



Building on our past Investing in our future





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The Liberal Democrat Manifesto for the London Borough of Sutton, May 2006

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"The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community and in which no-one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity."

Preamble from the Liberal Democrat constitution

"To build a community in which all can take part and all can take pride."

Mission statement of Liberal Democrat-run Sutton Council

Dear Reader,

Your Liberal Democrat council already has a strong reputation nationally as a high-achieving, environmentally-sustainable local authority and one that provides value for money. Four star, 'excellent', (the highest rating possible) is how the Audit Commission has rated your council and the Government has just given us national beacon status for our work with the police and for our waste and recycling services - two services so important to local people.

We have some of the best exam results in the country; we have provided excellence in regeneration and housing; we are innovative; we have world-class leisure available; a library service that is the best in the country; and we are one of the safest, greenest boroughs in London.

But we have much more to do.

MORI told us in 2005 that *"A strong two-thirds of Sutton residents (67%) are satisfied with the way the Council is running the borough - a consistently high level compared to other boroughs surveyed by MORI"*. Our aim is to satisfy the remaining 33% and this manifesto sets out some of the ways in which we'll do so.

We are ambitious for our borough and we are determined to meet the expectations and high standards of Sutton residents: it is you who provide the real test for us. We believe that you should be involved in the decisions that affect your lives, should be well-informed and have easy access to all those places where decisions are being made. A Liberal Democrat Council doesn't just provide services - it is the residents' champion and the voice of the community.

We want Sutton to be cleaner, greener and safer; we will continue to improve the quality of your services and provide better value for money; we want the success of the Phoenix and the Roundshaw regeneration to be replicated in other parts of the borough; we want our town centres to be more thriving; we want better transport across the borough; when you contact your council we want you to be satisfied with the service you receive; and we want to make it easier for you to participate in decisions that effect you.

In this manifesto you'll find fresh ideas for the next four years. You'll see innovative approaches to problems, new ways of tackling old problems, and ambitious, achievable targets to make even Sutton better. And we will campaign on your behalf at local, London and national level in areas including health and transport.

Sutton is a great place to live, work and learn - but it can be much better. This manifesto sets out some of the ways in which we'll make you as proud of Sutton as we are to serve you.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Sean Brennan, Council Leader

A profile of Liberal Democrat Sutton



**Councillor Sean Brennan -
proud to be leader of
'4 Star, excellent'
Liberal Democrat
Sutton Council**

- ★ Most active voluntary sector in the country
- ★ Second highest recycling rate in London
- ★ One of London's lowest unemployment rates (2 %)
- ★ Best-value town centre for retailers in London
- ★ A pioneer of town centre CCTV
- ★ UK's first safer town partnership between police and Council
- ★ Highest proportion in London of professional, managerial and skilled employees
- ★ Bedzed, UK's first eco village
- ★ UK's first self-service libraries, and one of the best library services in Europe
- ★ One of the UK's lowest road accident rates
- ★ The country's top-performing schools
- ★ Internationally-recognised junior tennis centre and highly-rated athletics training centre, Sutton Arena

Just some of the independent and nationally recognised awards won by Sutton Council – achieved by putting Liberal Democrat values into practice:

- ★ Awarded **Four Stars, 'Excellent', the highest possible status**, by the Audit Commission for its work as a council overall
- ★ **Winner** - Guardian Public Service Awards for *Innovation and Progress* for the library self-check units
- ★ National **Beacon status** - *Transforming the Delivery of Services Through Partnerships*, for the Safer Sutton Partnership
- ★ National **Beacon status** - *Waste and Recycling*
- ★ **Winner** - Local Government Chronicle (LGC) excellence award for *Innovation* for the Group Treatment Programme that helps children who have lived with domestic violence
- ★ **Winner** - Local Government Chronicle (LGC) excellence award for *Regeneration* for the Phoenix Centre
- ★ **Winner** - LGC/Health Services Journal, Sustainable Communities awards 2006 *Community Youth Initiative* for the Phoenix Centre
- ★ **Winner** - London Sustainable Transport Award, Best Council Travel Plan
- ★ **Winner** - Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Internal Service Team of the Year for *Waste Management, Refuse Collection & Street cleaning*
- ★ **Chartermarks** for council cashiers service; housing and regeneration; revenue and benefits; children's information service; and library service
- ★ Corporate **Investors in People** (IiP)

Developing strong and active communities

Our aim is to build a community that everyone can be a part of and can take pride in. Where people feel well-informed and can be involved in decisions that affect their lives. Where people play an active part in the community and can participate in a range of social and cultural activity.

We will continue to work with voluntary and community groups. The Compact between the Council and the voluntary sector is well advanced. We are working with the Sutton Centre for the Voluntary Sector (SCVS) and others to secure funding for a voluntary sector hub to bring SCVS, Sutton's Volunteer Centre and Sutton Racial Equality Council together under one roof, and also offer support to other voluntary bodies and enable closer working arrangements.

Residents' Associations play a significant role in bringing the local community together for social and cultural purposes and to discuss shared local problems. We support them and will encourage their growth and development. We will seek to enable developing Associations to learn from the strengths and successes of those that are already well established.

We do appreciate that some people need extra support to be sure their voices are heard. This is particularly important for those receiving long term support arranged by the Council and the NHS. So we want to see the continuing growth of a vibrant independent advocacy sector as it will help the way our public services respond to the needs of especially vulnerable people.

Ensuring equal opportunities and fairness for all matters. It is a core tenet of what we are and stand for. It influences everything we do and the way we do it. And a Liberal Democrat Council will continue to lead the way in which new statutory duties in race, gender and disability legislation are applied.

We have already co-located Orchard Hill College with SCOLA in the old Wallington Town Hall – this offers a unique combination of learning opportunities in the area and means Orchard Hill College is now easily accessible within the community.

Liberal Democrats respect the independence of the civic mayoralty and will maintain this system. But we also believe the civic mayor has an essential role to play in actively

promoting the Borough and engaging residents with community activities.

We want to make the Area Committees less formal and devolve more work to them with an allocated budget, so that decision-making will become increasingly relevant and closer to the people affected.

We will continue our programme of restoring the borough's war memorials as a tribute to all those residents who contributed so much to our freedom.



Developing strong and active communities

in short, we will...

- ★ work with the Sutton Centre for the Voluntary Sector [SCVS] and other community based bodies to secure funding and bring SCVS, Sutton Volunteer Centre and Sutton Racial Equality Council under one roof
- ★ continue to actively encourage a vibrant, independent advocacy sector for Sutton's residents
- ★ produce information packs for new residents about getting involved in their area and about the variety of local services and facilities
- ★ ensure the Council's workforce is representative of the community it serves
- ★ carry out equality impact assessments on existing policies and/or services as well as new initiatives to make sure we avoid unintended discrimination
- ★ positively promote cultural events like Black History Month, Islam Awareness Week and Holocaust Memorial Day to help us all challenge racism and bigotry
- ★ introduce annual mayoral awards that recognise positive contributions to Sutton's communities by residents and people who work in the Borough
- ★ continue to develop our Libraries as a 'community resource' and explore opportunities to allow residents to return library books to other drop-off points such as shops
- ★ refurbish Wallington library, Whitehall, Honeywood, Little Holland House and the Register Office
- ★ work toward enabling the Council to register as a Museum Authority
- ★ work with local groups and develop an investment partnership to build creative arts and sports centres in the borough and in the meantime retain the Secombe Theatre until a new multi-purpose cultural facility can be provided in Central Sutton
- ★ develop Sutton as a cultural centre through art, literature and music and celebrate the borough's heritage by bringing more civic art – statues, sculptures and poetry – to the whole borough
- ★ devolve more work to Area Committees with allocated budgets & make them less formal giving you more opportunities to participate
- ★ continue to make efficiency savings within the Council so that we can spend more money in the community. We expect to achieve over £1,500,000 in efficiency savings in 2006/7, while reducing the use of agency staff, printing, copying and stationery is expected to save a further £650,000
- ★ promote the concept of the global neighbourhood and explore the possibility of a twinning arrangement with a town in the developing world
- ★ strengthen our Fairtrade and ethical trading commitments
- ★ promote the development of community time banks to allow residents to use their talents to exchange services, similar to existing LETS schemes

Developing a cleaner, greener environment

The environment is at the heart of everything we do. We are recognised across the country as one of the top Councils for environmental protection and promoting sustainable living.

We are proud of our record in effective waste management. We have the second highest recycling rate in London – currently just under 30% - and we have set the Borough an ambitious new target of 50% by 2010. We continue to extend our popular green garden waste and kerbside glass collection services.



Led by Sutton and working in partnership with Kingston, Merton and Croydon, joint bids worth four million pounds from the London Recycling Centre mean we now have a composting plant that accepts 15,000 tonnes of green garden waste and a treatment plant which processes 110,000 tonnes of mixed household waste annually.

These projects will cost you nothing and mean:

- ★ an annual reduction of 50,000 tonnes of waste sent to landfill
- ★ an annual increase of 40,000 tonnes in recycling and composting
- ★ around £1,500,000 financial savings for Sutton over the next decade.

To do our bit to tackle climate change we have set up Sutton's Planet Pledge where hundreds of you have already signed up to make changes in your lifestyle to help the environment, whether by recycling, avoiding unnecessary packaging, wasting less water, turning off electrical equipment, walking or cycling.

We are proud of our role behind the development of the UK's first eco village at Hackbridge called BedZed. Designed to save

energy and use alternative energy sources, it is cited across the country as a prime example of sustainable living, using locally sourced materials.

We have now installed the largest solar powered domestic hot water system in the UK at Killick House in Central Sutton. It is more than 93% energy efficient and should save thousands of pounds on hot water bills and cut 36 tonnes of harmful carbon dioxide emissions each year.

We will continue to build on our success with our street cleaning and leaf clearing services and we will continue to tackle graffiti and flytipping with fast intervention and effective penalties. The street cleaning service is now based on areas so that staff can get to know the streets and the residents and provide a more thorough and personal service. Streets are now cleaned on a regular rota system on the basis of footfall and litter levels. We intend to look at making use of new technology to allow residents to use their mobile phones to send information and photographs about street scene problems directly to the appropriate council offices.

Developing a cleaner, greener environment

in short, we will...

- ★ seek to raise income for the borough through the sale of locally-produced energy, introducing a programme to recover energy from the waste which remains after recycling – the income will reduce Council Tax increases
- ★ 'badge' our buildings with their energy rating to show how effectively they use energy and natural resources
- ★ improve graffiti clear-up time to make it even faster
- ★ get tougher on litter louts and give our local police powers and the support to issue Fixed Penalty Notices
- ★ get tougher on dog fouling and 'educate' those allowing dogs to foul
- ★ continue to develop our success against fly tippers and fly tipping
- ★ bring back the 'noisy party patrols' in the summer and see if we can identify funding to make this a permanent service
- ★ continue to make our parking service more transparent and fairer with colour-coded parking bays and introduce a parking permit scheme for carers
- ★ develop schemes for parking permit discounts for fuel-efficient cars
- ★ promote the principle of car-free areas in the borough
- ★ extend the popular green garden waste collection service and our programme to collect real Christmas trees for recycling
- ★ provide free compost – Sutton Earth – for residents from the borough's recycling centre
- ★ expand the commercial recycling trial across the Borough and maintain our recycling collection service for residents in flats
- ★ encourage supermarkets and other shops to limit the use of plastic bags and to take back used ones
- ★ explore the possibility of introducing recycling facilities for plastic bottles, cans and batteries in town centres
- ★ campaign against junk mail by promoting the Mail Preference Scheme
- ★ enhance our deep-clean service for every road throughout the Borough
- ★ in spite of Government cuts, continue to fund 'Operation Scrap It' which removes most dumped cars within 72 hours of being reported
- ★ continue the campaign to bring Tramlink's service to Sutton
- ★ campaign for the side entrance at Sutton Station to be opened by the station operators
- ★ campaign to persuade Transport for London to provide more double-decker buses on school routes



Creating safer communities

We shall build on our groundbreaking Safer Sutton Partnership Service. Sutton was the very first council to integrate its community safety staff with local police under a single management structure, when the Partnership was launched in 2005 by Sutton Council and the Metropolitan Police.

Former Commissioner Sir John Stevens said of this practical approach to tackling community safety: *"...Sutton is a unique partnership, pushing out the boundaries of anything else that has happened in the country..."*

It still does. The services working together, now co-located in the Old Police Station, include:

- ★ Police safer neighbourhood teams
- ★ Drug and alcohol abuse services
- ★ Neighbourhood wardens
- ★ Parks police
- ★ Domestic violence support services
- ★ Police community support officers
- ★ Youth crime and truancy liaison officers
- ★ Police and council licensing departments

Police Crime Prevention Design Advisers spend at least one day a week working with

the Council's Planners helping to make new housing developments like Durand Close, quite literally '..safe from the ground up..'

Sutton is one of the safest Boroughs in London but this doesn't mean we're complacent about your fears or worries. Nevertheless, home burglaries have dropped by 30% in the past three years and robberies are even fewer.

A large number of you are worried about becoming victims with many of you raising concerns about alcohol fuelled, anti-social behaviour. So we are working with residents to improve inter-generational understanding and to better manage parks and open spaces with close liaison between Police and the Council's Parks Constabulary.

We will continue to campaign for safer public transport with Transport for London, increase supervision of pubs and licensed premises and using special patrols – catch and prosecute off-licences selling alcohol to the under-aged.

Sutton was one of the earliest London Boroughs to ensure that every part of the Borough had its own dedicated Safer



Neighbourhood Team. Police and panels of local residents will ensure that priorities are set by the neighbourhoods themselves and so help improve community safety.

One of the first Boroughs to install CCTV on a large scale, the Council CCTV monitoring system is now in the Police Control Room offering better monitoring and faster communication. We have found the money to modernise and improve the system this year.

Creating safer communities

in short, we will...

address the issue of anti-social behaviour by:

- ★ increasing the liaison between the Police and the Council's Parks Constabulary to make our parks safer
- ★ increasing the supervision of pubs and licensed premises and continuing to use special patrols to catch and prosecute off-licences selling alcohol to under-age people
- ★ continuing to issue Acceptable Behaviour Contracts with young people causing problems
- ★ seeking Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) through the Courts, when appropriate (around 40 have been issued to people of all ages)
- ★ investigating how other boroughs are dealing with the issues of alcohol-fuelled crime and underage drinking to inform our own policing policies

Improve community safety by:

- ★ replacing the CCTV system with the most modern system possible
- ★ campaigning for safer public transport
- ★ keeping the local environment clean and well maintained, cleaning graffiti quickly and repairing damage from vandalism
- ★ ensuring the Safer Neighbourhood Teams work with the street cleaning teams to identify graffiti and rubbish problem areas
- ★ ensuring our local police teams are even more visible and dedicated to specific neighbourhoods
- ★ creating local resident panels to help police set the priorities for community safety
- ★ encouraging the development of active, well-supported Residents' Associations
- ★ providing opportunities for youth participation in community projects like the Junior Citizen project

- ★ working with the Police and Fire Service to develop a citizenship and safety centre in the borough that will provide a range of facilities, including a safety and life skills education centre and a youth zone



Improving health and well-being

More than 70% of you describe your health as good – a higher figure than the national average and in the top third for London Boroughs. However there are considerable inequalities in health standards in different parts of Sutton. The Council will continue to work with health authorities to identify reasons and implement programmes to tackle these critical issues.

The Council does not run the NHS and local health services are not directly accountable to local people. We will strive to ensure that people are properly consulted and their views taken into account when the NHS proposes changes in services.

The Government is setting an agenda for radical change in the health service and we will work with the community and the local NHS and campaign for better health provision wherever you live in the borough: better community services, more local hospitals, better GP clinics and more NHS dentists.

But the public health agenda is more than just the health service alone. We need to bring together all the sectors of the council and the community – environment, housing,

transport, employment, planning, social services and education – so they are connected and working together to give people easy access to good services and comprehensive information to enable them to prevent the causes of ill health.

One of our challenges is to persuade people to look after themselves – to discover the benefits of not smoking (the Borough's biggest killer), being more active, drinking less, reducing stress and avoiding drugs and substance abuse. This will also reduce the demand on over-subscribed medical and social services. The Council will lead by example, and will extend the ban on smoking within all of its working environments.

A range of joint projects is already in place with initiatives aimed at healthier lifestyles. We want to see 'education campaigns' promoting prevention so people can start making informed decisions about choosing healthy options. We will continue to promote healthy eating at school which we have done for several years. Sport is also a key ingredient, but exercising in general is healthy and can include activities like dancing, gardening, cycling and walking.

Selling the message of good health to people who can feel isolated and alienated – like older people and youngsters – means the active continuance of partnership development with the local NHS, the voluntary and the community sectors. This is essential if we're to realise the positive aspects of Better Healthcare Closer to Home, giving you access to health and social services, in your own home or close by.

In the UK, one in four of us will face mental health problems at some point in our lives. This is still a taboo subject, so one of the Council's main priorities is to promote understanding. In particular, we will explore ways of tackling the worrying increase in children of school-age facing such issues.

Sutton has a higher-than-average population of people with learning disabilities – a fact not recognised by Central Government when funding the Borough. We will continue to campaign to remedy this situation. We will embark on a major programme to upgrade day services for people with learning disabilities and work with the health authorities for the sensitive re-location of Orchard Hill's residents to more appropriate homes.

Improving health and well-being

in short, we will...

- ★ ban smoking in all Council work environments and vehicles
- ★ integrate the Council's social services with NHS health services to ensure seamless provision
- ★ seek greater funding for Sutton's above-average numbers of people with learning disabilities
- ★ upgrade and expand our day services for people with learning disabilities
- ★ promote public understanding of mental health problems and ensure effective care for sufferers
- ★ identify inequalities in healthcare standards and work with the health authorities to ensure all residents can access a higher standard of care
- ★ develop projects to deliver the good health message to hard-to-reach groups of society who would most benefit from lifestyle improvements
- ★ invest in campaigns that encourage people to be more active and make healthy choices in their lifestyles eg campaign for better cycle parking at transport interchanges
- ★ work with our local health services to encourage the provision of exercise prescriptions for use in our leisure centres
- ★ ensure our schoolchildren are offered healthy food in their school canteens
- ★ support projects encouraging children to participate in physical activities
- ★ place strong emphasis, and work closely with the health authorities, on promoting improved health and well-being among our residents, organising such events as an annual health and wellbeing fair.
- ★ Work with local NHS bodies to ensure that they properly consult local people and take their views into account when proposing changes in services.



Investing in children and young people

The young people of this Borough will shape the community of the future. We know that very many young people contribute positively to the community and we appreciate their achievements at school and at home, as carers and as volunteers. It takes a living community to raise children, one which supports them and strikes a balance between their rights and responsibilities.

Through the Children and Young People's Partnership, we are bringing together the Council's education and youth services, children's social and health services, Connexions and the police. We want to provide joined-up services and build a better system of support for all young people.

Through the Children's Trust, professionals are collaboratively supporting children with



disabilities and complex health needs. This helps focus support on the child and parents – rather than on a range of 'available' services.

For the under 5s we have already established two children's centres and by 2010 there will be fifteen offering comprehensive coverage across the Borough. They will provide every family with children under 5 ready access in their own neighbourhood to all health and local authority services. This will include 8am to 6pm childcare throughout the year.

We believe in fostering understanding between the generations and we will continue to build on the ground-breaking work achieved by projects like 'Behind the Hoods' – an intergenerational project and video. The young and the elderly have shared priorities and concerns about:

- ★ fear of crime
- ★ access to public transport
- ★ affordable leisure facilities

We are proud of the outstanding success of all our schools throughout the Borough and that our educational standards are some of the highest in the country. We have always

invested more than the minimum set down by government in our schools and the excellent achievements of all our schools bear the fruit of this investment. We devote considerable funds to supporting children with special educational needs.

We are aware that not all children will benefit from a strictly academic education. Accordingly we are encouraging schools to broaden their range of subjects.

We will continue to promote sport among young people and are proud of the Borough's new facilities such as Sutton Arena and Roundshaw's Phoenix Centre. The 2012 Olympics will provide huge opportunities for the young. The next few years should provide a springboard for a new variety of careers, not just in athletics but also linguistics, gardening and landscaping, catering, building and construction.

We acknowledge the many difficult challenges facing young people. Self-harm is an increasing problem among young people and we will continue to work with local mental health services to enhance the range of available services.

Investing in children and young people

in short, we will...

- ★ invest in eight more children's centres, located in areas of most need by 2008, and a further five by 2010
- ★ encourage schools to broaden their curriculum and include more vocational subjects
- ★ increase funding to support children with special educational needs
- ★ improve the flexibility of the Youth Service to better engage with young people
- ★ develop projects that promote inter-generational understanding
- ★ provide safe places for young people to engage in leisure and social activities
- ★ offer forums for young people to express their views and be heard
- ★ engage with young people and encourage them to take an active part in the borough's civic life
- ★ develop ways of diverting young people from overindulgent risk-taking behaviour like smoking, binge drinking, substance and drug abuse
- ★ work with the local NHS to improve the range of mental health services available to young people
- ★ encourage young people's participation in sport by introducing a charging policy in our leisure centres and borough activities that does not exclude the financially or socially disadvantaged
- ★ campaign for increased investment in borough sport and leisure provision
- ★ expand opportunities for participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award and other youth adventure activities
- ★ implement a Leisure Credit Scheme for older teenagers to encourage them to work on community projects and earn credits to be used in the borough's leisure centres



Valuing older people

As people live healthier and longer lives, we are fortunate that so many are able to continue playing an active role in the community, particularly through the voluntary sector.

Older people have a wealth of experience, knowledge, commitment and time to share. They make a major contribution to Sutton's quality of life and culture. We are all individuals, with a range of skills, contributions to make and needs to fulfil. Most significantly we place great importance on identifying and contacting older people who feel disenfranchised and do not take advantage of the services and benefits that they are entitled to receive.

In partnership with Age Concern, the Sutton Seniors' Forum and Better Government for Older People, we have asked older residents to contribute views to help develop a comprehensive picture about the realities of older people's lives.

Their priorities will shape our strategy for Older People and form the basis of the Council's approach to older people's services, the commissioning and refurbishment of buildings and facilities as

well as how the Council and health authorities need to focus services and support.

We will continue to work in partnership with those organisations and bodies where our support and intervention can have a positive impact on older people's lives – like the pension and benefits services, voluntary agencies like SCVS and the Sutton Carers' Centre.

We recognise that age discrimination is a problem for many older people even though they have a positive contribution to make to the whole community. A Liberal Democrat Council as a major employer will always support the principle of flexibility in recruitment and retirement to make the best use of older people's knowledge.

We are keen to see older people's skills and experience, for example of cooking and nutrition, do-it-yourself activities and bringing up children, benefit other members of our community like younger people and new families.

The Council recognises the importance of Sutton's 16,000 carers looking after their

relatives – both older and younger. Devoting time and support to those most precious, many feel isolated and unappreciated. We will continue to listen and to find practical ways of recognising their unstinting support for many of Sutton's vulnerable residents by working in partnership with specialist voluntary organisations, the NHS and the Council's community services.

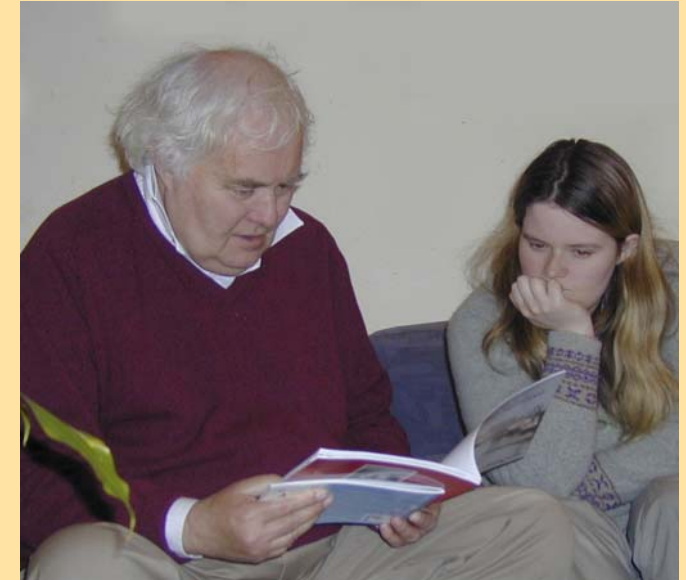
We are committed to investing in high quality services for older people. However a number of the Council's residential homes for older people do not meet modern standards. We have major plans to upgrade and modernise a number of these homes and bring them in line with comparable authorities, concentrating residential care on the most vulnerable – such as those with dementia.

In addition, we have already initiated an ambitious project to build extra-care sheltered housing to help older people live independent lives.

Valuing older people

in short, we will...

- ★ launch the Council's Older People's Strategy, reflecting the views and priorities of older residents and ensure it forms the basis of our policies and actions
- ★ work together to promote mutual respect and a positive image of older people and their valuable contribution to society and fight discrimination and ageism
- ★ consult older people in the commissioning and provision of services, and when designing and refurbishing buildings and facilities
- ★ offer flexible recruitment to benefit the older employee
- ★ help reduce poverty in old age by encouraging older people to secure the welfare benefits they are entitled to
- ★ continue to provide and promote opportunities for continued learning among older people
- ★ seek ways to increase the support available to carers
- ★ upgrade and modernise the Council's residential facilities for older people to the highest standards
- ★ develop a major facility for extra-care sheltered housing enabling older people to continue to live independently
- ★ provide a register to provide increased access to information about services and facilities for older people
- ★ set in place systems to identify and make contact with harder-to-reach groups of older people and ensure they can take advantage of the services and benefits they are entitled to receive
- ★ recruit more volunteers to work with older people



Encouraging enterprise and employment

A recent study showed that Sutton town centre is London's best-value location for retailers with large retail groups looking to invest in the borough.

Sixty percent of Sutton's workforce are professional, managerial and skilled non-manual employees – the highest percentage of all London's Boroughs. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates (2%) in the country.

Clearly a buoyant, successful and sustainable local economy is vital to the long-term prosperity and viability of our Borough. We want to create an environment in which businesses of all sizes can offer sustainable jobs locally, which will in turn reduce travelling times to work and improve people's quality of life.

Plans are already in place to revitalise Sutton Town Centre. And we want businesses and residents to get involved in revitalising our district centres in Worcester Park, Cheam, Carshalton and Wallington so that they all further enhance the Borough's reputation as an attractive place to work, shop and visit.

Our Land Use Planning programme will ensure the provision of local employment opportunities is properly balanced with local housing needs. And we will build on Sutton's deserved "green" reputation to establish the Borough as the natural home of environmental friendly and sustainable employment.

in short, we will...

- ★ work with the Sutton Town Centre Management Group to produce and implement a Strategic Plan for the future of the Town Centre which continues to encourage people to shop and work there
- ★ ensure that Sutton remains a suitable environment for small and medium sized businesses to operate and expand
- ★ continue to ensure Sutton's reputation as good value for business investment
- ★ develop 'district centres' in Carshalton, Cheam, North Cheam, Wallington and Worcester Park to make them even more attractive places to work, shop and visit



- ★ positively involve businesses and residents in these 'districts' to help with the centres' revitalisation
- ★ strive to provide jobs locally to reduce travel times and so improve residents' quality of life
- ★ ensure that the need for local employment opportunities is properly balanced with local housing availability
- ★ continue to work with local businesses through the Key Employers' Group and other organisations
- ★ build on Sutton's deserved 'green' reputation and establish the Borough as THE place for environmental and sustainable employment

Improving housing

We are committed to creating vibrant communities that respect the heritage and tradition of our local area and enhance the distinctive character of our urban villages.

Following the successful regeneration of Roundshaw, we are now regenerating the Durand Estate. In addition, we are working with partners to provide high quality homes for local families wanting to live in sustainable communities.

Families are keen to stay in the borough but expect Sutton's housing to meet the demands of expanding families. So, reflecting our broader commitments to environmental improvements, we will continue to develop policies like 'the design of residential extensions' which will strike a balance between families' aspirations and the local environment.

We will continue to campaign to protect the borough from developers who want to build on our back garden land and overdevelop the area. We need to keep our garden land and communal spaces for children to play and people to meet.

The Mayor for London pays lip service to the notion of the suburb and fails to understand the role suburbs play in providing good family homes and a safe environment in which to live. However, the constant growth in some areas has put huge pressure on roads; local services and utilities like water.

With the average price of a 3-bedroom home in Sutton running at just over £188,000 and the average wage around £450 per week, many families are finding it increasingly difficult to afford their own home. Research shows that Sutton needs just over 1,000 affordable homes built every year to meet the anticipated need and our planning policies must ensure that a proportion of all our housing is affordable.

Residents gave us one of the highest 'YES' votes in the country for the establishment of an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) for the management of the Council's housing stock and we have set high standards for the Sutton Housing Partnership.

in short, we will...

- ★ ensure that affordable housing continues to be built
- ★ take account of the effect of development on roads, local services and utilities
- ★ provide good value, well-managed services to tenants via the ALMO and hold the Government to its commitment to provide cash for investing in improving homes under the ALMO
- ★ bring the Council's housing stock up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010
- ★ continue to campaign for the protection of back garden land
- ★ work to protect the character of our suburban environment

