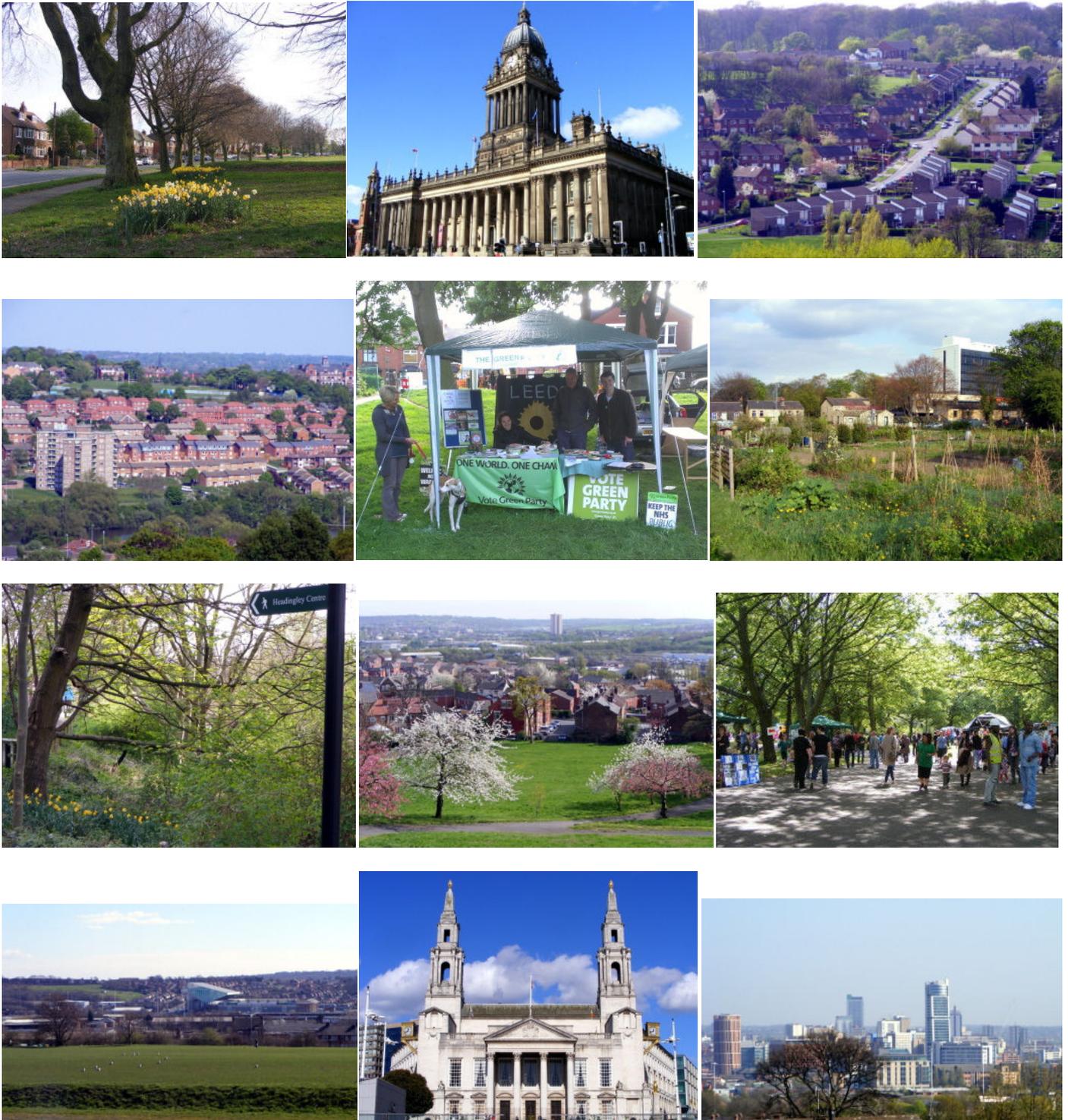


Towards a Green Leeds

A vision for a sustainable, fairer future



The Leeds Green Party Manifesto 2014



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Introduction

The Green Party of England & Wales aims to create a just, equitable and sustainable society. We focus our efforts primarily, though not exclusively, through the electoral system.

OUR PRINCIPLES

The Green Party of England & Wales has a short statement of our **Core Values**, and a longer explanation, called the **Philosophical Basis**, of the underlying thinking and motives behind our policies.

policy.greenparty.org.uk/core-values

policy.greenparty.org.uk/philosophical-basis

OUR POLICIES

All the Green Party of England & Wales' policies are available through the party's website greenparty.org.uk

We also have short documents called **Policy Pointers** which are intended both as introductions to Green Party of England & Wales policies and as downloadable leaflets at policy.greenparty.org.uk/policy-pointers

The **Policies for a Sustainable Society** (PSS) contains all the policies agreed at successive Green Party conferences by its members. These are our main detailed policies from which local policy objectives are derived. The PSS is a living and evolving document which goes through a rigorous and democratic approval process - annual conferences of the Party are the supreme policy making body.

policy.greenparty.org.uk

OUR LOCAL PARTIES

The Green Party of England & Wales comprises of local parties, and the general practice of the Party is to encourage the greatest possible autonomy of each local party in its pursuit of the aims of the Party. Therefore local parties can produce their own policies and campaigns consistent with the *Philosophical Basis* of the Party as expressed in *Policies for a Sustainable Society*.

OUR MANIFESTO FOR LEEDS

This manifesto aims to provide a vision of what Leeds would be like if the Green Party were to form an administration in Leeds City Council. It highlights the local policies our councillors seek to introduce as we work towards that target, and promotes the many reasons for the people of Leeds to turn Green candidates into hardworking Green councillors.

This manifesto was drawn up by a working group of members of the three local Green parties in Leeds, with Cllr David Blackburn contributing in an advisory role.

Chris Foren – Headingley Green Party (Secretary, Leeds Green Party)

Colin Noble – Leeds Green Party (Fundraising & Events Officer)

Andrew Pointon – Farnley & Wortley Ward Green Party (Secretary)

Additional contributions were made by David Smith (Campaigns Officer 2011-2013)

Arts & Leisure

What we stand for

- Defending the city's libraries from cuts, seek to improve book stocks and do more to promote reading in our schools and beyond.
- Supporting and promoting public art and literature schemes.
- Promoting music in schools, especially for the city's most deprived and vulnerable children.
- Encouraging full use of our community centres and parks by all our people.
- Increasing support for creative organisations that promote social inclusion
- A wide range of leisure and cultural activities, easily accessible and available to all, no matter where they live in the city.
- Encouraging participation in outdoor and indoor, formal and informal sports and physical exercise for residents of all ages – for health and enjoyment.
- Making improved youth provision a priority. This is not only something we owe our young citizens, it can also make a major contribution to dealing with perceptions of safety in the wider community, as young people will need to hang around less if they have more to do.
- Working with the voluntary and community sectors, and with young people themselves as much as possible, to provide a wide range of youth facilities and activities.

Community Safety & Crime

Greens believe communities should be at the heart of policing. We think police officers and uniformed PCSOs should be visible in our neighbourhoods, and should attend community meetings to understand – and act on – local people's priorities.

Their efforts should be focussed on building relationships with residents and businesses, and most of their time and effort spent preventing crime.

The police should work in close partnership with the city council, health providers and the community and voluntary sector, and devolve budgets to neighbourhood teams to spend on local policing priorities, and to fund youth work and other diversionary activities.

The police must continue to work closely with the criminal justice system to ensure those responsible for crime and anti-social behaviour are brought to justice. For less serious offences, the police should try to seek resolution between the offender and the victim through restorative justice.

Greens will:

- campaign for a greater proportion of police budgets to be spent on the further development of neighbourhood policing to ensure a closer relationship between the police and the communities and businesses they serve.
- promote greater partnership working, including pooled budgets, between the police, the city council, health providers and the community and voluntary sector to deal with the causes of crime, not least through more support for youth work and young people's activities.
- lobby for the abolition of the Police & Crime Commissioner post. We believe the politicisation of the police is bad for the force, bad for the community and bad for democracy. We should reinstate the Police Committee made up of elected councillors.
- always strive to protect the human rights of every citizen.
- monitor the police to ensure they deliver on their commitment to allow peaceful protest.
- monitor and improve custody standards at police stations across Leeds.
- champion the adoption of an environmental strategy to make WYP one of the 'greenest' police forces in the UK.
- increase funding for services for victims of sexual violence in the city.
- support licensing officers in their work to reduce alcohol-related harm in the city.

Education

We believe in schools working with, and being accountable to, their local communities to support the development and educational achievement of children. We see schools as being the hub of their communities and working collaboratively with each other, not in competition, to spread good practice and resolve problem. To these ends, we:

- support Education for life - e.g. support University of the Third Age, support return of adult education e.g. Workers' Educational Association (WEA), etc.
- will lobby to scrap tuition fees, SATS, league tables and Ofsted, thus maximising local control over the curriculum, where we would like to see more education on conflict resolution and problem solving, and more education on development and democracy.
- believe in providing smaller class sizes.
- will promote more local schools, hence less travel; and more school buses (real and walking).
- oppose the further creation of Academies and Free Schools, which remove control of schools from parents, teachers and the wider community. Evidence suggests Academies do not improve standards.

Energy, Farming, & Food

We work towards:

- insulation of hard to treat domestic properties.
- maintaining an effective Energy Unit within the Council.
- maintaining a comprehensive long term energy plan for the City.
- launching a sustained programme of energy education.
- continuing to improve the energy performance of all public buildings with smart metering.
- supporting the energy and heating advice service.
- looking into ways of using waste heat in the city.
- providing support for community initiatives.
- ensuring that new buildings are designed and orientated to take the best advantage of solar energy.
- supporting micro-generation of energy, for example through small scale production, coppicing, etc.
- promoting and encouraging the use of allotments and production of local produce.
- promoting and encouraging local farmers' markets.
- the introduction of council-run market gardens.

Health & Social Care

Health

Our vision is for a city where life expectancy is not determined by postcode or wealth. Every section in this manifesto includes policies to improve the health of the people of Leeds – from insulating the city's homes to setting up a core network of safe cycle routes and from improving air quality to promoting allotment use and local farmers' markets.

We will use the Council's increased role in the coordination, overview and delivery of local health services to defend local service levels wherever possible, whilst also promoting preventative health and early intervention wherever possible.

We would like to see a stronger focus on the role of the Director of Public Health and Public Health England (which has an office in Leeds).

- We will lobby the Government to maintain funding levels and equal access for all to NHS services in Leeds. We will fight to keep the NHS public.
- We will lobby for the provision of NHS dentistry for all. We will press for government

policy where the NHS provides all treatment free at the point of use, including free dental care, eye tests and the abolition of prescription charges.

- We will work with partners in the Hospital Trust, the new GP consortia and other health care providers to keep health services as local as possible, easily accessible close to where people live and fully comprehensive.
- We will be forthright and robust in our criticism of any reductions in service in Leeds and will use all powers at our disposal to resist such developments.
- As part of the Council's responsibility to take the leading role in health issues we will proactively involve local people in discussions about health services and feed the results back to health care providers and Government.
- We will seek to maintain services providing support to people addicted to drugs and alcohol (whether the services are provided by the council, voluntary sector or others). Whilst these people are unlikely to speak up for themselves and an easy target for cuts, drug and alcohol addiction fuels a great deal of crime in Leeds and results in greater costs for health and social services if it is not tackled.
- We will pursue other policies to promote a healthy Leeds including reducing pollution, healthy local food and warm secure homes.

Social Care

We believe in a society where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

What we stand for

- The hallmark of a civilised society is how well it cares for its most vulnerable members, especially during difficult economic times. These citizens include the following:
 - Older and very old people
 - Children
 - Disabled people of all ages
 - People with mental health problems
 - People with high support needs.
 - People with learning difficulties
 - Families with disabled children
- We believe that high-quality social services are vitally important and that they should not bear the brunt of government cuts.
- We believe that preventative care, healthy food, a clean environment, well-insulated homes and an adequate income help to reduce pressure on social services and improve quality of life for everyone.

Greens will:

- prioritise the protection of Social Care.
- resist the wholesale outsourcing and privatisation of care services and the driving down of standards. Work together with staff, user groups and voluntary organisations to find the best ways of providing services. We will ensure that provision is fully co-ordinated with the work of GPs and other healthcare providers.
- expand advice and take-up schemes for welfare so that all users of social services are able to claim the benefits to which they are entitled.
- would endeavour to set up a capacity building fund to encourage new groups and initiatives. Whilst longer-term funding agreements are a priority, if used alone they can stifle innovation in service provision.
- monitor waiting times and address any problems that are identified.
- prioritise support for carers, recognising the invaluable work that they do. This would include, but would not be limited to, increasing the available levels of respite. Carers need holidays too!
- seek to improve the availability of advocacy for users of social services.
- implement 'review and monitoring' systems to make sure that people receiving individual budgets are not exploited by unscrupulous providers.
- ensure adequate public-sector day care is provided to those who need it.
- monitor closely the welfare of those people covered by personalised care
- ensure service changes are made only after fully involving users in the decision making process. Support initiatives which encourage the direct involvement of local service users in the management of provision
- support the third sector to provide advocacy support for people in need of local services and in the delivery of supplementary care and support.
- work to increase the supply of supported housing for vulnerable groups.
- lobby for greater support for carers, both nationally and locally.
- work with trade unions and employers to improve the conditions and services of care service workers, many of whom are poorly paid.

Housing

We oppose the housing target of 70,000 over the next 15 years as being unattainable and unsustainable environmentally.

Any new building programme should be of green energy efficient homes and should concentrate on greening existing homes as this cuts the nation's benefit bill, and increases the tax and national insurance and VAT take. It is estimated that for every £1 of public money spent on housing, the Government claws back about 70p.

Building energy efficient new homes and retrofitting the existing stock cuts the nation's carbon footprint and reduces fuel poverty.

Greens will:

- continue to lobby for an end to council house sales. If sales continue all money raised should be reinvested in new homes.
- continue to support the work of co-ops, community land trusts and co-housing groups.
- continue to campaign for the proper control and regulation of letting agents and work with Housing Trusts and private landlords to create an ethical lettings agency.
- campaign for the introduction of private rent stabilisation, setting maximum annual rent increases and entitling tenants to agreed services from their landlords.
- use compulsory purchase powers to fill private sector homes empty for more than six months.
- improve and protect the city's sheltered and supported housing.
- campaign for better financial and benefit advice for tenants.
- work with the city's housing co-ops cohousing groups to try and increase their role in meeting unmet housing need.
- support mixed development. Monitor and review the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (in relevant areas of the city) in order to build and maintain strong, balanced communities. Continue to support the local planning policy known as 'Article 4 Direction' giving the council the power to prevent new conversions from family housing to a shared 'student house' in areas where the balance is in danger of changing the nature of the local community. This does not mean we are opposed to student housing, rather we believe the council should have stronger powers to manage the adverse effects where individual streets are in danger of becoming dominated by one type of resident. We support purpose built student accommodation where there is a proven need.

Leeds Environment

Local Policies

- We actively support small 'human size' farms where animals are reared organically and, as far as is practical, allowed to roam free. Animals should also be protected from climatic conditions that would be harmful to them.
- We encourage a reduction in the consumption of all animal produce and would actively promote the development and use of foods which are both more humane and healthy.
- We aim to introduce a 'hot line' to enable citizens to determine whether individual trees and hedgerows are protected and, if not, to help them place Tree Preservation Orders quickly and efficiently.
- We actively support the growth and development of urban wildlife and ecosystems, with special emphasis on the creation of wildlife corridors.
- Forestry would be supported and developed, both for its own sake and as a renewable resource.
- We support the extension and improvement of green spaces, including the river and canal environments.
- We applaud Council's acceptance of the idea of a city centre park but we want the reality to be bigger and better than their current thinking.
- We will oppose any fluoridisation of the Leeds' water supplies.

Local Democracy

We want to give residents more power to make decisions for their neighbourhoods. We want to restore democratic control of decisions by opening up the way councillors and officers make decisions, to all political parties and the public.

We will back public and not-for-profit organisations to deliver services to meet the city's needs.

Locally we work towards:

- devolving power to lowest level practicable.
- reducing Leeds City Councillors' allowances. Basic Allowances should be reduced by 9% and Special Responsibilities Allowances by 29% in line with the amount that Leeds Green councillors currently claim.
- proportional representation for local elections.

Local Economy & Taxation

The Green Party believes that we need a new economic vision, which encourages a diverse economy and investment in the green jobs of the future but also values quality of life and the special character of our city. We believe 'green industries' have a huge role to play in creating prosperity in Leeds. Jobs could be created quickly across the employment spectrum, for example, by insulating homes, fitting solar panels, and building new 'green' homes.

Locally we work towards:

- local production for local use by promoting small scale local businesses.
- lobbying central government to allow councils to set business rates that encourage sustainability re-use and repair.
- encouraging local businesses to adopt a Living Wage above the level of the Minimum Wage.
- encouraging and extending farmers markets & cooperatives.
- supporting Kirkgate Market.

Transport

Greens champion better public transport and a better deal for walkers and cyclists. We are not opposed to cars, but to car dependency. Most car journeys made in the city are local and unnecessary and could be walked, cycled or made by bus. We believe we need to persuade people to change the way they travel, if we are to tackle climate change, cut the city's carbon footprint and make Leeds a better and safer to place to live.

Locally we work towards:

- a 21st Century integrated transport policy that includes a priority for public transport, and includes walking and cycling.
- opposing the NGT Trolley bus route to Holt Park via Headingley and the resulting destruction of trees and green spaces.
- opposing the HS2 railway line and campaigning for the money to be spent on improving local rail services.
- developing a planning process that reduces the need for travel.
- campaigning for more local control over public transport and the re-regulation of buses.
- introducing more car-free zones, increasing home zones and 20 mph zones, car clubs, and bus lanes.
- improving passenger information and ensuring everyone knows about their local services
- encouraging operators to improve the image of public transport.
- encouraging the use of cycles.
- addressing seriously the needs of pedestrians and disabled people as road users.

Pedal Power

Bicycles are a healthy and efficient means of transport and in cities like Leeds are as fast and convenient as cars. However, most people are put off cycling simply because traffic levels in Leeds make it a dangerous way to travel. They turn to other methods of transport which cost users and the community more for example buses and cars. Despite this, there are more bicycles than cars in the U.K. and as many new bicycles as new cars sold in each year. If the conditions were right, many more people could use their bicycles.

Local Policies

We work towards:

- ensuring all road modifications take account of cycle safety.
- making special provision for cyclists at dangerous junctions.
- developing a network of attractive routes and cycleways.
- bidding for available government funding to create segregated cycle lanes on the major roads in Leeds as part of our strategy to help Leeds be a major, modern European city which attracts jobs and residents.
- giving maintenance of present road surfaces priority over building new roads.
- providing more and safer cycle parking facilities and committing the Council to a cycling budget that recognises that thousands of Leeds people use cycles.
- providing, protecting, maintaining and increasing public rights of way and leisure routes for walkers and cyclists.

Moves Afoot

The commonest way of making a journey is by foot. The emphasis given to motor traffic always leaves people on foot second best when it comes to crossing busy roads and walking beside them.

Local Policies

We work towards:

- reducing the amount of through traffic and the speed of traffic in all areas, especially in residential areas to 20mph e.g. through the use of traffic calming.
- pursuing selected pedestrianisation and road closure schemes in residential and commercial areas.
- providing more road crossings, keep subways clean and attractive, and generally providing safe and pleasant conditions for pedestrians where necessary at the expense of motor traffic.

Waste & Recycling

Locally we will work towards:

- following the principles of the Five Rs – Reduce, Refuse, Reuse, Repair, and Recycle
- promoting education & inducements for waste reduction.
- the separation & collection of bio-waste as an alternative to incineration.
- increasing the number of recycled products such as all 7 types of plastic, and textiles. Recycling facilities for all sorts of glass should be freely available around Leeds, but the emphasis should be on reusable glass products like bottles with a small refund for their return.
- ensuring pedestrian and cycle access to recycling sites.
- continuing to oppose the Cross Green incinerators and any other future waste incinerators in Leeds.
- dealing with Contaminated Land where possible or encourage plant growth through Natural Attenuation (NA) if applicable.

Contact Leeds Green Party

To find out more, to help our campaigns, or to join the Green movement:

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