

A message from Nicholas Rushton, Leader of the County Council

"The Opposition parties may well focus their campaigns on negative issues in the run up to 2nd May. I am proud of the fact our manifesto concentrates on our solid record of achievement, and sets out our positive plans to put Leicestershire on the right track to prosperity and growth. At the same time I want to make it clear that under my leadership the Conservative Group has acted quickly and decisively where there has been any breach of the Group Rules on conduct and behaviour. I give an absolute commitment that will continue to be the case.

It is never easy to separate local elections from the national political picture. In my view, it has never been more important to do so. Conservatives will concentrate on local, County issues and I beg your good sense to see through any ploy to convince you otherwise. There are five good reasons to back the Conservatives on 2nd May:

- We have frozen council tax for the last 3 years in a row and we will keep it low.
- We want to attract and support new business in Leicestershire to create jobs and prosperity for the whole community.
- Keeping our communities as some of the safest in the country by minimizing crime and supporting the victims of crime.
- Continue to invest in improved care for the elderly, with better links with the NHS.
- Striving for Excellence in all our schools so children and young people are equipped with the skills they need for the future."

Vote Conservative on 2nd May 2013
The Right Future for Leicestershire

Environment, Highways & Transportation

Conservatives are proud to have some of the best roads' infrastructure in the country. We maintain nearly 2,500 miles of highways, 61,000 streetlights, deal with over 20,500 road, pavement and pothole repairs and our gritters keep our county on the move whatever the weather has to throw at us.

Key achievements and priorities for the future:

- Over 75 councils took part in the National Highways and Transport survey in 2012. Leicestershire was the top performing county council for the condition of its roads.
- Secured £3m in Government funding for highways maintenance projects and in the 2013/14 Budget, Conservatives invested a further £1.5m for pothole repairs.
- We introduced the Street Lighting reduction scheme, which aims to cut carbon emissions by 30% by 2014, and save taxpayers over £800,000 per year.

Conservatives keeping Leicestershire on the Move

Waste Management

The overriding priority for Leicestershire is to secure the best deals possible to reduce our liability to landfill tax. This costs Leicestershire taxpayers nearly £6 million in 2012/13, and given the need to find savings, is an unacceptably high burden for taxpayers to bear.

Key achievements and priorities for the future:

- Conservatives intend to declare a zero-tolerance policy on landfill tax. In 2009, over 50% of waste was disposed of in landfill. We have reduced this to just over 32% in 2011/12.
- We have improved the recycling facilities at Lount. We are currently investing £2 million overhauling Whetstone Household Waste and Recycling Centre and have plans to improve facilities at Kibworth and Melton.

Putting Communities in Charge

Protecting the environment and the rural character of our County is another top priority for Conservatives. Building a better, more prosperous society is also about developing, protecting and enhancing our village communities. They need to thrive too.

A new Conservative Administration will:

- Invest £6 million in rural broadband and infrastructure.
- Introduce The Veterans Charter for Leicestershire.

Safer Communities & Policing Relations

Over the last 4 years, by working with our partners in delivering safer communities, there is a serious story of success to tell.

- Total crime reduced by 25.1%.
- Violent crime down by 31.1%.
- Domestic abuse crimes down by 27.3%.
- 23% reduction in serious, acquisitive crime.
- 56% reduction in anti-social behaviour.
- Working through the County's Youth IMPACT team, youth re-offending rates are down by 13%.
- Young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time has been reduced by 49%.

Public Health and Promoting Healthier Lifestyles in Leicestershire

Local healthcare is undergoing a revolution. Through the Conservative-led Government's reforms to the NHS, the County Council will use them to improve the health and wellbeing of the population within the County and in Rutland.

Conservatives believe there can be no better Olympic legacy for Leicestershire than to promote fitter, healthier, more active lifestyles.

Polling stations open:
7am to 10pm on 2 May 2013

 **Vote Conservative**



This pocket version contains only a summary of our policies but the full manifesto is available to see and download from our Conservative Group website at:

www.leicestershireconservatives.org.uk

Twitter:
@LeicsCC_Cons

Promoted and published by Dr R K A Feltham,
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The Conservative Summary Manifesto for
the Leicestershire County Council

Elections 2 May 2013

**Going for Growth:
The Right Future for
Leicestershire**



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 **Vote Conservative**

OUR RECORD OVER LAST 4 YEARS

- Freezing Council Tax has saved hard working families £480 since 2009 – a real terms reduction of 16.7%, which has put £57m back into the local economy.
- We reduced the size of the County Council costs by £48m to become the best “value for money” council, and reduced debt by £21m.
- We enabled more elderly people to remain in their own homes.
- Despite being the most underfunded local authority, our schools are among the best performing in the country, with 83% being rated good or outstanding.
- We acted quickly to remove many unauthorised traveller sites.
- We refurbished and built new libraries.
- We committed £6m for rolling out super-fast broadband.
- Leicestershire was awarded Council of the Year 2009.

OUR PLEDGES FOR NEXT 4 YEARS

- We will strive to make Leicestershire the best place to live, work and stay healthy.
- We will continue with sound and prudent financial management, securing value for money in everything we do.
- We will ensure a comprehensive package of measures to support jobs, economic growth and infrastructure.
- We will safeguard the interests of the most vulnerable children and adults in society.
- We are determined to put communities in charge to enable people to shape their localities the way they want.
- We will continue the Local Authority Mortgages Scheme helping first time buyers get their foot on the housing ladder.

Council Tax and Finance

In 2009 we promised to keep your council taxes down and we have frozen the County-element of your council tax for the last three years. We also pledge to keep future rises below the rate of inflation.

A new Conservative administration will:

- Freeze the council tax again for the financial year 2013/14.
- Keep a tight-lid on the council tax level you pay in future years and any rise will be below inflation.
- Maintain Council reserves at prudent levels to enable investment in frontline services and keep the council tax down.
- Have repaid over £21 million debt, reducing the burden on local taxpayers.
- Focus more than half of our County Council spending on local, small and medium sized firms, now worth £174 million per annum.
- Explore budget-pooling agreements with other Councils in Leicestershire and beyond to support efficient service delivery and find new and innovative ways to manage demand for our services - placing people and outcomes ahead of bureaucracy.
- Change fundamentally the way the Council thinks it should provide services - with more commissioning, facilitating or enabling of service delivery. This will be delivered by a cross-party Transformation Board who will be tasked to “think the unthinkable”.

Driving a Thriving Economy

Boosting the economy of Leicestershire is the top issue for Conservatives. The County Council is in a unique position to shape the local economy and drive growth, jobs and investment in infrastructure. We are one of Leicestershire’s largest employers and have a spending power of over £780 million per year. With that sort of economic clout, we are able to influence new markets to meet demand and change expectations and outcomes. We have already invested substantially in the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park and we intend to do much more.

- We will provide £3.2 million in economic development support including loans to small business- particularly those in rural areas who struggle to raise capital for investment.
- We will work with our colleagues in Leicester City Council to develop a County/City Deal working with Government and the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) to win greater freedoms from Whitehall control to boost the local economy.
- We will explore the benefits of co-operating where we can with other LEPs in neighbouring authorities.
- Conservatives have plans to utilise all their New Homes Bonus monies from Government to support units of affordable rural homes and extra care housing.
- We will aggressively oppose the second-phase High-speed rail (HS2) link proposed to run through parts of Leicestershire.

Conservatives are determined to tackle worklessness, upskill the local workforce, cut through the red tape blocking the release of employment land and buildings, will concentrate on distribution and logistics and take measures to tackle capital availability and support measures which drive economic growth.

Children and Young People

The last four years have seen a revolution in the way education is provided in Leicestershire. We have an enviable record of achievement, of which we can be justifiably proud.

Over the last four years we have:

- Devolved most of the schools’ budget and given as much autonomy from Local Authority control as possible to schools to determine their priorities. Over 83% of our schools are rated good or outstanding by OFSTED.
- Supported the Government’s plans to drive up standards in education with the Academies programme - nearly 60% of our schools have converted.

Over the next four years we will:

- Introduce the Education Excellence Partnership in Leicestershire. Its job will be to provide a good supply of excellent school places within the County to continue our fine tradition of providing excellent education, despite being the lowest funded authority for education in the country.
- Continue to maintain our support for the Safeguarding of children and young people.
- Develop the Supporting Leicestershire Families programme with a £6.7 million investment.
- Argue the case with Government to give up their control of funding to allow us to provide local solutions to local problems- particularly over catchment areas and home to school transport.
- Maintain our network of Children’s Centres by making up the shortfall in Early Intervention Grant and protect early years services with £3.2 million investment.

Adults & Communities

Conservatives have always been mindful of the impact of the growth of adult social care services. This is why it is the biggest County Council spending department. In this 2013/14 financial year, the net Adults and Communities budget is over £127 million. Conservatives are particularly proud of their record in maintaining this level of funding, despite demographic pressures and have always provided the extra resources to meet demand.

Over the last 4 years we have:

- Successfully transferred nine of the County Council’s residential care homes to the private sector without compromising quality or standards of service.
- Refurbished the library in Oadby and built new libraries at Leicester Forest East and Lutterworth.
- Completed the £1.3m redevelopment of the county’s biggest library in Loughborough.
- Built two new Learning Disability Respite Care facilities in Oadby and Wigston and in Melton Mowbray at a cost of £2million.

Over the next four years we will:

- Continue to support plans for 100% take-up of personal budgets.
- Invest £7.5 million to modernise the Adults & Communities department including greater integration with the NHS, to reduce admissions to hospital.
- Continue to work with district housing authorities to deliver extra-care housing accommodation.
- Expand the ‘First Contact’ Scheme which enables agencies to work together to refer people to appropriate agencies in a co-ordinated way.