

A future fair for all

DAVID KIRKMAN'S STATEMENT FOR THE *Hertfordshire Mercury*

THE key to this General Election is securing the recovery.

There will be tough decisions, but the choice on May 6 is to ensure that we have a future in which everyone can share.

Labour is proud of its record in government and we do not want to see a return to the recession or the austere future which is threatened under the Conservatives.

The Tories are committed to holding an emergency budget within 50 days. They would take £6 billion out of the economy immediately putting the recovery at risk.

The shadow chancellor will not admit the price we will pay under the Conservatives – except, of course, by committing to an inheritance tax cut which would give £200,000 to each of the 3,000 richest estates in the country.

Labour has a proud record since 1997 which includes:

On **health** we now have over 44,000 more doctors and over 89,000 more nurses and GP practices now offer extended opening hours for at least one evening or a weekend session.

In **education** there are 42,400 more teachers and 123,000 more classroom assistants – and 3,700 schools have been rebuilt or refurbished.

Nearly 3,000 Sure Start Children's Centres have been opened and there is now a free nursery place for every 3 and 4 year old.

For the **elderly** we have seen 12 million pensioners benefiting from the Winter Fuel Payments scheme, the introduction of free bus travel for the over-60s and free television licences for the over-75s.

On **law and order** police officers in Hertfordshire have increased to 2,172 while there are now more than 260 Police Community Support Officers. In the period Dec 2008 to Feb 2010 crime in the county is down 11.7 per cent.

Labour introduced, too, neighbourhood police teams designed specifically to meet the concerns of residents.

In **sport and culture** the Labour government led the campaign to secure the 2012 Olympic Games and introduced free admission to national museums.

The election will offer a choice about the kind of future we want for Britain.

Labour will continue supporting families and businesses, strengthening the recovery and promoting jobs.

It will continue to provide Sure Start Children's Centres and guarantee a good education for every child including catch-up tuition for pupils who fall behind.

A National Care Service will be set-up with free personal care for the elderly and there will a maximum two-week guarantee on cancer referrals and an 18-week guarantee for hospital treatment.

Police will spend 80 per cent of their time on the beat and on immigration and Australian-style points system will be introduced to ensure only those with the skills we need to build a strong economy will come here.

Simply, in the General Election Labour is the party of recovery while the Conservative plans pose great risk.

DAVID KIRKMAN

Vote  Labour