

Southend Liberal Democrats

DELIVERING A CITY TO BE PROUD OF



**Southend Liberal Democrat
Manifesto 2022**

INTRODUCTION

We are proud to have been working with others within a Joint Administration over the last three years to deliver real improvements for Southend while keeping Council Tax levels well below those of neighbouring Castle Point and Rochford.

Our priorities are:

- ✓ **Protecting our local environment**
- ✓ **Promoting our local economy**
- ✓ **Supporting and investing in our local communities**

Our manifesto provides a summary of what we have achieved over the last three years and what Liberal Democrat councillors elected in 2022 will work towards.

WE WANT EVERY RESIDENT AND BUSINESS TO HAVE PRIDE IN SOUTHEND

Through innovative and thoughtful recovery projects we will continue to enhance our High Streets and tourism areas, supporting local employment, museums and galleries, and make Southend the go-to City by the sea.



Protecting Our Local Environment



For the last three years the Liberal Democrats have been leading the Council's green agenda. We declared a Climate Change Emergency and are determined that this means action, not just words. Our success is shown in our placings in the top echelon of local authorities by accredited organisations.

Our Policies

- ✓ We are taking and will continue to take comprehensive measures across all areas of the Council's work, as well as working with local residents, businesses and organisations, to ensure that our agenda against climate change becomes a reality.
- ✓ The City has two Air Quality Management Areas and we will continue to monitor and make improvements in these areas as well as monitoring at other points, including pressing for adequate monitoring of aircraft noise, particularly at night.
- ✓ We will work to ensure road improvements on major routes include proposals for a green environment, and work with local groups to improve the environment of our streets and open spaces, especially our parks and Two Tree Island.
- ✓ We will continue to promote the schemes in our Green City Action Plan, working with schools, businesses and residents.
- ✓ we have stopped the use of glyphosate in our Green Flag parks and gardens and children's play areas and are looking for alternative methods of weed control. We will enhance our parks and gardens with areas for wildlife and meadow plants and seek to bring park buildings back into beneficial use.
- ✓ We will promote renewable energy and sustainable travel programmes such as growing our network of cycleways and supporting electric car use by providing more charging points.
- ✓ We will work towards zero landfill by enhancing recycling services and promoting an education programme for residents and businesses to ensure our waste is recycled properly.
- ✓ We will continue with our plans to plant many more trees and shrubs across the City to increase the tree canopy to 15% by 2030 by working with residents and businesses.

- ✓ We will use all powers available to us to protect against dog fouling, fly-tipping and littering.
- ✓ We will ensure that the green agenda is uppermost when bringing forward projects and that our contractors and suppliers are also looking at their green credentials going forward.
- ✓ We will continue to increase our housing stock by utilising available land and working with others to provide the housing we need and, where necessary, using our powers to buy appropriate land for council housing and empty and derelict properties for refurbishment.
- ✓ We will continue the progress of our new Local Plan, particularly gathering evidence to prevent incursions into our Green Belt by development requirements laid down by Government. Our planning policies will provide for balanced development throughout the City.
- ✓ With the Government's housing requirements comes the need for new infrastructure and we will continue to lobby the Government for the means to provide schools, health facilities, roads, and parking. Large developments will be scrutinised for their contribution to necessary infrastructure and their green credentials and compliance with our new policy on the inclusion of electric vehicle charging facilities.
- ✓ We will encourage the preservation and conservation of our historic fabric through our conservation areas and we will be diligent with owners regarding the maintenance and protection of historic buildings.
- ✓ We will continue the introduction of 20mph limits/zones in residential roads, where appropriate, and expand our School Streets programme.
- ✓ We are committed to investment in repairing our pavements, roads, and green verges after years of under-investment
- ✓ We are supporting and will continue to support the provision of local bus services, especially north-south connectivity.

Promoting Our Local Economy



Our High Street has suffered as a result of the pandemic and the national trend away from the traditional shopping experience. We recognised this as something we needed to take on board with our culture-led regeneration of the High Street through innovative uses of the Victoria Centre and the continuing work to bring forward the Better Queensway scheme.

Leisure and culture will be a major feature of the regeneration and will inject new life into the area. We are already fostering a variety of uses, including housing, a better environment, and ensuring that from the High Street to the seafront there is something to be interested in and take part in.

We have greatly enhanced our tourism offer with the new Pier trains and new and exciting events like the Halloween Parade, Southend Arts Festival and LuminoCity.

Our Policies

- ✓ Through our new Local Plan, we are working to ensure Southend's planning policies reflect the changes that have taken place and enhance the offer we provide. Our ownership of the Victoria Centre will see us remodel the space to its best advantage with a range of uses which will draw people into the city centre.
- ✓ We will encourage more residential and leisure use which will in turn lead to a more pleasant atmosphere through covered ways, green spaces and community use and add to the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre.
- ✓ We will encourage a positive approach to the linkage between the town centre and the seafront and avoid clashes of interest which put our seafront and High Street at risk
- ✓ We will work to protect our historic frontages and ensure new developments in our High Street are within context.
- ✓ We will support our local shopping areas by improving their settings and attraction.
- ✓ We will continue to monitor and oversee all major Council projects to ensure they are on time and on budget. This is vital to the economic life of the City and will continue to be at the forefront of how we progress our recovery.

- ✓ We will ensure efficient and effective procurement of services that add value to projects. We will seek the same commitment from our suppliers and contractors. We will progress any proposals which allow us to require local employment in major schemes.
- ✓ We will continue to work with all agencies and local heritage groups to ensure the City's rich heritage is maintained, enhanced and documented.
- ✓ We will continue our improvements to the Pier with enhancements at the Pier Head and continue to support schemes to bring back the Kursaal into beneficial use for the City. We will ensure our seafront is safe and user-friendly for residents and visitors and that we continue to bring the fun and excitement which is part of being a seaside City.
- ✓ We will support leisure uses which are vital to the future economy of the City and the City Centre in particular and we will look to provide as wide a range of tourism and leisure activities and facilities as possible.
- ✓ We will continue our programme of bringing illuminations back to the seafront.
- ✓ We will encourage inward investment into the City to enhance our job market, provide apprenticeships and prospects for our workforce which in turn will foster the wealth of the City for all.
- ✓ We will work with businesses and residents to create a destination that visitors and residents enjoy and will want to return to. With the extension of the summer season we will seek to encourage longer-term employment in the leisure and tourism industries and encourage more industries to establish themselves in Southend in order to raise income levels in the City and wealth for the City.
- ✓ Tourism is our lifeblood and we will do everything we can to support our tourist areas in their recovery and promote opportunities for staycationing and investment into the local economy.
- ✓ The City is not just Southend and we will ensure that the benefits of improvements in our wider area are carried forward to areas such as Leigh Port and East Beach.

Supporting and Investing in Our Local Communities



We have taken strong measures in our budgeting processes to ensure that we have the funds to invest in our City. We have been investing in the areas our residents tell us are important: tree-planting, public safety, repairing roads and pavements and much more. We will always take a proactive approach towards supporting and investing in our communities.

Our Policies

- ✓ We will continue to press for truly affordable, accessible housing, including council housing: holding developers to account, ensuring that all major developments provide more affordable housing.
- ✓ Through our licensing scheme for certain rental market areas we will drive improvements in housing stock and ensure that all tenants have a home that fits their needs and gives them comfort in their daily lives.
- ✓ We will continue to increase our housing stock by utilising available land and working with others to provide the housing we need and, where necessary, using our powers to buy appropriate land for council housing and empty and derelict properties for refurbishment.
- ✓ Through our Local Plan policies, we will promote better quality housing, built for our residents' needs, and seek to redress the balance between flatted and family accommodation through a range of accommodation types which enhance their areas and provide accommodation across the spectrum.
- ✓ We made great strides in our care for the homeless during the pandemic and will continue to carry that forward with supportive projects to enhance their future opportunities and settled living.
- ✓ We will continue our programme of improvements to our housing stock, taking account of needs and circumstances in relation to assistance in such matters as fuel poverty and special improvements.
- ✓ We will continue to lobby the Government for the means to provide schools, health facilities, roads, and parking. Large developments will be scrutinised for their contribution to necessary infrastructure and their green credentials, including electric charging points.

- ✓ We will continue to resist any plans to downgrade Southend hospital and our ambulance service.
- ✓ We will continue to enhance and work towards promoting better care for people with mental health issues in a targeted way so that the right help gets to the right person.
- ✓ We will continue to work with and nurture and protect our young people who need a public health service and social network that works for them. We will work with other agencies to achieve this. Similarly, we will care for our elderly and people with disabilities, ensuring care services meet their individual needs, such as the new facilities provided by the Council at Brook Meadows House.
- ✓ We will encourage multi-range doctors' practices to ensure that they can deal with a wide range of issues without the need for hospital visits.
- ✓ We will continue to put pressure on the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for additional police resources for the City. Our Community Safety Unit is now a central part of our community security role but the unit, the police and other agencies need satellite accommodation in order to successfully keep guard over areas from Leigh to Shoebury.
- ✓ We will continue to push for the use of Leigh Police Station as a community hub and will support the same type of facility in the east of the City.
- ✓ We will continue with our programme of CCTV coverage where it helps to protect residents and businesses.
- ✓ We have committed heavily to investing in repairs to our pavements, roads, and green verges. after years of under-investment

**We know there is more to do to
make Southend the wonderful
city we know it can be**

**Vote Lib Dem on
5th May**

and be part of the journey

**Southend Liberal Democrats
delivering a city to be proud of**



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