

Cambridge 2008: Rising to the Challenges



A Liberal Democrat Manifesto for the 2008 City Council Elections

HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY – ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE – WASTE AND RECYCLING
QUALITY IN DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS -- EFFICIENTLY RUN PUBLIC SERVICES
STANDING UP FOR CAMBRIDGE RESIDENTS OVER THE CONGESTION CHARGE PROPOSALS

THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT MANIFESTO

FOR THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2008

The Liberal Democrats have led Cambridge City Council for the past eight years. We have transformed the way the council services are run and have earned welcome national recognition from the independent local government watchdog, the Audit Commission, for the way we manage things. Their message is a heartening one of many services improved, targets achieved and the highest standing amongst district councils for our use of resources. This record of achievement has been renewed in 2007-8 with **a further year of substantial progress**.

This manifesto sets out for the citizens of Cambridge the reasons for giving the Liberal Democrats a fresh mandate. The case is built on a shared vision for the city founded on the cornerstones of sustainability, service, vitality, and growth. As will be seen from reading the detail in these pages, we are working hard to provide a broad range of services for a diverse community but we can draw out on this first page a small number of important examples that show that our plans for the coming year are in tune with public concerns:

A **carbon careful** approach, in particular working to get **improved home energy efficiency** for new and existing housing;

Improving on the substantial successes of our **waste and recycling services**;

Not squandering the one-off opportunities to insure that the growth of the city is to the benefit of all, with the provision for good **affordable housing** and new **community facilities** in well-designed, energy efficient developments that do not detract from existing communities or repeat mistakes like Arbury Park. Young people often have the least heard voices but they have needs that must be better recognized. We are providing a wide range of **opportunities and events for young people** to engage with and we recognize this is a moving target as interests and expectations rise and change;

At the same time residents rightly expect high **standards of services** on the doorstep, in the neighbourhoods, in our parks and open spaces and in the city centre.

We will continue to aim for **high levels of efficiency** and will pursue realistic but ambitious goals, where necessary challenging the government and other public bodies to play their part constructively.

For instance, we seek significantly **enhanced public transport**, and **fairness** in ensuring a substantial discount for residents in the County Council's **congestion charging** plans. All the money raised this way must be invested in better public transport and improved facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

We will also continue to campaign with Liberal Democrats nationally to scrap the **unfair council tax** and replace it with a system of local government finance based on people's ability to pay.

I. Carbon Careful Cambridge.

“To promote Cambridge as a sustainable city, in particular by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the amount of waste going into landfill in the City and subregion.”

Cambridge City Council undertakes considerable work to **promote energy efficiency in buildings** within Cambridge, starting at our own door. The Council has had a certified green electricity supply since 2005 sourced from renewable energy sources, making a significant contribution towards reducing our carbon footprint. In the Guildhall carbon dioxide emissions for the year to March 2007 fell by 72 tonnes, reaching the lowest level for at least 5 years. It is expected that 07/08 will at least have sustained that reduction.

We adopted a Home Energy Strategy in November 2006, including **specific energy efficiency targets** for owner-occupied, private-rented, Council and Housing Association properties and progress is being made. Energy efficient lighting and recycling are the main focus points.

The Sustainable City Team within the Environment & Planning Department works to **improve environmental awareness and practice** both within the City Council and amongst Cambridge residents and organisations.

In 1999-2000, the year before the Liberal Democrats took control, the recycling rate was a pitiful 9%; the figure for 2006-7, the latest complete year, is 39.6%. We believe we can do better still, and a prime focus in relation to waste and recycling remains to achieve even higher participation rates within the schemes in order to get the **maximum diversion of waste from landfill**. It is not only domestic waste that must be reduced; business can do more, and, for example, most Council committee papers are now published in A5 format instead of A4 to reduce paper use.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN THE HOME

Achievements of the past year

- Increased the average council housing stock energy efficiency (SAP rating now 69.5-70), placing us in the top quartile nationally.
- Established an Energy Service Company focusing on void properties in the Council stock which enables tenants to make a clean start when they move into their new home.
- Renewed all lighting on stairways and communal passages in the Council's own housing stock and fitted them with energy saving bulbs.
- Established a pilot “Energy Action Zone” in October 2007 located in Cherry Hinton, containing 210 private houses, which will operate for 6 months, offering intensive, door to door energy advice and monitoring.
- Continued Cambridge Energy for Good scheme, providing expert advice and grants for city residents installing renewable energy technologies on their homes. The project helped fund the installation of 18 solar hot water heating systems for city properties, including one which was fully funded by a prize draw.
- Launched the Landlord Accreditation scheme, which gives its members a guarantee of fair dealings, regular gas and electricity checks and reasonable facilities.

Plans for the coming year

- Building on the experience of the Pilot Action Zone a new Home Energy Officer will help people in private sector housing to upgrade the energy efficiency of their homes. We will also set about establishing a further zone in another part of the city.
- Requiring the Landlord Accreditation Scheme to include a specific SAP rating from October 2008. A free inspection and free certificate (legally required from October) will be offered to members.
- Continuing to investigate different types of renewable energy technologies to see if they could be used in City Homes.

- Coordinating publicity for grants and special offers so that people know how to get money to increase energy efficiency in their homes
- Continuing to do extra work in City Homes to raise the level of insulation and energy efficiency including extra loft insulation, extra cavity wall insulation and new heating systems.
- Continuing to treat problem cold and damp rooms in council houses including installing expensive but efficient dry lining.
- Continuing to improve the Council's housing stock by renewing old bathrooms and kitchens (the Decent Homes programme) and replacing older boilers with more energy efficient ones. No Council house now has a SAP (standard assessment procedure) rating lower than 35 (the Decent Homes Standard minimum) with the average now 69.5, one of the best in the country.
- Continuing to advise elderly and low-income residents about their homes. We will also give grants and loans towards improved insulation, efficient boilers and central heating.

RECYCLING AND WASTE REDUCTION

Achievements of the past year

- Overall recycling rates in Cambridge have risen from 29.5% in 04/05, to 35.2% in 05/06, and then to 40% in 06/07. We are expecting to reach the target set for 07/08 of 42%.
- Extended recycling to many flats. Since January 2007 63 sites have been added to the recycling services. For some flats we have provided residents with blue bags that can be used to store recyclables within the flat before taking it down to the recycling area.
- Worked with tenants of City Homes (the Council's own stock) to improve recycling facilities in 20 blocks of council flats, tailor-making the facilities to the different blocks.
- Extended recycling to various hard to reach properties including colleges, schools and HMO's.
- Worked with Anglia Ruskin University and the University of Cambridge to provide facilities plus education and information to encourage usage.
- Established "bring facilities" for dry cell batteries and Tetra-paks.
- Took steps to ensure that better recycling facilities in new developments are included in planning from the start.

Plans for the coming year

- Continuing to extend recycling provision to blocks of flats.
- Exploring options for recycling litter collected in the streets.
- Improving recycling rates in the Council's own buildings.
- Establishing another two battery recycling sites.
- Establishing a recycling site in Dennis Road and explore the possibility of other sites in the Fison Road area.
- Extending paper saving measures to other areas of council work.
- Initiatives to reduce litter originating from domestic waste before or during collection.

RAISING AWARENESS

Achievements of the past year will be built on in the action plan for the coming year

- Cambridge Climate Change Charter was developed and launched in October 2007 at the British Antarctic Survey: the launch involved over 70 leaders from schools, universities, businesses, community groups and the public sector.
- Continued development of a Cambridge Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, with expert independent support from the Energy Saving Trust and Building Capacity East Performance Improvement Programme.
- Supported Cambridge Carbon Footprint in delivering innovative and imaginative activities to help Cambridge's diverse communities reduce their carbon footprints. Between January and December 2007 33 different community events were attended with a foot-printing stall, talk or workshop. The Akashi project worked with over 30 different groups from the City's BME and faith communities drawing 350 people to the Akashi festival in October 2007.

- The City Council Green Team, which takes action to improve environmental working practices across the Council, ran 6 Council Carbon Challenge events with Cambridge Carbon Footprint.
- Recycle Now Week roadshows organised.
- Provided environmental advice and information at numerous events throughout the year, including World Water Day, the Scouts Jamboree, Ross Street Community Centre Environment Weekend, and Energy Efficiency Week.
- The 2007 Cambridge Environment Festival included a schools climate change poster competition, the winning entries for which were displayed at a 'One Planet Living' exhibition in the Grafton Centre, and two *Trashion* shows illustrating the use of recycling materials for fashion at a community centre and college in Cambridge.
- Gave Sustainable City Grants for both project and core funding to Cambridge organisations which can demonstrate their contribution towards the City Council's environmental objectives, such as the Travel to Work Partnership, a hydro-power feasibility study at Jesus Weir and a "Magnificent Revolutionary Cycling Cinema".

CARBON REDUCTION AND THE WORLD OF WORK

Achievements of the past year

- Coordinated a 'Switch Off' week among 5 large Cambridge employers during National Energy Saving Week, saving a total of 1.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide, (equivalent to the average weekly emissions of over 10 Cambridge households.)
- Produced 'Buying Green at Cambridge City Council' which contributes towards reducing the Council's carbon footprint. Training for officers on the implementation of sustainable procurement policies is integrated with procurement training modules.
- Launched the first truly green council vehicle to operate within the city centre with the new rechargeable electric "Mega" van.

Plans for the coming year

- Installing energy-saving measures at the Meadows Community Centre to reduce its carbon footprint and fuel bills.
- Making improvements in council commercial properties so their energy needs are more sustainable.
- Undertaking further energy efficiency works in council offices, including automated energy monitoring systems.
- Establishing an invest-to save fund of £250,000 for measures applied to reducing the Council's carbon footprint

2. Connecting with Cambridge

“Ensure that residents and other service users have an entirely positive experience of dealing with the Council.”

As highlighted in the Audit Commission’s recent assessment, many of the Council’s services continue to improve. That reflects the investment we are making both in staff and in systems. At the same time it is important to ensure that residents and services users get good information and have effective opportunities to influence the way services are reviewed and developed. We also recognise the need to be aware of the very diverse nature of those residents and service users, and the challenge of trying to ensure that their needs are recognised and met.

MAKING INFORMED CHOICES

Achievements of the past year

- Promoted Local Democracy Week to young people with councillors involved in *I’m a Councillor, get me out of here!* and political speed dating competitions.
- Established a forum of Residents Associations to improve understanding of residents’ difficulties with and hopes for the planning process.
- Established a new forum for planning and construction professionals interacting with the planning system.
- Adopted Statement of Community Involvement setting out exactly how the planning process interacts with the public and other stakeholders, increasing the transparency of the process.
- Launched online services for a range of parking permit holders including blue badge.
- Reviewed the tourism policy for Cambridge to emphasise provision of welcome to visitors rather than its promotion as a destination.
- Worked with tenants through Street Forums by knocking on tenants’ doors to ask about waste and street services. Approximately 300 tenants were consulted over the summer months.
- Community events staged by Cambridge Carbon Footprint and supported by the Council have delivered innovative activities to help diverse communities, including young people and ethnic minorities, in reducing their carbon footprints.
- Helped the police to implement their Cambridge model of neighbourhood policing hosted through the area committees.
- Launched the sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme which allows those seeking access to subsidised public housing to make choices on a clearer basis of information.
- The Council has risen to 14th place in the Stonewall Index for its work as employer in the field of LGBT issues, making it the highest placed district council in the country.
- Sought to maintain democratic access and accountability in new sub-regional planning and housing delivery organisations.

Plans for the coming year

- Expanding the profile of activities in Democracy Week in order to encourage more people to become involved in local and national elections.
- Launching a new website setting out clearly and easily the growth plans for the city.
- Launching a new online system where planning application and drawings can be submitted, viewed and commented upon.
- Preparing to open the Visitor Information Centre in a new location, designing the service so information needs can be met on terminals and through leaflets.
- Extending the popular ‘Scores on the Doors’ scheme so that potential patrons of restaurants can know in advance about their hygiene standards.
- Extending and improving the range of transactions that can be done electronically on the council website.
- Striving to make the new ‘local area agreement’ and ‘local strategic partnership’ quangos open, representative and accountable.

- Reviewing the proliferating non-democratic external partnerships that make decisions on so many matters affecting Cambridge.
- Concluding and implementing the review of City Centre Management so that there is greater ownership by private sector partners.
- Undertaking new proactive conservation work in consultation with local people, including the use of English Heritage's rapid appraisal techniques to provide an informed appreciation of areas of Cambridge targeted by development e.g. the key radial routes and the suburbs.

SUPPORTING THE VULNERABLE

Achievements of the past year

- The Council, in partnership with the voluntary and independent sector, has continued to implement the Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy with its emphasis on helping people to adopt a more positive lifestyle.
- Provided a loan scheme for deposits and liaison with landlords to help homeless people access private rented housing.
- Reduced use of temporary housing and bed and breakfast accommodation by speeding up council bureaucracy. While the Government target is that people should spend less than six weeks in B & B, the Cambridge average is four weeks.
- A new Reconnections Policy helps homeless and roughsleepers with no connection with Cambridge but links to other places to return there and pick up those connections which give them the best chance of success in breaking the downward cycle.
- The number of Rough Sleepers has continued to reduce and has now stood below 10 for a year.

Plans for the coming year

- Services designed to combat homelessness will put an increased emphasis on 'meaningful occupation' as a means of learning skills to help people to take greater charge of their lives.
- The Learning and Development service for the homeless and recent homeless will be remodelled and restarted, with Jimmy's Night Shelter being helped to gain government grants to improve the conditions for their guests and establish an all-day Assessment Centre at Zion Baptist Church.
- We will work with partners in the sub-region to meet responsibilities agreed regionally for provision of 15 pitches for gypsies and travellers as well as continuing to look for a transit site.
- We will review disability access to council buildings.

IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICES, RESOURCES AND ASSETS

Achievements of the past year

- Opened the new Grand Arcade car park.
- Opening of John Lewis Cambridge as a state-of-the art department store in Autumn 2007, complemented by the opening of the Grand Arcade in March 2008, bringing a valuable annual rental income to support council activities.

Plans for the coming year

- Implementing the Guildhall scheme with Jamie Oliver secured as tenant for a new restaurant on Wheeler Street.
- Developing a more strategic approach to the council's property assets.
- Continuing to review the Council's plans for spending and service delivery so that the needs of a growing population can continue to be met.
- Providing in phases improved access to council services by phone and in person so that most customers' needs are resolved by frontline staff or championed by them whilst being dealt with by specialists.
- Capitalising on opportunities for greater back-office efficiency resulting from the restructuring of customer access.

3. Supporting Cambridge's Communities

“Maintain a healthy, safe and enjoyable city for all, with thriving and viable neighbourhoods.”

We are committed to keeping Cambridge an attractive place to live, and wish to support and enhance the existing neighbourhoods. We will continue to provide **facilities for children and young people**, building on the success of the DEC youth project and exploring the possibility of free bus rides for school age children.

The 2005-08 Strategy for crime reduction has been a success. The target in the plan was to reduce overall crime by 21% compared to a baseline figure set in 2003/4, and at the end of December 2007 crime in the city was reduced by 23%. We will work to **further reduce crime**, working in partnership with the police, including using *Ecops* and Police Community Safety Officers.

We want Cambridge to be an enjoyable as well as a safe environment, and will aim to **increase public art** in local neighbourhoods as well as the city centre.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Achievements of the past year

The Liberal Democrat run city council has made provision of activity programmes for young people a priority in the last year.

- Provided a new bus for the DEC youth project. The bus is gathering rave reviews amongst young teenagers.
- Succeeded in winning a £200k Big Lottery bid for funding of a 3-year, multi-faceted programme of play projects that will enhance children's experience in their natural surroundings
- Safer City grants made to schemes which engage young people in sport and divert them from involvement in anti-social behaviour. The grants enable these schemes to provide sports instruction by trained coaches and youth workers.

The City Council has also carried out an exciting range of renovation and redevelopment of the City's playgrounds and sports facilities

- Improved children's play facilities around the city: Histon Road recreation ground has been refurbished; Nightingale Avenue MUGA has just received planning permission, and extensive consultation has taken place on recreation ground improvements at Ramsden Square and Thorpe Way.
- Refurbished the outdoor learner pool at Sheep's Green

Plans for the coming year

We will continue to provide extensive support to managed schemes for children and young people by:

- Providing grants of for youth activities identified by young people during the year.
- Utilising the Big Lottery award to provide Urban Adventure play opportunities, enabling children to access outdoor play spaces, encouraging them to be adventurous and experience nature without having to travel out of the City. A key strand to this is the delivery of the Playboat providing activities on and next to the river, including residential projects in partnership with other local agencies.

We will also continue to improve facilities for play by children and young people by

- Undertaking improvements to Ramsden Square Recreation Ground.
- Refurbishing the children's play area and MUGA in Thorpe Way.
- Implementing the Nightingale Avenue MUGA scheme.
- Replacing the astroturf at Abbey/Coldhams Common and upgrading the sports changing facilities

KEEPING CAMBRIDGE SAFE

Achievements of the past year

The City Council has targeted activities to reduce involvement of young people in crime and anti-social behaviour

- The 'Six Wards Project' targeted environmental damage and introduced significant environmental improvements. Youth diversionary projects were set up to provide constructive activities for young people in the area.
- Contributed to the funding of a Youth Offending Service's Intervention Officer, to prevent those young people identified as being at most risk from becoming prolific offenders.
- Safer City grants made to Take Control, a confidence and appropriate behaviour course for a group of 8 young people with learning disabilities who have been involved with criminal activity or are vulnerable to becoming offenders.
- Safer City grants to 'Next Generation' urban music and video project for young men who engage in intimidating and anti-social behaviour, mentored by previous 'graduates' of this successful music project.

The City Council has taken steps to address issues related to irresponsible consumption of alcohol.

- Adopted a cumulative impact policy for licensed premises the city centre and at the Cambridge Leisure site.
- Over Christmas and New Year periods the Partnership has funded a Night Time Care Centre to provide a high profile emergency service to promote responsible drinking and to provide emergency first aid.

We have also taken steps to increase the safety of our residents

- The Partnership has funded three domestic violence awareness raising events. A total of 264 professionals have been trained.
- Neighbourhood policing extended to entire city.
- The award winning CCTV and mobile CCTV service has continued to expand and work closely with the police. Innovative texting system aids detections and arrests.
- Cambridge cycle parking guide produced by Cambridge Cycling Campaign to help reduce cycle theft.
- Contribute £50k a year towards the cost of providing two Police Community Safety Officers.
- Providing funding for a specialist 'streetlife' police officer.

Plans for the coming year

We will work to ensure that young people are safe in Cambridge, and provide schemes to ensure they are not the victims or perpetrators of crime by

- Ensuring young people in the city have constructive activities to partake in, feel they have the confidence to report issues to the various partners and have a voice to influence the work of the Community Safety Partnership.
- Working with partners to identify and secure neighbourhood and city centre youth venues, enhancing activities and safe meeting-places available for teenagers.

We will continue to work to reduce the problems caused by alcohol by

- Bringing the Mill Road area under the 'cumulative impact policy' designation for alcohol licensing.
- Keeping 'alcohol disorder zone' powers under review and consult with the licensed trade on voluntary alternatives by which some licensed business could pay towards the consequences of alcohol related environmental, criminal and anti-social behaviour.
- Supporting alcohol education projects in the city.

We will work to ensure that residents and visitors to Cambridge can feel safe

- Reviewing the CCTV system to see whether cameras and surveillance resources could be better and more cost-effectively redeployed making use of latest wireless technology. Roll out CCTV for Wulfstan Way, and Ravensworth Gardens.

- Working with our partners to extend neighbourhood policing, including known local contacts such as PCSOs.
- Urge the police to opt to provide more extensive powers for PCSOs so that they can take action against cyclists who break the law.
- Bringing empty houses more swiftly into occupation using management orders.

IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

Achievements of the past year

The individual communities in Cambridge have distinct needs, and by working with residents we have been able to support our neighbourhoods:

- Established a residents' association forum in order better to understand residents' difficulties with and hopes for the planning process.
- Completed the Storey's Way Conservation Area assessment.
- Enacted a number of successful Environmental Improvement Projects: ranging from hanging baskets on Chesterton High Street and work on the Foster Road allotments; to resurfacing and improving the Campkin Road car park, and improving lights on Parker's Piece and Burleigh Street.
- Organised a *Love Your Neighbourhood Day* in Castle bringing together a whole range of services (rangers, police, etc) in partnership with the local community.

The importance of public green spaces to the viability of communities is understood by the Liberal Democrats. We have

- Worked with Friends' groups to understand their concerns over green spaces.
- Began to undertake cyclical maintenance of trees, following a comprehensive review of all the trees in parks and open spaces.
- A survey of Jesus Green was undertaken and the Council secured a £40k grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake further consultation. The grass has been re-instated in the area where the bowling green used to be and the pump-out facility has been upgraded.

We have worked to improve transport links from the neighbourhoods:

- Improved 4 bus shelters in 4 wards in the city in the last year.
- Conducted a successful experiment on restricting verge parking in Perne Road and Mowbray Road.
- Introduced a car club in four locations in the city.
- Launched a cycle-shopping-trailer scheme in conjunction with Waitrose.

Plans for the coming year

We remain committed to ensuring public involvement and working with residents by:

- Adopting new public art strategy, which will refocus public art on local neighbourhoods rather than city centre.
- Undertaking new proactive conservation work in consultation with local people, including the use of English Heritage's rapid appraisal techniques to provide an informed appreciation of areas of Cambridge targeted by development such as the key radial routes and the suburbs.
- Refocusing Environmental Improvement Projects on neighbourhood schemes. Review the process for these grants to streamline smaller projects.
- Reviewing our City Ranger programme. We will use the Rangers to assist households with problems with waste and recycling.
- Re-launching the Neighbourhood Links programme to allow public to monitor the council's work and report problems early.
- Undertaking work to improve standards in the Ekin Road estate through repairs and physical improvements and in more rigorous enforcement of tenancy rules.
- Introducing a management framework for grounds maintenance, which will give residents the opportunity to propose locally derived standards

We will also keep Cambridge a beautiful place to live, and seek to enhance the city's public open space by:

- Continuing to deliver stunning planting schemes across the City's parks and open spaces at lower environmental cost.
- Undertaking detailed consultation regarding the use of Jesus Green and ways in which it can be enhanced without detracting from its unique characteristics.
- Supporting residents in refurbishing the open space in Ravensworth Gardens including improving the soil conditions.
- Conducting a review of existing public open space to see how we can best use and extend the facilities and space we have.

We will also continue to work for sensible sustainable transport options in Cambridge by:

- Extending the car club into further locations and by including low carbon vehicles.
- Campaigning to reverse the County Council's unfair policy on yellow lines and other parking measures which is based on ability to pay rather than need.
- Campaigning for a greater role for local residents in determining speed limits in the City.
- Investigating the use of bye-laws to introduce restrictions on parking on verges where desired by local residents.

4. Achieving sustainable growth

“Lead the growth of Cambridge to achieve attractive, sustainable new neighbourhoods, including affordable housing, close to a good range of facilities, and supported by transport networks so that people can opt not to use the car.”

The high standards demanded by the City Council drive our planning process for sustainable growth in Cambridge and we are committed to enabling **community participation and consultation** in development planning. The **Quality Charter for Growth** in Cambridgeshire sets out the core principles to guide growth: creating healthy and diverse communities; sustainable, integrated transport infrastructure; environmentally sensitive standards; distinctive neighbourhoods and high quality public realm. We will ensure that the unambitious planning decisions taken by South Cambridgeshire District Council at Arbury Park are not repeated in future developments around the City.

Our ambitious policy of **40% affordable housing** will promote community cohesion through locating social rented homes in small tenure blind clusters throughout the new developments. On Council owned land in the Clay Farm development, we have allocated an even higher 50% to affordable housing. Under the Liberal Democrat City Council areas the size of Midsummer Common and Jesus Green will be built into new developments, **doubling the total area of green space** in Cambridge and enhancing the recreational opportunities available to all City residents whilst encouraging biodiversity and a varied landscape.

TRANSPORT

We will ensure that the City voice is heard in discussions of the Transport Innovation Fund and Congestion Charge proposals put forward by the County Council. We need a real alternative to using the car and so will demand the development of a comprehensive transport strategy which includes massive improvements to cycling and walking, and a public transport system which provides regular, reliable services that Cambridge residents, as well as visitors and workers, can use. We will oppose plans which would not provide efficient public transport alternatives in advance of any road pricing scheme and demand a fair deal for City residents in any road pricing schemes.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Achievements of the past year

- Adopted a Statement of Community Involvement, providing opportunities for information, consultation and participation by local communities and increasing transparency of the planning process.
- Adopted Affordable Housing Policy, requiring 40% affordable housing and a new approach to placing socially rented homes alongside market homes in new developments.
- Adopted Sustainable Design and Construction Policy setting high standards for developers including in sustainable urban drainage, air quality and waste and recycling provision.
- Achieved government endorsement of the Cambridge East Area Action Plan which represents 12,000 new homes.
- Agreed through the Joint Development Control Committee with the County and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, and worked closely with developers to achieve, a high quality outline master plan for Trumpington Meadows.
- Reaffirmed our commitment to doubling the public open space available to City residents through including large areas of public green open space and ‘green fingers’ in new developments.
- Offered high level of urban design support to developers of the Southern Fringe and North West Cambridge and the creation of a Joint Urban Design Team to ensure high quality design in development planning.
- Successfully steered the massive rebuilding of the shopping areas in the historic city centre, including the Grand Arcade and Christ’s Lane developments.
- Visited new developments in the UK and Europe to inform best practice decision making.

- Reviewed employment land in the City to protect key sites from residential development.
- Reviewed the plans for the Northern Fringe East in the light of uncertainty over the railway and sewerage land requirements
- Engaged with the County Council to prepare the Residential Roads Design Guide enabling a pedestrian and cycle friendly approach to road design and promoting trees in pavements.
- Engaged in the regional discussions on plans for gypsy and traveller sites.

Plans for the coming year

We will work towards achieving newly developed areas of Cambridge that we can all benefit from, and be proud of, by

- Adopting the Quality Charter for Growth emphasizing the importance of the four core principles of development.
- Ensuring new developments above a threshold of 1,000 square metres or 10 dwellings to provide at least 10% of the total predicted energy requirements on site from renewable energy sources where viable.
- Preparing high quality Design Codes for new developments
- Continuing to prepare an exemplary, high quality residential development at council owned land at Clay Farm.
- Engaging with the County to achieve well designed and sustainable new schools at the heart of the new communities.
- Preparing a new residential cycle parking design guide.
- Appointing a new Sustainable Urban Drainage Officer to support best practice in new development, and an additional Planning Officer.
- Appointing a Biodiversity Officer to ensure a culture throughout all Council departments which respects and encourages biodiversity.
- Adopting a new Planning Obligation Strategy defining the new S106 agreements.
- Preparing a final Area Action Plan for North West Cambridge for inspection.
- Preparing, with the developer, the master plan for Cambridge East.
- Preparing the development brief for Cambridge University's Mill Lane site.
- Preparing for examination the new Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework.

TRANSPORT

Achievements of the past year

- Campaigned successfully to put in place from Spring 2008 a Joint Transport Forum with the County Council to ensure the City Council can represent the interests of Cambridge at an early stage of transport planning.
- Issued regular responses to the County Council Transport Innovation Fund and Congestion Charge proposals and demanded substantial resident discounts in any Congestion Charge scheme

Plans for the coming year

We will ensure that the City voice is heard in discussions of the Transport Innovation Fund and Congestion Charge proposals put forward by the County Council. We need a real alternative to using the car and so will demand the development of a comprehensive transport strategy which includes massive improvements to cycling and walking, and a public transport system which provides regular, reliable services that Cambridge residents, as well as visitors and workers, can use. We will oppose plans which would not provide efficient public transport alternatives in advance of any road pricing scheme and demand a fair deal for City residents in any road pricing schemes. In addition we will

- Influence, to the best of our ability, the development of the County's transport plans through the Joint Transport Forum.
- Press for a fair deal for City residents in considering the Transport Innovation Fund proposals.

- Press for free bus travel for school children throughout the week, encouraging them out of cars during the crucial school run periods, saving carbon and reducing congestion.
- Explore how Sunday pricing changes can be implemented and encourage better bus services in the City on Sundays.
- Install electric charging points for vehicles in car parks.
- Research how eco-banding of cars can influence parking pricing.
- Bid with the County Council to be designated a Cycling Demonstration City by Cycle England, to gain funding and development for cycling facilities..
- Pressing the police to enforce good cycling behaviour e.g. using lights and waiting at crossings, and to equip PCSOs with powers to take action with these offences.
- Reviewing local cycling policies with a new cycling group and explore possibility of establishing and promoting a code of conduct for cyclists.
- Explore whether an initiative like Paris's *Vélib*, or 'freedom bike' scheme would work here, on a commercial footing as with car clubs.
- Lobby government for devolved powers in relation to road pricing now that the DfT has effectively abandoned pursuing a national scheme.

External Challenges

We have faced a number of additional challenges in preparing the budget for the financial year that starts in April. Predictably, and regrettably, the new concessionary bus fare scheme is costing the council tax payer greatly in excess of the funding provided by the government. We estimate that it is underfunded by a massive £680,000. While **the scheme clearly brings huge benefits to the over 60s** the Government would not listen and has shared out the funding in an incompetent way. Because Cambridge is a net destination, the Cambridge council tax payer is in effect subsidising the return bus fare of visitors to Cambridge when they use their concessionary pass to go home.

More fundamentally, government support for Cambridge is falling in real terms year on year while funding is diverted to London and the North. **As a result of Government policy, Cambridge will not benefit from extra council tax income from a growing population!** Instead any additional revenue will be clawed back by Gordon Brown for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless we were able to identify savings and efficiencies amounting to some £1.7m which we have used to meet these pressures and to fund initiatives to meet our priorities,

The present boundaries of the City do not make much sense: part of Cherry Hinton, the Meadows Estate, and the new Arbury Park development all lie in South Cambridgeshire. This is confusing and inconsistent. These problems will reach a critical size as many of the urban fringe development sites straddle the boundary. We are working with South Cambridgeshire District Council to achieve an agreed scheme for re-drawn boundaries for the City and aim to put a joint proposal to the Boundary Committee for England shortly.

Fractured and uneven administrative arrangements mean that Cambridge has little autonomy to pursue many of the objectives that residents seek, particularly where these involve highways and transport. We will continue to argue the case for unitary government for Cambridge, and will press neighbouring authorities to join us in requesting the Government to establish an Integrated Transport Authority for the Cambridge region.

The unfair Council Tax is still with us. Gordon Brown has failed to provide a fair alternative, such as a Local Income Tax, which takes account of people's actual ability to pay. Liberal Democrats would scrap the unfair Council Tax.

On the basis of flawed calculations the Government seem set to impose an additional 4,300 houses on Cambridge on top of the 14,700 that were identified in the 2003 Structure Plan. Moreover, these figures are being stated to be minimum targets rather than maxima. The City Council will continue to object to Government about these draft plans. The Government's unsympathetic plans further seek to delete the term 'compact' from the description of the character of Cambridge, which seems to invite ribbon development and sprawl.

Meeting the need for affordable housing in Cambridge, where there are more than 5,000 people on the waiting list, is compromised by the way in which the Government takes over £12 million a year, or £1500 a tenancy, from council tenants to spend on housing repairs in London and other large conurbations.