

FOR A LONDON UNITED



London Mayor • London Assembly • London MEPs
The Liberal Democrat Manifesto for a Greater London

A NEW MAYOR FOR A GREATER LONDON

London is one of the great capitals of the world with our history, arts, music, sport and wonderful diversity of culture and language. Above all, Londoners make our city one of the most interesting and exciting places on earth. And as a centre for business – from family shops to international banks – we are an economic powerhouse.

But we can do better

London should be a place where none of us have our lives damaged by crime or the fear of crime.

London should be a place where our journeys around the capital cease to be stressful and unpredictable and become easier and more reliable.

London should be a clean and liveable place

And if Greater London is to be a place where everyone can fulfil their potential, we must celebrate and support all the different towns and villages of Greater London as places with their own character but united together to maximise prosperity and success.

My kind of London is a place where we have jobs for the jobless, affordable decent homes for the homeless and badly housed, and where everybody – whatever their ability, background, character or circumstances – feel they can fully enjoy their capital.

Despite our capital being run by Mr Livingstone, Mr Norris and their friends for the last 20 years London is currently not the city we want or deserve. Mr Norris was the Minister for Transport in London but there were no great improvements and no new dawn.

Four years ago, Mr Livingstone was elected Mayor of London by many people who were protesting against Labour and against the failures of the Blair Govern-



ment. This time a vote for Mr Livingstone is a vote for Labour and a vote for Blair's Mayor.

Since the last London Elections, it is Labour which has taken Britain into a premature war with Iraq, pushed through plans for higher student fees even though they had promised they would not, hiked up the unfair Council Tax and agreed to the closure of post offices all over Greater London.

When earlier this year Mr Livingstone decided to rejoin Labour he gave up being the type of Mayor the people of London most wanted – a Mayor independent of the Labour Government; a Mayor who can fearlessly champion Londoners' needs; and a Mayor with clear principles who sticks by them.

It is now vital that London makes the change. London desperately needs a Mayor who is in nobody's pocket. Not in the pocket of big business – unlike Mr Norris with his chairmanship of Jarvis and list of directorships. Not in the pocket of the Labour party and the trade unions like Mr Livingstone.

With a leadership of energy, enthusiasm and openness, Greater London can be safer and more

efficient, cleaner and healthier, prosperous and affordable.

My vision is nothing less than a Greater London, the most exciting place in Europe, where we are united in making this great capital a place we are all proud to belong to not some of the time but all of the time. We must make this great capital city into our community, our town and our kind of place again. That is what I pledge to do, and that is what this manifesto is all about.

It is time for our London to have a new start.

It is time for an easier, more liveable London.

It is time for a new mayor for a Greater London.

IT IS TIME FOR A LONDON UNITED.

SIMON SAYS...

**“SIMON
PUTTING LONDONERS FIRST
HUGHES.”**



Charles Kennedy

www.simon4mayor.org.uk

A SAFER GREATER LONDON

London has the highest rate of recorded crime in England. Not surprisingly Londoners are more concerned about crime than anything else. Although stable, overall levels of crime remain high, and violent crime has risen over the last four years. Crucially, Londoners' fear of crime is growing, which is an alarming trend.

Liberal Democrats believe in the need to reform the Metropolitan Police Service, and placing local policing and local priorities at the top of their agenda. Through guaranteeing a minimum number of officers for each neighbourhood, we can create a safer London where people feel secure in their own communities. It is crucial that we continue to devote sufficient resources to tackling serious crime and the threat of terrorism.

SAFETY

A Permanent Community Police Service

Liberal Democrats will insist that every neighbourhood (communities of 5-10,000) in London is provided with its own designated 'community police force' by 2006. This will grow over the four-year term to comprise four police officers and four community support officers, who will not be removed from their local duties except in extraordinary circumstances.

A sergeant on a 4-year contract will head each 'community police force' so they can get to know and establish links with the local community. It is a priority for Liberal Democrats that Londoners feel safe and confident in and around their own homes. These locally 'owned' officers will become familiar faces within their work neighbourhoods. They would agree their work targets and shift patterns with ward councillors to ensure that their efforts are focused around community priorities. Each unit will be contactable by their local community 7 days a week.

The new arrangements will play a key role in establishing trust and confidence in street level policing, and help to reduce public disorder and the fear of crime.

Initially all police officers will come from redeployment; Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) will come from redeployment with additional PCSOs funded through efficiency savings.

Police Recruitment

Liberal Democrats continue to support the increase in the

Metropolitan Police (Met) numbers. Our overall target is 35,000 uniformed officers. It is important that the police are representative of London's diverse community; we will work closely with the Met to promote the recruitment of under-represented groups.

In particular we will work with the Met to increase the numbers of special constables in London. Special constables play an important part in policing, bringing with them important community links and specialist knowledge.

Safer Trains, Safer Stations

We will enter into immediate negotiations with the Rail Authorities, train operating companies and local boroughs to highlight Londoners' concerns over safety, and campaign for:

1. CCTV to be installed in and around all London stations.
2. All stations to have clearly visible and sensibly sited emergency phone points so passengers can summon help and report vandalism.
3. All stations to be kept in a good state of repair, with graffiti and litter removed regularly.

We will immediately enter into discussions with the Met and BTP to identify ways in which to increase a visible police presence on trains including best use of PCSOs and special constables, especially after dark.

We aim to provide a police presence at all major Tube, train and bus stations during rush hours and other appropriate times.

Better Customer Service

We will examine – on a case-by-case basis – the arguments for re-opening police reception at stations that are currently closed to the public, as well as re-locating inappropriate and inaccessible stations to more publicly convenient positions, such as close to train stations or shopping centres.

Our revolutionary One Number for London would provide a non-emergency information and advice service for Londoners, with the ability to connect Londoners directly to their local police station if necessary.



Local Accountability

We aim to publish borough-by-borough crime statistics every 3 months.

We plan to organise the production of annual 'community safety reports', for all areas of London, to include local crime prevention information, reporting and conviction figures; crime rates in each ward (broken down into each major class of crime), the work of the probation service (including the frequency, duration and nature of community service in each area) and local courts; and an overview of significant crime prevention work that is taking place.

We plan to complement each community safety report with an annual public meeting, at which those responsible for crime prevention and reduction would be held to account by the local community. The local Borough Police Commander, the Leader of the local Borough Council, the local councillor responsible for community safety, senior Probation and Courts officers, the relevant London Assembly Member and the local constituency MP, will all be expected to attend and held accountable at these borough meetings.

Crime Prevention

We will lead campaigns for further crime reduction and prevention, building on successful and best value initiatives that can be extended; including better street lighting and security locks for pensioners.

We will work with the Youth Justice Board, Borough Councils,

Police and the voluntary sector to look at new ways of tackling youth crime, such as additional constructive leisure opportunities and improved recreational facilities for young people in each borough of London.

Making Offenders Serve the Community

If community service is to be of true and worthwhile benefit, convicted offenders must undertake tasks that address the needs and priorities of the community that has been affected by their crimes. Those responsible for damaging our local communities should pay them back. We will work with the London boroughs, the Courts, the Youth Service and the Probation Service to develop local input in the setting of community service work, so that victims and commu-

nities can influence the way that offenders pay back their debt to society.

Discrimination and Hate Crimes

All hate crimes whether based on race, religion or sexual orientation are unacceptable. The Liberal Democrats will continue to promote greater tolerance and understanding, and will work closely with the police to ensure that tackling hate crimes remains a priority and that those responsible for such crimes are brought to justice.

London's Fire and Rescue Service

We will work with fire fighters to provide a twenty-first century service for Londoners, and to ensure the service is adequately prepared for a major terrorist incident.

TACKLING TERRORISM

There is no greater responsibility than ensuring the safety of all those who live, work and visit Greater London. We will:

- Start immediate talks with the Government for an increase in the civil defence budget for London.
- Work with central Government to provide better information to the public on what to do in the event of a major terrorist attack, with the view to including this information with Londoners' annual Council Tax bills.
- Facilitate closer working of our police and security services at an EU level and with other capital cities, sharing security information where appropriate, and disseminating best

practice in combating terrorism.

- Suspend talks on installing mobile phone access on the deep line Tube network, due to the recent history of using mobile phones to detonate terrorist bombs.
- Consult on the establishment of a dedicated London Emergency Volunteer Reserve Force to assist the emergency services in case of an attack.
- Enter into immediate discussions to arrange the merger of the British Transport Police (BTP) in London with the Metropolitan Police Service. In order to provide more effective co-ordination of security on London's transport infrastructure.

TRANSPORT FOR A GREATER LONDON



Any recent transport gains have come despite the Mayor's incompetence and the Labour government's obstruction. Transport for London's financial planning is chaotic; consistently failing to spend their budget yet wanting more for the following year. At the point where this year's budget was being planned, Transport for London had failed to spend a staggering £345 million. The Mayor said congestion charging would raise £120 million a year – the reality has been £68 million. Customer service was so bad the Mayor had to hand another £31 million to Capita. Bus subsidies are rocketing.

Labour's insistence on their ruinous plan to hand Tube maintenance to private companies cost £500 million in legal costs alone. Labour Ministers dither on vital projects like Crossrail, the East London line extensions and Thameslink 2000.

Liberal Democrats aim to lift transport standards right across Greater London, not just in the centre, so our city can function as efficiently as many of our European neighbours'. Life needs to be better for cyclists and pedestrians. Those without a Tube network need better rail services, integrated with bus and tram. We need to add value to Labour's foolish PPP for the Tube so we get earlier upgrades of track and signalling. A Liberal Democrat Mayor will insist on competent financial management so that all the policies set out below become a reality over the next four years.

TUBES

Late Night Tube

We will extend the running times of the Tube network until 2 am on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, allowing Londoners to enjoy a longer night out without worrying how to get home safely. This will give a much-needed boost to London's entertainment and hospitality industry.

Tube Delivery Pledge

We will monitor and publish 5 key performance indicators on the Tube – overcrowding, safety, trains per hour (peak and off-peak), waiting times and cleanliness – and make them available to Tube users in stations and online.

Travel Information

We plan to provide a clear and consistent display of travel information across the Tube network. Tube drivers and other London Underground staff should inform

passengers about problems on all ongoing public transport connections.

Reduce Overcrowding

We will look at proposals to help overcrowding, through changes to the fare structure to encourage travel outside peak times.

Increased Reliability

We will immediately start discussions with all interested parties to work out the best ways of speeding up track and signalling renewal and repair by extended maintenance, at times which cause least disruption.

TRAINS

London Commuter Service

London's commuters need real political leadership from the new Mayor to integrate commuter rail services with existing Tube, tram, DLR and bus services. Although the Tube, tram, DLR and bus networks are managed by Transport for London, London's railways are overseen by the Strategic Rail Authority, which too often gives preference to inter-city services. We will undertake a wide-ranging consultation on the creation of a London Commuter Service, to give Londoners an effective voice in railway planning throughout Greater London. So decisions that affect London are made by Londoners.

We will work with the Train Operating Companies and Network Rail to ensure that all stations have adequate facilities – all stations should be equipped with an inquiry point phone, along with debit and credit-card ticket machines.

WALKING

People frequently use the Tube for short journeys because they're not sure how to get to their

destination on foot, or how long the walk will take. For many of these journeys, it would be quicker, cheaper and healthier to travel on foot. In other cases people are put off by London's pedestrian-unfriendly roads.

We will ensure a pedestrian friendly Oxford Street by 2008, and consult on delivering improved transport hubs for buses, and an extra spur on the proposed new North-South tramline.

We will work with Transport for London towards ensuring better signage for pedestrians along key walking routes, showing typical walking times e.g. 'Kew Gardens 10 minutes', 'Liverpool Street Station 8 minutes'. This will encourage people – and especially tourists – to save time & money by travelling on foot, instead of adding to overcrowding on the Tube and buses.

We will ask Transport for London to investigate the feasibility of maps and signs at Tube stations to clearly indicate tube stations within a short walk of each other, and additional signs to help people work out the direction of their onward journey when they arrive at Tube stations.

BUSES

21st Century Buses

We will examine the potential for cost savings and performance improvements that could result from using Global Positioning Satellite technology to track and manage bus movements. This has been already shown to work successfully in Brighton. We will work towards the replacement of the outdated and ineffective 'Countdown' technology to provide accurate real time information to passengers at bus stops.

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Passenger Information

We will ask Transport for London to investigate announcement systems on buses, so each stop is clearly identified to passengers (as it is on the Tube) and onward connections to rail, Tube or tram are advertised.

School Buses

We will consider pilot schemes in four London Boroughs (two in outer London, two in inner London) to get children to school on American-style Yellow School Buses. School buses are a safe and efficient means of transport, helping to cut road congestion and reduce air pollution.

ROADS

Black Cabs

Black taxi cabs are an integral part of London Transport. Black cab drivers will be invited to elect a representative to be a full voting member on Transport for London.

Parking Charter

We will develop a parking

charter to promote a fairer and more consistent approach to parking enforcement across Greater London. We aim to include a common parking scheme for disabled people across Greater London.

Instant Enforcement Pledge

Instant removal of all vehicles parked in bus lanes.

Bus Lanes

We will allow motorbikes, scooters, cyclists and black cabs to use all bus lanes, at all times.

Transport Links

We will look at the feasibility of establishing a system of taxi shares to take people – particularly the elderly – back from out of town shopping centres and supermarkets. We will also work with key stakeholders towards the establishment of secure late-night waiting areas at tube and train stations, and work with transport companies to promote co-ordinated late-night taxi-share schemes. This is aimed at making people, particularly women, less vulnerable.



CYCLING

'Take a Bike' Scheme

We will ask Transport for London to examine the introduction of a scheme to make thousands of bicycles available at a nominal hire charge at up to 50 locations across London. People will register their credit card details and pick up a bike in one place, and drop it off within a given time period at any 'Take A Bike' location.

Protected Cycle Routes

We will put forward proposals for key cycle routes through central London – physically protected from other road users – marked with clear signposting and colour coding, and advertised by freely available Tube style maps.

Security

We will work with key stakeholders to increase the number of secure, covered cycle racks in strategic central London locations – especially at rail termini and key transport interchanges. We will use

consistent and proven designs that make parking and locking easier and more secure.

THE RIVER

The Thames is a greatly underused and overlooked asset to London, and, with appropriate planning and guidance from the GLA, much better commercial use could be made of the river. In particular we will explore expanding the use of the river for carrying freight and waste/rubbish.

With the huge planned developments of the Thames Gateway region in the next few years, thousands of new buildings and many new roads will be constructed around the river.

The Liberal Democrats believe that every effort should be made to use the river as a means for servicing the construction of these new developments, taking the pressure off our overstretched roads, and minimising their environmental impact.

We will also work with the London Port Authority to find a

CONGESTION CHARGING

Liberal Democrats support the principle of Congestion Charging in central London, and are committed to making it work better for all Londoners. We will:

- Allow an extra day to pay the congestion charge (extend the time limit from 10pm on the day to midnight on the following day).
- Change the end of the charging period from 6.30pm to 5pm.
- Allow advance block purchasing of tickets, without designating the dates in advance.
- For all businesses, allow companies to register so that they can phone up to check if one of their vehicles has been in the congestion charging zone that day. For small businesses, we will

reduce the minimum eligible size for 'fleet tickets' from 15 to 5 vehicles.

- Not extend the Congestion Charging Zone westwards into Kensington & Chelsea.
- Only consider expansion of the zone in boroughs already partly covered by the zone. Decision would ultimately be decided by a vote in a local ballot of registered electors in the possible extension areas.
- Examine new categories for exemption.
- Automatically give every vehicle 5 free entries into the congestion-charging zone each year.
- The congestion charging zone will be suspended between Christmas and New Year.



suitable location for a cruise ship terminal. We will encourage the development of commuter boat services, and we plan to integrate the ticketing of these with the rest of transport for London.

CROSSRAIL

The Crossrail One project is vital to the development of London's economy. It will create £20 billion in wealth with a tax gain of £7.6 billion for the Treasury. Liberal Democrats are fully committed to the project. The City and Canary Wharf need a direct rail connection to Heathrow and to Eurostar at Stratford International. The new regeneration areas of East London in the Thames Gateway must be linked up from Shenfield and from Ebbsfleet through the Royal Docks. We do, however, have serious reservations about the proposed spur using the District Line through Richmond.

The Government must give the go-ahead to build the core Paddington-Liverpool Street-Canary Wharf section now.

Crossrail depends on new central London tunnels and work needs to start. We propose an enhanced specification for the twin tunnels so that trains from the West and East of England can use them – e.g. Bristol direct to the City, Ipswich direct to Paddington. This is vital too for our Heathrow-Stansted shuttle.

AIRPORTS

Liberal Democrats remain totally opposed to any further development at Heathrow Airport and the proposed end to the runway alternation policy. The residents of West London who live under the flight paths have suffered enough. This is not a part of London that needs more runway capacity.

By 2007 Eurostar will reduce London-Paris journey times to 2 hours 15 minutes. We need a serious challenge to short haul air flights to the Continent, which crowd our skies. The next Mayor needs to campaign for sustainable aviation, promoting EU and

international co-operation to ensure airlines meet their full external costs. Liberal Democrats want Britain to play a full part in the Trans-European transport network (TEN-T), working to develop high-speed rail links between the Channel Tunnel and the rest of the UK, and across all of Europe.

The Liberal Democrats believe that if any additional runway capacity is genuinely needed, it should be built conveniently close to the Thames Gateway area at Stansted. We propose a Heathrow-Stansted high-speed rail shuttle via the City and Stratford International, using the Crossrail infrastructure.

“Liberal Democrats support the principle of Congestion Charging in central London, and are committed to making it work better for all Londoners”

HOUSING GREATER LONDON

The shortage of housing in London is a well-known crisis. Best estimates are that the capital requires 33,600 new homes every year to cope with the existing backlog of need and the capital's rapidly swelling population. Of this total, over 25,000 homes will need to be in the affordable bracket if individuals on lower incomes, many of whom work in key public services, are able to afford their own home.

The severe shortage of housing has caused London property prices to rocket – they have risen by 51% in the past three years alone. The average price of a house in London is now nearly £93,000 more than the UK average and over 9 times the average salary of a nurse or firefighter in the capital. It is a simple fact that house prices are increasing faster than public sector pay and, consequently, public employees are being priced out of the housing market.

Under the current Mayor's term of office, homelessness in London has risen by 29% - this amounts to approximately 14,000 households. The capital now has nearly 63,000 families who are forced to live in temporary accommodation. London also has over 150,000 homes which are overcrowded – far higher than anywhere else in the country. Meanwhile, the scandal is that there are an estimated 100,000 homes lying empty in London that could be brought back into use to help

alleviate this huge problem. The current Mayor has done little to meet this challenge.

The short supply of housing, and affordable homes in particular, has become a huge constraint on London's economic growth. This is fundamentally responsible for exacerbating the recruitment and retention difficulties being faced by both the public and private sectors. Despite this worrying situation the current Mayor has not made housing provision a priority. He has done too little and left it too late. Liberal Democrats will not allow this crisis to continue. London's economy and the prosperity and happiness of its residents are dependent on a steady supply of housing, which we will ensure becomes a reality.

The central issue behind London's housing crisis is the severe shortage in supply of housing stock, coupled with high demand fuelling rising prices. This is largely due to long delays in planning slowing down the supply of housing coming on stream. We

will pursue a series of policies aimed at increasing the supply of housing in London.

Fast Track home building

Liberal Democrats will work with retailers and transport companies to identify unused urban space above and around supermarkets and train stations for affordable housing. We will set an overall long-term objective in the London Plan to generate 10,000 extra units through these Fast Track schemes. We will also conduct an annual review of affordable housing provision, with a view to setting accelerating annual delivery targets.

50% Affordable Housing

We will ensure that, London-wide, 50% of all additional housing provision is affordable. However, we will not pursue the 'one-size fits all' approach of the current Mayor. We prefer individual site flexibility to ensure that housing schemes are relevant and achievable in their different localities.

The Scandal of Empty Homes

Action must be taken to bring the thousands of empty homes in London back into use as affordable housing. We will encourage boroughs to establish clear strategies for tackling empty properties with a specific officer to enforce this and maintain a local register of empty homes. We will also encourage boroughs to enter into voluntary agreements with empty property owners, to renovate their properties for affordable rent and the piloting of empty property management orders across London. This is where boroughs take control of properties if owners refuse assistance or have demonstrated reluctance in bringing their properties back into use.

Protecting Private Tenants

We want to support and protect those renting properties in London and guard against the activities of unscrupulous landlords. We will conduct negotiations with Borough colleagues, encouraging them to establish a register of approved private sector landlords and their properties. These lists could also record complaints and issues, securing quality of accommodation and treatment for tenants across London.

More Investment for Housing

We will vigorously press the Government for more investment in London housing, making it

easier to fill the gap between supply and demand for affordable homes.

More Responsibility for Housing

As part of our 'Better Government for London' agenda, we will lobby the Government to devolve strategic responsibility for housing to the Greater London Authority. This will allow for London-wide co-ordination of policy and will give the GLA a remit which is at least equal to that proposed for the other English regional assemblies. With our proposed abolition of the Government Office for London we will also lobby for its planning responsibilities to be devolved to the GLA.

Homelessness Information Service

We intend to set up, in conjunction with Borough Councils, the establishment of a London-wide Homelessness Information service. This will provide relevant information to those currently or soon-to-be affected by homelessness. We want this to be linked with empty homes strategies to ensure that homeless families receive priority placement.

We will immediately set up effective monitoring procedures to gauge accurately the extent of hidden homelessness throughout London.

Thames Gateway

The project to develop the Thames Gateway in East London offers an unprecedented opportunity to boost economic growth and bring about environmental improvement and urban renewal to an area in desperate need of regeneration. Liberal Democrats fully support the push to take advantage of the huge quantities of brown-field, previously industrial land and to convert its potential by building thousands of much-needed homes and creating employment opportunities for new and existing residents.

However, we have some serious reservations about the way in which the project is currently being managed. A multiplicity of

agencies and organisations has developed in the Gateway, with overlapping responsibilities and uncertain remits, creating layers of unnecessary and potentially conflicting bureaucracy. No proper consideration has been given to working relationships between the myriad organisations in existence, with a glaring and worrying lack of authoritative leadership and direction. It remains totally unclear how the Government's proposed Unitary Development Corporation for the Gateway will bring additional benefits. Liberal Democrats suspect that this will only add to the confusion and the duplication of efforts. We believe that the London Development Agency should retain strategic control for the Thames Gateway area so that planning and progress can continue unhindered – particularly on those projects related to London's Olympics bid.

Liberal Democrats remain unconvinced that there are enough channels for public and community representation and participation. There is an absence of transparency and little certainty about who to contact to get involved, express comments or raise queries. Local accountability is conspicuously missing.

Finally there are concerns about the adequacy of the funding package for the Gateway. The sum in February 2003, extends only until 2006. We will push the Government for a longer-term resource commitment to enable proper planning. This will also ensure that in future years, boroughs in the Thames Gateway are not saddled with any new financial burdens as a result of insufficient central investment.

If the Thames Gateway is to be a success, there needs to be co-ordinated and joined up thinking which can tackle all of these issues in a strategic way rather than the piecemeal and juxtaposed approach, which is currently being taken. Clear, accountable, leadership is crucial, as is the full engagement and participation of local communities.

THAMES GATEWAY

Liberal Democrats have a clear and comprehensive vision for the Thames Gateway. We want to see the development of green and sustainable communities, with adequate community infrastructure, affordable accommodation, sufficient public transport links and the provision of

training and job opportunities that are relevant to and required by local people. We want to see communities rather than just construction – and this involves proper planning with the involvement of transport, health, education and a whole variety of public services and utilities.



A CLEANER GREATER LONDON

The quality of our environment is an issue that impacts directly on all Londoners. It is worrying, therefore, that London fares badly compared to other European cities in terms of its environmental track record. The capital languishes far behind many other European cities. London recycles only 9% of its waste and our air pollution is worsening, 70% of Londoners now perceive the capital's air quality as a problem. The current Mayor has done little to demonstrate to us that the environment is one of his main concerns. London's streets remain dirty and its major roads are devoid of greenery.

It's time that making London a green city was taken seriously so that future generations can enjoy its benefits. Liberal Democrats will continue to be the champions of environmental issues, not shying away from such major challenges as global warming, energy efficiency and waste management, and clearly addressing these in our strategies. We will insist on the highest standard of green design in planning and development across the capital ensuring that London's beauty is enhanced, promoted and preserved.

WASTE, RECYCLING AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

Residential Recycling

We will encourage residential recycling by working closely with borough councils, supporting easily accessible recycling facilities for all Londoners, including regular kerbside collections for roadside properties.

Recycling for Business

We will consult with borough councils and other key stakeholders on the creation of a London-wide Waste Minimisation Network to help businesses identify waste reduction methods and advise on 'green procurement'.

We will work with European colleagues to agree a zero level of VAT on all energy conservation materials.

RECLAIMING THE STREETS

We will work closely with London's boroughs to campaign for cleaner and safer streets, highlighting the areas which fail to deliver. We will promote;

Safer Streets

Every road and street across London should be well lit and properly signposted to reduce crime and increase public confidence. We will work in partnership with boroughs and private companies to provide better street signs and renewed street lighting.

Greener Streets

Planting bushes and trees in the

central reservations of London's major trunk roads and dual carriageways will improve London's bio-diversity, and create a better environment across London's road network.

Cleaner Streets

We will actively work with borough councils to identify and promote the most effective ideas on street management and maintenance so that communities across London can benefit from cleaner streets and more welcoming local environments.

POLLUTION

Home Zones

We support 'Home Zones' for all residential side streets of London, restricting the speed limit to 20mph. This will reduce noise pollution and improve safety on the streets for Londoners of all ages.

Air Pollution

Liberal Democrats will ensure that Transport for London's ongoing replacement programme equips London with a fleet of environmentally friendly buses. We support Low Emission Zones, from which vehicles causing the most harmful air pollution would be barred at all times. We will maintain pressure on the Government to meet EU air quality requirements for all of London, including west London, and provide boroughs with the necessary funding to monitor pollution in their area.

Airports

We will take action to reduce noise pollution from low-flying aircraft, using EU legislation as support for appropriate operating restrictions around London's airports. We will also continue our vigorous campaign for an end to night flights over London and maintain our opposition to the Government's Heathrow expansion plans.

Polluter Pays

We will promote the 'Polluter Pays' principle, as enshrined in EU legislation, to ensure that wherever possible the producer of pollution, rather than taxpayers, pay the costs of environmental legislation. For example, Liberal Democrats want car manufacturers to pay the costs of disposal of old vehicles rather than last owners, or as is frequently the case local councils.

OPEN SPACES

- We will preserve and promote London's open spaces, and produce a London-wide guide to green spaces. Liberal Democrats will work with boroughs and communities to improve the amount and quality of public space for recreation and relaxation.

- Liberal Democrats will protect London's precious green-field sites and resist development in London's Green Belt. We will work towards a London-wide target of 75% of new development on brown-field sites and reflect this target in our development strategies.

- We will campaign to persuade the government to change VAT rules which currently exempt developers from paying VAT on green-field sites, while charging for renovation.

MOBILE PHONE MAST PLEDGE

We will immediately negotiate with network operators to provide a regularly updated map of all mobile phone masts in London on the GLA website. Londoners have the right to know where masts are located so they can make their own, informed decisions about housing and schooling.

GREENER HOUSING

We will expect environmental considerations to be part of all developments across Greater London, following best practice, such as the BedZed housing in Liberal Democrat run Sutton.



“We support Low Emission Zones, from which vehicles causing the most harmful air pollution would be barred at all times”

A HEALTHIER GREATER LONDON

There is so much that can be done. With London's health services under increasing pressure, many NHS staff feel undervalued and overstretched. With inadequate and unequal funding packages, a lack of care facilities and too few people leading an active lifestyle, the challenge is enormous.

Liberal Democrats are not afraid to tackle this challenge and will incorporate health considerations into all our policies. We will continue to press for a radical shift of resources, bringing them closer to patients and cutting the strings that tie local health services to Whitehall. Using Mayoral influence we will continue to press for

access to good NHS health care, including dentist and GP services, for all communities across London.

Many Londoners are not registered with a GP. They currently have nowhere to go except Accident and Emergency departments. To tackle this we will start discussions for a GP or nurse-led walk in centre at or near major hospitals in London.

In addition we will work together with key health agencies to monitor and tackle inequalities in service provision across the capital – making the case for a London Health Inequalities Fund to target investment where it is most needed. Liberal Democrats will also initiate an urgent

examination into the serious lack of residential and nursing home care in London and feed these results into our campaign for an additional share of resources.

Liberal Democrats see the NHS as a health service, not a sickness service. Health promotion needs to rise up the agenda to address the root causes of ill health and not just treat the symptoms. It is also essential that we have an active approach to promoting healthier lifestyles. To this end we will open up fresh dialogue with London boroughs to facilitate improvements and better access to high quality recreational and sports facilities across London.

We will set up a co-ordinated

campaign throughout London, targeting particular communities, encouraging people to stop smoking and offering them advice on where they can get free help to do so. We will not impose a London-wide smoking ban in all public places.

We acknowledge the huge recruitment and retention problems facing health services in London. We will work constructively with London health agencies to tackle the root causes behind this, including investigating targeted housing and transport policies and looking into training and London Weighting issues.

Good health is a fundamental prerequisite for modern life, without which no one can achieve their potential. Poverty, poor housing, and pollution all have a detrimental effect on the health of Londoners; health improvement has to be central in all of London's policy and planning considerations. One of the Mayor's duties is to promote the health of Londoners.



London is renowned across the world for its economic success and prosperity.

It is a market leader in financial services, with the City alone contributing over 31 billion euros to EU GDP, and providing in the region of 200,000 jobs. This strength is expected to grow in coming years.



PROSPERITY FOR A GREATER LONDON

Alongside the staggering economic might and wealth of business and the City, London is also home to communities suffering from extreme poverty and social deprivation, with the highest unemployment of any region in Britain.

An appalling 30% of Londoners of working age are not in work, with 625,000 working-age adults living in poor households. It is deeply worrying that Inner London has a child poverty rate of 48% – by far the highest figure in Great Britain. London also contains two-thirds of the most deprived housing estates in the country, with more than 63,000 homeless households forced to live in temporary accommodation.

Greater London does not get a fair deal from the Government. Each year, central Government takes up to £17 billion more in taxes from Londoners than it gives back to them in spending on public services. Whilst we all acknowledge that London should contribute to the security and prosperity of the United Kingdom, London's chronically underfunded infrastructure demands immediate improvements and major investment. It is time to start redressing the balance of

payments. Liberal Democrats will not rest until the Government accepts it.

Liberal Democrats will listen to and support Greater London's entrepreneurs, small businesses and large corporations – we want to directly engage and co-operate with London's wealth creators. In his term of office, the present Mayor has shown far too little understanding of the importance of the business community, failing to recognise or support their needs. This is a trend that Liberal Democrats will reverse in order to secure fairness for all Londoners.

Liberal Democrats look forward to harnessing and developing more innovative sources of funding and economic activity. We will look to attract alternative sources of funding for London's major projects. This will include business sponsored schemes and conducting detailed research on the use of bonds and the benefits of pursuing Land Value Taxation (LVT). We will also promote social enterprise in the capital, and work with businesses throughout London to foster a universal sense of corporate responsibility for London's maintenance and future prosperity.

A Fair Deal for London

We will launch a dedicated campaign to highlight London's public service and investment requirements, lobbying the Government for a fairer share of national funding. Liberal Democrats will also oppose the Government's plans to change EU structural funding, which could see further funds taken away from Greater London.

Making Work Pay

We will use our influence to lobby Government for changes to the in-work tax credits system, which is biased against Londoners, and provides a real financial disincentive for many who want to return to work.

Making Europe Work for Business

Liberal Democrats believe in working constructively with the European Union to get the best deal for British business. We will continue to use our influence to support British employers and employees, such as protecting Londoners' right to voluntarily opt out of the EU Working Time Directive whilst promoting safeguards against employee exploitation. We

will also continue to work for a single market in financial services.

Thames Gateway

We plan to appoint a Thames European Gateway Director, who would co-ordinate the Thames Gateway developments with London's economic, European and spatial development strategies.

Tourism

We will re-examine the existing structures of tourism promotion, with a view to appointing a Tourism

Champion to co-ordinate the promotion of London around the UK and overseas.

We will start negotiations to introduce 'London Welcome Staff' at major London airports, rail termini and other main-line stations, to provide a positive experience for first-time visitors and give free advice and information to visitors and Londoners alike.

LONDON DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Liberal Democrats will ensure that the London Development Agency (LDA) operates in a transparent and accountable manner, with clear and published development priorities, and sensible criteria for investment.

We will establish regular meetings between the LDA and our proposed Greater London Business Council, to ensure that the LDA's initiatives are consistent with the needs and priorities of London business.

JOBS FOR LONDON

We will direct the LDA to focus its efforts on the reduction of unemployment levels in London, through the introduction of targeted training and skill-development schemes for

Londoners. This will promote best practice in using European funds to get people back to work in London's most deprived areas.

CULTURE, ARTS AND SPORTS FOR A GREATER LONDON



London is one of the great cultural capitals of the world. Its theatres, museums, galleries, and sporting venues play a central role in city life and help to make London into a vibrant and attractive place to live, work, and visit. Participation in leisure and cultural activities makes an enormous contribution to the quality of life of Londoners. Liberal Democrats want to improve the choice of and accessibility to recreational facilities for all residents and tourists.

LONDON OLYMPIC BID FOR 2012

The 2012 Olympic Bid offers Londoners a fantastic and unique opportunity to unite, celebrate and take pride in their city. Liberal Democrats are committed to working closely with the bid team – giving them our total support.

We regard it as crucially important to ensure a proper legacy for the Olympic Games so that all Londoners will benefit for generations to come. Properly planned, the Games can deliver many lasting improvements to Greater London including new jobs, leisure facilities, housing, transport links, and social cohesion. It is essential that the bid avoids any 'white elephants', and ensures that new housing, sporting facilities and transport links meet

the long-term needs of London, not just short term bid criteria.

Involving Londoners in the bid is vital. Liberal Democrats will insist on comprehensive and genuine consultation. Every Londoner, not just those living near the Olympic Village, must have the opportunity to participate and have an input.

We do, however, remain concerned and unhappy with the present funding package. The Labour Government is asking individuals to pick up the bulk of the bill for hosting the Games through the lottery and the local council tax. Liberal Democrats will negotiate a more balanced and fair funding package, maximising government and business contributions and sponsorship potential.

We will work with local communities to extend opportunities and negotiate with borough colleagues for special offers and discounts that could be incorporated into a London-wide leisure pass scheme. This is something the present Mayor has failed to deliver, despite the pledge contained in his last manifesto.

We will actively support and promote the entertainment industry and sporting world, giving a voice to those who are most knowledgeable about making London come alive. Liberal Democrats want to offer something for every age and interest, linking up London's attractions and activities for the enjoyment of all.

SPORTS & LEISURE

Londonwide Leisure Pass

We will work in partnership with boroughs and sports authorities to develop special offers and discounts on some of London's thousands of attractions and facilities, with a view to establishing a Londonwide Leisure Pass.

Playing Fields

We will work with the boroughs to prevent any further loss of playing fields.

Free Swimming

We aim to give all Londoners the chance of one hour free swimming each week, as soon as practicable possible and sponsorships arranged.

Safe Play

Using the Mayor's planning

powers and development strategies, we will work to ensure that all local communities have a safe and conveniently located site for children's play and recreation.

Recreation Areas for Teenagers

Liberal Democrats plan to assist every borough to provide at least 2 local facilities for teenagers, such as skate parks, assault courses, bike parks, aerial runways, and climbing walls. This will be achieved through constructive working with youth and community groups, uniformed forces and community minded private sector organisations.

A Sports Champion for London

We will consult with borough councils and sporting organisations on the appointment of a Sports Champion for London, who will support sport across the capital, encourage participation and promote the capital as a venue for major national and international sporting events.

Open All Hours

We will begin discussions with schools and colleges to encourage them to offer their facilities such as play-areas, sports pitches, swimming pools and sports halls for community use, by opening them on weekday evenings and at weekends.

Wembley National Stadium

We welcome the major regeneration potential that the national stadium will bring to London. We have serious concerns regarding the public transport provision needed to bring the tens of thou-

sands of visitors to the stadium, and will be closely monitoring the progress of this.

Crystal Palace

The use of money by the London Development Agency to save and enhance the national athletics stadium is welcome. The facilities being rebuilt here must include a 50m swimming pool and the centre should become a regional resource for all London's athletes.

ARTS & CULTURE

We intend, as resources are secured, to support a programme of cultural events reflecting London's diverse communities that can compete among the best in the world, including:

- New Year's Eve celebrations of which London can be proud, with several simultaneous events in different parts of London rather than just at the centre.

- National Day celebrations for England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, and other major community celebrations in London (such as African, Asian and Latin American). Notting Hill Carnival will continue to be supported.

- Enhanced support and high-level promotion of the London International Film Festival, the Thames River Festival, London International Festival Theatre and the annual Gay Pride Festival.

- We will work with the boroughs to find the best ways of arranging a programme of cultural events for Londoners and others, with the objective of each borough and the city taking turns to host major Greater London cultural events.

London's theatres are an important part of the capital's economy. We will work with the Society of London Theatres and other groups to promote their use.

We plan to appoint an Arts Champion for London to promote live music, theatre, film, dance, and the museums and art galleries of London. The Champion will have a role in heightening awareness of London's cultural attractions, and promote London as a city to which artists, performers and new productions would wish to come.



WORKING FOR A GREATER LONDON

The establishment of the GLA was heralded as a new era of democratic, regional government for the capital. It is a pity that this promise has not been fulfilled. The GLA, supposedly London's governing office, has been unable to fully live up to expectations. Its potential for innovation and strategic policy creation has been constrained by Government afraid to let London off the leash.

The GLA should be a fully operational regional Assembly, run by accountable, locally elected representatives to which a vast array of responsibilities are devolved. However, this is not the case. The Government has insisted on the maintaining the Government Office for London - a department controlled centrally by officials appointed by the New Labour Government. It seems that Londoners are still not trusted to run their own affairs.

The current Mayor's track record is not much better. He has demonstrated a poor record in properly engaging with Londoners and working constructively with the London boroughs. The Mayor has failed to exert his influence on the European and global stage, missing many opportunities to promote London's benefits and support its international priorities. The Mayor must be a Mayor for those that live and work in Greater London, delivering real improvements for the city and enhancing the prosperity and quality of life for residents Londonwide - not just a few key groups in central London.

Making London government more open and accessible to everyone is an overriding priority for Liberal Democrats. We believe in decentralised, inclusive decision-making and value the contribution of and co-operation with London's Boroughs. As such, it is our pledge

to engage and consult with Londoners, listen to their views and incorporate them and their elected representatives at every level.

Abolishing the Government Office for London

The Greater London Authority is an accountable and elected body with executive power. Its purpose is to provide regional government for the capital. Since its establishment the Government Office for London (GOL) has become a totally unnecessary layer of bureaucracy. GOL now simply duplicates many of the functions conducted by City Hall and the Boroughs. This is at annual cost to taxpayers of over £15million. It only remains so that central Government can attempt to steer the direction of London's policies. Liberal Democrats will vigorously campaign for the abolition of GOL. We want to secure better value for taxpayers' money and ensure that London is governed democratically by representatives that Londoners themselves have elected.

An Ambassador for London

London is the largest city in Europe and one of the most prestigious and famous places in the world. It needs a political voice to match. Liberal Democrats believe that London's Mayor should be the capital's figurehead - an ambassador for the city to Europe and the world. As Mayor, Simon

Hughes will use his influence to state London's case, pursue its economic priorities and promote it as an ideal place to visit, invest in and do business.

A Voice for Business

Liberal Democrats will examine the case for a Mayor's advisory body of representatives, a Greater London Business Council, that would be chosen from London's business community and include members from the entire cross-section of industries, business sizes and geographical locations. This "second chamber" would assist and inform the Mayor's policy team in the consideration of issues and challenges facing London's economy, helping to ensure that London can be a prosperous place for all.

Establishing Consultative Assemblies

For London to be successful it needs the support and involvement of its diverse communities. Governing London, therefore, must include listening to Londoners and incorporating their views into the decision-making process. Liberal Democrats will aim to establish four 'Consultative Assemblies', to inform and advise the Mayor on policy formation. Representing young people, older people, the voluntary sector and faith groups, these Assemblies would also be reflective of Greater London's eth-

nic diversity and gender balance. They will ensure, that all groups, particularly those with voices not traditionally heard, can participate and make a difference.

Borough Co-operation

As Mayor, Simon Hughes will be committed to working closely and collaboratively with local government to ensure that London's government is consistent and effective. He will visit each borough and the City Corporation at least once a year to discuss local issues, gain awareness of borough priorities and hold a public question time. He will also regularly meet with the borough leaders, of all 33 boroughs.

London Citizens' Advocate

Liberal Democrats will work to secure funding to enable the appointment of a London Citizens' Advocate. They will actively pursue the cases of Londoners who feel that they have been dealt an injustice by a public authority in the Capital.

Closer Co-operation with London's Euro-MPs

London's government needs to work closely with representatives of the European Parliament to ensure that Londoners get value for money from all levels of government and that their interests are effectively represented. Liberal Democrats want to ensure taxpayers' money is

spent effectively and, in particular want to end the waste of time and money (some £150 million per year after enlargement) as the Parliament travels between Brussels and Strasbourg.

Diverse London

London's rich diversity helps to make London the vibrant and exciting place that it is, contributing greatly to London's economic and social life. We will continue to recognise and support London's diverse communities, ensuring that all Londoners are treated fairly and equally. Labour's approach to immigration and asylum has too often been led by media pressure and this is unsatisfactory on such an important issue to Londoners. Asylum seekers should be treated humanely while their cases are being considered, while immigration must be based on a sound assessment of our economic needs rather than speculation and misinformation. Liberal Democrats will continue to use their influence in the European Parliament to campaign for a common EU immigration and asylum policy, which will ensure justice and fair sharing of responsibility between EU countries.

LONDONERS' CHOICE

As Mayor, Simon Hughes will let Londoners choose how to spend £1million of the annual budget from a choice of three projects proposed by the London Assembly.

ONE NUMBER FOR LONDON

Community life would be far easier and less stressful if Londoners had one single telephone number that they could use to access all of the public service information they require. There would be no more confusion over who to contact and queries could be resolved without numerous calls to various departments.

To make this a reality, Liberal Democrats will undertake a detailed investigation of the feasibility of establishing a fast, efficient one-stop help line. Located in London, this would operate 24 hrs a day and always be answered by a real person. Modelled on the tried and tested 311 service in New York, the One-Number system would be customer-service driven, initially providing direct access

to all GLA information and services. Following this it would be gradually integrated with Borough call centres to make the service Londonwide and comprehensive.

How you might use it:

- Registering a complaint about noise, graffiti or abandoned vehicles
- Planning a Tube or bus journey
- Making non-emergency police calls
- Querying opening times of local libraries or leisure centres
- Checking rubbish collection and recycling schedules
- Finding out information about London's tourist attractions.



GREATER LONDON IN A GREATER BRITAIN

“The Liberal Democrats believe that local Post Offices are an essential part of every community”

Iraq War

The Liberal Democrats were the only major political party to oppose the Iraq war. We believed the UN weapons inspectors should have been given sufficient time to do their job. War was not used as a last resort in this case. As we have seen, weapons of mass destruction are yet to be found. The Coalition must now respect the democratic process in Iraq and not interfere or this will compromise the process. We would welcome greater involvement of the UN.

Liberal Democrats are also boycotting the Butler inquiry, as it will not deal with the central issue – why we went to war, and whether or not the presentation of intelligence accurately reflected the reality. The question the British people want an answer to is: did the government knowingly spin the war? We know they exaggerated; did they know they were stretching the truth?

Scrap the Council Tax

Council Tax is a grossly unfair tax. It hits the poorest sections of our society the hardest and is based purely on the value of the property in which a person lives. This is regardless of whether or not they own it, and takes no account of an individual's income or ability to pay. Quite simply it is a regressive tax, penalising those on low & medium incomes, and ensures that the poorest members of society spend a far greater proportion of their income on tax than the rich.

As a proportion of their income, the poorest 10% of society pay over 4 times more on Council Tax than the richest 10%.

As a proportion of their income the poorest 20% of pensioners pay nearly 6 times more than the richest 20% of non-pensioners.

Since he was elected in 2000,



Left to right: Mike Tuffrey AM; Lynne Featherstone AM; Simon Hughes MP; Baroness Sarah Ludford MEP; Lord Graham Tope AM; Baroness Sally Hamwee AM.

the current Mayor has doubled the proportion of council tax that he takes from taxpayers. The average London household now pays an extra £442 in Council Tax under Labour, which amounts to a rise of over 70%. (The average London Area council tax in 1996/1997 was £615.55 and in 2003/04 £1058.00).

Nationally the Liberal Democrats are vigorously campaigning to abolish the Council Tax and replace it with Local Income Tax (LIT). This is a much fairer system that takes account of people's ability to pay. The average rate of LIT would be 3.75%, making 70% of households better off than they are under the present Council Tax system.

Scrap Tuition Fees

Since coming to power in 1997, the Labour Party has abolished maintenance grants, introduced tuition fees of £1,000 a year. They are now breaking their last election manifesto commitment by introducing legislation to allow universities to charge “top-up fees” of up to £3,000 a year.

Liberal Democrats want to see tuition fees scrapped and are lobbying for the re-introduction of maintenance grants of up to £2,000 a year for the poorest students. This would be funded through a system

of progressive taxation, by taxing incomes above £100,000 per year at 50%.

Supporting Post Offices and Pharmacies

The Liberal Democrats believe that local Post Offices are an essential part of every community. Unplanned closures of post offices across Greater London have affected the most vulnerable in our society, particularly the poor and pensioners. We continue to fight against inappropriate Post Office closures across Greater London and will work constructively towards making Post Offices more economically viable. The Liberal Democrats will also continue their support for local pharmacies.

Free Personal Care for the Elderly

The Liberal Democrats are the only party that supports the full recommendations of the Royal Commission on long term care. We believe that health care should be free at the point of delivery and that this should include personal care for the elderly. We want to end the injustice of elderly people having to use their life savings and sell their homes to pay for personal care. In Scotland, where Liberal Democrats are part of the administration, we have used our influence to introduce free personal elderly care.

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