



A FRESH START.

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT MANIFESTO 2019





Contents

5 Demand Better for West Berkshire

9 A Greener West Berkshire

13 Protecting the most vulnerable

17 Investing in you and your family

23 Supporting our communities



**EXIT from
BREXIT**
www.LibDems.org.uk/join

**BREXIT
WHAT IS
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FOR?
ABSOLUTELY
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**WARRICK
LEAMINGTON
VOTED EU**

**FROM
LIB DEMS
AGAINST
BREXIT**

**Liberal
Democrats**



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INTRODUCTION

Demand better for West Berkshire.

In the local elections to be held on 2nd May, you will decide who governs West Berkshire for the next five years. Our pledge is to deliver better services, and be better representatives for you and your family.

I am delighted to be able to present to you the West Berkshire Liberal Democrats Manifesto for the local council election on May 2nd 2019.

At a time when national politics is dominated by one issue the important role that local councils play on a daily basis can get lost in the noise.

The funding and service pressures local councils have faced have had an impact on us all, on our children's education, on our elderly relative's care, and how our area is looked.

As Liberal Democrats we have put forward policies that can be delivered over the course of the Council term that will improve protected our environment, invest in our towns and villages, and protect the most vulnerable.



Our manifesto is presented in four themes which we believe in short is what you should expect from your council to protect our environment, invest in you and your family, care for the vulnerable and support our communities.

A Liberal Democrat controlled Council will not just deliver polices against these themes, we will also use our collective voice to speak up for West Berkshire.

Whether it be on the impact of Brexit on our local economy, the need for more funding for our schools, or calling for better environmental regulations, we will not shy away for demanding better West Berkshire.

I love West Berkshire. It is optimistic, good-humoured and confident. Our young people are bright, creative and want to live in a world that is clean and green and that the rest of us haven't wrecked.

Our vision and ambition is for a West Berkshire that is successful, forward looking and is recognised as a good place to live and work; an area that cares for those that live within its boundaries and those who visit; towns and villages that care for its environment and is a custodian for the next generation.



In four years time we want you to hold us to account especially on our key policy items:

- Commit to delivering 1,500 affordable new homes over the next 5 years, with at least 150 being for social rent
- Tackle climate change by working towards being carbon neutral by 2030 and by scrapping the Green Bin Charge
- Invest in our towns by introducing free parking days and creating a *MyWestBerkshire* App promoting local offers and businesses
- 20 mph and idle free zones outside schools to improve safety and air quality
- Develop a new youth service in partnership with young people
- Establish community forums so your voice is heard

Stand with us to Demand a better West Berkshire by voting Liberal Democrat on May 2nd.

Best wishes,

Councillor Lee Dillon

Leader of West Berkshire Liberal Democrats



Pedestrians have priority
Considerate cycling permitted
Keep dogs under control



Demand Better

A Greener West Berkshire

1.1 Protecting our environment

West Berkshire contains many areas of natural beauty. With climate change receiving ever more focus, we must act locally to safeguard our environment for future generations and contribute to stopping the impacts of climate change.

Your local Liberal Democrats will:

- **Work towards making West Berkshire carbon neutral by 2030.**
- **Re-establish kerbside recycling of green waste without an additional direct charge to residents.**

1.2 Changing the 'way we waste'

- Re-launch the recycling service to increase participation rates through education.
- Launch recycling clubs for items that are not currently collected at the kerbside.
- Promote Sustainable Markets across the District.
- Use all legal powers to prosecute those caught fly tipping and use that money to introduce more community recycling points.

"The Liberal Democrats are committed to a greener West Berkshire. We recognise our area has come a long way, **but through innovative planning we can be even greener.**"

- Cllr Tony Vickers, Newbury



1.3 Greener Travel

- We will seek to reduce the need to travel by car by focusing on pedestrians and cyclists in any traffic schemes and aim to double the number of students choosing healthy journeys to school and college
- Work with our Town and Parish Councils to create a 'Clean up the Town' anti-litter campaign.
- Guarantee existing public transport routes in our villages, and work in partnership with local groups to establish more community transport schemes.
- Expand the amount of public electric car charging points.
- Introduce 'idle free zones' outside all schools to reduce air pollution.
- Consult on introducing a low emission zone on A339 and improve traffic flows on the A4 (Chapel Street) to combat air pollution.

1.4 A Greener Council

- Reduce the amount of energy used by the Council that is produced by fossil fuels and use our procurement process to drive a change of behaviour in the wider community.
- Ensure that the Council's Commercial Investment Strategy for income generation considers the social and environmental impact of its investments.



Demand Better

Protecting the most vulnerable

We agree that the true measure of a society is in how it treats its most vulnerable members so we have a range of ways in which we aim to increase the quality of life of our local residents, enabling the sick and elderly to live at home for as long as possible, supporting vulnerable young people and tackling mental health challenges and social isolation.

2.1 Caring for our young people

Your local Liberal Democrats will:

- Introduce 20mph limits outside all schools and work with Thames Valley Police to ensure that it is properly enforced.
- Support mental health provision for young people through the Emotional Health Academy, and prioritise funding so that regardless of what school a child attends they will get the service they need when they need it.
- Increase the number of staying put (Looked After Children) placements that are successful.
- Work with Town and Parish Councils to help fund the successful 'Detached Youth Worker' model, making sure that we can engage with hard to reach groups.



2.2 Caring for our elderly and vulnerable

Your local Liberal Democrats will:

- Bring back a Handyman Service for the elderly and vulnerable, helping them to live independently in their homes for longer.
- Work with the government and all parties in order to provide a long term sustainable solution to fund Adult Social Care. Whilst this long term aim is being progressed we will ensure that decisions about care are focussed on supporting our clients.
- Improve the time it takes to make an initial assessment for care needs and carry out reviews into care in a timelier manner
- Bring forward a program to tackle social isolation, particularly in our rural communities. Research has shown that, in terms of negative health outcomes, lacking social connections is comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, and has worse health outcomes than risk factors such as obesity and physical inactivity.



Demand Better

Investing in you and your family

The Liberal Democrats want to ensure that West Berkshire is a place where children and families can thrive, and where they choose to remain in the long-term because of the great opportunities found locally.

We also want local residents to feel that the council is both accessible and accountable to them through increased transparency.

3.1 Learning for life

Your local Liberal Democrats will:

- Show our belief in equality of education for all by working hard to close the attainment gap that exists between children from different backgrounds.
- Work to increase the number of nurseries within the district, in order to ensure that families are able to access the hours of free childcare they are entitled to.
- Launch a Mentoring Programme with local businesses supporting our children.
- Work with local institutions to create a West Berkshire Science Academy with a focus of getting more young women into this area of work.
- Strive for all our schools to be rated as Good or better by OFSTED.



- Pilot lunch clubs throughout the summer to combat holiday hunger.
- Work with local education providers to create work clubs and programmes that help develop skills whilst in employment, to enable more people to access high-quality education and training that can help them progress through their careers into well-paid jobs.
- Develop our apprenticeship service to offer expert advice and guidance to employers on how best to utilise the Apprenticeship Levy, and provide our staff with in-work opportunities for training and development.

3.2 Housing and Homelessness challenges

Your local Liberal Democrats will:

- Commit to delivering 1,300 affordable new homes over the next 5 years, and will use council resources to unlock the expansion of more social rent properties in particular.
- We will expand the 'Housing First' model as we recognise that having a safe secure home is can be the key to unlock someone potential.
- Use council land for housing if it delivers more affordable and social rent properties – making sure we get a fair return on land.

- Work with developers to make new build development sites 'internet ready' (fibre optic to the home) making it a requirement of the planning permission. Crackdown on rogue landlords and ensure minimum standards are maintained and the outcomes of inspections are published.
- Work with housing providers to develop a local 'rent to own' model.
- Campaign for a long-term funding settlement for supported housing.
- Undertake a full land audit of the district, to ensure that we are using it in the best possible way to provide public services, as well as to bring forward new homes.
- Investigate the extent to which private companies and developers are "land banking" by sitting on valuable property, and explore further Compulsory Purchase Orders to release this land to be put to better use.
- Use our powers to reduce the number of empty properties within West Berkshire, increasing tax rates for homes left empty, and using the income generated to bring more homes back into use.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act requires local authorities to work to prevent homelessness as well as help when people are. We will make sure grants are spent in consultation with the those who access and deliver these services.



3.3 Running your council a different way

Your local Liberal Democrats will:

- Cap council tax rises at inflation
- Hold a full inquiry into LRIE so we can ensure that the same mistakes are not made again, wasting your family's money.
- When we carry out consultations we will provide detailed information so residents can make informed decisions.
- Create Area Forums so local communities can have their voices heard.
- Expand webcasting of meetings and hold meetings across the district so that they are less Newbury-centric and increase resident participation.
- Increase the amount of time available for public questions on Council agendas.
- Reduce the amount of information being considered by the Council in private.

“West Berkshire Council needs a shake up. The Conservatives have been running the council for over 14 years now. It’s fair to say **people are fed up of their cutting and shutting programme.**”

- Cllr Jeff Brooks, Thatcham

Non Fiction & Reference



Demand Better

Supporting our communities

The Liberal Democrats have a range of ways in which we will help our local high streets to thrive and ensure that there are plenty of accessible opportunities for residents to live, work and study across West Berkshire.

4.1 Supporting our Communities

Your local Liberal Democrats will:

- Create a My West Berkshire App that promotes local businesses and offers in store discounts (Business Improvement District).
- Provide free first hour parking across the District in selected car parks through a £150,000 investment grant. We will work with Newbury BID and local trading groups to determine what days we should offer this to help their local business.
- Expand the successful town centre events in Newbury to other towns in West Berkshire.
- Look to expand the number of temporary and regular markets throughout West Berkshire, enabling a greater number of small businesses to access high street locations.
- Invest in Thatcham Town Centre by delivering the 'Turley Plan'.
- Work with local businesses to lobby government on changing business rates to give high street shops a fighting chance against the online sector.



- Support the building of a bridge over the railway line at Thatcham.
- Fix potholes first time (Pothole Wardens) (Street Champions).
- Introduce 'Resident Transport Grants' to deliver local highways projects addressing issues on estates, like parking (Resident permit zone, speeding, traffic flow etc...)
- Establish an out-of-hours traffic management system.
- Understand our local jobs market to make sure that residents have access to the training that will get them well-paid, good-quality jobs in our growth industries.

This manifesto sets out Liberal Democrat policies and priorities for West Berkshire Council. The Liberal Democrats on town and parish councils may set their own policy on devolved matters, and for those policy areas.

Published and promoted by Nassar Kessell on behalf of West Berkshire and Newbury Liberal Democrats, both at Thatcham House, Turners Drive, Thatcham, RG19 4QD.

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