**CONSERVATIVES FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**DRAFT CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Conservative led Buckinghamshire County Council delivers over 140 important services for the people of Bucks. These include: roads, transportation, waste disposal, libraries, country parks, public health, education, looking after our elderly, protecting and safeguarding vulnerable children any so much more.**

**If elected a Conservative County Council will:**

* **Ensure value for money**

As Conservatives, we believe passionately in value for money. We have frozen Council tax for three of the past six years. We planned ahead as our Government funding was heavily reduced. All Government money for services is due to disappear completely by next year. In anticipation, we have cut back office costs, reduced overheads, merged services with other councils, introduced new technology and increased income to over £70 million each year to protect front line services.

Despite rapidly rising demand and costs, we have been able to limit our normal Council Tax increase to 2%. This will enable us to protect our planned investment in roads and pavements. We will also implement the Government’s proposal for a 3% increase which will only be spent on paying for Social Care for our elderly. The overall 5% proposed increase is equivalent to £1.10 pence per week for a Band D property.

* **Continue to invest in improving our roads and pavements**

Over the past six years we have invested over £120 million in restoring our road and pavements. There have been improvements; however more still needs to be done. Despite tough financial times we will prioritise continued investment of at least another £60 million over the next four years

* **Improve and enhance Buckinghamshire schools**

Our education system delivers some of the best results in the country for our children. Nearly 90% of our schools are rated ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’. Our Key Stage 4 results are consistently more than 10% above the national average. Conservatives have successful campaigned for improved Government funding for Bucks schools and have now secured an additional £10 million each year to help our schools continue to deliver great results.

* **Fight for money for essential infrastructure**

As Bucks population grows in the coming years it will be important that there is funding from developers and central Government for the roads, schools, parks, health facilities and cycle routes that are needed. We have already obtained over £88.5 million in Government funding for improvements across the county. However, much more is needed and we will continue to fight to ensure that Bucks receives its fair share.

* **Prioritise Safeguarding vulnerable children and provide care for our elderly who are unable to help themselves**

One of the council’s most important and difficult jobs is safeguarding those at risk of abuse and looking after those, particularly our elderly, who are unable to help themselves. We have increased spending on these key areas from about 45 pence in every pound spent to over 60 pence in every pound. Support for the elderly is not only morally right but helps relieve pressure on our valued NHS.

* **Work with the Police to further reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and help all communities get on well with each other**

Reducing crime in Buckinghamshire remains one of our residents’ top priorities. Crime is also changing with increased reports of ‘Cyber-crime’, child exploitation and domestic abuse. We will continue to work with the police to help prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime. We will also help tackle offences like speeding and illegal parking. As Buckinghamshire grows and changes we will work with local community and voluntary groups to help ensure that all parts of our society get on well.

* **Mitigate the effects of HS2 as construction begins**

Conservative local councillors have helped lead the campaign against HS2. We have also actively lobbied and petitioned Parliament for mitigation. Over £60 million worth of extra mitigation has been obtained towards helping local communities blighted along the route. As construction starts we will continue to support local people and businesses affected.

* **Protect our environment and increase recycling rates**

Bucks is one of the most beautiful counties in Britain. Bucks Conservatives will fight to keep it that way with great country parks, action on flood prevention, support for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and increased recycling and energy recovery rates. Importantly, we will continue our ‘zero- tolerance’ policy towards fly-tipping.

* **Further roll out Super-Fast broadband especially in rural areas**

The County Council has helped fund the roll out of Super-Fast Broadband to over 90% of the county’s households and businesses. However, we need to reach those that are still without this vital service. We will support reaching at least 95% where technically possible.

* **Support job creation by making Buckinghamshire one of the best places in which to do business**

Providing everyone with the opportunity of a job is one of the best ways to fight poverty and improve their quality of life. Bucks Conservatives will support our business community; especially our small and medium enterprises grow and flourish, bringing much needed jobs and prosperity to the county.

* **Encourage the provision of modern apprenticeships for our young people in both private and public sectors**

We recognise the value of modern apprenticeships as a great start to a vocational or business career. We will continue to offer apprenticeships and encourage private business to do the same. We will also work with our schools and colleges to better match skills with job opportunities.

* **Improve people’s lives and health**

Some people in Bucks still have a shorter life expectancy and poorer quality of life than those in more affluent areas, Conservatives work for everyone and will support action by the NHS and voluntary groups to reduce problems such as drug abuse, alcoholism and unhealthy lifestyles. This not only improves people’s lives but relieves pressure on the NHS. We will also look to integrate services with the NHS where this benefits residents.

**In difficult financial times, only an innovative and progressive Conservative County Council will continue to provide opportunity, encourage aspiration and be there for the most vulnerable.**

**VOTE CONSERVATIVE!**