

# FOCUS

on Essex County Council

[www.essex.libdems.org](http://www.essex.libdems.org)



## Time for a change ..... .....the Tories must GO!

The last 4 years have been wasted by this Conservative Council. It's time for them to go. Labour has lost the trust of the people. It is only the Liberal Democrats who can clear up the mess with local and national policies that will benefit all Essex residents.

### 10 Reasons to vote Liberal Democrat ~~X~~

#### ✓ Axe the Council Tax

The Conservatives have increased Council Tax by 38% over the last 4 years and 93% over the last 8 years!

Liberal Democrats would replace Council Tax with a **fairer local income tax** based on the ability to pay.



**93%**  
*The increase in  
Council Tax  
after 8 years  
of the  
Conservatives*

#### ✓ More cash for early learning

Liberal Democrats want more investment in children's early years, smaller class sizes, and high quality training for every teacher. **We want more teaching and less testing.**



#### ✓ Scrap Tory Leader's secretive £1.2m personal budget

Liberal Democrats have argued for more honesty and openness about the way taxpayers' money is spent including the Leader's personal budget. **We will end the Conservative waste and inefficiency.**

## ✓ A fair deal for the elderly

The Conservatives have systematically sold off residential homes for the elderly, so restricting people's choice of home. National Liberal Democrat policy is for **free personal care for the elderly**.



## ✓ More Police on the Streets



Crime and anti-social behaviour have increased under this Conservative Council. Essex people feel just as vulnerable now as they did 4 years ago. The Council has the power to provide bored young people with places to go and things to do. Instead the Conservatives have chosen to cut the Youth Service budget and have closed Youth Centres across the County.

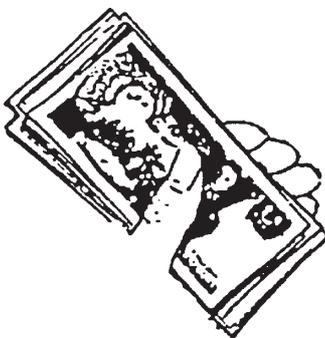
The Liberal Democrats want people to feel safer in their homes so our national policy is to **put 10,000 more police on the beat**, using the money Labour want to waste on ID cards.

## ✓ A greener and cleaner Essex

To preserve our environment we must cut pollution, cut congestion and cut waste. Liberal Democrats have led the fight against incineration and for recycling. The Tories have blocked our proposals to increase the rates of recycling. Labour abstained! **We do not want large waste facilities to dispose of unrecycled waste.**



## ✓ Careful finance



The scrapping of Highways Agency Agreements with some District and Borough Councils by Conservative County Councillors will produce inefficiencies and £2m extra expenditure and problems for delivery of services locally. It has also led to wasteful office moves and demands for more office space.

Liberal Democrat Councillors were the first to highlight inadequate budget-making procedures of one Council Department which produces excessive overspends.

**Liberal Democrat Councillors have criticised the Conservatives for their accounting practices and have proposed budgets which would have resulted in better services and a lower council tax.**

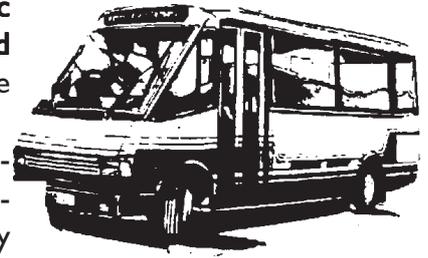
# A record of action - a promise of more

## ✓ Getting traffic moving and making public transport work

The Conservatives 'declared war on congestion' but have clearly lost it. Liberal Democrats want to see a **comprehensive review of public transport provision, with Quality Bus Contracts and Park and Ride schemes** on the edge of towns with links to rail services to ease congestion.

The standard of many roads and pavements has worsened under the Conservatives and the service is officially graded as only one star. Public Transport has been neglected. Bus routes have been slashed across the county in both urban and rural areas.

There must be more bids for Government funding and a co-ordinated approach to road maintenance and improvement schemes to minimise disruption for the public. **We will ensure efficient use of planning gain monies** and work closely with Regional government for real strategic transportation planning.



## ✓ Providing sustainable and affordable housing



The controlling Conservatives on the Regional Assembly failed to make the acceptance of the Governments housing demands conditional on the Government funding the infrastructure needed like transport, hospitals and schools. **Liberal Democrats would ensure that sustainability was a fundamental condition.**

The Conservatives ran down the stock of affordable housing for rent at a time when the price of housing for rent and sale became increasingly unaffordable. **Liberal Democrats will use the planning system to deliver more affordable homes for rent.**

## ✓ Real community involvement

Conservatives have centralised power and cut out consultation with local people. **Liberal Democrats want the Council to be more honest and open about the way it spends taxpayers' money.**

We opposed and changed the undemocratic decision to appoint school governors by a Conservative County Councillor instead of by local panels.

When the Schools Meals Service contract collapsed the Tory County Council were slow to offer help. **We want headteachers and governors to contribute to policy and political decision-making when it affects schools.** OFSTED have criticised Essex Conservatives for not doing so.

### The winning Team



*Geoff Williams gained a Conservative County Council seat in the Basildon by-election last September.*

# Liberal Democrats work all the year round not just at election time

# FREEDOM FAIRNESS TRUST



## TEN NATIONAL REASONS TO VOTE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT

- ✓ **Put patients first.** Free doctors and nurses from Whitehall meddling.
- ✓ **10,000 more police on the streets.** Cutting crime, the causes of crime and the fear of crime.
- ✓ **No tuition fees, no top-up fees.** University affordable for every student.
- ✓ **More investment in children's early years.** Spend the £1 billion Child Trust Fund when it matters most.
- ✓ **Free personal care when you need it.** No one forced to sell their home to pay for care.
- ✓ **£25 more on the pension every week at 75.** A million pensioners off means-testing.
- ✓ **Free off-peak local transport** for all pensioners and disabled people.



*Liberal Democrats celebrate after taking control of Newcastle City Council from Labour at the 2004 council elections.*

- ✓ **Axe the Council Tax.** Local Income Tax is fair, affordable and cheap to collect.
- ✓ **We should not have gone to war in Iraq.** It's time to restore trust in government.
- ✓ **Take the environment seriously.** Cut pollution, cut congestion and boost renewable energy.

**It is time for a change...**  
**.....the Tories must Go!**