

Six to Fix – our six priorities for our district

1 Cut costs:

The Liberal Democrats will start talking seriously to other Councils about cutting cost by sharing services with an easily accessible local authority.

2 Public toilets:

The Liberal Democrats believe that public toilets are an essential part of every day living for residents and tourists alike.

Means will be found to keep this essential service.

3 Jobs for our area:

The Liberal Democrats believe with jobs lost and empty shops, offices and factories Stratford District Council needs to work harder at attracting new jobs- especially for young people.

4 Cut the cost of politicians:

Liberal Democrats believe that with the number of staff who has lost jobs and services cut by Stratford District Council there should be a proportionate response from councillors. In effect fewer councillors.

5 A bigger say in Planning:

Liberal Democrats believe that Planning affects everybody because it shapes the District.

The localism agenda is meant to give residents a bigger say in planning and the Liberal Democrats are committed to seeing this happening.

6 Support for volunteers:

Liberal Democrats believe and know in the Stratford District Council area people are already helping one another, therefore they deserve support.

The above six to fix are the immediate priorities and are supported by the principles and thinking outlined in this manifesto.

Paying for the six to fix

To pay for the six to fix and support the Council budget additional income generation is suggested as follows

Income Generation

Planning

A quality customer planning service should be established to consider all aspects planning that applicants could use to identify conformity with planning guidance and regulation, before an application is made.

To ensure the quality and a high standard a fee would be charged for this service.

Enforcement

Abuse of the environment is increasing; therefore a successful enforcement policy needs commitment from elected members and officers.

An income stream can be provided by enforcement. The money raised can then be used to help pay for awareness raising campaigns.

Council Assets

The sale of Council assets could generate income, but it must be for a specific reason. If it is possible the sale asset should be sold to acquire an accruing asset, so that value remains with the Council.

The sale of any asset should be supported by a business case to justify the sale.

Feed in Tariffs

The government is encouraging Councils to cut their energy costs and earn an income by generating renewable energy. The Feed in Tariff (or FITs) gives a fixed rate for each unit of energy generated a rate for each unit sent to the grid and savings on the energy bill. This would be an opportunity for the Stratford District Council to reduce their carbon emissions, reduce their energy bill and gain an income.

Stratford on Avon Liberal Democrats
Manifesto for the District Council Elections May 2011
We listen to what you say

Distinct communities have their own distinct needs and ambitions. People are often genuinely concerned about what happens in their neighbourhood, and want to be informed and involved in decisions that affect them. But too often these ambitions are thwarted by over managed and centralised public services.

Our manifesto for Stratford on Avon District Council is based on our beliefs and is covered under the following headings.

- Participating Communities
- Environment
- Safe Communities
- Clean and Tidy Communities
- Sustainable Communities
- Trust and Politics

Our policies are based on the following five principles:

- decision-making should be as close to the people as possible and as locally accountable as possible.
- preventing problems will support community cohesion as well as being cost effective.
- joint working with partners will contribute to the well being of our communities.
- shared services with other council will reduce costs
- local people should be involved in decisions about their area.

We are accountable to the local community and always act within the law in the best interests of the community. We will:

- Listen to and value the views of our residents
- Bring environmental protection to the top of the planning process.
- Act as good stewards of your taxes, to ensure that quality services are provided, giving value for money.
- Work with other Councils to improve services and reduce costs to Council Tax payers.
- Strengthen Council action against graffiti, vandalism, pollution and noise, which ruin people's lives.
- Enforce planning breaches to ensure a good quality environment for all
- Support Liberal Democrat principles locally and nationally.
- Work in partnership with the police to fight crime.
- encourage local economies, new enterprise and re-generation across the District.
- make all services as easily accessible as possible to all residents and local businesses
- look for ways to bring income to the Council by making assets work harder.

Participating Communities

Stratford on Avon Liberal Democrats Manifesto for the District Council Elections May 2011 We listen to what you say

It is a core Liberal Democrat belief that decision making should be as close to local communities as possible

The commitment by Liberal Democrat Councilors is to:

- give more support to help communities construct Parish Plans so that they can carry greater weight in the planning process. We will recognize their value in addressing local needs.
- enable town and parish councils to be effective in implementing their parish plans and design statements.
- ensure better and more prominent notification of planning applications.
- support Parish Councils to achieve quality status and thus allowing local people to make decisions that affect their communities.
- ensure effective support for and from Community Link Officers to enable grass roots initiatives to be successful by;
 - a) giving sustained help to individuals and groups who work towards maintaining the sustainability of their community.
 - b) strengthening the understanding of the rights and obligations of local people on the need to take a shared responsibility with the Council.

Stratford on Avon Liberal Democrats
Manifesto for the District Council Elections May 2011

We listen to what you say

The Environment

We believe, as we have for over 30 years, that the environment is endangered. It is time that all the talk about Climate Change and sustainability is translated into practice. A green thread runs through all of our proposals.

We will do this by:

providing a publicly available audit about where and how recycled waste is used. This will inform and encourage residents and we will use the information to maximize recycling and avoid undesirable practices such as long distance “export” of waste.

establishing a greater priority for environmental issues in planning by identifying and then managing all significant environmental aspects relevant to Planning Control.

setting a sensible time scale to achieve higher environmental standards in new and existing buildings through the planning systems and by advice. We will ensure that current requirements are enforced.

working with partners, suppliers and contractors to improve both their and our environmental performance.

There is a commitment by the Liberal Democrat Councillors to:

- publish the carbon footprint of the District and then target reductions year on year, working with the County Council and other partners to make improvements in measures such as National Indicator 186.
- commit the District Council to move to using the best available environmental technologies for council operated vehicles within a proper and a costed time scale.
- set stretching but achievable targets for renewable energy, insulation, water collection, grey water use, surface water collection and composting for all new builds with good easily obtainable advice for conversion of existing dwellings.
- apply similar standards to commercial developments.
- consider ways of introducing an affordable collection and disposal service for electrical and electronic equipment for recycling.
- actively promote going carbon neutral
- provide a household battery collection service.

Stratford on Avon Liberal Democrats
Manifesto for the District Council Elections May 2011
We listen to what you say

Safe Communities

Liberal Democrats believe that safe communities are communities in which people enjoy living and to ensure this we will:

continue to support visible local policing.
support and develop, in partnership, local policing based on Parishes and Wards.
work with local communities and partners to reduce both crime and the fear of crime.
ensure good coverage by CCTV

There is a commitment by Liberal Democratic Councillors to:

- Support the Community Forum to ensure regular Ward based reviews with Councillors, police and residents to ensure fairer use of the money we control.
- Involve Parish Councils in making the Community Forums more effective
- Identify and publish one contact number and one e-mail address for logging issues in each Ward. Publishing this number as inventively as possible so that it becomes well known in the Ward.
- Establish and publish, within the first 12 months of administration, a Ward profile of recorded crime as the base line for action.
- Encourage the use of the bicycle by Police Officers and PSO's where appropriate.
- Encourage the expansion of Neighborhood Watch Schemes.
- Promote partnership working between the Police, Traffic Attendants, Dog Wardens and other services that work in the community, to be the eyes and ears of the community.
- Know where problem areas are and why they exist by engaging the knowledge and support of local people.
- Work towards a local system of empowering victims of crime to make the offender more aware of the fear that they have instilled in their victim.

Stratford on Avon Liberal Democrats
Manifesto for the District Council Elections May 2011
We listen to what you say

Clean and Tidy Communities

We all want to live in a safe, clean and green community and to bring this about, Liberal Democrats will:

rigorously monitor service standards to ensure that contractors meet the requirements of the contract.

ensure that all agencies and partners involved in the maintenance of our environment work together, including the actions of the residents.

provide sufficient and proper education about maintaining a clean and safe environment. Also, by providing strong enforcement for lawbreaking such as litter and dog fouling offences.

There is a commitment by Liberal Democrat Councillors to:

- close the gaps or overlaps in cleansing and maintenance contracts.
- promote closer integration of key services such as street cleaning and grounds maintenance.
- publish a register of ownership and management responsibility of Public Open Spaces, so that local people, in keeping with big society thinking can petition the right person or organization when areas become neglected or if they wish to become more involved.
- ensure that residents and Parish Councils should have a significant role in the monitoring process in the above paragraph and monitor actions
- take action against graffiti, vandalism, and fly tipping, littering and dog fouling.
- ensure open spaces and streets are clean, tidy and safe and that footpaths are properly maintained.
- Respond when the public calls for action on specific issues. We will be prepared to take appropriate action against known offenders by working with partners and other organizations.

Stratford on Avon Liberal Democrats
Manifesto for the District Council Elections May 2011
We listen to what you say

Sustainable and Affordable Communities

Housing

Liberal Democrats know that people want more than bricks and mortar from their home, but that they also want to live in clean, safe and sustainable communities. For some in Stratford-on-Avon District this can be an impossible dream. To help overcome this we have to have housing that is affordable and linked to employment patterns.

we will play an active part in the Regional Spatial and Economic planning process.
we will actively seek to enhance the Council's leadership role in housing, enabling more affordable homes to be built and to keep them affordable.
existing homes have to be improved and specialist housing provided where required.

There is a commitment by Liberal Democrat Councillors to:

- place more emphasis on local ties and understanding patterns in social change. This must include recognising the importance of social and family ties and recognising the need for stability in families.
- review the bidding system to allow a fairer allocation of housing.
- set higher standards for the building and the design of affordable homes.
- set achievable targets for returning empty properties back into use quickly.
- ensure high quality design and layout of new homes to create pleasant, sustainable communities.

A more robust approach must be taken on design issues at an early stage in development proposals and the Council must be willing to challenge planning applications that do not meet the highest standards. Greater use should be made on an advisory basis of outside bodies such as CABE.

Housing Development

Liberal Democrats believe that the Local Planning Process should be delivering the housing needs of the District and should involve local communities This would allow place making principles to be developed that would encourage mixed sustainable and human scale development, therefore we believe that:

- growth should meet local needs as identified by the local community.
- infilling on brown field sites within existing settlements on brown field sites would usually be acceptable
- allowance could be made for
 - 100% affordable /social housing
 - One for one replacement.
- otherwise RSS requirements should be met through new, sustainable settlements of 2,000 to 3000 dwellings.
- empty shops should be used to create homes.

the integrity of each settlement should be respected whilst allowing each one to grow.

- building against the railway line only if it does not encroach on the greenbelt

In July 2007, the Government published Building a Greener Future: Policy Statement which confirmed its intention that new homes would ultimately be designed and constructed to 'zero carbon' standards. It said that this goal would be achieved in 3 steps – a 25% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions in 2010, followed by a 44% improvement in 2013, with the final step to zero carbon being taken in 2016.

Local Economy

The Liberal Democrats believe that jobs should be kept within the District and would re-introduce the Economic Development role to the Council. This would allow the Council to take a more active approach to the creation of new jobs, particularly when done in conjunction with the County Council.

Action must be taken on empty retail units, to preserve the vitality of our shopping areas. Where suitable long term tenants are not available then occupation by start up businesses, exhibitions and galleries must be encouraged, through working with landlords.

Tourism is the life blood of our district and many jobs depend on a flourishing tourism sector. The council must give support, encouragement and co-ordination for the promotion of our district.

Travel

The commitment by Liberal Democratic Councillors is to:

- Listen to the views of local bus users and encourage feedback on customer satisfaction with their local services.
- Continue to support the Community Links Transport System

Stratford on Avon Liberal Democrats
Manifesto for the District Council Elections May 2011
We listen to what you say

TRUST and POLITICS

Liberal Democrats believe it is the role of every Councillor in to be the activist in their ward. They should campaign to not get elected but to change things. Councillors should act as cabinet members for their ward

Liberal Democrats believe that restraint should be shown by local Councillors when claiming allowances and expenses.

Additionally the Liberal Democrats believe there should be a maximum amount that should be claimed from the public purse each year for serving as a Councillor or from serving in a public position to which the appointment was made by virtue of that person being a Councillor.

We recognize that being a Councillor is essentially a voluntary position. Councillors should not accumulate so many paid public positions that the total level of remuneration would exceed the average wage in Warwickshire. Additionally Councillors should be required to declare their total allowances and expenses, received from the public purse by virtue of their being a Councillor, on an annual basis.

