

# 2023 Local Manifesto



East Lindsey Group

**BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER,  
HELPING EVERYONE THRIVE**

## **Introduction**

Since the last elections for East Lindsey District Council the national government has persisted with its austerity programme and after over a decade of such policies our public services lie in ruin. The policies pursued to achieve this political ideology have had a damaging effect to the country as a whole and been especially harmful to mainly rural, sparsely populated areas such as ours. This has resulted in local government, especially in rural and coastal areas such as East Lindsey, struggling to meet residents' needs whilst starved of government funding.

The short-sighted nature of austerity policies left us all disadvantaged and unprepared for unexpected upheavals and therefore the effects of the energy crisis have hit us all far worse than need have been.

Over the past few years the Labour Group in East Lindsey has fought against the damaging effects of cutbacks on local residents. Recent government policy has encouraged bidding wars between councils for specific government grants, rather than the genuine local control that would have come from sustainable funding that does not come with strings attached.

In the midst of this, we have fought for fairness for all and particularly for the most vulnerable in the district to be protected from the worst of the cuts. In addition we have worked to support our unique local economy by trying to protect jobs, promote our local businesses and to improve the local environment.

In reality that means that we look to ensure residents get the best service money can provide, rather than the cheapest service regardless of quality that the ruling group pursue.

Yet we want to do so much more, and we can only do that in power. This document is a brief outline of some of the changes needed to provide great services to all residents.

## **Homelessness**

This is a national scandal and although policies adopted during the Covid lockdown ensured most street homeless people found accommodation that improvement has declined. Although an investment into this service from national government is desperately required, locally a Labour led council would ensure that policies on homelessness and housing are aligned to help solve this problem.

## **Housing and planning**

Nationally there is a shortage of houses due to the many years where house building has not been keeping up with demand. The Tory government of the 80's presided over the biggest sell off of council houses ever seen without making any attempt to replace them, whilst the post-2010 one has made promise after promise to build more houses and broken every one, failing both renters and buyers.

East Lindsey as part of its housing strategy should be looking into increasing the number of affordable properties especially single person and dual person homes. More importantly it needs to insist that the quality of all houses are improved. It is no longer appropriate to build to 20<sup>th</sup> century standards in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Damp homes and poor or slow repairs by landlords are having a detrimental effect on too many households in East Lindsey. Labour will continue to highlight this issue, and we will maintain numbers of Housing Standards so that affected households can be protected effectively.

East Lindsey's planning process is unduly biased in favour of developers. We will ensure that planning regulations are properly enforced, and will make changes to the enforcement of Section 106 requirements, which was recently audited as performing poorly, so that communities can benefit from the investment they are due as a result of large developments.

Indiscriminate approvals for the benefit of developers are turning our coastal towns and villages into huge caravan wastelands in the name of promoting tourism. Our beautiful countryside is too often spoiled by poor planning decisions. Valuable farmland should continue to be used wherever possible to produce the food that our country needs to achieve long term sustainability.

Often communities feel that their input on planning policies and building applications is only a token one. Labour will work with organisations such as the Community Planning Alliance to redress the imbalances in District planning policies, enabling communities to

write their own Neighborhood Plans and providing local residents and businesses with a real voice in revising the East Lindsey Local Plan in 2023.

## **Environment**

Where planning laws allow, we will install solar power cells on all public buildings that we control. We will ensure that all council buildings will be as carbon efficient and environmentally friendly as possible. We will carry out a feasibility study into solar charging points over council car parks, and will install them where the business case is made.

Improving our buildings need to be alongside improving our environment. The Tories don't care about the environment. They are unable to balance the needs of agriculture and the provision of wind and solar power. Protecting grade one farmland and providing sites for green energy can both be achieved; too often Tory policy prevents this.

Labour's call for the council to reduce its corporate use of single-use plastic and other single-use items led the council to adopt a policy reducing this. With this council being responsible for collecting recyclable materials and other waste, the council must lead the way in further reducing expensive and polluting behaviours.

There is a dedicated team that looks after our area keeping it clean & tidy. We will provide further support in this area and stop treating it as a Cinderella service. As a result, not only will our resorts become more attractive to visitors but our market towns and inland tourist attractions will flourish too.

A district wide policy of providing recharging points has been ridiculously slow in its implementation. We will move to have these in every location owned by the council – not just selected car parks.

Recently plans have been announced to site a nuclear waste depository in East Lindsey. A lot of money has been offered to sweeten this blow. Tory policy is to support bringing this pollutant into our area and use the money to fill the gap in funding created by austerity. Our position is that it is madness to introduce these materials into an area currently so reliant on tourism and agriculture to provide jobs and economic prosperity. The money on offer should already be coming to this district to resolve deprivation issues – not as a desperate bribe.

We will strive to meet and even exceed the council's carbon reduction goal of Net Zero by 2040. In addition, we will work to improve biodiversity through our use of green spaces, and through the council's policies for planning and development.

## **Environmental protection and enforcement**

It is important that policies that deliver a clean and healthy environment are enforced and we will commit to ensuring that our enforcement officers are properly supported to do their work to protect us from the many differing environmental crimes being committed today.

We will also work with local groups who seek to nurture and improve their own village or town.

## **Nuclear waste**

The local community in and around Theddlethorpe have been vehement in their opposition to the siting of a nuclear waste facility offshore via the site of the former gas terminal. We do not welcome this proposal, which threatens local tourism businesses and which will prevent other businesses and industries from wanting to move into the area. It may destroy as many jobs as it is purported to create. Therefore, Labour will oppose it.

## **Finance**

Government contributions to council finances are shockingly low after 12 years of austerity, so it is important for the council to invest wisely and get a good return on its investments. This allows the council to do more with what it has available. However, the return should not be the only consideration. We want the council to invest ethically, and to avoid placing funds with organisations or countries with records of corruption, human rights abuses, or environmental destruction. Therefore, we will seek to have environmental, social, and governance factors form part of the council's criteria for deciding where to invest its savings.

Such policies will also help us deliver our housing and environmental plans – a virtuous circle.

We will ensure the council always sets a legal, balanced budget. Its reserves must be proportionate to the size of the council, so that is neither hoarding residents' money nor leaving so little in reserves that it risks bankruptcy. Reserves of cash should only be held at the minimum level for the council to function from year to year plus any funds required for long-term projects.

We will push the council to invest in East Lindsey, rather than outside the district. The Tory policy over the last term was to borrow money to make money and it has failed. Investments made with borrowings have barely retained their overall value. We would

look to borrow only if local opportunities arose that would bring direct benefit to local people or businesses.

Current national government policy is to replace fair funding across all districts with a bidding war for funding. Whilst this unfair system exists, we will bid for extra funding to deliver the improvements we outline in this document and to improve existing services.

It is also vital that national government recognises that local councils actually deliver many of their policies and we will demand that proper funding comes from central government to ease the burden on the council-tax payers. We want to see an end to the vicious circle of increasing tax bills followed by cuts to services.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

The Wellbeing Service at East Lindsey is a success story because it is a service that keeps people out of hospital and allows many to live independently for longer. It is an investment in people that pays dividends, run across Lincolnshire by East Lindsey. We will lobby, as a minimum, to maintain funding to this service but also to increase it, so that residents will continue to be able to access it and to better meet the requirements of local people.

## **Waste**

In Lincolnshire the recent introduction of a separate paper and card recycling service is a small step to improve recycling rates, but other areas do much more, such as collecting domestic food waste. Public awareness of what can be recycled and re-used, and what needs to be thrown out, is not as high as it could be and this contributes to higher levels of contamination of recycling. Plus it is most annoying to have a bin rejected for collection. All of which also costs the whole district money – and we all how much in short supply that is under Tory national government.

Labour will push for better awareness of recycling, and for an increase in the percentage of recycling waste versus that going to incineration. We will also investigate ways of getting more types of waste into the recycling regime.

We advocated a reduction in the use of single-use products within the council that led to its adoption of a Sustainable Products Policy. We will promote that policy to partner organisations as a way to further reduce waste in the district.

## **Retail and markets**

Local shops are vital to a district with a rural nature, in fact the beating heart of many of our villages.

Therefore, we will scrap the Shop Front Grant and replace it with a Retail Sustainability Scheme of equal value. This scheme will offer business rates rebates to independent shops in danger of closure, whose disappearance will affect the sustainability of a settlement, targeted especially to those shops that are the last of their kind in their location. This will improve the sustainability of our settlements and will cut unnecessary road traffic.

Too many of our council run markets lack vitality, often opening with empty stalls. We will invest in better market management to bring life back to our markets and boost our local economies.

Banks and other major firms are moving us towards a cashless society with ever increasing speed. This is not a situation a large proportion of our residents want to happen. Labour will seek to put in place measures to support the retention of ATMs and other cashpoint facilities across the district.

By having a combined strategy for shops and markets Labour will ensure our town centres are fully resilient in the ever changing retail world and residents will feel confident to shop locally.

## **Economic development**

Shops and markets are not the only part of the local economy that requires attention. Manufacturing, technology, small businesses and all other area that stimulate economic development require it too. So do small business start ups.

Although most of this work is done at county council level it is important that local district policies do not get in the way of this vital work but it is our responsibility to ensure that where there is to be industrial change it is in the right place and enhances the locality rather than disturbs it.

One of the simplest ways for the council to create an income stream for itself and boost the main industry of tourism is through their biggest asset, Kingfisher Park. However, by a series of poor management decisions the Tories have wasted this opportunity and have picked a fight with existing tenants rather than negotiating the improvements that would benefit all parties - the council, the tenants and the economy of the district.

## **Disability**

We will champion better disabled access in towns and in our own buildings. Measures such as increased drop kerbs, levelling out pavements, and other ways of making spaces more accessible will be a priority. This will be a consideration throughout all of our planning policies.

ELDC will continue to be dementia friendly, and to promote dementia friendly awareness in the district. Charging points for electric vehicles must be accessible by default. Disability consultation on major projects will not be an afterthought.

We will continue to fund the Wellbeing Service, and will seek to expand its capacity where finances allow.

Our ageing population needs more suitable homes adapted for disabled use, and these will be planned for. We will also look to encourage house building techniques that provide 'homes for life', rather than ones that require alterations as we age.

## **Young people**

We will fight for fairness for the generation that one day will have to run our services. We will invest in skate parks, playgrounds, and play parks and ensure that they are maintained and usable.

There is a lack of suitable skilled work in East Lindsey, and that means that many young people are obliged to move out of the area to find work that pays a decent wage. Where we are able to influence this, we will champion skills for the digital and knowledge economy, in order to boost those sectors in our area. Seasonal and low-paid work must not be the only basis for the local economy, and we must attract young people to want to stay in this area with better opportunities.

Occasionally there has been money available to councillors to give grants to local community projects. We will ensure this scheme is permanent and has an emphasis on supporting young people in their local areas.

## **Transport**

Transport policy is not the responsibility of the district council but because we realise the importance of travel to our district we will continue to lobby for improvements to all aspects of travel.

Recent implementation of Active Travel schemes was ham-fisted, and in Louth they infuriated local people. We, on the other hand will press for proper conversations to be



had with local people to ensure improvements are what people really want to see. Another example is in Mablethorpe where plans for the Mobi Hub have had to be revised. We will work to complete the second phase of that scheme in partnership with other bodies but will also work closer with local communities in the future to ensure that future plans for improvement are better thought out.

As the transition to electrical vehicles gains pace, it is important that we support the transition by supplying more charging points in the district. Also, these must be accessible for disabled drivers, and it will be a priority to ensure that this is the case.

We have many council-owned car parks, but we aren't making the most of them as we enter a period of transition away from fossil fuels and towards greater energy independence. We will carry out a feasibility study into implementing solar panels over car parks, in order to provide energy. If the business case is made, we will implement this.

## **Armed Forces Covenant**

East Lindsey District Council is signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant which pledges fair treatment to members of the armed forces, veterans, and their families.

The Labour group brought a motion to council giving support to the British Legion's "Count Them In" campaign, asking to have a question about the armed forces included on the next census. The question was included on the census, allowing councils nationwide, including our own, to better understand what is happening to our veterans and armed forces families.

We will continue to work to ensure ELDC upholds the Armed Forces Covenant in practical ways.

## **Skills**

The whole of the district has been held back by a lack of training, and the difficulty in accessing what there is. Alongside our lobbying on general transport matters we want to see support given to those who have to travel vast distances to get their skill centres.

In addition to which we will continue to push for all our towns to have suitable centres for learning to reduce the need to travel. Why should students be expected to have a working day up to 50% longer than those of us in work?

We will lobby for higher-wage skilled work to come to this area, particularly in the low-carbon green industries that we will need to ensure energy independence.

## **Licensing**

A vital part of the East Lindsey Council's service is its licensing operation. Many aspects of daily life are governed by the need for a suitable licence that guarantees our residents are receiving services from qualified people. From pubs to taxis, amusement arcades to wildlife centres and many other activities are licensed. We will ensure that this service maintains its high standard of service so that residents and visitors alike are reassured that operators are suitable people to do so.

## **Devolution and integration**

The move to combine operations with Boston Borough was controversial and in the end an alliance that also included South Holland has come into being as the South & East Lincolnshire Partnership. It is hoped that this move will result in improved services without loss of local accountability, which we see as a positive idea.

However, the government nationally, encouraged by the Tory County Council leadership are seeking to create a 'super-unitary council' which would include all of the existing Lincolnshire County, North Lincolnshire Unitary and North East Lincolnshire Unitary areas. We do not support this, as Greater Lincolnshire is too vast an area to be viable as just one council, leading to inefficiency and less community involvement in the decision-making process. Eventually, we believe, that this would lead to public services being provided that suit only the provider rather than the public that it serves.

## **And finally....**

Our candidates are well in tune with their individual constituencies and will offer their residents their own 'micro-manifesto', based on the above principles but fine-tuned to local issues and circumstances.