

# **Warrington Labour**

**2021 MANIFESTO**

**Let's keep going!**

**Keep Warrington Labour**

# Our story

We have been through some tough times together: economic turmoil, terror on our streets, and now the ongoing pandemic. Yet ours is a story of resilience, of struggle against the odds, and of people determined to do well for themselves and their families. We've survived wars, economic crises, we've lived through some of the toughest things imaginable, and come out stronger.

That strength comes from our people, and the institutions we shape around us. There's a spirit of solidarity and community wired into Warrington that you don't see everywhere. From the start of this pandemic, Warrington people have and continue to look out for one another. We are a place that often sets the standard for the rest of the country.


Ours is a town with extraordinary capacity to meet the sternest of challenges, not just match other places but show them the way. We are proud of our past and our heritage, but we are always thinking about how to make things better in the future – a future still to be written.

As Warrington Labour, we reflect the people of Warrington's values and instincts, their priorities and ambitions. We listen. We act. We fight hard for local people. We know our communities. We understand how tough things can be sometimes, and the sacrifices people have to make.

We have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the young people desperate for a job, with the young families in need of a decent home, with people anxious about their future, or even worried about how to put food on the table.

We are on your side. We get it.





Every day we educate our young people, we care for our elderly, we run local buses, we empty your bins, we provide libraries, leisure centres, parks and playgrounds, we light the streets at night. From cradle to grave, the Council is there for you. Throughout this pandemic, we have stepped in to keep people as healthy as possible. It is Warrington's Labour Council that has underpinned support for people throughout this pandemic and it is Warrington's Labour Council that is working continuously to keep our local economy going.

But we see our role as more than providing quality, efficient public services, vital though that is. Unlike Conservative-run Councils, who seem to know the price of everything but the value of nothing, we understand the role of Warrington Council in making our town a better place for all, and in shaping the future, not just for a fortunate few, but for everyone, no matter where you live or what you do. Unlike the Conservatives, we never talk our town down. Warrington Labour turns places into neighbourhoods, and neighbourhoods into communities. Safe. Clean. Vibrant. Green. That's what makes us different.

This is why Warrington is officially the 'best place to live and work in the UK'<sup>[1]</sup>. On Thursday 6th May, vote Labour to make Warrington an even better place, to live, work and grow up. Let's Keep Warrington Labour.



**Cllr Russ Bowden**  
**Leader of Warrington**  
**Labour Group**



**Cllr Cathy Mitchell**  
**Deputy Leader of**  
**Warrington Labour Group**

[1] <https://www.warringtonguardian.co.uk/news/19218689.warrington-named-best-place-live-uk-new-study/>



# Our contract with Warrington

**Keeping Warrington the 'best place to live and work'.** It's not by chance Warrington has been voted the best place to live and work in the UK. Warrington Labour has made it this way and intends to keep it too.

**Sound public finances are essential.** Council budgets are money earned by hard-working people and businesses - not a penny will be wasted. We will continue investing wisely and spending efficiently.

**Providing high-quality public services.** During this pandemic, Warrington's Labour Council has continuously provided the services people rely on. We thank all the workers and community volunteers who have looked after our residents. Warrington Labour will continue to defend all our front-line services against Tory cuts so that every bin gets emptied, our town is cared for and our children get a great start in life.

**Powering up the community.** We pledge to empower our communities to take Warrington forward and make our Borough an even better place to live and work. Warrington Labour will continue to improve our town.

**Protecting the most vulnerable people.** The pandemic emphasises the importance of meeting the needs of Warrington's most vulnerable people. Heartless promises to cut investment income and freeze the Council Tax will decimate the life chances of those who are frail, disabled, disadvantaged or need to be kept safe. Warrington Labour pledges to stand up against this Tory/Independent threat.

**Tackling climate change.** We know extreme weather is both a global and local threat. The recent flooding across Warrington shows we're all at risk. Warrington Labour pledges to be a 'net carbon zero' Council by 2030. All our future activities will be carbon-free. We will invest in energy-efficient eco-homes, use more solar energy, electrify our buses, promote more recycling, encourage more cycling, cut out plastic and protect the green belt.

# **What's at stake for Warrington...**

## **Forward with Warrington Labour or backwards with the others**

It is time to decide who runs Warrington Council for the next three years and shapes the future of our Borough.

Warrington Labour has provided the leadership that the town needs; revitalising the town centre, creating jobs, supporting businesses, and protecting your local services. We have made Warrington the best place to live and work in the UK, despite Tory austerity cuts and the pandemic.

We are proud that our sound financial stewardship has taken Warrington forward. Not a single library has closed. Many of our schools are outstanding. We've striven to keep our local streets clean, emptied the bins, cut the grass, lit the streets, tackled crime and anti-social behaviour. We have fixed over 10,000 potholes and built a new bridge across the Mersey to reduce congestion.

We have initiated the building of a Youth Zone, our bus service is greener and we have 50 more apprentices at the Council. The £20m annual profit from our investments is the reason why our first-class front-line services have survived vicious Tory cuts.

We are proud of our work with the NHS and community groups throughout the pandemic. We take pride in the fact that the number of Warrington children living in poverty is below the national average.

Look around our town, you can see improvements everywhere. But we are never complacent. Warrington Labour has the energy and ideas to make our Borough an even better place to live.

In these elections the choice is clear; a vote to drive our town forward with Labour, or a vote for one of the others parties or the 'so-called' Independents that pushes Warrington backwards again.

## **What will Warrington Labour do for you, your family and your town?**





## **A caring town that promotes living with dignity and independence**

### **A lot done to help the most vulnerable**

We want a healthy town where people remain fit and well into older age. Our services focus on enabling people to live independently, well and with dignity for as long as possible. We are working with partners on ambitious plans to bring a new NHS hospital to Warrington, and have secured Town Deal funding for a Health and Care hub in the town centre.

### **A lot more still to do**

The NHS is in a period of major change and we are working ever more closely to integrate health and social care services, to make the most out of the funding available to Warrington. We want support to be easily accessible when you need it, with modern facilities, fit-for-purpose services, and a skilled workforce capable of delivering excellent care. We recognise that carers have borne the brunt of the pandemic and are refreshing our Carers' Strategy to ensure that these most selfless people get the support they deserve.

### **Health and Social Care pledges:**

We will invest in adapted accommodation and services for adults with learning disabilities so they can achieve their full potential

Further develop employment opportunities and skills through Warrington's new Health and Social Care Academy

Grow community inclusion for people who are vulnerable and experience social isolation especially through the pandemic

Provide rapid effective support for people living with frailty to remain independent and living safely in their own homes

Create a town centre Health & Wellbeing Hub in partnership with health, care and voluntary organisations



## Enabling a dynamic local economy

### A lot done to boost the local economy

Our Town Centre Masterplan is creating a safe, family-friendly place to shop, meet, eat and enjoy. We are enabling sustained investment to build more homes in the town centre, and welcome many new local businesses.

We have enabled Warrington's first digital hub, and our Business Exchange has helped hundreds of small businesses as well as breathe new life into Warrington's Chamber of Commerce.

Our transformation of Time Square has brought big-name leisure providers, new out of town businesses and over half a million visits to our award-winning new Market, since opening in July 2020.

### A lot more still to do

By supporting local businesses to grow and enabling the creation of local high-skill, well-paid jobs, Warrington will continue to have a strong economic recovery from the pandemic. We'll ensure the skills of local people are developed through our forthcoming Skills Hubs in Digital, Construction and Health & Social Care. We will continue to enable sustained investment and make Warrington an entrepreneurial home for startups.

### Economy pledges:

Make Warrington an entrepreneurial home for startups and digital nomads

Develop a local industrial and innovation strategy to close our skills gap

Reground the globally valued £132bn gaming industry in Warrington

Reconnect economic potential with the waterways of our town

Create more routes to homeownership within housing in the Town Centre





## **A healthy town supporting those who are in need**

### **A lot done to keep people safe, happy and well**

Despite Tory cuts, we have striven to support the most vulnerable people in our community: elderly people living alone, families in unsuitable accommodation or facing homelessness and those under pressure from the pandemic. Our town only thrives when we all thrive and one person in poverty is one too many.

We are proud of the food support, Safe and Well checks, assistance to refugees and homelessness support that Warrington Labour is determined to continue to provide.

### **A lot more still to do**

We will continue to invest in the services local people rely on. Working ever more closely with our voluntary and health partners, to best support local people to live more healthily and enjoyably. We will ensure the residents of Warrington get the best value from the money available across the voluntary sector, welfare and health economy.

### **Housing, health, culture, and well-being pledges:**

Maintain our focus on keeping people safe throughout the pandemic

Broaden support for community groups helping to tackle social isolation

Increase ongoing rough sleeper support so no one need sleep out a second night

Ensure domestic abuse victims are supported and have a voice in shaping services

Grow our supportive food projects helping those in need

Deliver more affordable homes

Grow our thriving cultural offer for everyone in our town to enjoy





## **Supporting safer, happier, thriving communities**

### **A lot done to support stronger, safer, happier communities.**

The Covid-19 pandemic has taught us that we need strong, well-funded public facilities, that all public servants are heroes, and that in a crisis we all rely on one another.

Warrington Labour is the party of public services. We are proud of our leisure facilities, parks and open spaces, places to play, the safe neighbourhoods and community centres and the local activists who run them.

### **A lot more still to do**

As our town recovers from the pandemic, we will build on our successes, by safely reopening our community facilities and further developing community-led solutions such as the Central 6 Masterplan. We will ensure the wishes of local people are paramount in decision making. Bringing the Rugby World Cup and Tour of Britain to Warrington will bring international attention to our town.

### **Communities and Leisure pledges**

Continue to protect and invest in Walton Hall as a regional tourist destination

Invest in parks and play schemes with outdoor "green gyms" to support health and wellbeing

Improve the safety of our community centres with the installation of defibrillators

Future-proof our grassroots sports with 3G pitches, Wifi in all centres, and dementia-friendly spaces

Create a place of sporting excellence at Victoria Stadium, through our Playing Pitch Strategy

Modernise our Libraries for the 21st century and create a community-focused approach with local partners



**Clean, Green,**

**Vibrant and Connected**

## **A lot done to improve our transport and public realm**

With 10,000 potholes fixed and major upgrades to our road network and cycling routes, a new bridge across the Mersey, and a major new route crossing the river and Manchester Ship Canal with Government funding secured, a lot of progress has been made in relation to travel in Warrington.

We are linking up our green spaces, ensuring accessibility for those on foot, bicycle and those using disability scooters. We are addressing traffic near local schools. Warrington also has bottlenecks that we are determined to get moving, and that can only be good for our air quality.

## **A lot more still to do**

Warrington Labour will make our town a thriving, prosperous part of the Northern Powerhouse, with great connectivity for people and goods within our town and beyond. We will make the most of the opportunities offered by major developments to rail infrastructure, whilst ensuring that more people travel actively, and use cleaner, greener ways to travel.

### **Transport pledges**

Enable more active travel;  
constructing new cycling and  
walking routes

Deliver the 'first and last mile'  
Transport Master Plan.

Implement our Electric Vehicle  
Strategy, starting with an all-  
electric bus fleet

Improve rail travel for Warrington  
passengers and freight Transport  
for The North

Deliver the Western Link, building  
on our infrastructure expansion to  
create new routes across the town





# **Cleaner, greener and tackling the climate emergency**

## **A lot done on the environment**

The climate emergency is real; right here, right now. We have already started work to mitigate its impact on our waterways, by investing in further flood defences.

With the local climate emergency declared, we are committed to taking practical steps to make our town carbon-free.

Warrington owns two solar farms and is developing a third. All include cutting-edge battery storage. Our street lights will be fully powered by our own green, renewable energy.

Our buses will entirely electric by 2024 – no more carbon dioxide fumes.

## **A lot more still to do**

We want to become a world leader in tackling the climate emergency by becoming a 'net zero' Council by 2030. We will invest in energy-efficient eco-homes, encourage more recycling and less waste. We will promote more cycling and walking and less driving, cutting out plastic wherever possible. We will encourage and protect bees, butterflies and other wild creatures through environmental stewardship.

## **Environment pledges**

Continue our progress to reduce fuel poverty in Warrington

Commit to keeping the bins emptied, especially through the pandemic

Implement our clear plan to become Net Zero for Carbon by 2030

Grow our town's Litter Network by supporting new and existing community groups

Establish EV charging points across Warrington to help car users change to all-electric



## **A great place to grow up**

### **A lot done to give children the best start in life**

We are proud of our excellent local schools and children's services. Children in Warrington achieve strong outcomes that enable them to embrace all of life's opportunities.

During the pandemic, we have provided hundreds of food parcels and laptops to school children who were isolating and to those at risk of holiday hunger.

Our youth workers have reached out to the town's young people and we have developed new innovative approaches to supporting children and young people at risk of coming into care.

### **A lot more still to do**

A mental health crisis is coming down the track and we will start with more expert support for our school pupils. We will support children with complex needs and their families, welcoming the opening of the new Autism Spectrum Disorder school. We will reduce the number of 16 and 17-year-olds not in education, employment or training and maintain focus on narrowing gaps in educational attainment for disadvantaged pupils.

### **Children & Young People pledges**

Ensure every young person has access to quality mental health services

Empower young people to have their say through a Youth Voice network

Develop post-Covid 'catch-up' education programmes for disadvantaged children

Support care leavers into adulthood by connecting them with local employers

Develop a Food Justice Action Plan to tackle childhood food poverty





## Services fit for the future

### **A lot done to modernise and transform**

The pandemic has shown how we can all benefit from newer means of remaining connected. Warrington's Labour Council has invested in more innovative ways of being accessible to residents and engage on issues.

Whether it's CareCall or Rapid Response helping vulnerable people to feel safer, or the ways we've partnered with local colleges to develop skills in the future workforce, we are committed to improving people's experience of our Council and the way it works for you.

### **A lot more still to do**

We are listening, and want to ensure that we hear the voices of local people. We'll provide services that are fair, respectful and inclusive for all, to ensure that we all get the best out of living in Warrington. Increasingly, it's about partnering with you to ensure that you can navigate resources available to you.

### **Transformation pledges**

Embrace technology whilst ensuring no-one is digitally excluded by providing other ways to access support

Set up a commission on gender violence, to address concerns and create a town where everyone feels safe

Make the Council the local employer of choice, where a career in the public sector is something to be proud of

Through a programme of innovative transformation, the Council will become more accessible and transparent

Drive for a fairer and more equal society, one where young people of all backgrounds can reach their potential



# **Warrington's Finances**

## **At a glance, the Myths... and the Truth**

Warrington Labour is shielding you from slashed services; through income raised from prudent, externally risk assessed investments.

Ask those making easy promises to freeze Council Tax and 'get rid of the Council debt' to tell you which £5m cuts they would inflict without raising Council Tax and how they would replace the further £20m earned by Warrington's income-producing investments if the assets were sold.

After 11 years of austerity, all the 'efficiencies' have been made. Councils across the country - including Tory-led ones such as in Boris Johnson's own constituency - have applied the 3% social care precept. Warrington also faces a net Covid shortfall of £4M and would lose £6.8m of new income without the investment strategy.

Warrington Labour is stepping up to this challenge. The only party able to present a costed and balanced budget, we believe that our town will be a much better place to live without the cuts totalling £35.8m that cancelling these investments truly represents.

## **So where does the Council's income come from?**

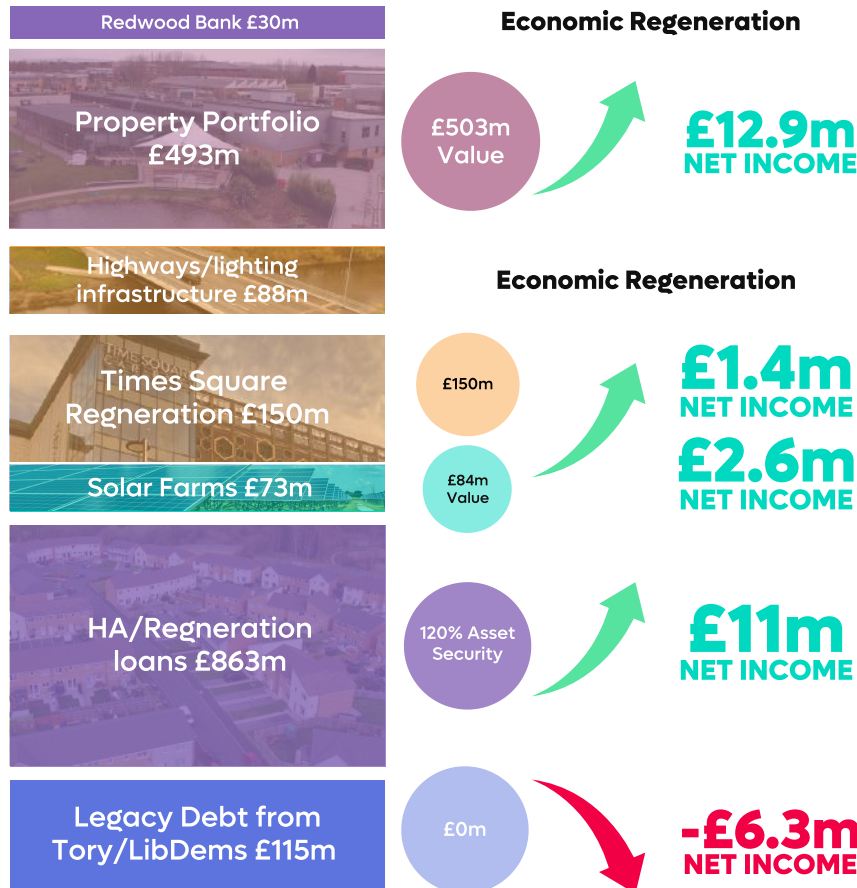
72% of the income comes from Council Tax. Warrington is allowed to keep just 27% of business rates under government regulations. This is why Warrington Labour has an innovative investment programme that produces £20m per year towards services.

We've kept services going throughout the pandemic. The portfolio of investments in commercial properties and Birchwood Park produce significant rental income, our own solar energy now supplies all Warrington's street lights, and with investments that support regeneration such as our bank supporting smaller businesses, and Time Square, this strategy is very successful. It is backed by marketable assets worth significantly more than the borrowing against them, and the asset value is also going up.

**See infographic on the next page...**



## How our investments perform...



**The Tories and Independents want to sell off these valuable assets and lose this income.**

**This would leave at least a £35.8m black hole in the Council budget, which can only mean cuts to services that people need and value.**

**Warrington can't afford this.**

## The Council's budget

The largest slice of Warrington's budget goes on essential statutory services supporting older people, adults with special needs, protecting children and vulnerable young people. This accounts for two-thirds of the net revenue. The other services we all rely upon account for just under a third of the total net revenue budget. All the Council's services would be at serious risk if its investment income was cut off.



- 44p** Support for older people and adults with special needs
- 23p** Protecting children and vulnerable young people
- 8p** Recycling collection and waste disposal
- 6p** Leisure, recreation, libraries, and culture
- 5p** Supporting young people excluding schools
- 4p** Maintaining roads and grounds
- 5p** Business support, insurance, HR, IT, and financial support
- 3p** Housing the homeless and housing planning
- 1p** Street cleaning and street lighting
- 1p** Community safety

# Delivering for you in these tough times



We've kept Warrington going through the pandemic, collecting bins, running buses, delivering thousands of food parcels and school dinners.



We've supported our third sector to tackle social isolation and paid out COVID business grants faster than most other Councils in the country.



We've cut the number of people sleeping rough in Warrington to zero, through new housing schemes and supporting individual needs.



We've built hundreds of sustainable, affordable homes and we're building more through our own housing company, increasing Council stock.



We've erected a new bridge across the Mersey to reduce congestion, laid new roads and fixed over 10,000 potholes.



We've brought a cinema back to the town centre through our Time Square regeneration, which hosts our new award-winning indoor market.



We've initiated the building of a multi-purpose Youth Zone in the Town Centre, set to open early 2022.



The Council now runs on renewable energy through our own solar farms that produces a growing income.



We're electrifying Warrington's own buses, making our Council owned bus fleet cleaner and greener.



We've invested £15million into the future of our local parks and green spaces, including restoring the Glass Houses at Walton Hall.



We've shielded Peel Hall from the unsuitable SatNam development and are protecting more than 90% of Warrington's green belt.



We're investing in the future of our workforce with Skills Hubs for Health and Social Care, Digital Enterprise and Construction.



We're improving our cultural scene with the new Cultural Quarter, enabling national music festivals, and investing in our venues.



We've built a new stadium and 3G pitch at Victoria Park, and we're a host of the Rugby World Cup this autumn.



We're bringing the Tour of Britain to Warrington this September, the UK's most prestigious cycle race, putting an international spotlight on the town.

## Let's keep going. Keep Warrington Labour.

[WarringtonLabour.org](https://WarringtonLabour.org)

 [WarringtonLabour](https://www.facebook.com/WarringtonLabour)

[#KeepWarringtonLabour](https://twitter.com/KeepWarringtonLabour)





# ***Warrington Labour***

**Vote  Labour**

Promoted by Jane Whalen on behalf of all Warrington Labour candidates at Labour North West, Spencer House, 97 Dewhurst Rd, Birchwood, Warrington WA3 7PG.