



A GREEN MANIFESTO FOR WARRINGTON - MAY 2016

BENEFITS

- Warrington Green Party will always support and promote any measures to ensure all people are equally afforded the means to fulfil the basic human needs of shelter, food and water. There should be no need to choose between heating and eating in this modern world of plenty.
- We will support efforts to undo the Conservative Government's Universal Credit policy. Social Security benefits should be provided equitably to those who require them, dependent on their individual needs.
- We believe progressive taxation is the fair way to fund necessary services in Warrington and taxes should be paid by all, not just those who cannot afford avoidance measures.
- We value those who care for others and, if elected, will work hard to ensure vulnerable people and their carers receive the maximum protection from Conservative Government cuts.

EARTH, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

- We are fundamentally opposed to fracking and will continue to campaign against the development of this practice as well as supporting the frontline groups which are protesting at potential fracking sites in the town. We will continue to push for further investment in non-fossil fuel forms of energy.
- We will support the proposed hydroelectric scheme on Woolston weir to generate electricity for the town. 'Run-of-River Hydro' schemes are a recognised highly efficient technology. Schemes currently installed on other weirs in the UK typically generate 1500 kW. The Warrington scheme is currently stalled due to Government reductions in the Feed-in-tariff affecting its economics.
- We will support rollout of the existing Warrington Sustainable Energy Programme. In particular, continued funding for installation of additional solar photovoltaic panels on social housing, domestic residences, council buildings, schools and commercial buildings. The Council will own, operate and maintain the panels, effectively renting the roof space of buildings, providing building occupants with discounted electricity and making further income from any extra energy generated.
- We welcome plans to retire the UK's remaining coal-fired power stations by 2025, and the imminent closure of Fiddler's Ferry. Whilst this clearly jeopardises local jobs, coal is the dirtiest of fossil fuels and the health of Warrington residents would continue to be put at risk if it remained in operation. We will support introduction of alternative employment in the renewables sector, along with skills retraining to mitigate direct job losses associated with the closure; this will include proposing a large scale wind/solar farm on the existing site.

- We will encourage Warrington Borough Council (WBC) to divest of all investments in companies associated with fossil fuels as soon as possible. WBC's pension fund is invested 4.43% in fossil fuel companies (£157 million). Green Party councillors in other UK local authorities have so far succeeded in getting this figure down to less than 2%. Staying invested in fossil fuels is a risk, because coal, oil and gas extraction must decline to meet climate change targets.

EDUCATION

- We believe all children in Warrington deserve equal educational opportunities for a good start in life. We will seek to restore education services supporting disadvantaged children which have been scaled back in recent years. This would include the *Surestart* centres which provide improvement of childcare, early education, health and family support, with an emphasis on outreach and community development.
- We believe the Government's increasing of university tuition fees to £9,000 per annum in September 2012 was fundamental in the subsequent 12% drop in university applications from Warrington students. We will support eliminating tuition fees nationally for further education and higher education.
- Locally, we will look to create an Education and Innovation Fund so people of all ages are able to access education at whatever time in their lives they may need it.
- We will encourage gardening clubs for school to introduce pupils to sustainable food production, healthy eating and cooking. Specifically, we will provide practical help and resources for teachers to set up gardens and awareness programmes. We will invite local residents with gardening knowledge to help with keeping the clubs going.

EQUALITY

- We seek a strong and diverse town where people feel safe and welcomed. To this end, if elected, we will support and aid development of high-visibility diversity events such as those run by the Mardi Gras Foundation, Warrington Pride, Warrington Ethnic Communities Association and Warrington Disability Partnership. We will press for funding to these groups to be increased and for sufficient resources to be allocated for tackling hate crime and increasing diversity awareness across the Borough.
- We will champion the principle of a maximum ratio for pay rates between the highest- and lowest-paid Council employees of 10:1 to foster equality; we will promote a similar limit for arms-length organisations such as LiveWire and Network Warrington. We will require maximum and minimum pay ratio eligibility clauses to be included in Council contracts and tenders.
- We believe in a zero tolerance approach to domestic violence. We will allocate resources to the existing refuge services and embark upon a Borough-wide programme to raise awareness of domestic violence. Women-only services will continue to be supported, however we acknowledge that men and non-binary identified people can be victims of these crimes. Support services will therefore be provided for all victims of domestic violence.
- We will encourage and allocate support to refugees who wish to settle in Warrington. We believe current refugee targets are too low and humanity, compassion, and common sense should be determining factors.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- We will seek to reverse outsourcing of Council services, such as Adult Social Services, where this can restore and ensure better quality of support.
- We believe the NHS should be a publicly-funded, publicly-provided health service free at the point of use. Money spent on health in this way will remain in the public economy, supporting the NHS rather than going into private companies' profits. We will support national campaigns for improved conditions for junior doctors; to improve nurses' salaries; and to invest meaningfully in mental health services.
- We believe comprehensive and inclusive youth services support young people's development, helping them to develop skills and confidence which enable them to make positive life choices. We will therefore seek to extend the provision of youth clubs in Warrington to offer a range of programmes for 11-20 year-olds in the town.
- We will support, promote and create opportunities for older people to remain active in the community and utilise their unique resources and skills. With an ageing population this will become ever more important, to alleviate social exclusion and unite communities within Warrington.

HOUSING

- We will require a proportion of new buildings in larger developments to be offered for construction to the Passivhaus energy efficiency standard. Passivhaus or 'Passive House' is the fastest growing energy performance standard in the world with 30,000 buildings built to date - Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery (MVHR) units reduce the heating requirement to the point where a traditional heating system is no longer essential.
- We want Warrington to remain as 'green' a borough as possible and will push for the creation of genuine green zones within new housing developments where wildlife can thrive. We will campaign for the retention of Green Belt sites and promote urban regeneration and brownfield sites for new development.
- We will publicise, and encourage residents to take advantage of, free home insulation schemes.
- We will support funding a fully coordinated approach to tackle homelessness and provide ongoing holistic support which would seek to re-home all homeless people in the borough. Each homeless person would be given a full support package. This could be provided by existing services, such as the YMCA, for which we will restore funding. As well as being the right thing to do, getting people back on their feet has the potential to make huge savings across emergency services, health, and other social services.
- We will require that all new housing estates include a proportion of genuinely affordable homes, whether for rent or purchase. The affordable home element would exceed 20% of new homes.
- We will promote and support local rent controls for all housing to ensure that tenants are not being exploited and that homes are fit for habitation.

TRANSPORT

- We will press the Council to use its influence as owner of Network Warrington to secure a transformation in the appeal and uptake of bus usage within Warrington. This will include introducing

orbital routes, more services to outlying areas, a fare for an hour's travel, a single fare to cover up to five passengers in a group, extending half price fares from 15 to 18 year-olds and generally reduced fares.

- We have consistently opposed the HS2 project because we believe it will be of no real benefit to the town; we will continue to oppose it and to work for improvements to existing rail routes and for bringing the railways back into public ownership.
- We will use our influence as owner of Network Warrington to promote the trial use of electric/hybrid buses to reduce pollution within the borough from public transport.

WORK, MONEY AND TAX

- If elected, we will seek to provide apprenticeship opportunities for all young people aged 16-19 in the borough not in full time education. This will include making it obligatory for all Council contracts to offer such apprenticeships and campaign for the increase of apprenticeship hourly pay rates.
- We will require the inclusion of a local employment clause into all projects which receive Council funding so that at least 50% of the workforce is recruited from the local area.
- We will strive to support small businesses in our town with Business Rates rebates or reductions for these local businesses which provide benefit to Warrington. We believe in celebrating and supporting the ingenuity and hard work of local people who bring new ideas and services to Warrington.
- We will campaign to remove or subsidise employment tribunal fees, benefiting all Warrington residents, and thus lift the cap on compensation - justice should not come with a price tag.

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