

YOUR VOICE, OUR MISSION:

To Transform Redbridge
You Spoke, We Listened.

 @RedbridgeIndys

 www.redbridgeindys.org  info@redbridgeindys.org

2028



TABLE OF CONTENTS

● Foreword from the Leader	04
● A Council That Works for Residents	05
● Lower Bills, Cleaner Air, Better Neighbourhoods	06
● Regeneration, Jobs and a Stronger Local Economy	07
● Cost of Living Support and a Safety Net for Every Resident	08
● Fairer Council Tax and Better Value	09
● Safer Streets and Sensible Parking	10
● Safer Neighbourhoods and Visible Action	11
● Better Homes and Fair Planning	12
● Children, SEND and Youth Opportunities	13
● Culture and Community	14
● Contract with Redbridge Residents	15
● Footnotes and References	16
● Get In Touch	20



FOREWORD FROM THE LEADER

VASEEM AHMED

Leader of the Redbridge Independents

Redbridge is a borough of **proud communities, hardworking families and neighbourhoods** full of potential.

But too many residents feel local politics is no longer delivering what it should. **Council tax rises**, yet the basics are not always done well. **Streets** are left untidy, planning feels imposed, families navigating **SEND** services feel unheard, and too many people feel the council does not explain or listen.

Vaseem Ahmed



The Redbridge Independents exist because we believe local government must return to first principles:

Respect for residents

Transparency in decision-making

Value for every pound people pay

Pride in every neighbourhood

Opportunity for every child and young person

Strong communities and shared belonging

We are not driven by national party politics. We are driven by **Redbridge**.

This manifesto sets out our **programme** and our promise: **practical, local, independent leadership** focused on what matters most.

A COUNCIL THAT WORKS FOR RESIDENTS

A Redbridge Independents-run council will have, as its **primary duty**, the responsibility to help **tackle the cost of living crisis** and to **alleviate poverty** wherever it exists in our borough.

We will put the **everyday financial pressures** on families and households at the **centre** of how the council spends its money, plans services, and supports residents.

We will focus relentlessly on **improving neighbourhoods** and **raising quality of life** for ordinary residents. We will strive to make **Redbridge safer**, and we will confront directly the blight of **drug dealing, crime and anti-social behaviour** that undermines public confidence and damages community wellbeing.

Above all, we will ensure that **genuine accountability** is the hallmark of council governance.

Residents will remember that a BBC investigation reported serious issues with the condition and licensing status of several rental properties owned by Jas Athwal MP, the Labour Member of Parliament for Ilford South and a former Labour Leader of Redbridge Council. The BBC reported evidence of black mould, infestations, and that some properties did not hold the licences required under the council's selective licensing scheme, a scheme introduced during his leadership.¹

Despite these findings and the public concern that followed, residents were never given a clear explanation as to why no council enforcement action was taken or what accountability process applied.

We will rid the council of this culture of impunity and lack of accountability once and for all.



We will work in **genuine partnership** with community groups, faith leaders, volunteers and the third sector so that **consultation** is not an afterthought, but a **real part of decision-making** from the beginning.

We will make Redbridge Council **transparent and accessible**. Public meetings should be easy for residents to attend, including from the comfort of their own homes, with **clear signposting** so people know how to watch, participate and engage.

Residents must be able to **ask questions** and receive **proper responses** from those making decisions on their behalf.

To ensure that residents can ask questions and receive responses, we will make sure **accountability is real and visible**. We will also ensure that a **human being**, not an automated system, answers complex resident queries, so that problems are resolved rather than lost in a cumbersome bureaucracy.

We will ensure that pensioners, disabled residents, families with children, and young people feel they have a council that is no longer remote, but **present and responsive**.

We will hold **regular open public meetings** where the Leader and his team can be **engaged directly**, without procedural barriers that prevent **real scrutiny**.

Redbridge deserves a council that is **open, human, accountable** and **rooted in the everyday lives** of the people it serves.

LOWER BILLS, CLEANER AIR, BETTER NEIGHBOURHOODS

THE CHALLENGE

Residents are already living with the consequences of **rising costs** and **environmental pressures**.

The **cost of energy** has become one of the **biggest household pressures**. Many residents are now forced to make impossible choices between **heating** and **eating**. This is not just a national issue. It is felt in every **street**, every **block of flats**, and every family home across **Redbridge**.²

Poor air quality around major roads, high streets and school routes¹²

Overheating homes in summer, which is especially dangerous for pensioners, disabled residents and those with health conditions¹³

Flooding and drainage problems, which damage roads, property, and public confidence¹⁴

Unequal access to green space, where some neighbourhoods have far fewer trees, parks, and safe public spaces¹⁵

A sense that “green policy” has been done to residents, rather than with residents, leading to distrust and resistance

The Redbridge Independents do not believe in environmental policy as a lecture or a slogan. We believe environmental improvement should be practical, fair, and rooted in everyday benefits for residents.

OUR PLAN

- Help **households** reduce energy **bills** by promoting and supporting take-up of **insulation** and **energy efficiency schemes**, especially for **pensioners**, **disabled residents** and **low-income families**.³
- Support **solar energy solutions** that lower long-term **costs**, including expanding solar on suitable **council buildings** and exploring ways residents can **benefit**.¹⁶
- Improve **air quality** around **schools** and **high streets**, including **practical anti-idling action** and **safer school routes**.¹²
- Protect and improve **parks** and **green spaces**, including better **maintenance**, improved **play areas**, and **fairer investment** across all **neighbourhoods**.¹⁵
- Tackle **flooding**, **blocked drains** and **neglected infrastructure**, with clearer accountability and faster action on known **hotspots**.¹⁴
- Strengthen action against **fly-tipping** and **environmental vandalism**, targeting repeat **hotspots** and offenders.¹⁷

WHAT CHANGES WILL RESIDENTS SEE

Lower energy bills over time³

Cleaner air around schools and busy neighbourhoods¹²

Better parks and public spaces¹⁵

Fewer flooding and drainage failures¹⁴

Cleaner streets and tougher enforcement on dumping¹⁷

A greener **Redbridge** should mean a **healthier borough**, a **cheaper borough to live in**, and a **better-run borough**.

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT AND A SAFETY NET FOR EVERY RESIDENT

THE CHALLENGE



The **cost of living crisis** is not abstract. It is felt in **household budgets**, rising **food bills**, **heating costs**, **rent pressures**, and the **daily anxiety** faced by families, pensioners and young people trying to build a future.

National evidence shows that **living standards have been squeezed**, with low and middle income households facing **sustained pressure** from rising costs and stagnant incomes.²

Food insecurity remains a serious national issue. Parliamentary research confirms that significant numbers of households, especially those with children, **struggle to afford essentials**.³

A council cannot solve every national problem, but it can **act decisively** to **protect residents** from the worst impacts and ensure that **no one is left without support**. Redbridge should be a borough where **hardship is not ignored**, where help is practical, and where **no resident is left to struggle alone**.

OUR PLAN

Helping Redbridge families through the cost of living crisis

A Redbridge Independents-led council will make cost of living support a clear local priority, with practical help for families, young people and older residents.

We will:

- Explore a **Redbridge bursary scheme** to support **young people** who want to continue in **education**, including those progressing to university.
- Work with **schools, community partners** and local organisations to expand holiday food support for children eligible for **free school meals** during the **school holidays**, in line with national guidance and proven models⁴.
- Review how **free school meal support** can be extended to more **secondary school pupils** where this is most needed and **financially achievable**.
Strengthen support for **pensioners, veterans** and **older residents** on low incomes, including access to regular **hot meals** where needed.
- Help more **Redbridge households** access **insulation** and **solar energy** measures that can **lower bills**, in line with the national **fuel poverty strategy**⁵.
- Work closely with **food banks, faith groups** and **voluntary organisations** across the **borough** to maintain a strong and dignified local **safety net**, recognising the **vital role community support** plays in protecting **wellbeing** and **dignity**.

WHAT CHANGES WILL RESIDENTS SEE

Practical cost-of-living support reaching households directly

Fewer children going hungry during school holidays

Stronger help for pensioners and vulnerable residents

Lower energy bills through insulation and renewable solutions

A borough where hardship is met with practical help, not neglect

FAIRER COUNCIL TAX AND BETTER VALUE

THE CHALLENGE

Residents deserve **respect** for every pound they pay.

Council tax is money taken directly from **household budgets** at a time when many families are already facing **rising living costs**. The **cost of living crisis** has placed sustained pressure on ordinary working households.²

Residents want to know: where is the **money going**, is it being spent wisely, and are the basics being **delivered properly**?

OUR PLAN

We will:

- **Strengthen scrutiny** so residents can see what is working and what is waste
- Publish plain-English explanations of **major spending decisions**
- Focus council resources on **frontline services**
- Ensure budgets reflect **resident priorities**



Council tax is widely recognised as regressive, falling more heavily on lower-income households as a share of income.⁷

We will ensure the **council's pension fund** meets ethical governance standards, learning from **Southwark Council's approach**.⁸ This means a **Redbridge Independents-led Council** will divest from companies complicit in genocide or serious human rights abuses.



WHAT CHANGES WILL RESIDENTS SEE

Better value for money

Reduced waste

Transparent spending

Accountability for decisions

Ethical investments

SAFER STREETS AND SENSIBLE PARKING

THE CHALLENGE

Residents want streets that work: safe routes for **children, practical parking**, and **road decisions** based on common sense.

Safe routes to school should not be a luxury. Parents should not have to worry about **dangerous crossings, poor lighting**, or pavements that are unsafe for **children, pensioners, or disabled** residents.

Too often, traffic schemes feel imposed without genuine consultation, **leaving residents frustrated** and local businesses struggling. Streets should support daily life, not make it harder.

Transport policy must be built around people's everyday needs, not implemented without consent or clarity.



OUR PLAN

We will adopt a listen-first approach focused on safety and practicality.

We will:

- Fix the most dangerous routes to **school** through better **crossings, lighting and pavements**
- Prioritise accessibility for **children, older residents and disabled** people
- Support practical **parking** and **traffic decisions** that work for residents and local businesses
- Ensure major road changes only happen after proper **consultation** and clear evidence
- Take a common-sense approach to road redesign: **listen first, then act**

Road safety and sensible transport planning are part of quality of life, and residents deserve decisions made with them, not done to them.

WHAT CHANGES WILL RESIDENTS SEE

Safer journeys for children walking to school

Streets designed for families, older residents and disabled people

Parking policy that supports local high streets rather than undermining them

Road decisions made with residents, not imposed on them

Common sense must return to how Redbridge manages its streets.



SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS AND VISIBLE ACTION

THE CHALLENGE

Residents want to feel safe in their everyday lives: on **streets**, in **parks**, on **buses**, and in **town centres**.

Safety is not just a number on a chart. It is confidence that your **children** can walk home, that street corners are not dominated by **harassment** or **nuisance behaviour**, and that **anti-social behaviour** is tackled rather than tolerated.

National evidence shows that deep hardship remains widespread, and that poverty and insecurity often intersect with **neighbourhood disorder** and **vulnerability**. The **Joseph Rowntree Foundation's UK Poverty** work highlights the persistence of hardship across the country, particularly affecting children and low-income households.¹⁰

Residents deserve visible action, not distant promises.

OUR PLAN

A Redbridge Independents council will take a joined-up, visible approach to neighbourhood safety.

We will:

- Increase visible local action to tackle **anti-social behaviour & street crime**
- Focus on hotspots: **harassment, nuisance bikes, street drinking and persistent disorder**
- Strengthen partnerships between council enforcement teams, **police, youth services** and **community organisations**
- Invest in early **intervention programmes** that divert young people from harmful pathways
- Ensure residents receive updates and feedback when issues are reported, so enforcement is **accountable**

Community safety requires both practical enforcement and prevention.

WHAT CHANGES WILL RESIDENTS SEE

Fewer incidents of nuisance and disorder in neighbourhoods

Greater visible presence of coordinated enforcement and support teams

Faster responses to persistent hotspots

Improved confidence that reporting problems leads to action

Safety is fundamental to quality of life.

BETTER HOMES AND FAIR PLANNING

THE CHALLENGE

Affordable, safe, decent housing is central to **wellbeing** and **financial security**.

Yet high **housing costs** are a major driver of poverty, particularly for renters. The **Joseph Rowntree Foundation's UK Poverty** research highlights that **housing costs** pull many households below the poverty line and intensify hardship.¹⁰

Poor housing quality, overcrowding, exploitation by **rogue landlords** and badly managed **HMOs** undermine family life and damage **neighbourhood cohesion**.

Planning must serve residents, not developers.



OUR PLAN

A Redbridge Independents council will:

- Push for genuinely **affordable, family-sized homes**, not token provision
- Demand better quality new builds with **proper space**, safety and design standards
- Strengthen enforcement against **rogue landlords, unsafe overcrowding** and **poorly managed HMOs**
- Require **major developments** to include proper **local consultation** and plain-English summaries
- Ensure residents understand what is being proposed and have **real influence over planning decisions**

Housing policy must protect residents, not exploit them.



WHAT CHANGES WILL RESIDENTS SEE

Stronger council action against unsafe and overcrowded housing

Higher standards in new development

Fairer planning decisions shaped by community needs

A borough where housing means security and dignity, not stress and instability



CHILDREN, SEND AND YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

THE CHALLENGE (SEND DUTIES)

Children with **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities** deserve proper support and accountability.

Local authorities have **clear statutory** duties under the **SEND Code of Practice (0 to 25 years)**, which sets out responsibilities for assessment, provision and outcomes under the **Children and Families Act 2014**.¹¹

Yet many families experience delays, poor communication, and lack of accountability navigating **SEND** pathways.

THE CHALLENGE (CHILD POVERTY AND YOUTH OPPORTUNITY)

National research shows that **children** are **disproportionately affected** by **poverty**, limiting opportunity, **wellbeing** and future prospects.¹⁰

Young people deserve **safe spaces**, meaningful opportunities and routes into work, not neglect or exclusion.

OUR PLAN

A Redbridge Independents council will:

- Deliver faster, clearer **SEND** pathways, with better communication and accountability
- Ensure families are supported at every stage of **Education, Health and Care planning**
- Provide **safe youth spaces** and **activities** several evenings a week with local partners
- Create **real opportunities** through **sport, skills**, mentoring and routes into employment
- Establish education **support funds** and bursaries so financial barriers do not block ambition
- Strengthen **holiday food** and youth wellbeing programmes as part of tackling hardship

WHAT CHANGES WILL RESIDENTS SEE

- Faster, clearer SEND support for families
- Reduced frustration and stronger accountability
- Safe youth provision and structured opportunity
- Young people supported into skills, work and confidence
- A borough where every child matters and no family is left unheard

CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

THE CHALLENGE

Strong communities underpin **wellbeing**, belonging and resilience.

Shared spaces such as **libraries, parks** and **community centres** are vital social infrastructure. When hardship rises, **community organisations** and volunteers often provide **crucial support**.¹⁰

Redbridge's diversity is a strength, but cohesion must be nurtured through shared spaces, local pride and community partnership.

OUR PLAN

A Redbridge Independents council will:

- Back the community groups, **faith communities** and **volunteers** who hold neighbourhood life together
- Protect and improve shared spaces where people meet: **libraries, community centres, parks**
- **Support events** and **activities** that bring people together and build local pride
- Work closely with **food banks** and third sector partners so residents facing hardship have a **safety net**
- Put **genuine consultation** at the heart of decision-making, not as an afterthought

Community is not an add-on. It is the foundation of a borough that works.



WHAT CHANGES WILL RESIDENTS SEE

Stronger local networks of support

Shared spaces protected and improved

Greater local pride and belonging

A council that works with communities, not above them

OUR CONTRACT WITH REDBRIDGE RESIDENTS

The Redbridge Independents are standing for a different kind of local government.

Not remote decision-making

Not closed-door politics

Not excuses or impunity

We offer this contract with the people of Redbridge:

- A council focused on tackling the **cost of living** and **alleviating poverty**
- A council where **accountability** and **transparency** are the hallmark of governance
- A council that delivers the basics properly: **clean streets, safe neighbourhoods, decent housing**
- A council that invests in children, **SEND support**, and **youth opportunity**
- A council rooted in **community partnership** and **genuine consultation**



We will listen first

We will act with common sense

We will be accountable

And we will always put residents before party politics

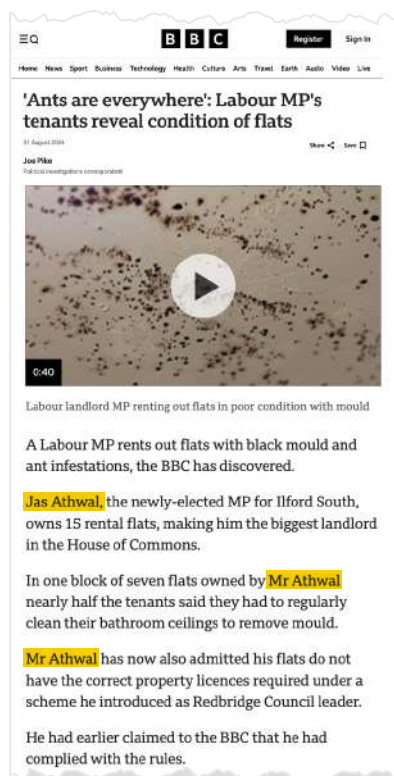
This is our contract with you.

Redbridge deserves better.

Redbridge deserves independent, local, resident-led leadership.



FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES



BBC News, investigation into rental property conditions and licensing concerns relating to Jas Athwal MP:



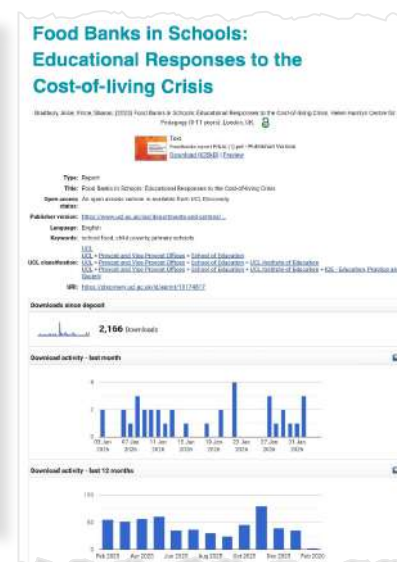
Resolution Foundation, The Living Standards Outlook 2024 (29 August 2024):



House of Commons Library, Food insecurity in the UK (CBP 9209):

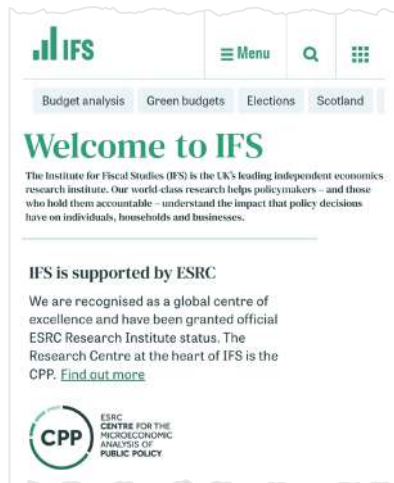


GOV.UK, Fuel Poverty Strategy for England:



University College London, Food banks in schools and community wellbeing report:

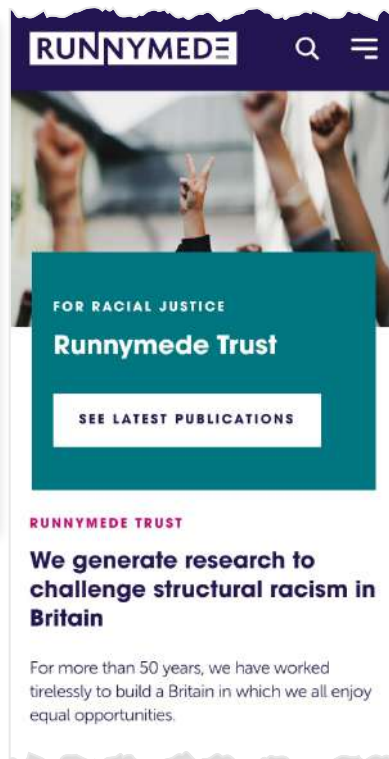
FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES



Institute for Fiscal Studies, analysis of council tax regressivity:



Southwark Council (2025), ethical divestment decision:



Runnymede Trust, inequality and neighbourhood environment research:



Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK Poverty 2025: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK (February 2025):



Department for Education, SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance):

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1** BBC News, investigation into rental property conditions and licensing concerns relating to Jas Athwal MP:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyg1j0lv1go>
- 2** Resolution Foundation, The Living Standards Outlook 2024 (29 August 2024):
<https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/the-living-standardsoutlook-2024/>
- 3** House of Commons Library, Food insecurity in the UK (CBP 9209):
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9209/>
- 4** GOV.UK, Holiday Activities and Food Programme guidance (2025):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-foodprogramme-2025>
- 5** GOV.UK, Fuel Poverty Strategy for England:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fuel-poverty-strategy-forengland>
- 6** University College London, Food banks in schools and community wellbeing report:
<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10174817/>
- 7** Institute for Fiscal Studies, analysis of council tax regressivity:
<https://ifs.org.uk>
- 8** Southwark Council (2025), ethical divestment decision:
<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2025/action-divest-southwark-pensionfund-conflict-and-genocide>
- 9** Runnymede Trust, inequality and neighbourhood environment research:
<https://www.runnymedetrust.org>
- 10** Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK Poverty 2025: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK (February 2025):
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/uk-poverty-2025-the-essential-guide-tounderstanding-poverty-in-the-uk>
- 11** Department for Education, SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

- 12** UK Government, Transport interventions at schools: health impacts and benefits (December 2025)
- 13** The Health Foundation, Inequalities in access to green space
- 14** GOV.UK, Flood risk asset maintenance and inspection: good practice guidance (2025)
- 15** Public Health England, Improving access to greenspace: A new review for 2020
- 16** Resolution Foundation, Rooftop solar panels can cut energy bills by almost a quarter
- 17** DEFRA, Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2023 to 2024 (26 February 2025)
- 18** House of Commons Business and Trade Committee, Small businesses facing pressures comparable to the pandemic (February 2026)
- 19** Arup, Innovation Districts: How can we drive growth in major UK cities?



REDBRIDGE

INDEPENDENTS



**SCAN HERE
TO JOIN US
NOW**



@RedbridgeIndys



www.redbridgeindys.org



info@redbridgeindys.org