



Manifesto 2022

Greener, fairer, safer Cardiff

Cardiff Liberal Democrats

www.cardiffld.org.uk



Our vision for Cardiff

For too many people, things aren't working the way they should.

Too many people are under huge pressure from the cost of living crisis, businesses and venues are still facing the fallout of COVID, and Brexit is having a huge impact on public services across Cardiff.

But the way things are today is not the way it has to be. We can make sure that everyone in Cardiff, no matter who you are or where you're from, can thrive.



Getting the basics right

We're optimistic and ambitious for the future of our home and Wales's capital city, but the first job of a council must be to get basic public services right.

Despite inflation-busting council tax rises and eye-watering levels of borrowing for pet projects, the Labour party running Cardiff Council is failing to get the basics right.

After a decade of Labour leadership, our capital city has been left without a bus station, waste collections are in chaos, our streets are dirty, our city's heritage has been eroded, woodland and green spaces destroyed, and community facilities written off.

Listening to you

Communities feel dictated to rather than listened to by Labour leaders in City Hall. Parents struggling to get their children into their local school, people struggling to get around on public transport, families struggling to keep up with the cost of living. They feel left behind and taken for granted.

That's why a Liberal Democrat-run Cardiff Council will have a laser-sharp focus on getting the basics right for our communities now, and in the future.

Our focus will be on cleaner, safer, and happier communities. On making sure everyone has a safe place in Cardiff to call home. On ensuring everyone has access to vibrant green spaces. On affordable, reliable public transport. On creating a new way of listening to residents about your priorities for your communities.

Our priorities will be your priorities.

We believe in putting people, our communities and our planet first, creating a better future for all of us. A Liberal Democrat-run council will be on your side in City Hall.

The choice for the people of Cardiff has never been clearer. It's time for fresh start with the Liberal Democrats.

Give us your support and together we can make a greener, fairer, safer Cardiff.

Cllr. Rhys Taylor
Leader of the Liberal Democrats
City and County of Cardiff
April 2022



It's time for change. And you can make it happen.

-  Cleaning up our streets, employing more street sweepers, protecting green spaces, and tackling the climate crisis
-  Make our community safer by working with the police to tackle crime and expand youth services to prevent it
-  Build 3,000 new council homes over the next 10 years and tackle homelessness
-  Improve access to public transport and create a transport network for the 21st century
-  Run a listening council that works with residents

**On 5th May, vote Lib Dem to
Demand Better For Cardiff**

Environment

We want a cleaner and greener city, and for Cardiff to be a leader in facing up to the climate and nature crises. Starting with the basics, where more people are encouraged to recycle, fly tipping is tackled and air pollution is reduced. Under Labour's leadership the number of household waste recycling centres has been reduced from 4 to 2, waste management has been in chaos due to collection days being changed, recycling levels have gone down in the last 2 years, and Cardiff has been identified with high air pollution.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- **Clean up our dirty streets** – We will invest in more street sweepers, introduce free bulky waste collections, bring back community skips to neighbourhoods, work to re-open household recycling centres to the north and west of the city, and increase support for volunteer litter pickers.
- **Protect our natural environment** – We will protect our existing green spaces across the city and increase the number of trees planted, so that all parts of the city benefit. We will ensure new developments provide a home for nature with trees, green walls and green roofs on buildings. We will put an end to concrete jungles in Cardiff.
- **Lead the fight against pollution and climate change** – We will increase the number of electric charging points, electrify council vehicles, consider banning the most polluting vehicles from the city centre, review the residents' parking scheme and explore the use of emissions-based charging. We will apply a climate change impact assessment on all council and financial decisions, so protecting the environment is always a priority. We will develop community environment action plans so residents' priorities shape the council's priorities for green spaces, play areas, street cleansing, and transport improvements.



Crime and community safety

As a capital city, Cardiff faces growing challenges with reported crime and disorder. Overall crime appears to be going up in Cardiff and whilst policing is the responsibility of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cardiff Council has an important role to play. Since 2017 Cardiff has seen increasing rates of anti-social behaviour, knife- and drug-related crimes, and crimes related to public order offences. In 2020 we faced the humiliation of seeing the operators of the Nextbike bike hire scheme temporarily withdraw their fleet of bikes due to rates of vandalism that they hadn't faced in any other city.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- **Prevent crime** – We will review youth provision, working with children and young people to design services that fit their needs. We will increase support to community organisations to provide more diversionary activities; and we will use better planning to build out crime through use of lighting and by minimising dangerous locations.
- **Tackle crime** - We will expand the number of anti-social behaviour officers working for the council and improve links with the police. We will expand the ARC CCTV network to tackle persistent anti-social behaviour, and we will expand the neighbourhood watch network.
- **Bring our communities together** – We have seen communities across Cardiff concerned about their safety and trust in the Police, with the death of Muhammed Hussain following his release from custody. We will work with our communities to ensure that Black, Asian and Ethnic (BAE) communities feel safe, and will work with the hospitality sector to encourage them to sign up to the South Wales Police LGBT+ Partnership scheme.



Transport

We want a city that is better connected where people can travel to work or school on reliable, clean buses or by active travel. The current Labour administration has failed to sufficiently invest in roads, pavements and support bus routes, leaving many struggling to get around. They promised a new bus station a decade ago and we are still waiting for it to open.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- **Prioritise public transport** – We will work with Cardiff Bus and other bus companies to develop a new transport strategy ensuring communities across Cardiff have reliable, affordable bus routes. We will restore services that have been cut to communities that need them, ensure that buses are not stuck in a congested city, build the new bus station and review bus fares including piloting free bus travel. We will pilot more on-demand bus services and roll out more electric buses.
- **Fix our crumbling streets** – We will roll out a new programme of highway repairs and resurfacing to fix our crumbling roads, pavements and footpaths, and introduce a Walking Strategy, making sure everyone can get around safely.
- **Encourage walking and cycling** – We will design active travel routes to ensure that more children can walk and cycle safely to school, active travel is a safe alternative in all parts of the city, not only the city centre. Where new roads are built, including as part of new housing developments, we will ensure that properly segregated cycle and pedestrian routes are part of the infrastructure, as part of a strategy of working towards making sure that as many of the facilities people need to access on a day-to-day basis as possible are within 20 minutes of their home.



Housing

Cardiff has a housing crisis. Too many people can't afford to buy a home, homes are left empty permanently or as second homes, some rented accommodation is poor, and over 8,000 people waiting on the social housing list. People are sleeping rough on our streets and the current approach to homelessness isn't working. The fire safety scandal shows that too many developers put profits, not people, as their priority.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- **Prioritise investing money into building much needed homes** - We will build an additional 3,000 council homes over the next 10 years, and use the latest energy efficient technologies to ensure they are low carbon.
- **Provide more help to people experiencing homelessness** - We would not criminalise homelessness as some councils have done and will work to ensure that nobody is stuck in temporary accommodation and that everyone is supported to have a place to call home.
- **Help more people into private housing** - We will work with the private rented sector to assist in re-housing people on the housing list more quickly, providing support to encourage landlords into this market. We will develop a deposit guarantee scheme for tenants, tackle empty private homes by increasing the council tax premium by 300% and charge a 100% council tax premium on second homes.
- **Make planning work for people** - We will change the way planning works in Cardiff from tick box consultations by reviewing the method by which consultations are carried out, meaningfully involving and listening to communities. Communities need to be involved from the outset, rather than being presented with a plan agreed behind closed doors. We will ensure that developers pay the s106 money they have promised, so that affordable housing, playgrounds and infrastructure is funded properly.
- **Fire safety** - We will establish a Building Safety Support Hub to provide support for victims of the fire safety scandal.



Education

Investing in our schools is crucial if we are to give our children the best possible start in life. It was the Welsh Liberal Democrats who established the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) to provide additional funds for schools in disadvantaged communities, including here in Cardiff. Through Kirsty Williams, when in government as education minister, Welsh Liberal Democrats led the way in investing in early years education because that's where investment makes the greatest difference. We doubled the funding for our youngest pupils through the PDG and promoted equal opportunities through increased money for sports kit and school uniforms through the PDG Access Grant. We delivered non-repayable maintenance grants for students to tackle inequalities and contribute to meeting living costs- the only part of the UK where this is the case. In Cardiff, Labour continues to fall short in many parts of the city in responding to pressure on insufficient school places and particularly in Welsh-medium education. Labour is failing to listen to local communities over plans such as the expansion of the new Cathays High School.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- **Give children the support they need** – We will support children and young people as we deal with the disruption caused by the pandemic. We will target resources to the most vulnerable learners, provide digital and other equipment so that all pupils have equal access and fund enrichment centres in the school holidays.
- **Provide enough school places** - As the city expands, we will work with schools and parents to ensure that local children are able to attend local schools. We will bring forward plans to increase the number of Welsh-medium school places, including the provision of new Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools.
- **Open up schools to the wider community** – We will give much greater impetus to opening up our schools to their local communities. We will support schools to manage their facilities so that they can be used by community groups thus strengthening community cohesion and widening opportunity across the age spectrum.



Finance and economic development

We want a city which encourages small businesses and entrepreneurs, where council tax rises are proportionate, and the council's finances are well managed. Under Labour the city centre is struggling with more and more empty shops, the council is spending millions on a new arena, council tax is up, and council debt will hit £1.4 billion by 2024. When the Liberal Democrats previously ran Cardiff Council between 2004 and 2012, the city had a lower average council tax rise throughout that period than every other local authority in Wales.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- **Better manage the council's finances** – We will review major projects and aim to reduce council debt to more sustainable levels. We will limit any council tax rises over the lifetime of the next council term to below the Welsh average, and we will develop a participatory budget process so residents can help set the priorities for our infrastructure spending. We will ensure that budget decisions are assessed for their impact on our environment, inequality, and poverty.
- **Support business in our city** – We will be pro-business and put measures in place to raise the profile of our city on the UK and international stage, in order to attract major companies to invest in Cardiff. We will work with landlords to help new businesses set up in vacant units; we will support more businesses to start click and collection services; and we will reform the tendering system so that more small and medium-sized businesses can bid for council contracts.
- **Support district shopping centres** – We will work with businesses to deliver more small-scale regeneration projects in local communities. We will tackle litter, improve pavements and establish trade groups so that businesses can be empowered to improve the areas around their shops.



Social services and health

One of the most important responsibilities of a council is to protect and support the vulnerable in our society, yet over the last 10 years this group has been let down by a lack of leadership and vision.

Services have been cut, care agencies have left the market, day centres have closed and the social services budget has been out of control. In 2020, Cardiff's Youth Services scored 0 out of 36 in an official inspection, showing how badly Labour have let young people down.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- **Support vulnerable adults** – we will work with the local health board to reduce the number of people trapped in hospitals because they haven't got the right care and support; provide more support for carers; and build more older person's accommodation.
- **Protect vulnerable children** – We will provide more support for looked after children and their foster families; ensure more children are placed closer to home; fund more respite services, and review social services provision for children to stabilise the service and retain staff.
- **Ensure children and young people have a voice and are heard** - We will ensure that the most vulnerable children and young people receive the support and education they deserve to have the best start in life. We will also work with schools, health board, and services to improve access to mental health support for children and young people.
- **Address health inequalities** - We will commit to focusing action, in conjunction with local NHS organisations, on tackling the stark health inequalities which exist between different poorer and better off communities within Cardiff.



Libraries, culture and sport

Providing access to arts, culture and libraries across Cardiff is part of delivering a healthier, prosperous and happier city. It is also critical to ensuring that everyone feels included and welcome in Cardiff. Labour led a disastrous transfer of leisure centres to a private company and cut library hours.

Access to music education for our children has been cut back, prices hiked, and too many of our poorest communities are unable to access opportunities. Too many of the city's communities are losing vital community facilities and their identity.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- **Protect leisure centres** – We will review the contract with GLL/Better to ensure that every community is getting the services they need. We will refurbish Pentwyn Leisure Centre and reopen it to the public after it was closed in March 2021. We will ensure that all communities have access to facilities to keep them active and healthy through an Active Cardiff strategy.
- **Expand the Hyb project** – We will review libraries and hybs and ensure that more communities have access to a modern accessible building and the full range of hyb services.
- **Protect our cultural heritage** - Establish a tourism information office in the city centre, and support the establishment of music venues in the city centre such as Womanby Street. We will protect Cardiff's heritage and community facilities and listen to organisations such as the Cardiff Civic Society and wider society to develop planning policies that encourage high quality buildings in keeping with our history. We will review planning policy with a view to protecting long-standing music venues even when flats or hotels are granted planning permission nearby. We will continue to support Pride Cymru, Menter Caerdydd, Tafwyl, and ensure that they are supported to grow. We will make sure that different communities in Cardiff are celebrated, included, and have access to community facilities. We will seek to re-establish a permanent community facility to promote and support the Welsh language.



A council that listens

As Liberal Democrats we believe that councils should be as open and transparent as possible, so that decisions can be scrutinised by councillors and the public. We believe councils should work with residents to shape priorities, plans, and the future of our city. When we ran the council we introduced public questions and we frequently consulted the public on decisions.

Under Labour communities have been ignored, local consultation has been reduced or not been carried out effectively and controversial decisions pushed through.

A Liberal Democrat council would:

- **Open up the council to make sure the people in charge hear the voice of the city's residents** - We will hold regular social media sessions where local people can ask Cabinet Members questions. We will review the ways that the council engages with children and young people so they are better engaged.
- **Introduce fair voting** - We will change the system used for electing councillors to the Single Transferable Vote so that every vote counts in local council elections.
- **Make the council more transparent and responsive** - We will overhaul how, where and when meetings take place to better allow public involvement.
- **Listen to more voices** - We will look at best practice in accountability and participation, pilot a Citizens' Assembly to ensure that a wide range of voices is heard on key issues facing the city, and pilot Participatory Budgeting meaning that residents can vote on community projects. We will ensure that the council is accessible to, and works with, all communities in Cardiff.



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