

Preston Labour Manifesto 2019



PRESTON FOR THE MANY, NOT THE FEW



A message from Labour Leader Matthew Brown



Labour in Preston is asking for your support in these crucial all out elections that will decide the future of our city for years to come.

With election day looming residents must be made aware the Conservatives have cut our central government grant for years and will completely end it in 2019-20. We therefore need to increase Council Tax more than we would wish to ensure our essential services perform well from waste collection, street cleaning, maintaining our parks, licensing taxis and restaurants and to continue our powerful social justice agenda.

Labour will support a new local economy where both poverty and inequality are addressed and new strategies are deepened that build local wealth and expand economic democracy. Put together this will see a resurgence of forward-thinking municipal socialism in Preston.

Our city centre has been regenerated, with our new Market Hall. We have plans to develop a £35m cinema and restaurant development to significantly enhance that area, create hundreds of new local jobs and eventually return the asset into city ownership realising a long-term profit for the community.

Exciting plans are afoot with the Harris Museum aiming to receive significant investment of £10m as the UK's only blended Museum, Art Gallery and Library.

Labour will expand our social justice agenda that has seen tens of millions of pounds of public contracts repatriated to locally based businesses, rising wage levels and an increase in the number of new affordable homes. This agenda will be deepened by helping establish the first regional cooperative bank in the north west and new worker owned firms.

Despite facing huge government cuts Labour has in recent years secured over £4 million in external funding to invest in Preston's heritage and fantastic parks that are enjoyed by the whole community.

Labour will work to tackle holiday hunger and period poverty and continue to build a Preston where everyone matters to counteract any tensions arising from Brexit.

Labour needs your support on Thursday, May 2nd to build the confident and fairer Preston we all want to see.

Sections

- ✓ **An inclusive economy in Preston**
- ✓ **Preston – A Living Wage City**
- ✓ **Investing in our future**
- ✓ **Reducing the cost of living in Preston**
- ✓ **A greener and cleaner Preston**
- ✓ **Decent, affordable housing in Preston**
- ✓ **A city of creativity and culture**
- ✓ **A healthier Preston**
- ✓ **A city where everyone matters**

An inclusive economy in Preston



Economic policy

Preston named as most most improved city in UK

Labour-run council with localist economic policies tops Good Growth for Cities index

Labour in Preston recognises we can no longer support a 'business as usual' economic model that benefits the top 1% of society. Labour will work in a radical but sensible way to ensure people in Preston gain more control of their economic futures.

Labour's Community Wealth Building approach known as '**The Preston Model**' is now acknowledged as a credible response to discredited neo-liberal economics that cause long term disinvestment and inequality. Community Wealth Building is being implemented in varying degrees by over 60 different areas of the UK including London, Birmingham and Wales.

Since 2011, our policies have helped Preston rise out of the bottom 20% of the UK's most deprived local authority areas and improve in the government's Social Mobility Index.

Last year Preston was voted **the most improved city in the UK** in a respected annual PWC/Demos report on inclusive growth, and in the last 3 years **over 14,000 employees** have been added to Preston's economy.

Labour will support transformative, common sense policies based around the following principles:

Bringing investment and jobs to Preston

Labour has taken a key strategic role by working with both public and private sectors to promote an inclusive economy across Preston.

In 2013, Labour-run Preston was one of the first councils to bid for the new wave of City Deals. **The Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal** in partnership with South Ribble and Lancashire County Council, incorporates an agreement with government to invest £350m in public infrastructure aiming to generate 20,000 jobs and 17,000 new homes with at least 30% affordable. This equates to £1 billion added in gross value to the local economy.

Despite government changing the funding of New Homes Bonus causing instability for City Deal, Labour is committed to achieve City Deal targets in a realistic and sustainable manner. Labour will seek to bring more **community wealth and social value outcomes** to City Deal projects to ensure it remains in line with our values.



The Lancashire County Pension Fund has agreed to invest up to £100 million in the City Deal area. This has seen an £18m student apartment block on Friargate constructed in partnership with local companies with refurbishment of the old Park Hotel planned to begin later this year (above).

Labour has approached the £7bn pension fund and its trade union representatives to ask them to invest more in the Lancashire economy and will promote with other Lancashire local authorities an innovative **Lancashire Wealth Fund** to further leverage public pension and other investments and assets (including land for development) to benefit Preston and Lancashire.

A revitalized city centre

Improvements to Fishergate has made a big difference to the city centre expanding along Lancaster Road this year enabling Preston to upgrade its once crumbling city centre infrastructure.



Work with Lancashire County Council (LCC) has seen investment of over £20m million into **Preston Bus Station** with a long-term future in public ownership that will be completed this year. The key **Youth Zone** facility for young people is regrettably not part of the plans and Labour will explore an affordable alternative with appropriate partners.

Labour has been successful in a development bid for significant Lottery and Arts Council investment to improve the **Harris Museum & Art Gallery** which will total over £10m of investment. This should see big improvements to the Harris as the UK's only blended museum, gallery and library.

Labour will work with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) to deliver their £250 million masterplan to benefit Preston in their role as a **civic anchor institution**. With UCLan, Labour will seek extra investment to improve the street scene in Friargate, incubate new businesses and support new technology such as the proposed **civic drone centre and service**.



Preston City Council has invested over £5m in the new **City Owned Markets** including the refurbished Market Hall under the Outdoor Market canopy and launched a unique container-based market under the Fish Market which has seen a resurgence of creative independent businesses occupy the city centre.

After demolition of the old market hall and car park Labour will develop a **£35m new cinema and restaurant complex** to enhance the whole Market Quarter. In line with Labour's values the asset will return to **municipal ownership** after a period of years.

The Council transferred the disused **old Post Office** in 2017 to the Signature Living Group to convert the building into a boutique hotel known as The Shankly Hotel due to open this summer. Labour welcomes their pledge to move towards paying the real living wage and banning the use of zero hours contracts.

Buy local and hire local

Since 2013, Labour has supported a transformative **Community Wealth Building** project which continues to receive support from the European Union with Preston City Council acting as lead partner alongside 6 other European cities.

Labour has worked with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and several large place-based public sector '**anchor institutions**' including UCLan, Lancashire County Council, Preston's College, Community Gateway & Lancashire Constabulary, to redirect more of the significant amount of public wealth spent by these institutions on goods and services to deliver social and economic benefits to Preston and Lancashire.



The initiative has already seen an **extra £75m redirected to Preston based suppliers** in 2017 and **£200m across Lancashire** supporting 4500 jobs and expanding the living wage, apprenticeships and other social and environmental outcomes for the community.

Several new place-based institutions including **the NHS** are now engaged with the project and discussions are continuing with Lancashire authorities about a county wide approach to ensure more Lancashire people and businesses benefit.

Labour will encourage our anchor institutions to revisit their recruitment practices to **encourage the hiring of local people** especially in areas of high unemployment and deprivation which often have large BME communities extending equal opportunities.

Labour realises the benefits new and emerging technologies can bring to the local economy. Labour will work with UCLan and partners to support a **Civic Drone Centre** which will include a not for profit drone service for the local public sector. This could provide significant opportunities for local SME's and BAE Systems to benefit through the local supply chain.

A local economy we have control over



To realise Labour's aspirations to improve our community we cannot manage but must transform our local economy. This means promoting **forms of economic ownership and activity** that create and retain wealth locally and are more democratically controlled.

Labour will launch an innovative transnational partnership with New York City and Spain's Mondragon Cooperative Corporation to establish **10 to 15 new worker owned businesses in Preston** with funding of up to £1 million.

This partnership involving Preston City Council, UCLan and Preston's Cooperative Development Network (PCDN) will also look to fill economic gaps in the local economy, where there is no strong business base to compete for goods and services from our anchor institutions.



Since 2008, it is clear our mainstream banking system is not serving the communities they claim they support. **24 branches in Preston** and its surrounding areas have closed despite vast public wealth bailing out the major banks over 10 years ago. Our region therefore needs alternative banking arrangements and Labour will provide these.

Labour will work with other councils and anchor institutions to establish a **North West Community Bank** across Lancashire, Merseyside and Cumbria. When fully licensed this new regional cooperative bank is projected to **lend £500 million by its 8th year** to local businesses and individuals often ignored by larger financial institutions.

Promoting the rights of working people

Labour will promote the **rights of working people** in Preston by promoting trade union recognition across the city and as a social value outcome in local purchasing.

Labour will not employ staff on zero hours contracts and shall apply this principle to our purchasing policies as far as legally possible. Neither will Labour engage with companies involved in illegal blacklisting activities.



Labour will expand **the real living wage and apprenticeships** including in our City Deal infrastructure programme and encourage it through our wealth building partnerships with other anchor institutions.

Labour will keep refuse collection and other services **in-house** unlike Preston's Conservatives who proposed privatising them. This will enable us to keep control of the service and retain both fortnightly bin collections and recycling services.

Labour welcomes the decision of our public sector partners like Lancashire Constabulary to **insource services** that improves standards and the treatment of staff. Labour will insourcing across the wider public sector in Preston where it has representation on those institutions.

Preston - A living wage city

Labour run Preston City Council **became the first employer** in the north of England accredited with the Living Wage Foundation in 2012. Labour will continue to pay and promote the real living wage now valued at a rate of at least **£9 per hour**.



More than **60 other organisations** in Preston now join us as Living Wage Employers. This helps our city remain **1st out of 14 local authority areas** in Lancashire for individuals receiving the real living wage working here helping women particularly often in low paid part time work.

Labour intends to go further and aim to be one of the first English cities in the national **Living Wage Places** initiative. This will target large placed based employers like Royal Preston Hospital and PNE who are not currently accredited as Living Wage Employers.

Labour will also review its **business rates policies and role as a landlord** to encourage local employers to raise wages in Preston to at least the level of the real living wage by offering decent incentives.

Investing in our future

Preston has been at the receiving end of cuts from Conservative led governments since 2010, that as a traditional working-class community has reduced money available to spend on people in Preston by more than one third.



Despite this Labour has **balanced the budget** by reducing senior management costs, becoming more efficient, sharing services where appropriate, investing sensibly and prudently using our reserves.

When we have been forced to transfer loss-making assets to maintain existing services **Labour hasn't handed them to large corporations and outsourcing firms**, but to organisations in line with our values like our leisure centres now owned by its employees.

Going forward **Labour will seek to place its investments more directly in our local economy** and restructure our senior management in a way that saves money and delivers Labour's key priorities.

Labour will also explore the feasibility of a not for profit lottery across Lancashire to raise money for charitable causes.

Reducing the cost of living in Preston

Reducing the cost of food

Preston's new markets provide cheap, quality locally produced produce that can help reduce food bills. Labour will continue to support **Our Food Coop** that provides vegetables, fruit and salad at two thirds of the price of most supermarkets reach more people in the community. Labour will work with community cafés and foodbanks to help the most vulnerable.

Hunger affecting children is something we cannot tolerate. Labour's partnership with Fareshare, using healthy surplus food to provide **free or low-cost meals** during term time has seen over 4000 meals distributed in the last 9 months saving families up to £30 a week. Labour will increase spending on our holiday markets initiative and look to expand **free breakfasts** for children where no free or low-cost provision exists.



Financial Inclusion

Labour has adopted a **financial inclusion strategy** since 2015. This has seen over one thousand residents access bank accounts, get online and reduce debt and household expenditure. Labour will maintain this expenditure of over **£100,000** in 2019/20 with rollout of full-service Universal Credit needing active intervention at a local authority level.

Reducing the cost of energy and borrowing

Labour helped established a city-wide credit union rebranded as **Clevr Money** which has 500 members who live or work in Preston. Labour will help expand the number of Clevr's payroll partners and push for a permanent presence in the city centre. Labour will invest in **Lancashire Community Finance** as a not for profit alternative to payday and doorstep lenders providing affordable credit.

Labour launched **Fairerpower Red Rose** in 2017 as a municipally supported not for profit alternative to the Big 6 energy companies. This helped many people obtain fairer tariffs with some saving hundreds of pounds a year. Labour will continue to support **Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHIL)** to help more people receive cavity and loft insulation and boilers to save on household energy bills.

First class advice services & work clubs

Labour will protect its **Benefit & Debt Advice Services** that has secured over £10 million in unclaimed benefits and resolved over £5 million in recent years. These services are individually tailored including completion of claim forms, representation at tribunals and food bank referrals.

In partnership with the DWP Labour has expanded the number of **Community Work Clubs** across priority wards to provide neighbourhood-based employment support. Labour will continue this service and go further by linking new developments within Preston to **job opportunities for residents** through our planning policies in addition to encouraging local hiring.

A greener and cleaner Preston

Labour will improve our environment in Preston reducing mileage by encouraging the purchasing of more goods and services locally and do much more including:

Improving our parks and green spaces

Labour has secured millions of pounds of external funding to improve our parks recently developing the play and sporting facilities on **Moor Park** that includes the £500,000 skate park designated as a centre of regional excellence for extreme sports. Labour will now explore a **Phase 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund** for Moor Park.

Winkley Square Gardens has been restored through hard work and external funding and now hosts community events over the summer period. The Townscape Heritage Fund has brought several office spaces back into use in the wider area.



Labour will continue working with voluntary sector organisations like Let's Grow Preston to improve the environment and use the planning process to increase allotment provision.

As part of **Preston's Local Plan** Labour will ensure parks and open spaces are secured on forthcoming new developments when applications are passed through the planning process.

Supporting clean energy

Labour remains opposed to the undemocratic decision by central government to impose fracking on Lancastrians with Preston Council also adopting a policy of opposing fracking.

Labour will investigate whether collaboration across Lancashire can **municipalise more energy production** and would welcome co-investment with the Lancashire County Pension Fund to pursue these aims.

Labour will proudly join with 40 other local authorities by **declaring a climate emergency** to ensure tackling climate change becomes a key priority for Preston.

Sustainable transport in Lancashire

Labour supports the **licensing of bus franchises** to ensure democratic control over the price and quality of our bus services through any Lancashire devolution deal. Labour will explore with the transport authority how to raise more revenues locally for public transport.

Labour will push for **new community transport** routes when there are relocations of GP services including those recently proposed for Plungington and North West Preston.

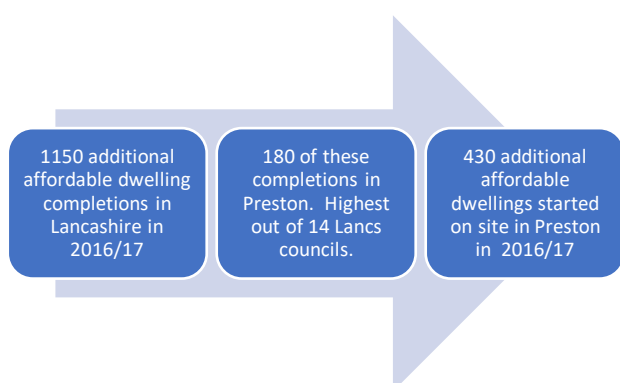
A plastic free city

Labour will ban the use of **single use plastics** in town hall buildings which cause damage to the wider environment. Labour will use its influence to try and persuade local employers such as large supermarkets to do the same. This will also help reduce the need for recycling.

Decent, affordable housing in Preston

For over a decade Labour's policies ensure at least 30% of homes on all developments of 15 units or more are **affordable homes** including properties for social rent.

This has helped deliver hundreds of affordable properties for families, with Preston having the largest number of additional affordable home completions out of 14 Lancashire councils with **180 new affordable homes** in the latest figures available for 2016/17.



Reducing the number of empty homes

Labour has increased the number of empty properties brought back into use since 2011 working with Methodist Action, Community Gateway and others.

Recently we have used commuted sums from developers to establish a **partnership vehicle** to bring empty homes back into use for affordable housing, with this pot due to expand further to bring dozens of empty properties into use.

New ways to deliver housing

Labour has made land the council owns available to social landlords to build new affordable and social housing and will continue to do so where appropriate.

Labour will invest over £200,000 supporting an expanded **social lettings agency** to secure fairness for those who are at risk of homelessness.

Labour welcomes the decision of the Lancashire Pension Fund to invest in new shared equity housing provision in Preston through Heylo Housing. Labour will ask the fund to consider directly investing more in housing across Lancashire through the proposed local wealth fund.

Labour will establish a **housing delivery vehicle** to develop affordable homes meaning the council again plays a role in delivering new properties and explore acquiring land for this purpose. Labour will investigate the feasibility of establishing Preston's first Community Land Trusts.

Fighting homelessness

One of the biggest consequences of Tory austerity is the growth of homelessness and rough sleeping across the country. Labour will deepen its **multi-agency approach** to reduce homelessness in Preston.

People who face homelessness often have complex multiple needs involving substance misuses, mental health issues and are in and out of the criminal justice system. Labour is breaking this cycle through our **Housing First approach** with Preston showing the lowest level of homelessness in the North West according to figures from Shelter.

This spring we are proud a **24-hour drop in facility** will open in partnership with the Foxton Centre providing a much-needed facility for rough sleepers and the homeless.

A city of creativity and culture

Due to financial pressures Labour transferred the management of **West View and Fulwood Leisure Centre's** to protect jobs and maintain existing services. To support our values the assets were transferred to GLL who introduced their employee owned model into Lancashire. As part of the transfer **£1 million** has been invested in both centre's and a partnership board established with elected representatives and other stakeholders.

Labour will publish its **arts and cultural strategy** this Spring after consultation with a range of partners, with Preston's bi-annual Lancashire Encounter festival aspiring to be the key cultural event for central Lancashire.



Labour will continue our annual events programme around the Flag Market, Markets and our parks including Rockprest and Race for Life. Labour is privileged to have secured Preston as a training venue for teams competing in the **Rugby World Cup 2021**.

Labour plans to coinvest **over £10m** to complete the **Reimagining the Harris** project. This major investment in the building infrastructure ensures the Harris as the UK's first blended museum, library and art gallery will witness a rebirth as a key anchor institution engaging with the community and expanding access to culture.

A healthier Preston

Labour will ensure we have the healthiest possible living environment for Preston. As part of development plans Preston is one of few authorities to adopt Health Impact Assessments encouraging **new GP provision, open spaces and quality housing** to create healthier communities. Labour will use its influence when there are proposed GP relocations to ensure communities aren't neglected and push for new public transport arrangements when necessary.

Labour will examine the feasibility of bringing out-patient services from RPH to a city centre-based setting that would see relocated services, offices and new housing bring the NHS closer to the community, with added social and economic benefit.

Labour is working with partners to **reduce smoking** to below the national average in Preston as a public health priority. Labour has actively supported proposals to reduce the maximum stake on **Fixed Odds Betting Terminals to £2.00** under the Sustainable Communities Act and are pleased this has been enacted in April.



Improving mental health is a big challenge and Labour has appointed a **member champion for mental health and suicide prevention**. Labour will explore best practice with relevant partners to help those at risk of suicide, especially younger men.

A city where everyone matters

Labour will strengthen our community to **ensure everyone feels valued and included**. We will continue to build a feeling of togetherness across Preston with tensions from Brexit apparent.



Labour will **help older people** reduce the cost of heating during winter time and form partnerships with local organisations to tackle isolation. Labour will promote a **positive view of ageing** and ensure community wealth building and local work clubs support older people into employment. Labour will continue to promote dementia awareness, ensure taxi licensing is responsive to older people's needs, and encourage older people to claim benefits they are entitled to.

Our **children and younger people** need support and nurturing. Labour will ensure the young are safer by raising awareness of **child sexual exploitation** and issues like online bullying and abuse. Labour will support measures to improve the mental health of younger people through **MH:2K**, and ensure young people receive work opportunities and apprenticeships through our economic policies. Labour will promote cultural activities young people will enjoy.

Preston's strength derives from its diverse communities and we will embrace a feeling of tolerance and understanding in Preston.

Labour will support events like **Preston Mela**, **Preston Pride** and **Standing Together Against Racism (STAR)**, many of which emerged under Labour's leadership of the Council.

Labour will ensure services are impact assessed so no group of people are negatively affected, promote good practice across Preston through our **Inclusion Reference Group (IRG)**, and ensure our services have due regard to disabled people by making appropriate adjustments where necessary.

Labour will enhance the **rights of women** by working with Labour's Police & Crime Commissioner **Clive Grunshaw** and others. Labour will support services for women needing to escape from abusive relationships and address 'hygiene poverty' through our continued support for the **Red Box Project** with local schools and colleges.

Labour will promote a zero-tolerance approach to all aspects of **hate crime** and work to **combat modern slavery** by eradicating the practice from public sector supply chains, and lobbying government for businesses like car washes to be licensed.

Labour will use its resources and influence to ensure Preston remains safe for the whole community. Labour will continue to **support CCTV** to reduce crime and work closely with the Police to ensure resources are deployed in areas of most need.

Labour Councillors will continue to be a visible presence at **PACT meetings** working to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

Labour's 12 promises for Preston

- ✓ Labour will invest in public infrastructure, increase the amount spent by the public sector with local enterprises, and encourage local recruitment creating thousands of new jobs.
- ✓ Labour will regenerate our city centre with a £35m cinema and restaurant development and co-invest £10m in the Harris Museum, Art Gallery and Library.
- ✓ Labour will establish a Community Bank that will lend £500m across the region and promote a Lancashire Wealth Fund to invest further in our local economy.
- ✓ Labour will create 10 new worker owned businesses in Preston in partnership with UCLan and Spain's Mondragon Cooperative Corporation.
- ✓ Labour will increase the number of employers paying the real living wage by becoming one of the UK's first Living Wage Places.
- ✓ Labour will expand free or low-cost meals during term time, expand breakfast provision and work with charities to supply free sanitary products for girls.
- ✓ Labour will invest over £100,000 in financial inclusion and protect first-class services providing housing, debt and benefit advice.
- ✓ Labour will maintain our parks and public spaces to the highest standard and push for a devolution deal that will include local franchising of bus routes.
- ✓ Labour will create a delivery vehicle to enable the council to build housing again and ensure at least 30% of housing is affordable on larger new developments.

- ✓ Labour will work with partners to address the root causes of homelessness, establish a new social lettings agency and 24-hour walk in centre for the homeless.
- ✓ Labour will continue our popular events programme that include Lancashire Encounter, Rockprest, Armed Forces Day and Race for Life.
- ✓ Labour will challenging hate crime, all forms of racism and discrimination and work with the Police to prioritise resources in areas of greatest need.

Vote Labour on Thursday 2nd May



Thanks to Tony Worrall for selected images. Others from creative commons.