



CHAPTER ONE

# CREATING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

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Our local economy is built on the hard work of people across many different sectors, many of which have had a tough time in recent years and especially during the recent Coronavirus pandemic. We believe that Wiltshire Council needs to take a lead in helping our local economy recover.

We want an economy in Wiltshire that works for everyone. Whether it's tourism, agriculture, manufacturing or services, we want it to be dynamic, green, co-operative and skilled.

### **DYNAMIC**

With targeted investment in growth, jobs and tourism in every town across Wiltshire.

### **GREEN**

Growing the green economy and building a better environment.

### **COOPERATIVE**

Making our enterprise agency work for all of us and bringing businesses together to do more.

### **SKILLED**

Building training and supporting education providers to deliver the knowledge and skills that people need.

## LABOUR WILL

- Invest in economic growth throughout Wiltshire, attracting inward investment and supporting businesses to provide good quality local employment.
- Support the Green Economy to create jobs and meet our Climate Emergency commitments through renewable energy and energy conservation.
- Deliver small-scale enterprise parks and business centres through local plans to support local employment.
- Deliver the support local businesses need to thrive in a competitive environment.
- Build Wiltshire's reputation as a tourist destination, bringing investment into the area.
- Help local communities to rejuvenate their high streets and retain vital local services.
- Ensure that Wiltshire Council procures goods and services to support local businesses.
- Invest in continuing education, training and skills to help local people get good secure jobs, including further and higher education.
- Support the MoD and military families as major contributors to the Wiltshire economy.
- Take a lead as a responsible employer, promoting jobs that provide good pay, secure conditions and training opportunities.

# CREATING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

## INVESTMENT IN ECONOMIC GROWTH

Labour will establish a Wiltshire Investment Fund. This will be delivered through a local Enterprise Investment Bank, to provide capital investment and training, and to champion the growth of community businesses and cooperatives.

We want a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) that is more accountable, and we believe all our communities should benefit from the millions of pounds spent in our region, not just those areas chosen by unelected LEP committees.

Labour will complement the large LEP growth areas (currently concentrated on the transport corridors of the A4, A350 & A303) with mini growth zones in every town. As large companies already do in the current growth areas, small businesses throughout the county will be able to access advice, support and funding to grow and to employ more people.

## SUPPORTING THE GREEN ECONOMY

Labour will extend Wiltshire Council's investment in renewable energy, and will implement energy conservation and energy generation measures on all public buildings and on council houses, as well as develop renewable energy projects on council-owned land.

We'll ensure that the planning framework positively supports renewable energy developments. We will work with local communities and businesses so that these are in the right places to mitigate intrusion on the landscape. We'll work with parish and town councils to set land aside in neighbourhood or town plans for green energy generation.

Wiltshire Council must play an active role in providing expert advice and assistance in accessing funds for community energy initiatives to community groups, parish and town councils. So we'll establish a team to do just this. We'll also ensure that Wiltshire Council provides an accessible framework to promote awareness of home energy efficiency grants and helps to link homeowners with local suppliers.

## PLANNING FOR LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

We will help provide the right planning framework to support the development of small-scale local enterprise parks and business centres, and work with partners, such as the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, to help establish these to provide the necessary spaces to support local employment and economic development.

Labour will ensure that land set aside for such commercial or employment use is marketed thoroughly by Wiltshire Council and the LEP before it is given over to more housing.

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## SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

Ultra-fast broadband rollout for rural businesses is essential. No part of Wiltshire should be left behind.

Wiltshire has enormous potential to be marketed as a strong and recognisable brand. Labour will work with partners and local enterprises to establish a “Wiltshire” brand that consumers can trust, based on product quality, environmental sustainability, animal welfare standards and responsible employment. This will help promote and market Wiltshire produce and products (and reinforce the county’s image as a tourism destination).

We’ll bring together food producers who want to work with each other to establish a Wiltshire Local Food Network. This mutually owned co-operative, sharing the costs of marketing and distribution, will bring much needed scale and support to producers.

## TOURISM

Tourism is a significant part of our local economy but could potentially play a much bigger role. We’ll increase funding support to ‘Visit Wiltshire’ to promote tourism. In return, we’ll also expect them to support town and parish councils in promoting tourism at a local level.

Labour will ensure that Wiltshire Council plays its part in promoting Wiltshire as a strong brand through its websites, roadside signage and public buildings. We’ll also ensure that Wiltshire Council plays an active role in working with partners to identify and create new developments and attractions, and to support those developments through the planning process.

We’ll support museums, the arts and festivals through increasing direct grants and also support them in bidding for funding from other agencies. This will not only help promote Wiltshire as a destination for leisure tourism but will also benefit local residents and help rejuvenate our town centres.

We will develop, expand and promote the network of trails, footpaths and cycle routes within the county, and support the promotion of active leisure tourism.

We will work with partners to promote all of Wiltshire as an attractive tourist destination. We will offer a ‘Wiltshire Card’ to provide tourists with free bus travel and free (or discounted) admission to attractions and cycle-hire.



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## SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Town centres remain important as places where people shop, use services and socialise. Where successful, they attract investment and make people feel positive about where they live. Labour will ensure the regeneration of our town centres by supporting high streets, cultural, social and arts spaces.

To support our high streets, we'll transfer ownership of Wiltshire owned retail units to town councils so they can implement local lettings strategies, and support pop-up shops and arts initiatives. We'll support local Community assets such as pubs and shops through rate relief and planning protection and we'll actively promote the community's right to buy these assets if they are at risk.

## RETAINING INVESTMENT IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

With an annual budget of £344M, Wiltshire Council is a major purchaser of goods and services within the County. A review of council spending for 2019/2020 showed that over 40% of that spend leaks out of the county and neighbouring areas. Much of this spending on goods and services could be provided within our local area, creating local demand and supporting local firms.

Following the example of Preston City Council, we'll put in place an initiative so that Wiltshire Council buys more goods and services locally. This will support local businesses and suppliers and will help the Wiltshire economy to thrive. We'll link up with other organisations in the county, such as Wiltshire Police and the Ministry of Defence, to encourage them to do the same.

# CREATING A DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

## INVESTING IN CONTINUING EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS

Labour will champion further investment in Wiltshire College building on the recent improvements made to the Lackham, Salisbury, Trowbridge and Chippenham campuses. We'll also work with the Further Education sector in Wiltshire and local employers and partners to ensure that the right vocational courses and apprenticeships are provided to support local growth sectors.

We will work with the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP to expand the availability of Higher Education in Wiltshire, through the further development of Wiltshire College's offering and potentially through partnership with an existing university institution to establish a local campus.

We will support apprenticeships for young people and those seeking a change in career and we will work with schools and colleges to improve the links between themselves and future employers. We'll use Wiltshire Council's network of 30 county farms to provide opportunities for new entrants into the farming sector and to support the promotion of best farming practice.

## SUPPORTING THE MILITARY

Labour recognises the significant role that the military plays in Wiltshire's economy, both the Ministry of Defence (MoD), as a major employer and landowner, and forces personnel and their families.

We will work constructively with the MoD to ensure that the Army Rebasing Programme is completed successfully, in terms of infrastructure, but also in the integration of re-settled families into their local communities. We will support British Forces Resettlement Services events and reach out to the families of military personnel to help them establish themselves in the area and find employment.

We recognise the skills that ex-forces personnel have to offer and will implement a Guaranteed Interview Scheme, so that any veterans applying for a job at Wiltshire Council are guaranteed an interview for any job that they apply for.

## TAKING A LEAD AS A RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYER

We believe that Wiltshire Council should be an accredited Living Wage Employer, guaranteeing a Real Living Wage to all employees. We'll progressively require the Council's suppliers and contractors to become Living Wage Employers through its procurement policies. We will end Wiltshire Council's use of zero hour contracts and pay the Real Living Wage, and we'll similarly require the Council's suppliers and contractors to do the same.

We will work to improve employment conditions and skills in the social care sector by signing up to Unison's "Ethical care charter for the commissioning of homecare services", joining other councils like Cornwall and Plymouth in becoming an Ethical Care Council.