

GREENER...

Climate change is the single greatest threat to our way of life. Councils, working with communities, need to be at the forefront of cutting carbon emissions, and cutting waste, if we are to protect the planet.

Liberal Democrats are leading the charge, with programmes to make whole housing estates, schools or council offices carbon neutral. We are pushing forward with new designs for housing that reduce water consumption, cut energy use, and reduce waste.

But we all want to see our environment protected on the local scale too. Our parks and green spaces, trees, gardens and public squares: these shared spaces are vital to our everyday lives.

Liberal Democrat councillors can be trusted to fight for and improve our environment – both locally and globally. Around the country we are:

- boosting recycling rates – even in the inner cities where it's toughest
- encouraging energy efficiency in buildings
- adding cycle lanes and footpaths, with marked Safe Routes to School for children
- promoting and investing in public transport
- improving parks, open spaces and public footpaths, and planting trees
- Creating 'low emission zones' and introducing environmentally friendly buses

Lib Dem run Newcastle is to make a 12-block housing estate a beacon project for **energy efficiency**. The south-facing blocks will be fitted with solar panels and



micro generation turbines, in order that 90% of the energy and heat needs of the residents will be met by renewable sources – for free.

Bristol City council began a **cleaner vehicles initiative**, thanks to its Lib Dem leadership, with funding for conversion to LPG given to residents and businesses in June 2005.

In Islington, green spaces are at a premium so there has been more planting, more trees and bird boxes and the development of a successful **Ecology Centre**. Under the Lib Dems, Eastbourne won a 'Green Apple' award for their innovative **recycling scheme** for office computers.

In Watford Lib Dems have introduced **grants of up to £500** for activities like river cleans, community clean-ups, extra planting and flower shows – anything which improves the overall look of an area or which brings the community together.

In Waverley, Liberal Democrats extended **kerbside collection** of recyclable materials, adding 33,500 homes to the scheme within just six months of taking control - including 2,500 rural homes other parties had said couldn't be reached.

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Pensioners hit by 25% tax hike

Pensioners face a staggering 25% rise in council tax bills this year thanks to the Labour government.

Chancellor Gordon Brown has cancelled a £200 rebate for pensioner households – issued last year as a pre-election bribe. Pensioners' bills will hit record highs this year as a result – with average bills over £1250.

That's a rise of more than £250. But pensions will only rise about 3% this year, with that money easily swallowed up by rocketing tax bills.

Liberal Democrats will continue our fight to get pensioners a fair deal on local taxes. It's time to scrap Council Tax and replace it with a fair tax based on ability to pay.



A Local Income Tax wouldn't need complicated benefits and rebates. It would be automatically affordable for people on low or fixed incomes.

The unfair Council Tax was invented by the Conservatives, but it's soared under Labour. Bills are nearly £600 higher than in 1997. And government watchdog the Audit Commission has described the tax as "fundamentally flawed".

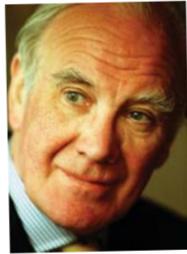
Neither of the other parties have any ideas for fixing the Council Tax crisis. Only the Liberal Democrats are committed to axing this unfair tax once and for all.



**safer
fairer
greener**

liberal democrat priorities
for local government 2006





Introduction

Menzies Campbell QC MP
Leader of the Liberal Democrats

We all want to feel safe in our communities. We want access to decent, reliable local services. We want clean and sustainable neighbourhoods. And we want fair taxes we can afford to pay.

But those simple aspirations are drifting out of reach.

Labour and Conservative governments have spent decades taking power away from local people. Denying them the right to choose their own policing priorities. Imposing unfair and painful taxes. And letting faceless bureaucrats make decisions about local schools and hospitals they have never visited and will never use.

That has to stop. It's time to give power back to people and to their communities.

That's why Liberal Democrats across the country are fighting back. Campaigning for local action and solving local problems. By putting our policies into practice on the ground, we're making Britain safer, greener and fairer.

People in every part of Britain are turning to the Liberal Democrats. There are no no-go areas. And where Labour and Conservatives have let people down, we're delivering. Better services, better value for money, and better accountability.

So if you want to make a difference for your community, vote Liberal Democrat on 4th May.

SAFER...

Crime ruins lives. Too many people live in fear, effectively imprisoned by crime and anti-social behaviour in their communities.

But no-one should be afraid to leave their home, to walk down the street at night, or to let their children play outside.

That's why Liberal Democrats are doing everything we can to cut crime.

Our agenda isn't about headline-chasing, and it isn't about tough talking and soundbites. It's about what works.

- More police on the beat, with support from community wardens and support officers.
- Better youth services to get young people off the conveyor belt to crime.
- Investment in street lighting
- Better drug treatment, and community payback for petty criminals
- Local policing contracts, giving communities a say in how the police operate
- Clamping down on graffiti, fly-tipping and vandalism to give people pride in their environment.

Lib Dem run Islington has pioneered **Acceptable Behaviour Contracts** to tackle anti-social behaviour as early as possible – instead of the cumbersome procedures for ASBOs. They're now used all over the country as an effective alternative to ASBOs, and even Labour ministers have admitted that Lib Dem ABCs help slash anti-social behaviour.



Liverpool's Liberal Democrats have **cut domestic burglary** by a staggering 24% in two years with its innovative project to gate back alleys between terraces.

Crack houses have been closed down in record-breaking numbers by Liberal Democrat Lambeth. When Labour ran the council there were 84 homes given over to crack dealing: that's been cut to just 10 at any one time.

Liberal Democrats in Somerset are fighting back against anti-social behaviour with a pioneering **Community Justice Panel**, where offenders are brought before a community jury. Restorative sentences mean offenders pay back into the community to make amends.

FAIRER...

Good local services are the cornerstone of social justice. With decent housing, good schools, care for the elderly and the vulnerable, and investment in skills and regeneration, councils can tackle deprivation and exclusion in a way that national politicians can only dream of.

But if we want a fairer Britain, we need to make sure the ways of paying for these services are fair too.

Inequality is greater in Britain now than when Labour came to power. Where you live, what your parents do, which school you go to, all now count even more than before in determining what your life chances are. And – because of the unfair Council Tax – the poorest people pay a higher proportion of their income in tax than the richest.

Liberal Democrats are fighting poverty and deprivation in councils across Britain. We're doing everything we can to keep tax bills as low as possible – while campaigning nationally to

scrap the hated Council Tax and replace it with a fair system based on ability to pay.

Making Britain fairer is a key ambition for Liberal Democrat councillors. That's why we:

- keep taxes low by spending wisely and efficiently
- invest to tackle homelessness and sub-standard housing
- devolve power to local area committees and forums to empower people no matter what their background
- encourage independent living for the elderly and disabled by offering good quality social care



- fight to improve standards in schools, and tackle truancy and discipline
- defend adult education and skills training against Labour cutbacks

Liberal Democrat led South Shropshire helps **young people onto the housing ladder** with an innovative scheme for "golden share" properties, that will remain affordable for generations.

Council Taxes are being kept as low as possible – with Liberal Democrat-run Lambeth, Islington and Southwark all freezing their tax this year, saving local people money.

Southwark Liberal Democrats have worked with local partners on a multi-million pound scheme to help people remain **healthy and safe in their own homes** instead of having to go into residential care or stay in hospital when they don't need to.

Fitness programmes are helping **long-term unemployed** people back into work in Bridgend thanks to the Lib Dem led council's work with GPs and hospitals.

Liberal Democrat-run Lambeth is due to open the country's first **parent-run state school** in September 2007, tackling disadvantage by opening up school places in the area. The new comprehensive school will be non-selective and non-denominational.