

reinvigorate Gloucestershire



A programme of improvements for
2009 and beyond

Gloucestershire County Council
Liberal Democrats

*The Tories have failed you – elect a Liberal Democrat council
on 4th June*

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six to fix

A Liberal Democrat run Council will

- 1. end the poor one-star service and deliver first class personal care for the elderly and disabled**
- 2. tax people less, and stop wasting money on private consultants, conferences and spin**
- 3. tackle the £130m repairs backlog of county roads**
- 4. halt the building of the massive waste incinerator**
- 5. protect the green belt and oppose house building on the flood plains**
- 6. keep adult social care charge increases below state pension inflation**

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Introduction by Jeremy Hilton

Economic hard times are upon us. You need a county council that will be proactive in helping county businesses overcome the recession. Jobs are being lost and unemployment has risen to 3.2%. We shall help people who are suffering the worst effects of the downturn.

This manifesto has imaginative solutions to deal with the problems now facing Gloucestershire. It shows how we can help Gloucestershire weather the economic storm and improve council services.

The quality of services in Gloucestershire is in decline under the current Tory administration at Shire Hall. This opinion is backed up by two key independent inspectors.

The Audit Commission has downgraded the council from its previous four-star category and the Commission for Social Care Inspection has given the council a poor rating for its safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

Amazingly, the Conservatives are to waste our taxes on a judicial review to challenge the critical report on adult social care rather than accepting the judgement and getting on with tackling the recommendations for improvement.

Liberal Democrats will cancel the judicial review and stop wasting your money on unnecessary lawsuits. We will concentrate on delivering top quality adult social care.

We will scrap the £1,000 per day consultant hired to advise cabinet and the top management team on how to do their jobs. If senior directors are incapable of running services without this consultant, they should go.

Our roads are in a mess and four years of Tory control has seen the backlog in highway maintenance stay at £130m. The Tories have let you down on their promise to improve the roads.

The county council has purchased Javelin Park as the site for a massive waste incinerator. It has received £92M in PFI credits from the Labour government to progress this project. A Liberal Democrat council will halt plans for this huge waste incinerator; we will increase recycling targets to 70%, and use more environmentally friendly technologies to process residual waste.

A council run by the Liberal Democrats will be a vast improvement on the current Tory administration. We are up to the challenge. Vote Liberal Democrat on 4th June and vote in a better future for Gloucestershire.



Cllr. Jeremy Hilton, Leader of the Liberal Democrat group

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for Public Finance

- ◆ **fair council tax in the current economic climate**

A Liberal Democrat run council will deliver a fair council tax in response to the current economic climate. We proposed a council tax rise of 1.8%. The Tories voted through a rise of 2.9%.

- ◆ **an efficiently run council**

We will deliver over £10m a year efficiency savings and provide better value for money services.

- ◆ **scrap wasteful expenditure on expensive consultants**

A Liberal Democrat administration will scrap the £1000 a day consultant appointed to hide the shortcomings of Tory cabinet members.

- ◆ **council spin is costing nearly £1m a year**

We will cut spending on PR and scrap the position of lead cabinet member in charge of spin.

- ◆ **the Tory council last year spent £130,000 on luxury conferences and lunches.**

Under a Lib Dem administration, meetings will be held in council offices rather than in expensive, taxpayer funded conference facilities.

- ◆ **remember the £12.5m frozen in Icelandic bank accounts?**

We will invest cash balances wisely and bring borrowing under control.

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for Economic Recovery

- ◆ **match the government's 10 day payment target**

We will aim to pay our suppliers within 10 days and encourage partner organisations to do the same.

- ◆ **bring forward planned investment in capital projects**

A Liberal Democrat run council will review the council's capital programme and bring forward projects wherever possible to take advantage of lower costs, and keep local businesses afloat.

- ◆ **act responsibly when recovering arrears**

A Liberal Democrat administration will support the national Code of Conduct for public bodies dealing with arrears and ensure that enforcement actions are measured and appropriate. Bankruptcy should be a last resort.

- ◆ **signpost financial advice**

Your council will work with the CAB, debt advisory services, job centre plus and local business to provide financial advice to business, especially in the area of business rate relief.

- ◆ **help tackle unemployment**

A Liberal Democrat run council will actively work with partners to help businesses through the recession to overcome growing unemployment, which now stands at 3.2% and rising (Feb 09).

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for Adult Social Care

- ◆ **poor one-star personal care for the elderly & disabled is unacceptable**

A Liberal Democrat run council will secure a high standard of care for elderly and disabled people in the county. We will implement the 21 recommendations of the Commission for Social Care Inspection. We will deliver a three-star service.

- ◆ **personal care budgets**

Personal budgets will be introduced so people can choose their own personal care plans to fit their needs.

- ◆ **charges will not rise above pension inflation**

Care charges for elderly people will not rise above inflation.

- ◆ **deliver care in the home**

Quality care and well being support will be provided so that people can stay in their own homes.

- ◆ **support carers**

A Liberal Democrat run council will provide support for carers. Extra support services will be developed to support elderly people who take on the role of carer.

- ◆ **learning disabilities and mental health**

Our administration will improve support to people with learning disabilities in the care of social services. We will work with health organisations to improve services for people with mental health difficulties.

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for Children

- ♦ **increase access to sport, drama and music in the county for young people**

We shall give more support to schools and voluntary groups to deliver opportunities for young people beyond the limits of the national curriculum.

- ♦ **develop personalised learning**

A Liberal Democrat run council will develop personalised learning services to help young people achieve their potential - they should not be held back by restrictive education.

- ♦ **healthy body - healthy children - lively minds**

We will support schools programmes promoting awareness of healthy food and lifestyle amongst children including working with the county farms for visits and development programmes, supporting growing clubs and cooking clubs.

- ♦ **youth support services and young people volunteering**

Our administration will target youth work where it is needed and will work with schools and young people to support volunteering in their local communities.

- ♦ **ensure school buildings and facilities are fit for purpose**

A Liberal Democrat run council will act to remove all temporary school buildings attached to schools, ensure ICT facilities are up to date, and support outdoor areas at schools. We will work with government to fast track funding for the county from the "Building Schools For Future" programme.

- ♦ **teachers to support children who stay in hospital and recover from illness at home**

Tory council budget cuts to fund teachers who provide education support to sick children will be reversed. Children who stay in hospital or are recovering at home deserve education support.

- ♦ **20 mph safety zones around all schools**

We will commit to a countywide plan to deliver 20 mph safety zones & safer routes to school around all schools in the county over the next four years.

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for the Environment

- ♦ **halt the building of the massive waste incinerator for the county**

A Liberal Democrat run council will halt the building of a massive waste incinerator in Gloucestershire. We will plan for alternative environmentally friendly waste disposal options.

- ♦ **countywide organisation to coordinate recycling improvements and waste collection**

A countywide waste partnership is necessary to coordinate the waste collection and recycling facilities in Gloucestershire.

- ♦ **increase recycling target to 70%**

We will raise the target for recycling waste to 70%. The Tory council has only achieved 43% recycling. Increased recycling will reduce landfill and remove the need for a massive waste incinerator.

- ♦ **prevention and preparation for flooding**

The council will follow up the recommendations of the flooding inquiry, including action on dredging and draining. We will work with water companies and the Environment Agency to protect communities.

- ♦ **energy use & air quality hotspots**

A full audit of the council's carbon footprint is necessary to enable improved efficiencies to services, which will reduce the carbon footprint. We will tackle poor air quality hotspots.

- ♦ **protect the green belt and stop house building on the flood plain**

Liberal Democrats will work to stop government plans to build houses on the green belt and on flood plains. We opposed the Tory council bid for "growth point status" that encouraged accelerated house building on green fields.

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for Transport

- ◆ **a fast rail service to London is important for the county economy**

We will press the government to secure funding to deliver the dual tracking of the line between Kemble and Swindon to speed up services to the capital.

- ◆ **the Tories have failed to reduce the £130m backlog of roads maintenance they promised**

A Liberal Democrat run council will set out a clear plan for quality road repairs around the county.

- ◆ **cycling keeps you fit, it's great for the environment**

The county needs a network of cycle hire facilities for local and visitor use – new dedicated cycle paths will be encouraged.

- ◆ **transport in the Central Severn Vale**

The Liberal Democrats will improve transport and reduce congestion within the Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury areas. We will review the Tory plans, which have left future park and rides, road links and bus services uncoordinated.

- ◆ **improved bus services are critical for the economy and environment**

We will improve services to passengers and develop links to rail services

- ◆ **real time information at urban bus stops encourages more passengers**

Under our leadership the council will invest in real time information at bus stops to encourage more people to switch from the car to public transport.

transport continued next page

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for Transport

- ◆ **low floor buses before 2017**

We will press the government and bus operators to bring forward low floor buses before the 2017 deadline.

- ◆ **voluntary transport**

A Liberal Democrat run council will help to achieve better voluntary transport support in the county.

- ◆ **transport for young people**

A Liberal Democrat run council will develop a transport system that young people can use during the daytime and evening. We will build on the ethos and vision of the “yellow bus review”.

- ◆ **enough salt to keep our roads safe and open in winter**

No more begging from other councils for salt to keep our roads open in winter. We will make sure we have a full supply of road salt for our needs

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for Community Safety

- ◆ **emergency planning**

We will make sure the emergency planning team is properly funded, with comprehensive plans to deal with potential emergencies in the county.

- ◆ **improve the response times of the fire service**

A Liberal Democrat run council will build four new fire stations to serve Gloucester, Cheltenham and the surrounding areas and speed up response times. We will increase the recruitment and retention of retained (part-time) fire fighters.

- ◆ **fire control to stay in Gloucestershire at TriService centre**

Liberal Democrats will reverse the Tory cabinet's agreement with the government to close the TriService fire control centre in Gloucestershire. We oppose moving the fire control to Taunton.

- ◆ **working with the police**

Your Lib Dem-run council will work closely with the police service to make sure policing in local communities responds to the needs of residents and your voice is heard on crime and disorder problems in your area.

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for your Council

- ◆ **open cabinet meetings to public questions**

A Liberal Democrat run council will open cabinet meetings to questions from members of the public and councillors.

- ◆ **establish area committees**

We will give local councillors power to work with officers on local projects, which affect their communities.

- ◆ **work with Youth MPs & youth councils**

The council will work with Youth MPs & councils to ensure their voice is heard in the decision-making process at Shire Hall.

- ◆ **lawyers don't need your money**

The legal challenge to the poor reports from the Commission for Social Care Inspection will be cancelled – we will not waste your money on unnecessary legal fees.

- ◆ **no cabinet member for propaganda**

A Liberal Democrat administration will not have a lead cabinet member for communication (propaganda) – we will not waste your money on council spin.

- ◆ **council services and national identity cards**

You will not be required to show a national identity card to qualify for council services. We oppose the national identity card scheme and when applying government legislation we will work to ensure that the civil liberties of local people are protected.

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for Communities

- ◆ **support regeneration schemes in Gloucester, Cheltenham and market towns**

The council will work with current regeneration projects to support regeneration in Gloucester and Cheltenham. We will support initiatives to secure a prosperous future for market towns in the county.

- ◆ **support our libraries**

We will maintain free access to the internet in Gloucestershire libraries. We will reinvigorate capital investment in our libraries.

- ◆ **support our most deprived communities**

We will not forget the 44,000 people living in the most deprived communities. We will make sure that resources are targeted at the communities most in need.

- ◆ **support post offices**

A Liberal Democrat run council will work with local post offices to support measures to keep post office services open in local communities.

- ◆ **no more innocent people on police DNA databases**

A Liberal Democrat administration will oppose innocent people appearing on the police DNA database.

- ◆ **adopt new estate roads more swiftly**

The county council is too slow to adopt new estate roads, with some roads remaining unadopted 5 years and more after they were built. Our administration will put in place new policies to tackle these unnecessary delays.

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for the Countryside

- ◆ **public transport in rural Gloucestershire is poor**

We will provide improved services connecting rural villages and the major towns and employment sites.

- ◆ **keep our county council farms**

A Liberal Democrat run council will re-establish the acre-for-acre policy to support tenant farming in Gloucestershire and support rural farming communities.

- ◆ **rural roads have been rated some of the worst in the country**

We will work closely with parish and town councils to coordinate a programme of repairs. Local councils will be consulted over traffic safety measures in their localities.

- ◆ **work with parish and town councils**

The county council will work effectively with parish and town councils to support local villages and communities.

- ◆ **maintain footpaths and bridleways**

Our administration will act to stop the delays in maintenance of footpaths and bridleways.

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