



Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

2019 MANIFESTO

Building the **Better, Smarter, Fairer**
Royal Borough that residents are asking for



Time to demand better

People have told us that they want a greater say in what is happening locally. For too long, you have had to put up with a council that does not listen to your views, with councillors who block residents on social media when challenged and who believe that the most vulnerable people in our society should be swept from the streets.

After 12 years of Conservative rule, you're still waiting for truly affordable homes, bustling town centres supporting high-street names as well as local traders, community facilities that work for the community, and a Borough Local Plan that works.

These are the priorities of the Windsor and Maidenhead Liberal Democrats, and these form our vision for the borough.

A successful track record

After so long under the Conservatives, it may be hard to believe that things could ever have been different. But the Liberal Democrats have controlled the council before and some of those things we take for granted now — the cinema, and CCTV, StreetCare — were brought in by the Lib Dems.

That's why we're confident that we can deliver. Our candidates come from a wide range of backgrounds including: finance, education, marketing, retail, and charities. We will build on our past successes in

administration, and the talents and know-how of our new councillors, to reverse some of the damage the Conservatives have caused.

In doing so, we will always ensure that we protect the most vulnerable in our society first, and work to make our borough more equal. This can only be achieved in the spirit of cooperation, working together with residents, businesses, voluntary groups and our valued council officers.

Here for you all the year round, not just at election time

Our local Lib Dem members and supporters work throughout the year to ensure that residents' concerns are put to the council. As well as meeting people face to face, we carry out surveys and invite residents to email or phone us with their comments on a wide range of local issues.

Our manifesto reflects what you have told us you want for your Royal Borough. Please give us your support on May 2nd.

It's time to demand better.

Simon Werner

Chair, Windsor and Maidenhead Liberal Democrats

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Our Vision

Town Centre Developments

We're proposing a vision for our town centres that turns them into community hubs which are not just about shops but also about health, education, entertainment, leisure, arts and culture.

Residents of both Windsor and Maidenhead are becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of vision for their town centre.

The Conservative plan to build lots of high-rise tower blocks is not the solution to the problems of our town centres.

Looking after our Streets

Residents have been shocked by the appalling quality of road repairs carried out by the council. So many of the repairs have not been done properly. If water can sit in a repair or the edges are not sealed, potholes will undoubtedly reappear the next winter.

Liberal Democrats will renegotiate the maintenance contract, to reward long-term solutions rather than quick fixes for our roads, and see what services could be brought back in-house like graffiti removal.

Supporting Families

In the council, the local Lib Dems have always supported family-friendly policies, whether by championing schools, playgrounds, youth centres or starter housing, or by helping vulnerable families.

On education, we want to see fair funding across all schools — at the moment one school is benefited by the Conservatives above all the rest.

A Smart Royal Borough

By using technology that already exists in other councils, we can make residents' lives in Windsor and Maidenhead a lot easier.

We will introduce electric buses, wireless phone chargers, smart street lighting and a new smartphone app showing you useful information in real time.

Seven Key Pledges for the Borough

We will:

- 1. Champion the use of 21st-century technology, like 5G, that will improve residents' lives.**
- 2. Restore local democracy.**
- 3. Build a new Borough Local Plan that residents can support.**
- 4. Work with the homeless to help get them back on their feet.**
- 5. Improve recycling rates by making it easier for you to recycle.**
- 6. Champion families' needs by improving education, leisure and community facilities.**
- 7. Fix our roads properly the first time round.**



Police Funding

Local councils are coming under increasing pressure to contribute more money for policing. In January 2019, the local commissioner for Thames Valley Police (TVP) asked for an increased contribution which is double the level of the previous year's increase.

43% of TVP's funding comes from the council, while the rest is from central government. When she was Home Secretary, the Prime Minister imposed savage cuts on central government funding for the country's police forces. Now that the country is officially no longer in austerity, we feel that central government needs to step up once more and reverse these cuts.

We will meet our obligations to support the police, whilst campaigning to make national government reverse its cuts to police funding.



Social Care

A particular concern is funding for care for the elderly and other adults whose care is the responsibility of the council. The bill is only going to rise for the foreseeable future. Taking care of our most vulnerable residents is a top priority for Windsor and Maidenhead Lib Dems.

Nationally, the Lib Dems are campaigning to raise an additional £6 billion from income tax to help save the NHS and social care services. In the long term, we want to reform health and care funding so that you will have full transparency over how your taxes are spent.

We will prioritise social care locally, and continue to campaign for better funding from the government

Outsourcing

Liberal Democrats are not opposed to outsourcing where a clear, tangible benefit to service delivery and/or financial performance is identifiable. However, it is important not to make these decisions for purely ideological reasons. There is a danger that data can be manipulated to back up the case for outsourcing.

Where there is evidence of potential benefit, e.g. joining an already established or proposed outsourced consortium with neighbouring authorities, we will subject proposals to strict scrutiny, calling in neutral advisors where appropriate.

When contracting for outsourced delivery there are a number of potential risks around costs, delivery, democratic responsibility and complaints.

We will ensure that contracts include both performance and financial benchmarks, and will publish both the benchmarks and the contractors' performance against them.

There must be a clear identification of responsibility, both of an officer and a lead councillor. The lead councillor must take responsibility for the reports to the council and be democratically accountable for failures in delivery.

We will insist that contracts include clear identification of the control and scrutiny that will be exercised both by officers and councillors. We will establish the paths of communication, both internally and with the contractor, to make that happen.



Finance

The Conservatives have had control of RBWM for 12 years now and in that time, the state of the borough's finances has deteriorated, with massive increase in debt and £8.2 million overspend in just one year.

Last year, the Liberal Democrats declared that the proposed budget was a "gambler's budget". We would love to have been proved wrong, but unfortunately we were proved right.

Council Tax

Whilst we would very much like to keep the council tax rate unchanged, it is the duty of any responsible administration to carefully examine the financial position and determine whether an increase will be necessary.

We guarantee to not increase council tax above inflation.

Business Rates

Ideally, central government should allow local councils to set the level of business rates. However, when dealing with councils, the government tends to give with one hand and take with the other, so careful analysis of the immediate and long-term effects on grant funding will be needed.

We continue to be aware of the pressures facing local businesses in Windsor and Maidenhead, and will look at all options for supporting them.

What is the true state of our borough's finances?

Insufficient information is available to determine the state of the council's finances.

This is partly because too many contracts — particularly those that entail the council taking on debt — are classed as 'Commercial: in confidence'. We would ban secret contracts like these and require all new contractors to accept that contract information will be open to public scrutiny.

The current situation makes it impossible for opposition groups to come up with an alternative budget. No council wants to end up in the position of Conservative-run Northamptonshire County Council which had to declare itself near-insolvent and drastically cut back services. However, hints from the leadership about the social care bill lead us to believe that we are perilously close to disaster.

As soon as we are able to, we will investigate the council's finances and put in a robust plan to ensure they are sustainable in the longer term.

Building a 21st-Century Borough

In the heart of the Thames Valley, Windsor and Maidenhead have the potential to be national leaders in innovation and technology.

We want our Royal Borough to be leaders in innovation, not followers.

Smart Street Lighting

Smart street lighting can measure traffic flow, air pollution, and noise disturbances, allowing us to monitor which areas need specific attention.

We will trial smart street lighting in the Royal Borough.

Electric Car Incentives

Electric cars are a clean and green way to travel. However, we need to incentivise people more to switch from petrol or diesel to electric.

We will provide electric car charging points, and will reduce parking charges for electric cars in the borough's car parks.

Plastic Bottle Banks

We know that one of the biggest issues is plastic waste and that's why we ensured that residents could recycle plastic as part of their household recycling. We want to work with Plastic Free Windsor and Plastic Free Maidenhead to deliver policy which will implement the council resolution to eliminate single-use plastics. But we want to do more than that, we want plastic bottle banks to reward you for depositing your recyclable waste.

We will introduce plastic bottle redeem sites throughout the borough.

Electric Buses

Electric buses are a common sight in many European towns and cities, and are now starting to be seen in the UK.

We will promote the development of an electric bus fleet in Windsor and Maidenhead.

Wireless Charging

As people depend increasingly on their mobile devices, it's important that they can keep them charged up throughout the day.

All public buildings will have wireless charging points, and we'll also encourage companies to provide these for their employees and customers.



On-Demand Buses

We need to use our buses more, but there often isn't enough demand to run routes to everywhere that people might want to go. Many towns and cities have on-demand bus services.

Often called "Ring and Ride", these pick you up from where you are and then drop you off where you want to go. It's like a car pool, only bigger, and runs seven days a week.

We will establish an on-demand ride-sharing bus service.

My RBWM app

Residents in Windsor and Maidenhead want information available to them in real time.

Wouldn't it be amazing to know exactly what car parking spaces were available before you left home? Wouldn't it be easier to know where the bus is before you head to the stop, how much traffic there is in town, and how busy the swimming pool is before you go? We want you to have all of that information at your fingertips.

With a dedicated smartphone application, residents will be able to see traffic flows across the borough, the exact location of their bus, parking availability, how busy the leisure centres are, bike hire availability, weather, pollen levels, reporting issues, CO₂ levels and much more — all in real time.

We will develop a My RBWM app for smartphones and tablets using realtime local information to make residents' lives easier.

Truly Affordable Housing

There is a generation of young people whose experience is of a broken housing market, because they cannot afford a place of their own. Up and down the country people need more affordable homes to buy or to rent, and these need to be quality houses. Yet government, both centrally and locally, has virtually stopped building. Locally, this problem is exacerbated by inflated house prices.

We will focus on ensuring that developers provide social housing within their developments.



Social housing

Even affordable homes won't be accessible to everyone. And not everyone will want to buy a home. We have spoken to residents who are delighted with their social housing and have no plans to buy. Any scheme to build on our green spaces must take account of the needs of residents and key workers from outside the borough who want social housing.

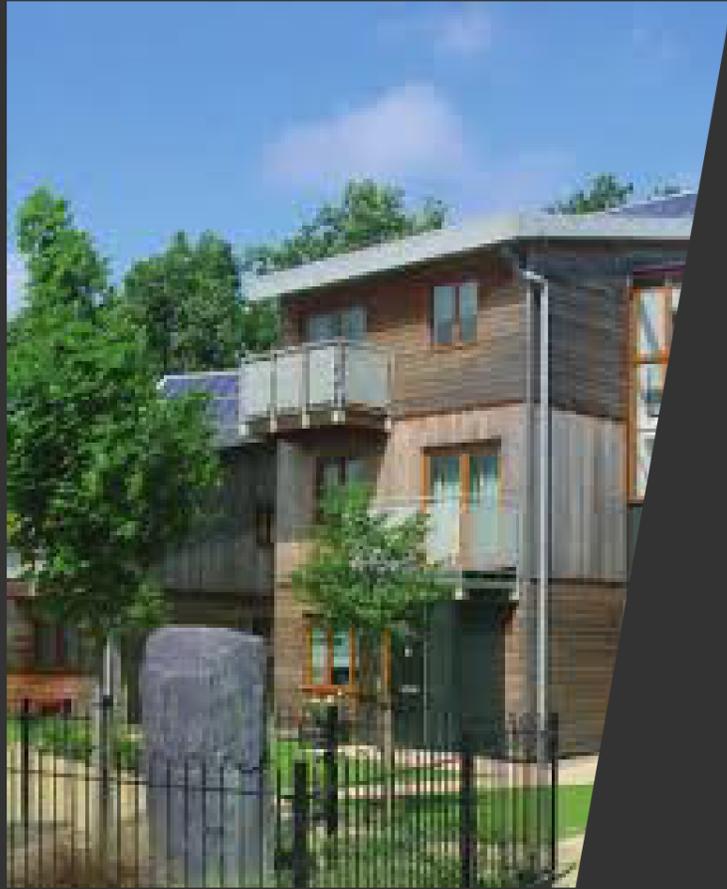
We will ensure that developers deliver on their social housing obligations.

Where feasible, we will build affordable and social housing directly, either contracting the building work ourselves, or through a wholly owned housing company (a trading company).

Community-led housing (Community Land Trusts)

Community Land Trusts are community-led housing initiatives that provide affordable housing in perpetuity. They have high standards in terms of the quality of the buildings, the ratio of built area to open space, and the environmental sustainability. The residents are involved in their own neighbourhood, which helps to counter disempowerment, isolation and loneliness.

We will actively support community-led housing initiatives that have a viable plan and sufficiently widespread support.



Preserving our natural environment

All towns need green lungs; plans to tear up our green belt threaten the very nature of our borough.

We will ensure new houses have access to open spaces, and require developers to put forward designs that preserve and enhance wildlife such as green corridors, ancient trees and building enhancements such as rainwater harvesting.

We will create a trust for Battlemead Common and Great Thrift Wood to prevent future councils from building on the land.



We have a great track record on housing

Here are just two examples of our achievements.

Phoenix Court was built after the demolition of a high-rise block that had a potential safety issue. The original building had been built to the same design as Ronan Point, where a gas explosion and subsequent collapse of some flats took the lives of four people and injured many more. Surveyors identified the problem when people who had bought the Maidenhead flats under right to buy, tried to sell.

People often admire its aesthetic appeal and although homes there are now sold on the free market, properties remain accessible for first-time buyers.

Kathy Newbound, who held the housing brief at the time, says: "Our decision to demolish and rebuild was a difficult and contentious one to deliver, but ultimately, it was the right thing to do. I was so grateful for the backing of a united Lib Dem group, whose team work and commitment ensured that affordable housing was at the very heart of the agenda."

Alpine Close was initiated while Lib Dems were still in control of the council and is a great example of building with sustainability in mind. It was built by Maidenhead and District Housing Association (now Housing Solutions), in conjunction with Bree Day Architects, to deliver 27 houses and flats for rent.

Maidenhead and District Housing Association was initiated by the Lib Dems, in 1995.

The chief executive of the Housing Association at the time said, "This was a ground-breaking development for us, as it represents our first truly environmentally friendly and sustainable homes."

Homelessness

When it comes to homelessness, Windsor and Maidenhead Lib Dems favour an approach focused on the needs of the individual. Not only is this the ethical thing to do, it has been proven to be the most successful approach. It is essential to collaborate with the charities and organisations who work with rough sleepers. They are the experts and have the necessary skills to guide our policies and practice.

We will engage fully with Windsor Homeless Project, The Susan Brett Foundation, More Than a Shelter, and others, making it easier for them to get their job done.

To address rough sleeping, we advocate a 'Housing First' model. This evidence-based approach uses independent stable housing as a platform to help people with complex needs move away from homelessness. We believe in personalised support for those with complex and multiple needs and we would promote mental health and addiction services. We would also seek to provide opportunities for volunteering and employment to help people get back into the world of work.

We will open permanent night shelters to provide emergency housing, not just during severe weather, but year-round. These would be in partnership with local organisations, and would act as hubs for people to access a range of services and support, as well as shelter.



Building the borough residents ask for

The draft Borough Local Plan (BLP) is in serious trouble. This plan dictates how the Borough will develop over the next few years — where homes will be built, where employment opportunities will be created — and is currently going through the process of being approved (or not) by a planning inspector.

The inspector has criticised many aspects of the plan including:

- Not fully considering the risk of flooding on new sites
- The way council has identified green-belt sites
- Not properly considering objections received from the residents
- The hijacking of the Windsor development plan

Time for a new start.

The inspector has also asked the council to consider whether they should abandon the whole thing and start again. Local Liberal Democrats have been saying for a while that the approach being taken is flawed, and now the planning inspector has agreed.

We will prioritise brownfield over greenfield development.

There are obviously difficult decisions to be made but by working with the residents, we think we can develop a BLP that will gain public support and be approved by the planning inspector. Our borough has amazing potential, and it would be a tragedy to destroy that.

Let's build a borough which the residents want, not one that pleases developers and no one else.

We will do everything in our ability to turn around the current, flawed, Borough Local Plan.

Residents demand more than an 'Eat, Sleep and Leave' borough; they want a community they can be proud of.

We want to build a borough that represents all of its residents; a borough that delivers opportunities for work, living and leisure.



Community Facilities

Local residents need a greater say in development happening in their area, and are best placed to know which kinds of community assets are needed.

We will work collaboratively with local residents to build consensus and support for a Borough Local Plan which is focused on making the borough a place where people love to live.

Developments cannot work individually; they need to be coordinated with their surroundings, existing housing stock and each other. By ensuring development designs and landscapes have a similar style to those existing, we can build a borough that enhances the lives of residents.

We will ensure that infrastructure such as roads, car parks, bus routes, cycle routes, footpaths, schools and leisure amenities are planned in a joined up way, and not just within individual developments.

“We will do everything in our ability to turn around the current, flawed, Borough Local Plan.”

Which pub hosts Latin classes? Where is Maidenhead’s purpose-built dance studio? The variety of needs for community facilities is wider than most of us can imagine — clubs & groups for young people, educational & social groups, lunch groups for older people, organisations that support families & children, faith, spiritual & philosophical groups, exercise classes, and the provision of sit-down hot meals for the homeless.

We will consult widely on unmet needs for community facilities so that provision in new developments can respond to residents’ needs, and be better designed with users in mind.

Sometimes (particularly on weekday evenings) the existing provision is almost full to capacity and it can be difficult to find a venue, particularly for medium and large gatherings.

We will invest in restoring youth centre facilities that have been depleted by the Conservative council.

The main providers of community facilities are places of worship. Most hire their facilities when they are not using them to help cover the cost of maintaining the building; some also view using their premises for community engagement as part of their mission.

The second largest provider is the council, either via purpose-built community centres or buildings such as the town hall and library. Other providers include the Norden Farm arts centre and village/memorial halls as well as schools.

Where viable, we will work with faith and other groups to make their premises available to the wider community.





We will consult with residents on establishing a Windsor Town Council as well as other parish councils within the borough.

Better services for everyone

Council services should be available for everyone, and equality of access should be a fundamental right. We oppose Tory initiatives that affect people's rights, such as changing the location of polling stations to inaccessible areas.

We will make playgrounds more accessible by installing inclusive playground equipment, which can be enjoyed by all children, regardless of needs and abilities.

In a borough where the number of elderly people is increasing, we need to attract sufficient carers.

We will ensure that carers are treated as key workers entitled to affordable rented housing.

We want people with disabilities, mobility issues and conditions such as dementia to be able to participate as fully as possible in the activities they enjoy.

We will work with voluntary organisations to ensure that council services are as accessible as possible.



Windsor Leisure Centre

The leisure centre originally opened in 1986, and although there have been minor improvements in recent years, the overall facility is tired and in need of updating. The private company, Parkwood Leisure / Legacy Leisure, was awarded a 10-year contract for the running of the council's leisure centres after a flawed consultation period and was the only bidder for the contract. The Windsor Liberal Democrats demanded clarity from the council back in 2014 but now residents tell us that the leisure centre is still below standard for hygiene and cleanliness, and there are ongoing customer service issues.

A Lib Dem council would

- **Review the performance of the existing contract holder and carry out a transparent bidding process for the future running of the leisure centre.**
- **Demand that all interested parties submit a long-term plan for developing the leisure facilities for the 21st century.**

Community hubs

The closure of Squires and potential sale of Wyevale garden centre means that Windsor has lost two community hubs for residents of all ages, which offered a range of retail, social and eating opportunities. We think that the multi-generational aspect of these garden centres was part of their appeal and don't believe that just another café will fill the hole left by their closure.

We will:

- **Consult with residents about the new community spaces they want to see.**
- **Prioritise the social aspect of the community space, bringing together different generations, as well as giving opportunities for employment to diverse groups; for example, enabling people with learning difficulties to run a café.**
- **Install accessible play equipment such as swings and ramps into play areas across the town.**



Maidenhead Town Centre

More damage is being done almost daily in the town centre: the leisure centre is moving away from the town centre, pay and display machines are being brought into every car park, there are very few truly affordable flats, and the high-rise blocks are getting taller. The latest plans include 17-storey buildings!

Our vision for the town centre is a community hub that's not just about shops but also about health, education, entertainment, leisure, arts and culture — a place that people from all over the town and further afield want to visit.

We welcome the work that the new owners of the Nicholsons Centre have started and we see great merit in their plans. We want to ensure that the best of those proposals are carried forward.

Liberal Democrats have a track record in this area. The cinema was brought to Maidenhead in exchange for allowing a developer to build some office buildings including the '3' office.

We propose to use the ground floor of the new Broadway car park, along with Nicholsons Walk, to bring major leisure facilities to Maidenhead. We can bring back a bowling alley, for instance, and other leisure facilities you want to see.



Town Hall

Rumours have been circulating that the Conservatives are planning to build another high-rise building on the site of the Town Hall. Many staff have been moved out and proposals have been suggested that council meetings should take place at the new leisure centre, not at the town hall.

Back in 2003, the Liberal Democrats defeated the Conservatives' last attempt to knock down the town hall — we will continue to fight any such proposals.

Windsor Town Centre

There is a real need to rejuvenate Windsor town centre. Looking around Peascod Street at empty shops and increasing numbers of charity shops, betting stores and vape shops, it is easy to see why. The town centre is often deserted after dark, and there is a lack of leisure facilities to attract visitors in the evenings.

We will pursue the possibility of developing the empty Fenwicks site into leisure facilities such as a cinema.

Conservative councillors have become complacent about Windsor town centre, believing that tourists alone will keep the centre thriving, one even stating that Windsor does not need regenerating. We know this is not the case.

We will:

- **Work with private landlords and the town centre manager to develop an ambitious plan for the town centre.**
- **Improve street lighting at night to make the town centre more welcoming.**
- **Encourage, support and promote entrepreneurial residents who want to launch start-up businesses in the town centre.**



Transport

With the arrival of the Elizabeth Line, Maidenhead is set to become an even more important transport hub in Berkshire. With shorter journey times to Tottenham Court Road and Canary Wharf, investment is needed to ensure that Maidenhead station is fit for purpose and that other stations across the borough don't fall behind.

We will work to make Windsor and Maidenhead a fully connected borough with excellent transport links, a first-class bus service and high-quality car parking.

The introduction of the Elizabeth Line also allows us to better connect Windsor with London, ensuring that timetables match up for trains to Paddington.

“We will introduce pay on exit parking wherever possible.”



Roads

The borough has limited opportunity for new roads to supplement the network, but we will examine the various 'pinch points' to see if traffic flow can be improved.

New traffic lights will not be planned unless they are popular with local residents.

We will build a plan for our road infrastructure to ensure it is fit for purpose all the time — not just at election time.

One of the problems with road repairs is that the underlying problems are not always resolved. For instance, a road in Pinkneys Green is repaired every year. However, there is an underlying drainage problem that is never sorted out. This means that in the winter, the rain and ice just sit on the road and break up the surface, meaning it needs to be repaired each year.

Potholes need to be properly repaired, as with a temporary patch, the pothole often reappears a year later.

We will focus attention on dealing with the underlying problems that lead to road repairs, so the roads will be fixed first time every time.



“We will build a plan for our road infrastructure to ensure it is fit for purpose all the time — not just at election time.”

Rail

We would like our branch lines to have reliable trains going straight through to London, as that would encourage people to use stations like Furze Platt and Cookham.

If you get on a train at one of these stations, you are more likely to get a seat, so through trains are a real incentive to use the branch line.

If more people use the branch line, then more frequent trains should be provided. (We note the introduction of electric trains from Maidenhead to London which have more carriages and are more comfortable.)

We also support the reinstatement of the branch line to High Wycombe.

We support increasing the frequency of the Windsor-Slough train service.

Buses

Bus transport provides a key lifeline to many people in our community. We want to see buses become more accessible to residents who need them.

We will expand the local bus service in Maidenhead and Windsor.

We also want to see bus services that run to the locations residents require and at times that are key to the community. Only by building a connected transport network in the Royal Borough can we provide the best service to residents.

We will campaign for a rail / bus interchange at Maidenhead station to encourage commuters to finish their journey by bus, together with more secure cycle parking.

Parking

We know that parking is a real issue for residents in Windsor and Maidenhead. Residents want high quality parking, and we believe it's crucial to the revival of our town centres.

We will introduce pay on exit parking wherever possible.

We will ensure Advantage card holders can park for free from 5pm each night in every council car park and extend Advantage card discounts to season ticket holders.

We are concerned at the loss of on-the-level outdoor car parks in Maidenhead. We know, from talking to residents, that people with mobility issues (who don't necessarily qualify for a blue badge) appreciate their convenience.

We will ensure that we keep some surface and on-street car parking in Windsor and Maidenhead.

In Windsor, parking is especially at a premium, and illegal overnight parking is a real concern. Due to poor design, residents are often left with a choice between parking dangerously or parking a substantial distance from their home.

We will take a proactive approach to sorting out chaotic parking across the borough. Our ideas include:

- **Reducing the need for multiple car ownership by improving cycle routes and public transport routes.**
- **Insisting on minimum parking provision for new developments.**
- **Incentivising owners of unused private parking space to make it available to the public.**
- **Adding additional car parking spaces to Victoria Street car park in Windsor.**



“Good cycling networks need to be kept separate from cars and pedestrians, and where they have to be together we need bike-friendly traffic calming measures.”



Cycling is good for health, and good for the environment. We've spoken to residents though who keep their bikes locked up in their garages because of safety and security concerns.

Good cycling networks need to be kept separate from cars and pedestrians whenever possible, and where they have to be together we need bike-friendly traffic calming measures. There is a wealth of experience from other towns (and other countries) and best-practice guidance available.

We will give cycling a much bigger profile with:

Secure cycle parking — there have been some cycle thefts in the town centre and at Maidenhead station, and there is no secure cycle parking at Furze Platt station.

Segregated cycle paths to enable children to cycle to school, out of the town centres and to major hubs in our towns. There is no linked up network of cycling routes today, and no mention of building such a network for the future in the council's plans. The only mention is of building short sections of cycle paths within specific developments.

Where **cycle lane markings** are faded, they need to be brought up to standard.

Consideration of an effective, accessible and affordable **bike hire scheme** in Windsor and Maidenhead, either a docked or dockless scheme.

Education and Young People



No to selection in RBWM

We understand that parents want to give their children the best possible start in life — it's natural. However, there is no evidence that bright pupils will do any better in a grammar school than in one of our local comprehensives. Indeed, our comprehensives regularly send students to top universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, which proves that they can take pupils as far as they are willing and able to go.

On the other hand, the selective system limits choice for the roughly 80% of children who don't pass the 11+. This figure includes a disproportionate number of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and also includes children who are gifted in some areas but not across the board. Comprehensive schools can help all children from all backgrounds to be the best they can be.

We will fight against the reintroduction of selection to RBWM, and support our wonderful comprehensives and free schools.

Among our supporters are members of local campaign group Excellent Education for Everyone which opposes the reintroduction of selection to RBWM and works closely with the national campaign group, Comprehensive Future. You can visit their websites to see some of the studies that have been carried out into selective vs. comprehensive education.

Fair Funding

While many of our schools now manage their own finances, the borough can still fund improvements and expansion programmes. Under the Conservative administration, funding decisions haven't always been as transparent or well managed as they could have been: in 2015, residents found themselves with more questions than answers after they questioned the decision to award £0.5 million of Developer Contributions to just one free school.

We will set out a clear and transparent process for the allocation of council and/or developer funds to schools, with a fully documented audit trail, and invite all eligible schools to apply for those funds.

More recently, the mishandling of the expansion project at Lowbrook Primary School left the project unfinished, and children who'd been offered places had them taken away.

We will work with schools to cost out council-funded projects accurately and realistically.



Young People

We will create and fund a youth council with decision-making abilities.

This will be an elected board of young people with real decision-making ability, who will ensure that the young people of RBWM are listened to and represented by the council.

We will:

- **Fund extracurricular activities for young people**
- **Ensure that a link is developed between the council and members of the UK Youth Parliament**
- **Support existing youth centres and provide additional services where there is a need. In particular, we would encourage the youth centres to engage with more 'difficult-to-reach' young people.**



Protecting our Environment

Green Power

Excessive emissions pose a threat to the future of the planet, and the health of local residents. We oppose the expansion of Heathrow airport, which will raise carbon emissions, increase air and noise pollution, and impact negatively on the health of residents across the borough.

We will develop a green power strategy to help residents and local businesses reduce their environmental impact and save money.

We will lead by example by investing in solar panels on community buildings, and supporting and promoting the provision of electric car charging points in the borough.

Wild Maidenhead

Our borough desperately needs concerted action to begin to reverse the biodiversity decline. We believe that everyone should be able to enjoy wildlife and want to encourage residents to support it. Wild Maidenhead has drafted the Local Biodiversity Action Plan around seven habitats and has selected 20 species for special focus.

Maidenhead Liberal Democrats launched Wild Maidenhead in consultation with around 50 local wildlife groups, and the organisation now enjoys wide, apolitical support.

Despite the great conservation work many are doing, biodiversity is in decline and a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan of action is urgently needed.



Biodiversity

Biodiversity in our area is in decline. Once-common species, which older residents knew as part of their childhoods, are now rare sights or have disappeared altogether. Water voles, which inspired Kenneth Grahame's 'Ratty' from *The Wind in the Willows*, are no longer recorded in Maidenhead. Hedgehogs are in decline. But we also know from the successful reintroduction of red kites, for example, that we can help nature recover.

We will support local activities to reduce waste in the River Thames.

Windsor and Maidenhead should be places where we value our wildlife and their habitats. Nature enhances all our lives.

We will make Windsor and Maidenhead some of the best places to enjoy wildlife. We'll increase efforts to monitor nature in the borough, so we don't lose more species before we even realise they are in trouble, and will take every opportunity to protect and enhance biodiversity. We will support local biodiversity action plans.

Flood Risk

We will work with parish councils and the relevant national agencies to do six things to help keep us safe and dry:

1. Commit to making sure pumps and barriers are provided to protect key infrastructure such as sewage pumping stations and electricity substations.
2. Create incentives for residents to protect their own homes and small businesses, where sandbags don't work.
3. Provide resilient bus services — reliable alternative services should be routinely provided when normal routes are affected by flooded roads.
4. Carry out regular test exercises to make sure that borough officers and contractors know how to work with the parishes in the event of floods.
5. Insist that the Environment Agency has a transparent operation system for the Jubilee River, and new River Thames Scheme controls, and that these are regularly rehearsed.
6. Remove the red tape from local flood defence schemes by making our own borough-wide assessment of the benefits and getting on with the work, if appropriate. This might include, for example, the A4094 at Widbrook Common.
7. Create a map of roads which are most likely to be affected by flooding and make it available to residents so that they can plan effectively.

Current policy (Borough Local Plan 1999) is that the number of people at risk of flooding should not be increased by a planning application.

However, this is frequently ignored by the planning authority, with extra bedrooms and new houses being built in areas that are prone to flooding. It is possible to build houses that are safe and operate during flooding, but even so, you couldn't live there unless the infrastructure (sewers, drinking water, roads) are also flood resilient.

The River Thames is a beautiful feature of our borough, but we have to manage the flood risk that goes with it. And that risk is increasing because of climate change. Lib Dems have been working with parishes across the borough to assess whether the Conservative-led council is ready for flooding. The borough council should do what it can to keep homes dry and roads open so that our lives are less disrupted by flooding.

Recycling and Waste

Recycling rates in Conservative-controlled RBWM are too low. They are much lower than those of other councils in the south-east, meaning that more of our waste goes to landfill, which is bad for the environment and costs money due to landfill tax.

The Liberal Democrats are committed to reducing single-use plastics and members of the Windsor Lib Dems are founding members of Plastic Free Windsor. They and Plastic Free Maidenhead have succeeded in persuading the council to promote their aims.

We will support Plastic Free Windsor and Maidenhead and work to eliminate single-use plastic from council activities.

The green bin scheme has increased in popularity ever since it was introduced. However, feedback from residents is that you'd like weekly green bin collections in the summer.

We will investigate removing charges for garden waste collections and ensure that over the summer months green bins are emptied weekly rather than fortnightly.

We send less than a third of our food waste for recycling. The rest goes to landfill where it decays and emits harmful greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The recycled portion is used to generate renewable electricity for the national grid. So every kettle you boil is powered, in part, by the carrot peelings you put into your kitchen waste caddy. If we could increase our food waste recycling to the rates achieved in other areas in the south-east, less would go into landfill and the cost of managing the borough's rubbish would fall.

We will improve our borough's recycling rates by making it easier for residents to sort and recycle their waste.

Liberal Democrats in the borough have always committed to maintain weekly bin collections, and we will continue to do so for as long as you ask us to.

"We will ensure that over the summer months, garden waste bins are emptied once a week rather than fortnightly"



Crime and Grime

Windsor and Maidenhead Liberal Democrats have a long history of tackling crime and grime within the borough. We started the Community Wardens scheme, and brought in CCTV. We also created the StreetCare team, which included a specialist graffiti-removal officer who dealt with litter, graffiti, potholes and general grot.

The Lib Dems have had to lobby hard to get the council to clean up our streets. In Pinkneys Green, our own Clive Baskerville got so fed up waiting for the council to remove graffiti that he donned the rubber gloves himself!

Recently, the borough contracted out the StreetCare team. The performance of the team is now limited by the contract with the contractor, rather than motivated by the pride the council officers take in serving our community.

We believe there is a link between grime and crime. If litter and graffiti are not cleared up immediately, it makes it look as if the residents do not care about where they live. We will use our Borough App to allow people to report vandalism, graffiti and litter along with its GPS location so that it can be quickly cleared up.

Dog Mess

We are a nation of dog lovers, but the waste they produce can cause problems in our streets and parks. Residents tell us that dog mess is on the increase. Other councils have trialled schemes such as providing residents in badly affected areas with stickers.

We will:

- **Review the location of dog waste bins**
- **Use our Borough App to allow residents to report dog mess in real time and to facilitate mapping of the problem with a view to catching inconsiderate dog owners who fail to clean up after their dogs.**

We will work with the new StreetCare contractor to bring about a more proactive approach. If necessary, we will bring some of the more instant fixes like removing graffiti and fly-tipping back in house.



We will encourage and promote solutions that design out crime for new and old buildings. We'll also help householders with advice and assistance in improving their properties to discourage crime.

Recently, the Lib Dem ward councillor for Pinkneys Green managed to not only save CCTV in the borough but to actually expand it, when the Conservatives were planning to cut it.

We will continue with CCTV expansion, and resist any attempts to cut it.

Also, pressure from the Liberal Democrats led to an increase in the number of Community Wardens. Community Wardens are the eyes and ears of the community — they should be allowed to deal with environmental issues where it's safe for them to do so. Currently, they are not even armed with graffiti removing kits.

We will not only continue to increase the size of the Community Warden team, but would assign them to help with the fight against grime.



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