

The Liberal Democrat Manifesto for Bradford 2018 -19

A Liberal Democrat Approach

A Liberal Democrat approach to Bradford is of a place where Councillors work hard for the people they represent, giving local people a voice in deciding how their local neighbourhoods should be run, regularly reporting back and keeping in touch with the people who elected them. They stand up for the vulnerable, champion learning, defend public services and have a passion for helping people to help themselves. As Liberal Democrats they share and live out the shared values that are found in the preamble to the Liberal Democrat party constitution;

The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community, and in which no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity.

We champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals, we acknowledge and respect their right to freedom of conscience and their right to develop their talents to the full.

We aim to disperse power, to foster diversity and to nurture creativity. We believe that the role of the state is to enable all citizens to attain these ideals, to contribute fully to their communities and to take part in the decisions which affect their lives.

Liberal Democrat Councillors believe that the best solutions are found by people working together in stark contrast to the “we know best” attitude of Labour. The economic crisis facing the country has made it far too easy for Labour in Bradford to make cuts to public services and blame the Government. We accept that the Council cannot be expected to spend money that it does not have but the Labour-run Council does have a say over what it chooses to spend its money on. Austerity is not solely to blame. Labour Councillors have a choice.

Labour Councillors in Bradford have spent millions of pounds in doing up buildings, consultant after consultant paid to write reports on projects that failed – just look how much money they have spent on trying to build swimming pools, heating projects and buying a car park to raise a miniscule income. They paid for 50 trips abroad for members and officers in the last five years and spent almost a million pounds and lost almost 3000 weeks of work because Labour failed to make the discipline and grievance process work properly.

Now they plan to spend another £98 million pounds on capital projects with thousands of pounds being spent on yet more consultants. Millions of pounds on cycle lanes for non-existent cyclists, thousands of pounds on new furniture, over £4 million to refurbish a set of offices and then closed them. These are choices made by Labour Councillors who at the same time have cut millions from front-line services to children and vulnerable adults.

The Liberal Democrats will continue to campaign to make the Conservatives in Government and indeed Labour politicians in the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, both with big media operations and cash reserves, to give back to Bradford our fair share of public money.

We cannot support Labour Councillors in Bradford balancing the books of the District on the backs of the vulnerable, poorest and least able to pay.

It's not surprising that Conservatives Councillors voted to push through the Council Tax Support Reduction Scheme without even a debate.

But it is truly shocking that Labour Councillors brought forward the scheme in the first place.

Now just over 28000 working poor people find themselves with higher bills. Carers or those with the enhanced disability premium have had their exemption removed; this means hundreds and hundreds of pounds of extra costs for families with the biggest burdens to carry.

Bradford under Labour is failing to achieve good results for its people, it is failing to increase everyone's wealth except that of its Councillors and it is failing to provide even basic care to vulnerable people or keep the streets clean and well lit. It really is time for a change.

This election is not about electing a national Government but it is about electing people with a passion to get things done. When you next go vote please use your vote to vote for someone to work hard for you, your family and the place we live. I will be voting Liberal Democrat and I hope you will support them too.

Jeanette Sunderland

Leader of the Liberal Democrats in Bradford

Liberal Democrat Councillors and the Lib Dem Team across Bradford will work together and focus on these priorities:

- **Raising standards of educational achievement and restoring the cuts made to services to young people**
- **Building homes that meet our needs, registering private landlords and shaming those that break the law**
- **Creating a Care system that really looks after vulnerable people**
- **Increasing the number of jobs and raising skill levels so we have people able to work in services to peoples' health, manufacturing, construction, care and able to use new technology**
- **Supporting the whole community to feel safe, treated honestly and fairly**
- **Creating a District that is clean and green, with a waste management system that works both above and below ground, and ensuring our District is resilient to flooding.**

Raising standards of educational achievement

Labour's £300 million privatisation of Bradford's Education system was a failure and set the raising of standards back ten years. Liberal Democrat Education Ministers as part of the Coalition Government increased schools' budgets by 7% in real terms between 2010 and 2015 but the Conservatives in Government are now cutting school budgets year on year. To their shame the Labour-run Council has decided to focus Government cuts to the Council on services to children in our most deprived families and children with special educational needs.

The Liberal Democrats in Government gave Bradford's schools millions of pounds in extra money called the 'Pupil Premium' to help children in our schools, and every infant in Bradford now has a free school meal saving families £400 for every child.

We will continue to campaign so that every child has a place in a good school close to where they live.

The Liberal Democrat team will;

1. Support families and children affected by Labour's decision to cut £13.7 million pounds from the Early Years Budget and £800 thousand from the SEND budget.
2. Make sure every child has a place at a good local school. We will build schools and find partners to run them.
3. Continue to support the project to attract the best teachers to Bradford. We will look for partners to ensure that Bradford's schools leadership is the best in the country.
4. Create sixth form colleges to ensure that every child gets access to the best secondary education they can get and give every student a bus pass giving a discount on local fares.
5. Ensure that all young people are given formal careers advice including advice about all options including apprenticeships.
6. Ensure parents know about access to free childcare and work with those families of children who would qualify for the Pupil Premium to ensure they make the best of opportunities available to them.
7. Establish a specialist team to challenge the accepted way of delivering teaching and learning, including community based-learning and community nurture groups.
8. Create a network of community-based homework and literacy support for children and their parents or carers to ensure children succeed.
9. Reintroduce librarians as 'literacy champions' in every community run library with a specific remit to develop community based reading hubs. We will return libraries to the management of the Council.
10. Create a network of community based social enterprises that offer different places and ways to learn, ensuring that all children experience different pathways to work.
11. Provide every young person and their family with training outside of school to keep themselves safe on the internet.

Building homes that meet our needs

With a quarter of our population under 25 years of age we need to make sure that young people can find a home to live in. That means building homes that we need, such as homes for older and single person households, which free up larger homes for growing families. We welcome smaller homes on previously developed land but despair at Bradford's Labour Executive's failure to produce a proper development plan which meant developers were

free to build wherever they could get permission. This failure by the Labour Executive has cost the District dearly. They are also failing to properly register private landlords leaving many tenants living in sub-standard homes. 95% of people want a proper register introduced to protect tenants and help make sure that all landlords keep the homes they let out for rent up to a decent standard.

The Liberal Democrat Team will;

1. Fight against all housing developments on Urban Green Space. Where land is needed for development it should be done with local agreement to meet local needs.
2. Ensure that all homes meet the 'Life time homes' standard.
3. Ensure that any development includes a contribution to local amenities – decided locally, not by Officers of the Council and Labour Councillors behind closed doors. And that all ward Councillors are asked to lead on discussions about the required infrastructure for their wards and how the Community Investment Levy and other monies can be used to improve infrastructure.
4. Introduce a proper register of private landlords and ensure that landlords make sure that both the inside and outside of their properties are up to a locally determined 'Decent Homes Standard' and do not cause a nuisance for other neighbours.
5. Review all homes for vulnerable people ensuring they are of a high standard and replacing where needed.
6. Put in place a proper plan to bring back into use derelict offices and shops as homes and plan to include facilities such as doctors surgeries, dentists etc to serve the needs of the increased population.

Creating a Care system that really looks after vulnerable people.

Labour in Bradford is rationing care to vulnerable people. Almost 1 in 5 calls to the adult services Access Point go unanswered, demand is rising and the number of people helped going down. Families and carers are being left struggling to cope.

We will work to make sure that vulnerable people feel safe in their homes and care workers are paid the proper rate for the job and that carers are properly assessed and supported.

The Liberal Democrat Team will;

1. Ensure the implementation of the Care Act and ensure that carers are properly supported and vulnerable people are supported through strong community networks.
2. Stop contracting with care providers in a way that causes them to use zero-hour contracts and leaving their workers earning less than minimum wage.
3. Set up community- based hubs of support linking the volunteer and voluntary sectors as a resource for health professionals and care providers ensuring that vulnerable people living at home are not isolated. Ensure that every community has access to a range of activities and funding for support based in community centres and supported by local partnerships.
4. Introduce a “Care Closer to Home” fund to help people stay healthier for longer and avoid hospital admissions.
5. Ensure that all youth workers are provided with “Mental Health First Aid” training.
6. Give mental health equality with physical health and put the mental health of children and young people at the top of the District’s agenda.
7. We will ensure that all young people are provided with resilience education and ensure that a mental health practitioner is based in every secondary school.

4. Increasing the number of jobs

The £17.5 million pound Growth Zone funded by the Liberal Democrats in Government is making a real difference to our City Centre but there is a lot more to do especially on local High Streets.

Liberal Democrat Councillors will;

1. Fight for additional investment to create more businesses especially in the area between Leeds Road and Wakefield Road and for the development of high skilled advanced technology jobs on the Yorkshire Water site at Esholt.
2. Match-fund projects to attract government funding to support small business.

3. Invest more in apprenticeships in high quality local government jobs such as planning, engineering and accountancy.
4. Invest in schemes to promote enterprise and self-employment amongst young people.
5. Use extra income generated from the collection of business rates to fund environmental improvements on the smaller High Streets – creating additional free parking spaces and improved public spaces.
6. Review parking arrangements on local High Streets to maximise the benefit to local businesses removing longer term parking to alternative sites and introducing Park and Stride Schemes particularly near schools.
7. Support local communities to create schemes to provide “on the spot” training on the High Street for young people.
8. Promotion of local youth work experience scheme to ensure that young people are given a wide choice of careers linking work experience to education pathways.
9. Ensure that every child over the age of fourteen is either in education or training or has a job.

5. Supporting a community that feels safe and is treated honestly and fairly

The latest “PEEL” Police effectiveness report published in March 2018 shows that in terms of Preventing Crime and tackling anti-social behaviour and protecting vulnerable people the Inspector judged West Yorkshire Police to be good. However they found they way the Police investigate crime and reduce re-offending requires improvement.

The Inspectors found that the quality of investigations for low-level crimes, such as street robbery, burglary and vehicle-related criminality needs to improve. Of particular concern was the quality of its initial investigative response, and handover are a cause for concern. The Inspectors said officers and supervisors need further training in Basic Investigative Skills and that the Force needs to review its procedures to track down criminals who are wanted for offences, to ensure they are arrested promptly and prevented from continuing to cause harm.

Publically available figures from the West Yorkshire Police website show that in Bradford East there were 20692 recorded crimes. Almost half were for violence and sexual offences

(27% of the total for violence and sexual offences and 20.49% for Anti-social behaviour). Of the total number of crimes recorded in a staggering 76.40% no further action was taken and only 496 offenders were dealt with at court. We can understand how hard it is to find out who does commit crimes, however in 31% of the offences the Police knew who the suspect was but were unable to prosecute the offender; in other words 5110 known offenders got away with their crimes.

We have serious concerns about the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner. On his watch crime is up, reoffending rates for young people are up, on every measure he is failing Bradford and for three-quarters of all offences across the district no action is taken. It's no wonder that HMC found the approach to investigation requires improvement.

The wages bill for the Police and Crime Commissioners Office has risen every year since 2012 and total costs have risen by half a million. We estimate that the cost of the Police and Crime Commissioners Office alone amounts to the equivalent of recruiting and training and extra 35 Police Officers a year.

People have the right to feel safe in their homes and when crimes are reported to see that action is taken. We believe the best way to help victims is to stop crime happening in the first place, whether by designing out crime or by smart punishments that put offenders back on the straight and narrow. We believe the first job of the criminal justice system is to prevent crime by cutting reoffending and the Police can only do that with our support.

The Liberal Democrat Team will;

1. Scrap the Community Safety panels and devolve community safety decisions to local partnerships between the Council, Police and others such as housing associations and local Councillors sitting on the Council's Area Committees.
2. Repeal Labour's cuts to the Youth Services ensuring that every young person has access to at least three nights a week youth offer within their community.
3. Create a network of 'Green Space Wardens' to ensure that our parks and open spaces are clean and pleasant places for leisure activities. They will have a specific remit to encourage community activity in the parks, such as gardening, implementing policies for conservation and management of green spaces, for community development and sport activities for everyone.
4. Extend restorative and community justice schemes and promote more innovative problem solving within the court system. Drug addiction should be treated as an

illness, with treatment for drug users and strong action against dealers and drug dealing that blights our communities.

5. Design out opportunities for crime, by improving the built environment, the design of new technologies and increasing community resilience.
6. We will hold a public inquiry into how the Council has dealt with historic cases and its approach to child sexual exploitation in our District.
7. We will hold a formal review of the implementation of the Raising Participation Act to ensure that all young people are either in work or in learning. We will instigate a formal system for recruiting and employing mentors to support young people who are in need.
8. Challenge the Police and Crime Commissioner about his record of working for Bradford, the use of his media team, his rising costs and increasing levels of cash reserves.

Local Taxation

It was not surprising that Conservatives Councillors voted to push through the Council Tax Support Reduction Scheme without even a debate. But it is truly shocking that Labour Councillors brought forward the scheme in the first place.

Now just over 28000 working poor people find themselves with higher bills, carers or those with the enhanced disability premium have had their exemption removed. This means hundreds and hundreds of pounds of extra costs for families with the biggest burdens.

The Council Tax Support Reduction Scheme means for a family with one child and a total joint income of £256 per week they will get no help with their Council Tax and we will be asking for around about 10% of their earnings.

And if you are one of the 1511 adults in the District with a learning difficulty - then you are a "demand management issue" and "you are being supported in a smaller cost envelope that will stand up to a judicial review".

We cannot expect Labour to spend money that it doesn't have however we cannot support them to balance the Council's budgets on the backs of those least able to pay.

The Liberal Democrat Team will;

1. Keep the Council Tax increase to 0% for general services and use any increase to tackle care for the most vulnerable ensuring that those with broadest backs share the burden.
2. Review the number of Councillors reducing them to one per electoral ward. We will also remove the allowances paid to Councillors for political jobs on the Council and additional trade union officials saving around a quarter of a million pounds which we would invest in services to keep vulnerable people safe.
3. We will review all the additional payments paid to Councillors. This adds up to the Labour Group on Bradford Council costing tax payers almost a million pounds. This money we will invest directly in services to young people.
4. We will never tax you without an explanation of what the money will be spent on. We will reduce the Council's budget fairly and openly setting out who is going to be asked to contribute more and where cuts will fall.
5. We will put a stop on all future Council borrowing for unsustainable projects such as the Swimming Pools and the "Peoples Palace" until the business case for the project has been proven and public support has been gained. We will monitor and challenge capital expenditure on projects that are to bring income into the Council ensuring that the money is spent in Bradford for the benefit of the Bradford economy and brings additional social benefits.

6. Creating a District that is clean and green and has a waste system that works

Labour Councillors implemented a costly permit scheme and charges for bulky waste and we have more fly-tipping than ever. We believe that what is needed is a change of public opinion which makes littering an 'offence against the public norm' rather than an offence punishable with a fine. We are spending millions of pounds cleaning up after people who are too lazy or don't care to dispose of rubbish in a bin. The failure to collect some waste has seen the Council's fly tipping team become part of the business plans of unscrupulous waste traders.

According to a recent air quality report, Bradford had a 4.2 per cent mortality rate attributable to particulate air pollution in 2015, equating to around 2,300 years of life lost per year due to the health effects of particulates. Labour Councillors have refused to

establish Clean Air Zones where they are needed, particularly outside schools, leaving young lungs damaged by cars idling their engines close to schools.

The Liberal Democrat team will;

1. Base Environment Teams in a community centre in each ward and give them the responsibility for cleanliness, environmental improvements and recycling. We would create a community pay-back scheme for people and organisations that are caught littering.
2. Review the operation of the Licence to Carry waste scheme aiming to cut the number of unscrupulous waste traders and incidents of fly-tipping.
2. Invest in the proper management of green spaces with the creation of community owned and managed trusts and community- based Green Space Wardens.
3. Scrap the brown bin charges and double the collection of green garden waste from the brown bins and review the recycling of other types of household waste.
4. Consult with residents about the development of no-cold calling zones, neighbourhood watches or good neighbour schemes.
5. Support the introduction of local schemes to increase energy efficiency, set targets for clean air and water, radically reducing waste and carbon production and reform planning law to encourage cycling.
6. We will create “no-idleing zones” outside schools and in villages and create clear air zones to clean up the air that we breathe.

The Liberal Democrats are working to build a stronger economy in a fairer society, enabling everyone to get on in life.

We believe everyone should be able to take charge of their lives and fulfil their potential in a free, fair and open society.

To achieve this we need to create both sustainable growth *and* equality of opportunity. That is what we will be campaigning for in the Local Government elections on May 3rd.