

Labour is on your side



Islington Labour's manifesto for the
local elections 2006

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This is Islington Labour's manifesto for the 2006 election. The policies contained in this document are Labour's plan to make Islington a better and fairer place to live in.

The Labour Government and London Mayor Ken Livingstone are working together to make Islington a better place to live. But Islington's Lib Dem run council is not playing its part. During the six years that the Lib Dems have run Islington Council they have ripped people off, cut services and stopped listening. At the same time Labour in Islington has listened to people and changed. Labour is on your side.

Labour's ten headline pledges for Islington are:

1. **Cut crime and anti-social behaviour:** More local police on the beat, more CCTV and crack down on anti-social behaviour.
2. **Parking for people, not profit:** Halve the cost of visitors' vouchers, cut the cost of annual permits by £25, a better deal on estate parking and cut the hours for parking restrictions.
3. **A better deal for families:** Better school meals by sacking Scolarest, more childcare, improve youth services, and reverse Lib Dem cuts to play schemes. Improve secondary schools by working together with Labour-run Camden.
4. **More affordable housing:** Ensure at least half of new developments are built for rent and sale at affordable prices. Speed up council housing repairs.
5. **Financial commonsense:** Keep Council Tax below the London average. The Lib Dems have raised Council Tax by 33% since the last election.
6. **Cut councillors' pay:** Halve the amount spent on councillors, reducing the record amount top Islington Lib Dem councillors pay themselves.
7. **A better deal for older people:** Improve the meals on wheels service and invest in more lunch clubs, reversing Lib Dem cuts.
8. **A cleaner Islington:** Make the borough clean and green. Remove fly-tipped rubbish within two hours. Speed up removing graffiti and litter.
9. **More recycling:** Aim to increase recycling to 50% of waste by making it easier to recycle, especially for businesses and on estates. Labour will recycle for real not dump our waste on the developing world.
10. **A listening council:** End Lib Dem arrogance and listen to Islington people.

These policies are outlined in more detailed over the following pages. You can find out more at: www.islingtonlabour.org.uk. If you like what you read you can join the Labour Party by calling 08705 900200 or email us at info@new.labour.org.uk.

Introduction

By Catherine West, Leader of Islington Labour group.

Over the last few years the Labour government and Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, have injected millions of pounds into Islington. There is over forty percent more money for Islington than four years ago. That's nearly half as much again.

Despite this, Islington's Lib Dem council have squandered their opportunity to make a real difference to our borough.

Under the Lib Dems, Islington has fewer homes of a decent standard than neighbouring Camden or Haringey. We remain bottom of the league for GCSE results in London. Against the national trend, crime is rising and Lib Dem weakness on crime means we don't use ASBOs or CCTV properly. Amazingly, it is cheaper and easier for young people to buy a 'Happy Meal' at McDonalds than go to the local pool or to use the gym.

The Lib Dems have increased tax, cut services and raised charges. They have turned our borough into 'rip-off Islington'.

At the same time Labour in Islington has listened and changed. We have learnt from mistakes in the past. Labour is on your side.

The differences between Labour and the Lib Dems in Islington are very clear. The Lib Dems see the Council only as a way of administering local services. The Labour approach is more ambitious. Islington has a range of deep social problems; our borough is scarred by poverty, crime and poor housing. We believe Islington Council should do more than just keep things ticking over – it must help make our borough better.

The policies in this manifesto have one purpose: to make Islington a fairer, safer and better place to live. The Labour Party has always been on the side of the many not the few. In Islington this means good schools for all children, not just those who can afford to live on the border with Camden; and putting the housing needs of the whole community before those of rich developers. The contrast between our approach and that of Lib Dem leader Steve Hitchins – who claimed that people needed to earn £45,000 a year to live in Islington – could not be clearer.

The big problems in our area are caused by a breakdown in the community. And we see the community – people working together – as the way to solve them. We believe it is vital the communities are given the power to take ownership over their own areas. We believe change is only sustainable if local people feel a sense of ownership over what is happening. And, unlike the Lib Dems, we will be a listening council that takes the views of local people seriously.

Labour in Islington has changed. With your support we can change Islington.

Cllr Catherine West

Leader, Islington Labour Group.

Chapter 1: Making Islington safer

Labour's key crime and community safety pledge is:

- **Cut crime and anti-social behaviour: More local police on the beat, more CCTV and crack down on anti-social behaviour**

Labour believes that everyone has a right to live their lives, both in their homes and outside, without fear. For this to happen, action has to be taken to prevent criminal activities. The Lib Dems are not taking this action – they are weak on crime. We believe that the Council can play an important role in preventing crime and making neighbourhoods safer:

More local police: Safer Neighbourhood Teams

Safer Neighbourhood Teams are a Labour initiative, provided by the Labour Mayor of London and the Metropolitan Police Authority.

- Labour will work with the Labour Mayor and Metropolitan Police Authority to significantly increase the number of local police on the beat in Islington and target them at the crime hot-spots in our borough.
- Labour councillors will work closely with their Ward Teams to ensure that they are effectively used in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour within their wards.

ASBOs:

Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) are a useful tool given by Government to prevent specific cases of anti-social behaviour. They are more serious than Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, which are voluntary. ABCs were introduced by the Labour Council in 1999 and are mainly used to prevent young people acting in an anti-social way. These have been successful but only up to a point.

ASBOs are needed against anyone who refuses to stop creating a severe nuisance.

- ASBOs are used much more widely by our neighbouring boroughs. Last year Labour-run Camden introduced 201 ASBOs compared to Lib Dem Islington's 26, which could explain why some people are spilling over the border into Islington to cause trouble.
- Labour will work with the Police to use ASBOs much more widely and more effectively.
- Labour will also make sure that greater support and counselling is given to those who need it, for example drug users, to stop them living a life of crime.

More CCTV

The Liberal Democrats have made it clear that they don't believe that CCTV cameras make any difference to the amount of crime on the streets. Labour believes they are wrong. In Labour-run Camden Town Centre, street crime is down 24% since CCTV was installed. Islington now suffers from criminals coming into our borough from outside because they are less likely to be caught on CCTV here.

- Labour will work with the Police and local communities to establish permanent CCTV cameras in some areas such as shopping centres, and mobile cameras to deal with specific problems.
- The Government has provided two new mobile CCTV vans for

Islington; we will apply for more Government funding for this specific purpose, and liaise with local businesses, many of whom would contribute to the cost of CCTV to ensure more security for their premises.

Better youth provision

We believe that cuts to youth services by the Lib Dems have left many young people in Islington with little to do, leaving them hanging around the streets, which leads both to their getting into trouble and causing trouble. Labour will strengthen youth provision to give young people a positive alternative to crime and anti-social behaviour. The details of this are to be found in the 'Making Islington a better place for families' section of this manifesto.

Safer communities

The fear of crime can be debilitating for many of Islington's most vulnerable residents.

- Labour will ensure that basic repairs to communal areas, such as street doors and lights, are carried out quickly. Our detailed plans for this are set out in the Housing chapter.
- We aim to 'design out' crime as far as possible and will work with residents to improve areas which they perceive as dangerous. We will ensure that street and estate lighting is maintained effectively by tightening up management in those departments, and provide more lighting where needed.

Fighting gun and knife crime

Islington is seeing increasing levels of gun and knife crime. Labour councillors will work with the Police and the Labour Government and make the reduction of gun and knife crime a priority.

- The Council's Trading Standards Department will be used to make sure that dangerous and illegal weapons are not on sale, and to enforce current legislation about the sale of potential weapons to under-age children.
- We will work with Islington's schools and colleges to launch a major anti-knife campaign.

Alcohol-fuelled crime

Local councils and the Police have new powers to take early action to close pubs that are the focus of anti-social behaviour. Such pubs often run irresponsible 'happy hours', or sell alcohol to under 18s or to people who are already drunk. Alcohol abuse has a massive impact on crime and people's feelings of safety; it is responsible for many criminal acts including domestic violence. Labour would use the powers to reduce irresponsible sale of alcohol in Islington.

Drug-fuelled crime

Much crime is committed by people who are under the influence of drugs, and who need money to pay for their habit. The Government has given councils and police powers under the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 Crack House Closure Orders to close premises which are being used for the supply, use, or making of class A Drugs – this includes cars, sheds and garages. Labour would ensure that these powers are used effectively. Additionally, there is drug-taking in communal areas of some estates, which makes the area unpleasant for other residents. We will also help drug users to get proper treatment.

Working with the community

The most important and effective tool in fighting, and preventing, crime is people

– the residents of our borough. Labour councillors will support people in standing up against crime and antisocial behaviour.

- Labour will work with the Police to make it easier to report crime as many people have told us that it is difficult to do this. For

example, it is local residents who often know where ‘crack’ houses are situated.

- Labour will also work with the voluntary sector which has much experience in working with young people and in crime-preventing initiatives.

Chapter 2: Making Islington a better place for families

Our key pledge to Islington families:

- **A better deal for families: Better school meals by sacking Scolarest, more childcare, improve youth services, and reverse Lib Dem cuts to play schemes. Improve secondary schools by working together with Labour-run Camden.**

Making schools better

Standards in all Islington schools have risen steadily because of the dedication of teachers and staff and the extra funding provided by the Labour Government. However, we still have the worst GCSE results in London. The Labour council's top priority will be to ensure that all children achieve their full potential and that schools prepare them to play a full role in our community.

Islington's schools have been run by private firm *CEA@Islington* since 2000. The Lib Dems are poised to renew CEA's contract without any consultation or review. Labour believes that such an important contract should never be automatically renewed and will seek to open up this contracting process as soon as possible.

Islington Labour has struck a historic deal with Camden council where we would actively encourage a bid from Camden to run Islington's secondary schools.

Secondary school places in Camden are often in high demand by parents in Islington. Education in Camden is in the top three of inner London boroughs. At present Islington has the lowest GCSE results in London – breaking a key Lib Dem election promise. Camden Council have confirmed they would be keen to work with Islington to run our secondary schools.

This would move the operation of schools in Islington to the public sector,

instead of a private profit-based contractor. CEA's management fee for 2005/6 was almost £1 million.

Labour will work with all the schools in the borough to ensure that they co-operate with each other and the LEA. We will discourage schools from opting-out of the LEA. We will encourage diversity but we will not allow any state school in Islington to select on the basis of ability.

Labour believes there should be a new secondary school in Islington, but we believe the current proposals for an Academy on the site of St Mary Magdalene's are flawed. We believe there is an ideal site for a new school at the site of the Barnsbury Centre on Offord Road, however the Lib Dems have just sold this to private developers for housing. Labour will try to rescue this site for a new school.

The Labour Government has committed £130 million to re-build all of Islington's secondary schools by 2016. A Labour Council will work with the Labour government to ensure Islington gets the best deal possible from the *Building Schools for the Future* programme.

Improving school meals

Labour is very unhappy at the current standard of school meals in Islington, and will act to improve them. We will ban junk food in schools and ensure that school meals offer a nutritious and balanced diet. Labour will look to support staff when introducing better

school meals through more training and investment in better kitchen facilities. We will end the current unsatisfactory arrangement and encourage an in-house bid to replace Scolarest as the supplier of school meals.

Play centres, nurseries and provision for under 5s

The Lib Dems have stood by and allowed voluntary nurseries to close. Labour will work closely with voluntary nurseries and we will actively seek the financial resources to keep open those that serve families who cannot afford the high cost of private child care. Labour will seek to limit the cost of play centres to the level recommended by the Government.

We will enhance and expand the Sure Start centres, a Labour Government initiative which was refused further funding by the Lib Dem Council.

We will increase the number of after-school play centres and holiday play schemes, and reduce their costs. The Lib Dem Council's price rises have forced children out of these on to the streets and caused many schemes to close.

We will work with schools so that all children can have 'wrap-around' care between 8am and 6pm including breakfast clubs, sports facilities, homework clubs and arts clubs.

We will also work with the Labour Government's extended schools initiative to ensure that schools strengthen links with the community and involve local organisations.

Improving youth services

Labour will invest more in voluntary youth clubs cut by the Lib Dem Council. We will increase outreach work with young people who do not use organised

youth facilities. Labour will work to provide more opportunities for young people to divert them from anti-social behaviour.

We will introduce the 'Olympic Izz Card' to provide free access to leisure facilities for all young people from Islington.

Sport and the Olympics

The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics provides a wonderful opportunity to improve the sporting facilities in our borough. Labour is disappointed that the Lib Dems have failed so far to make more of this unique opportunity and we will campaign to ensure that Islington gets an Olympic legacy.

Labour would seek to improve sporting facilities in Islington by:

- Ensuring that Islington receives a fair share of money available for Olympics legacy projects.
- Ensuring that all five to seven year old children will have access to six free individual swimming lessons, in addition to existing school swimming lessons
- Working with others to co-ordinate sports provision across the borough.
- Being more transparent about the amount of money being invested in sports.
- Building links with sports clubs in the borough.
- Vigorously prosecuting those who damage Council sporting facilities

Islington has its own bit of Olympic history in the Hornsey Road Baths, which was the training site for the competitors in the Olympic swimming competition in 1948. Labour aspires to open a modern swimming facility and will investigate whether funding is available.

Chapter 3: Making Islington cleaner and greener

Labour will work to make Islington greener, cleaner and healthier for all. Our key environment pledges are:

- **A cleaner Islington:** make the borough clean and green. Remove fly-tipped rubbish within two hours. Speed up removing graffiti and litter.
- **More recycling:** Aim to increase recycling to 50% of waste by making it easier to recycle, especially for businesses and on estates. Labour will recycle for real not dump our waste on the developing world.

A Greener Islington

Islington residents deserve to live in a healthy environment. This means that not only do we need to improve the environment of Islington itself, but also that we need to make sure that Islington and its people contribute to the improvement of the world outside our borough.

To do this, Islington Labour understands the need to work together with Islington residents.

- Labour will promote the work of the *Islington Environment Forum*, which works with Council, voluntary sector and residents to build a sustainable borough.
- We will strengthen the Council's *Sustainability Agenda*.
- We will ensure that new homes in Islington meet the Eco Homes Standard.
- As current council vehicles come to the end of their life we will replace them with vehicles that emit zero CO2.

Rubbish collection

Labour is very concerned at the way in which the Council's contract with ICCL to collect rubbish has been enforced.

Labour will ensure the contract is enforced properly and rubbish collection is of a high standard.

- Labour will guarantee weekly rubbish collection. The Lib Dems

want to collect rubbish every fortnight.

Improving quality of life

People's quality of life can be drastically affected by the policies and actions of our council. The quality of streets, pavements, buildings and green spaces affect us all.

- Labour will work hard to ensure that wherever people go in Islington they find clean streets and buildings, safe pavements, clean air and well-controlled, safe traffic.
- We will ensure that bad roads and broken pavements are acted upon quickly by ensuring Council staff, such as road sweepers, report any problems immediately. This will save the Council hundreds of thousands of pounds a year in compensation payments.

Clean and safe neighbourhoods

Keeping our neighbourhoods clean and free from litter, dog mess, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and rubbish needs constant effort and vigilance.

Unfortunately, enforcement is not enough – many of the problems are caused by a lack of understanding of what is required of people to make life pleasant for all. We will test ways to give local people more of a sense of ownership over, and involvement in,

their area, and win their commitment to keep it clean.

- Labour will ensure all reported fly tipped rubbish will be collected in two hours and will vigorously prosecute fly tippers.
- Labour will have zero tolerance towards dog mess. We will double the number of fixed penalty notices against those who let their dogs foul the streets.
- We will re-invigorate the *Eyes for Islington* scheme, and investigate how it can become more involved in community activities.
- Labour will increase the number of litter bins in Islington.
- We will ban new sex shops in residential areas.

Safer roads

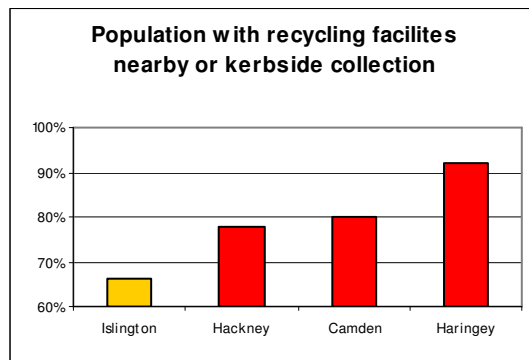
Everyone deserves safe roads where they live.

- Labour will maintain and extend 20mph zones, Safer Routes to Schools, and Lorry bans where feasible.
- We will use modern technology to control traffic speed, and work to eliminate road humps wherever possible. Labour will remove the road humps on Liverpool Road.
- We will introduce 'Home Zones' where residents request them and they make local sense. A 'Home Zone' is a group of streets arranged to meet the interests of pedestrians and cyclists rather than motorists.
- We will make cycling safer and easier on our streets.

Waste and recycling

Under the Lib Dems, Islington Council has failed on recycling. Recently, Islington came in at 374th place in a league table of 392 local authorities for their recycling performance. The Lib

Dems' panicked efforts to improve this led to Islington's 'recycling' being dumped in Indonesia.



A Labour council will work to a Zero Waste Strategy and we intend to make Islington's recycling performance the best in Inner London, with a recycling rate of 50%.

People and their commitment are essential in aiming for this level of performance, and we will work hard to educate and motivate residents, school children and adults as well as local businesses.

- Labour will make recycling more attractive and easier for all homes, street properties and estates and will promote more trade and business recycling.
- We will introduce easy ways to recycle bottles from Islington's many pubs and clubs.
- We will ensure that Islington Council plays its part in boosting recycling. Under the Lib Dems the council hardly recycles any of its own waste.
- We will improve the arrangements for collection or exchange of bulky domestic items and will bring back an improved Council skip service.
- The on-line *swapXchange Islington* service will be improved and promoted better.

- We will work with local retail and other outlets to reduce the amount of packaging which people accumulate when shopping.

Finally, Labour will be meticulous in managing our contracts with recycling suppliers, to ensure that Islington's recyclable materials are actually recycled rather than dumped in landfill sites, whether in the UK or abroad.

Green space

Parks and open spaces make life in Islington both healthier and more pleasant.

We will protect Islington's green space and never give planning permission that reduces the amount of green space available.

The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales. Islington has only one 'Green Flag' award, compared with Haringey's four. We will work to bring our other parks up to this standard.

Labour will improve the quality and quantity of play equipment, and the supervision of playgrounds, to improve the health and social development of our children.

We will work with Homes for Islington and other social landlords to improve the green spaces on estates, and will produce a strategy for encouraging better use of small plots and spaces in our streets and squares so that more

people can enjoy walking around the borough.

Public transport

London's public transport has improved beyond recognition under Labour Mayor Ken Livingstone. Islington Labour will work with Ken and his team to ensure that Islington gets the best possible deal from Transport for London. Labour will promote public transport, in particular the *Plus Bus* scheme.

Mobile phone masts

Under the Lib Dems Islington Council has become a soft touch in the face of big mobile phone companies.

- Set up a mast register showing all the phone masts in Islington, and applications for new masts. Many other councils have these.
- Make sure that when new masts are put up all, schools nearby receive two letters by recorded delivery consulting them on their views. One should go to the head teacher and the other to the chair of governors.
- Have a dedicated telecommunications plan that sets out clearly how the council will deal with phone mast planning in detail.
- Toughen-up procedures with phone mast operators to make sure they consult local communities and that radiation levels near masts are properly checked.

Chapter 4: Improving housing

Labour's key housing pledge is:

- **More affordable housing: ensure at least half of new developments are built for rent and sale at affordable prices. Speed up council housing repairs.**

Affordable housing for local people

A Labour council will make the provision of high quality affordable housing for local people a top priority.

The Liberal Democrats have given developers an easy ride at the expense of Islington families who are trapped in unsuitable and unhealthy homes. Commercial developers have exploited the Lib Dems weak planning system: the 4 area planning committees lack clear strategic guidance on planning decisions and have failed to apply consistent policies across the Borough. In addition to making better use of increased funding from the Labour Government in Westminster we will:

- Seek to ensure an at least 50% contribution of affordable units on new developments. Based on the London plan, this means 35% social rented and 15% low-cost home ownership. Within the low-cost home ownership element, we will prioritise provision for people on low wages.
- Demand that developers stop the 'less than 15 units' scam, where they are not required to make a contribution to social housing contribution on smaller developments.
- Prioritise the provision of community facilities and additional green space as part of new developments.

Better management of Council-owned housing

Islington Council owns the freehold of half the homes in the borough and its management of those homes through Homes for Islington, the local Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), plays an important part in ensuring that residents have a clean, green and safe environment which they can enjoy.

This requires improved cleaning and caretaking, better maintenance and more responsive housing management, to tackle noise and anti-social behaviour. It requires that tenants and residents have a real say before decisions that affect them are made.

Labour will seek to establish forums where all social landlords and representatives of residents in all the forms of social housing could meet.

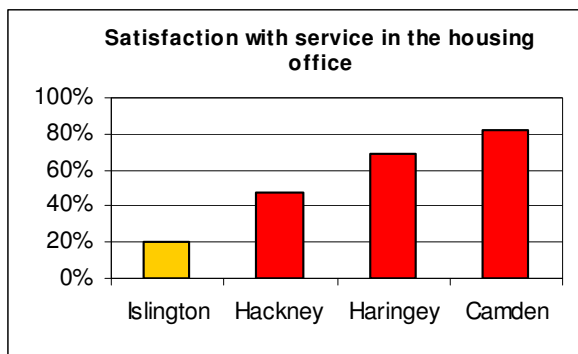
The Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)

Labour will put better housing management at the top of its agenda. We will ensure that that tenants and residents in Islington see a real difference in housing services - and have access to a service that delivers in terms of price, quality and accountability.

Labour will:

- Require closer monitoring of the quality of work being done by building contractors and their sub-contractors. Customer satisfaction will be a key measure in the monitoring process. No payment will be made to service providers unless agreed repair standards are met.

- Actively support the development of tenant involvement in setting and monitoring of housing management priorities through (i) tenants and resident associations; (ii) more effective tenant involvement with the ALMO.
- Push for better and more local service delivery on estates, in particular expanding the role of caretakers to include making minor repairs.
- Promote TRAs and other mechanisms (e.g. TMOs) which allow tenants to directly influence housing management priorities and if appropriate take on the local management of services.



Working with Housing Associations

Many Housing Associations do not place sufficient emphasis on high quality housing management. A Labour administration would:

- Actively monitor the quality of RSL housing management – and withhold support for new developments from poorly performing associations.
- Work with housing associations to end joint management of new and existing estates – which often contributes to poor housing and area management.

Achieving the Decent Homes Standard

A Labour Government has delivered the resources necessary to achieve the Decent Homes Standard in Islington. Under the Lib Dems, Homes for Islington has not focused on what tenants and leaseholders want.

- A Labour administration would actively listen to tenants and will improve management of major works to ensure that they are carried out to a higher quality and with more care for residents.
- The ALMO in Islington is to be wound up in 2010. Labour will review all available options, including a return to council management, and fully and openly consult tenants and staff. Any ballot would be run fairly, with all sides being given the opportunity to put their case. A Labour council in Islington will also campaign for central government to give tenants a real choice of options – including council ownership and management, continuation of the ALMO, or transfer to a housing association, with the same levels of public subsidy being available in each case.

Giving leaseholders a better deal

Labour understands that the high levels of investment required to refurbish council- housing after years of under-investment is placing excessive burdens on leaseholders.

We will ensure that major works estimates are subject to real scrutiny and that leaseholders are not overcharged. We will develop innovative approaches to supporting leaseholders that are unable to meet these costs – including ‘partial’ or full buy back of Right To Buy. We will also provide leaseholders with an option to pay for

regular maintenance over time.
Ultimately we will give leaseholders the value for money they deserve.

Reducing homelessness

Labour takes seriously the need to provide homes for the homeless in Islington. By developing innovative 'temporary to permanent' schemes we will increase the quality of housing available to vulnerable people and families.

Working with the private sector

A Labour council will promote the rights of private tenants and will work with landlords to improve the condition of private rented housing. We will use our powers under the new Housing Act to take enforcement action against any homes in multiple occupation which are unsafe. We will take action to bring empty properties into use as homes.

Chapter 5: Sustainable development in Islington

Islington is a rapidly growing Borough. There are more people wanting to live here and more businesses that want to locate here. Land values have risen sharply and development pressures have become intense. Labour will ensure that the growth of the borough is managed to benefit all of its residents, not just the better off.

A new Development Framework for Islington is already being developed that will have a lasting impact on the Borough over the next decade. We shall undertake a review of the core policies immediately on gaining power and will embark on a fundamental public consultation to revise the Development Framework based on our overall vision that Islington's future development must be sustainable. We will ensure that growth:

- benefits all the current and future residents of the Borough.
- is environmentally sensitive.
- is supported by the right level and range of public services and facilities.
- strengthens cohesion, community identity, neighbourliness and a sense of belonging.
- creates places to live and work that are safe and secure.
- sustains our 'town centres' as attractive and economically viable places.
- provides a variety of homes, particularly those which are affordable.
- creates a dynamic economy with businesses and jobs that are suitable for Islington residents.

Sustainable development

Over the coming years, it will be essential that homes and businesses in Islington make the maximum contribution to environmental protection. Our planning policies will aim to minimise waste, use energy and other

resources efficiently, improve air quality and preserve open public space.

Reducing the development pressure

The Lib Dems have betrayed many neighbourhoods by permitting excessively dense developments and weakening Islington's historic policies that previously limited the number of tall buildings. The Lib Dems have already surrendered City Road Basin, Old Street, and the Kings Cross Islington Triangle to tall buildings. They have failed to preserve the right balance between the interests of residents and the stresses caused by leisure and entertainment businesses and the excesses of the 'night time economy'.

Labour is determined to apply firm planning policies in support of our sustainable development goals.

- We will ensure that Islington has an urban environment of the highest possible quality, and one that is built to a human-sized scale and density.
- We will require imaginative design that respects the distinctive character of the Borough, its places, people and heritage.
- In promoting sustainable development, we will meet the needs of all residents especially those suffering from disadvantage and give priority to those parts of the borough in the greatest need.

A Better Archway

The Archway area needs to be regenerated, but throughout the Council's consultation on how to improve the area, local people have told us that they believe that the Lib Dems have not listened to their views. It is clear that the Lib Dems are surrendering to the interests of large developers and ignoring the wishes of the local community.

Labour is campaigning with local people towards a united and sustainable community in Archway. We are calling for small, incremental improvements to the area, achieved step by step, with the involvement and support of the local community

Boosting prosperity

Islington Labour will aim to raise the living standards of the majority of Islington's residents by encouraging business growth and creating jobs that are suitable for all Islington's residents.

- Labour shall seek mixed use development across the Borough and discourage large scale office developments in favour of

business spaces more suited to small and medium sized enterprises.

- We will encourage greater use of public transport and seek to reduce travel to work distances.
- We will ensure that local people have an active involvement in the development decisions that affect their neighbourhoods.

Taking urgent action

Proposals for major redevelopments are already taking shape in the Borough and we shall intervene to influence these decisions immediately following the May 2006 elections. We will review the Finsbury Park Area Action Plan, the Archway planning brief and we will re-open negotiations with Camden to secure a better development of the Kings Cross railway lands. We will make special efforts to revitalise the shops, offices, public buildings, amenities and homes along *a//* the main roads through the Borough to ensure they remain vibrant thoroughfares.

Chapter 6: Ending the Parking rip-off

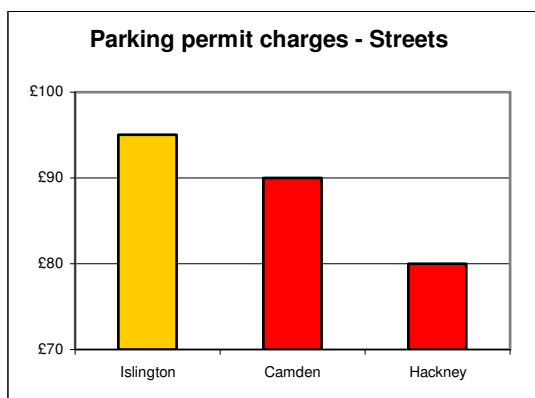
We believe that parking should be organised in the interests of people not the Council's profits. Our key parking pledge is:

- **Parking for people not profit**: halve the cost of visitors' vouchers, cut the cost of annual permits by £25, a better deal on estate parking and cut the hours for parking restrictions.

Cutting the cost of parking

Labour believes that parking controls should be sensibly designed and fairly applied. We will listen to local people over the extent of CPZs – introducing and removing them where local residents demand.

We will reduce the standard permit charges by £25 per annum, and will halve the cost of visitors' vouchers. We will review the limit on the number of vouchers people can purchase each year.

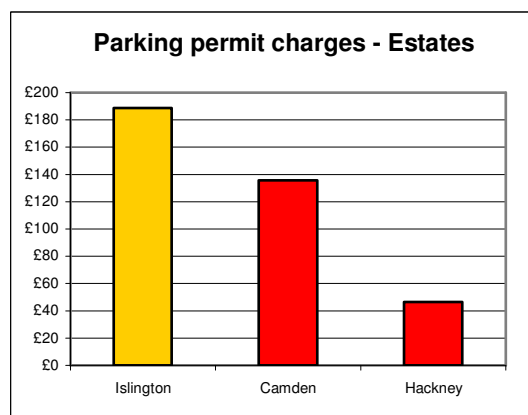


Estate parking

Labour believe the massive difference between the price of parking on streets and on estates is a disgrace. We will also immediately cut £25 from the cost of an estate parking permit. We will consult tenants and residents on how they want estate parking to operate, And we will ensure those on estates are not charged more than those who live in street properties for the same service.

Labour will also allow residents on estates to apply for parking visitor

vouchers so their visitors can park on neighbouring streets.



Reduced hours

Where local people request it, and where feasible, we will reduce operating hours for Controlled Parking Zones. We will closely study the effect of the new two-hour CPZ in north Islington.

Fairer enforcement

We believe that parking enforcement should be rigorous – and fair. We will make it a main aim of the Parking Service to explain rather than exploit the rules. They should work towards offence reduction rather than retribution.

Better business parking

With land at a premium, shopping areas in Islington do not have public car-parks available. This means that our shops are at a disadvantage compared with supermarkets. We will provide free short-term parking bays in our retail areas to redress the balance for local businesses and shoppers.

Arsenal

When Arsenal's new stadium opens at Ashburton Grove, the match-day parking scheme and transport arrangements must minimize the risk of chaos and inconvenience for local residents. We

will monitor the plans and their implementation closely, to ensure that the rights and concerns of residents are actively protected. We will also ensure that disruption to residents caused by non-football events will be minimised.

Chapter 7: Supporting all of Islington's people

The Lib Dems are letting down the most vulnerable members of our community.

Labour's key pledge is:

- **A better deal for older people: improve the meals on wheels service and invest in more lunch clubs, reversing Lib Dem cuts.**

Helping older people

Lunch clubs and day centres are vital to many older people. But despite this they have suffered cuts by the Lib Dems.

Labour will help older residents by:

- Not allowing more lunch clubs and day centres to close .
- Working with voluntary organisations and the community to develop new provision for older people which is appropriate for the changing community in Islington.
- Automatically allowing pensioners 12 months to spread the cost of Council Tax by direct debit.
- Work with the Government, NHS and other bodies to develop more multi-use centres that older people can visit.

Labour will tackle concerns about the quality of the home care service. We will enable councillors, and others, to inspect the service to ensure high standards.

Improving the Meals on Wheels service

Many people report that the Meals on Wheels service is letting down the people who depend on it.

- Labour will improve the Meals on Wheels service; both the quality of the food and the level of service provided to clients.

Supporting people with disabilities

Labour believes that the council can play a key role in helping all Islington citizens achieve their full potential. We will help residents with disabilities by:

- Increasing council support to organisations supporting disabled people, which have been seriously cut by the Lib Dems.
- Giving disabled people an increased allowance of parking visitors vouchers at the same (50% lower than current) cost as pensioners.
- Labour will set up workable policies to deal with the housing provision for disabled people. We will help disabled and vulnerable people who are living in inadequate housing conditions to find suitable accommodation.
- Labour will involve people with disabilities in the planning and delivery of housing services.
- Labour will work with partners across the borough to enhance disabled access in Islington.

Fair choice on Direct Payment

Labour will ensure all people get a fair choice on whether to receive services through direct payments.

Supporting our Post Offices

Labour believes it is vital to keep local post offices open. A Labour Council will support local Post Offices by:

- Allowing parking transactions (buying permits, visitor vouchers, paying fines) to be made in any Islington Post Office.
- Work with Post Office counters to reduce queues at peak hours.
- Retain cash payments at Municipal Offices.

Chapter 8: The Council and the community

Our key Council and community pledges are:

- **Financial commonsense:** Keep Council Tax below the London average. The Lib Dems have raised Council Tax by 33% since the last election.
- **Cut councillors' pay:** Halve the amount spent on councillors, reducing the record amount top Islington Lib Dem councillors pay themselves.
- **A listening council:** end Lib Dem arrogance and listen to Islington people.

Financial commonsense:

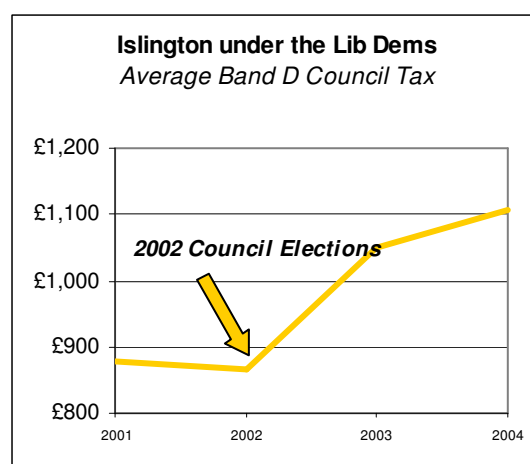
Since 1999 Islington council has received record amounts of money from the Labour Government. Despite this the Lib Dems have played politics with council finances. Just before the 2002 Council elections they cut Council Tax, and then raised it by sixteen percent after they were re-elected. Labour believes that people who use council services, and the people who deliver them, need a council that believes in financial common sense. We pledge:

- **Financial commonsense:** Labour will never play politics with the finances of our council. We will also maintain and increase external funding such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
- **Keeping Council Tax down:** Labour will keep Council Tax below the London average for all four years of our administration. The Lib Dems have increased Council Tax by 33% since the last election.
- **Efficient services:** Labour will look at ways of saving money by delivering services as efficiently as possible. We would always look to make fair efficiency savings rather than put up tax.
- **Council contracts that deliver:** The Lib Dems have failed to hold council contractors to account. Labour will properly supervise contractors to ensure they provide a high quality services, and will not hesitate to intervene

where necessary. We will not normally award very long term contracts.

At the same time top Lib Dem councillors, the Council Executive, pay themselves the highest salaries for Executive councillors in the country. In response to this Lib Dem greed Labour would cut top councillors' pay: We will cut in half the amount spent on Councillors and guarantee that no Executive Councillors will be paid more than the London average. We also will ensure that councillors publicly account for their time spent on council duties..

Labour will stop the Lib Dems' flashy PR-based 'A1 Borough' campaign and direct the resources away from costly consultants and into front-line services.



A listening council:

Under the Lib Dems Islington Council does not listen to people. Labour believes that we need to give the people

of Islington much more say in the way the council is run:

- Islington Labour will seek views on whether to change the ways the Council tries to involve the public. In particular, we will look at ways to make Area Committees more effective and transparent. We will look at changing the boundaries for area committees, including a new Area Committee for the Clerkenwell and Finsbury area with the powers of a Parish Council (the Lib Dems promised to do this in their last manifesto, and have now broken that promise), increase the ability for the public to ask questions and allow member of the public to items on the agenda for discussion at Area Committee meetings.
- Labour believes it is vital to empower the community to make more decision and we will be radical about how we approach this. We will consult on other ways of involving local people in the council's decision making.

The current Lib Dem administration does not like being scrutinised. The current council-level scrutiny committees do not relate to either services or groups of users. And the committees themselves are packed with Lib Dem cronies. On the other hand, Labour welcomes strong scrutiny. We believe that a strong council scrutiny function will improve decision-making, improving services and save money. Labour will introduce:

- A young people's scrutiny committee and commit to implementing Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that young people: *'have the right to say what they think should happen*

when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.'

- An equalities scrutiny committee which will have a specific remit for community cohesion and keep an eye on Health & Adult Social Services, again with representatives from across Islington's diverse communities, the Pensioners Forum, disability organisations and BME communities.
- A Safer and Stronger Communities scrutiny committee which will have a remit covering community safety as well as housing and the environment. This would invite representatives from the Police, FITA and others.
- An Audit Committee, including a significant representation of non-Councillors, to ensure public money is spent wisely and effectively.

Labour's approach to scrutiny will be different because we will:

- 1) Invite community, voluntary sector and partner public service representatives to participate; not just councillors.
- 2) Be transparent and make it clear which committee is responsible for which service area.
- 3) Give real power to members of the community; for example, to place issues on the agenda for discussion.

The Lib Dems do not believe in consulting people about decisions made by the council. Labour believes in real consultations: a Labour council would proactively seek to get the views of local people on issues that affect them, and we will listen to, and act on, the results.

Working with Council staff

Labour understands the importance of council staff being well trained, well motivated and well paid. This will lead to better quality services for all. Labour will build a good relationship with staff and trade unions. We will aim, at all times, to be a good employer. Labour strongly prefers existing Council services to be delivered by directly employed and accountable staff.

Supporting Community Organisations

Islington Labour believes that it is more effective for the council to help local people improve their own communities. Therefore we will look to work with, and support, the voluntary sector in its efforts to improve Islington.

The Lib Dems have badly damaged the voluntary sector and community organisations in Islington. Labour will seek a new deal with the local voluntary sector. We will review the council's support to voluntary and community groups to establish how best to allow community organisations of all sizes a real role in service delivery and a secure future whatever their area of interest.

The Lib Dems have cut funding for organisations that give advice and support to people in Islington. A Labour council will look urgently at ensuring there is adequate provision of independent advice and support for everyone in Islington.