

# How the Liberal Democrats would save you money

Below: do we need 6 Council offices?



Above: Stratford council offices



Above: Rugby council offices



Above: Nuneaton council offices



Above: County Council offices



Above: Warwick council offices  
Below: Atherstone council offices



The Government recently looked at re-organising local government and asked Councils to put forward their views. One option was 'Unitary' - merging the County and District Councils.

But the Conservative run County Council rejected the Unitary option - and admitted that no financial work was done on the possible savings before taking this decision.

Yet Councils elsewhere have predicted huge savings. Liberal Democrats believe that at the very least this option should have been costed to identify savings, and then local people should have been asked for their opinion.

Instead, the Tories running our County and District Councils decided to go for the status quo. The Lib Dems believe the Unitary option should have been costed - if only to provide a benchmark for future savings.

## HUGE SAVINGS ELSEWHERE

In the current review twenty six Councils submitted proposals to go the Unitary route. Some of those Councils are Conservative controlled and all have looked at the financial impact of their decision on Council Tax payers.

Surrey claimed they can save Council taxpayers £80 million a year through going Unitary. Bedfordshire said they can save £25 million a year. Buckinghamshire stated they could save £10 million a year on management headcount alone. All these three Councils are Conservative run.

## SO WHAT NOW?

The Liberal Democrats have put forward a motion to the District Council for the next Council meeting asking for financial targets to be set from closer working with other Councils in the area. Council reports suggest that savings may be available by reducing management numbers, integrated procurement, accommodation rationalisation and common IT platforms.\*

Without targets for savings the Lib Dems suspect that the full potential of savings may not be realised so we will be keeping the pressure on the Conservatives to start delivering for Council tax payers.

## Nationally

We believe reforms are needed in the whole system of financing Local Government. Taxes should be based on ability to pay - for us this means a Local Income Tax. We think it is wrong that a pensioner could end up paying the same as a millionaire.

Scotland is now examining the possibility of Local Income Tax as a method for financing Local Government north of the border. At the same time, in order to bring greater accountability, we believe more of Local Government finance should be raised locally. At the moment the majority of money is provided centrally, by the Government.

\* for more details see District Council Executive papers for 7th April 2008, Item 4 - shared services.