



Manifesto 2017

Driving Cardiff Forward

Cardiff Liberal Democrats
www.cardiffld.org.uk



Our vision for Cardiff

Cardiff stands at a cross-roads. Over the last 5 years of Labour in charge of the Council we have seen services cut, council taxes rise excessively and their leadership in complete disarray. The council has been in the news for all the wrong reasons. Cardiff deserves better.

A city open to the world

Cardiff has a history of being an open, tolerant and liberal city. The Victorians built our city on free trade, opening us up to the world through hard work and an entrepreneurial spirit. That openness brought wealth, culture and expansion, putting us on the map and eventually making us the capital city of Wales. We must do the same again.

The Liberal Democrats want to continue that ethos and campaigned to stay in the European Union during last year's referendum. It was great that Cardiff voted to remain. If Britain is to leave the EU, we need Cardiff to be open, outward looking and innovating. We will prioritise education to give our children the skills they need in this changing world, and we will make Cardiff business friendly by helping local businesses to drive growth and making the city attractive to large companies. We will hold true to our liberal values at a time when racism and populism are on the rise in the world, and remember that whatever someone's race or religion - **we are all Cardiffians.**

Getting the basics right

We need to be ambitious for the future, but also need to get the basics right so that more companies choose to invest here. Currently our streets are dirtier, our roads and pavements are crumbling and important services for the vulnerable are being cut.

Labour have cut back street cleaning, already closed a waste and recycling centre, made smaller bins compulsory and reduced the number of places where people can pick up green recycling bags. These policies have led to increased fly-tipping and more litter on our streets. We must tackle our crumbling infrastructure so our citizens can get around without facing large potholes. We also need to expand the number of affordable homes so that our children have a home for the future.



An end to the chaos of the last 5 years

Labour can't run Cardiff properly while their main focus is fighting each other. In contrast the Liberal Democrats are united and fight for local people. Labour promised to keep council tax rises to no more than 2% from 2014, but have broken that promise year after year.

Labour have ignored communities that have fought to save local services. This can't go on. Even some of their own councillors have had enough with two recently deciding to join the Liberal Democrats. We need an administration that will keep to its promises and put local people back at the heart of decision making.

This manifesto sets out realistic proposals to improve the lives of our people. Last time we led the council, we delivered the lowest average council taxes in Wales, and this time we pledge to keep tax rates to a minimum while delivering excellent services.

The choice for the people of Cardiff has never been clearer. It's time for fresh start with the Liberal Democrats.

Give us your support and together we can drive Cardiff forward.

Cllr. Elizabeth Clark
Leader of the Liberal Democrats
City and County of Cardiff
May 2017



Our five key pledges to the people of Cardiff:

- 1** Pilot smaller class sizes in some of our most deprived communities.
- 2** Invest in our crumbling roads and pavements, reversing the decline in spending per person.
- 3** Make Cardiff greener by investing more in street cleaning, establishing a 'handy van' scheme and re-introducing the free bulky waste collection that Labour introduced charges for.
- 4** Open Cardiff for business, using the City Deal, Central Square and the new bus station to bring new jobs to the city.
- 5** Limit any council tax rise over the next council term to below the Welsh average, in contrast to Labour breaking its promise year after year.



Education

Education is our top priority. Investing in our schools is one of the best things we can do to give our children the best possible start in life. When the Liberal Democrats ran Cardiff Council, we invested in new schools such as St Teilo's, opened new Welsh medium schools, and invested in existing schools such as Hawthorn Primary.

At a Wales-level, between 2012 and 2017 the Welsh Liberal Democrats secured an extra £33,847,390 for Cardiff's poorest pupils to narrow the gap between the least and most well off pupils through the Pupil Premium. At a Cardiff level, we increased funding to schools over an 8-year period between 2004 and 2012, leaving Cardiff as the second-highest spending local authority in Wales in terms of funding delegated to schools. Over the last 5 years, Cardiff Labour have failed to respond to the school places challenges in the north of the city, mismanaged the creation of Eastern High and let children and parents down.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- Work with the Welsh Liberal Democrat Cabinet Secretary for Education to pilot smaller class sizes in some of our most deprived communities.
- Investigate options to expand Cardiff High School.
- Allow high schools and primaries to formally link in order to share priorities, governance, and resources, ensuring that high-performing schools offer the lead to underperforming schools.
- Invest in the upkeep of school buildings to bring schools up to a decent standard.
- Encourage pupil leadership and involvement in school governance through school councils, pupil governors, and other initiatives.
- Protect Meadowbank Primary School from closure - the school provides specialist speech and language support to children across Cardiff and should be kept secure.
- Ensure that the necessary funding is available to schools to support pupils in need of specialised support.
- Extend links with universities to allow undergraduates to play a mentoring role within schools.
- Invest in the recruitment and training of new governors to ensure strong leadership in our schools.
- Assist schools to prepare for the new Welsh curriculum that is due to start in September 2018
- Ensure high quality training is provided for teachers and engage with the Welsh Government's new Academy for Educational Leadership to enable our school leaders to lead.
- Promote the use of community buildings, leisure centres and school premises to increase the level of childcare provision in Wales including wrap-around care.
- Consider a language immersion centre to ease pressure on schools that are presented with children with very little or no English.
- In line with our past record of expanding the provision of Welsh medium education we will again seek to match future provision to meet demand, including by investigating the options for establishing a fourth Welsh medium high school for the city.



Finance & Economic Development

Under Labour, the economy of Wales is dramatically lagging behind the rest of the UK - our employment rate is lower than England and Scotland; we have the least productive economy in the UK; and the highest child poverty levels outside London. As the key economic driver in Wales more needs to be done to boost the Cardiff economy.

Labour pledged to act urgently to tackle youth unemployment, but it still lies above the Welsh average. The business sector is crying out for the Council to have more speed, focus, clarity and delivery of economic achievements. They have failed to invest in transport and infrastructure to bring people into our cities and they have broken their promise to keep annual council tax increases to under 2% for four successive years.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- Commit to limiting any council tax rise over the lifetime of the next council term to below the Welsh average. When we ran the council between 2004 and 2012, the average increase in council tax was 2.7% - the lowest in Wales. Over the last 4 years Labour have increased it by 4-5% each year.
- Be pro-business and put measures in place to raise the profile of our city on the UK and international stage, in order to attract major companies to invest in Cardiff.
- Ensure the City Deal is delivered, but with more transparency and democratic accountability.
- Seek to promote the Real Living Wage to help lift low pay earners out of poverty
- Work closely with the business community to develop Cardiff as a hub for emerging technologies and industries.
- Explore ways to involve local business leaders in the Council's Scrutiny Committees, working with the Federation of Small Business, Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of British Industry and local trades organisations to ensure the voice of business is heard.
- Establish a sustainable business advice service to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) improve energy efficiency and preserve resources.
- Reform the tendering system so that more SMEs can bid for council contracts.
- Explore, as a priority, how the local authority can improve access to finance for small and medium enterprises.
- Deliver the Maelfa Regeneration project in Llanedeyrn. Liberal Democrats started the project in 2004, have continued pushing the council on it whilst in opposition and we will ensure it is completed during the early part of the next council term.
- Deliver more smaller-scale regeneration projects in local communities.



Environment

Under Labour our city has suffered from increases in fly-tipping and messier streets. When the Lib Dems took over the council in 2004, Cardiff had the dirtiest streets of any city in England and Wales. We invested in street cleaning, introduced free recycling, and started free bulky waste collections. Our recycling rates improved and our streets were tidier. Since Labour took control of the council in 2012, street cleaning has been cut back and they have forced many households to have smaller bins, closed recycling centres and charged for bulky waste collections. Our communities are neglected and our streets dirtier. Cardiff's carbon dioxide emissions are high compared to many other British cities, with some city centre wards particularly vulnerable to high levels of air pollution. As a coastal city facing the challenge of unpredictable weather and rising sea levels through climate change, it is in the city's best interests that we reduce our impact on the environment and commit ourselves to making Cardiff a resilient and sustainable city, based on values of community and equality.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- Invest more in street cleaning, particularly after waste collection day and for deep cleansing of streets and neighbourhoods.
- Establish a 'handy van' scheme to improve action to deal with issues such as dumped litter, graffiti and the co-ordination of repairs across geographic areas.
- Use better targeted education, particularly in inner city areas, with the aim of improving recycling rates.
- Abolish the charges for the free bulky waste service that Labour have introduced.
- Expand the number of household waste recycling centres, ensuring there are at least four across the city, including at Wedal Road and in Western Cardiff .
- Expand the number of locations where residents can collect recycling and food waste bags, for example shops and post offices.
- Explore the establishment of council approved 'shops' based at the Household Waste Recycling Centres where residents can buy reusable/upcycled items.
- Work with businesses to improve commercial waste food collection rates and pilot ways to better containerise commercial food waste so it is less prone to attacks by seagulls.
- Explore the introduction of bottle banks in targeted areas where cans and bottles can be returned for cash or Time Credits – vouchers that can be exchanged for services from shops, cinema and other venues.



- Work with management companies of apartment blocks with the aim of giving occupants more opportunities to recycle and ensure future developments provide facilities to maximise recycling potential.
- Work with landlords to ensure that tenants understand the correct waste collection arrangements and are provided with recycling facilities at the start of their tenancy.
- Crack down on fly-tipping by specifically targeting hotspots, enforcing fines and lobbying Welsh Government to increase fines.
- Tackle dangerous air pollution levels by encouraging people to find alternatives to driving and promoting car-free days in the city.
- Encourage renewable energy development in the Cardiff area, and actively support the proposed Cardiff Tidal Lagoon.
- Trial electric vehicles and work to improve the charging infrastructure in the city.
- Pilot a 'Library of Things', which residents can join to borrow practical household items, for example gardening tools.
- Restore the dedicated graffiti teams previously introduced when we ran the council.
- Reintroduce additional end-of-term waste collections as part of the 'Get it out for Cardiff scheme' in areas with high student populations.

Democracy

As liberals we believe that councils should be as open and transparent as possible, so that decisions can be scrutinised by councillors and the public. When we ran the council we introduced public questions, we froze councillors' allowances and we frequently consulted the public on decisions.

Under Labour communities have been ignored, local consultation has reduced and the council has relied on the Ask Cardiff survey that over-represents affluent suburbs in the north, and under-represents less affluent, younger and ethnic minority communities.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- Change the system used for electing councillors to the Single Transferable Vote and extend the franchise to 16- and 17-year-olds, if and when we are given the powers to do so.
- Review the ban on photography and videography in the council chamber and the public gallery to see whether it would improve democracy.
- Improve engagement with citizens through social media, including allowing residents to report problems through Facebook and Twitter as well as existing Connect2Cardiff methods.
- Increase the proportion of Welsh-speaking council staff in public-facing roles, to ensure that everyone who wants to, is able to communicate with the council through the medium of Welsh.
- Consider scrapping the council's Capital Times newspaper, favouring instead more direct communication with residents.
- Improve consultation with residents, businesses and community groups on council-led changes that affect them.
- Review the ineffective and unrepresentative Ask Cardiff survey, ensuring that any annual survey is more representative of our diverse city.
- Recognise the diversity of Cardiff Council's workforce by recognising and encouraging employee networks, and applying for a place on Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index every year.
- Allow members of the public to present their own petitions to council scrutiny meetings.

Libraries, Culture & Sport

Providing access to arts, culture and libraries across Cardiff is part of delivering a healthier, prosperous and more optimistic city. When we led the council, we refurbished or rebuilt Penylan, Cathays, Grangetown, Splott, Llandaff North, Rhydypenau, Llanrumney and Fairwater Libraries, as well as delivering the multi-award-winning new Central Library.

Labour have closed Roath Library, cut library hours and replaced librarians and library assistants. Access to music education for our children has been cut back, and too many of our poorest communities are unable to access opportunities.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- Maintain the book budget for our local libraries, ensuring breadth and availability of content.
- Commit to maintain the provision of music education in our schools and increase access for our children where possible.
- Refurbish and re-open Roath Library.
- Ensure that services are not reduced at Penylan Library now that the building is managed by the leisure trust.
- Promote and ensure Welsh language services and activities to all communities across Cardiff.
- Consider a future bid to be a UK City of Culture.
- Establish a tourism information office in the city centre.
- Support music venues in the city centre including Womanby Street. We will review planning policy to protect long standing music venues even when flats or hotels are granted planning permission nearby.
- Continue to support Pride Cymru and Tafwyl for the entire council term - these events are important parts of Cardiff's cultural calendar and attract hundreds of thousands of people.
- Continue investment in the Hyb programme to diversify the services available in libraries, ensuring that more of our communities have access to a local Hyb.
- Campaign to reduce VAT on Visitor Accommodation & Attractions from 20% to 5%.
- Develop a local list of buildings which are considered historic assets for our area.
- Invest in the maintenance and improvement of the quality of external sports facilities.
- Invest in disability sport in Cardiff.
- Work with community sports groups to maintain and improve their facilities through the use of Time Credits – vouchers that volunteers earn and then spend on fun activities and experiences.
- Encourage more international sporting events in Cardiff.
- Engage with the LGBT Sports Forum and LGBT sports teams to promote LGBT inclusive sport in the City.
- Support any future bid to bring the Commonwealth Games to Cardiff.



Housing

Cardiff has a growing crisis with too many people unable to afford to buy a home and over 8,000 people waiting on the list for social rented housing. When Labour took control of the council they promised to continue the Lib Dem plan to build hundreds of new council houses, but by the end of 2016 not a single council house had actually been built.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- Prioritise investing money into building much needed homes. We would seek to increase the current commitment to build 1500 homes and ensure they are actually built, not just left as empty lots, and use the latest energy efficient technologies.
- Provide more help to people sleeping rough on our streets. We would not criminalise homelessness as some councils have done and would work with housing charities to support them and help them to rebuild their lives, including looking at the Housing First model
- Use new housing powers to invest in insulation schemes in poorly insulated council homes, lowering energy bills for those who need it most.
- Invest in renewable energy technology in council homes to reduce energy consumption and reduce costs to tenants.
- Work with the private rented sector to assist in re-housing people on the housing list more quickly, providing support to encourage landlords into this market.
- Work with the landlords and tenants' groups to raise accommodation standards, help develop a more sustainable market in the private rented housing sector and ensure tenants are aware of their rights.
- Work with neighbouring councils with the aim of developing a more regionally-based approach to housing, so it is possible to build new housing outside the city boundaries, but connected with appropriate roads and public transport.
- Undertake an urgent review of Labour's controversial Local Development Plan to address concerns about changing population projections and impact on the environment and traffic congestion.
- As far as possible, seek to avoid the use of bed and breakfast accommodation to house homeless people. We ended the need for the council to use such accommodation when we previously led the authority, working with local housing associations, and using temporary rented housing and the specialist facility at Adams Court.
- Review the application of the Right to Buy scheme to ensure money is reinvested into building new homes.
- Develop an accessible housing register.
- Seek to facilitate greater use of under-utilised space above shops for much needed additional housing provision in communities.



Social Services

One of the most important responsibilities of a council is to protect and support the vulnerable in our society, yet over the last five years this group has been let down by a lack of leadership and vision. In adult social services, there have been three different cabinet members and three different Directors due to repeated restructures. Services have been cut, care agencies have left the market, day centres have closed and the social services budget has been out of control.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- Work with the local health board to reduce the number of people trapped in hospital because they haven't got the right care and support - Cardiff is currently the worst performing Welsh council in this area.
- Provide more support for carers. Not enough carers receive the support that they need and deserve,
- Support long term investment in Alzheimer's Society Cymru's day centre at Oldwell Court - we worked with the charity last year to stop Labour's closure plans and a Liberal Democrat council would secure its future, as part of a wider plan to make Cardiff the first dementia-friendly capital in the UK.
- Review the provision of meals on wheels and luncheon club services to avoid duplication.
- Work with the third sector to support the development of social enterprises and encourage sustainable volunteer-led care and support.
- Protect and re-introduce funding to volunteer-led luncheon clubs such as Adamsdown and Dalton Street Day Centres.
- Support people to have more freedom and control through direct payments. We would raise the hourly rate so that the direct payment rates are closer to those of other service users, and give users of this service more support to recruit paid carers and be an employer.
- Pilot the use of intergenerational living models (as developed in the Netherlands), where students are offered free or subsidised accommodation to live with and support older people.
- Seek to support and grow the provision of community transport.
- Work with providers of care homes and extra-care housing to ensure appropriate housing is available. We have a growing elderly population and Cardiff does not have enough suitable extra-care housing to allow people to live independently for longer.
- Encourage easier access to mental health services for young people, bringing together the council, NHS and schools to work more effectively as partners in delivering this.
- Aim to raise the standard of support for vulnerable people by ensure a better standard of training is provided to care workers.



Highways & Transport

A modern aspiring city needs a good transport infrastructure, yet under Labour our roads are crumbling, subsidised bus services have been cut back dramatically, the delivery of the new central bus station has been significantly delayed, and park and ride charges have increased. The city is projected to grow by over 90,000 people in the next 20 years, and with two huge new housing developments already approved by the current Labour council on green-field sites, these problems can only get worse! Since 2012, the amount spent per person on roads and pavements has fallen by 26% and we are the second lowest spender in Wales - at a time when other councils are investing more and more. Cardiff is the driving force of the capital region and our city needs a modern integrated transport system to bring people in and out each day.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- Roll out a new programme of highway repairs and resurfacing programme to resurface our crumbling roads and paths.
- Work in partnership with the Welsh Government and business partners to promote the South Wales Metro integrated transport initiative.
- Prioritise the delivery of a modern bus station in the city centre.
- Seek to deliver more and better located park and ride sites on strategic routes into city (including near M4 Junctions 32 and 33).
- Work with partners to link Junction 33 to the A4119 in preparation for the projected new housing developments.
- Work with Cardiff Bus and other providers to encourage the use of more environmentally-friendly buses that can help reduce air pollution.
- Develop a new strategy for cycling backed by an appropriate share of capital investment; building on the previous Enfys strategy established when we previously ran the council. To make it easier to cycle across the city, we will develop new cycle routes, connect existing routes, and introduce drop-kerbs. This would in turn benefit other road users by cutting overall congestion on Cardiff's roads.
- Where new roads are built, including as part of new housing developments, we will ensure that properly segregated cycle and pedestrian routes are part of the infrastructure.
- Work with partner organisations to provide more secure free cycle parking across the city, funded through advertising and/or subsidy.
- Work with Network Rail to establish new stations at Mynachdy, St Fagans and St Mellons.
- Consult with pedestrians, particularly people with mobility issues such as the elderly and disabled, to identify pedestrian crossing blackspots where crossing times can be lengthened.
- Investigate options to allow for a greater percentage of a road to have residents' parking, where residents support it, in areas of acute parking demand.
- Increase parking enforcement to combat illegal parking in residential areas.
- Increase the enforcement of 20 miles per hour zones, particularly around schools, and increase the number and spread of them.
- Ensure Community Infrastructure Levies (CILs) on the developers of large-scale housing developments provide funds for sustainable transport infrastructure development.
- Open and advertise park and ride sites to car share users to promote the reduction of single occupancy car journeys.
- Lobby the Welsh and UK Governments to completely scrap the tolls on the Severn Bridge.
- Support car clubs within the city with appropriate infrastructure provision.
- Seek to offer every child the chance to learn to cycle safely at school.

Crime & Community Safety

As a capital city, Cardiff faces growing challenges with reported crime and disorder. Overall crime appears to be going up in Cardiff and whilst policing is the responsibility of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cardiff Council has an important role to play. Between 2004 and 2012, the Liberal Democrat-run council worked with local police to deliver a network of additional PCSOs, introduced alley gating schemes in various parts of the city, established the council's dedicated graffiti teams, and introduced the out of hours' noise nuisance service.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour across the city by using targeted interventions, neighbourhood management and promoting community safety services.
- Work with the probation service to encourage greater use of restorative justice.
- Install more alley gates across a wider range of areas in the city.
- Minimise the number of young people who enter the youth justice system by working with partners to reduce offending.
- Bring communities together, and ensure that Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are treated equally.
- Work with businesses to encourage them to sign up to the South Wales Police LGBT-friendly scheme.
- Subject to the support of local residents, increase the number of 'No Cold Calling Zones', where cold callers are specifically forbidden from selling goods or services. We'll prioritise areas with high proportions of elderly people.
- Extend the operating hours of the council's out-of-hours' noise nuisance services and increase enforcement capabilities.
- Explore opportunities for communities to adopt and improve their local spaces through initiatives such as adding seating, planters for community gardens and enhanced access.
- Oppose any moves to create a single, centralised Welsh police force, to ensure the system is responsive to the different local needs of communities in different parts of Wales.
- Ensure that there is a named person in every school to help the victims of cyber-bullying.
- Pilot the use of secure parking to prevent motorcycle crime.



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