

2018 Annual Statement – Liberal Democrat Group

Cambridge Liberal Democrats campaigned in the recent election under the manifesto “An Open, Inclusive City – a council working for all” bit.ly/cld2018manifesto.

From the opposition benches, the invigorated group of Liberal Democrat city councillors will be championing the arguments developed in this manifesto and holding the majority Labour administration to account on theirs.

Our priorities are:

To put housing first – to keep Cambridge an inclusive city

- Address the overall housing shortage by working now to bring forward major brownfield sites in the city
- 500 new council homes to be additive not substitutes for other social housing
- Provision of key worker housing using a ‘Living Rent’

A transformation of transport – to keep Cambridge connected

- Frank consultation on all options to fund first class public transport and reduce congestion
- Combat pollution with an anti-idling campaign, electric buses and a Clean Air Zone
- Strategy for residential on-street electric vehicle charging and cycle parking

For the council to get its basics right – and, in particular, keep Cambridge clean

- Reverse cutbacks in Streets & Open Spaces service – raise, not reduce cleaning standards: including expansion of environmental patrols, improved litter picking frequency in residential areas around shopping centres, an additional summer litter collection team for the city centre and intensified collection on open spaces, increased frequency of litter bin cleaning and supervision of set-up and take-down of events on open spaces
- Proper care, repair and cleaning of the city’s public toilets - and extended opening hours
- Accelerated refurbishment of common and communal areas within council housing

We consider this administration has been falling short on all three priorities.

In addition, over the coming year we will be arguing:

- For a withdrawal and rethink of the council’s recently introduced charges for Shop Mobility in the city centre, predicted to exclude 20% of disabled and elderly users
- For seamless waste and recycling service in the handover of newly-built homes to their first residents and better bin collection problem-solving for all residents
- For a positive response to the report and recommendation on rough sleeping and street life issues published by our city and county ward councillors for the city centre in February

- For an energy investment scheme for shops, offices and industrial units in the council's commercial property portfolio, accelerating Cambridge's achievement of carbon neutrality
- For the opening to the community of small woodland areas in the council's ownership, with suitable management regimes and physical access arrangements
- For more action to increase the Cambridge's tree cover, including the adoption of the Children's Tree Scheme, involving the city's primary schools
- Against plans to charge tenants of sheltered housing schemes for everyday running repairs
- For a proportion of the 500 new council homes to be let at the lower, 'local authority rent level' to ensure the most vulnerable to welfare benefit cuts can still find a place in social housing
- For reinforcement of the Housing department with an extra officer to assist tenants who claim benefits with the upcoming transfer to Universal Credit, which no longer permits direct payment to landlords as standard
- For empty properties to be brought into use as rapidly as possible, including those owned by the council itself, and the utilisation of all tools available including penal council tax levels, so far rejected by the council
- To defend the role of elected councillors in determining planning applications and resist delegating more decisions to officers to make in private
- For the project to improve the Market Square, which has eventually been adopted after its previous rejection, to be thorough-going both in fabric and management, and to involve the public and other stakeholders fully
- For the so-called Devolution Deal to conform to promises made by its advocates to bring central government powers and resources closer to Cambridge, rather than to centralise powers and resources already available to our city