

Lambeth Citizens
Local Election Manifesto
2018



1. An Accountable Lambeth

We believe that for Lambeth to thrive decision makers need to work with, and be accountable to, civil society. Organised communities with strong relationships have the power to transform our community and make Lambeth more welcoming, more affordable, and fairer.

Lambeth Citizens is an alliance of 23 faith, education and community institutions working together for the common good. Over the past year Lambeth Citizens members have spoken to over 2000 local people to find the issues that we care about and determine what needs to change. In November 2017 170 people gathered to vote on three priority areas: welcoming refugees and migrants; affordable housing; and access to university. This manifesto lays out what we are planning to do on these issues and what we are calling on Lambeth Council to do.

Lambeth Citizens will:

Build relationships between civil society institutions in the borough; find and develop leaders in those institutions to contribute to the common good.

We are calling on Lambeth council to:

- 1. Work with Lambeth Citizens to make our borough fairer, more equal and more welcoming**
 - 2. Meet with Lambeth Citizens once a quarter**
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2. A Welcoming Lambeth

Lambeth has a long history of welcoming refugees and migrants from across the world. We are proud of that heritage and want to ensure that we maintain and build upon it so that refugees and migrants are welcome in our borough. Lambeth can be proud of being at the forefront of the UK's response to the refugee crisis and has resettled 22 refugee families from the Middle East and North Africa since the start of the refugee crisis.

Lambeth Citizens will:

Support refugee families that are resettled to our community; provide expert support to community sponsorship groups through Sponsor Refugees; provide conversational English language volunteers to resettled refugees; provide expert support to the council on ESOL.

We are calling on Lambeth council to:

1. Resettle Syrian and Middle Eastern Refugees

- To have resettled 28 families to Lambeth through the government's resettlement programmes
- Ensure adequate casework support for the families once they arrive
- Support the families to integrate into our community and provide targeted help with work and volunteering opportunities

2. Support Community Sponsorship of Refugees

- Encourage and support local groups to sponsor refugee families including through hosting networking evenings and offering advice for prospective groups

3. Work with us to create and resource an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) strategy for all refugees and migrants in Lambeth

- Nominate a cabinet member to lead on ESOL and work with us on the strategy
- Assign an officer to coordinate ESOL services and promote high-quality services

3. An Affordable Lambeth

Lambeth is in the midst of a housing crisis. As the cost of housing increases, people in our community are being forced to choose between substandard accommodation and moving out of our borough, away from family and networks. We believe that everyone in Lambeth should have homes that are genuinely affordable and that rogue landlords are held to account.

Lambeth Citizens will:

Proactively look for potential sites for community land trusts; provide expert support for community land trust through London CLT; support members to challenge rogue landlords and celebrate good ones.

We are calling on Lambeth council to:

1. Build Community Land Trusts: Genuinely and Permanently affordable housing

- Commit to including community lands trusts as a recognised form of affordable housing in Lambeth's Local Plan
- Support our campaign to build a CLT on the TfL site in Streatham Hill
- Work with us to identify council-owned sites that could include CLTs and identify a number of possible sites for discussion within six months of the election

2. Hold Rogue Landlords to Account and Celebrate Good Landlords

- Pilot a Licensing Scheme for Landlords in Lambeth
- Hold an annual reception to celebrate good landlords
- Provide training and support on tenants' rights to the police to ensure they react appropriately to evictions

3. Ensure that 'affordable' means affordable

- Use all means available to the council to guarantee that 'affordable housing' is *genuinely* affordable and is either social rent or linked to average incomes (CLT or London Living Rent)

4. A Fair Lambeth

In Lambeth only 43% of all children go to university. This is compared to 52% in Kensington and Chelsea and 56% in Hammersmith and Fulham. This is not because children in Lambeth are not as bright as children in other boroughs but because a variety of barriers are preventing them from realising their potential.

One of the biggest barriers many children in Lambeth face is that it is very difficult to access student finance if you are not a British or EU Citizen and the fee just to apply for British Citizenship is £973.

Lambeth Citizens will:

Work with KCL Widening Participation department to organise parents to break down the barriers to children going to university; provide expert advice to the council on social mobility and university access; support parents to enable their children to become British Citizens.

We are calling on Lambeth council to:

- 1. Work with us to create a Lambeth Social Mobility and Access to University Strategy**
 - Collaboratively produce and publish a strategy within 6 months of the election
 - Nominate a cabinet member and senior officer to work with us on the strategy
 - Appoint an officer to coordinate and promote summer school placements

 - 2. Champion pathways to British Citizenship for young people**
 - Meet with young people affected by the issue within three months of the election
 - Work with us to challenge the £973 application fee the Home Office charges for British Citizenship for children
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*For more information contact our Organiser James Asfa
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