



BETTER FOR BUCKS BETTER FOR YOU

Buckinghamshire Liberal Democrats Manifesto 2021

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Dear Resident,

After a difficult year, Buckinghamshire Residents have a big decision to make.

We are facing the biggest local elections in our County's history, with the largest Council in the Country up for grabs.

As we begin to recover and bounce back from Covid, do we continue down the same path of more Conservative waste and cuts or do we make a fresh start with the Buckinghamshire Liberal Democrat team?



Cllr Steven Lambert
Group Leader
Buckinghamshire Lib Dems

In this document you will find our vision for Buckinghamshire for the next 4 years and beyond.

If elected, we will ensure that Taxpayers' money doesn't go to waste, our public services are properly funded and that local decisions are made by local people.

We are the only alternative to the Conservatives' track record of letting our residents down.

Our fantastic, local candidates across Buckinghamshire will fight for this vision and for their communities. Lib Dem Councillors and Campaigners across Buckinghamshire have already proven their worth over the past year in the ways they have supported their communities through the most difficult of crises.

I am so proud of all of them.

Your votes on May 6th are an opportunity to elect a hardworking team for our county and send a message to the Conservatives that their track record of cuts and waste is not good enough.

Buckinghamshire needs strong local voices in the new Council, and the only way to achieve that is to elect a strong Lib Dem Team on May 6th.

Cllr Steven Lambert

Group Leader - Buckinghamshire Liberal Democrats

The Budget

The Liberal Democrats take responsible financing seriously.

All Councils have to deliver a balanced budget, and the Liberal Democrats will achieve this through smart spending decisions.

The Conservatives have underfunded Adult Social care by £3.4M this year. The Lib Dems will properly fund Adult Social Care by taking the full social care precept.

All other revenue spending increases are funded by the savings planned from creating a single unitary authority and abolishing the 4 district councils and County Council. Unlike the Conservatives, we will deliver further savings to Taxpayers by cutting the number of Councillors to under 100 - saving £600k a year.

Capital spending increases will be funded by borrowing within the agreed council limits from the PWLB. We will also seek to dispose of surplus assets owned by the council and use this to invest in better roads and footpaths.

If elected the Lib Dems will -

- Balance the books and properly fund our spending.
- Reduce Conservative Waste.
- Properly fund Adult Social Care.





Why A Vote For The Lib Dems Can Make A Difference To You And Your Community

- The Lib Dems are the only party with real momentum in Buckinghamshire.
- We are the second largest party on Buckinghamshire Council and as the clear opposition to the Tories, this election is a two horse race.
- We have proved in the council chamber that we won't be dogmatic but will work across party lines to secure the best solutions for Buck residents.
- We represent areas across the whole county, unlike Labour and the Greens. We control Aylesbury Council and have over 120 candidates in the field.

If you lend us your votes we can beat the Conservatives and can work cross-party to give the people of Bucks a better council that spends your money better.

Our High Street Recovery Plan

Whilst technology is changing our shopping habits our high streets are still the glue that bonds our communities together.

Our High Streets and Small Business Community need help from the Council.

Coming out of the Pandemic we would help retail and local small business by introducing :

- Free car parking on Saturday and Sunday in Council Owned Car Parks for 2 years
- Free parking for one late night shopping evening per week.
- We will introduce a Small Business Support Team in the council dedicated to helping our small businesses recover from the pandemic.



Adult Social Care

The Conservatives have underfunded Adult Social care by £3.4M this year, putting at risk our most vulnerable and the care provider community.

For far too long care for our elderly has been on the backburner by Conservative Governments and our council, seen as either a cash drain or cash cow.

Long term demographic change means we are living longer, so there are more vulnerable adults. There will be a 42% increase in over 85s in next decade.



If elected we will:

Bring forward plans within one year to reform our Adult Social Care provision for council funded places.

Undertake a full review of our respite care offer including those provided at Seeley's House in Beaconsfield.

Fully review our on-site day care service operating from our Opportunities Centres, to create destinations of excellence and support.

Work with self-funding adults in a care setting to review every aspect of their personal care plan with a named person outreach care support officer from our Adult Social care team.

Work with specialist partners to explore opportunities to deliver home care provision using IT assistive technology.

Bring forward plans to deliver against the long delayed Government's Adult Social Care White Paper on Adult Social Care reform using recommendations from the Local Government Association.



Education & Children Services

We believe that the best gift you can give a child is decent education.

For many in Buckinghamshire, our upper schools have been continually underfunded in comparison to Grammar schools.

We must work to close the exam performances gap between upper schools and grammar schools.



If elected we will -

- Work with parents and governors on an upper school by school basis to invest in infrastructure to make our schools the best environment for learning.
- Work in partnership with BASH (Bucks Secondary Heads) to develop a Bucks Education 'raise the bar' joint action plan to improve GCSE and A level outcomes at our Upper schools.
- SEND is a mess in Bucks, and children's services are still rated inadequate. We will review EHCP's to make them timely and reflective of need rather than offer.
- Invest in and reform Home to School transport so that parents do not have to spend thousands of pounds per child to get them to and from school and extra curricular activities, with an Oyster Card style system.

Health & Social Care

Health inequality in Buckinghamshire is a deadly reality. For far too long many have not had the care or support they needed because they live in certain postcodes.

Social Care takes 60% of the Council's non-education expenditure yet outcomes fall woefully short. No one should be written off because of their postcode.



If elected we will -

- Enhance our relationship with GPs, Emergency Services and charities to improve the well-being and health outcomes in our communities with the worst health outcomes.
- Work with GPs and the Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust to improve access to doctor and hospital appointments and ensure discharges to home or care settings are timely and supported.
- Improve provision for mental health in schools and in the community.
- Work with Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust, GPs and Teenage Mental Health services (CAMHS) to address underfunding and reduce delays.
- Create an annual, measurable action plan to address health and well-being inequalities in our most deprived areas.



War on Waste

The Tories are playing fast and loose with your money. They have lost £60m in grants since 2013.

They wasted money on pet projects such as Aylesbury Vale Broadband and e-commerce companies to compete with Bucks business.

The Conservatives' unchecked spending spree on shopping centres in Aylesbury, commercial ventures with offshore companies and schemes to build unwanted car parks, like the Station Road multi-storey car park in Gerrards Cross have put our council finances at risk.

Tory infighting has locked the council into two bin collection contracts costing Taxpayers £millions more than it should have.

Our council is the largest Unitary Council in the Country at 147 councillors. Over 20 Councillors larger than the next largest council, bigger than both the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments.

If elected we will -

- We will reduce the number of Unitary Councillors from 147 to below 100 at the next election saving at least £600,000 a year and around £2.4 million between now and the next election.
- Review all contracts for end to end waste collection and disposal to harmonise the service, and significantly reduce costs.
- End the "Special Expenses" extra tax scandal paid by the residents of Wycombe and Aylesbury on top of their Council Tax.



Protecting Local Democracy

We believe that our local communities are the strength and backbone of our county. They are often the best way to deliver local services.

The abolition of the four districts and the County Council was an opportunity to devolve more power to towns and parishes, not to centralise.

Government's planning laws are also removing the ability of local communities to protect their area.

If elected we will -

- Create a Town Council for High Wycombe.
- Work with parish and town councils, as partners
- Devolve as many services and assets as possible, should they want them.
- Assist smaller parishes in pooling together to share in devolved services.
- Build robust local plans with local democratic involvement.
- Review the Parish Charter and ensure it is delivered upon in a meaningful way.
- Reform the 14 community boards to create a real partnership with the community, 3rd sector and service providers having an equal vote and decision making power. Boards will be chaired by a non councillor and will be made up of no more than 14 Members. Of these 14 places, no more than 7 will be Councillors, the rest will be community and partner representatives.
- Strengthen the support that the Unitary council provides to parish and town councils, for resolving casework issues and creating a welcoming and safe environment in our neighbourhoods.





Homes & Planning

Here in Buckinghamshire, our planning system is under pressure in both directions.

Children can't afford to live near their parents and there is not enough truly affordable housing options for key workers nurses & teachers with around 5,000 on the housing waiting list.



Meanwhile, new Tory planning laws give carte blanche to developers and will erode the green belt.

In Chiltern and South Bucks, the local housing plan has been scrapped. This means the whole area is now open to speculative developments.

In Aylesbury Vale, the local plan is in its final stages and a backroom deal has seen the numbers of new homes in the north of the vale jump to around 35,000.

In the Wycombe area, we are against building in the Gomm Valley.

If elected we will -

- Cut waiting lists by building 1000 social houses for rent in the next 4 years.
- Deliver the new Buckinghamshire Plan to end the speculative development 'free for all' by developers.
- Build within local neighbourhood plans developed with local communities.
- Focus on eco-friendly truly affordable housing options including rent to buy and rent.
- Protect our Green Belt, Areas of National Beauty, Sites of Scientific Interest and Nature Reserves from encroaching development.
- Create a new Country Park in the north of the county.
- Fully fund the planning department to attract and employ the level of staff it requires.



Potholes & Pavements

Potholes are the most visible sign of the deteriorating state of the county with over 2,000 miles of roads and 2,000 miles of footpaths across the county.

They are the lifeblood of our economy, health and wellbeing and are used by every citizen. They require investment to deliver safe journeys.



If elected we will -

- Reverse the Tory cuts in tackling potholes and double maintaining safe pavements.
- Carry out a 'disability & access' review of pavements in our town centres and so that our town centres are welcoming and safe for all.
- Work with developers on highways and footways standards & timescales to ensure all new housing developments have a publicly available full adoption plan.
- Invest in solving congestion that is damaging communities, by delivering Highways schemes like the Iver Relief Road and the Aylesbury Ring Road.
- We will actively adopt the remaining outstanding and 'orphaned' public highways and pavements from new developments.
- Make it easier for communities to reduce speed limits e.g. 20mph speed limits around schools.
- We will invest in our volunteer lollipop people to improve school and highway safety.
- Review the Buckinghamshire freight strategy to protect rural routes and reduce emissions.



Our Environment



We must reduce our carbon footprint to save our planet and get a better quality of life.

Local Tories set a target of 2050 for Zero Emissions. That is far too late, we must do better. We will declare a Climate Emergency in our first Council meeting.

We have major problems with Air Quality across Bucks. Our Council can influence 40% of emissions - we can make a difference by ensuring the Council's Environmental impact appraisal has as much weight as its financial appraisal

We need a new and exciting approach to the green belt linked to its environmental impact and ensure that it is properly protected against the gradual erosion by creeping urban sprawl which it has suffered from under the Tories.

These green corridors have a vital role in safeguarding and encouraging biodiversity, in our health and well-being, and in taking action on climate change and carbon storage. Never has a year shown the value of the green spaces around our urban areas more.

If elected we will -

- Become a top 10 council for recycling in the country. Currently 4 of the top 5 Councils in the Country
- 150,000 trees planted every year.
- All car parks to have charging points by 2025.
- Removing gate fees at 'council tips' reducing the costs of fly tipping.
- Re-open the council tips to a 7 day a week service.
- Introducing a 'no fee' community recycle scheme for items such as furniture and white goods.
- End charging for Garden Waste collection from 2024.
- Decarbonise our investments by disinvesting in fossil fuel companies.
- All new council fleet vehicles to be electric by 2025.
- Explore options for Low Emission Zones to be rolled out across our major towns.
- Expand our cycle network and explore an affordable partnership model of 'single journey bike and other vehicle hire services' in our towns.
- Campaign to deliver the East West Rail spur from Aylesbury to Winslow, Oxford and Milton Keynes.
- Speed up the street lamp replacement to LED scheme and assess the number of natural 'dark ways' reducing light pollution for nature and reducing energy usage without impacting safety.





Our teams across the County

