

QUALITY SERVICES - LOW TAXES

The Derbyshire Conservative Group
Manifesto
2013 to 2017



 **Vote Conservative**

ANDREW LEWER CONSERVATIVE GROUP LEADER



Andrew Lewer with David Cameron

Dear Resident

Since 2009 Derbyshire Conservatives have been delivering their manifesto promises to improve services, reduce waste and get good value for money in the teeth of the worst financial period since the Great Depression. We have delivered 95% of our manifesto promises to the people of Derbyshire despite hostile opposition from the Labour Party that not once made a proposal about how they would reduce spending nor said what they would do to achieve better and more equitable services for Derbyshire.

No libraries have closed; no children's centres have closed. We have supported Derbyshire with innovative grant schemes that help communities to help themselves – an underpinning principle of our Conservative administration. These grants have purchased and renovated buildings, supported a whole host of activities for young and old, provided sports facilities and delivered many thousands of hours of sports for people of all ages and abilities.

We have addressed rural inequality in our services because we recognise that vulnerable people also live there, not just in the populous towns and larger villages. We have ensured that young people in rural areas also have access to youth activities that their peers in the larger towns took for granted.

Since we came into administration we have spent more than £25m a year on our schools, which can be contrasted with just £17m per year spent by Labour in its last 10 years of administration. This highlights how we address what is important to people, ensuring our children are thriving and learning in the best facilities that we can provide. We will deepen that commitment in our Manifesto for 2013 by coming up with an innovative financial package of up to £100m to ensure our schools are fit for the future and to address a Labour failure to ensure our schools were in good repair.

We are also spending more than £6m to address the condition of our roads, which have been affected by three harsh winters and one of the wettest years on records. Underinvestment prior to 2009 has meant our roads were more susceptible to erosion and damage. We have made sure our investment in roads has been targeted to ensure that potholes are dealt with quickly and efficiently and we will continue to ensure that happens with our Pothole Busters Scheme, which promises a better quality more permanent repair.

Our innovative approach to the huge challenges in Adult Care provision is recognised as a national leader, especially via our Extra Care homes, and our focus on helping people to stay in their own homes. The transfer of public health responsibilities to the Council, together with the much closer relationship we now enjoy with all branches of the NHS will help us deliver more deeply integrated health and social care in the years ahead.

This election is not about the European Union.

This County cannot afford to go back to being run by hard-line left wingers harking back to the 1970s.

As Conservatives we offer Derbyshire people a competent and capable team with moderate but progressive ideas. This Manifesto highlights some of those ideas; it is not simply a list of all the services we provide; we are committed to those services and will protect them but also reshape them to withstand the pressures they will face in the years ahead. We believe we are going into this election on a good footing, having delivered on our promises in our first administration and with a Manifesto to ensure good services and with an economic plan that makes Derbyshire a stronger County.

A Lewer

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YOUR MONEY

After three years of delivering 0% Council Tax, we are going even further to look after you and your family's household budgets by delivering 0% again next year, if elected. Council Tax had never been frozen before we took control of the Council and you can be sure that our Labour opponents would be straight back to their spend-spend-spend habits if they get back in; they have already said as much. Only by electing a Conservative administration can you be sure that your hard earned money is treated with the respect it deserves.

This care with money is not just about the level of Council Tax; we have already made around £100 million of efficiency savings over the last four years and we will continue to deliver more value from the Council but protect services as far as possible as well. Our commitment to value goes beyond the finances of the Council; we want to try and save you money in other ways, such as cutting your utility and other rising bills.

WE WILL DELIVER:

- 0% Council Tax again in 2014/15, the fourth year in a row!
- Derbyshire Lend a Hand: We will extend our acclaimed first time buyer mortgage scheme to a further 250 families
- Derbyshire Big Deals: We will extend our electricity and gas scheme to offer further discounts on water and plumbing and drainage, telephones and broadband, car recovery and home security not only to more local people in the home, but to the voluntary sector and to small and medium sized businesses
- Better Family Finances: A new scheme to encourage 5,000 families on low incomes to open bank accounts to give them greater financial security and access to discounts. We will grant £25 to every eligible family opening an account (to be matched by them) as long as they leave the money in for over six months
- Workforce Extra: We will extend this popular discount scheme, currently available to our workforce, for a further two years and extend it to include DCC pensioners





STRONGER COMMUNITIES

One of the biggest changes to come with the election of a Conservative administration in 2009 was the increased profile - and in many sectors the increased support - for the work the voluntary sector delivers for the people of Derbyshire.

Times are tough and will remain so for some years but we will still support people to help one another; this is good for people's health, the economy and helps to cut crime.

We will also protect the services that so many of us use and value, such as our library service. We are concerned that Labour has promised to reverse many of the efficiencies we have made but the money to do so is simply not there. Will they cut back on Derbyshire's libraries to find their missing millions?

A second term for Derbyshire Conservatives would ensure that all the County's libraries stay open.

WE WILL DELIVER:

- Our Library Pledge: All Derbyshire's libraries will stay open
- Broadband for Libraries: All of Derbyshire's libraries will be wireless broadband ready in the next three years
- Community Building Grants: We will continue this scheme, with another £1,000,000 for worthwhile voluntary sector capital projects across the County
- Community Action Grants: We will expand this scheme to help another 250+ projects of up to £1000 maximum
- Sports Action Grants: We will repeat this scheme to help another 250+ projects of up to £1000 maximum
- First World War Commemoration & 2015 Year of Culture: We will back these worthwhile activities and make them a success in Derbyshire
- New Libraries: We will open new libraries in Belper and in Glossop (and support efforts to find a sustainable use for the old library building at Victoria Hall, which we rent from the Borough Council); we will seek to use developer contributions to enable new libraries to come to Hilton and Matlock
- Recycling initiatives: A programme of promotional activities around protecting the environment, including a new Household Recycling Centre for Clay Cross
- Safer Streets: Support for 500 communities to have volunteer street marshals and to promote local activities to counter crime



SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Having the best possible chances in life and the freedom to make informed choices are key to our vision for young people in Derbyshire.

We have brought much needed flexibility into our Youth Service provision and have continued to build new schools and undertake much needed repair work on others, even in the difficult financial environment we are working in.

Whether a school is an academy or local authority funded we promote a Derbyshire school family approach to improve standards for all and encourage schools to work together by sharing experiences and opportunities.

WE WILL DELIVER:

- School Building Programme: Innovative financing for up to £100m of school repairs and rebuilding
- Continued support for the Summer Reading Challenge: Part of our plans to increase the use of libraries by Derbyshire's young people
- Young Apprentices: Grants to create a further 500 apprentices in small and medium sized enterprises across Derbyshire as part of the National Apprenticeship Scheme
- Continue our focus on literacy and speech and language: This will deliver the best educational start for our children
- Youth Activity Grants: Expansion of our £250,000 Youth Activities Grant scheme to support activities for young people with decisions being made by young people, via the Youth Council
- Derbyshire Young Carers Support: An expansion of our existing volunteer befriending and Volunteer Passport scheme into providing respite, activities and support for young carers in Derbyshire.
- Child Care Dividend: We will deliver an extra session of childcare via nurseries and Children's Centres to help people into employment with costs to be shared between the Council, individuals and employers
- Financial advice for young people: A network of volunteer experts going into schools, libraries and youth centres, to help young people learn how to manage on a budget and to make sensible financial choices
- We will ensure financial help and advice by Credit Unions and others is available where they can make a real impact, such as at Children's Centres. This will prevent our poorest and most vulnerable families from turning to loan sharks and high interest payday loan firms.



PROMOTING GROWTH

Nobody needs to be reminded what a tough time Derbyshire people are having in the current economic climate.

Derbyshire Conservatives are determined to do our part to assist the creation of growth, both through the County Council's capital expenditure and looking after the infrastructure we all rely on.

We already do a great deal of work in this area but we have some fresh ideas to do even more to 'go for growth'.

WE WILL DELIVER:

- **Second Career Apprentices:** A new training scheme for 500 adults looking for training or a change of career and above the traditional apprenticeship age; we will operate this in partnership with Job Centre Plus
- **Work Experience:** Placements for 500 young people within the County Council and a programme of support for other employers across Derbyshire
- **Trusted Trader expansion:** Increase the number of accredited businesses in the scheme by 50% by offering free membership to new entrants for a year AND subsidise renewals for current members for a year by 50%
- **Trade and Investment Strategy:** Bringing innovative ways into our trade and investment work, with greater use of external grant aid and sponsorship
- **Digital Derbyshire:** Introducing Superfast Broadband to every corner of Derbyshire during our term of office, with over £7m of support already underwritten by the County Council





BETTER TRANSPORT

For many people our roads are what they most identify with the County Council. They have been a high priority for the Conservative Administration since 2009. However, a run of especially severe winters and record high rainfall have made for an especially challenging few years; we have changed the way we run the Department to cope with budget and climate pressures accordingly.

We have lobbied for - and received - a large amount of central government funding to help protect our roads. We remain committed to improving road safety whenever and wherever we can. Our additional funding for Community Transport has been well received by many Derbyshire communities and in future we will focus even more upon supporting those who need the most help with getting around. Railways too are important to us and huge progress has been made over securing a station for Ilkeston. Canals too have their part to play, especially for regeneration and tourism, and we will continue to support the Chesterfield and Cromford Canals directly and assist with other projects around the County.

WE WILL DELIVER:

- Pot Hole Busters: An additional £6m into road repairs, from Council and Government funds, using the most modern and efficient methods
- Grit Bin Bonanza: Free grit bins for 400 Derbyshire communities, with the first fill of grit supplied free
- Snow Alert: Research work into a new category of gritting and support services to keep the parts of Derbyshire affected by heavy snow moving as distinct from our already successful changes to general work to tackle icy roads
- Personalised Transport: Reviewing our provision of transport to reflect the changing needs of the County, especially for older and vulnerable people
- Ilkeston Station: We are nearly there. Others talked about it. We acted!





CARING FOR OLDER PEOPLE & THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

The greatest challenge local government faces in the years ahead is the escalating cost of caring for the growing number of older people in our County, especially those with dementia. In Derbyshire we are leading the field in innovative ways to deliver care that people want and will need in the future, with more choice and more control but with the highest standards of dignity and respect. We know that, if possible, people want to stay in their own homes; via the popular HandyVan scheme and a range of other support services that is our goal for people as well. One size does not fit all when it comes to care needs and we will retain a range of different services to reflect that. The transfer of public health responsibilities to the Council gives us more tools to help people stay fit and well, with an added emphasis upon preventative work, to assist with our goal of preventing as many people as possible needing intensive care support in the first place. Relationships with the NHS: through GPs, hospitals and community health services across the County have never been better. That is vital because getting health and care provision to work together and design services together - that reflect what people tell us they want - is the most important task of all for the Council to enable us to cover costs but provide the right sort of care.

WE WILL DELIVER:

- Falls Prevention Grants: An emergency scheme for the really vulnerable and those with urgent needs, administered solely by the County Council; getting work done on people's homes to keep them safe and as independent they can be as quickly as possible
- Super Care: An up to £50m investment in Extra Care style supported living environments for Derbyshire people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties
- Extra Care: An additional £60m investment in the future of care provision, which has already proved so popular with its residents, with 400 additional supported living apartments across the County
- Derbyshire Carers Support: 5,000 half day breaks (known as 'respite care') for those who devote their lives to caring for others, often (but not always) partners or relatives
- Home Health, Safety and Welfare Checks: 5,000 of our most vulnerable over 80s will receive these checks at no cost to them, together with advice on how to receive help with money matters, home security and getting the most from our NHS
- Silver Skypers: Providing tablets computers across the County's residential homes and Extra Care apartments with properly supervised young people (both in school and out of hours) helping to train older people in their use, for activities such as family Skyping, storing photographs, reminiscences and family trees