

GETTING SHEFFIELD BACK ON TRACK A FAIR DEAL FOR SHEFFIELD

Liberal
Democrats

Sheffield Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2023



WHAT WE STAND FOR

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**. We believe that **each generation is responsible for the fate of our planet** and, by safeguarding the balance of nature and the environment, for the long term continuity of life in all its forms. We champion the **freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals**, we acknowledge and respect their **right to freedom of conscience** and their **right to develop their talents** to the full. We aim to **disperse power**, to **foster diversity** and to **nurture creativity**. We believe that the role of the state is to enable all citizens to attain these ideals, to **contribute fully to their communities** and to **take part in the decisions which affect their lives**.

Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed

Leader of Sheffield Liberal Democrats



Dear Sheffield,

As we approach the local elections on 4th May, it is crucial to remember that the decisions made now will have a lasting impact on our lives, our children's future, and the entire Sheffield community. We all want a thriving city with a better environment, excellent education, and robust health and social care systems. It is my belief that the Sheffield Liberal Democrats are best positioned to deliver on these goals.

Sheffield has long been a city of innovation and resilience, but recent events have left many of us feeling disillusioned with the City Council. Scandals like the tree-felling debacle and the container park project have called into question the council's transparency, financial responsibility, and commitment to our community. We, the Liberal Democrats, believe it's time for a fresh start.

The Sheffield Liberal Democrats have an ambitious plan for our city. Our plan prioritises protecting our heritage assets, empowering communities with more funding and decision-making power, increasing street cleaning efforts, supporting our foster carers, and standing by local businesses. Our commitment to reaching net zero and caring for our environment remains unwavering.

The Sheffield Liberal Democrats are dedicated to a long-term vision for our city that addresses key issues like affordable housing, public transportation, and job creation. We promise to be accountable for our actions and responsible with the use of public funds, ensuring that every pound is spent wisely and for the betterment of Sheffield.

Together, we can shape a future where our city is once again a beacon of trust, accountability, and progress. On 4th May, make your voice heard and vote for the Sheffield Liberal Democrats to bring trust, truth, and transparency back to the heart of our City Council.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shaffaq Mohammed".

Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed
Sheffield Liberal Democrats

A LISTENING COUNCIL

*A council which engages with you, with more decisions made locally and responsible management of limited resources.
Listening, open, transparent.*



- We will ensure that the public are able to make their voices heard and be treated with respect. Consultation with stakeholders and the public will happen early in the decision-making processes and will remain open throughout the process. If we got something wrong, we would listen and learn. We will respond to residents' concerns by being open and transparent about what is intended and why, and be prepared to change.
- We will review the council's website to make it user friendly and enable people to report concerns or request services more easily.
- We will shorten the time it takes for calls to be answered and responded to, including council tax enquiries.
- More powers, with associated budgets, will be delegated to the Local Area Committees so that decisions are taken close to communities that are affected by them. This will include small highways projects, youth services, work to support isolated and vulnerable people, funding to maintain and improve our parks and open spaces, and engagement with local business forums. Service delivery partnerships will be localised and strengthened, with an early focus on parks and green spaces.
- We will continue to press government for improved funding for local authorities, which has been decimated in recent years. We believe that the government has forced local authorities to raise regressive council tax rather than funding vital services through general taxation.
- We will manage the council's budget responsibly, making sure that the budget is realistic, and therefore deliverable, to ensure vital services are maintained.

REGENERATING OUR CITY

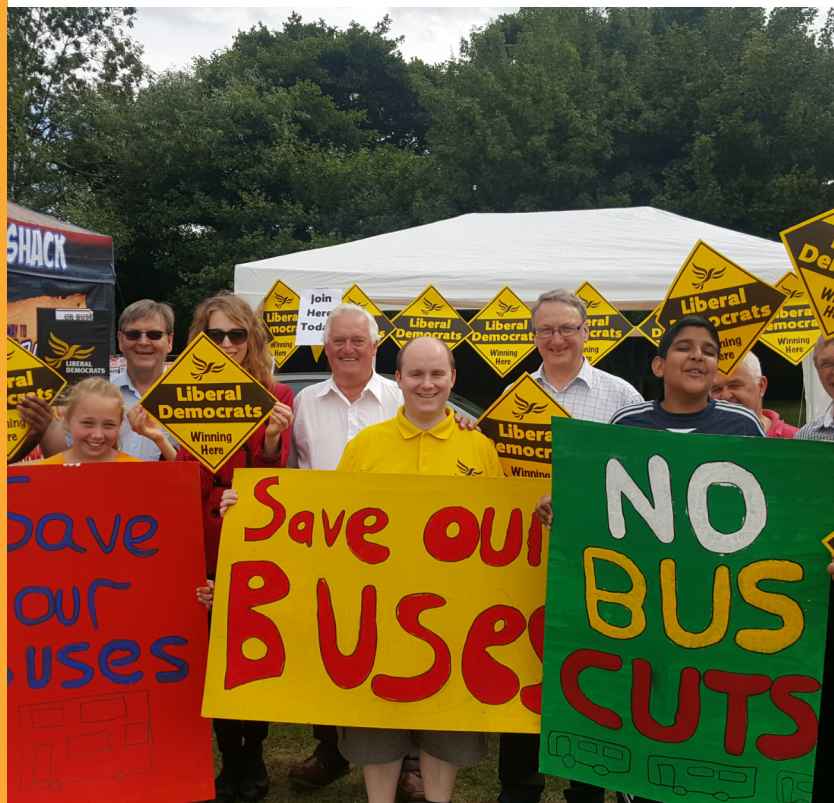
*Supporting
local
business,
encouraging
investment
and
rejuvenating
the City.*



- We want Sheffield to be a great place to do business and for the city to welcome new investment. Therefore, we will ensure new businesses, and businesses hoping to relocate to Sheffield, have access to advice and support. We will identify specific support for young entrepreneurs by doubling the Launchpad start-up support programme.
- We will encourage the development of local business networks, working with the Local Area Committees, to channel investment into district shopping and business areas, building on the £2m from the Economic Recovery Fund secured by the Lib-Dem-led Economic and Development Committee.
- We will also increase funding for the Low Carbon Audits programme, an oversubscribed business support scheme which helps businesses reduce their energy bills and work towards Sheffield's net zero target.
- We will work with the business and retail community to develop the city centre and attract investment, reflecting a growing importance of leisure and culture to the city centre. We will build on previous Lib Dem successes, such as the introduction of Tramlines and the food festival.
- We will support the city's night-time economy and help people feel safe at night by expanding the use of city ambassadors and community resilience wardens. We will consider the use of Public Space Protection Orders to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- We will oppose the inclusion in the Local Plan of a ban on new hot food takeaways within 800m of a senior school as this will prevent such establishments locating in many of our shopping areas, reducing customer choice. This would affect mainly small businesses whilst allowing large chains of fast-food restaurants to continue.
- We will establish a Council Heritage Parks and Community Assets Fund to fully repair the Rose Garden Café and ensure that our city's buildings are properly maintained, to prevent problems such as those we have seen with the Rose Garden café in Graves Park, Birley Spa Bath House and Stannington Park Pavilion from occurring again.

TRANSPORT THAT WORKS

Better public transport, evaluating the Clean Air Zone, more travel options and enabling action at a local level.



- We will ensure that wherever possible people have services such as shops and open space within easy walking/cycling distance, requiring such facilities as part of any new housing developments.
- We will ensure that the pollution levels in the city are monitored and used to assess the effectiveness of the Clean Air Zone which is now in place. We will continue to support people to access grants that they are entitled to for upgrading vehicles.
- We will review transport to, and within, the city centre to ensure access for ALL and to ensure everyone, including those in rural communities, can choose how to travel into and around the city, prioritising public transport and active travel such as cycling or walking. Liberal Democrats helped introduce the Sheffield Connect bus, which enables people to travel around the city centre at no extra cost, and supported the development of the Sheaf Valley Active Travel route to provide a safer walking and cycling route to and from the city centre.
- We will provide e-cargo bikes to businesses who want them to enable them to reduce the number of short journeys made with vans and reduce congestion and pollution. We will investigate a new cycle hire scheme for the city, using models which have worked elsewhere.
- We will press the government and the City Mayoral Authority for funding to extend tram or tram-train routes. Routes which could benefit would include the Sheaf Valley and a route to the Northern General Hospital.
- We will hold Amey to account to ensure that the highways maintenance contract is fulfilled.
- We will investigate options for increased park-and-ride provision to reduce congestion and make commuting to work easier for many.
- We will work with the South Yorkshire Mayor to set up an integrated public transport system, including a London-style bus service, where passenger needs determine routes and frequency, to replace Labour's bus partnership, which has failed to deliver for the people of Sheffield.
- Local areas will be supported through Local Area Committees to undertake small highways projects and changes to support active travel choices, including developing local cycling and walking improvement plans for their areas to improve road safety.
- We support the introduction of 'school streets' where these are practical to reduce pollution and improve road safety near schools.

MAKING THIS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

An agreed plan for development across the city, more affordable housing, support to make homes warmer, much better recycling and promoting biodiversity.



- We will press government for support and access available funding to revitalise our city and improve its infrastructure.
- Sheffield needs more homes for all types of households: families, couples and single people. We will work to ensure the Local Plan is adopted, taking note of the views of Sheffield's citizens as expressed in the 2023 consultation on the plan. We will ensure that developers make maximum use of brownfield sites, protect the greenfield sites in the green belt and maintain access to green space for all communities.
- We will investigate options to deliver more affordable housing, e.g. through shared ownership schemes and use of council-owned land. We support the Lib Dem policy that local authorities should have control over the Right to Buy option in their areas.
- We will press government and the South Yorkshire City Mayor for funding to clean up the brownfield sites in our city to reduce pressure on our green spaces.
- We will support developments aimed at older people and others who need homes for semi-independent living in all parts of the city.
- We will provide access to advice and information for all householders on the options to insulate and heat their homes to give them confidence in making the changes needed, such as relatively simple insulation of mid-terrace passageways. This will help to meet the city's aim to be carbon neutral by 2030 and reduce fuel poverty, which has become a major issue for many of Sheffield's citizens.
- We will make use of all available options to increase the number of car charging points for electric vehicles, making switching to an electric car an option for many more people. We aim to support businesses to introduce these facilities at workplaces.
- We will investigate options for alternative power sources, including from mine workings for district heating.
- We will introduce a warden scheme to equip volunteers to support their communities during bad weather (snow, ice, flooding) and help with adaptation to the effects of climate change.
- We will improve the recycling facilities in the city and the range of waste that can be recycled, including building on the Lib-Dem-led trial of food waste collection, facilitating the option of larger blue bins for paper/card recycling, increasing the opening hours of recycling centres and introducing a bottle return scheme. We aspire to be among the top councils for recycling rather than in the bottom 10%.
- We will support projects to improve biodiversity across the city and encourage community groups to be involved, building on our work to allow wildflowers to grow on grass verges.
- We will invest additional funding in initiatives to clean up our streets, tackling fly tipping, litter, graffiti and pest control through both the Local Area Committees and our Street Scene teams.
- We will provide our volunteer-run libraries with additional resources to support them in delivering a fantastic service for our neighbourhoods.

SUPPORTING ALL SHEFFIELD'S PEOPLE

Support to address the Cost of Living Crisis, council homes fully used and in better repair, and help for private tenants.

Support for the young, for carers and the vulnerable people in our communities.



- We will act across the council's services to support those struggling to make ends meet. We will increase support for organisations including Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABs), to help people manage their finances, access the support they are entitled to receive and signpost people to services they need. We will also encourage the expansion of face-to-face CAB support for those who need it.
- We will address the excessive number of council homes which are empty and reduce the length of time taken to turn around vacated properties. This is essential to reduce the number of families who have to live in emergency accommodation for too long.
- We will reduce waiting times for housing repairs and give housing tenants the right to directly employ an approved contactor if repairs are not carried out within an agreed time frame. We will press for an Alternative Dispute Resolution Scheme, which will enable tenants to receive compensation without incurring the cost of legal representation, and provide an alternative to using lawyers.
- We will increase the support for tenants in private-sector housing to address issues faced by an increasing number of people, including poor maintenance of their homes.
- Children deserve the best possible start in life and we will support families to provide this. We will investigate ways to improve access to Family Centres and invest in improvements to the buildings they use. We will support the upcoming transition to the Family Hubs model.
- We will improve the services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, who currently face long delays in assessment and in obtaining the support they need.
- We will address the issues faced by young people with additional needs or disabilities as they transition to adult services.
- We will provide a 100% discount on our foster carers' council tax bills, to say thank you to our current foster carers and to make fostering more affordable for those considering it. Liberal Democrats nationally have called for increased support for Kinship carers who step in to look after a family member's child when their parents cannot do so, recognising this vital role.
- We will provide under-18s who care for someone with free bus passes, to let them enjoy their social life and undertake their caring responsibility more easily, as Sheffield Young Carers has called for.
- We will deliver a city-wide youth provision, including direct services, and development officers to work with third-sector provision, depending on local need. The service will be monitored through the Local Area Committees.
- We will promote apprenticeships as a positive career choice for local people and a positive investment for employers.
- We believe that the government's current approach to the funding of social care is unsustainable and places disproportionate demands on places such as Sheffield, with a relatively low council tax base but high level of need. Liberal Democrats have called for an increase in the minimum wage for care staff to help address major staffing shortages, which leave families without adequate support. We want to see proper accreditation of their skills and investment in their training. In line with national Lib Dem policy, we will press the government to raise Carer's Allowance for unpaid carers by £1,000 a year.
- We will work through the Local Area Committees to improve how we identify and engage with people who are isolated to co-ordinate offers of support, where that is wanted, raising awareness of those groups who are seldom heard within our communities.
- We will specifically work to support those who are 'digitally' excluded, to help them obtain the skills to benefit from the use of information technology.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

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