

Exeter Labour Party

Exeter City Council Manifesto 2026



Labour Exeter City Council Manifesto 2026

Introduction

Across the country, councils continue to face real financial pressure. In Exeter, our Labour led council has addressed this by prioritising key services, making careful decisions, listening to residents, and focusing on what matters most to our communities.

This year we have again set a balanced budget that allows us to deliver on our priorities, while keeping council tax among the lowest in the country. The city council's share remains just £191.31 for a Band D property, only a small part of the overall bill.

As a Labour administration, we have made clear choices to protect services, support residents and invest in Exeter's future. The new Renters' Rights Act is now in force, and we will ensure it is delivered locally, giving over 33,000 Exeter renters stronger rights and protections.

After years of difficult decisions, we are now in a strong position. We are not cutting services, and we are continuing to invest in the things that make Exeter a great place to live.

Independent research confirms that Exeter remains a city people are proud to call home, with high levels of satisfaction and trust in the council above the national average.

Our priorities remain clear:

- Supporting residents through the cost of living
- Leading on climate action
- Building more council homes
- Protecting green spaces
- Investing in culture and leisure
- Running a stable, well led council

This document sets out what we said we would do, what we have delivered, and how we are building on that delivery.

Phil Bialyk

Keeping our Promises

Our 2024 Pledges

We set out clear priorities for Exeter in 2024. Against a wide range of challenges, we committed to deliver across four key areas.

Exeter's People

As a Labour led council, we committed to supporting residents and community groups, sustaining cultural and leisure programmes to improve health, wellbeing and enrichment, and increasing safety across the city.

- Support residents through the cost of living with targeted help and advice
- Improve community safety and reduce anti-social behaviour
- Invest in health, wellbeing, culture and leisure services

Exeter's Environment

We committed to working with residents and key partners to reduce carbon emissions, protect and maintain our parks and open spaces, and increase biodiversity.

- Lead local climate action, including retrofitting homes and expanding recycling
- Protect parks, green spaces and biodiversity
- Improve waste, recycling and street cleanliness

Exeter's Homes

We committed to tackling homelessness, expanding council housing, planning for future growth through the Exeter Plan and delivering our Liveable Exeter ambitions.

- Build new council homes and increase affordable housing
- Support those at risk of homelessness
- Plan for sustainable development across the city

Exeter's Economy

Despite reduced funding and rising costs, we committed to maintaining a strong and resilient council, supporting businesses and revitalising the city centre.

- Run a stable, well managed council with strong financial leadership
- Support local businesses and a vibrant city centre
- Invest in culture, leisure and community facilities

Exeter's People

What We Delivered

- ✓ Over £775,000 delivered to more than 5,000 households
- ✓ 923 pensioners supported with heating costs
- ✓ Targeted help for families, disabled residents and those most in need
- ✓ Rough sleeper numbers falling
- ✓ Community Safety Team established and expanded city wide
- ✓ Anti-social behaviour reduced by 21.9%
- ✓ 311 high definition CCTV cameras installed
- ✓ Purple Flag Award secured
- ✓ Leisure services protected and strengthened to ensure long term sustainability

We said we would support residents and improve safety. We delivered targeted support at scale and made Exeter a safer city.

What We Are Delivering Now

Residents tell us they feel strongly connected to their communities, with high levels of belonging and trust in the council above the national average.

- Expanding and permanently funding the Community Safety Team
- Continuing the rollout and upgrading of CCTV across Exeter
- Delivering the £130,000 Pride in Exeter programme
- Providing ward grants and a city-wide community grant scheme (city grant pot increased by 20%)
- Supporting community projects through the Exeter City Council Community Lottery
- St Sidwell's Point is a highly popular, leisure centre, competing with leading leisure centres nationally
- Continuing the Wellbeing Exeter programme
- With local and national partners Investing in major upgrades at King George V Playing Fields
- Delivering the Wonford Community Wellbeing Hub
- Providing targeted cost of living support
- Continuing investment in leisure services and health programmes
- Delivering the refurbishment of Heavitree Pool
- Working with community organisations, charities and local groups to deliver services

We are building directly on what we have delivered, strengthening communities and supporting residents across the city.

This means we will deliver

Cleaner streets, stronger community safety, continued cost of living support and investment in the services and spaces local people rely on every day.

Exeter's Environment

What We Delivered

- ✓ 1,250 council homes retrofitted
- ✓ Water Lane Smart Grid completed
- ✓ Food waste collections rolled out to all Exeter's homes across the city
- ✓ New upgraded Materials Reclamation Facility approved
- ✓ 799 trees planted
- ✓ Britain in Bloom Gold and National Silver awards

We said we would lead on climate action. We delivered real, measurable progress.

What We Are Delivering Now

We are building on strong performance, with high satisfaction in waste and recycling services and increasing satisfaction in parks and green spaces.

- Expanding solar energy generation across council buildings
- Decarbonising council services and facilities
- Riverside energy upgrades funded by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme
- Delivering further retrofit programmes to council homes
- Undertaking work to achieve Nature Towns and Cities accreditation
- Delivering tree planting and biodiversity improvements
- Supporting active travel improvements
- Developing a new Air Quality Strategy for Exeter
- Rolling out carbon literacy training, achieving national recognition and expanding to partners
- Delivering the expansion of Exeter's recycling operation and new Materials Reclamation Facility
- Investing in waste and recycling infrastructure
- Rolling out and expanding food waste collection
- Developing an Electric Vehicle Strategy and expanding charging infrastructure
- Exeter allocated £7.5m from Labour Government for 90 more electric buses in the city next year.
- Working with the University to deliver a carbon reduction roadmap and cost of achieving net zero
- Maintaining and improving parks and green spaces

We have protected and improved the everyday services residents rely on, from clean streets and waste collection to safer neighbourhoods.

This means we will deliver

Expanded green investment, more energy efficient homes, and a continued drive towards net zero through sustainable transport and low carbon infrastructure.

Exeter's Homes

What We Delivered

- ✓ Whipton Gardens Phase 1 completed, delivering new Passivhaus council homes
- ✓ 21 Passivhaus flats delivered at Brook House
- ✓ 100 new social homes progressing
- ✓ 182 affordable homes secured
- ✓ Rough sleeper numbers reduced

We said we would build more homes and support those in need. We delivered new homes and strengthened support.

What We Are Delivering Now

Residents consistently highlight the need for more affordable housing, reinforcing the importance of continuing our council housebuilding programme.

- Continuing the building of new council homes
- Delivering further phases at Whipton Gardens and other developments
- Building Passivhaus council homes
- Investing in existing council homes and neighbourhoods
- Maintaining and improving existing council homes through tenant engagement
- Continuing to prevent homelessness and support those most at risk
- Working with partners to support people experiencing homelessness into housing solutions
- Implementing the new Renters' Rights Act to improve security and standards for renters in Exeter
- Developing and delivering the Exeter Plan
- Supporting regeneration and sustainable development
- Working to ensure new developments are well managed, with stronger protections for residents and a focus on the adoption of roads and public spaces

While others focus on criticism, Labour is focused on delivery.

This means we will deliver

More council homes and more genuinely affordable housing, helping to tackle the housing crisis and support local residents.

Exeter's Economy

✓ What We Delivered

- ✓ Balanced budgets delivered
- ✓ No frontline service cuts
- ✓ Council tax among the lowest nationally
- ✓ £6.78 million invested in culture
- ✓ Cultural Strategy developed
- ✓ 86% participation in cultural activity

Labour said we would run a stable council and invest in Exeter's economy. We delivered stability, growth and investment.

What We Are Delivering Now

Exeter has a strong and vibrant city centre, with high participation in culture and a thriving local economy.

- Supporting the vitality of Exeter city centre
- Working with InExeter and local businesses to support the city centre
- Supporting independent businesses and bringing vacant units back into use
- Supporting business, jobs and investment across the city
- Supporting local businesses and high streets across all parts of Exeter
- Developing and delivering the Cultural and City Centre Strategies
- Supporting events and the night time economy
- Managing and sustaining key city assets including the Guildhall, RAMM, leisure centres, Corn Exchange and Guildhall Shopping Centre
- Tackling anti-social behaviour to support businesses and the local economy
- Continuing to run a stable, well managed council

We have taken responsible decisions to keep the council financially stable while continuing to invest in Exeter.

This means we will deliver

A well-run council that keeps council tax low, supports local businesses and invests in the city centre, culture and community facilities.

Our Pledges for Exeter

Building on what we have delivered throughout 2024 and 2025, Exeter Labour will continue to focus on the priorities that matter most to residents.

Delivering services and spaces that local people can enjoy

Exeter Labour will deliver value for money, keeping council tax low and supporting residents through the cost of living, while investing in high quality services, leisure centres, parks, playgrounds and open spaces.

Fixing the housing crises by providing more affordable Homes

Exeter Labour will continue to provide more council homes, helping ensure more residents have access to genuinely affordable, high quality housing. We will also make renting fairer by ensuring the Renters' Rights Act 2025 is fully delivered in Exeter, supporting over 33,000 local renters with stronger rights and protections.

Leading on sustainability through green investment

Exeter Labour will expand our green investment, retrofitting more council homes to make them more energy efficient, committing any new buildings to the highest efficiency standards and extending our electric vehicle strategy citywide.

Restoring and protecting pride in our communities

Exeter Labour will champion our communities by keeping our streets tidy, enhancing our Community Safety Team and delivering a new £130K Pride in Exeter programme, working with the police to tackle antisocial behaviour and restore pride across our fantastic city. We will improve standards in private rented homes, tackling poor conditions and ensuring new renters' rights are enforced across Exeter's neighbourhoods.

“We promise and deliver, not just SAY what people want to hear”

The Results

Together, these actions show how Labour has delivered on its promises, making a real difference to people's lives across Exeter.

- ✓ Safer streets
- ✓ More homes
- ✓ Stronger climate action
- ✓ Protected green spaces
- ✓ Thriving culture
- ✓ Stable finances

In leading Exeter City Council, Labour has a proven track record of delivering on its promises, focused on practical action, real results and leading a council that gets things done for Exeter.