✓ Keep Stevenage safe, clean and green
- ✓ Encourage investment in our economy and build the wealth of our community
- ✓ Prioritise sustainable transport & create 'living streets'
- ✓ Work with partners to improve the health of our residents
- ✓ Build on our heritage by developing our cultural opportunities
- ✓ Ensure our Co-operative Council gives people a real say in how we deliver services
- ✓ Focus on value for money by ensuring you set our priorities

Stevenage Labour – Working for our Community, fighting austerity, protecting the vulnerable

Stevenage Labour Party is proud of Stevenage, of our long and proud history and of our resilience in the face of austerity. We are confident of a bright future for the town, shaped by the town's residents, communities and businesses

Our regeneration plans for Stevenage Town Centre are exciting, we're the closest we have ever been to delivering the renaissance of the whole town centre, starting with SG1. This will ensure it reflects the aspiration of our residents and the world-beating technology being developed in our businesses. We will bring new shops, homes, work and leisure facilities as well as a one-stop shop for public services like health, library, police and county and borough council as well as having exhibition space and a coffee bar.

Our development partner, Mace, is a household name in the property world, a big player on world-class projects like The Shard, Birmingham New Street Station, Broadgate shopping centre in the City and the World Trade Centre in New York.

Our ambition for Stevenage, and our resilience as a community is what has enabled us to shape this project that will boost our local economy with jobs and training opportunities for local people. We won't give up, even as government funding is disappearing in front of our eyes.

We know how difficult it has been for our residents as both the Tory/LibDem coalition and then the Tory government have tightened the grip on our personal finances and almost squeezed the life out of public services. Too many people in our town are affected by zero-hour contracts, temporary work when they want permanent jobs or working for less hours than they need to support their families. The dreadful impact of the housing crisis has seen a chronic shortage of truly affordable housing and rents in the private sector are soaring out of the reach of families on average wages. As a Labour council we have to deal every day with the fallout from poor Tory housing policy and cuts to other services which leave too many people sleeping on our streets or sofa-surfing. Even those with decent jobs, have seen their housing and energy costs taking more and more of their income.

The cuts imposed by the Tory government have seen council funding in Stevenage cut by 74% and by 2020 we will receive no government funding at all. Our Tory MP has voted for these cuts knowing that they could decimate the services we deliver to Stevenage people. The ideologically driven cuts imposed by the Tory government have been the most unprecedented and concerted attack on localism and local services this country has ever seen.

Our Tory MP has done nothing to support our efforts to build more social housing and has tried to block our Local Plan after 2 years of public consultation and a full public enquiry. This just adds additional costs for the council tax payer.

Our Labour council will never stand back and wring our hands, or sit on them. Our job has been to respond to your feedback telling us that you want us to focus on regenerating the town centre, building truly affordable housing and tackling crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. You want us to stand up for you and for the services you value and we will always continue to do that.

We kept every promise made in our 2013 manifesto in spite of the £13m of savings we have had to make. As we start this new four year term for the council, we put before you a manifesto

designed around your priorities, fully costed within the prudent financial management we know you have come to expect of our Labour council. We know how important it is to protect the services that you value so much; like regeneration, our play service, police community support officers, neighbourhood wardens, support for our community centres and community transport.

Our 2018 manifesto sets out our pledges for Stevenage, our Labour council believes in Stevenage and with your support will continue working to build a bright future for our town and its people.



Councillor Sharon Taylor
Labour Leader, Stevenage Borough Council



Jim Brown
Chair, Stevenage Labour Party

A town with a vibrant, regenerated Town Centre and Neighbourhood Centres

Working with our partners, our Labour council has already attracted £350 million of private investment into our town centre as well as over £30 million of funding from our Local Enterprise Partnership. Our developer partners Mace have a national and international reputation having built The Shard, Birmingham New Street Station, Broadgate Shopping Centre in the City of London and worked on the World Trade Centre in New York. We know that regeneration of our town centre is now the top priority for Stevenage people, we want to ensure that our new town centre reflects the world-beating companies in our town and the aspirations of the people that live, work and visit here.

Our promise to you for the regeneration of our town centre is that working with Mace and other developers we will:

- ✓ Consult with Stevenage people on the regeneration
- ✓ Work with Mace to open a resident engagement centre in the Plaza
- ✓ Work with Mace with the aim of starting building work on SG1 early in 2019
- ✓ Ensure the new town centre incorporates new shops, homes, leisure and café facilities, new public squares and parks and a one-stop hub to access health, police, library, county and borough council services and an exhibition space and coffee shop.
- ✓ Improve the public spaces in Town Square and Market Square during 2018/19
- ✓ Refurbish the multi-storey car park in 2018/19
- ✓ Work to bring forward the redevelopment of Queensway as a top priority, including attracting new retailers
- ✓ Continue to negotiate with Network Rail and others to bring forward early regeneration of Stevenage Railway Station and support the building of a fifth platform
- ✓ Re-locate our bus station after consultation with Stevenage people especially bus users
- ✓ Create a parking strategy for the town centre, including new parking facilities to encourage shoppers and sufficient cycle and motorcycle parking
- ✓ Ensure our regenerated town centre is accessible to all including those with disabilities
- ✓ Make sure that new buildings in the town centre are energy efficient, economic, sustainable and accessible

Our neighbourhood centre regeneration is already underway and a successful regeneration scheme incorporating 30 new council homes, two shops and a brand new community centre has been completed at Archer Road. We have undertaken public space improvements at The Glebe and The Hyde and have extended the community centre at Symonds Green to incorporate new community space and a coffee bar. We have new housing being built at Rockingham Way and Burwell Road and have been consulting with residents, including those in supported housing, about a major regeneration scheme at Kenilworth Close.

Our promise to you for the regeneration of our neighbourhoods is that we will:

- ✓ Always work with residents and community groups to ensure neighbourhood regeneration is truly local and designed and implemented with those that will use its facilities.
- ✓ Develop Kenilworth Close with new, modern supported housing that meets national best practice, new homes, shops and community centre and improved public spaces and green spaces.
- ✓ Seek regeneration & development opportunities for The Oval
- ✓ Improve all 57 of our children's play spaces working with young people on their design
- ✓ Improve our garage compounds so they are refurbished, well-lit and feel safe for users

Improve the availability of housing especially council homes

Stevenage, like everywhere else in the UK, has felt the serious problems caused by the housing crisis. Having a safe, decent and affordable home is at the heart of our quality of life, achieving our potential and feeling part of our community. We want to play our part in starting to resolve this by accelerating the number of homes built in Stevenage, focussing on developing as much social housing as possible and ensuring our stock of council homes is kept in good condition. In the tradition of new towns, we want to ensure that homes built are accompanied by all the facilities that are needed to support quality of life; doctors surgeries and schools, shops and transport and high quality green spaces and leisure facilities. We have made a good start on our new council homes programme at Archer Road, Burwell Road, Rockingham Way, Vincent Court but we need to do all we can to ensure everyone has access to a safe, decent home and we know that is one of the top priorities of Stevenage people.

Our promise to you is to aim for everyone to have good housing and we will:

- ✓ Build at least 500 new council homes
- ✓ Complete housing developments at Scarborough Avenue, Kenilworth Close, the former Dupont Site and Gresley Way as well as Burwell Road and Rockingham Way.
- ✓ Look for further opportunities to develop council homes on council owned land
- ✓ Develop our 'tenant & leaseholder voice' through Housing Management Board, Customer Scrutiny Panel and the Leaseholder Forum
- ✓ Our allocations policy will recognise protected characteristics, those who have served in the armed forces and those who have a connection with Stevenage
- ✓ Ensure that at least 60% of new homes throughout the town, including in the town centre are built on previously developed land
- ✓ Use our Local Plan to ensure new developments are well-planned, well-designed and sustainable and have the facilities they need included in development plans
- ✓ Work with our partners to tackle rough sleeping aiming to eliminate this in Stevenage
- ✓ Provide homeless & winter cold weather provision in partnership with Stevenage Haven
- ✓ Work with Stevenage Haven to increase the provision of moving-on accommodation
- ✓ Deliver a first class housing and homelessness advice service and avoid the use of bed and breakfast provision for temporary housing
- ✓ Start work on our multi-million pound plan to refurbish all of our 500 flat blocks to be completed by 2023.
- ✓ Stevenage will be the first Borough in Hertfordshire to retrofit sprinkler systems to our high-rise flats. We have high levels of assurance on fire safety already but will work with our fire service to do all we can to keep residents safe including looking at Grenfell report to learn any lessons from that.
- ✓ Explore the licensing of private sector rented property and work with partners to support those experiencing poor quality private rented properties or problem landlords
- ✓ Introduce 'Article 4' directions to regulate conversions to houses in multiple occupation
- ✓ Provide information for young people on housing options and work to develop new schemes to meet their needs.

Keep Stevenage Safe, Clean and Green

Unprecedented pressures on public funding, including police funding, mean it is vital for us all to work in partnership to ensure we work together to drive down crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in Stevenage. We want to ensure that wherever you live in Stevenage you will be safe and feel safe. We want to build on the outstanding work we have already done in tackling domestic abuse and tackling crime associated with drugs and alcohol through our 'No More' project. We know that reducing crime and disorder is a top priority of Stevenage people and we believe our co-operative approach to working with residents, victims and partners will help us tackle the offending that affects people and impacts most on fear of crime.

Our promise to you is to work towards a stronger and safer community in Stevenage and we will:

- ✓ Fund Police Community Support Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens to provide a presence in our neighbourhoods
- ✓ Support neighbourhood watch, Street Meets, Neighbourhood Surveys, the Anti-Social Behaviour Forum and build on initiatives like our Tower Block Action plan.
- ✓ Develop our action plan for tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Modern Slavery
- ✓ Support Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse to work with partners to develop ground-breaking work to tackle domestic abuse
- ✓ Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour by using Community Protection Notices, Property Closure Orders, and fixed penalty notices
- ✓ Offer supportive activities as an alternative to families and individuals whose anti-social behaviour affects their community
- ✓ Build on the success of our 'No-More' project to help those whose anti-social behaviour is linked to drug and alcohol abuse
- ✓ Use CCTV, enforcement officers and fixed penalty notices to tackle fly-tipping
- ✓ Help young people to feel safer through our Youth Ambassadors programme
- ✓ Continue to campaign for night lighting to be restored in Stevenage

A town that is clean and green and recognises the importance of our green spaces to quality of life

With increasing government cuts to the funding of local government we will need to work hard to ensure we prioritise keeping our town clean and green. Our Labour council knows that Stevenage people truly value our wonderful green spaces like Fairlands Valley, Hampson Park and Town Centre Gardens. Our childrens play spaces encourage exercise, imagination and creativity as well as inspiring a love of the natural world. We want our town to contribute to that natural world not to be damaging it or diminishing its role in our quality of life.

Our promise to you is to work to protect our green spaces, manage our waste, recycling and emissions to ensure we protect the natural legacy for our community and future generations. To achieve this we will:

- ✓ Increase our recycling rates to at least 50% and ensure we understand the destination of recycling streams
- ✓ Never introduce additional charges for green and kitchen waste
- ✓ Launch a tough anti-litter campaign for our public spaces with strong enforcement including fixed penalty notices
- ✓ Retain our 'green flag' status for Fairlands Valley, Hampson Park and Town Centre Gardens and aim for this for Shephalbury Park and Ridlins End
- ✓ Increase Town Centre and High Street cleansing as funds become available
- ✓ Continue the programme of play space improvements involving our young people in their design
- ✓ Renew our Biodiversity Action Plan
- ✓ Support and promote our Green Space Volunteers
- ✓ Promote our green spaces through a 'Green Stevenage' section of our website
- ✓ Create a new 'green' square in the heart of the town centre as part of the regeneration
- ✓ Focus on outstanding energy efficiency of buildings and homes through the planning process

A town where we encourage investment in our economy and work to build the wealth of our community

With the uncertainty created by Brexit we will need to ensure that Stevenage has a reputation for encouraging investment; supporting our existing companies and new and growing businesses. We have world-beating businesses in Stevenage in engineering, space science, pharmaceuticals and data storage. We believe it is vital to the future of the town to ensure that our businesses have a town in which they can flourish, that Stevenage retains its excellent connections by road, rail and air, that our residents have access to secure, well-paid jobs, our young people have access to good training, apprenticeships and opportunities. Our Labour council has worked with businesses and partners to develop our infrastructure, including new rail services, town centre regeneration and new housing. As the town develops, we will continue to work with business to build the healthy economy that generates the jobs and wealth to support our community.

Our promise to you is to aim to build the wealth of our community so we will:

- ✓ Regenerate our town centre so that it reflects our world-beating businesses and the aspirations of Stevenage people
- ✓ Ensure our Local Economic Partnership continues to recognise Stevenage as one of the prime economic growth areas in Hertfordshire
- ✓ Use our local government funding and contracts to create secure employment for local people delivering through direct services wherever possible and where contracts are let ensure they are accessible for local businesses
- ✓ Stevenage Council will be a Living Wage employer and include Living Wage as a condition for our contractors
- ✓ Our Labour council will support an extensive apprenticeship programme. In 2016/17 we recruited 14 apprentices and 2 graduate trainees.
- ✓ Our Labour council will support a programme of work experience
- ✓ Our Business Technology Centre will provide support to new and growing businesses, support a business incubator and provide advice and guidance to potential start-ups.
- ✓ Support and promote Stevenage Credit Union to provide low-cost straightforward financial services to our residents.
- ✓ Provide financial and in-kind support to Stevenage Citizens Advice Bureau

A town where we prioritise sustainable transport, where our streets are 'living streets'

Our Labour Council has promoted the excellent transport links we have in Stevenage and has made our own investment in sustainable transport as well as seeing investment from our partners like the new Thameslink services which will provide an additional 18 trains an hour through St Pancras and the City of London from May 2018. However, we will have to continue to work hard to provide excellent public transport, we know that many parts of Stevenage do not have the bus services they need and if we are to encourage people not to use their cars so much we will have to make sure excellent alternatives are available. We are lucky to have a magnificent network of 45 km of cycle ways and want to promote their use but need to ensure they are fit-for-purpose. We want to restore our neighbourhood streets to places that our community can enjoy, not streets that are dominated by parking issues and speeding traffic.

Our promise to you is to work to create 'Living Streets' and lobby to ensure we have sustainable transport as well as good roads, rail and bus services. To achieve this we will:

- ✓ Pilot our 'Living Streets' programme in three neighbourhoods in 2018/19
- ✓ Promote use of electric vehicles by providing electric vehicles for hire and charging points around the town and use planning policies to promote electric car use
- ✓ Engage Stevenage residents and bus users in the development of plans for our new bus station and transport interchange
- ✓ Develop a 'park and ride' offer for all our town centre facilities including Old Stevenage, Town Centre, Leisure Park and Roaring Meg using electric buses
- ✓ Promote cycling within the town especially using our 45 km of cycle ways and lobby the county council to improve that network with better surfaces, maintenance and lighting
- ✓ Develop an extensive cycle hire scheme
- ✓ Work with partners to promote the regeneration of Stevenage Railway Station
- ✓ Continue to campaign for full widening of the A1M
- ✓ Campaign for noise reduction relating to aircraft noise from Luton airport
- ✓ Promote Stevenage through the 'gateways' to the town and improve signage on footpaths, cycleways and roads
- ✓ Consider with partners the viability of a Stevenage South stop on the Hertford loop rail link

A town where we will work with our partners to improve the health of our residents

In spite of cuts to funding and the underfunding by the government of the NHS and social care, our Labour council has already developed an extensive public health programme to tackle the key causes of poor health in our community; smoking, obesity and mental ill-health. Our public health strategy was described by the Director of Public Health for Hertfordshire as the best public health strategy he had ever seen. Much of this achieved with our partners in Stevenage Leisure Limited and through our Healthy Hub. Nevertheless Stevenage still suffers from significant health inequalities compared with the rest of Hertfordshire. Although not directly responsible for health, there is much our Labour council can do in the provision of excellent leisure opportunities, health promotion and partnership working to join up access to health advice and facilities.

Our promise to you is to work with our partners to improve the health of our community and reduce inequalities so we will:

- ✓ Work with our NHS partners to provide health facilities in the heart of the town centre
- ✓ Regenerate our leisure facilities in the town centre including providing a brand new leisure and youth centre when funds are available
- ✓ Ensure there are local amenities in our neighbourhoods to help residents improve their health
- ✓ Support health promotion campaigns especially smoking cessation, tackling obesity and dealing with mental health and wellbeing
- ✓ Deliver innovative health and leisure facilities that encourage our community to be active and help them stay active
- ✓ Support our older residents to remain independent as long as possible in their homes
- ✓ Provide free access health facilities like trim-tracks, outdoor gyms, Aquapark, table tennis tables and skateparks in our parks and green spaces
- ✓ Support & promote park run, Stevenage Cycling Festival, our cycle network and the huge range of sport and leisure opportunities we provide in Stevenage

A town that recognises our cultural heritage and involves people in cultural opportunities

Stevenage has a unique cultural heritage both as a settlement that goes back to the Domesday Book but also as Britain's first post war new town. We now need to build on that legacy with an enhanced and sustainable cultural offer, complementing town centre regeneration, substantially improving health and wellbeing, benefitting our local economy, engaging children and young people and attracting visitors from the County, London and beyond to a thriving, busy and accessible creative environment.

Our promise to you is to develop the cultural life of Stevenage working with partners to achieve the key ambitions set out in our cultural strategy, we will:

- ✓ Upgrade, support and develop our well-loved local theatre, the Gordon Craig
- ✓ Plan and deliver a major public art programme and trail enhancing our High Street and Town Centre, parks and open spaces and our cycle network
- ✓ Encourage the establishment of permanent & temporary (pop-up) artist studios and hubs including digital media
- ✓ Explore the relocation of Stevenage Museum to a town centre location with an aspiration to develop a First New Town museum
- ✓ Encourage the provision of high quality music facilities for the town to provide access to skills development and career opportunities for young people
- ✓ Build on the town's substantial sporting heritage by encouraging sport for all and attracting national and international sporting events
- ✓ Support Arts and Health projects that use creativity to enhance well-being and quality of life
- ✓ Promote our town centre regeneration through a wide-ranging programme of cultural activity in the town centre
- ✓ Ensure there is free creative and cultural activity for our community to engage in like Stevenage Day, Fireworks Night, Christmas Light Switch-on so everyone can get involved

Ensure our Co-operative Council gives people a real say in how we deliver services

Our Labour council believes that Stevenage people should have a real say in designing, implementing and delivering the services that we all use in the town. It was therefore a natural step for us to become a member of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network that operates across the UK with councils who hold these values sharing best practice and innovation. In our neighbourhoods we are developing a dynamic, community focussed method of drawing up 'living' plans for local areas. To do this we engage existing local community groups and find imaginative ways of getting local residents involved, like our 'Teddy Bears Picnic' in Pin Green. In 2018/19 we will be focussing on Martins Wood, St Nicholas and Shephall to prepare these plans and start implementing them. We want residents to feel that they have a real say in shaping their local area.

Our promise to you is to engage and involve you in all major decisions and planning for your area and in an active way in helping to design and implement our services, to achieve this we will;

- ✓ Roll out our co-operative community neighbourhood planning to Martins Wood, St Nicholas and Shephall in 2018/19 and a further two wards in each of the following years
- ✓ Pilot participatory budgeting in 2018/19 in Martins Wood, St Nicholas and Shephall so that residents of those areas have funding to support their planning aspirations.
- ✓ Learn the lessons of participatory budget pilots and roll out to further wards in subsequent years increasing the quantum of funding available if possible.
- ✓ Encourage, support and develop our engagement forums to assist us with policy development in specific areas such as our Domestic Abuse Forum, Anti-Social Behaviour Forum, Housing Management Board, Customer Scrutiny Panel and Leaseholder Forum
- ✓ Consult with our young people on the development of our neighbourhood play parks
- ✓ Always consult with residents of supported homes as we upgrade and improve the provision of supported housing to 21st century standards.
- ✓ Engage and involve our residents in the regeneration of Stevenage Town Centre, especially involving bus users in the relocation of the bus station.
- ✓ Develop our programme of community neighbourhood management including green space upkeep, upgrading our garage compounds, creating 'living streets', improving our play spaces and encouraging volunteering to develop 'pocket parks'
- ✓ Work with our residents to shape neighbourhood centre regeneration schemes

Focus on value for money by ensuring you set our priorities

Councils across the UK have faced the toughest financial times in living memory with huge cuts to government funding and unfunded inflation. In Stevenage this has seen a 75% cut in our funding. Our annual budget is £9.1m and we have had to reduce costs by £13.2m in the last few years. By 2020 we will have no government funding at all.

We still deliver very good value for money with over 120 services being delivered for an average cost of £204.46 a year for each home. It is important to remember that Stevenage Council only receives 12p from every pound of council tax we collect, the rest going to the county council (78p) and Herts Police (10p) We know that the services we deliver to Stevenage people are important, that is why we have focussed our cuts on back-office services, moving to shared services with other authorities where this does not affect service delivery, small increases to fees and charges and only as a last resort, increasing council tax.

Our promise to you is that we will always strive to deliver good value services and we will spend your council tax money on those things you tell us are important. To achieve this we will

- ✓ Review our priority-based budgeting system to ensure it is still delivering value for money
- ✓ Pilot participatory budgeting (local control of spending) for our neighbourhoods, evaluate the results and roll out to further neighbourhoods as appropriate
- ✓ Work with the county council to create an exemption from council tax for care leavers until they reach the age of 25.
- ✓ Retain our local community budgets for local projects in your area
- ✓ Ensure we deliver as many council services as possible through in-house provision. We currently collect our own waste & recycling for £39.50 a year per household (included in the cost of your council tax) and much of our housing maintenance is carried out by in-house teams
- ✓ When contracts are let, do all we can to encourage local companies to bid
- ✓ Continue to support our Youth Mayor and Youth Council, Stevenage had the first youth Mayor in the county and we want to continue to involve our young people in the town
- ✓ Expand our programme of introducing Neighbourhood Wardens to local areas to be a first point of local contact with the Council
- ✓ Ensure our residents have every opportunity to contribute to decision making through public meetings, digital methods, accessibility of our councillors and through a new interactive website. We will be investing £2m over three years to enable digital participation.
- ✓ Invest in commercial property in the Borough to help us generate income to reduce the funding gap as government funds are withdrawn altogether by 2020.