



Working for Cambridge Working for you

The Liberal Democrat manifesto for
the 2011 City Council elections

www.cambridgelibdems.org.uk

Working for Cambridge, working for you

Background

Since we presented our Manifesto in May 2010 to the people of Cambridge, the political landscape of the country has radically changed.

Thirteen years of Labour Government has give way to a Coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. No single party won the general election of May 2010, so the challenge was to provide stable and effective government. This was done by a Coalition Agreement between the two parliamentary parties to work together for the full five years of a Parliament.

When the books were opened, it was found that Labour had left a most poisonous legacy, a huge structural deficit and mountainous debts. The departing minister who wrote "Sorry, there is no money left" may have meant it as a joke, but it has been shown to be true - deeply, deeply true. The Coalition has to find £120,000,000 a day in interest charges on the huge debts Labour left, which would be enough to build a hospital every week or a new school every day.

The Comprehensive Spending Review in June 2010 indicated that 28% would be cut from the grant given to Local Authorities over four years. However, when the grant settlement was published in January 2011, it was seen that those cuts had been massively front-loaded. All local authorities are having to make significant savings this year and next.

For the last eleven years, under Liberal Democrat leadership, Cambridge City Council has had a track record of careful financial management that was judged excellent by the Audit Commission. This year over 2 million pounds was saved from the budget but the grant settlement showed that we need to find an additional 3.6 million pounds over the next three years. We will do it, however, in a careful and rational way without dropping into ideology or posturing as is seen elsewhere in the country where councils are under Conservatives or Labour leadership.

Clear Priorities

For this exercise, the Liberal Democrat leadership of the Council has identified three guiding principles:-

Basic services; waste will be collected, our parks and open spaces will be weeded and litter-picked and our streets will be swept. The city will remain clean and cared for.

Services needed by vulnerable people: play provision will continue, advice centres will remain open and grants will continue to those working with the homeless. the elderly and the disabled. Our commitment to fairness remans strong.

Investing in our future

The council will continue to invest in cutting its energy bills, better housing, more trees, refurbished toilets and sports facilities.

In all our activities the Liberal Democrat led City Council will work with others for the benefit of Cambridge and its residents.

Above all, we will speak out for Cambridge without fear or favour. Whether it is in the Guildhall, in Shire Hall or in Whitehall, our first priority will be to serve Cambridge and strive to realise our vision for the city.

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A city which is diverse and tolerant and values activities which bring people together and where everyone feels they have a stake in the community.

We have:

- Acquired a community play-boat and will incorporate it into our programme of urban adventure play provided for children and young

We will continue to:

- Run community centres across the city where residents of all ages can engage in social activities,
- Involve children and young people in play and youth provision through community centres, schools and on open spaces,
- Support sports, both as a bridge between communities and as an aspect of healthy living
- Support free cultural events, such as Arbury Carnival, Chesterton Festival, Cambridgeshire Celebrates Age, Black History and LGBT Months, Holocaust Memorial Day, the Big Weekend and Bonfire Night.

We will:

- Prepare to celebrate the London Olympics as a festival of sport and global peace and ensure that there is a tangible legacy for community sport and culture in Cambridge from the celebration.
- Seek to improve our services to young people around the city by working with partners
- Improve the community facilities in the east of the city



A city which recognises and meets needs for housing of all kinds - close to jobs and neighbourhood facilities

We have:

- Taken advantage of a change in government financial rules and built some new council houses which were handed over to City Homes in January 2011.

We will continue to:

- Require all major new developments to include 40% housing for social rent and in the intermediate category, including low cost equity purchase
- Promote building on suitable locations adjacent to the city and close to jobs.
- Create real new communities and neighbourhoods with a vibrant mix of housing, a full range of community facilities and generous open space in similar proportion to the best provision in the existing city.
- Continue to work with the Trustees of Jimmy's Night-shelter and the

We will:

- Rebuild the outdated provision for older people at Seymour Court
- Prepare to use the new “financial freedoms” with the Housing Revenue Account to build more homes for rent.



A city which draws inspiration from its iconic historic centre and achieves a 'sense of place' in all of its parts, with generous urban open spaces and well designed buildings.

We have:

- Consulted with local residents about an expanded West Cambridge conservation area and also an expanded Mill Road area combining the St Matthew's conservation area with a new area in Romsey. We will assess the responses and push this forward.
- Invested in the expansion of Logans Meadow local nature reserve to create a new wetland reserve in East Chesterton.
- We are making a major improvement to the appearance of Riverside including an innovative tree planting scheme.

We will continue to:

- Remain committed to high design standards by prioritising strong design disciplines in the planning process and by using advisory panels such as the Design & Conservation Panel, the Public Art Panel and the Quality Panel for new neighbourhoods
- Pursue ambitious plans for augmenting the city's public open spaces, ensuring that the new developments share the best standards of Cambridge
- Invest in our nature reserves to improve bio-diversity
- Fund new programmes of area based environmental improvements decided by area committees
- Make a major additional investment in new tree planting on Midsummer Common and Jesus Green to add to the one-for-one replacement of diseased trees on public open space
- Improve the appearance of public spaces particularly with the schemes in Fitzroy and Burleigh Streets and in Wulfstan Way

We will:

- Enhance the city with new public art including the Swift Tower in East Chesterton, the Snowy Farr Memorial and the Mill Road cemetery project
- Embrace the new planning guidance that limits 'garden-grabbing' schemes that detract from the sense of place or cause over development
- Seek ways to fulfill the aspirations in the Eastern Gate Visioning Document to improve the important gateway junction of Newmarket Road, East Road and Elizabeth Way.



A city where getting around is increasingly by public transport, bike and on foot.

We have:

- Used the resources, gained through the Cycling Demonstration Town status, to improve The Tins, New Bit and Madingley Road cycle paths
- Campaigned for and won the promise from the Highway Authority of a Mill Road area 20 mph zone.

We will continue to:

- Press for major public investment to support public transport, cycling and walking, recognising the need to stem the growth of private vehicles within the city and reduce transport related carbon emissions
- Campaign for a railway station in Chesterton.
- Expand the Car Club, beyond the 14 new bays coming shortly, helping to make car ownership less necessary in new parts of the city.
- Campaign for a safer and more pleasurable experience in the city centre for walkers and cyclists while continuing access by bus and taxi, especially for those with no other option.
- Campaign for the installation of more Real Time information at bus-stops especially where there is already money available from developer contributions
- Press the County Council to work more closely with the City Council to find transport solutions to meet the growth of jobs and homes in Cambridge, while protecting the special character of Cambridge's historic core.
- Campaign for safety measures to be carried out on the A14 to reduce the number of accidents and to improve traffic flow, without increasing the congestion in Cambridge

We will:

- Resist the County Council's drastic cuts to subsidised bus services



A city in the forefront of low carbon living and minimising its impact on the environment from waste and pollution.

We have:

- Hit a record high level of recycling in the past year
- Introduced recycling of fluorescent light bulbs

We will continue to:

- Raise our level of recycling by:
 - *extending blue bins to more businesses*
 - *including at least half the remaining 40 blocks of flats into the recycling service,*
 - *aiming for greater public awareness.*
- Campaign nationally for legislation to require manufacturers and retailers to minimise packaging
- Press ahead with new energy policies through our Decarbonising Cambridge study for our next local plan,
- Implement our Climate Change Strategy within the Council's own operations:-
 - *by continuing to cut our carbon footprint through*
 - *the travel and fleet management plan,*
 - *the use of green electricity,*
 - *improved energy management – including installation of LED lighting into the Grand Arcade Annex car park*
- Develop our outreach under the Cambridge Climate Charter

We will:

- Start kerbside battery collection for recycling
- Invest in photo voltaic panels on community centres, and sheltered housing
- Invest to reduce energy consumption and mercury contamination in the crematorium



A city with a thriving knowledge-based economy that benefits the whole community and builds on its reputation as a global hub of ideas and learning.

We have:

- Worked in partnership with the University Architecture department on a project to retrofit insulation in a particularly problematic Council property.

We will continue to:

- Use university research for ideas on city development such as in transport, low energy technologies, criminology, art and architecture
- We will enable the growth of the higher education sector in Cambridge through our planning policies, while expecting the universities and research institutes to set exemplary design and sustainability standards
- Support the growth of jobs in the city through the planning process
- Seek partnership with the universities on broader community objectives, recognising their role as landowners and major employers.
- Discuss issues of mutual concern with the student representative bodies



A city whose citizens are engaged and feel they can influence public decision making and are keen to pursue individual and community initiatives.

We have:

- Developed and implemented a code of best practice on consultation, so that we can establish a more consistent approach across the Council in seeking public input and using that input in decision making
- Increased funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau by 25% to enable it to respond to increased demand from Cambridge people who need to assert their rights in relation to benefits, debt, employment and housing.

We will continue to:

- Engage with a range of stakeholder groups, including residents' associations and children and young people, to gain feedback from and inform Council decisions,
- Use the aspirations of the "Big Society" when they fit our own aspirations for Cambridge and its residents.

We will:

- Fund through the Citizens Advice Bureau a series of touch screen kiosks to be placed around the city, making advice much more accessible in troubled times.
- Help make the voluntary sector more sustainable with grant aid to assist organisations adopting techniques of social enterprise and by sponsoring partnerships between them and local businesses
- Start a pilot exercise in the north of the city to involve the public more directly in shaping the agenda for their neighbourhood as a progression from the existing area committee
- Encourage the formation of Friends groups for parks and open spaces where they do not already exist.



A city where people behave with consideration for others and where harm and nuisance are confronted wherever possible without infringing the liberty of everyone else.

We have:

- Renewed the grants for specialist police working with the “street life people”, the street pastors helping the casualties of the night economy and the clinical psychiatric nurse helping the street drinkers off alcohol

We will continue to:

- Work in close partnership with the Police, sanctioning special Police powers sparingly and in strict response to hard evidence and avoiding measures likely to limit innocent behaviour
- Encourage greater transparency, public debate and scrutiny on policing priorities
- Review and update by-laws relating to parks and open spaces
- Seek to deal with the causes of anti-social behaviour in children and young people through working in partnership with the County Council, police, probation, health and voluntary organisations

We will:

- Extend the use of “payback schemes” in conjunction with the Probation service
- Expand the ranger and enforcement team to tackle non-recycling and nuisance neighbours