



# ***"Making the positive choice for a better Sheffield"***

Sheffield Liberal Democrat  
2008 Local Election Manifesto

# It's time for change....

That's what local people in Sheffield have been telling me loud and clear, they want a change in the Town Hall for the better.

They don't want a Council that doesn't listen. They don't want a Council that is only interested in grand projects; ignoring the every day needs of local people. They don't want a Council that talks big on local residents' priorities; but then fails to deliver.

But that's what's happening with Labour in control.

Liberal Democrats in Sheffield are up to the challenge set by local people on their priorities. We want to make a change for the better so that we can improve the lives of local people.

Changing the way we deal with crime and anti-social behaviour. Putting more wardens on the streets to deal with the issue; but also investing millions in a new youth service to give our young people extra opportunities to take part in positive activities.

Starting to protect our local and global environment. Offering more kerbside recycling to combat climate change. But also, unlike Labour, commit to protect and invest more in our local parks and green spaces.

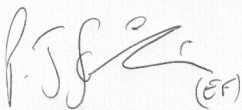
Putting local communities in charge of local services. Starting with allowing them to influence local library services, improvements to their local parks and how local streets are cleaned.

Giving all areas a fair deal when it comes to providing basic local services, rather than concentrating on a handful of favoured areas.

Local people have been telling me that they want a change for the better. Sheffield Liberal Democrats believe that we can only achieve this through working together. That means a Council that works for you, on your priorities, no matter where you live in Sheffield.

This year's local elections are closer than ever before. I believe that the only Party putting forward a positive agenda is the Liberal Democrats.

If you want a change for the better and a local Council that starts to deliver on local people's priorities, vote Liberal Democrat on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Scriven', with the initials '(EF)' written below it.

Councillor Paul Scriven,  
Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group on Sheffield City Council.

# Putting communities in the driving seat....

Many communities across Sheffield feel that the Council is distant and uninterested in the important 'bread and butter' issues such as cleaner streets and safer communities. They don't want a Council that is only interested in grand projects, ignoring the every day needs of local people.

Liberal Democrats believe that this has to change. We want to put local communities and their local councillors in the driving seat through giving them much greater power and say. To do this, we will:

- Setup new powerful 'Community Assemblies' that will decide how local services are delivered. They will control service budgets, agree an influential area plan and set agreed, important targets with local people.

By putting local communities in charge, we can move away from the current 'one size fits all' approach under Labour. Local services will be shaped according to the needs of local communities. This will start with local library services, local parks and how local streets are cleaned, revolutionising the Council and improving local services. We want to empower local communities so that they can have a real say, rather than dictate to them.

But to do this, we also need to start being fair with resources. Under Labour, the Council neglects vast parts of Sheffield. We want to put an end to this divisive policy and deliver services where they are needed the most. Therefore, we will:

- Give all areas a fair deal when it comes to providing basic local services, such as street cleaning, rather than concentrating on a handful of favoured areas.

This Council doesn't listen to local people on important issues. It's idea of consultation is telling us what is going to happen rather than asking local people what they want and giving them options.

Liberal Democrats are determined to give local people more of a say in important consultations. Therefore, we will:

- Reform the way the Council consults with local people, providing options on important issues rather than presenting a 'done deal'.

# Starting to protect our local and global environment....

Liberal Democrats believe that climate change is perhaps the biggest threat that we face. We owe it to future generations to do everything we can to mitigate it's global and local effect. Action is needed to protect our environment.

Therefore, the local Council should be at the forefront of this struggle, taking direct action to battle climate change while making it easier for local people to do the same.

But under Labour, the Council fails to take the issue seriously. They voted against our proposal to introduce annual targets to reduce Sheffield's carbon footprint and they refuse to expand recycling services.

This is despite the dangers climate change presents and the fact that most other local authorities offer a better recycling service than Sheffield, collecting up to four or five different materials as opposed to one.

Local Liberal Democrats are committed to changing this so that the Council starts to act more in line with the wishes of local people. To start with, we will:

- Expand recycling services through kerbside collections for an extra material and offering free green waste sacks.
- Introduce tough annual targets to reduce Sheffield's carbon footprint in order to combat climate change and set up a climate change working group.
- Create a 'green pot' of money for local communities to bid for to carry out community based environmental projects.

But these measures alone will not be enough to tackle the wider climate change issue. We must ensure that every single part of the Council, and its partners, lead by example on this agenda. Therefore, we will:

- Ensure that the impact on our global and local environment is addressed in every significant decision made by the Council and its partners.

Liberal Democrats also believe that we must start to protect and enhance our local environment, such as our parks and greens spaces, which unfortunately, are under threat more than ever under Labour. Rather than coming into conflict with friends of parks groups, we would work with them on their priorities. We will:

- Pass a resolution that would rule out development on our local parks and rigorously protect our green belt.
- Invest extra in enhancing our parks and consult local people on how they want the money to be spent.
- Introduce a citywide 'Best Kept Park' award and a 'Best Kept Garden' award.

By introducing all these measures, we believe that your local Council can start to protect our local and global environment and make it easier for local people to do the same.

## Making our neighbourhoods safer....

Whenever we talk to local people about how the Council can improve their lives, making our neighbourhoods safer is usually top of the agenda. This isn't surprising given the failure of the local Council and the Government to deal effectively with the issue.

Labour have found out that warm words, gimmicks and empty promises do not make our neighbourhoods safer. In fact, most local people feel less safe now than they did a few years ago. Liberal Democrats believe that we need to tackle the issue a different way.

First of all, we need to concentrate on investing as much as possible in the measures that work, making people feel safer. Therefore, we will:

- Employ extra wardens to patrol our streets, working with the Police to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

Unfortunately, Labour don't agree with us. Just two months ago they voted against our plan to invest an extra £500,000 to provide up to 15 more wardens across Sheffield. They prefer

to spend money on gimmicks that move crime around rather than deal with the issue. But if we gain power in May, we can make this change, which we believe is what local people want.

Using tough measures is only part of the solution. Liberal Democrats also believe that we must give young people extra opportunities to take part in positive activities. Youth services that the Council offer are woefully inadequate. Local people tell us that there is nothing for young people to do apart from hang around on street corners. Therefore, we will:

- Invest in additional youth services that will allow young people in Sheffield to take part in extra positive activities.

But we can only make our neighbourhoods safer if we all work together to take effective action. Local people, the Council and police will all work together using the newly formed 'Community Assemblies'. We will:

- Directly involve local people through community justice panels so that they can have an influence on how offenders repay the community.

## A better life for young people....

Young people are the future of Sheffield. It is vital that the Council does all it can to provide the opportunities for our children to reach their full potential. We believe that the Council needs to do much more in terms of education and engaging with our young people to raise aspirations.

Labour's track record on education is unacceptable. Since they have been in control, the gap between Sheffield and the national average for pupil attainment has increased at nearly every level. We will:

- Set tough targets for improvement to improve pupil exam results, starting with catching up with the national average.

We believe that schools work at their best when working together, rather than competing with each other. We also believe that every young person should be encouraged to make the most of their ability. Therefore we will:

- Encourage local schools to set up local federations so that families of schools work together to improve every young person's performance.
- Place greater emphasis on personal learning in our schools so that every pupil is able to make the most of their ability. Also, target resources on individuals at a young age.

At a time when the Government are providing incentives for local schools to change the way they are governed, we know that local parents want to ensure that they are in control. We will provide a framework that will allow them to be the ones who decide the future of education in their area. We will:

- Put local people in the driving seat for education in their area through community consultation on changes such as taking a school out of local Council control, including the possibility of a ballot.

But as well as giving parents a voice, it's equally important to give young people a say. If we are to have services that meet their needs, then young people must be able to influence local services for them. Therefore we will:

- Set up a high profile youth council that will be able to shape the agenda on policies affecting them.

# A fairer deal for everyone....

It is the fundamental belief of Liberal Democrats that everyone should be able to live in a fair, free and open society. Therefore, we hold the principles of social justice and diversity as central to how we wish to run the Council.

We have opposed Labour's way of tackling poverty as it doesn't tackle the root of the problem. But most importantly of all, it isn't working. The inequality gap between the richest and poorest in Sheffield has been growing. We want to reverse this trend and improve things for the most deprived parts of our society. Therefore we will:

- Introduce a new policy that targets individuals, groups and pockets of exclusion, rather than large geographical areas. Target resources on those individuals with greatest need.
- Explicitly link economic development and poverty to ensure sustainability, job creation, skills attainment and wealth creation.

We also want to ensure that everyone gets the local services that they deserve, with resources aimed at tackling problems where they are worse. We will:

- Ensure that every area gets a fair deal on basic services such as street cleaning, road repairs and replacing broken streetlights.

Fairness is also about everyone being treated equally, regardless of age, race or any other characteristic. One part of our society that is treated unfairly is older people. We believe more needs to be done to recognise that older people have something to offer. We will:

- Work to improve adult learning so that everyone is able to have access to education in order to better themselves, improving skills and knowledge.

As well as taking action on a local level, we would also campaign with local people on their priorities at a national level. Taking on the Government if need be. Unlike Labour, we are not afraid to stand up to the Government on behalf of Sheffield. We will:

- Stand up to the Government on issues important to local people.

# Making it easier for everyone to get from A to B....

One of the biggest challenges facing Sheffield today is how we can deliver the best transport system possible. People are fed up with the poor bus service and the anti-car policies coming out of the Town Hall. Local people know that congestion is getting worse and they want to see a change.

Liberal Democrats will offer a fresh approach to transport in Sheffield. While there is no magic solution that will solve the congestion problem, we believe that we can make it easier for people to get around. We will:

- Carry out a full review of the road network to eliminate anomalies such as unnecessary 'no right turns' and 'one way' streets.
- Help to tackle congestion by encouraging the use of green measures such as car clubs, travel plans, car sharing, walking and cycling, and setting up a new forum called "Sheffield on the Move"

- ✓ Work closely with schools to reduce the number of school runs looking at improved school travel plans and more 'walking' buses.

But we also need to make it easier for people to change the way they get around the city so that they can help in the battle against climate change. Improving public transport is also essential for those who can't afford or choose not to run a car. We aim to start a programme aimed at genuinely making a difference. We will:

- ✓ Promote Park and Ride as one of the most effective way of encouraging the use of public transport and thus contributing to reducing carbon emissions.
- ✓ Encourage more use of public transport by providing better information about bus services and joint tickets for trams, trains and buses. Improving access to train stations and seeking improved train journey times to other major cities.
- ✓ Lobby for the re-regulation of the buses so that local people can have a say on fares, timetables and routes.

Parking is also a major bugbear for many local residents and businesses. Also, many car users often become frustrated when they receive a fine for unwittingly going through a poorly signed bus gate. We will introduce measures to deal with both these issues including:

- ✓ Taking a more flexible approach to residents' parking schemes and exploring the use of tidal flow bus lanes to provide more parking to help local businesses and residents on urban clearways.
- ✓ Improving signage on bus/tram gates in consultation with road users so that restrictions are much clearer.

## Leading Sheffield's revival....

Sheffield has come a long way since the Tories decimated our local economy in the 1980's. We have been supporting Sheffield's revival and if we take control of the Council in May, we will continue to support our city.

We believe that we can improve Sheffield's local economy even faster with a Council that understands the business world. We understand that the plans to improve our local economy need to include small and medium sized businesses. We understand a successful city is about more than just regenerating the city centre. We will:

- ✓ Work with partners to ensure that small and medium sized local businesses are supported and encouraged to grow and succeed.
- ✓ Set up a 'business advisor panel' to give direct feedback and advice.
- ✓ Encourage district shopping centres around Sheffield to grow and become sustainable communities, rather than focusing everything on the city centre.
- ✓ Reform the planning department so that it becomes user friendly and improve consultation on major planning applications through 'Community Assemblies'.
- ✓ Work closer with the Universities to foster great results in education, and develop companies as spin offs from Research and Development.

Liberal Democrats believe that we should also grow our local economy so that we increase sustainability with regard to climate change. Therefore we will:

- ✓ Introduce a 'buy local' policy so that the Council favours purchasing goods and services locally to boost local business and reduce our carbon footprint.

- ✓ Create a sustainable design panel to scrutinise large and/or significant planning applications, advising Planning Boards on the environmental impact.

Along with our local economy, Sheffield has seen a revival in our culture. We have excellent theatres, a vibrant music scene and numerous citywide and community festivals, but these things hidden gems to those outside Sheffield. Therefore, we will:

- ✓ Promote a cultural strategy which develops cultural opportunities for all and promotes Sheffield's cultural diversity.
- ✓ Promote Sheffield as a centre for short stay tourism.

Together we can accelerate Sheffield's progress and ensure that we all reap the benefits.

## Improved local neighbourhoods....

Many local people have been telling us that their local neighbourhoods have been neglected because Labour are only concerned with the city centre. Whilst important, we believe that the Council can deal with the issues in our local communities too. The new 'Community Assemblies' will ensure that no area in Sheffield is neglected.

Liberal Democrats believe that issues such as cleaner streets, pothole free roads, good local services and sustainable development within our communities are essential. We will:

- ✓ Introduce an annual spring clean event so that together we can make all our local neighbourhoods cleaner and tidier.
- ✓ Start to repair every road, streetlight and pavement in Sheffield using the massive investment from Government, secured thanks to cross-Party support.
- ✓ Protect local communities from inappropriate and/or excessive development.
- ✓ Spearhead a campaign to save local Post Offices, investigating taking measures to keep local branches open.

We believe that we can make changes to the way in which we manage our estates so that we improve the quality of life for tenants. By giving them more of a say in what goes on in their local estate, we can start to do the things that will make real improvements. We will:

- ✓ Review the housing lettings policy including age banding.
- ✓ Enforce tenancy conditions so that those breaking rules and causing misery for everyone else are brought to book.

A vital part of ensuring that our neighbourhoods are successful is to have good quality housing. Local tenants have welcomed the Decent Homes Programme to improve their homes. However, they are anxious that there is no plan to maintain council housing to the same standard in the future, running the risk of homes being allowed to fall into disrepair again. We will:

- ✓ Support the completion of the Decent Homes Programme that will refurbish Council houses in Sheffield.
- ✓ With local tenants, lobby Government to demand they provide the resources to maintain Council housing in the long-term.

## Better value for your money....

Liberal Democrats believe that local people deserve to see value for money when they hand over their Council Tax. It's even more essential given that it is one of the most unfair taxes in operation in the UK today.

Under Labour, we have seen local taxpayers money wasted through unnecessary bureaucracy and financial mishaps as a result of poor control. We have seen a massive, unjustified increase in the number of Council employees paid over £50,000 a year and the Council has been ticked off by independent inspectors for the lack of financial control.

It's clear that we need to make changes within the Town Hall to cut back on wasteful spending. We need to start delivering value for money services, keeping the Council Tax as low as possible. We will:

- Carry out a zero-based budgeting exercise that will require all Council departments to justify all spending.
- Stop the massive increases in highly paid managers and review management structures to release savings for extra investment in front line services.
- Introduce targets for local quangos to reduce spending on administrative costs.

Delivering value for money is about keeping Council Tax increases to a minimum. It's also about ensuring that services are in line with what local people want. We will give local people powers to ensure that the local Council is always working to their agenda. We will:

- Allow local people to shape the Council's agenda by outlining citizen's targets for local services via the 'Community Assemblies'.

## Allow people dignity and respect...

Liberal Democrats believe those who are the most vulnerable in our society deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. We want people to have maximum choice, control and power over their lives. Labour's approach has been too little, too late, especially with regard to the chronic underfunding of Social Care, where often, only those with the most acute needs receive any assistance.

We want to change the way the Council cares for people so that there is more choice and control about how individuals live their lives so that services improve through all partners working together. We will

- Increase the number of people using direct payments and using personal budgets.
- Improve joint working between health and social care.
- Introduce a customer care charter for social services.

We understand that social care is about much more than just the Council and the local NHS delivering services. More than ever before, we have an army of valuable voluntary and charitable sources delivering care who also employ local people. We will

- Improve support for voluntary and charitable efforts and encourage local employment and businesses.

# It's time for change at the Town Hall....

Local people have a chance to make all these changes for the better on May 1<sup>st</sup>. You can have a Council that works for you, on your priorities, no matter where you live in Sheffield.

This year's local elections are closer than ever before. I believe we are the only Party putting forward a positive agenda for real change at the Town Hall. The Green Party and the Conservative Party in Sheffield do not offer change. They support the same old tired Labour agenda.

If you want to make the positive choice for a better Sheffield, then...

## ..vote Liberal Democrat on May 1<sup>st</sup>

