

Conservative Party Chairman Brandon Lewis writes for the Daily...

Vote Conservative to look after your local interests

NEXT week on Thursday May 3, you get to choose who runs your local services and how much you'll have to pay for them. Local elections are important because your council decides on everything from how often your bins are collected to how often your street is cleaned and roads are repaired. These might seem small in the grand scheme of things but they have a big effect on people's everyday lives.

So if you care about your street being swept, having good schools and how much you pay for council tax, then go out next Thursday and vote for Conservative candidates.

Around the country it's Conservative councils who are delivering good services while managing taxpayers' money to keep your council tax down. In England, Conservative councils charge on average around £100 less than Labour or the Lib Dems for council tax. As Conservatives we know that we can only deliver the services residents want with the money from hardworking taxpayers, so it's always our priority to manage that money effectively.

Take a look at Manchester. The Conservative-run Trafford council has the lowest council tax in Greater Manchester and is investing £14million to fix every road and pavement in the borough. Ninety-three per cent of schools in Trafford are now rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, meaning children there can get the best start in life.

IN THE Midlands, since taking control of Dudley council last year, the Conservatives have introduced two hours free car parking, reversed Labour's street cleaning cuts and scrapped Labour's plans to charge for green bin collections. That's just in the space of one year.

In London, the Conservative councils of Wandsworth and Westminster charge the lowest council tax in the entire country, half that of their neighbouring Labour boroughs. Yet they are delivering the services residents want.

Wandsworth has this year invested £150million in the biggest council-house building programme in the country to deliver good homes for local residents.

In Westminster, they have kept all of their libraries open and collect the bins twice a week. And both boroughs have



YOU DECIDE: Next week we elect our local councils and the choice is a clear one



Brandon Lewis
Chairman of the Conservative Party

more than 90 per cent of their schools rated as good or outstanding. They show what Conservative councils achieve day-in, day-out. Good services and low council tax, ensuring residents keep more of the money they earn.

It can be so easy to think that things such as low council tax, regular bin collections and clean streets are the norm if you've lived for years under a Conservative council. But having travelled across the country since becoming Conservative Party Chairman, I can tell you they're not. These services will continue only if you vote Conservative next week.

We only have to look at what's happening in Labour councils throughout the country to see what can happen. In Labour-run Birmingham, rubbish has piled up in the streets as bins have gone uncollected.

In Ashford in Nottinghamshire, Labour spent £20million shrinking bins in a botched attempt to increase recycling. But recycling there hasn't gone up at all and fly tipping has

rocketed by more than a third. Even the local Labour councillors there have had enough. An incredible eight of them have quit Labour over the past month alone.

They know what I know: Labour councils charge people more, waste money and run services badly. And it could get worse. From Leeds to London to Liverpool, the hard-Left Momentum group are seeking control of Labour. And we know the hard-Left ideology they want to impose on people. They have called for an eye-watering 30 per cent hike in council tax across the board, backed by some of Jeremy Corbyn's closest allies.

They have blocked housing regeneration and much needed new homes, purely because their hard-Left ideology is set against practical solutions. In London and from Brighton to Cornwall they have hounded out moderate Labour council leaders who have dared to disagree and put residents' needs first. They support bus strikes, leaving rubbish uncollected.

And it's not just overflowing bins that Labour will give you.

The truth is the country can't afford a Labour government, nor can we afford to elect Labour councils. Labour are not just clueless when it comes to running our economy and supporting local businesses, they are also failing to bring communities together.

JEREMY CORBYN'S lack of leadership in dealing with anti-Semitism in his party and his willingness to look the other way tells us all we need to know. He has allowed the hard-Left to take over Labour councils and will not act to stop anti-Semitism in the Labour Party from growing.

So the choice for Daily Express readers is clear: Conservative councillors delivering for your community, providing good local services while keeping your council tax low. Or Labour leaving you with less money in your pocket and worse services in your area.

In some areas, the difference between a Conservative and Labour council could come down to just a handful of votes. So I urge all of you to get out and vote. These elections are important and your vote really will make a difference.

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Don't risk waking up on Friday with a Labour council in charge of them.

'Labour councils run services badly'

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