

Vote Conservative on 5 May

For a brighter future for Southwark

The Conservative Party ***Southwark Council Manifesto 2022***

Foreword

Thursday May 5 is your opportunity to vote for a better future for Southwark. Labour's stranglehold on power has to change. Conservative candidates are standing for election throughout the borough. These are our key pledges.

We will:

1. Represent you, respect your concerns and bring accountability to Southwark Council
2. Champion our community, transport and the environment
3. Promote good governance and the effective public services you deserve

The past four years have been the only four in living memory without Conservative councillors on Southwark Council. It means Labour have pushed through their ideologically driven, flawed policies and spending plans without any effective scrutiny or opposition. Anyone who disagrees is simply ignored, and many people's voices are not being heard. That's bad for democracy and bad for decision-making.

Our pledge to you is that if you vote for us on 5 May, we will hold Southwark Council to account by representing you and channelling a strong, grassroots community voice at every opportunity.

Tristan Honeyborne and Clive Rates

Conservative Party Candidates for Dulwich Village

Lindsay Chathli and Peter Heaton-Jones

Conservative Party Candidates for Dulwich Wood

Jordan Abdi, Lewis Jones and Luke Warren

Conservative Party Candidates for South Bermondsey

and Conservative Party Candidates across Southwark

Our commitments to you

Standing up for Southwark

Council tax

- During the last the four years of Southwark Labour, council taxes have risen by 15%, much more than inflation (Band D). This is unsustainable in the face of a cost-of-living crisis and Southwark Labour is placing an unjustifiable burden on local residents.
- We should aspire to the example set by nearby Conservative-run Wandsworth Council: with the lowest average council tax of any council in the country, Wandsworth has gone from strength to strength. We will bring much fairer rates of council tax to Southwark and improve service provision at the same time.
- Southwark Council's council tax income per dwelling has increased by more than 35% since 2017, so there are no excuses left for poor public services.

Democracy, and community engagement

- Residents need a greater say in the council's decision-making process. When Southwark Labour invites engagement from the community; groups that lobby for special interests or have a financial interest in council decisions are often the loudest voices.
- We will stand up for of all members of our community. The current stakeholder groups on which Southwark Labour rely do not always represent the full diversity of views locally, especially as regards policies such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs). This can lead to poor policy: those most likely to be negatively affected are not afforded an equal chance to shape policy, or to help councillors and officers understand the reality of their lives.
- We commit to engage regularly with local residents and represent their interests and concerns. At the moment, Labour dominates the council and any other views are simply dismissed or ignored. We will make sure everyone's voice is heard fairly and respectfully.

Our commitments to you

Standing up for Southwark

Governance and public services

- Southwark Labour have pushed through high remuneration for their councillors, in the form of large 'special responsibility allowances' for members of the council's Cabinet and others, including large allowances for councillors performing the poorly-defined role of 'Community Champion'.
- In 2018/19, the highest special responsibility allowance - paid in addition to the basic allowance received by all councillors - was £53,239: ranking Southwark 12th highest in the country.
- Southwark needs measurable targets and a vision for the future. Without setting transparent metrics for performance and regularly reporting on them, it is too easy for the council to claim that it is doing a good job without fair and balanced evidence to justify that. Performance in children's services, education and social housing in particular are key areas where we will institute rigorous and transparent reporting so that annual performance can be compared and improved upon.

Education and sport

- All children should have the right to attend a good local school, close to their home. We will work co-operatively with central government to secure ongoing investment in the future of the next generation.
- There are inspirational leaders and teachers in many of our schools. We will encourage the sharing of expertise and resources to ensure that all children get the maximum benefit, wherever they are in Southwark.
- We will work with and promote our local not-for-profit sports clubs and sports charities, which are volunteer-led and work hard to make sure that our amazing local sports facilities remain available to local residents, schools and the wider sporting community.

Our commitments to you

Standing up for Southwark

Environment

- In Wandsworth, Conservatives have led the way on electric vehicle charging as we transition to carbon net zero, where there are now over 50% more electric car charging points per resident than in Southwark. The Conservative Party will be an unrelenting voice in favour of the roll-out of electric charging points and other measures to encourage and facilitate the transition to carbon neutral transport.
- Government statistics show that solid wood burning accounts for around 17% of air pollution in London (PM 2.5 particulates); nationally, domestic wood burning accounts for three times more small particle air pollution than car traffic. Promoting awareness of this issue and strongly discouraging domestic wood burning is an effective and necessary step to rapidly tackle air pollution.
- We will promote good management of our parks and woods. The Conservative Party was elected in 2019 on a manifesto promise to plant 30 million trees a year: we will play our part in “greening” our city and encouraging sustainable land use.
- We will promote access to our parks and green spaces, and we will seek to repeal the regressive parking charges Labour have imposed in Southwark’s parks, as well as the fees to use tennis courts that had previously been a popular, free, first come-first-served resource.

Housing and planning

- We will resist ‘infilling’, where the Council sacrifices open spaces and community amenities to squeeze in yet more development. In contrast, we will encourage the redevelopment and re-purposing of brownfield sites that have fallen into disuse.
- Southwark Council should conduct a review into the number of empty council properties, so those most in need can get the home they need, sooner.
- We will scrutinise the council’s programme of home improvements to make sure they happen on time and on budget.
- We see a greater role for local councils in facilitating residential and commercial property insulation, assisting with reducing our carbon footprint and cutting heating costs. Public awareness programmes, linking up reputable commercial suppliers with customers and incentive schemes should all be explored.

Our commitments to you

Standing up for Southwark

Policing and crime

- Crime in inner London continues to rise across Labour-run councils, and Southwark is no exception to that. The Labour Mayor of London has failed to address this issue and violent crime in particular has risen under his watch. Southwark Council needs a dedicated councillor cabinet member for crime and policing, to recognise the importance of this issue and provide an integrated approach across council services.
- We want to see Southwark Council playing a more structured and pro-active role in supporting and promoting Neighbourhood Watch as we recognise that crime reporting and community engagement are key pillars for an effective police force. We will work to help build on the existing network of Neighbourhood Watch schemes and include this as part of a strategy to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- The re-establishment of police bases in our community should be encouraged. The council must ensure that adult and children's services are appropriately integrated with the police to ensure efficient and quick resolution where violent crime, including domestic abuse, are concerned. Women's safety is a priority for us.

Recycling and waste management

- Southwark Labour's record on fly-tipping is appalling. Southwark fly-tipping incidents now rank 11th worst of the 333 local authorities in the UK and, of over 21,000 fly-tipping incidents recorded last year, only 22 led to penalty charge notices being issued. In contrast, with fewer than 4,000 fly-tipping incidents recorded, Conservative-run Wandsworth Council issued more than 700 penalty charge notices. We would improve enforcement and increase budgets where Labour have cut in real terms.
- Recycling rates in Southwark have stalled for a decade, at around 35%. Southwark Labour set out to achieve a 50% recycling rate by 2020, an objective they have fallen far short on. We will push to reverse these failures and make Southwark a London-leading borough on recycling rates and waste disposal.
- Large item disposal and recycling is an often-ignored issue, particularly since most do not have access to vans or large cars to dispose of large household items at recycling centres. We will take inspiration from Conservative-run councils and organise mega-bin services, to set up one-day disposal services across the borough. This would also reduce fly-tipping.

Our commitments to you

Standing up for Southwark

Supporting our local economy

- Central government has given many tens of millions in funding to Southwark Council to distribute grants and support to local businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our party is committed to support businesses as every level of government. As a party, we have always regarded businesses as key stakeholders in our society and will always be the first to recognise the role that they play in our community.
- We will ensure that businesses are fully integrated into consultation processes, not approached as an after-thought once decisions have already been taken.
- We will explore ways to encourage local investment and business development, attracting bright talent and potential from across London. Business rates, transport, internet connectivity and other local service provision all have a part to play in this.

Transport

- We support steps to sustainably reduce traffic and improve air quality for all.
- Public transport is closely correlated with private car ownership, and therefore use. Investment in public transport is important to reduce the incentives for unnecessary journeys by car. Zero-carbon public transport options are to be favoured, including community shuttles. The millions, if not tens of millions, received in fines issued by Southwark Council in connection with LTNs should be used as a springboard to revitalise our public transport wherever possible.
- We will work with and set ambitious challenges for schools and delivery companies to reduce traffic and pollution.
- We are concerned by the illegal use of electric scooters on Southwark's roads and, as part of our vision, will work to ensure that all road users respect the Highway Code. We also recognise that dangerous cycling on pavements is a problem.
- We will accelerate the roll-out of cycle storage facilities, in order to allow access to cycling for as many people in our community as possible.

Our commitments to you

Standing up for Southwark

Transport (continued)

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) have been introduced in Southwark with little or no consultation, and the results of consultations have been consistently ignored. With regards to LTNs, or any other interventions that close or restrict roads, we will:

- remove those, including those in Dulwich Village, East Dulwich and Champion Hill, that have significant adverse effects on vulnerable groups including children, the elderly, disabled and less mobile people;
- resist future measures that:
 - displace traffic onto residents or schools;
 - create access issues for vulnerable residents, emergency services or carers;
 - damage local businesses; or
 - do not demonstrably reduce carbon emissions or tackle climate change;
- represent the interests of pedestrians, cyclists, bus and train users, the less mobile and local businesses in all transport related decisions;
- rely only on independent, unbiased, clear data when considering road use and traffic management; and
- give our full and unwavering support to the conclusion of Southwark's Citizen Jury on Climate Change:

'Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) should only be implemented if extensive engagement with broader potentially impacted areas as well as the specific area is carried out thoroughly and shows support'

This election is an opportunity to vote for a better future for Southwark, with more community engagement, better decision-making and proper scrutiny of how our money is spent. Conservative councillors will work for the good of the whole borough, and listen to everyone's voices fairly and respectfully

Vote Conservative on May 5 for a brighter future for Southwark