

Milton Keynes Liberal Democrats' Manifesto

2016 Election

If the Liberal Democrats were running the Council after the elections we would implement the following policies:

Mitigation against Austerity Cuts

At the heart of what MK Liberal Democrats will do is to protect the most vulnerable from the Conservative Government cuts. To this end, we would work with voluntary organisations and groups who work with low-income families to find real, long-term solutions to the plight of our most vulnerable individuals and families.

Homelessness

MK Liberal Democrats believe that homelessness devastates lives. We will make tackling homelessness a priority with the aim of having no families in temporary accommodation or bed & breakfast. MK Liberal Democrats will do more to help the increasing number of single homeless people. We also commit to building homes and hostels on Council-owned land to help homeless people rebuild their lives, and to work with the voluntary sector to help put an end to homeless in Milton Keynes.

Affordable Housing

MK Liberal Democrats will support the strict enforcement of the current policy of 30% affordable housing, both to buy and for rental, with a proposal to increase that percentage to 35%, in line with the latest projections of need.

Regeneration

Milton Keynes Liberal Democrats support regeneration of our older estates. The Liberal Democrats believe that, when fully supported by local communities, regeneration will lead to high quality homes, greater job opportunities, better health facilities and improved educational prospects. The Liberal Democrats will NOT support any 'top-down' imposition of regeneration - in order to be successful, all regeneration schemes must be backed by residents, following full and robust consultation.

Growth

We support growth and will aim to build at least 1,750 houses per year including at least 30% affordable, but growth must come with the required physical and social infrastructure and protect our green open spaces.

Education

Liberal Democrats remain committed to non-selective education. We believe in a good school for EVERYONE.

We would continue to ensure the provision of the required level of school places and an environment that supports learning.

The Economy

The Lib Dem would support the economy by supporting inward investment, and especially helping our young people into work for the first time, e.g. through apprenticeship schemes and encouraging employers to help schools and colleges prepare young people for work.

Working with others/Devolution

As Milton Keynes Council has to shrink with Government imposed cuts, we would work with the Voluntary Sector and parishes to see if they could take over some functions that may otherwise be cut.

Recycling

When the Liberal Democrats last ran the Council we increased recycling rates FIVE fold from 11% to 55%. Rates have now flattened. We need to continue to maintain Milton Keynes at the innovative edge of recycling and aim to continually increase MK's recycling rates. The Liberal Democrats would produce a new Waste Strategy.

The Environment

The Environment is very important to the Liberal Democrats.

Residents are getting concerned that the physical environment is looking neglected and areas are starting to look run down. When the Liberal Democrats last ran the

Council we tackled environmental neglect by such initiatives as introducing the Graffiti Busters and removing abandoned cars quickly. We would once again look at ways of tackling environmental neglect, such as making the cleansing service more flexible, enabling hot spots to receive an adequate service.

The Liberal Democrats would continue to improve our management of water and flooding to reduce water consumption and protect the borough from flooding. We would ensure the new Flood & Water Strategy is implemented.

Potholes

The Liberal Democrats are not satisfied that the Council's current policy on fixing potholes is fit for purpose. They only fix potholes over 50mm deep, but will leave those around them unfilled. The Council seems to spend more time measuring potholes than fixing them.

The Liberal Democrats would instigate a review of the Council's pothole policy to take into account the number of potholes as well as the depth.

We also believe that pavements and redways need to receive equal attention to avoid accidents and prevent elderly people falling.

Public Transport

Public Transport is important to the Liberal Democrats as it is often used by those without access to a car, the elderly, the young and the low paid.

It is the means by which many get to and from work, so early morning and evening services are important, remembering that the Shopping Centre is open 7 days a week, Sunday services are important too.

Health/Adult Social Care

Liberal Democrats would continue to support independent living for our senior citizens. We would explore offering the warden service to residents in need of it living in the community.

Liberal Democrats believe that mental illness should get the same priority as physical illness.

We need to deliver more services for the growing number of residents suffering from dementia.

We would campaign for a local GP for everyone.

Children's Social Care

The Liberal Democrats would continue to ensure the protection from harm of all children in MK, and ensure that children in MK Council's care receive the best possible support to flourish physically, mentally and spiritually.

We need to improve the access of children to mental health services.

Finance and Resources

We would review the spend on the Council refurbishment programme to identify and seek money to put into capital projects such as school builds and city infrastructure.

We propose the sale of excess land and buildings in order to generate capital receipts to benefit the capital programme.

We would carry out a fundamental review of the budget with a view to minimising or ceasing unnecessary activities.

We would ensure that when staff levels are reduced that senior and middle management levels are also reduced.

We will impose strict time limits on interim positions before they must be made permanent, and end the practice of allowing staff to be self-employed and contracted via a personal company to the Council.

We would change procurement rules to tighten up on tax avoidance.