

CAMBRIDGE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

MANIFESTO

For the City Council Elections 2006



Reducing the Carbon Footprint

Connecting with Citizens

Thriving and Viable Communities

A Safe and Enjoyable City for All

Managing the Growth of Cambridge

Introduction – by Cllr Ian Nimmo-Smith

Things have come a long way in the six years since the Liberal Democrats took control of Cambridge City Council.

Following an emergency programme we based our priority actions around some key themes.

Basic services needed to be improved and lifted to a new level of performance.

Housing, both the stock owned and managed by the council, and private rented or owner occupied housing needed improvement.

A better provision for **public transport, walking and cycling** needed to be matched by steps to reduce the harmful effects of the car in congestion and pollution.

Action was needed on the **environment** to improve the performance of **waste and recycling** services.

The future **growth of the city** needed careful planning through the structure plan and the new local plan to maximise the benefits for current and future resident, and to support the key health, education and business sectors.

A new relationship needed to be forged **with citizens** to create significant opportunities for them to exercise power more directly, and to build greater engagement with the democratic processes.

While this framework has driven significant, measurable improvements, and was the basis for the Audit Commission giving the Liberal Democrat council their highest 'Excellent' rating, there is both more to be done and a need to take stock.

Our programme of action for the coming year proposes some changes to the balance of these priorities. In particular we believe that the prosperity and dynamism of so much of the local economy, and the service improvements we have worked to achieve, must not blind us to the major implications of global warming or to the needs of some of the more disadvantaged members of our community.

This city of international standing is seen by the government as a major driver of the national economy. We work hard to meet that responsibility through various partnerships across the Cambridge sub-region. However we now need to look to see whether we can match that by taking responsibility for the way the City is part of the problem of global warming, both as an organisation, and through setting challenging examples to other organisations, and by working to help individual citizens to make changes in how we live in order to reduce the extent of our carbon footprints.

While meeting these challenges we also need to continue to improve people's experiences of services we deliver; to find more effective and efficient ways of working; and to make careful use of the resources at our disposal.

Theme 1 – Reducing Cambridge’s Carbon Footprint

As a marker of our commitment we will ensure that the Council endorses the **Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change** to show our acknowledgment of the implications if climate change is not checked; to pledge ourselves to work with national, regional and local partners towards agreed targets for carbon dioxide reduction; to take practical steps towards these objectives in the way the council operates; and to work with local communities to understand how to make changes at the level of their individual activities. Many local people share these concerns and are keen to know how to do more personally; local leadership will help to harness this.

Our Record

1. Energy

The Cambridge and South Cambs ‘Energy for Good’ scheme was launched in December 2005, giving householders and businesses access to information and grants for renewable energy installations. The SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) energy ratings for the council housing stock are good (60 or higher – in privately owned housing, it is typically 45) – we have achieved this by, for example, the Council’s uPVC window programme, which is nearing completion. We have also installed solar energy systems in Council houses at Cameron Road and Kendal Way. Energy efficiency in council housing has been boosted by the installation of 500 condensing boilers in a programme of replacements. The refurbished sheltered housing scheme at Rawlyn Court has received an Ecohome ‘Very Good’ rating.

2. Carbon Footprint

We have committed Cambridge to a Carbon Reduction (CRED) initiative. An energy use survey of council owned buildings was completed during 2005. We successfully incorporated a micro-generation scheme in the new East Chesterton Community Center. We launched an in-house Green Buying guide at the beginning of 2006.

3. Transport

We have implemented policies to promote sustainable transport use: Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) fuelled vehicles have been introduced into the council fleet. We have maintained levels of cycle use - nearly 30% of journeys to work in Cambridge are by bicycle. Bus use in Cambridge has increased by 30% since 2000.

4. Recycling & Reuse

We have introduced alternate weekly collections & plastic recycling. Food waste can be collected with other compostible materials in the green bin collection. Recycling levels are improving dramatically, rising from under 20% to over 30%. As a result of residents’ commitment the Cambridgeshire partnership of councils has been awarded ‘beacon council’ status for waste management and recycling.

5. Sustainability

We have developed and promoted sustainable development and construction guidelines to boost the policies the current (1996) Local Plan, and have recently appointed a sustainable construction co-ordinator to work for the implementation of sustainable construction materials and methods.

6.

What we will do next

1. Energy

We will measure SAP energy ratings on as many properties as possible, using 'quick SAP'. SAP ratings will be included in the Landlord Accreditation scheme. We will encourage improved SAP energy ratings for private housing stock. The 'Cambridge Standard' for council housing will be energy efficient. We will work towards making use of renewable energy/materials a condition of planning consents. We will work with energy suppliers (gas, electricity) to publicise availability of grants for insulation etc. We will lobby the Government to modify building regulations over and above the changes coming in this year, to allow us to deliver housing that has good insulation and a high SAP rating. Developments on council-owned land will be required to a higher energy standard than the minimum set by building regulations. We will lobby Government for the ability to apply a discount in the proposed new 'Planning Gain Supplement' where higher energy standards are achieved, and will investigate the role of council tax discounts as incentives to energy reduction residential schemes. We will look to develop and adopt mandatory supplementary planning policies as part of the Local Development Framework, which require higher energy standards in new buildings. In modernising the sheltered housing scheme at Mansel Court we will ensure it achieves the Ecohome 'Very Good' standard.

2. Carbon Footprint

We will formally sign up the Council to a CRED carbon reduction pledge and monitor our progress towards achieving it. We will work towards implementing an automated energy monitoring system to improve energy efficiency in (e.g.) the Guildhall. We will start to replace existing light fittings in Council offices with newer, more energy efficient ones, and publicise use of low-energy light bulbs. We will look for suitable projects in renewable energy in Cambridge for funding and consciousness-raising. We will ensure that the Council's procurement procedures encourage 'buying green'. We will encourage the use of eco-friendly stationery by the council. We will seek ways to reduce the amount of paper used by the Council in its internal and external communications, with increased use of electronic communication methodologies. We will work towards setting up an ESCO (Energy Services Company) to deliver renewable energy projects in the sub-region.

In the longer run we will seek funding and partners to establish a Carbon Neutral city region centred on Cambridge which provides information on climate change and how it affects the region; helps people and businesses to understand their carbon emissions; demonstrates to people and businesses how positive action can reduce energy consumption and save money; improves the reliability and affordability of energy through the support of local renewable energy projects; improves the local environment by planting trees; and lobbies local and national politicians and leaders to change policy and practice.

3. Transport

We will work with others towards the founding of Car clubs in Cambridge. We will continue to encourage the use of cycles & buses. We will encourage 'car free'

developments in appropriate circumstances. We will promote car sharing. We will work with partners to reduce congestion using Local Authority Parking Enforcement (LAPE) and bus lane cameras. We will work with unions and staff to establish a new, effective 'Green Travel Plan' for council employees.

4. Recycling & reuse

We will extend recycling to flats and other hard-to-reach properties. We will introduce collection points for dry-cell batteries. We will provide refuse storage bins for householders in properties where wheelie bins are inappropriate. We will encourage differentiated waste collections at large events. We will join others nationally in campaign for the removal of VAT on housing renovations and repairs.

5. Sustainability

We facilitate Green Burials at selected sites in Cambridge. Refurbishment of the Crematorium will yield savings in gas use and reduction in energy use and CO₂ emissions. We will investigate further schemes for micro-generation, and the feasibility of a zero-emission, carbon neutral, energy sufficient, development in Cambridge, similar to the Hockerton Housing Project (<http://www.hockerton.demon.co.uk>), as a demonstration scheme.

Theme 2 – Connecting with Citizens

While we have worked hard to improve the services that the council offers, we are aware that there are still a number of ways in which there is room for improvement. Some of this depends on making the best use of new technologies, and some on better and more appropriate two-way communication, and opportunities for engagement with the council's decision making. We will strive to make changes that ensure that as far as possible residents' experience of dealing with the Council is a positive one.

Our Record

1. Access

We have successfully developed the Council's new website enabling residents to access more information (e.g. Planning Portal) and also to undertake transactions in an efficient and safe way. We have introduced out-of-hours hot lines e.g. for noise, dog wardens, and housing repairs. We have opened up all meetings to the public, with opportunities to speak or raise questions. We have extended the times and places residents can access planning applications details through local libraries and area housing offices.

2. Communication

We have increased citizens' engagement with recycling by producing a regular magazine to all Cambridge residents ('Cambridge Matters') on recycling issues. Meeting agendas, reports and minutes etc are published on the web.

3. Democratic Engagement

Area Committees were introduced in 2003. They give local residents the opportunity to raise questions about local services in their areas. Some monies for environmental improvements and community development and leisure have been devolved to Area Committees, where local councillors have a good knowledge of the needs of the wards concerned and can take the best possible decisions for their residents. There is full tenant participation in the Housing Management Board, via tenant elections. We have successfully completed a tenants' vote on the options for the Council's own housing stock, in which tenants voted by a significant majority to keep the Council as their landlord. We have successfully implemented new statutory responsibilities for Licensing under the 2003 Act, maximising the opportunities for involvement of the public. We have introduced a scheme that allows voters to use their phone to re-register each year. Regular meetings have been inaugurated between councillors and student union representatives.

What we will do next

1. Access

We will seek to improve the way our citizens access City Council services, with the goal of the Council being closer to residents. We will embrace new technologies to ensure that the quality of service delivered to our citizens is improved. We will seek to introduce a "new residents' pack" to be sent to new residents when they first arrive, with details of how to access all Council services. We will consider opening the Guildhall on Saturdays, to allow the inspection of planning applications, while the Central Library is closed for refurbishment. We will prepare for a second phase of the Planning Online system so that users can

access all documentation associated with a planning application, including drawings of plans and rendered images.

2. Communication

We will continue producing 'Cambridge Matters' for at least another year, and employ an outreach worker to tackle some of the remaining issues to do with waste collection. We will continue to enhance the website's functionality, with the introduction of further e-initiatives (e-payments and e-billing). We will publish council enforcement reports on the web e.g. relating to food safety. We will work with partners towards the implementation of a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme.

3. Democratic Engagement

We will seek to improve the role of Area Committees, e.g. by giving residents a say in S106 open spaces priorities. We will investigate additional powers and devolved budgets for Area Committees. We will encourage cross-fertilisation of best practice at Area Committees. We will encourage StreetScene management to attend their Area Committees. We will work with County Council to develop the role of County Councillors at Area Committees as part of their official remit, and seek devolution of appropriate County Council functions. We will take steps to improve rates of voter registration & encourage turnout at elections. We will continue to support Local Democracy Week – in particular, we will encourage youth participation in Local Democracy Week 2006. This could include council support for mock elections in schools. We will celebrate 800 years of mayoralty in Cambridge in 2007. Local projects will be driven by the needs and preferences of the citizens in the area. We will seek residents' views on their priorities for Community Development and Leisure priorities in their area via consultation through the Area Committees. We will take steps to promote increased recruitment of City Council staff from recognised minority groups.

Theme 3 – Developing Thriving and Viable Communities

Our vision for the vitality of Cambridge's new 'fringe' developments is based around creating new 'nuclei' of services such as shops, schools and other civic facilities. These nuclei are present varying extents within central and suburban areas of the city. We will work with partners to measure community nuclei in existing suburban Cambridge to gauge how much they are thriving, and in order to identify shortcomings. We will strive to counter the feeling that the centre of Cambridge is well cared for while the less visible (at least to visitors) parts are not so well looked after.

Our Record

1. Leisure

In East Chesterton, a Community Centre – a major new resource and manifesto commitment – became fully operational in March 2006 and will be formally opened in July. It will provide excellent new facilities for the local community, especially for young people. We have established a team of Reccy Rangers so that more children can be encouraged to make safe and healthy use of recreation grounds. We have undertaken a major refurbishment of the children's play area in Trumpington, including a skate-board park, and the re-vamping of the pavilion. A major refurbishment of the Nuns Way play area in King's Hedges has been undertaken, and the complete renovation of King's Hedges Learner Pool is under way with a reopening in Summer 2006. We have created new changing facilities at the Abbey Pools, and are major funders of the new sports hall at the Manor Community College, due to open in May.

2. Shops & Businesses

We have improved shop forecourt areas where they are council-owned, and have campaigned against Post Office closures.

3. Getting Around

In 2005-6 we spent £185,000 on subsidising buses across the city, and increased financial support to the Dial a Ride service. We have installed a number of new pedestrian crossings to connect local communities, including one across the Huntingdon Road. We have implemented many new cycle-way schemes and other minor cycle projects, and we have supported the County Council in testing the new bus Real Time Information System. We have implemented, in partnership with the other district councils in the county, a concessionary fare scheme for over 60s, and residents with certain disabilities, which provides free journeys within the pass holder's home district after the morning peak, but which, through inadequate central government grants, can enhance the basic government district level scheme only by providing a flat rate fare concession for journeys across district boundaries and free fares in Cambridge till the last night bus.

4. Local Amenity

We have rebuilt the toilets on Midsummer Common and Parker's Piece – which have won design awards. We have refurbished other toilets elsewhere – e.g. the block by the Bath House on Mill Road. We have reorganised the Council's StreetScene workforce into new areas, which parallel the Area Committees. We have introduced the City Rangers with a remit to provide a 'can-do' approach to fixing problems anywhere in the City. We have supported local Environmental

Improvement projects through the landscape design team. We introduced our own parking control team and reduced congestion and increased safety in the city with effective parking enforcement. We have introduced a byelaw to allow prohibition of parking of vehicles on grass verges, where residents support it. We have applied for Government funding of a low occupancy site for the short-term relocation of illegal traveller encampments.

What we will do next

1. Leisure

We will work to ensure that all parts of the City have adequate leisure resources, including open spaces, parks and recreation areas. We will appoint a new Section 106 officer, who will ensure that these monies are invested in facilities for local communities.

2. Shops & Businesses

We will promote Neighbourhood Retail Centre regeneration – enhancing local and district centres within the City. We will use the letting of council-owned shops as a means of encouraging small, locally based shops. We will ensure that the Council's procurement procedures encourage the sourcing of supplies or services from local businesses, and ensure that such suppliers are not excluded from the process. We will work with partners towards replacing closed sub-Post Offices.

3. Getting Around

We will improve cycle routes to school – including segregation of pedestrians & cyclists. We will seek to find ways of improving access to, and use of, public transport, for example by working with the County Council to improve access to buses for disabled and parents with young children, e.g. using raised pavements at bus stops, and new bus shelters. We will also work with the County to get buses running on time – using Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology & people monitoring, and real time information at selected bus stops.

We will negotiate a revision of the new concessionary fares scheme for 2007-8, to include, if possible, free fares for journeys that go across district boundaries within the county. We will refurbish the Coldham's Lane public footpath, and the Gough Way/Cranmer Road cycle way/footpath.

4. Local Amenity

We will refurbish the Chesterton Road & Cherry Hinton Hall toilets. We will build or refurbish new bus stops. We will run trial sites for the implementation of the byelaw for the prohibition of grass verge parking. We will encourage 'Neighbourhood blitzes' ('deep cleaning' of streets and litter picks in selected areas) working with residents groups through Area Committees. Work to introduce traffic calming in Kendal Way. We will continue to develop our LNRs (Local Nature Reserves), making them accessible and educational. We will continue the programme of major refurbishment of the Council's sheltered housing stock, providing older residents with high quality, up to date facilities. We will continue the search for a suitable low occupancy site for the short-term relocation of unauthorised traveller encampments. We will improve the way planners, councillors and local residents work together to ensure the optimal provision of recreational facilities in all parts of the City. We will undertake a trinennial assessment and review of air quality, and contribute to the new air

quality action plan. We will use proposed bus quality partnerships and the core traffic scheme as means of reducing the impact of bus exhaust emissions through setting emissions criteria for use of rising bollards in the city, and by requiring buses to switch off their engines when stationary for more than a short period.

Theme 4 - A Safe and Enjoyable City for All

Cambridge has lots to offer for most of the community, while we work to ensure that what is on offer is widely accessible to include younger, older and less bodily able people. Despite public perception reinforced by a biased press, Cambridge is generally very safe and welcoming. Indeed Cambridge City currently has the 6th lowest crime rate (as measured by the British Crime Survey) compared to 15 other similar authority areas. While we recognise that some people's activities can have unacceptable impacts, and work determinedly with partners like the police to challenge them, the headlines do not always correctly depict the reality of an open and enjoyable city.

Our Record

1. Voluntary Sector

In 2005, we held a Committee of Enquiry into the way the Council dispenses money in the form of Grants; the conclusions of this enquiry are now influencing the way these grants are administered. We have agreed a 'Compact' with the main local Voluntary Sector organisations.

2. Support for disadvantaged groups

We have improved sheltered housing: we have rebuilt Wulfstan Court (now called Dunstan Court) and modernised Rawlyn Court – and plans are in hand for further improvements to other schemes. We have improved disabled access, e.g. at shop fronts. We have appointed a Disability Officer to monitor compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). We have supported the Sport Equality Programme; and improved specialist equipment at Abbey and Parkside Pools.

3. Young People

We have offered free swimming for schools since 2000. We restored the Children's Festival in 2002. We have sought to encourage social behaviour with a range of exciting activities for children during school holidays, including *Splash* and *Play Daze*. We have expanded the Reccy Ranger scheme, which, in conjunction with the Young People's Service, encourages people, especially the young, to use recreation grounds and get involved in community projects; they build up links with young people throughout the year. We have provided Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and skateboard facilities at several sites across the city. We have expanded the DEC youth project. In addition we have given the Junction significant financial backing to help it achieve a major enhancement of its facilities.

4. Safer Cambridge

We have a good record of working with the Police to combat crime – including part-funding of Community Support Officers (CSOs). We have won a 'Safer car park' award for Queen Anne Terrace. We have improved security lighting at car parks. We have introduced 'dismountable' CCTV cameras, which can be deployed almost anywhere for short periods to help with community safety 'hotspots'. They have been used to monitor large events, for example on Midsummer Common. We introduced the 'Graffiti Squad' in 2000, which has proved a successful way of minimising the impact of offensive graffiti. We have had successful trials of 'pee-pods' in the city centre. There has been a 30% reduction year-on-year in violent crime according to the most recent published quarterly data from the police.

What we will do next

1. Voluntary Sector

We will work with partners to increase take-up of sport, music, the performing arts, and charitable activities in all age groups.

2. Support for disadvantaged groups

We will work with Age Concern and other partners to identify a suitable central meeting place for older people. We will work with partners to promote schemes such as Home Aid and the Safer Homes initiative, which allow the elderly to continue to live in their own homes. We will continue a programme to bring the required amount of publicly owned sheltered housing up to a much better modern standard.

3. Young People

We will seek a location for a City Centre facility for young people. We will work with partners, such as the Junction and the Corn Exchange, to increase the provision of activities for young people, particularly for those at secondary schools. We will provide Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) where suitable sites can be found. We will look for suitable sites for challenging activities for 15-19 year olds – e.g. off-road motorcycle track. We will investigate establishing links between school music groups and the Folk Festival. We will launch an event planned and run by young people each summer. The DEC youth project will be getting a new vehicle.

4. For all the Family

We will continue to develop the City Centre Strategy to ensure a vibrant, successful environment linked with the opening of the Grand Arcade, and continue the promotion of a safe early evening economy – providing a balanced retail, social and cultural experience for residents and visitors. We will explore ways of enhancing the Guildhall and the surrounding environment for both residents and visitors, and explore ways of utilising the Guildhall more efficiently (respecting the architectural heritage of the building) – providing improved services to residents and visitors to Cambridge (e.g. use of the vacant Crown Court space). There will be a major refurbishment of the Corn Exchange. We will launch the new Leisurecard – “*Cambridge work, visit and stay*”.

5. Safer Cambridge

The crime rate has gone down but people are still worried about crime. We shall therefore do even more to alleviate fear of crime and make Cambridge a more congenial place to live. We will work with police to implement a ‘cumulative impact zone’ so that applications for new licensed premises in the City Centre can be considered in the context of what is already there. We will work with pubs, clubs and off-licenses to secure a contribution towards the costs of safety measures and cleansing operations necessitated by night-time revelry. A voluntary scheme would be preferred, but we will use proposed new alcohol disorder zone powers, if that proves necessary. We will investigate whether a scheme of distinctive marking of cans and bottles sold by off-licences can help combat the sale of alcohol to under-age youngsters or to people under banning orders. We will renew our request for government approval for city-wide byelaw powers to assist the police in dealing with antisocial behaviour connected to drinking in open spaces. We will purchase pee-pods for deployment on a regular basis, and will

undertake further refurbishment of toilets. We will introduce a StreetScene response team, which will allow a rapid response to issues raised by local residents. We will work towards full accreditation of the Council's CCTV operators. We will review the operation of the open-air markets, and our street trading policy.

Theme 5 – Managing the Growth of Cambridge

Cambridge is going through a period of significant change. The key task is to guide the way the city develops so that we can overcome some of the serious pressures that have arisen from imbalances between where the jobs are and where there is housing that people can afford. We want to achieve the best possible standards of urban design and new housing, close to a good range of facilities, all bound together by transport systems so that people can opt for walking, cycling or public transport as the preferred modes. As much of the growth will take place outside the current city boundaries this work requires careful coordination and leadership of partner authorities.

Our Record

1. Planning

We have defended the Draft Local Plan to the Planning Inspector, which includes policies for the use of 10% renewable energy in new developments, and up to 50% of affordable homes of a variety of tenures in new developments of more than 15 dwellings. We launched online planning facilities, so applications can be submitted and tracked on Cambridge City Council website; residents can now send in comments online. We have been consistently meeting and exceeding the government's targets for determining planning applications on time, and have recently been praised by the government for our 'excellent progress' in achieving this. We commissioned independent research into the views of Residents' Associations on the planning process, and initiated a series of meetings to improve working between the City Council and Residents associations. We have negotiated significant amounts of funding from developers to enhance facilities such as open space, public art, and affordable house, as well as the provision contributions towards the educational and transport needs.

2. Working with Partners

We have worked closely with South Cambridgeshire District Council to submit the Cambridge East Local Development Framework, having drawn it up with extensive local involvement. We have adopted the Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Development Framework, again after extensive local consultation. We have agreed with partners a way forward for the development of an Action Plan for developing North West Cambridge between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road. We have successfully bid for new resources for the planning process from the OPDM and Cambridgeshire Horizons. We have increased our emphasis on design quality, with the appointment of a Historic Environment Champion and a Design Champion. We have started initiatives for promoting the City Centre shops during Grand Arcade building work.

3. Affordable Housing

Under Lib Dem control Cambridge City Council has achieved an exceptional record in working towards its target of 6,500 additional homes within the city between 1999 and 2016 as the city's share of the overall growth plans for the sub-region. So far in the first six years of this project there have been 1,840 houses completed. Moreover on qualifying sites 30% of these new homes are 'affordable', in line with the Council's current (1996) Local Plan policies.

According to the independent Audit Commission, this ‘places Cambridge City Council as one of the top performers in the country’.

What we will do next

1. Planning for the future – the big picture

We will bring the new Cambridge Local Plan into effect. It aims to enhance the high environmental quality of Cambridge and ensure that future developments work for the benefit of all citizens. It respects the importance of green space to Cambridge and places a particular emphasis on design quality, affordable housing and renewable energy. We will ensure the redevelopment of the Station Area is appropriate in scale and mix for Cambridge, taking into account the potential detrimental impact of over-development and its strategic importance as a multi-modal transport interchange. We will draw up an Action Plan for the Madingley Road/Huntingdon Road area. This will feed into the master planning process for the complete site including both the University and the NIAB sites. We will ensure the Council’s influence as a key stakeholder in the sub-regional growth area is used to achieve enhanced developments which maximise financial and social benefits in provision of affordable housing, sustainable development and sustainable living and other environment priorities. We will continue to seek the development of affordable housing projects on existing Council land, in conjunction with other partners (e.g. Barnwell Court). We will ensure that the views of residents and other stakeholders are taken into account in the growth agenda debate, and that the Council represents the views of the citizens of Cambridge in the key decisions taken by partners in relation to the growth of the sub-region. We will work closely with Residents’ Associations to improve their confidence in, and access, to the planning process. We will promote training in design quality for councillors, and continue to review past planning decisions as developments are built. We will review the role of the Conservation and Design Panel to ensure that external design expertise is available when considering planning applications.

2. New Communities

New ‘fringe’ developments will be based around ‘nuclei’ of services such as shops and schools. We will press for new, large-scale residential developments to include green open spaces and other facilities that enable people to access sports and play facilities. Arts and entertainments facilities should be provided in some new residential areas, so that people have a choice of whether or not to travel to the centre of Cambridge if they want a night out.

3. Getting there – the Transport Agenda

We will continue to lobby for a sub-regional Passenger Transport Executive, so that public transport is no longer in the hands of near-monopoly private providers. We will work closely with the County Council to implement the new one-way system in Emmanuel Street and the new Bus Quality Partnership, as well as to encourage initiatives such as on street ticketing, and to identify new bus priority routes, in an evidence-based approach. This will be facilitated by the new Real Time Bus Information System as it goes live across the city. We will press for demand management - including congestion charging measures - in the County’s

Long Term Transport Strategy. We will influence the County's implementation of the controversial Guided Bus system in order to maximize its usefulness for Cambridge residents and minimize its potential environmental impact. We will continue to press for the maximum possible provision of bus and coach interchange and layover facilities at the station area, relieving the pressure on the historic core. We will encourage tourist use of sustainable transport, including trishaws and cycles.

4. Parking

We will review need for car parking, taking a long-term view of possible trends and pressures. We will carry out overdue essential maintenance and minor refurbishments at Council car parks and deliver a new car park as part of Grand Arcade development. Residents' parking will be introduced where appropriate and where there is demand and support from residents.

The Good Governance of Cambridge

Since taking control in 2000, the Liberal Democrats have run the finances of Cambridge in a responsible and disciplined manner. We have redirected significant resources year on year, partly by identifying ways of doing things more efficiently, and partly by reducing expenditure on services which have a lower priority in order to boost new or enhanced priority services. While seeking to improve the many ways in which residents and others get access to our services, we will take account of the increase in demand that will come from population growth and invest in systems and technologies that can help to meet it economically.

The Council was rated 'excellent' in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment by the national watchdog Audit Commission published in 2004. This year they have awarded the Council the highest assessment both for its financial management arrangements and for its financial standing.

We will work to ensure that Section 106 monies are used in as timely and effective a manner as possible to provide adequate open spaces, play and sports facilities, community centres, etc. in a framework of good accountability and public consultation. We will continue to work with partners to identify future forms of sustainable funding for community facilities, e.g. for the Southern Fringe. More generally we will work to link strategic decision making closer still in the Council to our sustainability objectives.

We will continue to negotiate with Cambridgeshire Horizons for a fair share of resources to ensure delivery of infrastructure, and join in lobbying the Government for increased funding to implement Cambridge's challenging growth agenda. Other partnerships need to be reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose.

The Government has come forward with a confused and incoherent approach to local government structures. Ministers waver between seeking reorganisation of two-tier local government, and sketching out a possible 'city region' agenda for the East of England. We will respond by stating the needs of Cambridge and its role as the economic centre of a fast growing sub-region whose the cosmopolitan urban dynamism must not be too much subjugated to the perspectives and concerns of its rural hinterland. We believe strongly that the present two tier system is not fit for purpose, and that a unitary structure with the right footprint would be best for the future governance of the city.

We will continue to campaign with Liberal Democrats nationally to abolish the Council Tax which is such an arbitrary, oppressive and unfair system of financing local councils. We are committed to replacing it with a local income tax, based on each person's ability to pay, and much cheaper to collect than under council tax.