

Candidates' election statements

Progress strategy board elections 2014

– Councillors' section –

Election statements have been reproduced exactly as they were submitted, including any grammatical and/or spelling errors and the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those held by Progress.

Please read carefully before casting your vote.



Theo Blackwell

Gender: Male

Twitter: @camdentheo

Council: London borough of Camden

I'm a committed advocate of decentralising powers from Whitehall to local government and bring 12 years of experience as a Camden Councillor where I have been Cabinet member for Finance for 4 years and on the Cabinet for 8.

My other passion is how technology can improve public services. In recent years Labour hasn't always been on the front foot on this one: the digital revolution matters to because digital change creates both opportunities for innovation and growth, but also the potential to create greater uncertainty and alienation for those left behind. I have written for Progress on this subject and helped set up @LabourDigital, a new network of Labour supporters in tech.

The background to the May 2015 election will not just be a debate about the economy, but also change in public services. From 1 April 2015 councils will be setting austerity budgets thanks to further cuts from the government - when the Coalition promised it would all be over in one term. If elected I will bring real-world experience of the challenges faced by councillors when setting these budgets and making difficult choices.

Progress is already leading the way arguing for a greater role for local councillors in Party processes. I also want to see much greater transparency in Party structures, including how Regional parties – including London – select candidates under list systems.

- Longstanding local councillor
- Works in tech for video games industry
- Previous think-tanker for Social Market Foundation and Work Foundation.



Stephen Brimble

Gender: Male

Twitter: @stephenbrimble

Council: Exeter city council

I'm standing in these elections because progressive values need to be a key part of local government policy in the future with limited public funds. I feel that we need to engage small businesses, charities, voluntary organisations, our residents and co-operatives to ensure that local services are provided even with cuts. For example I'm currently leading a campaign to keep Northbrook Swimming Pool open.

I represent Mincinglake for Labour and the Co-operative Party on Exeter City Council. As a young councillor I feel that we can engage new people in the political process through community engagement. Since 2012, we've developed a community cleaning business across Exeter. This provides student employment and support for families and the elderly. We provide a living wage and we donate 10% of our profits to local charities and campaigns.

I'm a Politics and Sociology student at the University of Exeter. I am writing a dissertation on a co-operative and socially responsible future for business. I'm the Vice President of Exeter University Labour Students. In this role I am responsible for ensuring that we involve student in politics by making campaigning and debating accessible for all.

It would be an honour to represent councillors for Progress. I would like to share the views of small businesses, co-operatives, students and young people in our community. I think we reach our true potential when we share ideas in teams and where we work in a climate where everyone has a chance to succeed. Contact me if you have questions.



Brendan Chilton

Gender: Male

Twitter: @BrendanChilton

Council: Ashford borough council

Progress always provides radical debate and stimulating policy ideas, but above all it is a campaigning organisation working hard for a Labour Victory. I am standing for the Progress Strategy Board because I want to make a contribution to that work and to the Labour Party.

In my day job I am Campaign Director of Labour for a Referendum which is a group of MP's, Peers, Councillors and Members campaigning for the Labour Party to commit to an In/Out Referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union.

I represent one of the most deprived wards in the South East and have campaigned hard to protect local services and improve opportunity. From fighting the closure of children's centres to improved road safety I have a record of local campaigns and local success. I also have considerable experience working in business, politics and the voluntary sector.

My strong and successful campaigning record, varied experience across all sectors and my belief in 'hard graft' would serve the Progress Strategy Board well. Thank you and I hope I can count on your support.



Rachel Hodson

Gender: Female

Twitter: @CllrRachel

Council: Doncaster metropolitan borough council

My name is Rachel and I'm standing for re-election to the Progress Strategy Board.

I work for UNISON Yorkshire and the Humber as a local organiser, and I am also an elected councillor in Doncaster.

The last two years have seen big changes for Progress, and I'm proud that it is a place with open and meaningful debate at its heart. The strategy board has been key in ensuring that our organisation remains outward looking, centred on campaigning, and is unashamedly committed to working towards a Labour Government in 2015.

As a strategy board member, I have been committed to highlighting the need for our organisation to ensure that members outside of London have chance to engage. I am proud that many of our events have been held outside the capital during the board's term.

We have also seen the first ever Progress Women's Conference last year, which was a great success. I want to champion this event, to make it a regular feature of our annual calendar and build on it year on year.

I am a member of the Young Labour National Executive Committee, and would like to further the work done with Labour Students and Young Labour, not only around campaigning but supporting events where the young people in our movement get the opportunity for debate and discussion.

I feel that I still have much to offer, and hope that you will consider voting for me again.



Barry Kirby

Gender: Male

Twitter: @baz_k

Council: Gloucestershire county council

I got into politics through my community. Having set up a well-regarded residents association for our new build estate, I was elected to the local Parish Council and am now a County Councillor in Gloucestershire. In amongst this, I have helped set up and run a variety of community groups and organisations.

As a councillor, I believe in developing grass roots, on one hand helping two relatively new developments become communities, and on the other, helping a developed community grow and be supported. I am also the Labour Shadow Spokesperson for the Fire, Planning and Infrastructure cabinet role, which through the time of cuts and job losses has proven to be very challenging.

I am active on Social Media (@Baz_K & mrbpkirby on Facebook) as well as having my own blog (www.barrykirby.co.uk) in order to make communications with my residents as easy as possible.

In my 'free time' I run my own (relatively young) small business. This has given me a real insight into what we as a Labour Movement need to understand about supporting local business and how the local economy is key to the local community. I am a local LEP ambassador and a committee member of the local IET organisation.

As a member of the Progress board, I would hope to bring voices of the residents who we work for, opinions and ideas from businesses who we should work with and the experience of being on a County Council whose core services we need to protect.



Florence Nosegbe

Gender: Female

Twitter: @flonosegbe

Council: London borough of Lambeth

Dear member,

The 2014-2016 Progress Strategy board term covers an important period for the future of our party. In 2015 we have the chance to build on our message, reaching out to all parts of the UK to ensure that this coalition government is a one term government. Like many members, I am campaigning for an all-out Labour majority - nothing else will do.

I am re-standing for the Progress Strategy board to ensure that we continue to build a partnership with all sections of the party including our trade union colleagues, socialist societies and registered supporters. A diverse healthy party must reflect the views and aspirations of all different sections and communities.

I am keen to continue developing new platforms for party members and activist to discuss and develop new policies. I was proud to chair the opening plenary at the first Progress Winning with Women conference in September 2013 as part of the Campaigning for a Labour Majority, bringing together key women from across the Labour movement. I will work to promote similar events for different groups across the party, ensuring that the events are targeted across key battle ground constituency regions.

As a member of the Strategy Board I have participated in key meetings and championed the important role played by Labour Councillors and the need to include the work across local government in key party policy discussions. I have also encouraged lapsed members to re-join and will continue to work in an open and transparent manner.



Sally Prentice

Gender: Female

Twitter: @SallyPrentice

Council: London borough of Lambeth

I would like to join the Strategy Board to influence Progress's direction in the run up to 2015 and beyond. It's vital that Progress continues to develop and champion policies to promote aspiration, opportunity and security. Labour won in 1945, 1964 and 1997 because we offered a message of hope and opportunity to the British people. We must do so again in 2015.

We need to engage with people working in the private sector and people living in rural Britain to win in 2015 and elect more MEPs. Although I'm a councillor in Lambeth, I grew up in Wantage in Oxfordshire, where my parents still live. They rarely hear from Labour, and if they do, it's only at election time, and sometimes not even then. This must change. I'll bring an understanding of rural Britain to the Strategy Board.

I write for Progress. My articles on child benefit accounts and why the next Labour Cabinet needs a Secretary of State for Housing were published in February and May 2014 editions of the magazine. More of my articles can be found at www.sallyprentice.org.uk.

I'm an experienced councillor and campaigner. I held four Cabinet portfolios in Lambeth: children's services, environment, regeneration and culture and leisure. I've campaigned in by-elections in Eastleigh, Corby, Croydon, Sutton, Kingston, Havering and Harrow.

I'll also bring the Strategy Board experience from outside politics, having worked for Age Concern London, the Treasury and the King's Fund, and run regeneration programmes in east London.



Kaiser Rehman

Gender: Male

Council: Oldham metropolitan borough council

I am standing because as a Councillor I have always advocated Progressive Values and wish to shape the Labour Party with these values. As a law graduate, elected youngest Councillor in Oldham in 2011 and a businessman, I believe I can represent Progress Members on the strategy with my vision, which we all share in Progress, dedication and enthusiasm.

I believe it was these values that were behind our electoral success in 1997 and values that the electorate believe in in this country. Progress is an organisation which believes in pragmatism, listens and is in touch with the people. I firmly believe I will be able to advocate these views on the strategy board which will shape the future of the Labour Party and a Labour Government.

I believe this is a very important role and as a representative of Members of Progress, I have the passion and determination to advocate our views and contribute positively to the strategy board.

I also strongly believe Progressive Values should be implemented in our Local Government Policies for a more fairer society. This is something which I will also raise as an issue. Progress is about empowering people and strengthening the economy, rewarding those that wish to go forward with their lives. Progress does not ignore any section or group in society, it is this sort of politics that will lead us to election victory, this is the main reason for me standing, a fair and equal society which I wish to shape on behalf of members through the strategy board and having a say in the future of The Labour Party.



Vijay Riyait

Gender: Male

Twitter: @vriyait

Council: Leicester city council

I have served on the Progress Strategy Board for the past two years as a co-opted member, having run last time in the members section. It has been a huge privilege to be part of the Progress Strategy Board helping to navigate it through challenges to its legitimacy within the Labour Party and the transition to the fantastic new Chair, John Woodcock MP. Last year I was elected as a Labour Councillor for the Abbey Ward in Leicester City in a by-election, one of the proudest moments of my life. I am now standing in the councillors section to carry on the work that I championed within Progress such as increasing focus on BAME representation and issues. There is much more work to be done here but the current Progress Strategy Board recently supported a paper I presented to make a step change in Progress in terms of BAME participation.

I have been a vocal supporter of Progress as a place where centre left progressive and radical reforming ideas can flourish and be debated. As a person who has spent most of my career working in the private sector in the technology industry, we need voices which speak to the future of this country in the run to the election as a place where our economy can deliver high value, high skilled jobs for the many not the few.

I have been instrumental in supporting Sikhs4Labour which was launched by Ed Miliband and Yvette Cooper earlier this year.



Leon Spence

Gender: Male

Twitter: @cllrleonspence

Council: Leicestershire county council

Labour is at a turning point. Over the past 30 years society has changed immeasurably. The hopes, expectations and aspirations of hard working families are unrecognisable from those which were commonplace in the 1970's.

As a party we have a choice whether to hold to the ideals of another century in the hopes that the majority will inexplicably return to them or realise the interpretations of our ever present principles evolve as society does.

Progress must always be at the forefront of calling Labour to be the party of hope for all regardless of their place in society, to be the party of business and the party of workers and to be the party of world class public services.

The Progress strategy board has an essential role to play in ensuring the future is one which Labour will be proud of and it would be an honour to be part of that important task.

As a county, district and parish councillor I talk with and work for hard working families on a daily basis.

As a Chair of Scrutiny for Children and Families I see how ill-judged tory-led government initiatives are hurting the most vulnerable in our communities.

My politics are very much from the coalface of marginal constituencies in the midlands. The type of constituency, the type of family, which Labour will have to win if it seeks to return to power.

My role on the strategy board would be to give voice to exactly that type of constituency.



Mandy Telford

Gender: Female

Twitter: @mandytelford

Council: Cumbria county council

As a strategy board member for the past two years, I've been proud to help Progress walk tall and stand up for the values we love and the kind of party that can win elections.

All my life I have strived to break down the barriers that hold women back from playing an equal role in politics, so I was delighted when last year Progress held its first ever women's conference, with the second one in Manchester next month. But we know there is so much more to do, in Progress and in the wider Labour party. Progress should be the natural home for Labour women in politics: let's set that as our official goal.

It is also great that Progress has also held many more events outside London recently. But again, there is stacks more to do. Living in the north west of England with two wee girls makes it hard to get to the capital easily. Labour needs more busy mums from across the UK to shape our politics; I will be their champion.

But winning the general election next year is THE most important thing - we must deliver the Labour government that our communities desperately need. Progress must lead the charge in this campaign, supporting activists and candidates right across the country and taking our message out to voters. If elected to the strategy board I will ensure that Progress uses all its resources to deliver victory in May and continues to shape the ideas of the next Labour government.

**Nick Thulbourn****Gender:** Male**Twitter:** @n_thulbourn**Council:** Peterborough city council

By changing one street at a time I have managed to make a real difference in an area that I am the only red island in a sea of blue with a number of UKIP icebergs floating around. Being a councillor and the PPC for NW Cambs I believe I am in a position and in an area that through this experience could help drive positive and practical strategies, even in the true blue desert - if they can work here they can work just about everywhere.

I also run a small business and have had experience working all over the world which also could give a unique perspective on how looking at things differently can drive real positive ideas.

I am deputy leader and the lead on resources for the labour group in Peterborough city council which will help on a practical level delivering ideas that work.

Being a lifelong Labour supporter, married with three children, downes syndrome brother and can trace the positives in my life to practical labour policies and labour people who have imprinted the ideal of caring about people.

