

# NOTTINGHAM CONSERVATIVES MANIFESTO 2019

## “TIME FOR CHANGE”

### A Message from Cllr Andrew Rule, Leader of Nottingham City Conservatives

Nottingham is the Queen of the East Midlands and regional capital.

A city of sport from Meadow Lane to the City Ground to Trent Bridge to the Ice Arena.

A green city from Wollaton Park and the Arboretum to our neighbourhood parks.

A city of culture from the Royal Centre, the Nottingham Playhouse, the Broadway to the Nottingham Contemporary.

It has been my privilege to be a City Councillor for the last four years and my huge privilege to be leader of the Conservative Group who are the official opposition in this City.

I am proud of our City but I want to take the Council in a direction where it genuinely places the people of Nottingham on a level playing field with it, genuinely taking account of them and acting on their local knowledge.

I want to lead a Council that champions and nurtures the fantastic work done by the volunteers in our communities and supports and collaborates with them, rather than rigidly dictates to them what their objectives should be, focussing instead on what is best for the areas they serve.

A Conservative controlled council will ensure every area of the City is treated equally according to need ensuring that funding is allocated towards neighbourhood priorities.

We will spend council tax payers' money fairly and not pursue political pet projects, at our core remembering that we are here to represent the residents in our wards who expect us to fight for our local areas and the services provided to them.

Nottingham Labour have controlled this City for nearly thirty years. A former Labour MP in Nottingham recently said, “Labour thinks it owns this City,” – it does not - Nottingham is not a Labour City, the City is made up of tens of thousands of people who have diverse political beliefs.

Labour is changing; a vote for Labour on 2<sup>nd</sup> May is not a vote for more of the same. With the news that 17 serving councillors, including current Leader of Council Jon Collins, with over 200 years of service between them, have stood down – we ask the question who will be standing in their place?

The answer is that the majority are members of Jeremy Corbyn's private Momentum army. This will lead to divisive split in the Labour Group – it doesn't concern Momentum that:

- the City is forecast to be £1.5 billion pounds in debt by the end of the next financial year;
- or that its tram network has lost £65 million over the last two years;
- or that Robin Hood Energy has required bail out after bail out to keep it afloat with no sign of not needing further injections;

Nottingham Conservatives believe after nearly 30 years being controlled by Nottingham Labour, and the very real risk of a Momentum led takeover of the Nottingham Labour Group at this election, that *it's time for change* in Nottingham and that only Nottingham Conservatives can deliver this change.

## **City Governance, Decision Making & Council Transformation**

Under Labour a cloak of secrecy exists around many decisions taken within the Council.

The cloak is so thick that many decisions are taken so that their content is not even readily accessible to elected Councillors and taken under procedures that prevent Opposition Councillors from challenging them.

Since 2015, 136 decisions of this kind have been taken - decisions ranging from financing of Council Companies, like Robin Hood Energy and Blueprint, to multi million pound property investment in places like Dove Valley Park in Derbyshire, to decisions to close local care homes, like Laura Chambers Lodge.

By electing Conservative Councillors, we would ensure that Nottingham gets representation that focuses on the needs of the city as opposed to ideologically driven Councillors intent on playing politics, to the detriment of the people of Nottingham.

Nottingham Conservatives will place local community at the heart of the council decision-making process and guarantee that local knowledge will be placed front and centre to ensure that council run projects serve local needs and minimise disruption for residents during their delivery.

Nottingham Conservatives are committed to running a Council that listens from the bottom and doesn't dictate from the top. We believe it is vital for local accountability for decisions to be taken in the public view and not behind closed doors – leadership is no excuse for secrecy.

**That is why we will scrap the Executive clique that currently exists in council decision-making process and replace it with a transparent Committee based structure giving all councillors the opportunity to shape decision-making affecting our City, their particular wards, making them directly responsible to the electorate.**

Where it is absolutely necessary to take urgent decisions, we will consult with the leader(s) of Opposition Parties before these decisions are taken and amend the Council's Constitution to make this a requirement.

Under Nottingham Conservatives, serving councillors would no longer sit on the Boards of any of the Council's majority or wholly owned companies. We would instead separate the role of councillors and directors. Directors would continue to run the companies on a day-to-day basis and councillors would have a scrutiny function to ensure the Companies are being run in accordance with the values and objectives of the Council through a separate arms-length committee. We would ensure this was a politically balanced committee with full voting rights given to all committee members.

We will also instigate a full review of Special Responsibility Allowances paid to Councillors on top of their Basic Allowances, typically for chairing committees. Whilst there are some committees the Council is legally required to convene like planning and licensing, there are other committees that have no legal function and meet far less

frequently, that still entitle the Chair to a Special Responsibility Allowance equal to that of planning and licensing – a Conservative controlled authority would bring an end to the chairs of these committees being paid an allowance.

A Conservative Controlled Council will:

- Abandon the Executive Leadership model and introduce an open and transparent Committee based system of leadership allowing all councillors to take part in it;
- Be outward looking and seek to learn from approaches other authorities have adopted regardless of political persuasion;
- Develop a MyNottingham App enabling citizens to access Council Services from their mobile phone;
- Ensure where residents contact the council switchboard and their call relates to a statutory service they will receive follow up phone call within 48 hours from an officer in the service line that is most appropriate to their concerns or enquiries;
- Ensure where residents contact the council switchboard and their call relates to a non-statutory service they will receive follow up communication within 5 working days from an officer in the service line that is most appropriate to their concerns or enquiries;
- Ensure that Councillors receive a bi-weekly report on issues in their Wards reported through “Report It” by residents so they can ensure effective resolution of complaints;
- Require all Conservative councillors to complete regular roving surgeries through the year, ensuring they visit every street in their Wards to ensure they stay fully in tune with residents’ concerns and aspirations;
- Reform Area Committees and allow all residents the right to speak, propose amendments to and vote on items relating to their areas;
- Remove the Special Responsibility Allowance for Chair’s of Area Committees **currently £1,700 a meeting for four meetings a year**;
- Remove City Councillors from the Boards of all wholly/majority owned companies to promote transparency and effective corporate governance;
- Establish a politically balanced committee to oversee the performance of Council owned companies;

## **Council Finance**

Under Labour, council tax in Nottingham is the third highest in the country. Since 2010 council tax has increased **REGARDLESS** of whether Conservatives or Labour have been in national Government.

Labour blame reductions in Government funding for this. They say that the Council has had £125 million cut from its budget since 2015. Yet in this year alone Central Government has made direct grants available to the City totalling **in excess of £180 million** and similar grants have been made available in previous years.

The truth is this Labour Council is wedded to increasing council tax seeing the hard working Nottingham public as their bank of first resort. This is why Nottingham has the **THIRD HIGHEST** council tax in the country.

Despite continually blaming reductions in Government funding for its need to reduce services, amongst other things the Labour Council has funded:

- In Robin Hood Energy a loss making energy company it has no legal duty to provide and at the expense of local services;
- Frivolous unsuccessful legal actions putting politics ahead of legal principle, like the **FAILED £300,000 challenge** against the Council's own employees receiving backpay that they were legally entitled to;
- Costly transport schemes that have caused disruption to local communities and businesses

It has completed a borrowing binge **totalling £1.2 billion**, nearly 1.5 times the net Council budget **costing the City circa £50 million** a year in loan repayments. Worse, under Nottingham Labour's estimates it will only have repaid around £200 million of this borrowing by 2067.

Nottingham Conservatives are resolutely committed to delivering value for money for the hard working council tax-payers of Nottingham and ensuring the Council targets resources providing the services Nottingham residents expect it to provide.

We have consistently presented amendments to the Council's annual budget showing how Council tax payers money could be better spent in the City, without the need to increase council tax by the maximum amount allowed as Labour continually do.

We are committed to ensuring the City Council's assets are geared to generating the highest possible return and value for money for the Council Tax Payers of the City.

We will also ensure that where it becomes necessary to sell council assets such as property and land there will be a full scrutiny process introduced to ensure a fair and transparent disposal process is adhered to. This will reduce the risk of assets being sold at an undervalue to the detriment of the City.

In previous years we have asked for a list of capital assets like property directly or indirectly in the council's control and been told that one does not exist. If the council does not know what it owns how can it be best managed and how can we make sure that it is not mysteriously lost to the City and put into the hands of others?

In an open environment we would scrutinise any use of agents, preferred bidders, deals behind closed doors and using "commercial sensitivity" excuses so citizens are kept away from knowing what is going on with their money and their assets. Labour must not feel it owns the city - the citizens own the city and want it back.

Nottingham Conservatives believe the risks posed by Robin Hood Energy present a clear and present danger to the wider finances of the Council. We have repeatedly voiced these concerns at Full Council and in correspondence to the City Council's senior officers. We believe the only option is to sell off half the City Council's stake in Robin Hood Energy as this will:

- **Provide A Sustainable Future for the Company** – In its current form we believe that under sole City Council control the Company has reached a peak. We believe this is evidenced by the repeated injections of capital it has had to rely on from the Council. We believe that in seeking an ethical partner for the Company we can safeguard the local jobs RHE has created and provide certainty for its customers both locally and nationally.
- **Manage risk** – We believe that the risk the City Council is subject to, from the underlying financial demands of Robin Hood Energy, places too high a burden on the Council given the pressures it is already subject to in relation to its core services. We believe this is evidenced by the repeated injections of funding the company has sought, and been provided with, together with the guarantees provided by the Council. By selling off half its stake in the company to an ethical, experienced and competent partner the Council's risk would be reduced, as the partner would shoulder the risk alongside the Council, but crucially the Council will ensure that its existing financial interests in the company are protected.
- **Realisation of value for the Council** – Finally the realisation of half the City Council's stake in Robin Hood Energy would enable the Council to realise a measure of value that it has invested in the Company to date. This value could then be injected into supporting the Council's core statutory services, like adult social care and children's services.

A Conservative Controlled Council will:

- Strive to freeze Council Tax; but where an increase is necessary commit that it will not increase by more than the level of inflation;

- Maximise income from City Council assets putting financial acumen ahead of political gesturing;
- Ensure there is a single collection procedure to enable more efficient collection of Council debtors;
- Use Council Reserves, where appropriate, to fund transformation of statutory services within the Council to develop long-term savings;
- By 2024 have a plan in place to repay 75% of the outstanding Council debt by 2049
- Sell half of Robin Hood Energy to an experienced ethical energy provider and ring fence the proceeds to deliver service transformation in the Council's statutory services

## Adults In Care

Over the last four years the Labour Council has closed down care facilities in the City like the Laura Chambers Nursing Home in Clifton and the Oakdene Residential Care Home in St Anns.

This has taken away vital local facilities from areas adding to pressures on vulnerable residents who have to find care in unfamiliar areas and placing strain on their families.

More recently they have played politics with local healthcare by suspending the Council's membership of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System ("ICS"). Integrated Care Systems represent the national direction of travel in this area and the one serving the City is one of the most advanced in the Country.

Nottingham Conservatives will provide the leadership that local residents need to ensure that the City's interests are represented within the ICS and the City secures its fair share of local funding.

Nottingham Conservatives recognise the national pressures around social care and will lobby the Government to ensure the forthcoming Green Paper will deliver a model that fully recognises that as the Council takes on more responsibility for the delivery of adult social care. There must be more collaborative working with health service partners to ensure adult social care is delivered efficiently.

We will use the healthcare budget to promote independent living for residents and ensure that our day care centres **are protected** and become community hubs, which promote links with local employers, the voluntary sector and faith groups to ensure Centre users are provided with every opportunity to lead independent lives empowering them to reach their full potential within their local communities.

Nottingham Conservatives will:

- Maintain the City's Day Care Centres – under the Conservatives there will be no new Centre closures
- Create a mental health pathway to help residents with mental health needs access the support they need and beneficial signposting to community support networks
- Champion preventative approaches to prevent nursing care and hospital admissions being the first and final resort to enable residents to live in their own homes for longer;
- Ensure that where nursing care becomes necessary no couples will be split up and placed in different care homes
- Engage with elderly residents to ensure they are aware of what support opportunities exist for them within their communities and produce community directories to sign post residents to these groups.
- Ensure volunteer groups who work with older residents to combat isolation and loneliness have access to council facilities where they are currently under utilised.

## **Children Services & Education**

Nottingham Labour have spent much of their time politicising education in the City; we will strive to work with the committed and hard working teachers, schools and staff focussed purely on children's services and education - not on national politics.

Nottingham Labour have fought against every positive educational initiative in the last 20 years irrespective of the national government from academies to free schools.

**Because of** the national Conservative government and despite the local Labour party all children in the city go to a good or outstanding school and we now have state funded schools like the free school in Sherwood that are just as popular and oversubscribed as schools in the County.

Nottingham Conservatives fully agree with the Government's aim of ensuring every child should be in a Good or Outstanding School.

Better schooling and apprenticeships brought in by Conservatives has already dramatically increased the opportunities and life chances of our young people, but we don't want to stop there we will ensure schools are supported to continually improve, and offer more opportunities to our children. We believe academies that have effective careers programmes, helping to harness apprentices and employment opportunities for those leaving education, should be nationally recognised by OFSTED. Education performance should be judged as much on employment outcomes achieved as academic results.

We will support exclusions for unruly behaviour in our primary schools and ensure that social services follow up all notifications from head teachers on children at risk. By intervening earlier and ensuring children with additional education needs are identified at the earliest possible point support can be provided to prevent the pattern of behaviour continuing into secondary school where it can be too late to prevent longer term exclusion from happening. We will continue to support schools in dealing with persistent non-attendance.

We will continue to support Early Intervention practices in the City across both Children's Services and Adults Services. We want to provide support for families of children with additional needs to ensure they are protected from falling into gang culture in our City and become another knife crime statistic. We believe community is key in this approach and by collaborating with voluntary sector groups to provide support that doesn't stifle we believe we can help facilitate the measures to protect children.

Nottingham Conservatives will open up our youth centres to volunteer groups by allowing newly established groups a rent free period in our centres to increase usage. We recognise that there are a number of volunteers, qualified to work with children and young persons, who cannot currently access our centres because of prohibitive rental costs. We recognise that this leads to reduced access to centres and ultimately results in a false economy.

## Nottingham Conservatives will:

- Openly engage with free school providers to proactively identify possible sites for new schools where they are needed.
- Where school expansion is required and it is practicable, any schools expanded in the City's neighbourhoods will, under a Conservative led council, and unlike now, include a suitable pick up and drop off area to ease parking pressures on our neighbourhoods
- Work with partners across the city to ensure families receive free advice and representation when a child is at risk of being excluded and at exclusion hearings. This will ensure that the position of the child is heard and alternative solutions can be sought.
- Engage with the academies, like Farnborough Academy, who have actively engaged with local employers to create apprentice opportunities for school leavers and replicate this across the City.
- Lobby the Government to recognise careers education and outcomes are recognised by OFSTED as a measure of performance;
- Through the Nottingham Education Trust propose the creation of a "Nottingham Society Programme" using education to encourage children in the later stages of primary going into the early stages of secondary to engage with volunteer groups to work towards improving their communities. We believe by starting early we can bring about change for future generations.
- Ensure that Children's Centres, like Clifton Youth Centre, are opened up and accessible to volunteer groups to help them deliver youth projects in their communities.
- Support the voluntary sector in provision of amateur team games, particularly football. Of particular importance is the provision of youth academies supporting the step from school sports into adult leagues.
- Roll out programmes across the City's secondary schools to identify young people susceptible to falling into gang culture and working with their families to prevent this.
- Create community forums covering the North, East and South of the City, incorporating education leaders, community champions, councillors and senior council officers, specifically focussed on challenging gang culture in the City.

## **Business and Transport**

Under Nottingham Labour, the City Centre is under pressure. Labour has focussed on large-scale projects like Nottingham Castle which is coming to fruition and Broadmarsh which has taken years and years to get not very far.

This sole focus has been at the expense of the overall City Centre experience. We now have record numbers of vacant units in the City Centre and hard working, often independent, players in the retail, leisure and tourism sector have little voice.

Under Nottingham Labour's crusade against cars we now have more restrictions and increased parking charges deterring shoppers from the wider Nottinghamshire area from coming into the City to the detriment of retail and leisure in the City as a whole.

City centre parking management should support shoppers, tourists and visitors plus the thousands of staff that work in these businesses. This Council at times seems to be more interested in putting resources into getting more income from handing out tickets and fines rather than developing a city centre that works for us all.

In the City's districts Nottingham Labour have failed to engage with local businesses and been responsible for instigating measures with little thought to the cost on these businesses. The lack of engagement with small businesses **needs to end**. Nottingham needs a Council that does not just value large multinationals but respects and fosters the growth of smaller owner managed businesses recognising they are the backbone of the British economy.

Nottingham Labour continually scaremonger by saying under the Conservatives Nottingham City Transport would be sold off or privatised. Nottingham City Transport is a successful company providing vital transport services to Nottingham City and it would **NOT** be sold off under the Conservatives.

Nottingham Conservatives are committed to restoring the fortunes of the City Centre and our districts. We recognise that the City Centre in particular cannot survive on custom from the City alone and that we have to make it accessible and open to shoppers and visitors from outside the City Centre.

Nottingham Conservatives continue to have reservations about the financing of Nottingham's tram network following the large losses the tram operator has suffered over the last two years. We are therefore proposing that a full scale review is carried out to ensure the City is protected in the event that continued poor performance results in the operator failing.

Similarly, we will complete a review to see if there are any alternatives to the "Work Place Parking Levy" as a means of repaying the lending due on the tram network. We recognise that unless an alternative can be identified and implemented the City Council would be unable to meet the repayments due on the tram project.

Under Nottingham Conservatives, we will ensure that any surplus from the "Work Place Parking Levy" is prioritised toward traffic management schemes for those areas

in our estates that are affected by displaced parking from commuters and employees trying to avoid the “Work Place Parking Levy”.

We will establish an independent business forum for City Centre businesses to allow them to directly feed in to the City Centre strategy and help them shape the future of the City Centre and in collaboration with others such as Nottingham BID. We recognise that small independent businesses are the backbone of the British economy.

Nottingham Conservatives will:

- Facilitate a massive increase in footfall in all our shopping areas across the city by reviewing traffic restrictions and opening up the City Centre making it more accessible to shoppers and visitors from outside Nottingham City.
- A full review of traffic restrictions and parking charges within the City Centre will be completed with a focus on ensuring that deliveries to businesses can be completed effectively and that shoppers have the means to park;
- Parking in the City will be free after 4 pm in the week and all-day weekends;
- Establishment of a business forum promoting independent businesses in the City Centre
- Councillor led engagement with existing business like the East Chambers of Commerce, Nottingham BID and the Federation of Small Businesses
- Introduce a “Dragon’s Den” Scheme to encourage the next generation of Young Entrepreneurs in the City
- Ensure **NO** Local Link Bus Services will be withdrawn in the next Council term
- Ensure that NCT and council provided bus services introduce request stops service outside peak hours to promote passenger safety by allowing passengers to alight closer to home or on a safer route to their destination.
- Ensure the City has a contingency plan in place to future proof the City following the second year of poor financial performance from the tram operator.
- Complete a full analysis of possible alternatives to the Work Place Parking Levy to reduce the burden it places on businesses and their employees together with parking displacement in our communities
- Phased removal of speed humps on main estate roads and replacement with environmentally friendly alternatives
- Adopt a proactive approach to traffic and safety centred around local knowledge

## **Housing, Community, Planning and the Environment**

Nottingham Labour has introduced Selective Licensing, akin to a tenant tax, which has increased rents in the City. They have presided over, the conversion of a number of heritage buildings into student accommodation, and despite the City having a saturation policy in place on student accommodation has failed to enforce this.

Whilst Nottingham Conservatives do not disagree with using Selective Licensing to target hotspot areas within the City where there are known issues with rogue landlords, we do not believe adopting the scheme on a City-wide basis is proportionate. We do not believe that it is fair or right to presume that all private landlords are responsible for poor housing standards and are guilty of exploiting tenants. In this way we believe the City-wide introduction of Selective Licensing is disproportionate and has resulted in effectively a tenant tax being passed onto tenants in rented properties.

Nottingham Conservatives recognise the need for additional housing in the City but believe that good development needs to be respectful of the existing environment surrounding it and take account of and provide mitigation to additional pressures it may place on an area.

That is why under a Conservative led council we will lead by example and ensure - where council owned land is identified as surplus and earmarked for redevelopment - a place based approach to development will be adopted to make sure that existing highway and service infrastructure has the capacity to cope with additional pressures; so that any impact on amenity for existing residents is minimised once any development is complete.

Whilst it is right that enforcement action is taken against rogue landlords in the private sector we must ensure that the same standards are applied across to the board to all housing providers both private and public.

Following the Grenfell tragedy, Cllr Rule wrote a joint letter with Cllr Urquhart the then Portfolio Holder for Housing to lobby Central Government to provide the Council with the means to retro fit sprinklers to the City's Tower Blocks.

Nottingham Conservatives were delighted when after lobbying the Government the Prime Minister announced that the borrowing cap, which restricted the amount the Council could borrow against its housing stock, was lifted to enable it to do this.

In our neighbourhoods we want to ensure that new build housing has adequate car parking, to prevent parking pressures developing with existing properties; where existing areas of our estates have insufficient parking provision we will actively explore how these pressures can be resolved either through permit parking or the creation of additional parking areas as we have already done in areas of Clifton.

Nottingham Conservatives are deeply concerned by the rise of homelessness and rough sleeping in our city and recognise that to bring a person in off the street permanently, it requires not only a place to stay but help going forward. We were disappointed to see that the only facility, in the city provided by the Salvation Army, to

cater for such needs was closed in 2014 for non-budget reasons. We would look, as a matter of urgency, to bring it back.

In the recent budget Nottingham Conservatives proposed a fully costed investment in a Solar Panel Investment Scheme, building on the City's track record of delivering such properties. The investment return generated from this would be ring-fenced to deliver energy improvements to council owned buildings working towards the aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2029.

Nottingham Conservatives value and actively support the work done by the litter picking volunteers in our City. We want to provide support for these groups and ensure their experience and knowledge is used by the Council to encourage more residents to take part, educate residents about the impact of litter on the environment and use enforcement action to deter those responsible for litter. We will ensure local funding is provided to enable them to do this.

Under Nottingham Conservatives, the Council will:

- At the end of the current cycle scale back selective licencing to ensure hotspot only areas are targeted;
- Ensure that where tenants in Nottingham City Homes ("NCH") properties report safety issues they receive a follow up visit within 48 hours of the report being logged to ensure a prompt resolution to the complaint;
- Ensure that where the minority of NCH tenants are responsible for repeated ongoing anti-social behaviour NCH work in partnership with the local community protection teams and policing colleagues to collate the evidence necessary for prompt enforcement action and place the victims at the centre of this process;
- Enforce student accommodation saturation zones to ensure communities like Lenton do not become enveloped with student flats to the detriment of local residents;
- Support the building of aspirational family homes to ease housing pressures and encourage graduates to stay in the City
- Introduce a City-wide Public Space Protection Order banning traveller encampments from the City's Parks and Open Spaces to enable quicker enforcement and removal of encampments when they arise.
- Expand the City's mobile CCTV network to tackle anti-social behaviour and fly tipping hotspots;
- Implement the use of innovative surveillance technology to track illegal use of moto cross and quad bikes to enable police to locate where they are being stored and impound and destroy them;
- Utilise government funding to progress the Somewhere Safe To Stay Pilot and establish a hub in the City to provide support for rough sleepers.
- Work alongside charities like the Salvation Army and others to tackle rough sleeping in the City and provide outreach signposting to help rough sleepers locate the support they need for dependency related issues,
- Offer four extra garden waste collections a year for those residents in our leafier areas who want it for a nominal fee;

- Empower our community litter champions to take control of specific areas in the Ward and provide them with the support to do this.
- Develop a litter prevention strategy that incorporates Education and Enforcement.

## **Leisure and Tourism**

Under Labour, there has been a focus on creating destination leisure facilities. Whilst these have a useful purpose for promoting sporting competitions and tournaments on regional and national basis, they have led to a disconnect between our local sporting groups and their communities.

Many local sporting groups, like the Clifton Amateur Boxing Club, now find they are unable to use their local Leisure Centres to showcase the talent they have nurtured and are instead signposted toward destination leisure centres which makes it more difficult for them to encourage the local community to view their talent. This balance needs restoring and local clubs need more support from the Council to help them demonstrate their talent in our communities.

Over the last year the Council has embarked on a policy of increasing allotment rents which will see rents increase by almost 300% over next 3 years. This will hit elderly users and those residents with disabilities the most. It is also likely over the longer term to lead to additional pressures being placed on adult services leading to greater costs overall – another example of a false economy.

A Conservative controlled authority will:

- Freeze allotment rents going forward
- Engage positively with the Nottingham Allotment Federation and with it to implement its proposals for the running of allotments in the City

As part of our Leisure offer we will continue to promote access to local Leisure Centres to promote healthy living in our communities. We recognise the value of promoting the sporting achievements in our local communities and whilst the creation of destination venues, like Harvey Hadden, has a role to play for sporting events on a regional and national scale, we believe this should not be at the expense of allowing local groups to access local leisure centres to showcase and promote their talents in their local community in order to inspire young people to join them.

Nottingham has a rich history, and throughout the world is identified with the legendary Robin Hood, depicted in many movies. But does Nottingham reap the benefits of this international exposure, attracting tourists to our fine city?

The Labour controlled council have ignored the economic benefits of mass tourism enjoyed by many other cities and have only recently embarked upon a scheme to enhance the experience at Nottingham Castle.

We await the completion and sincerely hope public reaction is positive, and moves away from the perception of an “underwhelming castle”.

We believe the time is now right to take advantage of current opportunities to enhance the Castle to even greater esteem. There is a once in a lifetime opportunity to demolish the soon to be redundant Nottingham College site on Maid Marian Way and prominently expose the most magnificent rockface any city would be proud of.

This would seek to generate an expansive view of the city, from the Railway Station to the new Broadmarsh Shopping Centre generating a direct link between retail and leisure centres across the South of the City.

The expanse of land currently occupied by the college could be readily utilised for the expansion of the tourist trade and, with experienced and professional partners, for such as medieval markets, enactment events etc. Plus host car parking for tour buses and visitors alike, all without obscuring our magnificent Castle Rock, which incorporates the Trip to Jerusalem, one of the country's most famous pubs.

Establishing a tourist trail a tourist trail along Castle Gate to High Pavement to the Lace Market and St Mary's Church, would lead to yet further tourism experiences: Nottingham Contemporary, Galleries of Justice, St Mary's Church and many other iconic buildings.

Nottingham Conservatives will:

- Ensure that once demolished Nottingham College would not be developed higher than a single storey, if in fact at all
- Signpost a safe and traffic calmed walking route from the former college to the Broadmarsh Shopping & Leisure Centre
- Facilitate Medieval Market Events and other such themed related attractions
- Accommodate a dedicated coach park
- Nominate Castle Gate as a pedestrianised tourist trail, with applicable tourism development opportunities

Nottingham is sitting on a vast network of sandstone caves, and it is welcome that more exposure will be incorporated in the current Castle proposals but more extensive availability is needed across the City.

We would:

- Identify from recent surveys the extent and opportunity to allow public access to the cave network in our City
- Generate worldwide coverage of our City of Caves, by linking it with Robin Hood and Nottingham Castle
- Ensure all public buildings are cleaned and in pristine condition, like the Council House, and work with all other city property owners so they commit to the same.

What City would not relish an accessible river frontage like our River Trent and Embankment esplanade. There is a distinct lack of investment along this section of the River, particularly Trent Bridge itself. It is a walking, jogging, cycling haven, but needs thought through expansion and refurbishment.

Nottingham Conservatives would:

- Ensure access between the Holme Pierrepont and Attenborough Nature Reserve was achieved with a dedicated pathway to facilitate all leisure users.

- Seek to install, in conjunction with Rushcliffe Borough Council, Riverside street lighting along the banks of the river to reflect on the waters and offer evening usage.

Nottingham and the wider County is famous for its sporting heritage producing world champions like:

- Brian Clough & Peter Taylor
- Jimmy Sirrel & Jack Wheeler
- Carl Froch
- Viv Anderson
- Torvil and Dean
- Rebecca Adlington

Arriving at Nottingham Station gives no impression of the sporting talent we have nurtured in this City. Nottingham Conservatives aim to alter that by:

- Seeking the relocation of the Emmett Clock from “out of sight” at the rear now of the Victoria Centre and moving this iconic masterpiece to the concourse of Nottingham Station
- As a part of the regeneration of the area currently being planned to further enhance this by seek to secure the former Coroners Office located on Carrington Street and turning it into “Nottingham’s Museum of Sporting Heroes” to reflect and celebrate the achievements of Nottingham’s sporting champions.

Nottingham has some way to go to achieve widespread acclaim for its tourist offer and we will engage with existing and new but experienced operators in this sector and also whilst putting pressure on any rogue ones who now let us down.

With more, better varied and higher quality options, even maybe a 5 Star Hotel and another city based Michelin Star Restaurant, with international sporting events and a focus on achieving the aims mentioned, Nottingham’s economy can be supplemented by local and international tourists.

This would better achieve balance and further complement our student, international student and world class university offering but with less reliance upon solely appearing to focus on ever expanding the numbers of dull student flats the City.