

Wimbledon Labour Party

Merton Labour On Your Side: Our Policy priorities 2022-26

18th April, 2022

Throughout the pandemic, your Merton Labour Action Team has worked hard to keep Merton's residents safe. This is where we live, and we are proud of our community. Now we want to look forward. Since lockdown ended, we've been out and about, listening to how Merton's residents' lives have changed, and what everyone's priorities are.

As a result, we've drawn up a plan for the future. After years of austerity delivered by the Conservatives and Lib Dems, it won't be easy, especially while we face a cost of living crisis. So join us, in our community, as we look to build for the future.

Labour in Merton has always been on your side. We have:

- Set council tax at zero for low-income households, unlike other councils, and lower than all our outer London neighbours for everyone else
- Distributed £57m financial support to local businesses
- Maintained free school meals after the government scrapped them
- Achieved excellent school standards and children's services
- Kept all libraries and leisure centres open, unlike other councils, including a new library in Colliers Wood and a new leisure centre in Morden
- Delivered over 1,000 new affordable homes
- Brought AFC Wimbledon home to Plough Lane

WE'VE LISTENED TO YOU. NOW HERE'S OUR PLAN FOR MERTON

Your local Labour action team has been speaking to you and your neighbours to find out

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Maintaining excellent education skills for all ages and needs

We will invest in our children's education, so that all our young people can achieve the best outcomes at school and beyond. We will open a new school for SEND children, to reduce the number of students who have to travel long distances for a good education, and invest more resources to provide career support for young people.

We will fight to make Merton a more equal borough across all ages. We will consult residents and young people on introducing a new Merton Equality Charter, ensure all council staff receive a living wage and increase the proportion of senior managers from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Promoting a dynamic and inclusive economy

We will boost the local economy and encourage businesses that support our community. We will review licensing rules to enable more outdoor socialising, create multi-purpose hubs offering community spaces, workspace and support services for entrepreneurs, and review business rates and planning rules to promote businesses with a positive environmental and social impact.

We will support all our town centres and make our high streets the focus of our community. We will appoint town centre managers in Wimbledon, Mitcham, Morden and Colliers Wood, launch WiFi hotspots, examine new community toilet schemes, and commission work to decentralise council staff away from the Civic Centre in order to boost other high streets.

Supporting those most in need and promoting safety and well-being

We will support local health services and aim to redress postcode health inequalities that worsened during the pandemic. We will continue to campaign against the loss of vital services from St Helier hospital, including accident and emergency, and will press our local NHS for new services at the Wilson Hospital.

We will ensure that our public spaces remain safe places for families and people of all ages, and that crime rates remain among the lowest in London. We will complete an upgrade of our CCTV service so that people of all ages feel safer, and produce a plan for improved night-time lighting in our high streets.

A clean and sustainable environment

We will continue to make it a priority to keep our streets and open spaces clean, and to punish those who litter or dump rubbish. We will run a public consultation on the future of our waste services, and ensure more than 90% of litter and fly-tips are cleared within 24 hours of being reported.

We will protect our environment, tackle the climate emergency and keep our parks and open spaces great places for everyone. We will plant more than 5,000 trees over the next 4 years, launch a boroughwide playground modernisation programme, pilot a Climate Bond scheme to fund low-carbon initiatives, decarbonise the council's vehicles by 2025 and introduce an environmental impact assessment for new policies across all council departments.

Making Merton fairer and more equal, tackling poverty and fighting for quality housing

We will help protect those who are struggling with the cost of living crisis. We will continue to operate one of the country's most generous council tax rebate schemes for households with low incomes, Merton's council tax will remain below the average of neighbouring outer London boroughs, and we will continue to provide financial and practical support to our voluntary sector.

We will strive to deliver the good-quality housing that our residents deserve. Between now and 2026, we will approve building more affordable homes than in any other period since 2000, including 400 new social-rented homes, publish detailed plans to stop the increase in houses of multiple occupation and to combat rogue landlords who allow residents to live in poor-quality homes, and work with housing providers to publish a strategy including retrofitting to increase delivery of zero carbon homes.

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