



**Manifesto 2026**

**Large print version**

# **A borough that works for everyone**

**Delivering a fairer, greener and more caring Kingston**

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## Introduction

This manifesto sets out Labour's vision for Kingston: a borough that puts community at the heart of decision-making, where everyone who lives and works here can thrive.

We believe Kingston should be a place where there is something for everyone, access to good homes, reliable local services, and support when people need it most. A place where every life is valued and where the council is focused on improving people's lives and strengthening our communities.

The Labour government and the Mayor of London have been working hard to repair over a decade of cuts and neglect. That work includes major investment in public services and infrastructure, from estate safety funding and investment in Kingston Hospital, to more money for roads and highways, and expanding the Warm Homes Discount to support more households with the cost of energy.

But too often Kingston misses out on key funding opportunities, and local residents are not seeing the full benefit of the support available from Labour in government and City Hall. Kingston deserves a stronger Labour voice locally, one that works in partnership with national and regional government to deliver the investment and change our borough needs.

Kingston residents have now had eight years of Liberal Democrat council control. Independent research on council tax shows that Lib Dem councils overwhelmingly feature in the top 7 charging boroughs in London, with Kingston charging the most. Residents in next door Merton pay £400 less per year for their Labour council than the Lib Dems charge us in Kingston. Do you feel you are getting value for your money?

This manifesto sets out how Labour will deliver a fairer, greener and more caring Kingston - a borough that works for everyone.

# Our vision for Kingston upon Thames

## More money in your pocket

The Liberal Democrat run council in Kingston charges residents **£400 more per year** in tax than the Labour council in neighbouring Merton.

We want to end the Lib Dem waste that has left Kingston's leisure centre still closed after 7 years with an estimated cost of **£79.5m** and Kingston's roads given the worst rating in London despite extra funding from the Labour government.

## Affordable homes for residents and families

We believe that everyone deserves quality, affordable and secure housing whether that be a home to buy, rent or as a tenant in social housing.

That's why we're committed to putting community needs first, providing truly affordable homes and appropriate development, along with the infrastructure needed to support it. We will build communities and not skyscrapers.

## **A community that cares, a council that listens**

We know how essential investment in good public services is to help people thrive. We will invest in the health, wellbeing, and opportunities of **children and young people** and work to ensure excellent services for **older and disabled people** in Kingston.

We will work with Public Health and the voluntary sector to improve the quality of **mental health services** and prevent escalation of poor mental health.

## **A greener, cleaner Kingston upon Thames**

We will tackle the blight of fly tipping and make waste disposal fair and accessible to all by introducing 'Pop-up Tips' for residents.

This is just one way that we will keep Kingston's streets and neighbourhoods cleaner, reduce illegal dumping, and ensure that everyone can dispose of waste safely and fairly.

## **Making Kingston safer for everyone**

We support the actions of the Labour Mayor of London in putting more community policing into Kingston Town Centre to address anti-social behaviour. This return to visible community policing is helping to address the rise in anti-social behaviour and shoplifting under the Conservatives.

Ensuring that women and girls feel safe is a key priority for Kingston Labour, both in public spaces and online.

## **The best borough to live, learn and work**

We love Kingston upon Thames. It is home to vibrant communities from across the world, including strong faith communities, people from many ethnic backgrounds, and a proud and visible LGBTQ+ community.

We will champion a borough that values and celebrates every community, each contributing to the rich social, cultural and economic fabric of Kingston.

**More money in your pocket**

## **Delivering value for money**

Independent research on council tax shows that Lib Dem councils overwhelmingly feature in the top 7 charging boroughs in London, with Kingston charging the most. Residents in next door Merton pay £400 less per year for their Labour council than the Lib Dems charge us in Kingston.

Do you feel you are getting value for money from your council?  
We want to change that.

## **Cutting waste, not services**

There is a cost of living crisis and money has been tight for many of us. We believe that, at this time more than ever, elected representatives need to be careful when spending public money and keep costs down.

Unfortunately, the Lib Dem council in Kingston has not done so. When the Kingfisher Leisure Centre had a leak in the roof in 2019, the council was told that it would cost £5m to fix it. Instead, the Lib Dems closed Kingston's only public swimming pool and then demolished it in 2022.

Through bad management, poor planning and endless delays, the cost of replacing the leisure centre has since skyrocketed to an estimated £79.5m!

For seven years the Lib Dems have broken promises and wasted taxpayers' money on a hole in the ground, as a generation of Kingston's children have missed the opportunity to learn to swim.

Meanwhile, in a well-run Labour London borough next door, the old and the young have access to free swimming, better services and much lower council tax.

Sadly this is part of a pattern of waste and poor value for money from our Lib Dem council.

Despite the Labour Government giving Kingston extra money to fix its poor roads, the Lib Dems' mismanagement has seen Kingston receive a red rating (the lowest) for road maintenance. With endless road works, potholes and poor traffic management, residents and businesses continue to suffer.

We want to see an end to Lib Dem waste and more money in residents' pockets to help with the cost of living.

# **Affordable homes for residents and families**

# **Housing & Development**

## **A National Housing Crisis**

A good life, based on an affordable, secure, and stable home, should be available to everyone in this country. There's no more shameful testament to the housing crisis the Labour government inherited than the near-record numbers of people sleeping in shop doorways and the 170,000 children stuck in temporary accommodation.

Homelessness and rough sleeping doubled under the previous Conservative government, and some of the most vulnerable people in our society—and families who deserve better—are now paying the price.

This is a failure of a government that put policies in place which meant families had to deal with skyrocketing cost of energy, housing, and food bills. The same government's policies drove almost a million more children into poverty, left families struggling to pay the rent, knowing at any point they could be unfairly evicted, and failed to build enough secure, affordable homes for hard-working families.

## **A Local Housing Crisis**

Of the 32 London boroughs, Kingston is second from bottom on provision of social housing (City of London is bottom). The average wait time for a three-bed affordable home in Kingston is 25.3 years. Kingston has more than double the number of people living in temporary accommodation compared to Richmond or Hounslow.

The housing crisis has been made worse in Kingston through a lack of strategic leadership from successive Liberal Democrat and Tory administrations. Too often, when our Council makes decisions on development, their focus is on making our borough desirable and profitable for the development sector rather than on serving the needs of our community. Short-term thinking from the Council has led to the sale of land and assets. Time and time again, this has not been a good deal for our borough or for residents. We want a council that can think strategically and invest in housing and development in a way that helps tackle our housing crisis and builds a sustainable borough - a win-win for Kingston.

## **The Labour government is:**

- Building more social and affordable homes and backing this with a record £39 billion investment.
- Through the Renters' Rights Act, reforming the Private Rented Sector to ban no-fault evictions, giving renters more housing security.
- Investing in homelessness services to act early, supporting councils with the tools and flexibility they need and ensuring there's join-up between public services to prevent rather than just manage crises.

## **Labour will put community needs first.**

This means truly affordable homes and appropriate development, with infrastructure needed to support it. Working alongside the Mayor of London, we would promote the role of the GLA and local authorities as a developer, in order to produce more genuinely affordable housing and improve existing stock in line with our green agenda. This would reduce our dependence on the private development sector, which too often sees housing as a vehicle for commercial interest rather than social need.

Labour will end tokenistic consultation. We would put an end to our Council's out-of-touch approach of tokenistic consultation

and fake listening exercises. We would champion real community involvement in decision-making on needs-led development with appropriate infrastructure, serving the public interest.

### **Kingston Labour will monitor regeneration projects.**

The regeneration of the Cambridge Road Estate will eventually, through funding from the Labour Mayor of London, provide some much-needed additional council homes in the borough. Labour Councillors will closely monitor developments on the project to ensure that the needs of residents, not just on the estate itself but the roads around it, are met, that timetables are also met, and that costs do not escalate. Also, that standards are met in the quality of the new homes.

### **Kingston Labour will support private renters and tackle homelessness.**

Labour Councillors will work to ensure that the Council takes full advantage of the powers and resources given by the Labour government to local authorities to improve the security of private rented sector tenants in Kingston and to bring down the number of homeless people living in temporary accommodation or rough sleeping in the borough.

## **Our key housing and development aims:**

- Tackle our housing crisis locally.
- End short-term thinking and the sale of key assets.
- Champion local investment in affordable social homes.
- Embrace the role of the Council as community developer.
- End fake consultation and stand up for residents.
- Improve the security of private rented sector tenants.
- Reduce the number of homeless people living in temporary accommodation or rough sleeping.

**A community that cares,  
a council that listens**

## **Local Services & Community Wellbeing**

Kingston upon Thames is the second least deprived borough in London, but there are areas of deprivation. When the high cost of living - particularly housing - is considered, the borough falls within the most deprived 25% of English local authorities. We have an ethnically diverse population, with a trend toward greater diversity; it is expected to grow by another 11% in the next 15 years, particularly among older age groups. Our borough must therefore be inclusive, and it has now declared itself to be Age Friendly. In addition, action is needed to increase resilience, particularly in relation to flood risk, overheating, and food insecurity.

As the government rebuilds services stripped back by austerity, Kingston Labour knows that investment in public services is vital. Everyone should have high-quality services available at the point of need. Good public services are essential to help people thrive. Investment in services is also financially pragmatic; without adequate support, problems can develop or become more complex and harder to resolve - costing the council more in the long run and damaging people's lives. We will actively bid for Mayoral funds, learn from our neighbouring councils (particularly Labour ones), and actively lobby through the umbrella body London Councils.

Our voluntary sector plays a vital role, but reductions in public services, combined with the financial aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic, have placed enormous demands on their capacity. Labour will work with and support the voluntary sector through Kingston Voluntary Action and will ensure that the recent compact between the council and the voluntary sector is acted upon. We recognise these organisations as experts in their fields and will include and consult with them. We will also ensure that voluntary organisations have clear contact information for the relevant council officers so that the Kingston Community Strategy 2023–2027 actually empowers people.

## **Children & Young People**

Labour will invest in the health, wellbeing, and future opportunities of children and young people.

The Labour Government has recognised the importance of early childhood and is investing in Best Start centres, increasing support for early years education, and expanding programmes to tackle child poverty and family hardship. This national action is vital, as 71% of UK mothers report feeling overloaded, and nearly half experience mental health challenges. Early intervention, healthy habits, and equitable access to education can set the foundation for lifelong wellbeing.

Parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities have told us how they have been let down by the system. We will support them in ensuring that they retain what works for them locally and to provide a better future for all children.

## **Kingston Labour will:**

- Support planning powers to limit the density of fast food and vape shops near schools, promoting healthy environments for children.
- Press for the prompt completion of the Kingfisher Centre to ensure access to sports and exercise facilities for children and families.
- Work closely with schools, many of which have staff trained to support students struggling with their mental health.
- Lobby for more investment in Best Start centres to provide pre-school children and parents with vital early years support.
- Make eliminating child poverty a key focus
- Support low-income households to maximise income from employment.
- Reduce the cost of living where possible for families.
- Widen awareness of and eligibility for government benefits and local support.

Labour will work to ensure Kingston is a place where all children and young people can thrive, with access to education, health, and opportunities for development.

## Youth Clubs & Playgrounds

Kingston lacks youth clubs and affordable activities for young people. Kingston Council should work across departments and with partners and community groups to ensure all young people can access the support and life-enhancing activities they need, want, and value. Every child has an equal right to play; yet teenagers—particularly girls—have been effectively designed out of local parks and playgrounds, and disabled children cannot fully enjoy playgrounds that were not built with accessibility in mind. This creates barriers, including a lack of inclusive equipment and accessible toilet and changing facilities, limiting opportunities for safe, engaging, and welcoming play for all.

Nationally, the government has launched the first National Youth Strategy in 15 years, with a £500 million investment to improve youth services, refurbish or build up to 250 youth facilities, and create a network of 50 Young Futures Hubs - safe, welcoming, youth-led spaces offering arts, sports, wellbeing support, and skills development for young people. These hubs are part of a long-term effort to give young people places to go, something to do, and someone who cares, rebuilding services that were decimated by years of cuts to local youth provision.

Kingston Council should work across departments and with partners and community groups to support all young people to access the support and life-enhancing activities that they need, want, and value in places that feel safe, inclusive, and designed for them.

**Kingston Labour will:**

- Ensure all playgrounds are brought up to standard, with inclusive equipment and fully accessible facilities.
- Support inclusive playgrounds by backing campaigns such as Let's Play Fair, ensuring disabled and non-disabled children can play together safely.
- Support the Make Space for Girls campaign, making sure teenage girls have safe, welcoming, and enjoyable spaces in local parks and playgrounds.
- Actively bid for external funding to improve youth facilities, parks, and play spaces.
- Lobby for the Community Infrastructure Levy to be used to enhance local playgrounds, youth clubs, and parks.
- Work with schools, youth groups, and community organisations to provide activities and clubs that meet the needs of all young people.

Investing in youth clubs and playgrounds not only supports children's health, wellbeing, and development but also strengthens communities and ensures Kingston is a place where all young people can belong and thrive.

## **Older & Disabled People**

Labour will work to ensure investment and excellent services for older and disabled people in Kingston.

Funding cuts to social care and health care have left many without the support they need. The Labour Government is taking action nationally to strengthen social care, including recruiting thousands of additional care workers, increasing funding for homecare and community services, and integrating health and social care support to help older and disabled people live independently.

Kingston Labour welcomes the ongoing social care review led by Baroness Casey. Social care in our borough, as across the country, faces significant pressures: rising demand from an ageing population, increasing complexity of need, and the challenges caused by years of underinvestment. We are committed to ensuring that the voices of residents, carers, and frontline staff are at the heart of this process, so that any reforms are grounded in local experience.

Our goal is a system that provides high-quality, reliable, and accessible support for everyone who needs it, helping people to

live independently and with dignity, while preventing issues from escalating into more complex and costly problems.

Kingston is supposed to be an Age Friendly borough, but achieving this in practice requires real action. Services and information must be accessible to all, not just online, as around 15% of our residents are less digitally connected. Council communications must reach everyone who needs them, ensuring that older and disabled residents can access support, engage with services, and fully participate in community life.

**Kingston Labour will:**

- Invest in social care to reverse the damage caused by past cuts and provide additional care packages for both older people and working-age adults living independently.
- Closely monitor the progress of integrating acute (hospital) and community care services in Kingston to ensure seamless support.
- Support initiatives such as Connected Kingston and community champions, and retain the Freedom Pass to combat social isolation.
- Press for the Adult Education strategy to better address social isolation and promote wellbeing.

- Work to make Kingston genuinely Age Friendly, removing barriers to participation for older and disabled people and promoting inclusion in community life
- Advocate for affordable, accessible transport and local facilities that allow older and disabled residents to live independently and remain socially connected

## **Mental Health**

Kingston Labour will work with Public Health and the voluntary sector to improve the quality of mental health services and prevent escalation of poor mental health.

The mental health and wellbeing of the public declined during the pandemic, and its effects will be felt for years. Many people who seek help face long waiting lists or are passed between services without the support they need.

The Labour Government is taking strong national action to tackle this, including recruiting 8,500 additional mental health workers (with over 6,700 already in post), increasing funding for early intervention programmes and school-based support, and expanding access to NHS talking therapies via digital self-referral and new specialist units.

### **Kingston Labour will:**

- Work closely with Public Health and voluntary organisations such as Mind to lobby for equitable funding for mental health services.

- Support the redevelopment of Tolworth Hospital, made possible by the sale of land on the Springfield site in Wandsworth.
- Campaign for the housing department to strengthen its service to prevent tenants with mental health issues sliding into homelessness.
- Collaborate with local schools, community groups, and voluntary services to improve early intervention and support networks.

By combining national and local action, Labour aims to ensure that Kingston residents can access timely, high-quality mental health care and support, reducing suffering and improving long-term wellbeing.

## **Local Democracy: Giving Residents A Stronger Voice**

We have heard on the doorstep that residents feel powerless over how their council tax is spent. Many are disaffected and feel they don't have a voice over decisions that affect their lives. They are losing trust in politics. We can change this by giving residents a direct say in how council money is spent.

In Labour-run Newham Council, People Powered Places is a flagship participatory budgeting programme, where residents get to decide how funding is spent locally. These funds are collected through the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) from new developments in the borough. They support community projects aimed at improving local neighbourhoods.

Residents decide the priority projects and get a direct vote in deciding what is funded and will make the most difference to their community. The process brings people together across their differences and strengthens the sense of community and belonging. The key themes are “Your Voices. Your Choices. Your Neighbourhood.”

Labour is committed to making sure Kingston's money is spent wisely and transparently. Residents should know exactly how their Council Tax is used, and decisions must prioritise public services over short-term savings or developer interests. Labour councillors will make sensible financial choices that support local priorities, strengthen communities, and deliver real value for everyone.

### **Kingston Labour will:**

- Empower residents through participatory budgeting, giving communities a direct say in how funding from developments and council resources is invested.
- Improve transparency and local democracy by giving residents clear, accessible information on council structures and how to contact officers, so everyone can engage effectively with local decision-making.
- Actively bid for Mayoral and government funds to bring additional investment into Kingston, ensuring the borough benefits fully from national and City Hall support.
- Support the voluntary sector with clear funding pathways and strong partnerships, recognising their vital role in delivering services and empowering local people.

Unlike other parties, Labour will focus on long-term, sustainable investment, making decisions that improve lives now and for the future.

**A greener, cleaner  
Kingston upon Thames**

## **A Greener, Cleaner Kingston**

After years of inaction that saw our precious rivers treated like open sewers, Labour is delivering real change for our environment - nationally, regionally, and locally. Under previous administrations, water companies were allowed to discharge sewage into waterways with minimal consequence, harming ecosystems and ignoring public concern.

In Kingston, local Labour campaigners have long been a strong voice against pollution in the Hogsmill River, meeting with Thames Water and lobbying for urgent investment. Labour in government has passed major new protections, including the Water (Special Measures) Act 2025, which gives regulators stronger powers to prevent sewage pollution and hold companies accountable. The Mayor of London is also investing in long-term river improvements across the capital.

Investment delivered by Labour-run City Hall has helped to restore wildlife, including the reintroduction of water voles to the Hogsmill, and is now supporting the delivery of local bathing water sites that meet safety standards, as part of the Mayor of London's programme to improve rivers and protect habitats across the city.

Labour is also driving practical environmental action in local schools, rolling out solar panels on school roofs to cut energy bills, reduce carbon emissions, and teach the next generation the importance of sustainability.

This combination of national, City Hall, and local initiatives shows what can be achieved when Labour is committed to protecting our environment - and sets the foundation for a cleaner, greener Kingston.

In Labour-run Wandsworth, households get two free bulky waste collections per year. The Council takes up to four items or 12 sacks of waste for free.

Labour will bring this approach to Kingston to make waste disposal fair and accessible to all.

In Kingston, large skips will be placed in neighbourhoods around the borough for all residents to use. In Labour-run Wandsworth, this led to a 16% reduction in fly-tipping. Pop-up Tips in Merton were used by almost 10,000 residents. Labour will provide free neighbourhood skips four times a year, reflecting core Labour values of justice and equality. This ensures residents are not penalised if they can't afford a car or bulky waste collection. The

Lib Dem Council currently charges £47 for 1 - 4 items or £71 for 5–8 items.

This approach will help keep Kingston's streets and neighbourhoods cleaner, reduce illegal dumping, and ensure that everyone can dispose of waste safely and fairly, reflecting Labour's commitment to a greener, more sustainable borough.

### **Kingston Labour will:**

- Make waste disposal fair and accessible for all residents, ensuring no one is penalised if they cannot afford bulky waste collection.
- Make allotments available on council estates and small parcels of council land so people can grow and exchange their own vegetables.
- Explore opening up the Hogsmill to create a continuous trail from Old Malden to where it meets the Thames in Kingston.
- Continue to champion projects that improve biodiversity, clean rivers, and reduce environmental impact, building on national and City Hall initiatives.
- Protect and maintain Kingston's green spaces, oppose unsympathetic development, and ensure local people have access to them.

**Making Kingston safer  
for everyone**

## **Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour**

We have heard from residents and local businesses how anti-social behaviour can have a major effect on the quality of their lives. We will work with the Mayor of London and the Metropolitan Police to bring policing back to the community.

Cuts in policing under the previous government mean that less than half of people saw a 'bobby on the beat' over the last 10 years. Labour is turning this around with a return to visible community policing.

The Labour Government is recruiting 13,000 more neighbourhood police officers and Police Community Support Officers to increase foot patrols in town centres. We welcome the support of the Labour Mayor of London who has put more community policing into Kingston Town Centre to address anti-social behaviour and shoplifting.

We support the Labour Government's measures to protect workers and businesses with a new offence for assaulting retail staff and the scrapping of the £200 rule that often meant shoplifting under this value was not properly investigated.

A vibrant night time economy in town centres must be balanced with a tough stance on anti-social behaviour to protect both residents and visitors. We will work with local residents and businesses to establish the needs of the community, including the use and extension of Public Space Protection Orders.

**Kingston Labour will:**

- We will work with the Labour Mayor of London and Metropolitan Police to ensure Kingston upon Thames is the safest borough in London.

## **Ending Violence Against Women & Girls**

Ensuring that women and girls feel safe is a key priority for Labour, both in public spaces and online.

Women and girls experience and fear sexual violence -from unwelcome sexual remarks and gestures to rape and physical violence. It happens on our streets, on public transport, in schools and workplaces, in local shops and parks, and increasingly through social media. Over 70% of women in the UK say they have experienced sexual harassment in public. They are also at risk of abuse in their own homes.

The Labour government and Mayor of London have been taking steps to make public spaces safer and to support victims of abuse. This includes funding for domestic violence services and campaigns, to tackle sexual harassment.

Threats to women and girls increasingly happen online. AI-driven harassment, non-consensual sharing of images, and algorithmic abuse create real-world harm. Nationally, new laws are being introduced to protect people from online abuse, including non-consensual sharing of images, harassment via social media, and emerging AI-enabled harms.

## **Kingston Labour will:**

- Work with and fund local organisations and charities providing advocacy, counselling, and crisis support for survivors of violence and harassment.
- Work with community groups and schools to promote education programs on consent, digital safety, and respectful relationships.
- Provide support to victims, and lobby platforms for stronger protections and moderation.
- Ensure local organisations receive guidance and resources to support women and girls facing abuse both online and offline.
- Ensure council services are accessible, coordinated, and responsive, including housing support for survivors of domestic abuse.

Labour will work to ensure that every woman and girl in Kingston can feel safe, online and offline, and that our borough is a place where public spaces, digital spaces, and homes are free from abuse and fear.

**The best borough to live,  
learn and work**

# Reviving Kingston's Local Economy & High Streets

Labour will revitalise Kingston's high streets, support independent shops and local businesses, and build a fairer, stronger economy that works for everyone. Across the UK, government action is starting to reverse years of decline on high streets, including £150 million to help restore community pride in local high streets and targeted programmes to bring empty shopfronts back into use and support independent businesses. This national focus on strengthening high streets and small businesses recognises the vital role local economies play in community life, jobs and social wellbeing.

Kingston has long been known as a great place to shop, but with online sales increasing and many traditional shops closing, empty premises have become all too common. It's vital that new uses are found for these spaces and that we help local independent businesses thrive despite high rents and rising costs.

## **Kingston Labour will:**

- Support independent shops and small businesses by promoting vibrant, diverse retail and commercial spaces that attract footfall and strengthen local trade.

- Boost Kingston's high streets by working with landlords, councils and community groups to bring empty units back into use for local businesses, cultural activities, cooperatives or community enterprises.
- Work with trade unions and business organisations to ensure workers' rights and fair pay are supported in our local economy, including fair hours and secure work for shop workers.
- Launch a programme of community wealth building that keeps investment and economic benefits circulating locally, like in Labour run Preston, where councils and organisations prioritise local supply chains, mutuals, co-operatives and community businesses.
- Lobby for continued national support for high street businesses, including business rates reform, support for digital adoption and licensing reforms that reduce red tape and make it easier to open and sustain local enterprises.
- Work with partners to improve public spaces and markets, encouraging outdoor dining, markets, and cultural events that attract visitors and strengthen local spending.
- Support local skills and jobs initiatives that help residents - especially young people and unemployed workers - access training and employment opportunities connected to local business growth and high street revitalisation.

By combining national support with bold local action, Labour will ensure Kingston's economy is not just surviving but thriving, with strong high streets, successful independent businesses, and a resilient, inclusive local economy.

## **Arts, Culture & Leisure and Sport**

Arts, culture, and leisure are vital to building strong, connected communities. They encourage participation, support wellbeing, and provide opportunities for creativity, recreation, and social interaction. Under Liberal Democrat council control, Kingston missed opportunities to access government and City Hall funding for community sport and other projects.

Labour councillors in Kingston have a proud record of championing community arts, including supporting the building of the Rose Theatre.

### **Kingston Labour will:**

- Expedite the Kingfisher Centre rebuild, investigating delays and additional costs to ensure accessible, high-quality sports and leisure facilities for all residents.
- Celebrate Kingston's heritage and the legacy of Athelstan by incorporating in the upcoming cultural strategy and proposing an Athelstan Centre to promote tourism, host cultural events, and create local employment opportunities, ensuring Kingston's history and heritage continue to enrich the community.

- Support community events such as the Kingston Regatta and Kingston Carnival, ensuring Kingston's increasingly diverse communities feel included and represented.
- Leverage government and City Hall funding to expand opportunities for arts, sports, and cultural participation in schools, community centres, and public spaces.
- Maintain accessible arts and leisure resources, ensuring local theatres, galleries, and sports facilities remain affordable and inclusive for all residents.
- Encourage the use of empty shops by supporting creative and community-led uses, such as pop-up art studios, workshops, and local enterprise, bringing activity and vibrancy to high streets while supporting local talent.

By combining national funding, City Hall initiatives, and local leadership, Labour will ensure Kingston's arts, culture, and leisure infrastructure is vibrant, inclusive, and supportive of community wellbeing.

**Kingston Labour will:**

- work with Kingstonian FC, the council and the community to ensure the club can secure the permanent home back in the borough.

Kingstonian FC are historically the senior football club of this town, a famous old club that has achieved major honours in amateur and semi-professional football. The Ks have won the FA Amateur Cup and the FA Trophy twice, competed in the Football Conference, and produced numerous players who have gone on to careers in the Football League.

Grassroots football is vital to communities across the country. The Labour Party has committed nationally to strengthening grassroots sport by improving access to community facilities and supporting investment in local pitches and sports infrastructure so clubs can thrive.

But the Ks have been without a ground in the borough since being forced to leave Kingsmeadow in 2017, when the ground was sold to Chelsea FC. Since then, they have had to groundshare with Leatherhead, Corinthian Casuals, Tooting & Mitcham, and now Raynes Park Vale.

Labour councillors will work to ensure this famous old club can secure a permanent home in its home borough. A site has been identified within Kingston for a new ground, and the club is looking to build facilities there.

## **Celebrating and Supporting Our Diverse Communities & Tackling Hate Crime**

Labour champions a borough that values and celebrates every community. Kingston is home to vibrant communities from across the world, including strong faith communities, people from many ethnic backgrounds, and a proud and visible LGBTQ+ community. Each contributes to the rich social, cultural and economic fabric of our borough.

Labour councillors will strengthen community cohesion, celebrate this diversity through festivals, arts projects and cultural initiatives, and actively tackle hate crime, discrimination and harassment wherever it occurs, including racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-LGBTQ+ hate and other forms of prejudice.

While Kingston is largely a welcoming borough, Labour has a strong track record of acting swiftly against racist and discriminatory behaviour, including pushing for the removal of racist graffiti and challenging divisive narratives by highlighting the many benefits of a diverse and inclusive community.

## **Kingston Labour will:**

- Support local voluntary and community organisations that celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and challenge hate.
- Promote cultural events and programmes that reflect Kingston's diverse population, including LGBTQ+ events and celebrations.
- Ensure all communities have a voice in council decision-making and access to council support.
- Work with schools, youth groups and community partners to educate young people and encourage respect and understanding across communities.

Labour believes a borough that celebrates diversity and fosters inclusion is stronger, safer and a better place for everyone to live and work.