



# HOPE

Four local missions for a  
**fairer future in Chester**

# HOPE IN THE FACE OF UNCERTAINTY

## BRITAIN DESERVES BETTER

Things aren't like they used to be. After 13 long years, we are all paying the price for the Conservatives' political choices. Their legacy is rising inflation and a cost-of-living crisis which has resulted in record levels of poverty and inequality. They have crashed our economy, they have decimated our NHS, and they have brought public services to the brink of collapse.

## LABOUR IN CHESTER

Locally, the Labour Party is protecting public services. We have kept community centres, day centres, children's centres, libraries, museums, swimming pools and leisure centres open. We have invested in education, skills and employment opportunities. We have supported town centres by valuing our heritage, celebrating our culture and supporting local businesses. We continue to provide quality social care, despite a decade of government cuts to our budgets, and we are still investing in our parks and green spaces for everyone to enjoy. We are taking action to tackle poverty, to combat climate change, and we will always keep fighting for the things that matter to you.



The Tories might have broken Britain, but we will not let them break West Cheshire. That's why we enter into this election with an ambitious message of **HOPE**. Hope that decent support services are there to **help** you when you need them. Hope that we can keep creating **opportunities** for you and your family to live in a decent home, work in a good job and learn new skills. Hope that we can stay **proud** of our town centres, parks, roads and neighbourhoods despite seismic economic changes and over a decade of cuts to neighbourhood services. And finally, Hope that we can protect the **environment** and even improve it for future generations.

**That's why a vote for Labour is a vote for HOPE on Thursday 4th May. Find out more about Labour candidates where you live at [www.cheshirewestlabour.com](http://www.cheshirewestlabour.com).**

Best wishes,

*Louise Gittins*

**Labour Leader in Cheshire West and Chester**

### A CRISIS IN CARE

Around 60p in every pound of council tax now goes on supporting adults and children who need care and support. The Conservatives have failed to deal with this national crisis in social care and it has impacted every public service and every individual in need of care.

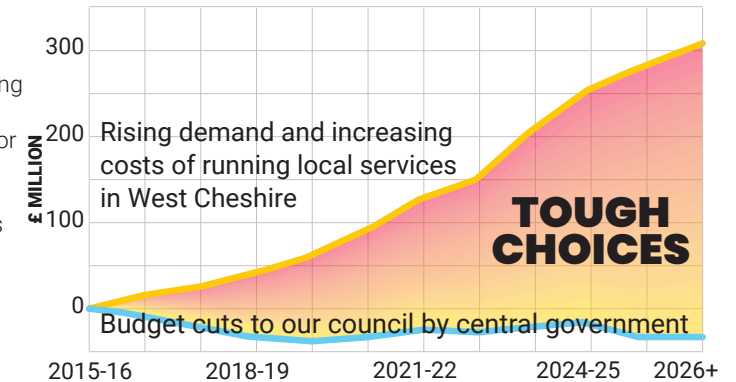
### VALUE FOR MONEY

Under Labour, Cheshire West and Chester Council has only raised council tax in line with the average for all councils in England. Every year our council receives a clean bill of health from independent auditors. This shows we are managing your money carefully.

## GIVE US BACK OUR HALF A BILLION POUNDS

Cheshire West and Chester Council has experienced over half a billion pounds of cuts from central government in the past decade, whilst at the same time rising inflation, an aging population, a mental health crisis and a poverty emergency has meant that demand for services and the cost of running these services has increased. Every Conservative Chancellor has told councils to put up council tax to meet these demands but rising costs and declining budgets mean a huge gap has opened up.

This is forcing councils to make tough choices, including cutting front-line services, raising taxes and charging for things they didn't charge for in the past. It is also leaving budgets stretched for things like street cleaning, youth services, education, arts and culture, and economic development.



## THE LABOUR DIFFERENCE

The Conservatives have taken our country backwards, not forwards. Locally, Labour has a strong record of standing up for communities against the Conservatives' cuts and austerity. That's why we hope you will support us with your vote on Thursday 4th May. We are trusted, local and on your side:

THE CONSERVATIVES' NATIONAL RECORD	LABOUR'S LOCAL RECORD
Over 1,000 libraries closed	We're keeping libraries open and investing in their future
Over 650 children's centres closed	We're keeping children's centres open to support families and give children the best start in life
Over 400 swimming pools closed	We're keeping swimming pools open to support the health and well-being of residents
Over 60 museums closed	We're subsidising museums because we're proud to share our heritage and culture
National crisis in social care	We invest 55% more than the average Conservative council in services which support older people to live in their own homes for longer.
Historic cuts to policing numbers across UK and rising ASB	We invest 14% more than the average Conservative council in community safety, including street wardens. We also spend 106% more on CCTV in public places to identify ASB and prosecute offenders.

# HELP AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE WHEN YOU NEED IT

## MISSION 1: HELP AND SUPPORT

- Quality social care, with people living longer, healthier and happier lives
- Best start in life for children
- Tackling poverty, including homelessness
- Good mental health



### UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

- An aging population, with a 46% increase in people aged 65 and over by 2035
- Over a million UK adults reported going a whole day without food in the past month because they couldn't afford to eat
- High levels of in-work poverty
- 11% of households are in fuel poverty
- 16 local neighbourhoods are in top 10% most deprived in England, with 50% higher child poverty in some areas of our borough compared to others
- 10 year gap in life expectancy between local communities due to health inequalities
- Suicide rates are two to three times higher in the most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the most affluent, and rates of hospitalised self-harm are also twice as high
- Rough sleeping continues to rise due to cost of living crisis

### OUR VISION

Throughout the pandemic, we forged new relationships. Working in partnership with residents, public services, charities, community groups and businesses, we made our area strong and resilient in the face of adversity.

Building on this experience, we remain focused on delivering services that are designed for an aging population, and which recognise the impact of poverty and inequality on families and young people. We need local services that don't make life harder for people who are already struggling, and we need to make council processes easier for people who need a bit of help and support.

These are Labour's values, and we are proud to be the Party of public services and fairness. The past few years have shown that these are not the values of the Conservative Party, locally or nationally. **That's why a vote for Labour is a vote for HOPE on Thursday 4th May.**



### LABOUR'S BIG IDEAS

- Quicker and simpler access to council services, both online and face to face
- Age friendly communities, which support people as they get older
- Crisis support services focused on reducing the longer-term impact on children and their families
- Innovation in care for vulnerable adults and children by working with the charity and voluntary sector, and by providing better support for carers

### WHAT RESIDENTS CAN EXPECT TO SEE

- Easier access to council services online, on the phone, and in person
- Council communications written in plain English
- Older residents supported to stay living in their own homes for longer
- More joined up support for elderly residents when they are discharged from hospital
- More involvement from people who use services in decisions that will impact them
- 3,000 local children no longer living in poverty
- Better support for children's mental health
- Fewer people rough sleeping on streets in our borough
- A wider range of services available in our children's centres
- Quicker assessments and decisions on support available to children with Special Educational Needs
- Life expectancy will increase, and suicide, domestic violence and poverty will decrease
- Reduced obesity, substance misuse and smoking related illnesses
- Support services for people with disabilities will be more joined up
- Fewer people experiencing social isolation
- Better support for care leavers to find homes, employment or continue in education

### FIND OUT MORE

More about our plans for help and support services: [www.cheshirewestlabour.com/hope/help](http://www.cheshirewestlabour.com/hope/help)



Find out more about the work the council is doing to tackle poverty: [www.tinyurl.com/hope-poverty-truth](http://www.tinyurl.com/hope-poverty-truth)



# OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK, LEARN AND SUCCEED, WHERE YOU LIVE

## MISSION 2: OPPORTUNITY

- ▶ High quality education, skills training and careers advice
- ▶ An economy that works for everyone with good jobs and decent wages
- ▶ The best place in the UK to start and grow a business
- ▶ Good quality homes for local people to buy or rent



## OUR VISION

West Cheshire's £10.5 billion economy is home to 14,000 businesses employing 180,000 people. We helped attract almost £300 million of investment into our borough last year and we need to ensure the benefits of this are shared. Our vision is for decent homes, good jobs, healthier lives and nice things to see and do in well-connected and vibrant communities.

Last year we supported over 2,500 adults to learn new skills and almost 700 people to get a new job. By joining up education, skills, training and employment, with a local living wage, a fair employment charter and recognition for businesses and other organisations that are socially responsible, we will make our area one of the best places to live, work, learn, visit and do business in our country.

This is Labour's vision for a stronger, fairer and more inclusive local economy. **That's why a vote for Labour is a vote for HOPE on Thursday 4th May.**



## UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

- ▶ Rising poverty is widening the attainment gap between children from different economic backgrounds
- ▶ Youth social mobility is worsening
- ▶ 11% of local households have an annual income under £15,000
- ▶ 15% of local jobs pay below the local living wage
- ▶ Unemployment rate for the borough is 3.5%
- ▶ Gender pay gap between women and men in full time work is £3,000 per year
- ▶ Proportion of new UK businesses surviving two years has dropped from 76% to 70%, largely due to the economy
- ▶ 28,000 residents live in neighbourhoods at risk of digital exclusion
- ▶ Over 7,000 households are on the waiting list for social housing in West Cheshire

## LABOUR'S BIG IDEAS

- ▶ Launch a new programme to inspire children by helping them experience ten exciting things before they are ten years old
- ▶ Combine our adult education, skills, careers and employment service to create a holistic training and employment service for our Borough
- ▶ Protect the Cheshire Pound by working with large employers on 'keep it local' procurement and employment principles
- ▶ Support new businesses to consider becoming co-operatives to share wealth and give employees a greater stake in the business's success
- ▶ Tackle digital exclusion through loaning and recycling devices, and by resolving poor connectivity issues
- ▶ Launch a Fair Employment Charter to encourage businesses in our borough to consider new approaches to employment, including for people with disabilities and with more flexible contracts for single parents or people with caring responsibilities
- ▶ Launch a new award for employers who sign up to our local living wage, pay their taxes, look after their employees properly and reduce their impact on our environment

## WHAT RESIDENTS CAN EXPECT TO SEE

- ▶ Better access to professional training and careers advice, including a specific service for people who are over 50
- ▶ Wider range of employment contracts to recognise single parents, carers and people with health conditions
- ▶ Higher average wages with more employers paying local living wage
- ▶ Business survival rates beyond two years remaining higher than in other areas
- ▶ Tenant's charter for renters living in social and private properties
- ▶ More council owned homes and affordable homes being built
- ▶ Targeted support for local authority schools to be rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by OFSTED
- ▶ New strategy to improve youth social mobility
- ▶ Targeted support for children with special educational needs
- ▶ New digital device loan service in our libraries



## FIND OUT MORE

More about opportunities for people in our borough: [www.cheshirewestlabour.com/hope/opportunity](http://www.cheshirewestlabour.com/hope/opportunity)



Watch a video about what an inclusive economy means for the area: [www.tinyurl.com/hope-fairer-economy](http://www.tinyurl.com/hope-fairer-economy)



# PRIDE IN OUR TOWN CENTRE AND LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

## MISSION 3: PRIDE

- Make town centres and high streets places where people want to live, work, visit and own businesses
- Innovation in making roads better, streets cleaner, and neighbourhoods safer and greener
- Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in partnership with the Police
- Cherish libraries, community centres and leisure facilities
- Invest in parks, play areas, sports fields and green space so there is something for everyone near to where they live



## UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

- Across the country, funding cuts mean 1000 libraries, 60 museums and 400 swimming pools have closed since 2010
- Footfall on UK high streets is down 23% since the start of the pandemic
- 16% of shops on Britain's high streets are empty and one in every 20 vacant units has been empty for more than three years
- National highways spending has been cut by 27% in the past decade
- Climate change is speeding up the degradation of roads and pavements
- Hundreds of play areas have closed across the UK due to government cuts
- Reported crime has increased, only 60% of residents feel safe going out after dark

## OUR VISION

Being proud of where you live is so important to people: the shops we visit, the parks we enjoy, the facilities and services we rely on.

Despite the challenges of Conservative austerity, local Labour councillors continue to secure investment in our town centres, we've also kept our museums, leisure centres, libraries and community centres running, because we believe in protecting the fabric of society. Despite over half a billion pound of government cuts, we continue to invest more in street cleansing, community safety, fly-tipping removal and grass cutting than the average Conservative council. We do this because we care.

We believe in a strong relationship between people and the places they live, work, learn or spend their leisure time. We recognise the importance of spaces in every community for families, friends, neighbours and strangers to come together to share in experiences, and where businesses, charities, public services and residents can co-locate.

Locally, Labour has held the line against government cuts – we're the ones keeping community facilities open. **That's why a vote for Labour is a vote for HOPE on Thursday 4th May.**



## LABOUR'S BIG IDEAS

- Launch a new specialist support service to help people start a business in town centres
- Make culture and heritage a front-line service to tackle isolation, support good mental health and well-being, enrich people's lives and grow the local economy
- Expand our street care pledge to give residents clear information on what to expect from our services
- The next Labour government will introduce a Take Back Control Bill, so communities can have a greater say over bus transport and other funding in their area - we will also bring the railways back into public control

## WHAT RESIDENTS CAN EXPECT TO SEE

- Higher footfall and new uses for empty units in town centres and on high streets
- More activities to attract families and grandparents into town with young children
- More cultural and heritage activities on high streets to support local businesses and celebrate where we live
- Investment in faster and better road repairs
- Easier reporting systems and improved communications on the status of reports you make about neighbourhood issues like potholes, street lighting and fly-tipping
- Harsher penalties for fly-tipping, graffiti and littering
- Public transport will be easier to navigate, with cross ticketing, simpler fares and a better frequency of services where it can be achieved
- Safer access to cycling and walking routes into town, to places of work and education, and which are linked to public transport
- Main library sites and community centres transformed into hubs where residents can access more local services
- More charities, voluntary groups and town and parish councils empowered to manage and run community buildings
- People will feel safer where they live
- More opportunities to get involved in local parks and community pride initiatives
- More accessible play equipment in our main parks for people with disabilities
- Continued investment in play pitches so people can enjoy sports where they live

## FIND OUT MORE

Explore detailed plans about how we will celebrate pride in town centres and local neighbourhoods at [www.cheshirewestlabour.com/hope/pride](http://www.cheshirewestlabour.com/hope/pride)



# PRIDE IN OUR CITY

## OUR MISSION FOR CHESTER

Proud of our past and excited about our future, our mission is to make Chester the most liveable city in the UK. We will work together with businesses, charities, community groups and other public organisations, to deliver the One City Plan and make Chester's economy stronger, greener and fairer. We'll celebrate our culture, take pride in our heritage and support the health and well-being of people of all ages in our city.

## 10 PROJECTS WE'VE DELIVERED

1. Restoration work on Chester Walls including the Eastgate clock, Northgate steps, Bridgegate renovation, Watergate renovation and hand rails, the parapet replacement programme, and new steps at King Charles Tower Green all completed between 2015 – 2023
2. Re-opening Chester Castle to the public for special events from 2017
3. Storyhouse built and opened in 2017
4. Chester Bus Interchange opened in 2017
5. Frodsham Street improvement works completed 2017
6. New £8m surface water drain for the city centre completed 2022 to help reduce sewage discharge in the River Dee
7. Chester Northgate and new Chester Market completed 2022
8. Grosvenor Park awarded Green Flag in 2022
9. Works to improve the appearance of the Rows through the Chester High Street Heritage Action Zone (ongoing)
10. Delivering a new strategy to support Alfresco dining across the city following Covid-19 (ongoing)



## 10 PROJECTS WE'LL DELIVER NEXT

1. Launch a voluntary contactless donation scheme on the Walls so tourists can choose to contribute towards their upkeep. We'll use the money to invest in restoration schemes, like at the 1966 bridge (over St Martins Way).
2. Deliver a new History Centre and archives facility on Lightfoot Street to store our Borough's historic documents and tell interesting stories about people throughout history and the places in our area.
3. Work in partnership to deliver the City Gateway Project which includes improving the train station, delivering new homes, building a new pedestrian and cycle bridge next to Hoole Bridge and creating a link from the train station to the Green Way.
4. Get more people living and working in the city centre through a future phase of the Northgate development, and by working with landlords to encourage conversion of underused, above Row space, into residential and workspaces for rent.
5. Improve access to the Town Hall and reinvigorate its use as a civic building, conference venue, cultural and community space, and visitor destination all within the wider setting of Northgate.
6. Invest in the Northgate Arena to bring it back up to a high standard and promote it as part of Chester's Northgate experience, including Storyhouse, the market, the cinema, and other venues, restaurants, retailers and visitor attractions in the area.
7. Support people to work in the city centre by building on the recent city centre 'Workspace' pilot and create more public workspaces and a wider range of flexible office space. We will also deliver gigabit broadband and improve the mobile phone signal in the city centre.
8. Deliver a new strategic vision for The Groves to stop sewage dumping, promote water sports, and support long term sustainable uses for buildings like Dee House, The Hydroelectric Station, the former Quicks Garage and Chester Castle.
9. Make Chester known for having a vibrant visual arts scene, by investing in a cultural programme that includes events like the new Chester Contemporary, so that we can bring international artists and experiences to our city.
10. Identify public health funding to support a new network of circular urban and countryside wildlife walks from the city centre to other areas of the city and the rural surroundings.

## AWARD-WINNING CITY

In the past two years, Chester has been named the most beautiful city in the world, a Top 20 UK retail destination, the Staycation Capital of the UK, the 4th cleanest city in the country and the 2nd best high street in the country by readers of The Telegraph.

## WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Chester's Rows are unique. They are home to the oldest shop front in the country and have survived as an economic centre for retail and commerce for hundreds of years. To secure Chester's future as a top retail and visitor destination, we need to work together to build a case for heritage status, without stopping the Rows from being able to continue to evolve.

## MEET THE TEAM

Meet Labour's team of local representatives and find out who is standing for election in your area of Chester at [cheshirewestlabour.com/team-chester](https://cheshirewestlabour.com/team-chester)



# PRIDE IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

## A BACK TO BASICS MISSION

Every council in the country has been forced to make cuts to street cleaning services. Maintenance budgets for parks and public spaces have also been reduced due to government funding cuts. Locally Labour has protected this budget, so we still spend 80% more than the average Conservative council on services that support neighbourhood pride.

We understand that residents need better information about these services, so that they know what to expect and what to do if you need to report an issue.

## EXTENDING OUR STREET CARE PLEDGE

### A GULLEY GUARANTEE

We will make information about gully maintenance clearer, especially for residents in areas that are prone to flooding so that there is clarity about the schedule for routine maintenance. Wherever it is necessary, residents will be able to raise support requests and receive updates on their report in a timely manner.

### A PARKS & CEMETERY CONTRACT

We will display clear information in parks and cemeteries so that people can see and understand the maintenance arrangements for the place. The information will include options for reporting new issues and opportunities for residents to work together on projects to improve the area.



### MORE WILD FLOWER MEADOWS

We will create at least two wild flower meadows each year in every ward in the borough, working in partnership with local residents, businesses and elected representatives to identify suitable locations.



### PAVEMENT RESTORATION

We will look at opportunities to align funding from across the council to restore damaged pavements, support active travel, provide better walking routes to schools and shops, and to support age friendly communities.

### FINES FOR FLY-TIPPING

We will implement the toughest possible penalties for fly-tipping, we will name and shame fly-tippers, and we will re-invest fines into new measures to stop fly-tipping.

## COMMUNITY GRITTING

We'll develop a network of community gritting boxes, working with town and parish councils (where they exist and if they wish to do so). This will include clear instructions on how communities can use them to reduce the risk from ice to pedestrians.



### GRAFFITI

We'll continue to tackle graffiti in public spaces and we will create a chargeable service for private landlords, so that when residents report graffiti that is not the responsibility of the council we can offer to remove it on a cost recovery basis.

### DOG FOULING

We will look at opportunities to use control orders to empower communities to enforce fines for dog fouling through delegation of powers to town and parish councils.

## REPORT IT ONLINE, ON OUR APP OR OVER THE PHONE

The council's 'Report It' mobile phone app is the best way for residents to let the council know about issues like potholes, broken street lights, fly-tipping, full bins, litter and dog foul. This service is also available through the council website or via the contact centre.

- Report online: [cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it](https://cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it)
- Download the app: [cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it-app](https://cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it-app)
- Call the contact centre: **0300 123 8123**



## IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS

We will change the way the Report It app communicates with users so that status reports give clearer information and updates.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Despite declining budgets, every year we fund services that look after:

- 392 bridges
- 2,279km of highways
- 2,443km footways and cycleways
- 1,280km public rights of way
- 50,000 trees
- 81,000 gullies
- 52,000 street lights
- 4,902 illuminated signs and bollards
- 45,065 road signs

# ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

## MISSION 4: ENVIRONMENT

- Create the best waste collection and recycling service in the country
- Support local renewable energy projects to increase energy security
- Retrofit homes to reduce energy bills and energy consumption
- Large scale de-carbonisation of industry and transportation
- Greater protection for animals, wildlife and green spaces



### OUR VISION

We are one of the worst areas in the country for carbon emissions and to resolve this we need to work with industry and de-carbonise at a scale and pace that will set the standard across the globe. Part of this plan must be to trap carbon and last year we planted over 46,000 trees. We also need to support communities to think about local energy generation and last year we secured £2.5 million of funding to insulate the borough's most energy inefficient homes.

Supporting active travel and encouraging walking through the greening of transport corridors is also important, as well as thinking about how we use land. We are already implementing our plans to keep 30% of our land for nature by 2030 and preparing for more local food production.

Healthy people and a healthy environment go hand in hand. We're committed to minimising waste, improving air quality, supporting wildlife and reducing energy consumption.

**That's why a vote for Labour is a vote for HOPE on Thursday 4th May.**



### UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

- Our borough is the fourth highest in terms of carbon emissions for all areas in the UK, with industrial processes making up over half of Cheshire West and Chester's total emissions
- 12% forecast rise in traffic by 2026 and poor public transport
- Residential properties in our area emit 572,000 tons carbon dioxide per year
- Emissions from commercial buildings total 442,000 tons per year
- 8% of emissions from our area come from farming livestock, largely due to high density of dairy farming
- Climate change means low-lying places in our area are at greater risk of flooding
- Almost half of all UK wildlife is in long term decline and 15% of species are at risk of extinction
- Evidence shows the loss of 50% or more of UK insects since 1970

### LABOUR'S BIG IDEAS

- Move closer towards a circular economy through better management of waste and a focus on recycling and re-use of materials
- Deliver a large scale retrofit programme by working with social landlords, identifying funding for private landlords and supporting community-led insulation projects
- Tackle wildlife crime, support re-wilding and wild flower projects and work with partners to identify sites for the re-introduction otters and beavers
- Create an award scheme which recognises businesses that contribute towards a fairer, stronger and greener West Cheshire.
- Look for new opportunities for local energy generation, like though closer working with community energy co-operatives
- The next Labour government will take back control of bus services and renationalise railways - locally we will invest in cycling and walking infrastructure to support active travel

### WHAT RESIDENTS CAN EXPECT TO SEE

- More low carbon housing
- More opportunities for retrofitting in your property, including community-led insulation projects
- More beavers and otters in our countryside
- Cheshire West will become an accredited Sustainable Food Place
- More wild flower meadows will be visible in parks and community spaces
- Lots more trees
- Better air quality and lower carbon emissions from industry, households and transport
- Clear plans in place to improve water quality in rivers and borough's coastal area
- More support to make energy efficiency changes in your own home
- More investment in natural flood management
- Less food waste and more food being grown locally
- More businesses taking local action on climate change
- More community energy projects and more locally generated renewable energy
- More people cycling and walking
- More people using public transport

### FIND OUT MORE

More about how we will protect and enhance our environment:  
[www.cheshirewestlabour.com/hope/environment](http://www.cheshirewestlabour.com/hope/environment)



Watch local Labour leader, Louise Gittins talk about the route to NetZero:  
[www.tinyurl.com/hope-net-zero](http://www.tinyurl.com/hope-net-zero)



Video on council's climate emergency response plan:  
[www.tinyurl.com/hope-climate-emergency](http://www.tinyurl.com/hope-climate-emergency)





**AN AWARD-WINNING  
LABOUR COUNCIL:**

**APSE COUNCIL OF THE YEAR**

(2018)

**LGC COUNCIL OF THE YEAR**

(runner up, 2021)

**KEEP BRITAIN TIDY GREEN FLAG AWARDS**

(2021-2022)

**GOLD AWARD NORTH WEST IN BLOOM**

(2022)

**SUSTAIN TOP 21 COUNCILS FOR  
TACKLING CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

(2022)

**LGC ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

(shortlisted, 2023)

**MEET LABOUR CANDIDATES IN CHESTER AT  
[WWW.CESHIREWESTLABOUR.COM](http://WWW.CESHIREWESTLABOUR.COM)**