



Change that works for you in Manchester

The Manchester Liberal Democrats are making 5 promises for the 2010 local elections:

- 1) Cut Council Tax by £51 for a Band D property.**
- 2) Cut waste, including ending the Council Leader's Chauffeur-driven car and claiming back £421,000 owed by other councils.**
- 3) Lobby for the return of £82million GMP Funding, which would pay for over 500 more police on our streets.**
- 4) Spend over £1million extra on gritting and improving our roads.**
- 5) Reverse plans to close Ewing school; and cut truancy levels.**

**Cllr Simon Ashley
Group Leader**

**Cllr John Commons
City Party Chair**

Proud of Manchester

Manchester is a vibrant, diverse city. Liberal Democrats are proud of our city and its people. But too many Manchester families are trapped in poverty, unable to access decent public services. We believe that the Liberal Democrats can make Manchester an even better place in which to live and work.

There are 33 Liberal Democrat Councillors in 14 wards, whilst South Manchester also has a Liberal Democrat MP, John Leech. Our elected representatives work hard for the community all-year-round.

Liberal Democrats aim to take control of Manchester City Council. We want to change Manchester for the better, making it safer, greener, cleaner and more local. We will play our full part in the future of Manchester's City Region. We'll stand up for the people of Manchester, and give power back to the people.

1) Council Tax cut by £51 for a Band D property.

In these hard times, every penny counts in the personal budgets of Manchester's people. The Liberal Democrats in Manchester have proposed either the freezing on cutting of the Council Tax for the past 10 years. This year, Labour raised Council tax by £11. We found extra efficiencies to freeze the council tax **and** give an "efficiency dividend" of £40 to all those registered for Council Tax.

This will help Manchester residents with stretched budgets and help keep the city's economy moving. Our Council Tax package returns £51 to Band D households.

2) Cut waste, including ending the Council Leader's Chauffeur driven car and claiming back £421,000 owed by other councils.

Liberal Democrats would cut Town Hall waste. The city's overpaid contribution to Marketing Manchester would be reclaimed, bringing in £421,000. The Council's PR budget should be reduced by £500,000 to avoid sending out publications that duplicate the same information. Labour's contract for a second chauffeur-driven car for the Leader of the Council will be cancelled, saving £10,000.

3) Lobby for the return of £82million GMP Funding, which would pay for over 500 more police on our streets.

Manchester's residents are contributing more funding to the Greater Manchester Police Authority through a 3-year increase in the local Police tax. We must see an increase in the numbers of Police Officers on our streets as promised.

But Government's unfair Police funding rules have taken away over £82 million – money that should be spend on putting extra police officers on the streets of Manchester. Liberal Democrats will not stop campaigning until the Government returns our lost Police funding.

4) Spend over £1million extra on gritting and improving our roads.

Lib Dems will introduce new grit bins, at least 5 per ward, and a new Snow Plough/ Gritter to Snow Plough dual use on existing vehicles. We will spend an extra £420,000 improving the city's drainage and roads, and devolve move decision- making on around £17million of Street Environment/Cleansing and Pavement Improvement budgets to Ward Committees.

5) Reverse Labour's plans to close Ewing school; and cut truancy levels.

Manchester Labour is failing the children and young people of our city. Manchester still has one of the worst education departments in the country. Our teachers are doing a good job, but they are let down by poor leadership and a lack of direction from the Town Hall. Head Teachers tell us that too much is spent by bureaucrats, instead of being devolved to local schools, where these decisions are best taken.

Manchester has the highest truancy in the country. We would wage a "War on Truants."

GCSE results are improving locally, but we still lag well behind both the national average and other core cities. More needs to be done to keep the pressure on schools to improve their results. Where schools are not achieving, the Council needs to be able to intervene earlier. Manchester Liberal Democrats are pleased that Faith schools provide a good education for many children in the city. Liberal Democrats pledge to reverse Labour's closure of Ewing School.

Liberal Democrat Budget 2010:

This manifesto should be read in conjunction with our budget proposals. This year, we have called for proposals for the following new investments in Council services.

Expanding our waste and recycling systems, to bring food waste and garden waste recycling to doorsteps across the city

Recruiting extra social workers

Investing more money on maintaining our crumbling roads and pavements

Increasing our capacity to cope with extreme winter weather conditions

Savings and efficiencies allow us to propose Liberal Democrat priorities that will improve public services in our local communities:

Increasing local community Grants (CASH grants) per Ward to £66,000.

Funding a Manchester Youth Choir

Providing an extra £100,000 to support voluntary sector youth provision

Webcasting of Council meetings and Committee meetings

Bringing back Public Question Time.

Liberal Democrats believe in devolving local decision making. We would shift over £20million to local Ward Committees for local people and Councillors to determine local priorities. This would include transferring the Street Environment, Street Cleansing Budgets and Pavement Improvement and Pavement Repair and Maintenance to Ward Committees to decide priorities locally, and setting up a £2million fund' for community bids for community facilities that need capital spending

From the Carbon Reduction Innovation Fund of £1million we would allocate £100,000 to Carbon Reduction 'quick wins' such as a Smart Meter loan scheme from libraries and to

expand the City Council's Travel Planning work to offer Manchester residents 'personalised' travel planning and encourage Community Groups to develop innovative carbon-reduction proposals with the remaining funding

You know what's best for your area, so we'll put you in control, with more decisions being taken locally by Councillors you elect. Backed by a "can do" Liberal Democrat Council that cares about the issues you care about – things like safer streets, better schools, greener parks and tougher planning enforcement.

Housing:

With huge Council House waiting lists, it is a scandal that it has taken a Labour Government 13 years to allow the Council to build new homes. We want to see more affordable homes built in Manchester. We'll build more Council homes, tackle the scandalous waiting lists, and bring empty homes back into use.

We'll act against rogue private sector landlords. We support the Council's own research which suggested a 30% affordable housing requirement, whilst Labour let developers off the hook with a 20% target. Lib Dems will ensure modern homes are eco-friendly homes. There is great housing demand to be met !

Crime and Disorder:

Greater Manchester Police is not performing well. It is being capped, and has had two recent inspections which have been damning. We need more police officers on the beat.

We support neighbourhood policing, with Bobbies allocated to each area.

Liberal Democrats firmly oppose ID cards and want to see this money spent on more police, and Community Support Officers on the street.

Liberal Democrats support tough action against those who commit crime. We support effective measures to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour. We will support local communities should they call for the use of Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), Dispersal Orders, Drinks Bans and evictions against nuisance neighbours. Lib Dems favour restorative justice, giving victims of predominately low-level crime more say in how the offenders are punished. **We will do whatever works to help our local communities tackle Anti-Social behaviour.**

Health:

Too many Mancunians die young. That's the stark reality of Manchester's poor health. The Liberal Democrats will work with NHS professionals to agree health and clinical priorities locally. We'll campaign to abolish targets, which distort these priorities and increase management costs.

We will lobby for more resources for primary care, public health and preventative and health education work and for the better use of existing resources in these areas. We would work closely with the Primary Care Trust (PCT), and our excellent University School of Medicine to fill the gaps in GP numbers, particularly in the inner city.

Environment:

Liberal Democrats want to see a cleaner, greener, carbon-neutral Manchester. That means better street-cleaning services week in, week out, as well as innovative solutions to reduce carbon emissions.

Labour aren't serious about tackling climate change. They took 18 months to come up with a strategy, and then let down the City by excluding aviation and Manchester Airport, owned by the Council, from the Climate Change action Plan. Some 85% of the Airport's CO2 emissions come from flights. The Airport cannot be given a free pass.

Labour's recycling record is poor. Manchester Liberal Democrats believe that the Council should be concentrating on reducing waste and improving recycling.

Manchester's green open spaces are not safe with Labour. Too much of it ends up in the hands of developers. Manchester Lib Dems were proud to help stop loss of green space such as the allotment sell-off in East Manchester, the proposed land sale in Marie Louise Gardens in Didsbury, and the plans to build on Greenbank in Levenshulme.

Transport:

Manchester's Liberal Democrats are proud that one of our members, Councillor Keith Whitmore, is providing political leadership as Chairman of Greater Manchester's Integrated Transport Authority.

The Authority works hard to improve bus and heavy rail services; and is currently delivering a major expansion of the Metrolink tram system to East, North and South Manchester and to Media City to the west of the city - an expansion that will see the length of the network go up from 37km to 97km.

We support Manchester Airport as a key player in employment and growth in the North West, but its expansion must be sustainable. We believe that there is an inconsistency between the government's policy on CO2 emissions, and the government's policy of airport expansion. These inconsistencies need resolving. We believe that the Council and Airport should set Carbon Reduction Targets based on 2005 levels.

Parks, Leisure, Arts and Culture:

Lib Dems will improve the quality of our parks, green open spaces and cemeteries. Good work done in our major parks must be replicated throughout the city. We would allow "Friends of Parks" Groups to bid for funding to bring forward plans to improve their park. Parks will also be given funding to promote composting schemes to help improve soil quality and planting in our green spaces.

In particular, in recent years, Manchester's Liberal Democrat City Council Group have been forward-looking and constructive in arguing for and backing key developments in our city such as the construction of the Bridgewater Hall, the staging of the Commonwealth Games and the establishment and staging of two Manchester International Festivals so far. We would like to see an annual Manchester Festival.

Regeneration and Jobs:

Liberal Democrats believe in an individual's right to live their lives as they see fit, without discrimination. Manchester today is a tolerant, multi-ethnic, multi-faith and diverse society. It is a richer society as a result - culturally, socially and economically.

A Liberal Democrat run Council would do more to improve the skill of Manchester's population - to equip our citizens to find work. We would improve literacy and numeracy and reduce the dependency on benefits in parts of the City.

We support the regeneration in the City over the past decade. We believe that the City Council has the financial capacity to undertake the Town Hall regeneration project. We strongly believe that the £165million proposed spend over a number of years will provide significant momentum for the local economy.

Local residents should be at the heart of any local regeneration initiative. Liberal Democrats will ensure that residents are consulted meaningfully, and listened to, before decisions are made.

We are concerned that local people are not accessing the jobs created by regeneration. Our unemployment rate is much higher than the rest of Greater Manchester. We make no apology for prioritising Manchester residents for Manchester jobs.

City Centre:

The City Centre is the catalyst for growth, wealth and jobs for Manchester. The successful council will seek to balance the need for job creation with the needs of local people. City Centre residents, workers and visitors, like the rest of the city, should have the right to:

- 1) Good night out and a good night's sleep, with action to tackle noise and nuisance.
- 2) World-class city with the highest standards of architecture and design for our buildings.
- 3) Greener and Safer City – protecting green open space and making our streets safer.
- 4) Giving people a real say and creating a more tolerant and diverse city.

Conclusion:

A Liberal Democrat Council would offer immediate, prudent support, through the proposed Council Tax reduction and efficiency dividend, to Manchester residents confronting the recession.

A Lib Dem Council will also change the way local priorities are decided, by truly involving Manchester residents in making Manchester greater.

Together we can make Manchester a safer, cleaner, greener and more local place in which to live and work.

Simon Ashley
Group Leader

John Commons
City Party Chair

Contacts:

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