

# **For the future of Milton Keynes**

## **2020 Manifesto**

The Liberal Democrats will create a better future for Milton Keynes. To do this, we have 7 priorities:

- Tackle poverty and homelessness
- Support our children and young people
- Improve our health and social care
- Demand a good home in a safe community for everyone
- Improve our local transport
- Build a stronger economy and keep the budget balanced
- Create a greener Milton Keynes



## **Foreword regarding coronavirus/covid-19**

*The main content of this document was finalised between late February and early March 2020. Between being finalised and being made public in early April the impact of coronavirus on the country and Milton Keynes has been occurring, and was still unfolding as we finalised the document.*

*At this time of national crisis helping vulnerable residents through the crisis caused by coronavirus will be the top priority for our local government including councillors, local parties, and charities/other organisations which support those in need.*

*The impact of the pandemic on both national and local government will be substantial. The content of this document outlines the Liberal Democrats priorities before the crisis. Obviously, these priorities will need to be reviewed once the current crisis is over and future consequences better understood.*



The people of Milton Keynes deserve a better future, and the Liberal Democrats can create it.

We want Milton Keynes to be a place where schools, universities, hospitals, businesses, communities and people can all reach their full potential, and can come together to make Milton Keynes an even greater city.

The Liberal Democrats can make this future a reality.

We will fight poverty and homelessness, so everyone who lives in Milton Keynes can live healthy and happy lives, being able to reach their goals and aspirations.

We want our residents to have good jobs and affordable homes in safe communities, and excellent health and social care when they need it.

The Conservative government has set growth targets for Milton Keynes. We will make sure the growth of our city is planned, so that the local Council has the final say, not developers.

We will work to improve our public transport and protect our redways, so our residents can easily get around the borough.

We will build a fair economy, and keep the Council budget balanced, so we can deliver on our promises. If you want this future for Milton Keynes, vote Liberal Democrat.



With your vote, with your voice, with your support, we can build a better future for Milton Keynes.

**Councillor Douglas McCall**

Leader of the Liberal Democrats on Milton Keynes Council



## **The Liberal Democrats made a difference this past year**

Over the past year we've been working in partnership with the Labour-run Council, which meant our manifesto was included in the Council plan. We've been able to deliver some amazing successes, despite massive cuts from central government.

Over the past year, we:

**Secured** £45,000 in the 2020/21 budget to fund additional children's mental health support in the form of targeted young people's drug and alcohol work.

**Demanded** that the Child Poverty Commission be created. Through the Commission and dedication from the Council, we hope to see the end of child poverty in Milton Keynes.

**Secured** £25,000 in the 2020/21 budget for a school lunch club fund, which will provide one-off grants to schools to start their own breakfast and lunch clubs during both term and non-term time, because no child should go hungry.

**Achieved** a change in Council housing policy, so that at least 36% of homes built on Council and Milton Keynes Development Partnership land are now affordable.

**Demanded** equality for wheelchair and mobility scooter users, as well as people who use buggies, by securing £100,000 in the 2020/21 budget to install dropped kerbs at road crossings and to remove or redesign staggered barriers.

**Fought** for the Council to bring in a housing need register and continued to support the current council house building programme.

**Secured** £97,000 in the 2020/21 budget for weeding and clearance across 141 estates.

**Continued** to tackle littering by securing £57,000 in the 2020/21 base budget for addressing 'litter hotspots'.



## **Tackle poverty and homelessness**

Child poverty in the UK is rising, and Milton Keynes is no exception. Some families have to choose between paying the rent and buying food. Families that are working are still living in poverty, in part due to high rent and low wages. Not everyone has a home, and the use of temporary accommodation has increased.

There can be a better future for Milton Keynes. The Liberal Democrats will:

**Support** the work of the Child Poverty Commission, which was called for by the Liberal Democrats in 2019, so that the children of Milton Keynes can reach their full potential.

**Promote** the take up of free school meals, and support lunch clubs during school holidays, so that no child goes hungry.

**Reduce** period poverty by working with the local period poverty charity Girl Pack Milton Keynes.

**Fight** in-work poverty by remaining committed to the real Living Wage and affordable childcare.

**Explore** creating a new 'Help to Heat' grants scheme, which will help tackle fuel poverty and reduce emissions.

**Support** our amazing community initiatives that are helping to tackle poverty and inequality, such as MK Storehouse, Winter Night Shelter and MK Food Bank.

**Press** for an adequate supply of temporary accommodation within the borough, so families who are homeless do not have to stay in bed and breakfasts, or completely outside of Milton Keynes.

**Explore** daytime 'somewhere to go' solutions for homeless people who have nowhere to stay after their evening accommodation closes in the daytime.

**Continue** the 'Housing First' policy that the Liberal Democrats helped to create in 2018, which has since helped 146 people off the streets.



## **Support our children and young people**

From children's centres, to schools, and all the way through to university, the children of Milton Keynes need our support. They need our care to grow, develop and learn.

To make sure every child in Milton Keynes reaches their full potential, we will:

**Oppose** moves towards selective education, and continue fighting for a good comprehensive education for all children.

**Support** our schools so they have enough places for our children, and ensure there is a Special Educational Needs Department in every school.

**Support** the development of a new university for Milton Keynes, so that we become a city of choice for students.

**Improve** access for young people to mental health services by supporting initiatives such as the YiS Youth Counselling Service. We secured £45,000 in the 2020/21 budget to fund additional children's mental health support in the form of targeted young people's drug and alcohol work.

**Support** the work of our Youth Offending Team in reducing re-offending and raising victim awareness, so that young offenders understand the impact of their actions on victims.

**Work** to increase the number of foster parents within Milton Keynes.

**Support** our libraries and children and family centres, which provide valuable help and advice to families throughout the borough.

**Help** our young carers by working with the specialist service Young Carers MK, to make sure they're getting the help and advice they need.





## **Improve our health and social care**

Health and social care services across the country are struggling because of central government funding cuts. In Milton Keynes, some residents struggle to see their local GP, and demand on services is increasing as our population ages.

To make sure that all of our residents, young and old, get the best health and social care, the Liberal Democrats will:

**Campaign** for equal support and treatment between physical and mental health.

**Improve** access to sexual health services throughout the borough.

**Support** independent and sheltered living for our elderly residents, ensuring they always have quality support.

**Demand** better Council and NHS services for our growing number of elderly residents. As our population ages, we need to make sure our services can handle the growing demand.

**Continue** to fight for better support and care for people with dementia, as the number of early-onset dementia cases rise.

**Campaign** for everyone in Milton Keynes to have access to a local GP and NHS dentist, including those who are homeless.

**Support** the expansion of Milton Keynes University Hospital, so that healthcare provision grows along with our city.

**Undertake** a Health in All Policies approach, as committed to in our national Liberal Democrat manifesto, so that all local decisions are only taken after the impact on people's mental and physical health has been fully considered.



## **Demand a good home in a safe community for everyone**

Over the past year, the Liberal Democrats have been fighting for good homes in safe communities, but more needs to be done. There aren't enough affordable homes in Milton Keynes, and the use of temporary accommodation has increased. Some of our streets have litter and weeds, which are an eyesore and a hazard.

Although crime in Milton Keynes remains low, some recent trends are worrying.

To make sure everyone in Milton Keynes has a good home in a safe community, the Liberal Democrats will:

**Develop** policies for the next Local Plan for affordable and social housing, with supporting infrastructure, so that the houses being built actually meet the needs of the people of Milton Keynes.

**Support** private renters by working with private landlords to provide good housing.

**Work** with local residents to regenerate their communities and create a plan to implement the Regeneration Strategy, making sure the voices of local communities are always heard.

**Support** the change in the remit of Milton Keynes Development Partnership so that it helps to deliver the Council's priorities, especially the building of affordable housing to buy and to rent.

**Improve** our streets by fixing potholes, clearing litter and removing weeds.

**Continue** negotiations with the Parks Trust to secure the long term management of our landscaping.

**Ensure** the new wheeled bin pilot, which is testing out the use of wheeled bins instead of clear sacks, is done properly.

**Work** closely with partners, particularly the Police and local schools, to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. We will continue to support the SaferMK Partnership to make sure our borough is a safe place.





## **Improve our local transport**

We want to see public transport become the first choice for people in Milton Keynes, but at the moment it can be inaccessible and unreliable.

We need to improve our public transport for our residents and for our environment, because we need more people to use public transport if we truly want our city to be carbon neutral by 2030.

To improve our local transport, the Liberal Democrats will:

**Protect and repair** our unique network of redways, so our residents can safely cycle and walk around Milton Keynes.

**Ensure** everyone can access our public transport by fighting for more routes, evening and Sunday buses, and accessibility for wheelchair users and people with buggies.

**Upgrade** more of our bus stops to have proper shelter and lights, as well as pressing for real time tracking on the buses.

**Push** for more electric vehicles to be used in public transport schemes. We'll also increase the number of electric car charging points throughout Milton Keynes, so that more people are encouraged to use electric cars.

**Support** the development of a mass transit transport scheme across Milton Keynes, so that our residents have fast and reliable public transport available to them.

**Support** the building of East West Rail between Oxford and Cambridge, making sure Milton Keynes benefits from the infrastructure that will come with it.

**Campaign** for a Milton Keynes Transport Authority, like Transport for London, so that we can have control over the public transport in our borough.



## **Build a stronger economy and keep the budget balanced**

Our future depends on the creation and attraction of businesses and investment throughout Milton Keynes to create jobs. To do this, we must put in place the infrastructure for businesses to thrive.

We recognise that the way to maintain a stable financial position is to keep the Council budget balanced. Over the past year, thanks to Liberal Democrat support, the Council has kept the budget in check, despite funding cuts from the Conservative government. However, it must be balanced for the long-term, in the face of further government cuts expected in the future.

To build a stronger economy and keep the Council budget balanced, the Liberal Democrats will:

**Encourage** the growth of small businesses and long-term, inward investment, creating jobs throughout Milton Keynes.

**Work** with partners to ensure that local organisations and businesses are prepared for the changes when the transition period for leaving the European Union is over.

**Ensure** the work of scrutiny within the Council is upheld with appropriate financial backing, making sure to continue the transparency of Council finances.

**Balance** the budget for another year and maintain Council reserves in the face of uncertain future central government funding.

**Fight** for fair funding for Councils through the Local Government Association.

**Support** plans such as the Oxford to Cambridge Development Arc, the new Milton Keynes University and Plan:MK, ensuring Milton Keynes and its residents benefit from industry, infrastructure and transport.



## Create a greener Milton Keynes

The Liberal Democrats want to make Milton Keynes the greenest city in the UK. To do this, we need to make our city carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050. We will build on our strengths to develop our Green City reputation, and will set an example for other cities across the UK to follow.

Here's how we'll do it:

**Create** the next generation of the city of trees. Milton Keynes already has 22 million trees and shrubs, but we will work up proposals for large scale tree-planting in the borough, and ensure that trees are planted in all new estates.

**Protect** wildlife by making sure it is not reduced due to poor planning and inappropriate landscaping.

**Commit** to defend weekly waste collections. We will ensure that if there are changes to our recycling system in the future, they will be to assist residents to help increase recycling, and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

**Continue** efforts to eliminate the use of single-use plastics at Milton Keynes Council.

**Lead** on green energy. At the next contract renewal, we will switch the Council centrally to using recognised green electricity, and will encourage individually managed properties and centres to do the same.

**Review** the Council's zero carbon policies for the next Local Plan to minimise the carbon from new buildings, and maximise carbon reductions elsewhere.

**Deliver** the Council's Biodiversity Strategy, the recommendations from the current Climate Change Task and Finish Group and build on the Sustainability Action Plan, which includes the creation of an Energy and Carbon Hub.

**Reduce** flooding of our homes and streets and roads by making sure our waterways are dredged often enough. We will ensure that our drains and sewers are cleaned out and are able to handle the excessive rainfall caused by climate change.



## Taken from the preamble to the party constitution:

*The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a **fair, free and open society**, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of **liberty, equality and community**, and in which **no one shall be enslaved** by poverty, ignorance or conformity.*

### More about the Milton Keynes Liberal Democrats

<https://mklibdems.focusteam.org.uk/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/MKLibDems/>  
<https://twitter.com/MKLibDems>  
[mklibdems@gmail.com](mailto:mklibdems@gmail.com)

*Published and promoted by Richard Greenwood on behalf of the Liberal Democrats, at Flat 1, 19 Cicero Crescent, Milton Keynes, MK11 4BJ*