

LOCAL ELECTION 2007 MANIFESTO



**STAFFORDSHIRE
MOORLANDS
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS**

Council Tax is a ridiculously unfair Conservative invention, and if we could, we would abolish it. But during our 4 year joint administration we have limited increases to just 2.5%. We will continue to listen to local people on Council Tax and services.

COMMUNITY SAFETY - THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS WILL:

- a. Reduce crime and the fear of crime so that the Moorlands is a safe place to live, work and visit. For example by delivering 'Trickster' and similar community safety events, to all age groups in an inter-generational manner across the District.
- b. Deliver a more joined up approach to Community Safety by effective use of District and Police officers, working with partners and supporting volunteers where appropriate (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Prevention Panels).
- c. Work with partners to improve leisure and sporting opportunities for young people.
- d. Deliver a fully digitalised, state of the art CCTV monitoring system to the people of the Moorlands
- e. Ensure that the new Civil Enforcement Officers are given powers to tackle environmental crime
- f. Deliver a safe house for the sufferers from Domestic Violence and support the 'Sanctuary' schemes as well as initiatives which aim to remove the perpetrator of violence from the family home.
- g. Roll out Community Speedwatch across the district following the pilot project in Dilhorne and Caverswall.

DEMOCRACY - THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS WILL:

- a. Open up Cabinet, Full Council and other meetings to Public Question Time with written questions submitted in advance.
- b. Delegate some decision making to Area Committees with defined powers and a delegated budget.
- c. Explore SMS texting facilities for accessing services.
- d. Continue NO 2 ID campaign.
- e. Oppose take-over by the City of Stoke-on-Trent, but co-operate with the City where it is in the District's interests.

ENVIRONMENT - THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS WILL:

- a. Deliver and expand new waste and recycling schemes to include plastics.
- b. Remove planning application fees for domestic energy generation schemes.
- c. Source and facilitate grants for insulation schemes to provide higher standards of insulation for all homes; require a very high environmental specification for all new homes, including Affordable Housing schemes.
- d. Develop the climate change strategy for the District to include a programme of projects that move communities and all Staffs Moorlands District Council property towards Carbon Neutral status (eg Biomass heating at Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre; Ilam Community Climate Change Project; ProjectCarbon.org).
- e. Require all new developments to include a condition where the developer must produce 25% of all energy required for the development in a sustainable manner.
- f. Encourage more families to take up the "Real Nappy" scheme to remove disposable nappies from the residual waste stream, and explore the development of nappy laundering schemes to assist parents.

In addition we will continue to explore the viability of providing a Promession facility in the Moorlands. ['Cremation' of the deceased through freeze-drying rather than burning.]

HEALTHY LIVING - THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS WILL:

- a. Explore and deliver innovative ways of encouraging greater use of Leisure Centres during the day time.
- b. Provide opportunities for family membership of Council leisure facilities.
- c. Encourage more "Leisure Prescriptions" from GPs [- free use of Leisure Centres for 12 weeks].
- d. Develop a 'well-being' strategy, in partnership with other agencies focussing on young parents and carers, especially those still at school.
- e. Build on the findings of the Substance Misuse Working Group to tackle alcohol and substance misuse across the District.
- f. Encourage family focussed leisure activities, festivals and entertainments.
- g. Develop a Play Strategy including Biddulph Valley Way, Trim Trails etc.
- h. Complete the refurbishment of Birchall Pavilion.

HOUSING - THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS WILL:

- a. Deliver another 250 affordable homes via our Council's Affordable Homes Programme in the three towns and via planning gain, by requiring 50% affordable homes on all developments, not just on larger sites which is the present policy.
- b. Roll out Affordable Housing programme to villages and rural areas, so that younger people and families are encouraged to remain living locally. Our employment, transport and leisure policies will support this.
- c. Deliver Extracare Housing Schemes for vulnerable people together with partners.
- d. Continue work on bringing empty homes back into use (80 achieved so far). Our target over the next 4 years is 150.

In addition we will encourage developers to install domestic sprinklers in all new housing.

REGENERATION - THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS WILL:

- a. Together with partners, make sure the Parkside Community Arts Centre is up and running by Christmas 2009.
- b. Facilitate the Extension of the Churnet Valley Rail line into Leek and ultimately Stoke-on-Trent.
- c. Work with partners to create the Caldon Canal basin in Leek and enhance the canal corridors in the District.
- d. Encourage the conversion of redundant mills to business use.
- e. Deliver a spatial plan for Leek via the Core Strategy to prevent piecemeal development.
- f. Provide more business start-up units with serviced accommodation.
- g. Continue Biddulph regeneration through the Area Action Plan.
- h. Encourage enterprise using traditional and locally available skills, supporting Live/Work units.

TRANSPORT - THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS WILL:

- a. Delegate the decision on Car Parking charges to Town & Parish Councils so long as all costs of providing the service are recovered either through Town or Parish precepts, charges or 3rd Party subsidy, such as businesses etc.
- b. Deliver Decriminalised Parking Enforcement and Residents' parking schemes.
- c. Develop Rural Transport strategies with partners, to provide help for the elderly and other disadvantaged groups who are trapped at home without a car.
- d. Support innovative cycle schemes across the District.