

Liberal 
Democrats

Peterborough

**Manifesto for Peterborough
City Council Elections 2021**

A VISION OF A MORE LIBERAL PETERBOROUGH

February 2021

Introduction

The Liberal Democrats want to create a fair, safe, and sustainable Peterborough in which everyone is equally empowered to fulfil their ambitions and live a healthy life.

We believe that we have the ideas that Peterborough needs in order to build a society in which everyone - regardless of their age, gender, or background - has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and get on in life.

Sadly, under the Conservatives, our city is falling backwards. Our council is over-centralised and secretive, we are failing to act to address the climate emergency, our services are being cut while anti-social behaviour is increasing, and the lack of affordable housing has become a major issue.

The Lib Dems believe that our city can have a bright future, but only with fresh ideas. The stale days of failing Conservative leadership need to make way for new and innovative ideas.

In recent years, Conservative chancellors have cut Peterborough's grant from central government. On average Central government grants to local authorities were cut 38% in real terms between 2009/10 and 2018/19. The Lib Dems believe that the fight against these cuts should involve doing more than the Conservatives' 'Stand up for Peterborough' campaign which simply seeks to 'move the deck chairs around'. We believe that much more money needs to be invested in the vital services that local government provides.

With the Conservatives set to lose council seats across the city, it looks increasingly likely that the city council will have 'no overall control' by any one party after the local elections. Politicians from all political parties will need to work together to protect and improve the services which many local residents rely on.

This document shows that the Lib Dems are more ready than ever before to help build a city that works for everyone.

Our commitment to the residents of Peterborough is that a council run by the Lib Dems will work to improve the lives of all residents by listening to you and working hard all year round.

This document sets out the policies that Liberal Democrat councillors will strive to implement should we get into a position of power or influence on the City Council. The order and speed with which the policies can be translated into action will depend on the funds available and circumstances prevailing at the time. There are also some policies which relate to responsibilities of the Council's partner organisations, such as the Combined Authority, where the process will involve influencing the decision makers rather than being able to make direct changes to service delivery.



Cllr Nick Sandford
Council Group Leader



Simon Kail
Local Party Chair

Our priorities for Peterborough

Take action to address the Climate Emergency.

Despite declaring a climate emergency in Peterborough, the council's ambition to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment are weak, focussing only on council owned buildings and services. The Lib Dems believe that the council should take a much wider role in reducing Peterborough's impact on the environment by promoting low carbon energy, transport, and housing for the whole community. We believe that Peterborough should reduce its overall carbon use significantly over the next 10 years and be a carbon neutral city before 2045. We support the ambition for achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 but we think current actions and plans in place will make this very difficult to achieve.

Give residents a greater say on what happens in their area.

The Lib Dems will reform the secretive, cabinet decision making process in the Town Hall, opting instead for a system which will be open and transparent to residents, giving councillors of all parties' greater influence. In this way we aim to end the Conservative administrations' over prioritising of investment on the city centre at the expense of the rest of the council area. Longer term, we will make your representation the same wherever you live across the council through Area Committees or Parish Councils.

Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Lib Dems will improve Prevention and Enforcement Teams to patrol outside of the city centre and address illegal parking and fly-tipping in our communities. We will also promote and encourage more local communities to establish Speedwatch and Neighbourhood Watch schemes to further assist in the reduction of anti-social behaviour. We will support additional resources to reduce violent crime and domestic abuse and assist victims.

The Lib Dems will invest more capital to protect our grass verges and tackle problem parking including parking on pavements. We will work to engage with local residents on a street-by-street basis to establish if there is desire for Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to be put in place to make grass verge and pavement parking illegal and consult on a council wide 20mph speed limit on residential roads.

Build affordable housing, maintain roads, and improve our public transport.

The Lib Dems will work to introduce a new strategy which properly supports and rehomes the increasing number of people living on the streets of Peterborough. The Lib Dems will ensure the council meets its target of 30% of all homes built in the city as affordable or social housing, if necessary, by establishing a council-owned housing company.

The Lib Dems will seek to increase investment in the bus network, working with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mayor to introduce green public transport to Peterborough such as light rail and/or electric buses. We will invest in our roads and pavements to improve for all users, encouraging the continued increase of cycling and walking following the COVID 19 pandemic and

taking advantage of the consequential improvements to our health of more exercise and reduced pollution.

Tackle social exclusion and improve the care and health of our residents.

The Lib Dems will work to make Peterborough an age-friendly city. We will work to tackle barriers to older people living well in our city. As part of this project, we will tackle social isolation and improve opportunities for older people to play a full and active part in their communities.

The Lib Dems will improve support for carers in our city both paid and unpaid, supporting both through direct financial aid, funding voluntary organisations and providing respite care.

Improve education for all.

The Lib Dems want to end the regime of teachers being forced to 'teach to the test' by scrapping SATs at key stage 1 and key stage 2 and education league tables to enable our children to have a better primary school education. We believe that rather than putting unnecessary pressure on 4- to 11-year-old children we should be giving them lessons which will help them fulfil their potential.

The Lib Dems wish to see inclusive education of our children, we support the phasing out of selective admissions policies based on faith and would aim for all children to be able to attend their local school if they so wish.

Promote sustainable economic development.

We will support existing local businesses and help to create new ones through training, business advice, the supply of appropriate premises and assistance with finding investment capital. We will encourage the creation of jobs in the green economy and look to adapt the city's infrastructure to new ways of working for the 21st century.

Deliver efficiency, effective services.

The Conservatives seek to portray an image of financial and management competence – but in fact over the past few years here in Peterborough they have wasted huge amounts of money through bad management and poor decisions. The Lib Dems will invest wisely in services and facilities and ensure that benefits are returned to the council rather than just to private companies or investors.

Tackling the Climate Emergency

The Environment and Waste Management

It is our commitment to the natural environment that makes us concerned by the way the current Conservative administration has failed to live up to our city's Environment Capital ambitions. The Lib Dems want Peterborough to regain our status as an environmental leader to ensure that residents are living in a pollution-free and clean environment and preserve our planet for future generations.

We believe that climate change is a fundamental threat to our way of life and to our biodiversity, we support the creation of citizens assemblies within Peterborough for us all to contribute to addressing the challenges we face in the coming years.

The Lib Dems believe that Peterborough City Council should lead by example when it comes to energy conservation and renewable energy. The Lib Dems support the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the council and its aim for council activities to be carbon neutral by 2030. However, we believe this is the tip of the iceberg and we will aim for wider Peterborough carbon targets with the goal of the city being carbon neutral before 2045.

We will examine options for moving all council staff into one energy-efficient building (including the possibility of making better use of the existing new building on Fletton Quays) and dispose of or rent out the current Town Hall.

Where government permits us to do so, we will use the council's planning powers to promote high energy conservation standards and use of renewable forms of energy within new housing and commercial developments.

The Lib Dems are concerned that pesticide use by the council and its contractors has increased in recent years. One of the ways we will look to improve our city's biodiversity is to reduce the use of pesticides.

We will also support the Forest for Peterborough initiative which aims to plant one tree for every person in Peterborough and would introduce further, more ambitious targets on tree planting. This will encourage more wildlife; improve the quality of the air we breathe and tackle the climate emergency.

We will increase the number of council-owned biodiversity and wildflower areas including where appropriate on verges. We will seek to use grass clippings and timber generated by landscape and tree management as a resource for energy generation and extra income for the council.

Visits to parks and green spaces have been proven to improve people's mental and physical health. The Lib Dems will safeguard and enhance parks and playing fields across our city so that future generations are able to access a green space close to their home, for example by applying Natural England's Access to Natural Greenspace Standard.

We will seek to manage the council's farmed estate (farms which the council owns and leases to tenants) for greater environmental benefit, looking to reduce water usage and pollution and emissions. More fundamentally, we will also look at whether the council should be a rural landlord at all and whether we would get better value for money by selling the farmed estate as an on-going concern and investing the proceeds in local services.

The Lib Dems are concerned that too much waste is being incinerated in Peterborough rather than prioritising reduction, re-use, and recycling. We will review the future of the waste incinerator in Peterborough and whether this is best for the long-term sustainability of the area.

The council should look to reduce the time taken to clear fly-tipping, reintroduce street cleaners in problem areas and, given the council's current financial situation, work with parish councils and community groups to increase the number of 'community litter picks' happening across our city.

We will also work to reduce fly-tipping by reviewing the unfair and counter-productive Brown Bin Tax, as we believe that residents should not be penalised for using brown bins. We will introduce a bulky waste collection service giving residents two free collections each year.

We support initiatives like Cool Food, which is led locally by Peterborough Environment City Trust. Food makes up 1/5th of our carbon footprint, and Cool Food helps us understand the carbon cost of what we eat. We will encourage residents to take up the challenge to cut carbon in food consumption (and waste) - reducing their food bills at the same time.

The Lib Dems' top priorities:

- Introduce carbon targets for Peterborough as a whole with the aim of the city being carbon neutral before 2045.
- Work to reduce waste and unnecessary consumption while increasing re-use and recycling.
- Tackle litter and fly-tipping by:
 - Reviewing the unfair and counter-productive 'Brown Bin Tax' under which householders (who already pay for waste collection through their Council Tax) are charged extra for removing garden waste.
 - Implementing a free 'bulky waste collection service' across the city – allowing householders to get the council to remove things like fridges and furniture which are otherwise all too often dumped by roadsides.
 - Reintroduce street cleaners in problem areas and encourage community litter picks.
- Reduce pesticide use and enhance biodiversity across Peterborough.
- Encourage energy conservation and renewable energy.
- Plant trees to help combat the effects of climate change.

Communities and local government

The Lib Dems believe that the current decision-making process on Peterborough City Council is failing residents. We feel that power is held in the hands of too few 'senior' councillors and, as a result, decisions are often forced through without adequate consultation.

The Lib Dems want to change how decisions are made to make them more transparent and inclusive, while integrating the principle of subsidiarity - the idea that decisions should be made at the most immediate level - into how the council operates.

First-past-the-post elections have blighted our politics for too long. They reduce diversity of ideas and representation. We believe that politics, both in Peterborough and across the country, would be healthier if we had a fairer voting system. We believe that it is important to get young people engaged in the political system at an earlier age.

We also want to work with communities across Peterborough to ensure that everyone is able to play an active role within our city - whether at work, within a community organisation or when engaging with neighbours. We want the city council to take an increased role in promoting diversity and supporting wider integration.

The Lib Dems' top priorities:

- Scrap the 'leader and cabinet system' and have all key decisions made by council committees that meet and hold debates in public.
- Increase public engagement through on-line broadcasting and give opportunities for residents to contribute to committee and council meetings on-line.
- Expand the role and powers of Full Council so that it once again becomes the 'Parliament of the City', rather than just being a piece of theatre or a talking shop.
- Create Area Committees with real powers, including the power to decide how money is spent within the community.
- Lobby central government to allow councils the option of adopting a fairer proportional voting system and lower the voting age to 16.
- Support the creation of new parish councils in areas which do not have them.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to develop the English language skills of those who speak other languages to ensure that they are better able to integrate into life in Peterborough.
- Promote and celebrate the diverse backgrounds of many of the residents of Peterborough through more cross-community events to lower the barriers to integration.

Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour and Enforcement

The Liberal Democrats are concerned that in recent years more residents than ever before have contacted us to tell us that they are concerned about criminal activity and anti-social behaviour in our city.

Many people feel let down by the lack of police action to tackle anti-social behaviour in residential areas, too many of our Enforcement Officers are being pulled into the city centre. As a result, problems such as dog fouling, graffiti, fly-tipping, and problem parking in residential areas aren't being tackled. From our conversations with residents, it is clear to us that they feel ignored by our local Conservative Police and Crime Commissioner as well as by our Conservative-led city council. Things need to change.

The Liberal Democrats will take residents' concerns seriously. We will ensure that the council works with the police to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour across our city and create an enhanced Prevention and Enforcement Service which will spend time tackling problems in residential areas.

Evidence shows us that community policing works. By building stronger links with residents, our police, and police community support officers (PCSOs) play a vital role in intelligence gathering, community engagement and reassurance. That's why we will lobby the police to improve their visible Neighbourhood Police Team and work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to review the cuts to PCSO's in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire currently proceeding.

The police's Community Speedwatch scheme is proven to reduce speeding. The Lib Dems want the council to invest in more Speedwatch equipment which can be borrowed by Community Speedwatch Groups across the Peterborough area. We also want the council to do more to promote and encourage the setting up of local Speedwatch schemes in areas without a group.

The Lib Dems will promote community justice panels and restorative justice that bring victims and wrongdoers together to resolve conflict, reduce harm and encourage rehabilitation.

Domestic abuse is an horrific stain on our society and is still all too often a hidden crime. Everything that can be done must be done to eradicate it. The Liberal Democrats want to improve support services by ensuring they are properly funded so that victims are given the help and support they need.

The Lib Dems' top priorities:

- Enhance the Prevention and Enforcement Service, to establish a specific new enforcement team which will spend all its time in residential areas.
- Lobby the police to increase the resources they allocate to community policing.

- Work to tackle speeding across our city.
- Promote Neighbourhood Watch and Speed Watch groups.
- Consult on blanket 20mph speed limits in residential areas.
- Fund domestic abuse support services.
- Promote community justice panels.
- Review the provision of services for young people to ensure that there are activities available for them out of education, to help reduce anti-social behaviour caused by lack of a more productive use of their time.

Education

The Peterborough Liberal Democrats believe that high-quality education services are one of the keys to building a fairer and more equal society. The right education can open up opportunities, unlock an individual's potential and provide the foundation people need to succeed in life.

The Liberal Democrats believe that to do this we must improve everyone's access to education. We will embrace 'lifelong learning' so that all residents, regardless of age or background, are equipped for a career in a modern, ever-changing economy. Evidence shows that early years and primary school education is the most important stage of an individual's education. That's why the Liberal Democrats will ensure that children's centres are kept open and their work strengthened. We will also ensure that a variety of accredited childcare is available throughout the city so that parents can choose the right care for their child.

We will aim to reverse cuts to the Pupil Premium and Free School Meals policies which are widely considered to have boosted children's educational attainment. These were Lib Dem achievements from 2010 to 2015 in the coalition government and we are proud of what Lib Dem ministers achieved in giving a fair chance to children from less privileged backgrounds.

We will ensure that there are enough school places and that parents can access a good primary school in their local area. We aim to ensure that primary schools in Peterborough are able not only to improve their OFSTED grades but also the outcomes for all their children. We support the inclusive education of our children and will aim to ensure all children can attend their local school and phase out admissions policies based on faith or other criteria.

If every school in Peterborough was a 'good' school, there would be less pressure on parents to secure places at schools further from home. As well as producing better outcomes for all the city's children this would reduce 'school run' traffic and improve community integration.

We will work to offer extra support for pupils, both to ensure individuals are able to fulfil their potential and to help create a more integrated Peterborough.

The Lib Dems believe that having good secondary and further education is vital to enable pupils to succeed in their chosen career. We would work to ensure that all pupils make good progress no matter their background at a good or excellent school, while ensuring that pupils with special educational needs, disabilities and English as an additional language have appropriate support.

Liberal Democrats value all forms of post-16 education and believe that for Peterborough to succeed we need to invest in a wide range of training opportunities. That's why we will work to ensure that all pupils have the right choice of schools and courses to meet their needs and aspirations, whether that be skills-based, academic or vocational training.

We will work to expand the number of businesses offering apprenticeships so that young people in Peterborough have the opportunity to earn while they learn.

In both secondary and further education, we will work to ensure that pupils have the right advice for selecting a future training or career path.

We support the establishment of a high-quality university in Peterborough and the range of opportunities that it would bring. As well as improving our local education, the Liberal Democrats believe that establishing a good university in the centre of Peterborough would offer a huge boost to our economy. It will help keep talented young people in our city who are currently leaving at the age of 18, grow a more varied night-time economy and - via placement years - ensure that local businesses have the graduate-level skills that they need to grow and succeed.

We believe that in the medium to longer term the Peterborough University should also provide accommodation to help attract talent into the city from outside and further enhance academic standards.

The Liberal Democrats believe in 'lifelong learning' and we want all residents to be able to develop their skills and knowledge in an educational environment. We believe that the council, employers, and our city's educational institutions need to work together to enable individuals to train and retrain to meet the constantly changing needs of the local jobs market.

We will work to increase cooperation with local business to provide courses designed to help people fill local job vacancies at all levels. We will target support packages at residents who are unemployed, underemployed, or wishing to return to work to enable them to have the skills and confidence to be active within the workforce.

We will promote democracy and participation in education by enhancing the rights of parents and students, for example by encouraging the setting up of school councils with meaningful powers in all schools. These councils could lead their schools to achieving Fair Trade, environmental or other accreditations.

The Lib Dems' top priorities:

- Lobby central government to axe education league tables in their current form to change the focus in the classroom from passing exams to developing key skills and knowledge.
- Phasing out of selective admissions policies based on faith and aim for all children to be able to attend their local school if they so wish.
- Establish a high-quality University in the heart of Peterborough.
- Promote lifelong learning through a council-run web portal.
- Protect our children's centres and local libraries.

Health and Social Care

Official statistics show that people living in Peterborough are much less healthy than people living in comparable council areas. Our social care service is in crisis while mental health still does not have parity with physical health. Both locally and nationally there is a clear need for more money to be invested in the NHS and social care.

Locally the Lib Dems believe that it is vital that the council uses its public health leadership and scrutiny roles to improve health across our city. Government cuts, combined with growing demand caused by an ageing population, has pushed our NHS and social care service into crisis.

Cuts to healthcare services are increasing waiting lists while cuts to social care have made the problem worse by resulting in patients being forced to stay in hospital (or 'bed block') long beyond the time when they are medically able to leave. Cuts to public health services and other preventative healthcare services are storing up health problems for the future.

The Liberal Democrats will campaign for better funding nationally and work to ensure that money is spent in the most efficient way.

We believe that the council must persuade central government to step-in to the Peterborough City Hospital's PFI contract to put our hospital on a more sustainable financial footing and allow more money to be invested in patient care.

Locally we believe that the council must take a strong lead in combating health inequalities and promoting preventative healthcare. The Lib Dems will invest more in preventative healthcare, particularly in areas of the city with lower levels of health and well-being, and work with partners such as Vivacity to ensure that more people are engaging with the services available.

Community centres, children's services, health and fitness classes and healthy eating advice all have a key role to play in improving health – and in cutting the burden on the NHS by reducing illness.

Equality for mental health is another priority for our party. We will work with partners in the charity and healthcare sectors to ensure that mental illnesses are given parity as soon as possible.

One of the areas of mental health which is a big concern for the Liberal Democrats in Peterborough is loneliness and social isolation. The Lib Dems want to make Peterborough the country's first 'age-friendly city'.

Both locally and nationally the Lib Dems are concerned by the impact of immigration policy on our NHS. There has already been an 80% drop in application for nursing jobs from people in EU countries. We believe it is vital that European doctors and nurses are given the certainty that they will be able to remain in the UK without additional barriers and that all immigrants working in the NHS and social care do not have to pay additional fees to access NHS services.

Using the council's powers in relation to 'health scrutiny' we will work with the Cambridgeshire Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure that rights of patients are promoted within the NHS and that patients wherever possible are able to get to see a GP, dentist or nurse at times which suit them.

We will seek to influence health service partners to get them to reduce over-prescription of drugs - in particular, antibiotics – and to change the perverse system of financial incentives that at present encourages the NHS to perform operations rather than invest in health education and preventative medicine.

The Lib Dems' top priorities:

- Increase the public health budget and work with the NHS to improve preventative healthcare and reverse Conservative cuts to Public Health England since 2015.
- Make Peterborough the UK's first age-friendly city including tackling the loneliness and social isolation crisis faced by thousands of vulnerable residents living in the city.
- Lobby central government to step- in to the Peterborough City Hospital's PFI contract to put our hospital on a more sustainable financial footing.
- Work with service users, carers, and others to improve social care services which better meet people's needs.
- Work to ensure that the rights of immigrant doctors and nurses currently working within the Peterborough area are guaranteed and they do not pay to use NHS services.
- Promote the rights of patients as 'customers' of the National Health Service.
- Work with the NHS to try to ensure that people can get an appointment with a GP at a practice of their choice, swiftly and easily at a time, date and place which is convenient for them.
- Ensure everyone in Peterborough can access an NHS dentist and have regular, preventative dental check-ups.

Housing and homelessness

Issues around housing and homelessness continue to concern local residents. Whether it's unaffordable housing costs, empty homes or an increasing homelessness problem in our city centre it's clear that over the past 20 years Peterborough's Conservative administration has failed to act to deliver the homes which local families need.

The Lib Dems believe that everyone should have access to a decent home, and we will act to deliver the homes that our city needs. To do this we believe that the council needs to be prepared to look at developing a new strategy for delivering housing.

We believe the council needs to be much more innovative and explore options to build new council homes, to introduce a 'living rent'. The Liberal Democrats are committed to making our community a place where people want to live and work. As part of this commitment, we want to increase the number of new affordable houses built, at least meeting the current target of 30% and helping to drive economic growth and investment within the area.

Using receipts from 'Right to Buy' sales and Housing Revenue Account borrowing, we will build new council houses. We will look at the possibility of the council owning and maintaining its own stock of council properties as a legacy for the people of Peterborough to use for generations to come.

We will improve planning policies, ensuring that new developments are fit for the twenty-first century. We will ensure that all new developments have fibre broadband installed from the outset to meet the needs of residents working from home and ensure that all large developments have public transport available from first occupation.

The Lib Dems will review and develop the selective licensing scheme for landlords which operates in the city centre. We will look to expand this scheme or introduce a charter mark scheme in other parts of the city where it would be beneficial in improving the standard of rented accommodation. We will review the council's policy on Houses of Multiple Occupation, with consideration given to limiting the numbers of such homes because of, among other things, their impact on parking and changing the character of the area.

We will ensure that all new houses are energy-efficient and that older houses are retrofitted with energy conservation features. Where possible we will ensure that play areas, natural greenspace and street trees are planned into new housing developments.

Many new estates in Peterborough have not been adopted by the council, with residents paying additional, often exorbitant ground rent for services provided by management companies. The Lib Dems will work towards the council adopting all services for new estates and the removal of 'dual charging' across council tax and ground rent.

The Lib Dems' top priorities:

- Provide more social housing - exploring the option of both building and managing newly built council homes.
- Increase the percentage of affordable homes being built on new developments.
- Tackle rogue landlords to ensure that all rented properties are to a decent standard.
- Ensure that all new developments have fibre broadband installed from the outset to meet the needs of residents working from home and ensure that all large developments have public transport available from first occupation.
- Work towards the council adopting all services for new estates and the removal of 'dual charging' across council tax and ground rent.

Transport and roads

The Liberal Democrats believe that an affordable, reliable, and efficient public transport service is vital to sustaining our city's physical and economic growth. By investing in public transport, we will ease congestion on our roads and cut emissions without limiting people's opportunity to travel.

The Lib Dems are concerned that under the Conservatives the council has failed to implement the Transport User Hierarchy as set out in the council's Local Transport Plan. We would ensure that pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users are prioritised as the plan says they should be.

Given the rising concern about poor air quality the Liberal Democrats believe that it is important that we cut harmful emissions from traffic as soon as possible. The Lib Dems would increase investment in our bus network to ensure that more residents have access to a reliable, regular, and environmentally friendly bus service. We will explore new modes of travel using light rail, Peterborough's waterways and 'park and ride' facilities.

In the urban area we would improve the frequency of evening and Sunday buses, and protect and improve the network of buses subsidised by the council. In rural areas we would examine options for ensuring that residents have access to some form of public transport, whether a scheduled or a 'demand responsive' service.

We would also aim to work with Stagecoach and the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to modernise our bus fleet so that the vehicles are all hybrid, electric or other low emission buses as soon as practical. We also support all taxi's being electric or hybrid within the same time frame.

We would lobby the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to introduce smart ticketing and bus franchising as done by the Mayor of London. We believe both the Mayor and Peterborough City Council have a responsibility to make public transport more accessible by reducing fares and providing fast and frequent bus services.

We will investigate financing new investments by raising income from council and workplace car parking charges thereby encouraging people to make use of alternative means of transport.

We will lobby the Department for Transport to help fund new railway stations in the north and south of Peterborough to make it easier for residents to use the railway and cut traffic traveling through the city centre to the railway station. While the Conservatives argue it can't be done, Lib Dem politicians in Cambridge have successfully campaigned for and won two new train stations.

We would look to work with the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to develop light rail plans for Cambridge with a similar, separate model for Peterborough, so that our city does not fall even further behind. We believe that ultra-light rail is a possible low carbon option for Peterborough with zero emission vehicles and low impact construction similar to that being developed in Coventry.

We believe that increasing the numbers of residents who travel by bicycle will cut pollution levels in our city. That's why we will also implement the Get Britain Cycling report recommendations in full, safeguard The Green Wheel despite the number of developments proposed along its route and work with council officers to develop a purpose-built cycle highway network to make it easier for people to cycle from residential areas into and through the city centre for work and leisure.

The Lib Dems believe that for too long the Council have failed to maintain our roads and pavements. We will seek to end the 'pothole culture' which has left our many of our roads and pavements in a dangerous state.

The Lib Dems will invest more capital to protect our grass verges. We will keep our pavements safe for pedestrians by discouraging parking on them. We will work to engage with local residents on a street-by-street basis to see if there is desire for Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to be put in place to make grass verge and pavement parking illegal. We will also use other simple measures such as tree planting to discourage cars from ploughing up grass verges.

The Lib Dems' top priorities:

- Establish a network of electric vehicle charging points throughout the city and encourage a switch to electric buses or light rail as part of a plan for carbon neutral transport.
- Increase investment in our public transport network – in particular, our bus services. We would protect and improve the core bus network by increasing the frequency of evening and Sunday bus services and improving access to buses in rural areas.
- Consult on workplace parking charges for Employers to provide additional funding for public transport and promote reduction in car use where other options are available.
- Invest more in permanent, rather than temporary, road repairs and lobby central government for extra resources to tackle this huge problem.
- Work to develop a long-term transport investment plan which seeks to develop light/ultra-light rail, bus, rail and cycling infrastructure across our city.
- Reduce fares for using public transport.
- Tackle irresponsible parking, including parking on pavements and grass verges.
- Encourage the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to examine options to tackle poor air quality and traffic congestion in a variety of ways, including exercising his bus franchising powers and to include Peterborough in his plans for light rail.
- Examine options for incorporating 'park and ride' facilities into bus, rail, or light rail improvements to further reduce city centre traffic.

A Thriving Local Economy

The Liberal Democrats believe that a thriving local economy is essential for the future of Peterborough. Our aim is to provide people with an access to a wide range of well-paid employment opportunities and to encourage entrepreneurs to set up businesses here particularly to support our carbon neutral goals.

The Lib Dems will work with the key local business networks like the Chamber of Commerce, Share Peterborough, Peterborough Bondholders and the Business Board of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to understand the current and future needs of employers, ensuring that good jobs are available long term. We will feed employment planning into our infrastructure, housing, transport, and education development to ensure we make the most of the opportunities that employers will bring.

Small companies offer great potential for growth in stimulating new jobs directly and in benefiting our lives locally, as well as impacting positively on the wider economy. We will encourage vibrant new start-up companies to emerge and flourish, especially from the new university, by working with partners in both public and private sectors to provide good business advice and access to capital.

We will support the excellent innovation centres Peterborough, benefits from which already encourage new technologies and social enterprises. We will also explore how the council can assist new manufacturing enterprises with premises made available on 'easy in, easy out' rental terms.

We will support the use of apprenticeships and other 'in work' training and increase the number of apprentices that the council itself employs.

Lib Dems will work with the council and local employers to encourage employee participation and involvement in decision-making, and ownership of companies by employees through co-operatives and other mechanisms.

We will lobby central government to scrap business rates entirely and replace them with a tax on land values, the Commercial Landowner Levy (CLL). In the meantime, we will bring new life to the city centre, urgently reviewing business rates to stem the tides of businesses deserting Bridge Street and the heart of Peterborough.

We will explore innovative approaches to risk-sharing to draw in new retailers who will add vibrancy and originality to the city. New retailers will serve the needs and aspirations of our thriving local population and attract people from outside the city to contribute to our local economy.

Peterborough's economy needs to grow in an environmentally sustainable way, protecting and enhancing our natural environment and protecting good air and water quality. We should make "creating the UK's environment capital" a meaningful aim and not an empty slogan, as it often is under our Tory-led council. We will look at introducing green investment bonds to give local people the opportunity to invest in our future for positive returns.

The COVID pandemic has led to many small businesses and the self-employed struggling to survive the loss of trade brought about by restrictions to protect public health. The Lib Dems believe these business and individuals should not be abandoned during this time and will support the provision grants and other schemes to enable them to thrive when restrictions are lifted.

The Lib Dems' top priorities:

- Create a green economy in Peterborough and become a genuine 'environment capital'.
- Support local businesses in creating good, long-term jobs.
- Encourage new business start-ups.
- Adapt our city centre for the modern age with innovative approaches and investment.
- Support small businesses and the self-employed through the COVID pandemic.