

Economic manifesto 2011

 Labour for Brighton & Hove

Labour for Brighton & Hove's economic manifesto 2011

Everyone who lives in Brighton and Hove or has visited over the last twelve years knows how the city has changed. Clever investment has produced sustainable growth, with Brighton and Hove now known for its environmental companies, creative and digital businesses, its culture and tourism. When Labour ran the Council our policies contributed hugely to having the highest level of employment since the war and rising wages.

In the mid-eighties, we all remember the seafront, as a virtual no-go area. We remember the declining Dome, the faded glory of the Pavilion, the potholed car park in Jubilee Street, the lack of cycle lanes, the absence of buses, the lack of reputation for cutting edge, growing businesses, the run down North Laine, the lack of restaurants and entertainment in Hove. Brighton and Hove were declining seaside towns. Then through sensitive planning and hard work to attract investors Brighton and Hove became a thriving and growing city by the sea, excelling in jobs, better homes, culture, comedy and the digital and environmental businesses of the future.

Local Labour raised the investment to:

- ✓ Regenerate the Dome
- ✓ Restore the Pavilion
- ✓ Reinvent the Museum free for all
- ✓ Build a new award winning Library
- ✓ Restore Jubilee Street
- ✓ Introduced a network of cycle lanes
- ✓ Supported the fastest growth in any bus company in the UK
- ✓ Help the North Laine and the rest of the city centre to grow by supporting the City Centre Management Initiative, the Business Improvement District [BID] and a variety of smaller organisations like the

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North Laine Traders Association.

- ✓ Start domestic and business recycling

In Hove, Local Labour:

- ✓ Gave planning permission for the City Park office complex hosting hundreds of new jobs
- ✓ Regenerated Portland Road by Compulsory Purchase of Portland Gate

This was the work of a LOCAL LABOUR Council in partnership with businesses, big and small, business networks (like Wired Sussex and the Economic Partnership), cultural organisations and community groups. We now are renowned in the world for our Festival and the creative and digital industries, which attract bright people to work in Brighton and Hove and greatly enhance our appeal to tourists. Our growing economy, in all areas including financial and business services and health, has been a magnet for investors. We have competed successfully with Bristol and Manchester to attract great investors like Disney, bringing jobs, economic momentum and recognition. We have retained American Express and their confidence in the city will result in a brand new office complex in Edward St.

Until, that is, the present Tory Council scared off the main developers and investors. And those trying to attract them, have had to work twice as hard against unfriendly planning, small-minded attitude to growth and expansion.

Local Labour's plans when we ran the Council were designed to:

- ✓ help create jobs for ourselves and our children
- ✓ attract investment to stimulate innovation (which creates the jobs of the future)
- ✓ increase the skills of the city population so wages have risen and unemployment was the lowest it has ever been since the War.
- ✓ Regenerate our iconic landmarks like the Pavilion and the Dome
- ✓ Build homes that people can afford

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All done with great ingenuity on the lowest Council Tax in Sussex.

For the future we need to ensure that our population in work is able to access training and improve their skills and that young people are prepared for the future world of work. In a changing global landscape where the knowledge-based jobs of the future will be very different from those of the past, this has never been more important.

Local Labour's skills pledge:

We will work with schools – primary and secondary – sixth form colleges, City College and the two Universities to **guarantee to every child and young person a meaningful experience of work while in education.**

We will recruit **every employer** we can in the private and public sector in the city to join with our **SKILLS PLEDGE** and sign up to the provision of **training for all their employees while in work.**

What we want to do in the future, along with whatever families or partners we may have, is a way of expressing our ambitions and aspirations.

There was a time, in the period characterised by heavy industry, when the transition to work was relatively easy. Now young people will go out into the jobs market with an uncertain future, no guaranteed job for ever, the prospect of constant learning and training, many more of us working freelance. Young people need confidence:

- ✓ in themselves and their personalities (which is what more and more employers will be looking for),
- ✓ in how to use and improve their skills
- ✓ in the people who can support them into meaningful work

The economy and our ability to thrive is dependent on that confidence in our young people.

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Local Labour's investment pledge

Inward investment has almost ground to a halt under the Tories. A responsible Council negotiates with a developer so that when plans finally do come forward for discussion at planning committee, the developers have already ironed out problems with design, environmental and transport issues, the number and types of houses, flats or offices. The Tories do not understand this. The flow of development for jobs and homes started by Labour has dried up. To many in the development world, Brighton and Hove is closed for business. So where are the jobs and homes going to come from?

Local Labour will pledge a concerted campaign with dedicated staff to bring investment back to our city to build and restore buildings to provide jobs and homes.

We will pledge to:

- ✓ Restore the confidence that is so crucial to investment
- ✓ Ensure that building is to the best design
- ✓ Ensure that building is to the highest environmental standards (as we did in Council before)

We will create a **dedicated Jobs and Homes Promotion Unit** to:

- ✓ Work with local businesses to attract national and international investment
- ✓ Facilitate local involvement in future projects
- ✓ Pledge targets for available homes integrated into the developments and not dumped on to people in areas already struggling

There has been much redevelopment in Brighton over the years, some of it good and some of it terrible. And there are times when great new buildings are what the city needs (The Van Alen is one that everyone loves – and includes a % of affordable homes within it. Another Labour success).

But now, as we face up to the challenge of climate change, we need to launch a programme of

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REFURBISHMENT to complement new buildings. It is cheaper, it uses an existing building and can produce results with a very low carbon footprint. Not to mention that the building process itself uses far less energy. Successful examples already exist in the city e.g. Queensbury House in Queens Road.

Local Labour pledge a campaign to refurbish buildings:

Use What We've Got To Achieve Excellence Campaign.

We will team up with the smartest of the developers who have refurbished buildings in the city and enable them, and others who will join us, to pool expertise to create the offices we need at a much lower carbon footprint.

At the same time **we will establish a city wide JOBS and GROWTH PARTNERSHIP**. This will bring together Employers, the council, the educators and entrepreneurs to develop what is needed for:

- ✓ businesses to grow so they can provide more jobs
- ✓ for the city to develop and support the businesses of the future that will provide the jobs for the next generation
- ✓ City College, Sixth Form Colleges and The Universities to equip graduates for work in the city
- ✓ for Schools to improve so they can better equip our children for life and work in the city
- ✓ an increase of investment into the city

This will be local people working with businesses, employers, entrepreneurs, the educators and the Council to help people achieve their potential in work and business. We will assist all those involved in the current set of Partnerships engaged in the economy and skills agenda to focus and maximise their effort by collaborating or merging to greater effect.

We will work with Banks to **increase lending to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)**, which is stagnating under this government.

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We will investigate the productive use of Council assets to match private investment to produce the land and space businesses needed to expand. We will **support Council (and ex-Council) employees to set up companies, cooperatives and mutuels** to bid for public sector work and develop businesses with a public purpose.

Brighton and Hove are known throughout the country for our small and unusual retail. The North Laine, The Lanes, St James's Street, Brunswick, Kemptown are all villages with extraordinary retail character. The reputation they create drives the economy. They have survived the recession remarkably well but they are fragile. They need the continued support of the City's tourism operation and the City Centre Business Forum and the Business Improvement District. **Local Labour will:**

- ✓ continue to support those initiatives, helping local areas to define themselves, give themselves an identity that will help them to promote their distinct areas.
- ✓ We will support Business Improvement Districts.
- ✓ We will campaign for the return of the business rate and the provision of services to businesses directly related to the rate.
- ✓ We will make full use of the incentives available to increase the number of businesses.
- ✓ We will back City College's city business skills unit and our local councillors and candidates will help local businesses to access the support they need to thrive.

Local Labour continue the improvements to the public realm:

- ✓ the cultural quarter
- ✓ the restyling of St James's
- ✓ the pedestrianisation of George Street
- ✓ the rejuvenation of Library Square and Jubilee Street.
- ✓ The seafront – especially east of the Pier

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We will initiate a design competition for street furniture, broadband boxes and encourage improvements that reflect Brighton and Hove's unique appeal as a retail centre, which plays such an important role in attracting far bigger investment to the city.

Vote Labour to save Brighton & Hove from deep tory cuts