

A clean, green recovery.



Conservative Manifesto 2022

50 pledges for a better borough

Foreword

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected each one of us in ways we never imagined, and we are still experiencing the effects of the virus in our society. As our borough emerges from the past two years, we need a council that puts residents first and supports our community to make a clean, green recovery.

We do not believe that the Hounslow Labour Party, which has been in charge of our borough for the past 12 years, is up to the task. From year-on-year council tax rises being used to fund huge increases in councillor allowances, to making unilateral decisions on traffic schemes in our borough without properly consulting with residents, you deserve better than this tired Labour council.

Your local Conservative team has a proven track record. When we ran the council between 2006 and 2010, we froze council tax every single year we were in power. We doubled recycling rates, invested millions into modernising our libraries and leisure centres and built safer communities by working with residents and the police to tackle crime across the borough. We know how to deliver a cleaner, greener recovery for our borough after 12 years of Labour, because we have done it before.

Your Conservative councillors have been working hard for residents since the last election, from leading call-ins against Hounslow Labour's poorly implemented Experimental Traffic Orders to acting as a constructive and critical friend to the council during our borough's fight against the pandemic. Your Conservative councillors have also been deeply involved in community work over the past four years, from organising laptop collections to bridge the digital divide in our borough's schools, to working with the community to build the much-needed Barnes Bridge footpath extension, to guiding independent retailers through grants claims and restrictions during the pandemic.

Now, after listening to residents from across the borough, we are excited to present our 50 pledges for a better Hounslow. We will put a cleaner, greener recovery at the heart of what we do as your Conservative representatives, building quality homes, reversing Labour's policy of year-on-year council tax rises and cleaning up our local politics to ensure the council works for residents and local businesses, not just those in charge of the Hounslow Labour Party.

Thank you for taking the time to read our manifesto, and we look forward to the opportunity to create a clean, green recovery in our borough.

Yours,

Councillor Gerald McGregor

Leader of the Conservative Group

Local Conservatives for a Cleaner, Greener, Better Borough

Our top 10 key commitments to you:

- 1) Create a safer borough by increasing levels of streetlighting and the number of local police officers
- 2) Improve the air we breathe by re-joining the London Air Quality Network and investing in better air quality monitoring to help us make informed policy decisions to tackle pollution levels
- 3) Champion our riverside heritage by backing local rewilding projects, defending flood plains from inappropriate overdevelopment and keeping our riverways clean and tidy
- 4) Put residents at the heart of local decision making by increasing the number of public forums and making councillors more accountable by publishing real-time data on how much case work they complete and how many meetings they attend
- 5) Support marginalised groups by working with business groups, forums and local businesses to improve access to career growth opportunities and apprenticeships for members of disadvantaged communities
- 6) Build quality homes for residents that are fit for growing families
- 7) Invest in our local economy by funding local markets and supporting retailers against crime and antisocial behaviour
- 8) Review controversial low traffic neighbourhoods and work with TFL to reform and improve safer cycling infrastructure
- 9) Reverse Hounslow Labour's policy of year-on-year council tax rises and review its changes to our borough's Council Tax Support Scheme
- 10) Clean-up local politics by reducing the number of councillors who receive "special responsibility allowances" and review the council's "strong leader" structure

A cleaner, safer borough

Keeping our Community Safe and Accessible

We pledge to increase the levels of streetlighting in the borough – Poorly lit streets are consistently identified as a leading cause of crime hotspots. We will restore streetlight levels to their pre-dimming level.

We pledge to improve the level of community policing – We will work with the police to encourage the recruitment of more local special constables to increase the number of police on the streets.

We pledge to work with ward teams to develop a local anti-drug dealing strategy – We will work with community groups, local councillors and the police force to develop an anti-drug dealing strategy to combat drug dealing hotspots in our borough.

We pledge to reinstate weekly rubbish collections – We will reinstate weekly rubbish collections in addition to the already weekly recycling collections, and work to improve our borough's stagnant recycling rate by introducing recycling for residents of flats above shops.

We pledge to reinstate a full graffiti-removal service – Hounslow Labour recently changed its policy on tackling graffiti to order Hounslow Highways not to clean up graffiti on privately owned buildings on the public road network. We will reverse this and reinstate a full graffiti-removal service.

We pledge to install more accessible public toilet facilities – To tackle the lack of accessible toilets, and the increase in public urination, we will create a Community Toilet Scheme to encourage local businesses to work with the council to offer clean, safe and accessible facilities to the public.

We pledge to clean up street clutter – We will adopt a clear policy on street furniture to reduce street clutter, including removing items which impede pedestrian access.

Cleaning Up the Air We Breathe

We pledge to re-join the London Air Quality Network – Hounslow is one of the few boroughs in London that is not a member of the London Air Quality Network, meaning we miss out on crucial data that will help improve air quality and lower pollution. We will re-join the London Air Quality Network on day-one of a Conservative-led council.

We pledge to increase the number of air quality monitoring stations across the borough – Hounslow has almost half the number of local authority funded air quality monitoring stations as neighbouring Hillingdon. We will invest in more air quality monitoring stations to help us make informed policy decisions to tackle pollution.

We pledge to support a better, not bigger Heathrow – The local Conservative Party has a long-standing support for Heathrow as a key employer for residents. We will continue to support efforts to build a better, not bigger airport.

We pledge to work with TFL to upgrade the Piccadilly Line – We will work with TFL and the GLA to upgrade the Piccadilly line, including fighting for a regular Piccadilly Line service at Turnham Green station.

Supporting our Riverside Heritage

We pledge to empower local communities to become champions of our waterways – We will support local groups to organise regular clean-ups of our riverscape and work with specialist organisations to improve public knowledge and understanding of the importance of river ecology.

We pledge to support efforts to rewild parts of our riverbank – Using the Crane River Park as a development of best practice, we will implement and support rewilding projects which improve riverbank access, increase biodiversity and beautify waterways, as well as protecting against urban flooding.

We pledge to support pioneering research into our stretch of the Thames – By backing organisations and academic partners, we will support and encourage projects which contribute to a better understanding of the health of the River Thames through water quality testing, litter monitoring and wildlife studies.

A Listening Council

Putting Residents at the Heart of Decision Making

We pledge to hold an annual residents survey – We will ask residents and business owners for their opinions on key local issues through an accessible annual listening exercise which will help to inform council policy.

We pledge to make your elected representatives more accountable and transparent – We will publish real-time information on how much casework each councillor does, what duties they have in terms of committees and decision-making, and how many meetings they attend.

We pledge to enhance the council's communication with residents – We will improve the council's communications policy by using all available media and digital outlets to inform residents of decisions being made and encourage participation in council meetings and consultations, and will ensure residents and businesses can phone the council and speak to a human being.

We pledge to increase the number of public forums – We will increase the number of public meetings and forums to ensure residents and local businesses have a direct line to their councillors and the borough's decision makers, creating an open and honest environment to share ideas and express concerns.

We pledge to decrease partisan politics in the local council – We will listen to and work with local representatives of every ward regardless of political affiliation, to ensure local concerns are heard and considered before decisions are made.

Supporting Those Most in Need

We pledge to adopt the Commission into Racial and Ethnic Disparities report in full – We will adopt the recommendations in this landmark 2021 report to ensure the diverse communities in our borough are properly represented and made to feel welcome by the local authority.

We pledge to create a targeted apprenticeships campaign – We will work with the business groups, forums and local businesses to improve access to career growth opportunities for members of disadvantaged communities.

We pledge to develop independently chaired community ‘Safeguarding Trust’ groups – We will work with community groups to develop a minimum standard framework for Safeguarding Trusts to scrutinise and problem-solve alongside regular policing.

We pledge to offer more extra-curricular activities to disadvantaged pupils - We will work with local schools and use government education funding to provide pupils in disadvantaged areas of our borough with a wider range of extra-curricular activities.

Quality Developments

Building Quality Homes for Residents

We pledge to build homes for comfort– We will be stricter on housing regulations to ensure that developers are building homes for comfort rather than cramped tower blocks.

We pledge to build more truly affordable homes – We will increase the minimum percentage threshold for affordable housing in each development to ensure more truly affordable houses are built.

We pledge to ensure new developments are family friendly – We will enshrine a new definition for a “unit for family accommodation” which will require developers to build more three-bedroom and four-bedroom units for larger families.

We pledge to place services at the heart of new developments – We will end a decade of Hounslow Labour’s lack of consideration for pressure on services by setting new guidelines on the provisions of public transport, shops, GP surgeries and schools for new developments.

We pledge to carry out a full-scale review of Hounslow’s housing system – We will implement a full review of our borough’s current housing stock to ensure homes are built that are fit for tenants and which match the ambitions of a greener borough.

We pledge to engage with social housing tenants – We will ensure that tenants are at the heart of our housing reforms and will survey all current social housing tenants and those in temporary accommodation to identify their needs.

We pledge to improve maintenance and repairs for our tenants – We will overhaul the current system to ensure a swifter, efficient and higher quality maintenance service for council tenants.

We pledge to review the home swapper system – We will review the home swapper system to ensure it is fairer and does not allow for individuals to “game the system”.

Supporting the Local Economy

We pledge to re-establish our borough’s historic markets – We will provide funding to restart Hounslow’s historic markets.

We pledge to involve local residents and businesses on the character of retail areas - We will review each retail area and provide consultation with residents and retailers on what they would like to be done to enhance their areas.

We pledge to increase and upgrade cycle parking in key retail areas – We will ensure local retail hotspots are well served with adequate levels of cycle parking to both incentivise alternative modes of travel and increase customer levels.

We pledge to expand and support ShopWatch – We will support the rollout of the UK wide ShopWatch initiative to protect against retail theft against our small businesses.

We pledge to support retailers in rolling out CCTV – We will work with local providers to produce a cost-effective bulk buy scheme to equip retailers with cheaper security against theft and anti-social behaviour.

We pledge to reform the fees and charges process - We will overhaul the fees and charges system, simplifying it so it can be better understood and encourage local street vendors and outdoor dining.

Safer Roads and Cycling

We pledge to review Hounslow Labour’s controversial traffic schemes – We will review Hounslow Labour’s divisive and poorly implemented “low traffic neighbourhood” schemes to ensure residents are properly consulted about the changes to roads in their area, with schemes reformed in areas in which they are not working.

We pledge to review and revise the C9 cycleway – We will work with local residents and community groups to review the C9 cycleway and proposed extension through Brentford and Hounslow to ensure we build safer cycling infrastructure that works for the community.

We pledge to work with TFL to upgrade cycling infrastructure on the A4 – We will work with TFL to upgrade the cycle paths along the A4 and create safer cycling infrastructure for cyclists along that route.

We pledge to commission a boroughwide survey of the backlog in maintenance works – We will ensure residents have clear and up to date data on works being carried out by Hounslow Council and how long it takes for road repairs to be completed.

We pledge to review the private finance initiative (PFI) contract with Hounslow Highways – We will ensure any contract given to companies to service our roads and streets has the best value for residents.

We pledge to campaign for step-free access in all of the borough's tube and train stations – We will lobby Transport for London to upgrade our borough's tube and train stations so that they all offer step-free access.

We pledge to upgrade the Public Transport Activity Level in our borough – We will work with Transport for London and other organisations to improve public transport links in all parts of our borough to encourage alternatives to car use.

Accountable Local Government

Supporting Residents Through Sound Financial Management

We pledge an end to unjustified council tax increases – We will end Hounslow Labour's policy of year-on-year council tax rises.

We pledge to review Hounslow Labour's changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme – We will review Hounslow Labour's changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme to ensure the poorest residents in our borough do not pay a single penny in council tax.

We pledge to review wasteful expenditure in Hounslow Council – We will review Hounslow Labour's decision to both increase the council staff budget by over £15 million and to double the amount spent on internal HR costs.

We pledge to spend Government grants wisely – We will ensure grants from central government are spent on directly supporting local residents and businesses.

Cleaning Up Local Politics

We pledge to review the number of Special Responsibilities Allowances (SRAs) – We will reverse Hounslow Labour’s decision to increase the number of councillors in receipt of enhanced rates of councillor allowances by abolishing unnecessary “grace and favour” positions within the council.

We pledge to review the structure of the council – We will explore alternatives to the so-called “strong leader” structure of the council, including the possibility of reverting Hounslow Council to the committee system.