

CALDERDALE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Stronger Economy. Fairer Society.
Opportunity for Everyone.



A Manifesto for Calderdale: 2015

Introduction:

Local Liberal Democrats have been at the heart of Calderdale Council, and local Town and Parish councils for over 40 years. We have a strong track record of knowing our area, understanding its needs, and helping local people. We are a democratic party, and this manifesto is packed full of ideas from our members, the residents of Calderdale. We now want to build on our success locally and nationally for the benefit of local people and communities

Janet Battye

Clr Janet Battye
Leader, Liberal Democrat group

Clr James Baker
Deputy Leader

A record of achievement for local people:

Whilst as Liberal Democrats we have a strong record of serving people in Calderdale, we are particularly proud of our record of achievement since May 2011 when, locally, we ran Calderdale Council (with Labour until they ended the arrangement in May 2013), nationally, we went into the Coalition government.

Our achievements locally include:

- Council spending has been reduced but we have protected local services: no Sure Start Centre, library or swimming pool has been closed
- Neighbourhood Policing has been protected
- Local people have been given a greater say through ward forums, public question time, and petition scheme being introduced to trigger Council debates on issues of importance to local people
- A Green Agenda developed with the highest waste recycling in West Yorkshire and help for local people with fuel bills
- More support has been given for local businesses: £3m invested over 5 years, record number of apprenticeships and money to help boost business exports
- Childhood inequality is being tackled to ensure that every child has an opportunity for success in life through the Pupil Premium, free school meals, and more free childcare
- Community budgets of £5,000 for each ward forum
- A £1.4m affordable warmth insulation scheme

Our achievements nationally include:

- £25m extra funding has gone into Calderdale's schools through the Pupil Premium to help give opportunity to disadvantaged children. Despite coming into government and inheriting the worst recession in living memory we have helped children from disadvantaged backgrounds, ensuring they have an opportunity to succeed in life.
- We have created over 2 million apprenticeships including 8,840 new apprenticeships here in Calderdale.
- 7,800 children in Calderdale now get free school meals.
- Unemployment in Calderdale is lower than when Labour left office in 2010.
- 35,000 people have had an increase in their pensions with our policy of the triple lock ensuring pensions now always rise with inflation, or at least 2%.
- 77,500 Calderdale residents have had a tax break of £800. And 7,000 people on a low income have been taken completely out of paying income tax.
- We have shared parental leave, which was a policy suggested by one of our members in Calderdale!
- 6,000 families in Calderdale have benefited from tax-free childcare
- 170 local home owners have benefited from our help to buy scheme.
- The Calder Valley train getting the green light for electrification.

These are not just numbers though, these policies are having a real impact on people's lives:

"As a single mother free school meals saves me about £40 a month. That makes a massive difference to my budget" - Karen Gill, Warley Town Resident

"The basic state pension is guaranteed to increase year on year thanks to the Liberal Democrat's triple lock policy. My pension is now worth £950 a year more than under the last Labour government" Mavis Ring - Calderdale Liberal Democrat member.

Health and social care:

- **Keep Accident and Emergency service at Calderdale Royal Hospital:** Whilst we understand that “no change is not an option” for health and social care services, we want to make sure that local people’s views and concerns are sought and listened to. The possibility that A and E services might be moved from Halifax to Huddersfield has raised real fears of local people and we want to make sure that local people can continue to get easy access to medical treatment when they need it in an emergency.
- **Develop Health and community Centres in each area of Calderdale to provide a wide range of services to help local people:** As Liberal Democrats we strongly support both local services and the integration of services. Then need to change health care services gives us a good opportunity to build on the developments that we have made in recent years of “community hubs” such as Hebden Bridge Town Hall. We’d like to see these across Calderdale and look forward to the Health centre in Todmorden offering a wide range of health and social care services.
- **Ensure that mental health gets a fair share of health spending:** this is a priority for Liberal Democrats nationally and locally. We are investing more funding in mental health services and want to make sure that services in Calderdale are easily accessible for local people. While “talking therapies” are important, so are support and care services for people living with enduring mental illness.
- **Explore the possibility of the debt on Halifax Royal Infirmary being bought out to get rid of the debt that Labour saddled local people with:** It is said that the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) debt on HRI has been “sold on” more times than any other and it is clear that this is a real burden for the Hospital Trust. Councils in other parts of the country have worked with their local hospital to take this on at the preferential interest rates available to Councils and we will be urging Calderdale Council to explore this.
- **Prioritise the safety of children and young people:** Calderdale Council’s Children’s Social Care services have been under notice to improve since the time of the previous Conservative Cabinet in 2009. When we ran the Council, we made sure that funding was made available and support given to bring these services up to standard. We are also monitoring the services to ensure that children and young people are protected from harm.



Local environment:

•**Campaign for better integrated transport systems – “door to door” including local buses and trains, as well as cycling, walking and fuel-efficient cars:** We’ll continue to press for significant improvement to the rail services (electrification of the Calder Valley line, modern railway carriages, the station at Elland) and we’ve protected and improved local buses. We’re supporting more cycling and walking, and reducing carbon emissions (and cleaner air) by electric cars. But we want to do more than that and make certain that transport is properly integrated so the system works well for local people.

•**Provide affordable warmth schemes for hard-to-heat houses:** Learning from the pilot projects (in Todmorden and Halifax), we want a scheme for all houses across Calderdale, maximising the benefits of insulating homes so that use of energy is minimised. This will stop preventable deaths from cold homes, reduce CO2 emissions and reduce fuel poverty.

•**Promote and invest in the Community Energy scheme to make cheap, renewable energy available across Calderdale the Green Investment Bank and similar sources of funding:** This scheme is just starting and we want to make sure that it develops and succeeds and we’ll look for ethical and affordable ways to make sure that it works.

•**Continue to improve waste collection and recycling to include garden waste and plastics:** Calderdale is now top of the league of Councils in West Yorkshire for recycling with a rate of consistently over 60%. The new waste contract should give us opportunities of extending this and doing even better.

•**Ensure that Calderdale Council sets an example in its use of energy – for example in the way it runs its buildings and street lighting:** In the work that Calderdale Council has been doing over the last few years to make sure that it retains the buildings that it needs to run its services and that they are fit-for-purpose, we are advocating that, throughout its services, the Council should set an example in its use of energy.

•**Tackle air pollution:** 10 times more people die in Calderdale from the effects of air pollution than they do from traffic accidents. We would work to ensure that the Council takes action to tackle air pollution and consult with residents on the creation of low emissions zones that would affect the most polluting buses and diesel vehicles.



A fair, open and efficient Council

- **Give people power to shape their communities:** Neighbourhood Plans give power to local people to shape their communities, for example, in deciding where new housing is built. To date, three areas have been approved by the Council for Neighbourhood Plans and we want to extend this opportunity to all communities across Calderdale. We would also encourage the establishment of new Town and Parish Councils
- **Involve residents in decisions about how the Council is run:** We will build on and develop “ward forums”, community petitions and consultation to make sure that the Council keeps in touch with and involves local people. Liberal Democrats in Calderdale have led the way in enabling local people to have their say, from opening up Planning Committees to hear the views of local people to devising a petition scheme and webcasting of meetings. We will continue to extend the rights of local people to participate in the work of the Council.
- **Make it easier for local people to work in partnership with the Council:** We believe that Council services should be delivered alongside community groups, local charities, and social enterprise. We want to ensure that this becomes part of the way that the Council provides its services and will seek to develop this approach, such as Pellon Network Centre on Rye Lane in Halifax, volunteering with our environment groups, or in a local library in Greetland and Stainland, Mytholmoyd or Elland.
- **Make the Council more efficient:** We believe that Calderdale Council is still top heavy in its management structure and we think that there are further savings to be made by sharing “back office” functions with other local organisations and services.
- **Return to the committee system of local government:** Currently Calderdale Council is run under a Cabinet system which means that once the Leader is elected by the Council, he or she appoints who they want to their Cabinet which has most of the power within the Council. Returning to a committee system would mean that all 51 Councillors get a say in decisions taken by the Council. We believe that this would be more democratic and cheaper because fewer councillors would get additional allowances.



Local economy

- **Continue to support local businesses through local initiatives:** When we took over running the Council in 2010, we instigated a range of active support for local businesses, including Business breakfast, start-up grants, promoting business support. We know that we have thriving businesses, from advanced manufacturing through to micro-IT businesses;
- **Investing in local markets across Calderdale:** The last few years has seen development of markets and the promotion of “market towns”, from the involvement of Totally Locally in Brighouse, the revamped market in Sowerby Bridge, the desire of traders in Todmorden to takeover the management of their market, and plans to move the market in Hebden Bridge. Borough Market in Halifax is a beautiful building. All need investment and Liberal Democrats will actively promote that in coming years.
- **Tackle youth unemployment by providing more apprenticeships, training and work experience schemes:** While the level of youth unemployment has reduced in Calderdale, as Liberal Democrats we retain the vision that every young person should have a purpose in life. We will invest more funding in apprenticeships, training and work experience, working closely with the Careers service, Job Centre and Calderdale College.
- **Develop a scheme for cheap bus fares to enable young people to travel to work or training:** While older people have the benefit of cheap or free travel, we want to develop a similar scheme to support our young unemployment programme to make sure that young people have travel to work or training.
- **Improve academic and vocational skills training in Calderdale to enable young people to make a good start in their working lives:** We still have a skills gap in Calderdale and this is holding back both the people looking for work and businesses developing their products. We would ensure that knowledge is shared about the needs of workers and businesses and training developed. This has been a key objective of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- **Help older, unemployed people to help them get back into work:** In recent years, there has been a growing number of people over the age of 25 who have been out of work for longer. Just as the Council has been supporting young people and growing businesses, we want to see these people targeted for support and investment in their skills.
- **Improve our streets:** Many streets across Calderdale are in need of repair. We would invest to resurface our streets, protect gritting services and put efforts into ensuring our streets are free of litter and dog fouling.



Manifesto 2015

Stronger Economy. Fairer Society.
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Opportunity for every child

Guarantee education funding from nursery to 19 and qualified teachers in every class

Prosperity for all
Balance the budget fairly and invest to build a high skill, low carbon economy

Fair taxes

Cut your taxes by an additional £400 by raising the tax-free allowance to £12,500

Our environment protected
Protect nature and fight climate change with five Green Laws

Quality health care for all

Invest £8bn to improve our NHS and guarantee equal care for mental health



Get in touch

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