



**Dundee's  
Bright Future**

**The Dundee Liberal Democrat  
local election Manifesto 2012**



## *So, why choose Dundee Liberal Democrats?*

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. The City of Dundee needs dedicated Councillors who will ensure high standards of public service, and a greater transparency and accountability to the electorate. Dundee Liberal Democrats seek to promote an environment where our local communities and businesses can flourish.

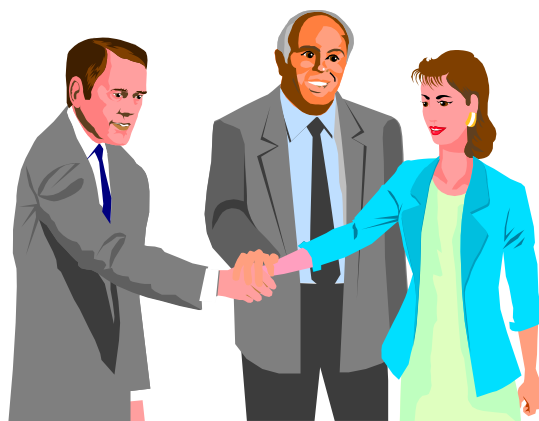
We strongly support the rejuvenation of our city - the Waterfront initiative and the V&A at Dundee - but also believe that improvements to our city must benefit all our citizens.

2012 sees the largest Liberal Democrat local election campaign in Dundee in a generation. The more Liberal Democrat candidates, who are elected, the more we will be able to influence decisions of the Council and press for the adoption of our policies. We pledge to work constructively with others elected to the City Council, and will oppose the 'political dog-fight' that has been a feature of much of the city's local government in the past.

# It's Your Council

How much do you know about your council? Have you ever been told? Have you ever asked? If you never ask you never know, right?

Wrong! Liberal Democrats believe you should never have to ask - after all it's your council.



In the jargon of politics this is "transparency and accountability" but the words mean nothing unless they are backed by actions.

As your representatives the Liberal Democrats are committed to:

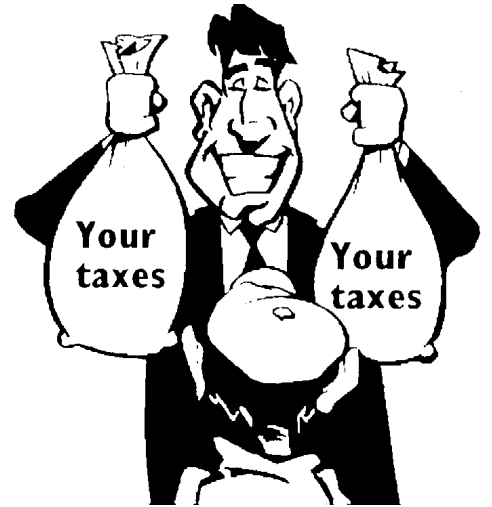
- Abolishing the SNP's secretive so-called "Changing for the Future" Board and transferring its responsibilities to the publicly accountable Policy and Resources Committee of the City Council that does not meet in secret.
- Giving the Council's Scrutiny Committee greater responsibility of scrutinising, monitoring and reviewing the work of the Council. The committee should also have the duty to actually go out into the communities in Dundee, gather your views and make specific recommendations to the full council. It should invite other public sector organisations to report on their services within the City Council area.
- Further developing Community Councils and local community groups across the city and giving them an active role in policy and decisions.
- Keeping in touch with our communities through regular local newsletters. The work of Dundee Liberal Democrat councillors is also posted electronically to further aid transparency and accountability.
- Effectively publicising ward surgeries.

# It's your money!

Less than 20% of the council's income comes from your council tax, the rest comes from central government - but in the end it all comes from your pocket!

It is very easy to criticise any council about its spending. Difficult decisions have to be made and they will often be unpopular with many people.

The Liberal Democrats know this but we also believe very strongly that you should know how and why these decisions are made.



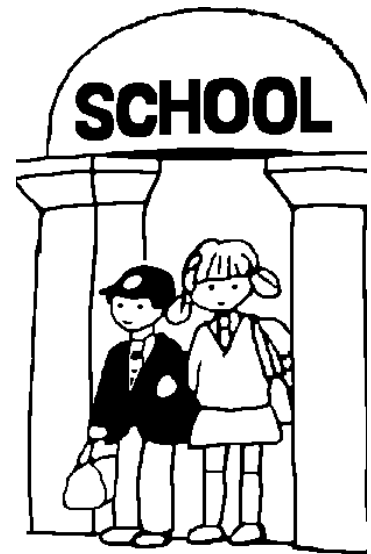
To achieve this we will :

- \* Require all departments of the council to produce a full summary of their required budget, with a clear explanation of how much money is needed and where it will be spent. These would be published as part of the public consultation before the final budget is agreed.
- \* Establish a cross-party committee whose principal responsibility is to develop the revenue and capital budgets and recommend them to the full council. It will meet all year round, not just in the run up to budget setting. The party political pantomime of "alternative" budgets appearing at the last minute is not in the interests of the City of Dundee.
- \* Improve the level and efficiency of council tax collection. Dundee has made progress in council tax collection, notably when the Liberal Democrat Group Leader was Finance Convener, but more must be done.

# It's your Community

## Dundee's Education Service

Liberal Democrats believe that investment in education is the most important function of local government. We are committed to securing the maximum possible additional investment in all aspects of educational provision.



- The SNP administration has failed to properly invest in Dundee's schools. All capital programmes currently underway for new schools were projects of the previous LibDem/Labour administration. A priority for the new council administration must be capital investment in our schools with new improvement programmes.
- The planned new offices and depots for the Environment Department of the council should be shelved, in favour of increased investment in the seven primary schools targeted for improvements. This will increase their funding from £250 000 each to £1 million each.
- All effort must be made to ensure the full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence across Dundee schools to ensure a high quality educational experience for all pupils in the city.
- We favour sensitive school catchment areas, and parental choice should be paramount.
- We support the valuable work of Parent Councils and PTAs. We will encourage the development of Pupil Boards in the city's schools.

- We will provide a high level of professional support/training to nursery staff.
- We will reverse the SNP cuts to PE and music visiting instructor posts in Dundee primary schools.
- Continuing professional development opportunities should be available to teaching staff by right - not at discretion of head teacher.
- The City Council should introduce new initiatives to reduced vandalism in the city's schools.
- We wish to encourage diversity in pupils' choices at school - especially encouraging second languages and music.
- We shall encourage the provision of 'healthy tuck shops' in schools in promoting healthy food and drinks.
- Through the education system, it is vital young people are informed of the dangers of substance abuse, drugs and alcohol.

## Dundee's Housing Service

Dundee Liberal Democrats strongly support the provision of affordable social housing.



- The City Council should work closely with other social housing providers and the private sector to increase the range of affordable housing.
- We shall encourage local tenant and resident groups in the management of their own properties and neighbourhoods, and will work in partnership with Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations to achieve this.
- We wish to encourage further development of housing in the City Centre.

- We support the City Council's moves to reduce the over-provision of sheltered units within the Council housing stock, the use of amenity housing, and see improving the quality and services of the sheltered stock for which there is demand as a priority for the housing department. The City Council must also continue to support the "Care and Repair" scheme to help elderly and vulnerable people keep their homes in good repair.
- Another priority for the housing department is to ensure that empty Council Houses are re-let without delay. This is an area where the City Council must continue to prioritise. It should also make efforts to press owners to bring unoccupied housing back into use.
- We are extremely concerned about the quality of some privately rented housing. Apart from rigorously enforcing the HMO Licensing Scheme, the Council support compulsory factoring to improve the quality of life for citizens in Dundee's tenemental properties.
- We remain concerned at the growth of Houses in Multiple Occupation in parts of Dundee. The HMO Licensing Scheme was a positive step, but there must be clear administrative arrangements with the planning system to ensure that all HMOs in the city obtain both an HMO Licence and planning approval, where required. We would review the present licensing and planning requirements for HMOs to further limit their growth.

# The City's Social Work Services



Liberal Democrats see a key function of Dundee's Social Work Services to be provision of quality services for our elderly people, the disabled, families, and children.

We acknowledge great work being done by the staff in the City Council's Social Work Department, and believe that retaining quality professional staff must be a key priority of the Social Work Department directorate. There has been a worrying reduction in the number of people assisted by home helps in Dundee in recent years. Liberal Democrats will seek a review of current arrangements and charging policy.

- Liberal Democrats strongly support resourcing and development of the City Council's Community Alarms scheme, and well as Quality Warden Schemes.
- Young people often feel isolated from their communities through lack of things to do and lack of opportunities to influence what is provided for them. The City Council must work with young people to develop a range of facilities and services to meet their needs, including an expansion of outreach work.
- The Council's Welfare Rights Team should actively promote Basic Bank Accounts for those vulnerable people without bank accounts.
- We will review the Garden Maintenance Scheme for elderly and infirm people to explore ways the service can be improved and made more accessible particularly for owner occupiers.
- We will run winter warm campaigns to combat problems of hypothermia for the elderly and citizens on low incomes. We support the expansion of the Food Train shopping service.



- We acknowledge and highly appreciate the impact of the 'Choose Life' initiative for prevention of suicides in Dundee. We strongly support its continuity and further development.

## Arts & Leisure in Dundee

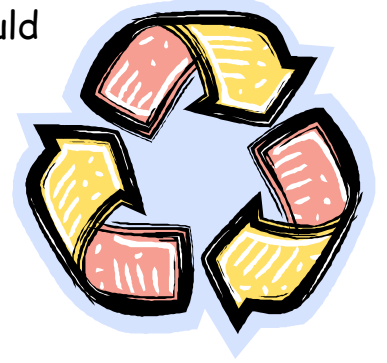
The Council has a key role to develop leisure and arts facilities in Dundee. We supported the principle of establishing Leisure and Culture Dundee but its performance must be closely monitored.



- The Council should take greater steps to market the availability of neighbourhood libraries to local citizens. We would support sending out a free library card to each named council taxpayer along with a leaflet about the library service.
- We wish to see a higher standard of maintenance of parks, amenity areas and public open spaces. We want to see a real improvement in the city's playparks over the next five years.
- We should strongly promote community use of school facilities and other Council-owned facilities. We want to see the City Council properly develop a role for Camperdown House.
- We support Community Garden initiatives in response to demand from local communities.
- We support the development of sports facilities in the City. The council should strongly support the growth of Sports Hubs across Dundee. We wish to see the further provision of decent free skateboarding facilities for young people, to supplement facilities elsewhere in Dundee.

# Our local environment

The protection and enhancement of the environment should be a key priority for the Council and underpins Liberal Democrat policies.



- We will review the charge for collection disposal of unwanted household items. We are concerned about the level of illegal fly-tipping in the city.
- We are completely opposed to the Dundee Biomass proposal and call on the SNP government to ensure it does not progress further. A new City Council administration should seek to overturn the SNP administration's refusal to support a Public Inquiry into the biomass project.
- We have concerns about proposals for Wind Turbines in the Newport, Wormit Forgan area of the River Tay and the visual impact of these on both sides of the river.
- We will continue to develop the network of local waste and recycling centres and increase the diversity of these (eg to include aluminium and plastics where not already provided). We want to see far more households offered recycling facilities with a large expansion of the trial projects for plastics, food and other recyclates. Liberal Democrats will also support resourcing more litter bins, and seek commercial sponsorship of these. We also want to see the City Council achieve commercial sponsorship of key city roundabouts, using the funding from this to improve their appearance.
- We would seek to give greater resources to the prosecution of 'fly-tippers', with good lines of communication with SEPA, and publicity in the city for this initiative.

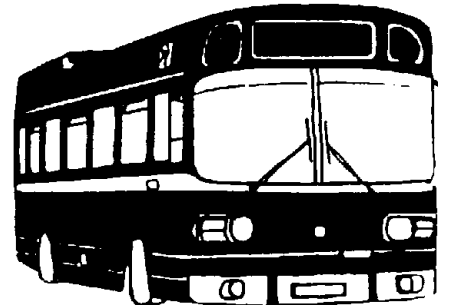
- The SNP administration has failed to progress consultation on possible residents' parking schemes in parts of Dundee where there is real difficulty for residents getting parked near their home. We see this consultation as a key early task for the new council administration after 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012. We also believe resource should be directed towards improved parking facilities in Dundee's council estates.
- Dundee's Community Safety Wardens do great work and the City Council should continue to strongly support this service. We support the revival and expansion of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the city.
- We would look at the viability of the introduction of a lower maximum response time for public enquiries on graffiti, dog dirt and fly tipping.
- Graffiti is an increasing problem in many areas of Dundee. Liberal Democrats call for a 'no tolerance' policy towards vandalism and graffiti through more investment in the Council's Rapid Response Unit. We are pleased that the Council has agreed to a voluntary code of conduct for City shops not to sell material which can be used for graffitiing (like spray paints and marker pens) to the Under 16s. The Council should swiftly and persistently remove new graffiti, and the further expansion of Rapid Response Team resources should be directed in graffiti-busting.
- We are committed to address problems of dog dirt and street litter. We propose a policy of placing posters in areas where there is a persistent problem with dogs - a "shame with no name" campaign against irresponsible owners. We will enhance the Dog Warden Service and provide more dog waste bins and signage.
- We share the concerns of residents who complain about wheelie bins sitting out on pavements permanently and want to see the City Council take decisive action to resolve this concern.

- We support the extension of CCTV facilities in the City.
- We want action on derelict buildings across Dundee. There's concern that empty buildings are an eyesore and a potential danger. The Council should strongly support action on derelict & neglected buildings by re-establishing the Derelict Land Working Group, whose membership must include elected members and stakeholders such as Dundee Building Preservation Trust.
- The roads and pavements in Dundee need a speedier and more effective system of maintenance and repair than exists at the moment. Additionally, we will support the continuance of funding a programme of upgrading unadopted pavements, looking at increasing its funding as finance allows. We also wish to see an unadopted roads programme established.
- More effective traffic calming measures should be introduced to reduce the "Rat Runs" where local demand from residents merits it. In particular we will actively promote the introduction of "Twenty's Plenty" in streets where a lower speed limit than 30mph would prove effective. Our neighbouring authority in Angus has many "Twenty's Plenty" schemes, and wish to see a similar active approach to this initiative in Dundee.
- We want to see better roads maintenance and real effort to properly resurface and repair Dundee's roads, with greater emphasis on the "Rapid Rhino" pothole repair system of permanent pothole repair.
- We are strongly supportive of the "Safer Routes to School" initiative, and "Home Zones."
- We shall invest in better street lighting where public safety is of concern.
- We see further improvements to the Winter Maintenance programme as a priority. The criteria for the provision of further

grit bins should be relaxed to allow communities to have greater access to grit bins where there is local demand.

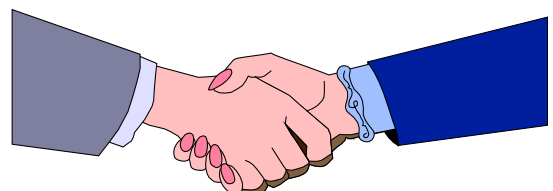
## Transport in the City

Dundee Liberal Democrats will actively seek out new initiatives to plug gaps in bus service provision in the city.



- We are very critical of the lack of progress by the SNP administration of Demand Responsive Transport and this must be a key priority for the next administration. This will be best achieved by tendering for a commercial operator to run Dundee's DRT service.
- In advance of the provision of DRT, the council should review and improve its subsidised bus services, particularly where there is no Sunday bus service. It should also discuss with the bus operators how "outer circle" bus links can be improved across Dundee and what scope exists for integrated travelcards in Dundee along the lines of the Oyster Card in London.
- We support moves to provide more, better quality, bus shelters and the extension of 'real-time' timetable information.
- The City Council should support moves by TACTRAN, the regional transport partnership, to improve rail services across Dundee and, in particular, the provision of the proposed additional station in Dundee West, to provide links to the airport, Ninewells Hospital and the Technology Park.

## Strengthening Local Communities



The Liberal Democrats propose that the effectiveness and productiveness of current interfaces between the Council and local communities be reviewed.

- It is highly disappointing there are so few Community Councils in the City. The City Council should more actively support the creation of Community Councils and thereafter give positive support to them.
- The City Council must consider empowering Community Councils or Local Community Planning Partnerships (LCPP) with some decision making and budgeting affecting their local communities. The City Council has decentralised some of its services - it is about time it decentralised some of its decision making to local communities. The City Council should also proactively encourage public attendance and involvement at LCPP meetings.
- The City Council should continue to support Dundee Youth Council to consult and involve young people in the City Council's services. The City Council should, in partnership with Dundee Youth Council, review the provision of youth facilities across the city to ensure that all communities are properly served with such facilities.
- There must, in future, be a better relationship between the City Council and Dundee's taxi drivers, who provide a vital service for our city. The City Council must establish a new liaison committee with taxi driver associations as current arrangements have failed - and establish good relations in future.
- Fairer Scotland Funding should be distributed more fairly than at present. None of the 6 wards currently receiving this funding should lose out on any funding they currently receive but the SNP's decision to give no funding to Broughty Ferry and the West End is fundamentally wrong and must be reversed.
- Liberal Democrats are strongly supportive of close co-operation with local organisations working towards social inclusion.

# Corporate Policies

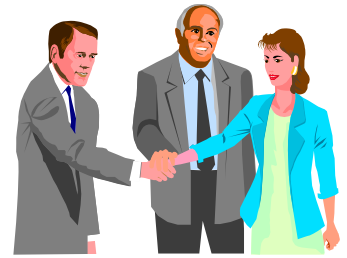
Liberal Democrats believe that the professionalism & experience of the City Council's staff is vital to City's success. We shall continually consider ways to ensure we retain quality staff within the City Council. For example, we shall encourage the further development of opportunities for teleworking and home-working. Staff are the Council's most valuable asset, and we see occupational health facilities, and assisting staff with childcare and other caring responsibilities as vital. We support the introduction of the "Living Wage" across the City Council but the council must also proactively encourage other employers - in the private, public and third sectors - to also introduce the "Living Wage."



- It is vital that Dundee presents an ever more positive image. We will work with other parties on the City Council to achieve a cross-party approach to highlighting all that is good about our wonderful city.
- We will review the priorities and budget for civic hospitality. Whilst being aware of the need to promote the city, we must also be mindful of the cost to the Council Tax Payer.
  - We remain concerned about the parking charges at Dundee's Ninewells Hospital and believe the City Council should campaign to have these removed. We support the licensing of private car parks.
  - We support moves to assist all Dundonians to negotiate with the power companies for lower full tariffs but this should be equally across tenure type and not only for the benefit of council tenants as Dundee Labour proposes.
- We will ensure all Council forms are in plain English, and that versions in other languages of Dundee citizens are available.

# Economic Development, employment and planning

Liberal Democrats believe that Dundee City Council must play a significant part in addressing local unemployment problems and creating a climate for local businesses to thrive and grow. We believe that the City Council must promote Dundee widely, to encourage inward investment, and work with local industries, educational, training and research establishments, to promote economic development in Dundee and maximise local job opportunities.



- We see an enhanced role for the City Council's Local Economy Monitoring Group in terms of bringing together all relevant organisations including the Department for Work and Pensions/Job Centre Plus, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and others to tackle long term unemployment in the city and consider how to enhance provision of placements and training.
- Liberal Democrats will continue to actively campaign to bring further Civil Service jobs to the city. We opposed the costly and ineffective centralisation of police and fire services in Scotland. With these becoming a reality, we would support a cross-party campaign to bring the headquarters of police and fire services to Dundee.
- We want to encourage more small-scale local employers to tender for services required by Dundee City Council.
- We believe the City Council should give strong support to Dundee Airport, a vital component in attracting new employment to the City.
- We shall encourage environmentally friendly policies, such as energy conservation and solar power in planning applications. All



major planning and development proposals must be subject to an environmental impact assessment.

- We shall seek contributions from developers towards infrastructure costs and community facilities in all major planning applications.
- We also support moves to bring local enterprise organisations (such as Scottish Enterprise) back into local control so that performance and expenditure can be made locally accountable.